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FOREWORD

Kieran Long
Director, ArkDes

ArkDes is the national museum of architecture and design in Sweden and at our home in central Stockholm we hold the national collection of architecture. It is, by any standards, a very large collection: it numbers somewhere around four million objects covering the modern history of architecture and architectural photography.

The most important strategic project in the museum today is our effort to put this collection on display for the public for the first time in our history. It has, until now, been a hidden resource, consulted by experts and researchers but mostly invisible to a broader public and to the profession. To research a collection of this size and importance is a historic effort, and the redesign of a museum’s collections exhibition (‘basutställning’ or ‘base exhibition’ in Swedish; ‘permanent exhibition’ in English—all unsatisfactory terms) is the kind of project that happens at most once in a decade. In ArkDes’ case, the permanent exhibition that stands today has been in place since 1998.

In 2023, we hope to open a new gallery that makes visible works from the collection. That exhibition must be informed by contemporary historical scholarship and presented in a way that allows the public to experience and interact with that knowledge. We want ArkDes to be a place where the public can come to understand the history of cities in Sweden, and to experience the extraordinary artistic
power of Sweden's best architects. We also hope that this knowledge will in turn help the public to imagine what their own role might be in the making of the future city.

ArkDes organized the research symposium in 2018 as an initiative to ensure the museum was a place where the research community could come together, and we will now make it an annual event in the ArkDes calendar. The symposium and this publication are our invitation to the community of researchers to be engaged in this effort to research and narrate the history in our collection.

In Sweden, the community of architectural historians is a small one, and young academics typically are not working on architects’ archives as their primary material. The museum would like to encourage and undertake object-based study that can benefit the collection and manifest itself in exhibitions and publications that present anew the rich story of modern Sweden to the public. There are vast areas of the museum’s collection that have never been researched. But I also believe that a rereading of the source material is necessary to deepen our understanding of the contemporary possibilities for architecture.

I am grateful to Christina Pech, who as our research coordinator convened the symposium that this publication records, and to the entire team at ArkDes who made the event and publication possible. Most of all, I would like to thank everyone who came to the symposium, and end with the hope that they, and many others, will work with ArkDes on the story of Swedish architectural history with the energy and skill that they displayed at the event.
INTRODUCTION

Christina Pech

Institutions collecting and exhibiting cultural artefacts are often referred to as both containers and producers of collective understandings of the past, memory or even identity. Their archives and collections gather—at times indiscriminately, at times highly selectively—material remains which are actuated when requested by scholars, curators or the public. This act of bringing to the fore chosen objects—be they drawings, photographs, clothes, documents or bills—is guided by processes of description, evaluation and interpretation. However, these terms and the nature of their relationship to archives ask to be further examined; in the same way as history is not equal to the past, archives are not memory.¹ In a heralding study on collective memory, sociologist Maurice Halbwachs stressed the distinction between the past and the archive, arguing that remembering the past is not the mere “retrieval of stored information, but the putting together of a claim about past state of affairs by means of a framework of shared cultural understanding.”²

1. For a further discussion, see the special issue of Archival Science, no. 13 (2013) and Caroline Brown’s editorial note “Memory, Identity and the Archival Paradigm: Introduction to the Special Issue.”
More recently, and with a special bearing on institutions collecting and exhibiting, cultural anthropologist Aleida Assmann has identified the dichotomy between the *canon* and the *archive* as a constructive interface for understanding the active production and preservation of memory. The canon is the result of selection and distinction, an “actively circulated memory” which is distinguished from the “passively stored memory,” the one accumulated in the archive.³ The former keeps the past active in the present whereas the latter keeps the past in the past, a tension that Assmann maintains is key to understanding the processes of cultural memory.

This act of actively remembering is a complicated, dedicated and costly procedure in society, manifest in a variety of cultural institutions, museums, foundations and centres. These offer a specific location where the processes of canonizing and archiving are made operational. Beyond that, they also and most crucially provide meeting places between ideas and material remains, between individuals and institutions.

This publication is a record of an event that aimed to be a meeting of this kind, between the actively formulated and interpreted and the passively stored and accumulated respectively. The Symposium on Architectural History held at ArkDes on December 18, was arranged as a rare opportunity for a museum to listen to, learn from and engage with ongoing research in the field. To identify some of the urgent topics and most novel and fruitful approaches which include, for example, how different theories, concepts,

and practice-based methods are influencing historical studies or how increasing internationalization is shaping the field. For an institution that deals with matters of cultural history, it is necessary to reassess not only the content but also the means of its understanding and its dissemination.

The organization of the meeting was more specifically spurred by the institution’s preparations for a new permanent exhibition on architecture in Sweden. As such, it was both a stock-taking of the state of research and an invitation to an active conversation with the vast and somewhat silent collections of ArkDes. It was based on the premise that present-day academic research provides the questions and methods which help to articulate the canon, the selection of objects, people and trajectories, whereas the archive constitutes the repository, based on whose contents these questions can be tackled. Therefore, it is the ambition of ArkDes to have its new permanent exhibition depart from vital concerns in contemporary historical research, because only in that way can the institution fulfil its double task of developing the corpus of knowledge in the field while at the same time disseminating architecture and design to wider audiences. The expertise of the museum—the curatorial and pedagogical competencies alike—provide the interpretative and communicative interface needed for this act of translation that will put history and research on display.

A meeting between questions and material is, however, not always an easy or straightforward one. Collections and archives provoke one of the most central methodological issues of history writing, that of causality. Typically speaking of the construction of historical explanations, it
can also be used to highlight the dynamics between the canon and the archive. Are the research questions limited by and embedded in the way the archive was founded, organized and transformed? Or are they imposed upon the material by outside forces, be they political, financial or ideological? One is soon prone to agree that, as has been suggested, archival work is, in fact, characterized by a process of genuine reciprocity. The epistemology of the archive guides the researcher, and vice versa, the content of the archive will only reveal itself by way of pronouncing the right keywords directed to it. By any means it is a contested realm where particular narratives are privileged and empowered while others are marginalised.

“How do museums make things matter?” Museologist Mattias Bäckström departs from the concerns of nineteenth-century museums but his question referring to the relationship between the archival object and its invested meaning is equally urgent in a contemporary situation with museums facing increasingly diversified tasks and audiences. The act of interpreting artefacts effectively for a public audience is a key concern of museums today, leading them to employ a growing number of interpretive tools. This development has certainly not gone unnoticed among museum and collection specialists. Ten years ago it led historian Steven Conn to pose the rhetorical question “Do Museums Still Need Objects?” In a museum reality that increasingly preferences the stories told over the accumulation of objects, the character of the canon is also changing. If the canon traditionally exemplified—at least in architecture and design—best practice based on prevailing

aesthetic and moral ideals, what is it representing today? Where do the stories come from and where are they heading?

Historical collections are often testimony to long series of events marked by site- and time-specific circumstances. Although often sharing common traits the specificities of their development tend to remain highly contextual. Similarly, the history of ArkDes and its collections is a particular one. Established by the Swedish Association of Architects (SAR) in 1962 as the Swedish Museum of Architecture Foundation, the institution’s initial task was to promote the architectural advancement of Swedish post-war architecture to contemporary audiences. In parallel, the instalment of this professional body, a museum, aimed to safeguard the production of Swedish architecture in the past for the future. By successful marketing of its new archival capacity, more and more archives stemming from architects active in Sweden were donated to the museum. After becoming a state authority in 1978, its holdings were in effect transferred from an interest group to the public. Today, ArkDes’ collection is one of the most substantive and wide-ranging architectural collections in the world.

The current permanent exhibition originally opened in 1998 to inaugurate the then considerably enlarged premises of the Swedish Museum of Architecture. A former naval gymnasium (now Hall 2) housed a rich and ambitious display that combined an international genealogy of architecture with a thousand years of Swedish architecture, ranging

from vernacular wooden constructs to complex present-day projects. Supported by a strong scenography, this exhibition was the first significant ‘history’ of architecture in Sweden ever put on display. Despite a series of revisions and displacements, the exhibit principally still presents the trajectories originally introduced. The prehistory and the selections of this first exhibition is certainly something that will inform the forthcoming one and raises several questions fundamental to the relationship between the canon and the archive, between what is selected for display and what remains in the depository.

One of those questions is chronology, often employed in permanent exhibitions and duly regarded a good pedagogical tool. In contrast, current interest in anachronisms in art and architecture has suggested that periodization (and its related chronologies) is fundamentally dysfunctional, unable among other things to accommodate a global diversity that does not fit into Western canons and their aesthetic regimes.8 Besides, archives tend to be anachronistic. Consequently, several museums with historical collections have recently become the most fruitful testing ground for a multi-temporal present where the navigation of the past can be a museum’s greatest asset. Perhaps the chronological canon and the anachronistic archive can even turn around Assmanns proposal: what if the objects and stories selected for the canon are what becomes a thing of the past, and the stuff that remains in the archive is what is constantly re-activated in the present? To this temporal entanglement could be added also the nature of the

works of architecture themselves. As works of art they are not only historical but they also, to follow one of the pioneering museum architects Friedrich Schinkel, hold a capacity to transcend time through the aesthetic experience they offer. The questions then line up: Should the display have a thematic rather than a chronological organization? What is the most accurate time span; should it reflect the content of the collections or the architectural activities in the country at large? With the origins of this particular collection in mind (reflecting the profession), how should the multifaceted work of architects be represented—by buildings, landscapes, texts, furniture, objects or graphic designs?

These questions can immediately be linked to a series of issues having to do with the agency of the institution itself and its contribution to the historiography of Swedish modern architecture. What should be done to the established canon and the already canonized figures like Gunnar Asplund, whose legacy is deeply intertwined with the institution? Or on a more political note, what is the role of design in an exhibition produced by an institution that was only recently assigned design as an area of responsibility but has not been collecting design per se? Further, in relation to the contemporary museum landscape, it is urgent to ask what it is to be a national centre of architecture today, in an ever-expanding field of bi- and triennials, fairs, and a wide variety of actors, institutes, galleries and collections. Or to better understand the increased presence of the professional museum curator; recent scholarship has pointed to the

importance of museum curators as historical agents—how does this changing role affect the display as a site of knowledge production? In summary: What is the role and agency of the institution in its own right?

As a first modest step to begin answering these questions, the symposium was limited to research on the twentieth century. This was an attempt at aligning the content of a future permanent exhibition with the actual content of the collection that spans from the mid-1800s to our present day, with a special focus on the period 1930–1960.

What follows is a collection of the papers presented at the symposium. They have undergone editorial revisions but retain the essence of their original presentations. Claes Caldenby’s short essay which closes this publication gives an overview of the content and elaborates on a few themes and individual contributions, but the wide range of topics warrants some initial comments to the reader. To set the scene and introduce ArkDes’ researching of the potential of the collections and the institution, collection curators presented their respective work. Frida Melin’s investigations of different archives have generated both topical and visually striking findings. Johan Örn’s analysis of the different facets of the architect Sigurd Lewerentz’s oeuvre is made possible through a meticulous assessment of the architect’s vast archive. A first group of papers, moderated by Martin Rörby, addressed the complexities of the 1960s and 1970s from the vantage point of building bureaucracy, entangled histories and printed discourse respectively. A second thematic group put forward novel analyses of canonized architectures or architects in and of Sweden, commented by Johan Mårtelius.
Another topic, discussed by Mikael Andersson, co-editor of this publication, revolved around disseminations and influences on architecture in Sweden through different media, as well as professional and personal networks. Finally, the common denominator of a discerned thematic group was the inclusion of the northernmost parts of the country. The entanglement of the built environment and the exploitation of natural resources in the subarctic regions of Sweden was studied through the lens of feminism, decolonization and urban morphology. These presentations were tied together by reflections provided by Malin Zimm. In their keynote lecture, delivered by Janina Gosseye, and commented by Helena Mattsson, Gosseye and Naomi Stead elegantly reflected on a “Short History of Silence,” asking why women remain voiceless in architectural history despite years of awareness and numerous attempts to establish a more open conversation in architectural history. The concluding comments by Thordis Arrhenius and Claes Caldenby, moderated by Christina Pech, centred on the usefulness of periodization and chronology in communicating as well as teaching architecture, both central to the objectives of a permanent exhibition.

We are delighted to conclude that the call for papers was met by an overwhelming interest. A blind peer-review process delivered fourteen presentations by scholars from both within and outside Sweden, an engaging combination of well-established researchers as well as junior scholars and PhD candidates. We were intrigued by presentations rich in content offering both new perspectives on well-known topics or authorships and pointing to whole new avenues of inquiry, not least a critical assessment of the architectural production, theory and historiography of the post-war era.
At the time of writing, we have in fact just concluded the 2019 ArkDes symposium which centred on welfare state discourses in collaboration with the research network Nordic Models of Architecture and Welfare.

This brings our time frame a bit closer to the present. As with all sorts of history writing, the exhibition project dwells in the present. It is a site where the construction and synthesizing of experiences of the past and expectations for the future coalesce. It is a time capsule of what was once considered culturally significant (the archive), while anticipating the judgement of history to come (the canon). Archives and canons continually reinvent and recreate each other. The acknowledgment of a reciprocal process answers in part the previous question where the canon comes from and where it is heading: it has a temporality and a directionality, based on artefacts and relationships in the past but projecting them into the future. The employment of the archive requires us to think in several tenses simultaneously.

With this in mind and with the ambition of making the long and winding road to the opening of the exhibition a transparent, inclusive and creative process in its own right, the contemporaneity of the exhibition process is paramount: the exhibition has already started.
In the historiography of Swedish modern architecture, the name Bernt Nyberg (1927–1978) appears twice. Firstly, as the architect behind a group of highly unconventional modernist buildings in southern Sweden, of which the County Archive in Lund is the most noted. Secondly, as a devoted apprentice and partner to Sigurd Lewerentz (1885–1975) during the very last years of his life. What is less well known is Nyberg’s seminal role in the making of the personality cult around the Swedish master architect. Lewerentz’s decision to move to Lund in 1970, at the age of 85, caused something of a fever among the young local architects. He was the name on everybody’s lips after the completion of St. Petri Church, a modern masterpiece in nearby Klippan which almost immediately became a site for architectural pilgrimages. Lewerentz had been a mythical figure in Swedish architecture for a long time; the church in Klippan caused a veritable cult to form around him. One of the clearest testimonies to this is a book dummy submitted by Nyberg in December 1975, just weeks before Lewerentz passed away. The dummy is now in the collection of ArkDes (ARKM 1985–16-2985) and presented the first in a series of planned but never finished books on Lewerentz’s work.
In the book dummy, which was dedicated to the church in Klippan, Nyberg combined texts by the architects Sven Ivar Lind (1902–1980) and Per-Olof Olsson (1915–1991), previously published in Arkitektur, alongside black and white photos of the church and of Lewerentz himself. The idea was to supplement the book with a portfolio of scaled-down drawings from the architect’s own archive.

The decision to dedicate the first book in the series to Lewerentz’s last church appears natural in retrospect, especially considering its quick raise to fame. However, what also has to be taken into account is the very special relationship—verging on obsession—that Nyberg had developed to the church in the mid-1960s. Together with artist and photographer Karl-Erik Olsson-Snogeröd (1927–1995) he had snuck around the construction site on an almost daily basis, slowly gaining enough courage to approach the lofty architect himself. The explicit purpose of their visits to Klippan was to make a film about the building process, focusing as much on the people involved as on the building itself. This resulted in a proposal, with still and moving images, that was awarded second prize in a competition for architectural films announced by the Nordic associations of architects in 1968.
In Olsson-Snogeröd’s snapshot-like images from the building site, the boundaries between the architect and his work are somehow blurred. The rough brick walls and the old man’s wrinkled face are viewed through the same aesthetic lens, characterized by high contrast, visible grain and saturated by blackness. Lewerentz’s gaze never really meets the viewer. He seems almost unaware of the camera, alone with his thoughts, while smoking his cigar. When Nyberg put together his dummy some years later, several of the photos from the documentation in Klippan were reused. Per-Olof Olsson, one of the proposed writers, criticized the heroizing approach. In a letter to Nyberg he stated that the images of “the cigar smoking monument” should be limited.

The book project came to an end with Nyberg’s early death in 1978, just as Lewerentz’s star was rising in the world of architecture. Nevertheless, the photos that originated from the cancelled film and book have profoundly shaped the image of the architect ever since. The same heroic imagery appears in publication after publication. It is no exaggeration to say that Olsson’s plea for modesty has been unheard. The notorious characterization of Lewerentz as a “silent architect” is virtually inseparable from the image of the old man with his cigar.


Sigurd Lewerentz är en realistisk tekniker och en fördomsfri estet. Medan hans generationskamrater länge, allt för länge håll fast vid ett arkitektoniskt formspråk som byggde på ett handverk som i sin tur byggde på låga arbetslöner accepterade Sigurd Lewerentz mycket tidigt modern industriteknik. Hans
Working with the collections of ArkDes is like being on an endless voyage of discovery. Since 1962, when the Swedish Museum of Architecture was founded, the principle of the museum has been to collect everything that belongs to an architect’s office; from the initial sketch on a simple piece of paper to the final construction documents. No culling or selecting. In order to get an idea of the architect’s working process, all kinds of material has been considered important to collect—sketches, notes, correspondence, receipts, working tools, photos and models are all essential parts of the ‘whole,’ which means that there are many layers of an architect’s work to be found in ArkDes’ collections.
Figure 1. Léonie Geisendorf’s architectural studio.
Figure 2. Pavilion in Karlshamn designed by Hanna Victorson and built in 1967.
About 600 architects are represented in our collections. Most of them have been active in Sweden between the years 1850 and 2000. 90% are male architects, although we are certain that some female architects might be ‘hidden’ behind the male signatures. A recent finding, for example, was the work of the ‘unknown’ (at least to us) architect Hanna Victorson. Some black and white photos of a pavilion caught our interest and it turned out that she was the architect behind some of the city of Karlshamn’s most interesting buildings. Later, this led to her working materials being donated to ArkDes.
As a curator of collections I am looking for stories, connections and visual highlights. I discover unknown projects and unexplored architects. I create an archive of possible themes, narratives and projects that could be interesting for researchers to dig deeper into. Since just a small proportion of the folders and boxes leave their shelves down in the storage room and see daylight in the upstairs reading room, I usually try to open a random folder whenever I visit the storage. A folder with an unexplored architect’s name can sometimes lead to new projects and eventually an unknown story to be told. This happened, for instance, when I became curious about the name Gustav Kull, who turned out to be an artist and illustrator who worked for several architects and large companies, such as VBB (Vattenbyggnadsbyrån) and SIAB (Svenska industribyggen). This name opened a new world of international building projects during the 1950s and 1960s such as a master plan for Karachi in Pakistan, a water treatment plant in Israel and a hospital in Dubai.
Figure 3. Illustration of masterplan for Karachi by Gustav Kull.
Figure 4. Photographs and artefacts from Susanne Tucker’s collection.
Collecting ‘everything’ also means that we get access to personal items belonging to the architects. Some architects didn’t separate work and private life and spent a lot of time at their offices. Personal objects like a postcard or a menu from a restaurant tell us something about the person behind the architecture, and give us a deeper understanding of the architect. One of the stories from our collections centres around some Polaroid photos of a villa in Mexico. Together with some sketches of floor plans, these were found in one of Susanne Tucker’s boxes. She was an interior designer who moved to Sweden in 1938. Rumour has it that she is the architect behind the villa, but this has yet to be verified.
Sometimes a single object can lead us down interesting paths. At the bottom of a folder in Ralph Erskine’s voluminous collection, I once found some drawings of an office building in Tangier. They were drawn by Elie Azagury, one of Morocco’s leading architects of the twentieth century. Around 1940, after graduating in Paris, he worked at Erskine’s office for two years. Collections like Erskine’s, undoubtedly one of the most studied and explored of all our collections since a few years back, help us to understand the architect’s working process. The work on a project might, for example, start with a study trip. Then comes the creative sketching period, correspondence with stakeholders, presentations to the client, and finally the construction documents. The process leading up to the finished building is in most cases long and complex. One extreme example is Sven Markelius’ work with Folkets Hus in Stockholm, which started at the beginning of 1930. Not until some 30 years later did the building open to the public. There are a large number of sketches from this period that show how the project changed over time.
Figure 5. Drawing of an office building in Tangier by Elie Azagury.
Figure 6. Photograph of Hillevi Svedberg in Milwaukee.
When I discovered Kjell Abramson’s travel sketches, I was genuinely struck by their expression. Besides being the architect behind Ingmar Bergman’s home on Fårö, he is also represented in Moderna Museet’s collections, as an artist. Traces from the architect’s travels are an interesting part of ArkDes’ collections. These include, for example, a passenger list from Ivar Tengbom’s trip to the World’s Fair in New York in 1931, a press photo of Hillevi Svedberg in Milwaukee during a scholarship in 1937, or Wolter Gahn’s caricatures of people he observed during his travels in Europe.
Figure 8. Contact sheet from Sune Sundahl’s collection.
Sune Sundahl’s photographs form an important part of the collections. Sundahl was working as a professional photographer from the 1940s until the 1990s. Among his numerous clients we find architecture and design magazines, artists, building and housing companies. Sundahl’s collection is an amazing documentation of Swedish architecture, design and public art. It contains negatives, contact sheets, glass plates and copies. I think that the contact sheets are the most interesting material for a researcher. Each sheet has a series of twelve photos that together create a chain of events. Usually the photographer selects one (or a few) of the photos for publication. But in the contact sheets we have the unique possibility to see the ‘whole’ and maybe more honest story; ‘behind the scenes’ so to speak.
Words bring us together, and silence separates us ... Liberation is always in part a storytelling process: breaking stories, breaking silences, making new stories.

Rebecca Solnit, The Mother of All Questions (2017), 18–19

In The Mother of All Questions Rebecca Solnit included a poignant chapter entitled ‘a short history of silence.’ Here, in the course of chronicling a series of tales of exclusion and violence against women, she denounces silence as ‘the ocean of the unsaid, the unspeakable, the repressed, the erased, the unheard.’ In this book, which carries the subtitle ‘Further Feminisms,’ Solnit advocates not just for women’s rights, but for human rights; for universal equality—for all voices to be heard. She writes:

We know who has, mostly, been heard on the official subjects: who held office, attended university, commanded armies, served as judges and juries, wrote books, and ran empires … Who has been heard we know … If libraries hold all the stories that have been told, there are ghost libraries of all the stories that have not. The ghosts outnumber the books by some unimaginably vast sum.3

Solnit then poses the fundamental question: ‘Who has been unheard?’ This question—of who speaks, who listens, who is heard, and who is cast into silence—can equally be asked of architectural culture, and hence of architectural historiography. Such questions have been posed before, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s when researchers across scholarly disciplines began to use oral history to make visible those groups who traditionally had been silenced in historical narratives. Since then, for the past fifty years, feminists and social activists have striven for equality, and so too have (some) architectural historians and writers who have pleaded for and endeavoured to write alternative, more diverse, multifaceted and polyvocal architectural histories. The fact that such histories have never been fully realised or truly embraced, as evidenced by the ongoing lineage of calls for their inclusion, is sobering—but more than that, it reveals what remains unspoken and unspeakable in architecture. In tracing a series of such appeals for historians to probe architecture’s blind spots and listen to its repressed and ignored voices, this paper also traces a history of silence in architectural historiography, and points to the politics of voicelessness that underpin the discipline and its discourse.

3. Ibid., 21.
A Short History of Silence

Over the past half century, architectural historiography has been punctuated by attempts to ‘break the silence’; to tell alternative narratives and to include other voices. From the 1960s, under the influence of feminist theory and activism, there was a rising interest in subjective experience, and the personal in research and academic work.⁴ In 1961, historian Edward Carr, for instance, published his seminal book *What is History?* In it, Carr posits that there is no such thing as an objective picture of the past. The historian, he argues, always selectively chooses what stories to tell and which facts to include.⁵ Under the influence of the writing of Carr, as well as others, the valorisation of the personal in history multiplied throughout almost all scholarly disciplines. At this time, perhaps not surprisingly, the practice of oral history emerged.⁶ As Professor of Modern History Lynn Abrams writes, from the 1960s and 1970s, ‘scholars—mainly those sympathetic to the political left and involved in feminist politics—used this methodology [oral history] to make visible those groups who traditionally had been silenced in historical narratives.’⁷

In architecture in the 1960s and 1970s, this primarily resulted in the production of biographies of the first generation of women architects who were active during

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the early modernist period, but whose stories had up until then remained largely untold. But also other counter-narratives or ‘corrective’ histories emerged. An early example is *Lived-in Architecture* by architectural historian and theorist Philippe Boudon. This book, which was published in 1969, relied predominantly on the oral accounts of those who lived in Le Corbusier’s Pessac housing project (1926–30) near Bordeaux. Its aim was to contrast the well-known history of Le Corbusier’s Pessac project, which relied chiefly on the architect’s vision of it, with the lived-in reality as told by its inhabitants.

Fittingly, *Lived-in Architecture* received a preface by French sociologist Henri Lefebvre, whose seminal work on everyday life and the production of social space has made a significant contribution to the discipline of architecture. Lefebvre writes:

What was Le Corbusier trying to do at Pessac? By building a modern style and by taking due account of economic and social problems he hoped to produce low-cost houses that would be pleasant to live in; he wanted to provide people with a container, in which they could install themselves and live their daily lives … This is what Le Corbusier wanted. But what did he actually achieve? … And what did the occupants do?


Up until the 1960s, those who wrote about architecture tended to forget (or conveniently ignored) that buildings are not frozen in time. Projects were commonly reviewed at the stage of completion, and often relied on the architect to tell the story of the building. When architectural historians then revisited the project later on, these reviews—along with the architect’s statements—resurfaced, and were (at times) accompanied by archival material that documented the process leading up to the stage of completion. What happened after that within the actual buildings (as distinct from within the archive) was rarely recorded in architectural historiography—even if it was well known that architecture is not static, but subject to change. And yet, the spatial knowledge embedded in interventions in buildings made post-completion by inhabitants and users, as well as in the stories that they would be able to tell about buildings, were often regarded as beyond the bounds of the discipline; as belonging to the realm of anthropology, sociology or geography rather than architectural history. It is indeed telling that Lefèbvre, a sociologist, was asked to write the preface to Boudon’s book. According to Lefèbvre, *Lived-in Architecture* was among the first publications to introduce the ‘lived-in’ aspect into the discipline of architecture and in doing so, he contended, initiated ‘a form of enquiry which is almost completely new’—that is to the discipline of architectural historiography, of course.10

10. Ibid., n.p.
Under the impetus of third wave feminism, the 1990s witnessed a renewed appeal for poly-vocality in architectural writing; a call to include different voices and to tell alternative stories. In his 1995 book *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, Professor of Architecture Mark Wigley, for instance, pointed out the need for architectural historians to take a fresh look at what type of stories they tell, encouraging them to ‘… [look] into some of the blind spots [and interrogate] the historiography for what is routinely left out of the picture. Or, more precisely, what is left out in order that there can even be a picture in the first place.’ Wigley goes on: ‘Only by looking at what is just outside the traditional frame is it possible to think about white surfaces that quietly slide right through the middle of it.’

And, inspecting the state of architectural historiography in the 1990s, it soon became clear that such ‘white surfaces’ abounded.

As a result of Wigley and others’ pleas to broaden the discourse of architectural historiography, a suite of micro-histories and stories of everyday spaces as well as of unknown and marginal figures emerged, in an attempt to dismantle modern architecture’s master narratives. Such histories often relied on oral history and spoken accounts of events, as unknown and marginal figures rarely leave traces in official archives. For all Solnit’s imagined ‘ghost libraries’ that contain stories that have not been told, is an equally large amount of hypothetical ‘ghost archives,’ which contain documents and objects that have been deemed too insignificant to enter official collections.

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In her chapter ‘Not a Muse,’ written for Diana Agrest, Patricia Conway and Leslie Kanes Weisman’s 1996 book *The Sex of Architecture*, which featured an all-women cast of contributing authors, Alice Friedman points to one such ‘white surface’ quietly sliding through the middle of modern architectural historiography.\(^{12}\) She writes: ‘Notably missing from the history of modern architecture is any substantive discussion of the role of women clients as collaborators in design or as catalysts for architectural innovation.

This failure of attention, together with the overvaluing of the individual architect as innovator, has contributed to the “star system” and distorts our understanding of the design process.’\(^{13}\) Indeed, clients are another key group of co-producers of architecture, whose voices are commonly excluded from architectural historiography. This omission—that is leaving the client out of the equation by disregarding the actual commission that architects received or by minimizing (or even ignoring) the contribution of clients throughout the design process—as Friedman points out, has resulted in overstating the creative genius of architects and their realisations.

Friedman’s chapter narrates the important role that Truus Schröder played in the development of her famous house in Utrecht (1924)—a house that is commonly attributed (solely) to the Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld.\(^{14}\) Like many texts that focus on figures who have been marginalized in architectural history, Friedman’s chapter mostly draws information from a series of interviews that were

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conducted with Schröder in 1982, in which she described her life story and the circumstances that shaped the design of her (now) famous house. Oral history thus, once again, emerged as the method par excellence for retrieving (or rescuing) the stories of those co-producers of architecture whose voices had remained unheard and whose contribution to the discipline had left little to no imprint in the official records.

And yet, in spite of repeated attempts to open up the conversation in architectural history, the voice (and intent) of the architect—and the myth of the genius designer along with it—stubbornly continued to dominate architectural historiography. In the same year that Wigley called to revisit the modes of architectural historiography, John Peter published The Oral History of Modern Architecture. This hefty volume contained transcripts of interviews—as well as a CD with audio copies of the interviews proper—with Frank Lloyd Wright, Marcel Breuer, Buckminster Fuller, Eero Saarinen, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Louis Kahn, I.M. Pei, and several others, who Peter labelled ‘the greatest architects of the twentieth century.’ While innovative in method, the book was rather reactive in subject matter and, as a result, received mixed appraisals. A few months after it appeared, architectural critic Julian Holder wrote a pulverising review for the British Architects’ Journal. In this piece, Holder labelled Peter’s publication as nothing more

17. Ibid.
than hero-worship, ‘an out-of-date homage to the leaders of the Modern Movement and their famous—and not so famous—acolytes.’ He concluded that ‘essentially “the greatest” have nothing very interesting to say.’

Such critiques of histories that valorise the architect’s story above others, and perpetuate the metanarratives that characterise the discipline, carried forward into the new millennium, as calls for different voices to be heard and for different stories to be told continued and became more explicit. In the early 2000s, geographers led the charge. In 2001, for instance, Professor of Human Geography Loretta Lees called for ‘a critical geography of architecture’ that is about more than representation. She writes: ‘For both as a practice and a product architecture is performative in the sense that it involves ongoing social practices through which space is continually shaped and inhabited.’ For this reason, Lees argues for ‘a more active and embodied engagement with the lived building.’ Two years later, in an article published in the journal Area, Mark Llewellyn, also a geographer, suggested that Lees’ more ‘critical geography of architecture’ could be achieved through ‘polyvocalism’—by including other voices and narratives.

19. Ibid.  
22. Ibid., 51.  
23. Ibid.  
Llewellyn reaffirms many of the arguments that were raised since the 1960s by those concerned with a more inclusive and multifaceted architectural historiography. In his paper, he pleads for ‘broadening the rather narrow focus of much historical research in architecture, which typically considers solely the producers of architectural spaces, the architects or planners themselves, as the valid object of study.’\textsuperscript{25} Llewellyn suggests that ‘… in order to understand more fully the geography of architecture, we need to engage in a meaningful way with the complete and wide range of individuals who were implicated in the process of designing and inhabiting the built forms produced.’\textsuperscript{26} Such a ‘critical engagement with the lived experience of architecture,’ Llewellyn contends, ‘would yield a “thicker,” more “real” discourse.’\textsuperscript{27} Neatly aligned with the postulates of third wave feminism, which in architectural historiography resulted in a growing interest in everyday spaces, Llewellyn also suggests that ‘it is not solely the unique and extraordinary spaces of architectural excellence that are noteworthy.’\textsuperscript{28}

Under the impetus of scholarship like this in the discipline of geography, and with the increasing popularity of oral history and interviews in architecture and its historiography (in 2006, for instance Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist staged an interview marathon at the Serpentine Pavilion in London, during which they spoke with Zaha Hadid and Richard Rogers, along with many other leading voices from a spectrum of fields and

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 265.  
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 264.  
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 265.  
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 266.
disciplines\textsuperscript{29}) the way in which these research methods were used within the discipline increasingly became the subject of scrutiny. In a piece written for the \textit{Journal of Design History} in 2006, architectural historian Robert Proctor, for instance, denounced how his colleagues used oral methods, suggesting that they commonly made a double mistake.\textsuperscript{30} The first error he identified was that architectural historians tend to regard architects’ stated accounts ‘as infallible and exhaustible sources of a knowledge of intention.’\textsuperscript{31} To counter this misconception, Proctor explained that when architects are interviewed later in life, they ‘must be seen as observing themselves in retrospective autobiographical mode’ and that research relying on interviews should therefore result in ‘a different kind of history.’\textsuperscript{32} The second fallacy that Proctor sought to illustrate was how architect interviews tend to make an abstraction of the collaborative nature of building and obscure the various hands and voices that have had a stake in the design. The interview, he suggested, gives ‘the interviewee a perceived authority over a collective work’ and ‘reinforces the architect’s status.’\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 296.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 297.
In a 2012 paper David Adams, a Lecturer in Planning, revisits the writing of Proctor, also taking into account the suggestions made by Lees and Llewellyn, to offer a way forward for the architect interview. He suggests that rather than discard it altogether, architectural historians should use these stories to enrich our understanding of how architecture is made and continually ‘re-made’ and reinterpreted over time—how these ‘individual narratives are embedded within an on-going relational process regarding the geographies of architecture.’ To be able to do so, Adams contends, ‘would involve broadening the rather narrow focus of some accounts, which typically consider solely the producers of architectural spaces, the architects and planners themselves, as the central focus of study, to develop a more integrative dialogue with actors who are all intrinsically involved with the “making” and maintaining of a building.’ Thus, Adams joins the legions of historians and scholars who from the 1960s, under the impetus of feminist theory, argued that oral history methods should be used to give a voice to those whose stories have remained untold, and that this should result in a different type of historiography.

In 2013 Janina Gosseye, the author of this piece, started a research project into the use of oral history methods within the discipline of architectural historiography, along with two colleagues: Naomi Stead and Deborah van der Plaat. In November 2013, they organised a small symposium, entitled ‘Lost in Conversation’ at the University of Queensland (Australia). The call for

35. Ibid., 10.
papers not only posed the (by then) common question regarding the ‘specific types of information [that might be] disclosed through the implementation of oral history in architectural historiography that would have otherwise remained unknown,’36 but it also sought to shed light on the interpersonal aspects of oral history methods—‘the positioning of the interviewer vis-à-vis the interviewee’37—and what implications this might have for architectural historiography. This question, which had long fascinated those studying the method of oral history—Lynn Abrams, for instance, writes: ‘still few historians write candidly about interview experiences’ and ‘much of what actually takes place in the interview is unreported’38—was picked up by Naomi Stead in a themed issue of the journal Fabrications that resulted from the 2013 symposium.39

In her paper ‘Architectural Affections,’ Stead suggested that rather than solely looking at whose voices are heard and whose stories are told in architectural historiography, we should also be taking into account who is writing these stories:40

37. Ibid.
all scholars are influenced by the particularities of their backgrounds and education, plus the identity categories of class, race and gender, plus the irrationalities of their emotions, but also their own bodies—we write and speak not only as disembodied floating brains, but as bodies with needs and wants of their own. Naturally, when more than one person is involved in conversation, all of these embodied and contextual and affective aspects come pressing together.41

Stead subsequently points to the radical potential of an architectural historiography that takes into account ‘structures of feelings’—another ‘white surface’ that quietly slides through the middle of existing architectural narratives—and pinpoints oral history as the ‘ideal mechanism through which to approach … new modes and bodies of architectural knowledge.’42

According to Solnit, including different voices and writing alternative narratives has a similar effect to ‘undersea volcanoes [that] erupt in open water’: they create ‘new islands’ that change the map. And yet, while some ground has been gained, on the whole, the map of architectural historiography has remained remarkably (even stubbornly) stable.43 In spite of more than five decades of calls for change and notwithstanding repeated attempts to enact that change (often with the aid of oral history methods) architectural historiography is still, for the most part, riddled with ‘silences’—a vast sea of the ‘unheard’—and written up by ‘disembodied’ and ‘unfeeling’ voices.

41. Ibid., 173.
42. Ibid.
43. Solnit, The Mother of All Questions, 18.
Architectural Historiography and the Politics of Voicelessness

In spite of a long lineage, the place of oral history within the historiography of modern architecture is not yet fully accepted, understood or theorised. The question of who can speak for and about buildings, what they can say and how, and what it all means—both for buildings and for people—thus offers a rich field for theoretical discussion. To open up this discussion, this section, which addresses the politics of voicelessness in architectural historiography, introduces two examples of recent architectural history writing that rely chiefly on oral history methods.

In 2011, Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist, the artistic director of the Serpentine Galleries in London, published *Project Japan*[^44] This book featured interviews with the surviving members of the Metabolist movement, their associates, critics and family members—interviews that Koolhaas and Obrist had conducted over a five-year time-period—and was accompanied by rich visual material. *Project Japan*, Koolhaas and Obrist suggested, was underpinned by an alternative method of undertaking research. Following on from Obrist’s earlier experiments with interviewing[^45], it was informed by ‘trialogues’—essentially, conversations between three (rather than two) people: Koolhaas, Obrist and their interviewee. In the introduction to the book, Obrist explained:

[^45]: Ursprung and Obrist, “‘Curiosity is the Motor of the Entire Interview Project.”’
Rem and I agreed on a method for our interviews: a Bakhtinian polyphony of voices: not just dialogic, but trialogic, allowing for multiple means of exploring the interviewee’s practice. The three-way interview is an attempt to break the segregation of professional spheres and cultural fields.\textsuperscript{46}

Four years later, in 2015, Patrick Stewart, an architect from the Nisga’a First Nation\textsuperscript{47} wrote a PhD on ‘Indigenous Architecture through Indigenous Knowledge.’\textsuperscript{48} According to Stewart, his work signified ‘… the first time [that] the voices of these indigenous architects, of so many different nations, have been brought together in conversation about the use of indigenous knowledge in design.’\textsuperscript{49} Like Koolhaas and Obrist’s book on the Japanese Metabolist movement, Stewart’s dissertation relied by and large on oral history and interviews as research methods. After initially authoring his dissertation in the Nisga’a language, he was asked to translate it to English.\textsuperscript{50} Stewart obliged. But, even if the words were English, ‘the style of writing … [was] not … standard or conventional academic English.’\textsuperscript{51} In an effort to privilege indigenous methodologies and indigenous ways of knowing, and to create ‘discursive spaces where relationships, reciprocity, redistribution, relevance, reflection, respect and

\textsuperscript{46} Koolhaas and Obrist, \textit{Project Japan}, 18.
\textsuperscript{47} These are an indigenous people of Canada that reside in the Nass River valley of northwestern British Columbia.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., viii.
responsibility can emerge,’52 Stewart employed ‘a way of writing that reads as if speaking.’53 The formatting of his dissertation purposely provided ‘an oral / aural / visually designed context’ in a bid to underline ‘an indigenist [sic.] research approach.’54

According to an article published in the Canadian National Post newspaper, ‘not everyone loved’ Stewart’s experimental ‘oral / aural’ dissertation.55 Some, the periodical claimed, had even suggested that the thesis was ‘outlandishly ‘deficient,’ and ‘an intellectual affront.’56 Koolhaas and Obrist’s Project Japan was not met with the same criticism. Even if some questioned the added value of the three-way interview,57 it was widely praised for its efforts to ‘mentally [reconstruct] the Metabolist adventure as if it were a film.’58 The question could be posed: What impels this differing appreciation and reception of two works that, methodologically speaking, attempted to do the same thing: to write an alternative, polyphonic history of a ‘non-western’ architectural culture? While this comparison might seem somewhat uneven, it is introduced here for polemicizing reasons: to reveal (some of) the epistemological politics that are at play in architectural historiography, and how these have undermined (and continue to undermine) the effective use of oral history within the discipline.

52. Ibid., vii-viii.
53. Ibid., x.
54. Ibid.
55. Hutchinson, “UBC Student Writes 52,438 Word Architecture Dissertation with No Punctuation.”
56. Ibid.
In his closing keynote address at the 2018 European Architectural History Network (EAHN) Conference, Professor of Architecture Reinhold Martin pointed to some of the epistemological fallacies of architectural historiography: the existence (or perhaps rather ‘persistence’) of ‘regimes of fact’ and ‘registers of truth.’ To this day, in spite of successive feminist revolutions, some facts in architectural history and its historiography weigh heavier than others and some ‘truths’ uttered by certain people are deemed more important than others. Martin suggested that one of the most dominant ‘regimes of truth,’ is (still) the West.

Indeed, Koolhaas and Obrist’s book was widely praised for revealing ‘… to Western eyes a deluge of documents and projects, most of which previously unseen largely due to the language barrier.’ In the introduction to Project Japan: Metabolism Talks, Obrist, states that he and Koolhaas chose to ‘… thoroughly investigate Metabolism, which was still poorly understood outside Japan’ to ensure that ‘the last avant-garde movement in architecture [would not recede] into history without ever having properly entered the historical record.’

The inference of this statement—that if a history is not known to ‘the West’ (as fluid as this concept may be), it has not ‘properly entered the historical record’—is unsettling, even if it was unintended. Equally, the request for Stewart to translate his dissertation from the Nisga’a language to English, even if understandable from a practical point of view—most Professors at the University of British Columbia (Canada) likely did not

59. Ibid.
60. Koolhaas and Obrist, Project Japan, 18.
master the Nisga’a language—could be questioned from an epistemological perspective. Stewart’s response, to write ‘as if speaking,’ was an attempt to resist the Western hegemony—in his own words: ‘a way of decolonizing the language and writing.’\textsuperscript{61}

It was precisely this aspect of Stewart’s dissertation—the alternative mode of writing architectural history rather than the content of the thesis proper—that drew attention.\textsuperscript{62} The article in the Canadian *National Post* presented Stewart’s thesis as an oddity—something to stare at, rather than read. Even if his mode of writing, one could argue, was very truthful both to the subject matter of his PhD, and to the research method used. By contrast, *Project Japan*, which according to its authors also relied on an alternative oral history research method, was cited more for its content than its method. In the case of *Project Japan*, which was the work of two well-known Western scholars, as opposed to that of a First Nations architect, the importance and validity of the narrative proper was sanctioned by those who compiled it—regardless of the (allegedly) ‘alternative’ way in which it was constructed.

\textsuperscript{62} See Hutchinson, “UBC Student Writes 52,438 Word Architecture Dissertation with No Punctuation” and “Nisga’a Architect has Unique PhD Dissertation.”
A story told by Koolhaas and Obrist is heard. When they give a voice to someone, others listen. Also in this way, architectural historiography continues to undermine the democratising goals of oral history research methods. As American Historian Donald A. Ritchie pointed out in his introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, when in 1966 British historians founded the History Workshop at the trade union-sponsored Ruskin College, they did so in the belief that history should be a collaboration of the efforts of researchers, activists, curators, local historians and the ‘do-it-yourself’ enthusiast, and oral history was one of the tools that fit all.63 The history of architecture, however, is almost exclusively written by a (select) group of mostly Western architectural historians, who decide which buildings to speak for, which narratives to include and how these stories are (or can be) conveyed. If ‘the hero’ persists in architecture, the same could be said for its historiography.

The comparison between *Project Japan* and Stewart’s dissertation, even if necessarily reductive, demonstrates that there are still quite a few hurdles to overcome for those interested in changing the map of architectural historiography. Oral history can assist in doing so. However, a greater understanding of this method’s background, as well as the theoretical implications of its application in architectural historiography—particularly in relation to the politics of voicelessness that are at play within the discipline—are necessary to achieve this goal.

Changing the Map of Architectural Historiography: Towards Different Ways of Knowing

There are several things that can be done to expand the map of architectural history and its historiography. First, architectural historians could acknowledge that those who use, occupy and construct buildings possess unique spatial knowledge, and recognize that the stories that these people can tell about the everyday use, occupancy and construction of buildings can provide different, more intimate insights into their failures and felicities, their nooks and crannies, and their social and cultural ‘life.’ Secondly, architectural historiography could take a more inclusive stance vis-à-vis the narrators of architectural history—those who convey stories of and about buildings. Polyphony and alterity need not only be celebrated in the stories that are told and the perspectives that are included in architectural history proper, but could extend to those who are writing it. To achieve this, the ethnicity, gender, class, sexual preference, political orientation, etc. of the architectural historian could be more explicitly expressed in its narration. To know who is speaking of buildings, who is telling the story, and from which point of view can be just as important as the story itself. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, to truly change the map of architectural history and its historiography, we should listen. To be able to speak of buildings is one thing, but to be heard is yet another.

64. Ohmann, “The Personal as History.”
THE MYTH OF THE VIRGIN LAND

Malin Zimm

We are putting more and more years between ourselves and the twentieth century, while day by day our planet is changing as a consequence of human actions over the past century. As we watch the century vanish into history, it is increasingly clear that this period is characterized by rapid changes caused by human activity. We call this epoch the Anthropocene, and its archive is the living environment of humans and its subsequent and widespread debris ranging from space junk to nanoplastics. Everything written and designed during this period was conceived against an unspoken background of the idea of unlimited extraction of resources from the planet.

Nothing held us back in the twentieth century, as the military-industrial complex transferred its momentum to consumption, all dependent on ever-greater mining of fossil fuels. We will need to return to the twentieth century and ask new questions about production of the living environments that could only have been created during this period. Before the twentieth century, we did not have access to the amount of energy that fossil fuels provide, and since the end of the twentieth century, the health of our planet demands that all production based on fossil consumption stop as soon as possible. All the characteristics of our living environments today will need to be re-evaluated based on the last century’s use of energy and materials. This was the last century in which mankind could, without reflection, make virgin extractions from ‘virgin earth’ in the shape of raw materials, metals and oil. Virgin material, defined as something not
previously part of a circular system, increasingly appears to be something belonging to the past. All extraction from the earth is done with an ecological debt to the future. Synonyms to the ‘virginal’—untapped, untrodden, unspoilt—abound in negation of everything mankind devoted the majority of its time doing during the twentieth century. Throughout the 1900s, the environment was more and more tapped, trodden and spoilt, while the Scandinavian economies and Sweden in particular have built prosperity following heavy national income from the export of natural resources and energy extraction.

The symposium at ArkDes brought together researchers focusing on the Arctic landscape of the Nordics, one of them exploring the practice by its tools of trade. A common interest of the group was Sweden’s northernmost landscape, clearly characterized by the large-scale impact of huge mines, pulling ore from rock and power from rivers. Every day iron ore is being taken up from the mines of Kiruna, Malmberget and Svappavaara, the equivalent of about six Eiffel Towers in terms of extracted steel. It is also in the Arctic environment that the effects of climate change are most noticeable.

Karin Reisinger pointed us to “A Disappearing Mining Town in the Archive: Staying with its Non-Permanency Towards a Feminist Cartography” to tell us about Malmberget’s feminist history. The asymmetric narrative about the mining town has been dominated by the men as the captains of the mining industry. In the shadow of these pivotal heroic tales are more traumatic stories of change and adjustment, with no gentle transitions. In this landscape, a whole town can be abandoned over a couple of weeks as availability of the resource dwindles. The ‘non-permanent’ characterizes the architecture, which is secondary to the landscape’s resources, or lack of them.
The story of the conditional landscape was expanded on by Ulrika Karlsson, with her study of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje, a great waterfall whose flow has been disrupted by construction of the Suorva Dam and Vietas hydro power station upstream in the Lule River. Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje is a place that links two narratives: the recreation value through tourism, and its production value as a hydroelectric power source. The story of the wild, untouched landscape exists simultaneously as it is carefully measured up and studied as a production landscape.

Daniel Movilla Vega presented “Swedish Constellations — The Construction of the City Beyond the 60th Parallel North.” This analysis brought the experimental, production-oriented urbanity of the mining towns into contact with a global context through the export paths and the production-oriented infrastructure with long, heavy transport routes. The interplay between dwelling and infrastructure gives rise to a special urbanity as part of a global network, which differs dramatically from towns and villages south of the Arctic Circle. On a global scale, this shift in perspective places the Arctic town at the centre of an international mega-system of transport routes, while in the national perspective they are towns on the outermost periphery.

With her study of architecture’s drawing tools — “The Paraphernalia of Architecture” — Stina Hagelqvist provided a similar shift in perspectives in the form of a methodological exercise: the contemplation of the influence the architect’s tools have on the built environment. The instrument’s impact on its user is an unexplored field, but their place as ‘objects with provenance’ is given in the
archive. The artefacts themselves are ostensibly innocent, but they are used to create scalable power over land in the shape of maps, and over space in the form of drawings. Considered individually, they become instruments for defying both reality and geometry, tools for attacking and manipulating the ‘virgin territory’ of the blank canvas.

The actual extent and conditions of the Arctic landscapes seem to be most easily captured by negations used by the various panellists; the ‘non-urban,’ the ‘non-permanent,’ the ‘untold,’ but also the ‘unconsidered’ influence of the paraphernalia. What relation do the peripheral narratives create for the archive? Is it here that the distance between the local narrative and the central archive is longest? We find ourselves in a stress-field between permanence and pragmatism, and between the archive’s claim on origin and original record, and the landscape that has long been regarded as a place of virginity, where the myth of the untrodden vies for space with the reality of an extractable landscape. During the previous century, our world was shaped by our material extraction. As our modern-day structures are added to the archive, today’s Arctic periphery could constitute the most temperate and attractive landscape. What we know about this future is that the mining of virgin materials, taken directly from the earth, will increasingly become part of myth and legend. The virgin material was once an unconsidered privilege, taken from the earth and processed as a kind of mechanical victory over the natural environment and its inhabitants. In the future, innocence is the mythological figure in whose absence everything must be shaped—with the awareness that no land is untrodden, no material is untapped, and no one is without blame.
Figure 1. Operations office for LKAB in Kiruna. Designed by Hakon Ahlberg in 1960.
How can architectural archives and permanent exhibitions take care of environments and architectures that are currently being lost, or at risk of disappearing due to exploitation, development and increasing effects of climate change? It’s no secret that architecture is highly affected by environmental changes. Should archives and permanent architectural exhibitions react to that and if so, how? Whose memories should be preserved? Which architectural processes are relevant for a future in which the original architectures no longer exist? For this gap between the precariousness of the actual environments and the permanence (of the architectural representations), I would like to offer some reflections.

Firstly, I would like to introduce a case to the discussion: perforated by mining cavities, Malmberget (literally ‘ore mountain’), a town that lies 100 km north of the Arctic Circle, will lose its approximately 2000 remaining inhabitants as the mining activities of the state-owned mining company LKAB utilise more and more ground for industrial extraction of ore. The ground has become unstable, and with the extension of the underground cavities it will no longer be safe to stay in Malmberget. While the urban transformation of Kiruna receives much attention, Malmberget is going to disappear silently from the map.
At the same time, the maps of Malmberget never ‘stood still,’ but constantly developed (forwards and backwards) with the extraction of ore. The residents of Malmberget are used to living in close quarters with mining operations. Over the coming decade(s), they will have to move to the neighbouring city of Gällivare, which will be renamed Gällivare-Malmberget. However, many are using the opportunity to leave the area completely. Since the ore lies beneath the houses and the everyday lives of the citizens, the constant building and dismantling, moving in and moving out, have been ongoing for decades, varying with the price of iron ore. Photographers (Lea Wikström, Sune Sundahl, Erik Holmstedt and more) have documented the processes of building, dismantling and moving houses, and the architectural archive also contributes to a future imagination of a disappearing town’s past.

I am not writing this reflection as an architectural historian, but rather as a feminist ecologist of knowledge production, transformation and exchange. Thus, my project draws on Donna Haraway’s description of the work of the (fictional) ‘children of compost’ from the book *Staying With the Trouble* (2016). Caring for and living in destroyed environments after extraction, the children of compost re-connect with the environment through mutual encounter. Embracing the traumatic changes, they narrate the potential of archiving what is still left and what has disappeared, even in the most destroyed environments, in order to “bring into ongoing presence, through active memory, the lost lifeways,” as Haraway puts it.¹ In Haraway’s narration, this is not a form of knowledge extraction, but of sharing ones own identity

with what is going to be extinct, or is already extinct. Even if it means sharing your own body with the threatened forms of living. Should the archive re-think and share its identity, facing environmental and capitalist changes that constantly affect our buildings? Where can we find such an ecology in the archive?

**Families in the Archive**

We need to dig very deep to understand how, in the 1950s, architecture determined the everyday lives of miners and service workers, while at the same time offering a caring and attractive infrastructure for survival in the beautiful but harsh environment, with its demanding winters. Architecture also shaped the roles of gender and power relationships and the constitution of the families.

Dealing with the town of Malmberget also means opening folders in the archive that have never been opened before. What we (researchers) find may still not do justice to the feminist movement of Malmberget, although the material in the ArkDes Collections is plentiful: drawings by Hakon Ahlberg, Eskil Sundahl, Folke Hederus, Torben Grut, Olof Lundgren and photographs by Sune Sundahl bear witness to a glorious past, while today it falls into the shadows of the much publicised and heroized case of Kiruna. An ecology of the archive, connecting architectures and onsite events and transformations, would be capable of answering complex critical questions with life-oriented processes of the past. What will future architects, restorers and repairers find in the archive?

2. I want to thank Frida Melin for her generous support, ArkDes for granting me a fellowship, and especially Christina Pech for her steady support and engaging discussions.
Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein demand a “deeper understanding for local differentiations regarding political and economic contexts” to oppose the “routine-like understanding of the welfare state.” This demand can be underlined by the complete Swedish family dwelling in the archive material on Malmberget: a woman pushes a pram through a seemingly endless street of row houses (Figure 2). This drawing comes from the office of Folke Hederus. Remarkable are the myriads of types, carefully drawn for a collective difference. From the same office, a drawing of a ‘tjänsteman,’ someone working for the mine on a managerial level, remains in the archive. The man is sitting in front of the chimney, sipping his drink, happy to have some leisure time. He is living in a detached house. This detached house is already gone today. The ground has become unstable and is fenced off. Of course, the family needs a baby in front of another house designed by Hederus, photographed in 1957 by Sune Sundahl (Figure 1). The child is as young as the small trees, and full of hope for a prosperous life in the mining community. While piecing together this family from the material of the archive—which is rigorous but mostly devoid of humans—a classical Swedish modernism argument suggests itself: architects were designing for the ideal Swedish family.

On the other hand, Malmberget has always been an intercultural place due to the inviting economic atmosphere of mining. It had a strong feminist movement, the Women’s Association of Malmberget. The Sámi, the original indigenous inhabitants of the region, had lived there long before urbanisation and exploitation, today partly in mixed families.


4. Lis-Mari Hjortfors, Vi har våra rötter både här och där: Om människor och miljöer i Koskullskullen under 100 år (Gällivare: Gällivare kommuns folkbibliotek, 1998).
Given all this underlying difference, the north of Sweden can be seen as another scene for modernist implementation with architectures—just not very permanent due to the steady enlargement of the mines. This also puts the archive under pressure, but is an opportunity to re-negotiate how architectural times are represented in the archives to which plans, building processes and new buildings belong, but less often the onsite practices of maintenance and (re)use or even destruction.

**Feminism on the Ground**

Firstly, I would like to stay with the representation of the only female figure of Malmberget in ArkDes’ collections: the woman on the perspectival drawing of the row houses (here named ‘kedjehus’). During my research since 2016 I have learnt that Malmberget always had a very strong feminist movement, successful in implementing feminist advancements in the community. When we look at the Swedish family in the archive, we may wonder what happened to the feminist movement with the implementation of a clear building programme in 1933, demanding running water, electric lighting, water closets, daylight in the rooms, and many other functionalist dwelling facilities.

Of course, this is a matter of contextualisation of archival material, but looking at the material alone, it could convey a misleading image of Malmberget. There is a specific critical point to be raised here. In 1957 someone in Hederus’ office drew a beautiful perspectival drawing with the only woman dwelling in Malmberget. She lives in Nedre Malmsta, a part of the city that lies east of the
former open-pit mine Kaptensgruvan (Captain’s Pit). We see her back, she is pushing a pram. That is how she was drawn in the architectural office in Stockholm for LKAB, in order to get the project accepted and built. The woman is living in a row house. She is assuming the role the mining community ascribes to her. She dwells in a carefully drawn variety of this type. But, gender-wise, what was really going on in terms of feminism in the 1950s in Malmberget?

In 1987 the Women’s Association of Malmberget published a short magazine which describes their achievements decade by decade since 1900. The achievements which were proposed and partly implemented during the 1950s, ‘the decade of reforms’ (Reformernas decennium) are described in a six page report. In the aftermath of World War II, suggestions for reforms concerned schooling, education for adults, health insurance, maternity insurance, pension for widows, and not least planning questions which were discussed by the 168 members. Further political discussions completed the activities of this decade. These practices of political discussion and reform are not shown in the archive, and even the woman pushing the pram was hard to find; it was not in the better-known architectural ‘masterpieces’ of Hederus, like Marockohusen, but rather in the side-stories of the serial production of terraced houses—albeit with an impressive number of different types. Mining has historically been and is again often shown from a male pioneering perspective. Documenting what is still left, and what has already disappeared, or is soon going to disappear, I propose to foreground the feminist history of the Malmberget community, which is

often left out in the male-dominated mining history and representation. With regard to this sign of a backlash, the more it is important to juxtapose the architectural historiography with the onsite feminist herstories.

**Present Destruction**

In December 2018, I hoped to see the terraced row houses designed by Hederus, and maybe enter some of them to see the interior and meet the inhabitants. I travelled to Malmberget to finally see the environment of the female inhabitant of the row houses of the archive, and arrived to see them being dismantled; they have to make place for the extension of underground mining (Figure 3 and 4). After they had been dismantled they were carried away by lorries in pieces. I had hoped to get into some of the houses, but not that way. Where is the place in the archive for these states of architectural (un)becomings, and violent exposure of the interior? How can the archive include these processes which take place after the building phase? Maintenance and destruction are seldom topics in archives. This lifecycle perspective is not sufficiently considered in architectural representation, but living in a world of climate change and capitalist exploitation, we have to face the fact that also architectures with high historical and social values are at risk of being lost.

**Archival Kins**

What can we learn from the archive as it is? We need to acknowledge that in many projects we learn more about ‘us,’ Stockholm architects, or the colonisation of the north, than about the ‘North.’ We are learning about the hybrid
and imaginaries of the centre. All the drawings were done in Stockholm. The accurate feminist practice for sensing this discrepancy may be “giving account of oneself.” We can learn how architects from the 1930s to the 1970s projected the mining community, departing from a welfare state, the changing role of the (!) woman, and upcoming capitalism. By nature, the archive is always a step behind since architectural drawings are mostly donated to the archive after the architect’s death.

I have re‑visited this specific mining town in northern Sweden, Malmberget, from two perspectives: What material about the town exists in the archive of ArkDes, and is potentially part of a permanent architectural representation after it has disappeared? And, which narratives do we find encountering the onsite architectures which have been preserved in the archive through plans and architectural photographs (Figure 2 and 3)? On the way towards a feminist cartography, which is in its complexity capable of involving perspectives usually left out in the architectural representation, existing processes of archiving will be supplemented with photographic and researched narratives, information and updates to the material. In this feminist‑materialist agenda, it seems necessary to cast an ontological shadow onto the archive and also show the troubles, the hopes and their destruction, and new hopes again. How can the present together with the past be preserved in the archive to avoid romanticising the effects of the historic agendas such as the welfare state?

In her lecture “Aspirations of a Posthumanist,” Rosi Braidotti has termed the posture “we-are-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same,” which offers a capability to bring forth an ecology of the archive which seeks to diversify its representation by adding narratives to the hegemonic material, to show how we are, or are not, together in the archive.8

Embedded in a system of knowledge which is then projected back onto the archive, I started experimenting with bringing together different folders of the archive and adding the missing information. In her fiction about the children of compost, Haraway narrates together with Fabrizio Terranova and Vinciane Despret the activities of the ‘Speakers for the Dead’ who “seek and release the energies of the past, present, and future … with its myriad tentacles of opportunistic, dangerous and generative sympoiesis.”9 Should archivists and curators become the speakers of the dead? The archive is mostly speaking to researchers, but should it also consider speaking to the children of compost who are interested in re-building lost environments onsite?

9. Haraway, Staying With the Trouble, 168. ‘Sympoiesis’ means ‘making-with,’ not only living together (symbiosis), but instead creating-together. While Haraway refers to the worldmaking capacities of the term, I am interested in the epistemological potential of the systemic word—the collaborative production of knowledge. See Donna J. Haraway, “Symbiogenesis, Sympoiesis, and Art Science Activisms for Staying with the Trouble,” in Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet, eds. Anna Tsing et al. (Minneapolis/London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2017), 25–50.
With my experiment, I simply present a beginning to reflect on how the archive can share its identity with locals. Instead of holding on to the linear way of the idealised family, a broader picture, involving feminist, indigenous, queer, nonhuman and further perspectives can be part of the archive cartography, readable by visitors, by researchers, and above all by former inhabitants of the architectures in question. Instead of tracing a welfare state family, my research kin has become a wonderful network of local people who embroider the architectural presence, support my research via hospitality, organise gatherings, take care of the birds, tell me about feminist pasts, and sometimes go into seclusion to tell me that my question is still not the right one.

10. ‘Kin’ shows the relational potential of knowledge and permanence making of representation of architectural history which exceeds reproductive demands for the architectural archive. Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble*, 216.

Figure 1. Tjänstemannavilla by Folke Hederus.
Figure 2. Kedjehus, literally ‘chain house,’ sketch from 1957 by Folke Hederus showing the only female inhabitant of Malmberget in ArkDes’ collections.
Figure 3. Collage of the kedjehus drawing by Hederus and its demolition. This photograph, along with several others, were donated to ArkDes in September 2019 to make the phase of the demolition accessible to researchers and the public.
Figure 4. Part of a kedjehus during demolition.
A photograph taken in 1900 captures two men sitting by one of the waterfalls of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje in Lapland (Figure 1). Stora Sjöfallet means ‘the great waterfall’ in Swedish and Stuor Muorkke, the Lule Sami name given to the area, refers to ‘mårka’ which translates to ‘the land between two lakes.’ This system of connecting lakes and rivers has always served as a migratory route, an important infrastructure of moving waters, during both summer and winter. Several Sami villages—samebyar—are located in the area. A sameby is not a village but a financial and administrative entity regulated by law. In this region, it often constitutes an extensive area stretching between the forested inland and the mountains on the Norwegian border. Members of a Sami village have the right to engage in reindeer husbandry.¹ In order to protect the visually prominent waterfalls and the headwaters of the Lule River, Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkke was declared a national park in 1909. The waterfalls and especially Stuor Muorkkegårttje were considered exceptionally majestic at the time. National parks such as Yellowstone in the US served as a model for the project of transforming the area into a national park. The photographer Ludwig Wästfelt from Jokkmokk municipality was commissioned by STF, the Swedish Tourist Association, to document the landscape in and around Jokkmokk and Lapland. One of the photographs he took is the one of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje.

The ubiquitous presence and use of computational techniques to process information permeates our culture. This pervasive digital culture entails a diversity of architectural engagement with images. In his text “Everything is Already an Image,” John May gives a historical and philosophical perspective of the different techniques of photography, drawing and image making. He differentiates between the photograph, where “scenic light is made visible during chemical exposure” and computational images that are defined by an accumulation of “measurable electrical charges, called signals.” These quantifiable signals can be stored and manipulated through various statistical methods. Images, he continues, are data, and data processing is imaging.²

In a point cloud image of the site, from a viewpoint similar to the one in the photograph of the two men sitting by the waterfall, another sensibility is communicated (Figure 2). An accumulation of different densities of points—a point cloud—forms a veil that envelops the rocky surface and describes the terrain of the now dry Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkeårgåttje. This systematic elevation data has been collected by airborne laser scanning technique with an accuracy of 0.5–1 point per metre, from an aircraft several thousand metres above ground.³ It was commissioned only a few years ago by Lantmäteriet, the Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority. Even though the image appears transparent as a veil, the contours of the mountains and the horizontal reference plane are qualities

3. A point cloud is a set of data points in space, in this case produced or acquired through laser scanning, in a coordinate system that represent the external surface of an object. The data comes from Lantmäteriet’s product Laser Data NH, https://www.lantmateriet.se/sv/Kartor-och-geografisk-information/geodataprodukter/laserdata-nh/?qry=laserdata NH.
found in both the historical photograph and the point cloud recently generated.

The accompanying depth map image visually mediates between the image of the point cloud model and the photographic image (Figure 3). It translates the three-dimensional information from the mesh of the point cloud model into a two-dimensional image of shades, by identifying which elements are visible and which are hidden from a specific viewpoint or projection plane—the screen. A depth map measures the perpendicular distance from a pixel on the projection plane, to a coordinate on a mesh or polygon generated from the point cloud. The pixels store data of distances; the shorter the distance, the darker the shade. In the depth map of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje, the foreground is black while further away, the mountains and the sky generate different layers and shades of grey. Through shades of grey, the depth map organizes the image into layers of foreground, middle ground and background. This is an effect that resembles the picturesque tradition of planning and organizing a painting in terms of distance, from foreground to background, well described by Andrew Attwood in his text “Rendering Air: On Representation of Particles in the Sky,” in which he refers to the writings of William Gilpin and his use of the term ‘keeping.’ Here he compares techniques of keeping with the steps necessary for preparing a computer rendering; the depth map is one of the crucial early steps, when a 3D model is turned into a 2D image.

The three main images accompanying this text are an image of a dry silver plate photograph (a print of a chemically processed light-sensitive plate), an image of a point cloud (a data set of points in space), and a depth map image (an image that shows the distance between a visible coordinate on a polygon in a 3D model and a viewpoint or projection plane). But since all three are two-dimensional reproductions that are more or less processed digitally, they are all only available to us here as images presenting themselves by the discreetness of their pixels. Although the photographic technique of depicting the site is incomparable with the computational technique of processing images, there is something alluring in the visual and aesthetic differences and convergences, producing different kinds of knowledge about the site of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkeååttje.

**Aesthetics of the Fall**

STF was formed in 1885 with the purpose of developing and facilitating tourism. In their yearbook, photography came to play an important role. Early on, STF announced a series of photography competitions for professionals and amateurs, with the ambition to systematically document the Swedish landscapes, Swedish architecture and the life of the people. STF wanted to promote knowledge about the country of interest to foreign tourists, even though the emphasis was on national self-knowledge, under the slogan “Know your country.”

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The photographers of the north in the early 1900s had just been given the opportunity to use dry glass plate negatives. These negatives provided an alternative to the wet plate negatives and made it possible for the photographers to more easily bring their camera and plates into the mountainous area of Lapland. In the photograph of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje, the long exposure time gives the photo a sharpness in the contours of the background, in the wider and distant landscape of the mountains, as well as in the foreground; the intensely textured rock surface and its geological striations. But the photograph also carries some blurriness in the foreground bushes, in the portraying of the moving water surface, and in the mist or droplets produced when the water falls, providing a calmer backdrop for the two men in the photo. There is an intricate relationship between foreground, middle ground and background. It seems as if the natural setting or scenery is a constructed scenography. A foreground with textured rocks and bushes, a middle ground with a horizontal datum of the top of the terrain and the waterfall, and a background with mountains and the sky; almost as if the photograph could have been taken in a studio. The two serious men are placed sitting down, neutral to their context of a most likely roaring waterfall. Is this an idealized image of nature, or a portrait of two men who through their tranquillity master the roughness of the terrain and the power of falling water?

Soon after this site was declared a national park, Swedish authorities permitted hydroelectric power development in the area. Along with other similar developments, this project was part of the modern ambition to quickly electrify the whole country, which laid the infrastructural
foundation for computational development and proliferation in Sweden. Since a large dam was constructed within the protected area, the boundaries of the national park had to be redrawn. The view of the falling and flowing water changed. The falls dried up. Stuor Muorkkegårttje remains, but it is not as magnificent as it was when it was called the “Niagara of the North.”6 The collection, manipulation and redirections of water flows and water levels caused changes to the ecosystem. After successive raisings of the dam level, old settlements, historic remains and grazing lands were submerged, while other parts dried out. In the 1960s the status of the national park was in question because of these drastic changes.7

Between 1900 and 1950, a large number of hydroelectric power plants were constructed in Sweden. In the north, one of the main reasons for developing hydroelectric power was to electrify the iron ore line railway Malmbanan which was under construction between Luleå in Sweden and Narvik in Norway. The aim with Malmbanan was to transport the heavy iron ore from the mines of northern Sweden to the Atlantic coast, for onward distribution to other parts of the world. The iron ore line reached Narvik in 1902 and was fully electrified in 1923. Downstream from Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje, at Porjus, a national monumental hydroelectric power plant was built between 1910 and 1915. Just downstream of Porjus, five years later the great falls of Harsprånget were used for yet another large-scale power plant construction. Over the years, this area became the largest supplier of hydroelectric power in Sweden.

7. Ibid.
The exploitation of water and construction of hydroelectric power stations gave architects an opportunity to explore and develop an architectural expression of the times. The earlier large-scale hydroelectric power stations, from the 1910s, were given a heavily monumental, ornamental and machine-aesthetic character (Figure 4). The belief in over-dimensioning a power station to meet future needs of electricity also paralleled the architectural ethos of Sweden and Swedish architects soon designed hydroelectric power stations to express functionalist ideas. Hammarforsen power station, designed by Osvald Almqvist in 1925–1928, is considered the first Swedish functionalist architectural construction (Figure 5). The ambition of the architect was to highlight the drama of the falling water through the architecture. This is a functionalist architecture that expresses an aesthetic of the fall by letting the falling water assume the role of the ornament.

The photographic documentation of the fall and the power station supports the aesthetics of the functionalist architecture developed by Almqvist; transforming the dynamic visual and atmospheric properties of the waterfall, along with its power, into a force of nature, thus connecting a whole nation with electricity through the aid of hydroelectric power. Perhaps Almqvist took the opportunity to further develop his interest in letting the natural context take the role of ornament when he as city landscape architect in Stockholm a few years later designed the Fredhäll park. In this project it is not the drama of the falling water, but a depression in a lawn framed by highly textured trees (oaks) collecting and providing grounds for

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recreation (Figure 6). Again, image records make us ask whether it is the photographic technique and the framing of the image that constructs hierarchies where modern architecture serves as a background to the drama of a framed and constructed nature.

Since many of the sites for development of hydroelectric power were identified in terrains without roads, both roads and temporary communities had to be created. The state-owned company Vattenfall planned temporary communities for up to 2,300 people with homes for the workers, schools, community centres, churches, shops, sport facilities, cinemas, theatres and dance halls. Electricity and the electrification of the homes changed everyday lives. According to Vattenfall, Sweden was one of the first countries in the world where all households were electrified.

**Interpolations**

When a water surface is present in an image, it always suggests a reference plane. It doesn’t matter whether the water is still or is falling or flowing. Either the plane is present in the image or the falling or flowing water suggests that there might be two or multiple reference planes. In the images, the photograph, the point cloud and the depth map accompanying this text, it is present as a horizontal division crossing the picture plane from one edge to the other. In the case of the photograph, it is the intensely textured face of the rock, which at one instance is interrupted by the swelling water, which indicates this

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plane. In the case of the point cloud image, it is the density of the points, creating a black band through the image that registers this plane. In the case of the depth map, it is the middle ground that spans across the image as a dark grey veil. The darker area in the point cloud image is a consequence of the great depth of the horizontal plane of the site. But also due to the transparency between points in the point cloud that lets distant information come through.

Ground and geology are in these three different images presented very differently. In the photograph, the textured rock formations produce clear edges, contours and silhouettes. They delineate a distinct foreground full of contrast, which in and of itself includes multiple figures and striations. Above, a greyish background of clouds and mountains, low in contrast. The ground or geological surface in the point cloud, or the simulated representation of a 3D point cloud, is defined by data that mathematically describes the heights at specific points in a terrain, providing a height model of multiple discrete points. There are no clear figures or contours but a sensibility of accumulated points. In the point cloud there is no hierarchy between materials or location. All points give a specific location on a surface that can be of any material. Lantmäteriet describes all the quality concerns of the point cloud in depth in a “Quality Description of the National Elevation Model” document. In this document all the quality concerns of the point cloud are described in depth. It is stated that there are “deficiencies” in the point density. Vegetation can often obstruct the laser pulses from the aircraft to reach the ground. There might

be point information that does not describe the geological ground but is captured in vegetation. Steep terrain, depending on the scanning angle of the aircraft might lack point information completely. Also, when the laser pulses hit water or surfaces that reflect poorly, there might be holes in the point cloud. Water that continues to shape the surroundings and builds the infrastructure of the site. To handle the deficiencies, computed interpolations had to be carried out to make a mesh of the point cloud of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttte. If both the point cloud image and the depth map image visualize interpolations, the photograph visually cheats the eye.

The photograph is legible to us by its visual familiarity, the ability to identify form and figure that provide us with knowledge about the site. We know and can refer to a roughened surface of a rocky terrain. We can position ourselves at scale in the photographic image due to the presence of two figural men. At the same time, as mentioned above, there is something strange, as if the scene is contrived, a well-crafted scenography for a portrait of two men in a roaring landscape, yet neither of them seems to be affected by the waterfall.

Something else is at stake in the point cloud image and the depth map image. The visual presence of points and the different shades of grey produce a different familiarity. The point cloud and the depth map, whether in high or low resolution, constitute raw material that architects work with on a daily basis for the construction of images, image processing and the collection of site information. Both the image of the dry plate photograph and the point cloud model were easily available on the internet. The depth
map was constructed later based on the information in the point cloud. But in principle they are all readily accessible information and constitute part of a growing online archive of material. An all-pervasive digital culture, which is accompanied by sensibilities and therefore knowledge that is bound neither by the physical nor the virtual, but crafted and further processed between media and modes of production.12

The ambition with this text has been to tell two different stories, where the site of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkeårtte provides the connection between the two. One concerns the mountainous landscape and its system of lakes, waterfalls and rivers. Further, the history of the site with conflicting interests in terms of rights and land use, tourism and recreational values, and the twentieth century’s rapid development of a technical system of hydroelectric power in the area with the ambition to electrify the whole country. The other concerns techniques for the systematic documentation and reproduction of the site; how the site has been subject to photographic documentation in the early twentieth century and recently, in the early twenty-first century, elevation data has been collected through airborne laser scanning techniques. Also, how this gathered information and these techniques of image processing both construct the site as well as affect architecture’s relationship to crafted aesthetic tendencies that emerge when moving between media.

12. For a further discussion on the relationship between images and materiality in the context of postdigital materiality, see Ellie Abrons and Adam Fure, “Postdigital materiality,” in Lineament: Material, Representation and the Physical Figure in Architectural Production, eds. Gail Peter Borden and Michael Meredith (New York: Routledge, 2017).
What do these three techniques do to the site? Is the technology—the photographic dry plate technique, the laser-scanned generated point cloud and the depth map—there to conserve, control, construct or repair an idea or narrative of the specific grounds of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkeårtte? In these images, facts and fictions become equally real and original.
Figure 1. Dry plate photograph of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårtte, 1900.
Figure 2. Point cloud image of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkegårttje.
Figure 3. Depth Map image of Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkkeårtte.
Figure 4. Porjus hydroelectric power station under construction, Lule River, 1912.
Figure 5. Hammarforsen power station by Osvald Almqvist, 1925–1928.
Figure 6. Fredhäll Park in Stockholm by Osvald Almqvist, who served as the city landscape architect of Stockholm between 1936 and 1938.
Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.


Writing history is an architectural practice which constructs narratives of the past and future, and as with all practices it raises several ethical questions such as who and what to include, and what the motives are. Writing history is not only a question of representation—to represent the past—but is also always a production in the present; of scenes, frames and identities but also of worlds possible to imagine. If history writing, its methods and interpretations, cannot ever be reduced to mere representations it becomes crucial to ask what worlds are produced through the historiographical work. The archive is often a precondition for historical narratives which creates its own problems and dilemmas when the archive is full of gaps, silences and absent voices which must be activated and made ‘alive.’
In the essay “Archive Fever,” Jacques Derrida points out that the concept of the archive comes from the Greek word *arkheion*, that is, a house of the archons, those who commanded.¹ In this house the official documents are stored and filed, and the archons are in power over the documents as well as their interpretations. Today the arkheion is under construction; it is being destroyed, rebuilt and reorganized. The archive has become an active device of making politics and through the ‘active archive’ institutions are restructured, power relations reversed, resistance groups established and the present reformulated through new interactions between the past and the future. From the house, the arkheion, or the empty container protecting the documents, the notion of the archive has been extended to include artifacts, such as buildings, monuments, everyday objects, environments and cities. Thereby the archive can be understood as the ‘documents’ in themselves, it is no longer solely understood as the physical space containing and ordering historical facts, but carries the information in its own materiality.

The digital turn has also influenced the notion of the archive. How should a future democratic society relate to its collective memory? How do we collect digital information and who is in possession of it? In April 2010, the American Library of Congress started the Twitter Archive after gaining access to all tweets ever sent, but already in 2017 they announced a new strategy based on a process of selection. This decision highlights a future problem of democracy where public institutions are not able to store all their digital information.²

If the arkheion was in the hands of power, the contemporary archive is often a weapon in the political struggles against that same power, similar to public demonstrations or other strategies of protest. Groups such as Radical References and Activist Archivists support resistance movements in their creation of archives and cataloging documents. Other organizations use the archive to strengthen their identities and power, for example, the 56a Archive at Elephant and Castle in London or the Occupy Archive from 2011.

When situating the discussions of the archive in the local situation of Stockholm the political implications of archiving are striking. Here, I want to point towards two strands of architectural history that seem, if not absent, then in need of more in-depth investigations and documentations: the history of the suburban participatory renewal projects and the feminist movements in architecture. These are only two of many histories not visible in the established archives or in the history books. First, the lack of documentation of renewal projects is related to a large number of short-term ‘projects’ and municipal reorganizations that have resulted in moving and restructuring the archives. These relocations have left many gaps in the documentation and hindered the archival practices in the suburbs, while other areas, such as the inner-city or more well-off suburbs, could develop a stable strategy for collecting and archiving material. These socio-economic and geographical differences thereby turn archiving into an activity with strong political implications. Second, documentation of the new sensibilities emerging

from the feminist field around 1980 are today kept in private small-scale archives or collections, spread out over many different locations, making them difficult to assess as an important body of work. The feminist discourse in architecture took form during the postmodern era and addressed power relations, economic and social conditions, new forms of spatial organizations as well as architecture’s role in society at large, and must be seen as a practice crucial for understanding the recent past. However, the loss of memory and knowledge that has been accumulated both in relation to the suburban renewal projects and to the feminist movements is remarkable. These histories are not in the records and are far from integrated into the history of architecture.

Around the 1980s a shift as radical as in the 1930s took place with a new Third Way policy marked by deregulations and neoliberalization. This shift still, to a large extent, frames the present situation, and unfolding the present includes dissecting the recent past. Considering that the archival situation is as vulnerable and incomplete as earlier discussed, there is a need to elaborate on possible archival strategies to construct situations that make new archives come alive. There has been much written about neoliberalism in the last ten years or so, but surprisingly little in relation to architecture, although architecture is fully embedded in this societal paradigm.⁴ Architecture is a sector that turns over huge amounts of capital, but more importantly it is a discipline that forms habits, frames everyday life, and effects the most personal structures of desire. In that

sense architecture is part of the creation of the ideological system of belief, which is a common way of defining neoliberalism, from Michel Foucault to Wendy Brown.⁵

To investigate architecture as tied into the processes of neo-liberalization, the discipline must be understood in a broad sense, as a spatial practice and a lived space, as well as a discursive field and a material culture. This view on the discipline will influence the historiographical work to include materials such as protocols, political decision-making processes, accounts, economic reports, contracts and so forth, as historical evidence, not only originating from the architect but also many other actors. But it will also influence the methods of history writing. Working with the recent past both has its limitations and possibilities. On the one hand, much material has not yet been collected and there are many gaps to be filled, on the other hand, people who have been involved in the historical processes are often still alive which opens for exploring methods of oral history. But even though the building and the archive are usually seen as pre-conditions for historical inquiry many scholars have in recent years challenged the current understanding of the archive.⁶ These alternative readings of the past and the present reveal how politics, space and social relationships are intertwined, and rather than a static collection of documents, the archive could be conceived as an active tool and even as an agent for writing history.


⁶. See for example works by feminist scholars and architectural historians such as Kate Eichhorn, Lynn Abrams, Karin Reisinger, Aggregate, Isabelle Doucet, Katie Lloyd Thomas, Anne Kockelkorn, Janina Gosseye, Erik Sigge, and Action Archive.
Ever since I wrote a conference proposal called “The fear of art in art history” I have been interested in Rita Felski’s notion of ‘postcritique.’ In architectural discourse, there is currently a great surge of interest directed to drawings, architectural photographs and exhibitions per se. Departing from this and my involvement with an institution of architecture, the ArkDes history symposium and in particular the vast and diverse material in Sigurd Lewerentz’s archive, I would like to propose that transferring postcritique from the field of comparative literature, Felski’s discipline, to architecture could be a theoretical avenue worth exploring further.

But what is postcritique? In The Limits of Critique (2015), Felski writes about how we as readers have been trained to see through texts in search for hidden meanings and agendas and not to look at/read them (as texts). Reading a novel, we just see it as a bearer of something other and not like a work of art. Therefore we tend to miss the aesthetic qualities of the text and what it can do—almost in a performative sense—in societal and cultural contexts.¹ According to Felski, who elaborates on Bruno

Latour’s actor-network theory (ANT), interpretation of texts should be “a coproduction between actors,” reader and text, “that brings new things to light” and opens up possible worlds.\(^2\) Her perspective embraces both affective and cognitive effects of reading, an act of deciphering content but also exploring and testing new modes of perceiving.\(^3\)

Felski is critical to Paul Ricœur’s ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ as well as Marxist, psychoanalytic, poststructuralist and deconstructivist readings. She doesn’t reject these theoretical approaches but questions their hegemonic position in education, research and writing; a position that inhibits other assets and opportunities.

Emotions are central to postcritique. Without emotional engagement, a text cannot reach and affect its reader, Felski notes.\(^4\) The meaning of a text is not equal with what it reveals about the social premises that frame it; the meaning of a text is as dependent on which feelings it evokes in the reader and how it transforms our sensuous experience of the world.\(^5\)

So: texts “makes things happen” and are not pure objects to investigate.\(^6\) We need to understand them, but also to care about them.\(^7\)

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3. Ibid., 175–176.
4. Ibid., 177.
5. Ibid., 179.
6. Ibid., 180.
7. This is a much simplified and quite uncritical account of Felski’s postcritique, but it has of course been criticized from different viewpoints in other contexts. See for example Jan Holmgaard, “Den postkritiska läsningen: Reflektion.” *Tidskrift för litteraturvetenskap* 47, no. 1 (2017): 16–19.
Architecture is not literature, and for obvious reasons we have a different relationship to our built environment, which we live in and with, than we have to a novel. The material turn is also more evident in architectural research, and architecture resonates quite well with Richard Kearney’s ‘carnal hermeneutics,’ a fascinating approach to the intersection of our bodies and thoughts, sensuous experiences and sense.8

I am not going as far as the journalist and editor Karin Olsson who once wrote about how vital the discussion of aesthetics is in the debate on Swedish architecture.9 But I do believe that a postcritical stance right now is being shaped in architectural research and criticism, something that could also be observed at the symposium at ArkDes. And this mode of ‘reading’ architecture, its representations and medializations doesn’t neglect our sensuous, emotional and carnal experiences of architectural works, objects and events.

Writing entangled accounts of resistant architecture after May 1968 creates opportunities to include also the various ways in which women have contributed to the design, conceptualization, and realization of the built environment. Writing about such contributions can expand our understanding of the transformative roles and the diverse capacities through which architects can contribute to society; preoccupations that were at the heart of discussions in architecture after 1968. In showing the diversity of ways in which architects contributed to the built environment, entangled accounts—in Sweden and beyond—can potentially generate also more diversified role models for architecture. While such diversifying work is important, it has several hurdles to overcome.

Entangled Accounts of Architecture

In the years following May 1968, many students and young graduates of architecture questioned the social and political relevance of their profession and education. Rather than preoccupied with the design of singular architectural objects—often commissioned by the economic and cultural elite and powerful—students now asked how they could contribute to a more socially just and sustainable world and how architects could contribute to the urban question. Energized by May 1968 but also, among others, by the American countercultures, civil rights movements,
and environmental activism of the 1960s, architectural work now emerged not just through (signature) buildings but also through live projects, community work, grassroots urban activism, ephemeral projects, and theoretical counter-proposals. But the 1970s was also a time when, at the least in many West-European cities, the thrills of 1968 and the countercultural effort of the 1960s would meet important socio-economic and political challenges.1 While many forms of activism that emerged during that time, today, seem politically distinct, they often shared common causes.2 For example, cultural heritage and urban conservation groups shared concerns around reuse and recycling with countercultural ecological activists.

Because throughout the 1970s all kinds of resistant yet ideologically divergent architectures existed side by side, it seems productive to provide entangled (hi)stories. Entangled accounts are productive because they embrace rather than dismiss, architecture’s multiple interpretations of politics and resistance during that time, and because they invite studying countercultures, environmental activism, and radical pedagogies alongside preservation practices and the struggle for the (historic) city. Such efforts can be found, for example, in the 2018 exhibition Mai 68: L’architecture aussi! at the Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine in Paris, where a wide range of projects and approaches are included, and in the travelling exhibition Now what?!

2. For example Daniel M. Abramson encourages us to connect such practices through the lens of obsolescence. See Daniel M. Abramson, Obsolescence. An Architectural History (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2016).
Advocacy, Activism & Alliances in American Architecture since 1968 that began in 2018, curated by ArchiteXX, a non-profit organization for gender equity in architecture, co-founded by Lori Brown and Nina Freedman.¹

Entangled histories also encourage looking into the long-term effects of resistant practices in an effort to broaden the discussion on the emancipatory capacities of such architectures. One can think of urban activists straddling grassroots community action with a more cultural and conservationist activism that would sometimes unwittingly result in the gradual regeneration of inner-city neighborhoods, ultimately pushing out precisely the residents these activists had originally advocated for.

Entangled histories can moreover help to resist ideological bias informed by contemporary romanticisms or irritations with the impact of 1968, a legacy that we are still inhabiting.²

Overlooked Histories

Entangled accounts of architecture after 1968 also prompt greater attentiveness to the overlooked elements of that history. To conceptualize the importance of such attentiveness inspiration can be found with scholars writing outside of architecture. In her book Hope in the Dark. Untold Histories. Wild Possibilities, Rebecca Solnit argues: “Though hope is about the future, grounds for hope lie in the records and recollections of the past.”³ Solnit argues that hope for

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change is already anchored in signs of hope found in the past. For architecture, Solnit’s work invites to recover overlooked or forgotten stories as a way of expanding the understanding of the past, and in doing so also complicating, and thickening present examinations. In her book *Reports from a Wild Country. Ethics for Decolonization*, Australian ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose calls for recovering stories that offer “radical and challenging alternatives to the modernity that underlies so much of contemporary social and ecological violence”; what she calls stories of “countermodernity.” Rose’s work of decolonizing is also a work of recuperation; bringing back a multitude of stories about our past. The recovery of such stories can help to complicate singular or dominant historical narratives in the present, which in architecture, a discipline that is also connected to a profession, can prove particularly productive for developing design solutions that are capable of challenging the status quo. The recently published volume *Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, for example, provides such “extended architectural histories” that offer alternative and persistent critiques of capitalism and its associated power.

When considering such work of recuperation for architecture, we have to acknowledge also the struggles Rose identified with such effort. A first challenge is posed by the periodization, and closure, of history. Rose warns that defining what is in the past can offer “a label to be applied to that which we wish to finish and forget, or from which we wish to differentiate ourselves and thus

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to absolve ourselves from responsibility.”8 Secondly, Rose warns against narratives that treat as ‘other’ anything that is not mastered by reason or through treating parts of the world as absent.9 Rose’s observations, and warnings, can speak also to architectural studies. Recollecting the history of architecture through the lens of prolific designers, the canon, and masterworks offers a way of defining, and also restricting, what is considered worthy of recollection; and what is considered a contribution to architecture and the built environment. Recovering alternative stories of architecture can help to expand such understanding;10 it can offer messy rather than purified narratives of architecture. But, as feminist theorists have shown, such messy stories are always threatened to become singular. The authors of the recent manifesto titled Feminism for the 99%, Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser, and before them, feminist thinkers including bell hooks and others, have warned how the feminism that, today, made it most prominently into the mainstream, is often a legacy of just one kind of feminism, such as the liberal feminism or ‘power feminism’ that empowered some but not all women, and has sometimes even been at the expense of other women.11 Such feminists remind us that bringing to the fore other, resistant, or multiple stories is not enough, but that the pluralism and diversity of those histories—of women, of architecture—is to be continuously protected.

Women Architects and 1968

When turning to Sweden, a historiographical territory that I have only recently begun to explore, the 1970s seem, similar to other contexts I studied, to offer fascinating co-existences of critiques of functionalist urban planning, countercultural ideas, and urban conservation efforts whereby transitions can be observed toward architectural and urban postmodernism. In Gothenburg this was exemplified by the struggle for the Haga neighborhood where countercultures, squatters and urban grassroots struggles coexisted and would eventually lead to urban conservation of the area. Such multiple activisms offer an excellent terrain for researching the diversification of architecture after 1968.

One perspective for narrating the complexities of 1968 is through the contributions of women. Women were of course not absent from the architectural counter movements. And yet they risk becoming what Kristin Ross in her book *May ’68 and Its Afterlives* calls the “forgotten militants” of 1968. Ross refers to, among others, the forgotten farmers and factory workers across France who, through extended strikes and other actions, contributed significantly to the disruptions and turmoil of May 1968.


but are not always duly acknowledged in historical accounts. In architecture we can consider also women as “forgotten militants” in that they often do not prominently figure in accounts of 1968. Looking more closely into the contributions by women can point us to ways in which architects (of all genders but oftentimes women) have adopted alternative roles to the dominant figure of the prolific designer and beyond conventional professional practice, such as in heritage conservation, housing associations, planning administrations, collective living experiments, and grassroots movements. By focusing on the careers of women graduates we can complement and thicken the existing scholarship on Swedish architecture after 1968, where only few historical anthologies exist that focus on women in the construction sector, and anthologies dedicated to Swedish architecture of the 1970s provide few direct references to women.

‘Finding’ Women Architects

Where to ‘find’ the women architects that risk to disappear from the historiography of 1968? How to find traces of those architects, of all genders, who developed careers outside the conventional places of architectural production (the architectural office; the design studio) and took on different roles to the dominant figure of the prolific designer?


roles to the lead designer? While efforts toward making visible such underappreciated contributions are not new, a focus on the period following 1968 may be particularly challenging.

While the historical contributions by women have been and are still being recovered in their capacity as designers, for acting as wealthy patrons, or as partners of celebrated men architects, women architects of the 1970s can be found differently. We could start by looking for women within architectural offices, where they may have been lead designers but also, often, members of design teams. This search is however complicated by these contributions often being kept anonymous. Architectural anthologies of the time, for example, rarely mention project team members; the 1978 SAR guide by the National Association of Swedish Architects being a notable exception. Another place to look for women designers is in specific manifestations of architecture. Women were for example prominent in collective housing experiments. They also developed careers as employees and leaders in public administrations, heritage societies, and cultural foundations, without necessarily attaching their individual names to architectural or urban work.17 Women would moreover become prolific writers, critical commentators, and editors; and take active roles in grassroots activism, community action, political pressuring, public speaking, and campaigning.

Giving voice to such contributions poses several challenges. It is interesting to observe that, while May 1968 was about the questioning of the architect as artist and singular author, it seems that precisely the continued obsession

with authorship risks that women, and more generally what Karen Burns, Justine Clark, and Julie Willis called, in a different context, the “salaried architect,” are being shunned from the history of 1968. ‘Finding’ women is also hampered by archival challenges. As feminist historiographers have pointed out, archival practices, themselves “enmeshed in histories, politics, and power structures” can (unwittingly) contribute to the ‘silencing’ of historical events and subjects. In architecture, archival collections—exceptions aside—typically contain drawings, physical models, and correspondences related to the buildings designed and built by architects. Collections also contain documentation related to the activities and organization of professional bodies, such as conferences, exhibitions, design competitions, periodicals, and awards. In the context of 1968, when architectural production took the shape of leaflets, newsletters, banners, reports, posters, pamphlets, sit-ins, temporary happenings, (self-build) design manuals, and ephemeral structures, conventional architectural archives may fall short. The material necessary to recollect these stories is often tucked away in the basements, attics, and bookshelves of private homes or in the archives of citizens groupings and non-profit organizations, and it is to be seen to what extent these materials will eventually make it into archival collections.

21. I am grateful for conversations around such archival challenges with colleagues and friends including Lee Stickells in Australia, Nina Gribat in Germany, Caroline Maniaque in France, and Helena Mattsson in Sweden.
History as World-Making

Entangled histories offer one route toward the patient and cautious stitching together of the multiple productions and voices that shaped the resistant architecture associated with 1968. Philosopher Didier Debaise speaks of the compelling figure of the “imaginative historian,” who offers a form of story-telling that is analytical and precise but also speculative and imaginative. I read in the “imaginative historian” a figure who does not just ‘learn’ from the past, but also is prepared to take part in a creative process of reliving and reimagining history; and therefore a figure of resistance. When entering the archives and oral histories on the lookout for women and alternative architectures, such imaginative work is required. Recovering the architectural productions and practices of the 1970s in this way, invites speculating about different role models for architecture today. As ArchiteXX’s co-founder Lori Brown argued, it is not enough to simply add women to our histories, teaching, and bibliographies, but to become sensitive to various ways in which they practice architecture.

Positioned as a researcher in a professional school of architecture, I feel compelled to write entangled, thick, and alternative (hi)stories not just because they can contribute to scholarship but also, importantly, because they can bring to the teaching of architecture examples of alternative ways of practicing and contributing to the built environment. Scholarship can then become a form of collective world-making, and can influence the architectures of the future.

There is a growing number of architectural historians exploring architecture’s organization and processes and their influence on architecture practices and buildings. This text presents research on architecture’s relation to administration and bureaucracy with the specific example of Swedish public architecture in the 1960s and the transformation of public administration that took place during this time. These changes were part of an international trend deriving from American corporate management and further via American public management into a broader revision of public administration and public policy, and reflect a “new spirit of capitalism” for which a “new public management” was essential.

In recent scholarship, the combined interest in administration and architecture is perhaps most directly brought together in studies of architecture’s role in the development of the welfare state, which is an active field of research in Sweden and internationally. This interest is part of a more general tendency of research less concerned with singular objects and form, and instead more focused on the resources and techniques for making architecture, investigating a broader range of practices and resources that are fundamental for architectural

production. Although this could be viewed as a shift from the concern of architects’ original intentions and buildings as representational objects, to attention on architecture’s resources, conditions and processes, it is perhaps more befitting to see it as a broadening of architectural history to also include perspectives such as the history of construction and labor, and the inquiries into building methods, building technologies and the organizational and administrative systems of building projects.

This text presents some key findings of my doctoral thesis, *Architecture’s Red Tape* (2017), which investigates the rationalization work of the Swedish government in its efforts to make public administration more efficient and predictable, and it focuses on how rationalization affected architecture and architectural practice. The thesis examines the efforts made to develop more flexible and open-ended systems within the fields of architecture and public management during the 1960s and early 1970s. More specifically, it analyzes these efforts at the intersection of architecture and public administration in state building construction through the study of the Swedish government agency: The National Board of Public Building, KBS (Kungliga Byggnadsstyrelsen).

KBS was in charge of providing premises to government and state institutions throughout the 1960s. It was undergoing rapid expansion to meet the requests of a growing state, delivering new offices, universities, police stations, court buildings, airports, embassies, and many more types of buildings. During that time, KBS intensified its activities with research and development to methodically determine ways to better deal with the speed of building production.
and the increasing size of building projects. The government and KBS’ leadership alike wanted to make public building construction more time and cost effective, and the development work focused on incorporating all aspects of building construction into new methods of rationalization. Nevertheless, the earlier rationalization efforts of the 1950s—primarily of standardization and industrialization of building construction—were not abandoned, but instead intensified and advanced through the new priority of efficiency. Although KBS’ government mandate was becoming increasingly inscribed into the Swedish government’s quest for rationalization and efficiency, the development projects and architecture of KBS surpassed the perceived limits of bureaucratic rigidity and in fact display an array of innovative and experimental research.

**Research Perspective**

My research on KBS aims to direct attention to Swedish modern architecture’s relation to the welfare state and welfare policies. The research is set against a historical critique of the state and of public building construction parallel to an increasing criticism of the architecture profession in the 1960s (and which accelerated during the 1970s). As such, my thesis is a contribution to the historical research of architecture’s ‘crisis’ in the 1970s with specific emphasis on public architecture and the building programming of the state. Throughout the studied period, building construction remained an important area in the grand project of the welfare state, although politicians had different priorities and ways of working with architecture and the construction industry for the advancement of the Swedish model.
I am here drawing on Manfredo Tafuri’s insistence on the importance of a political-economic understanding of architecture for comprehending the architect’s professional situation and changes to the field. Tafuri’s book *Architecture and Utopia* depicts a rather gloomy state of architecture and criticism around 1970. He proclaims the impossibility of an ideology of architecture after the rise of late capitalism and instead proposes a new assignment for historians: to investigate the “techniques of programming.” I interpret and use this concept as referring to the methods, practices and systems of decision-making for design, i.e. the ways in which architecture is designed, regulated and constructed. In my view, this is also Michel Foucault’s proposition for the historian’s expanded assignment and switch of modus operandi: from the referencing of change to the analysis of transformations—not as the description of a general history of ideas, but as distinguishing “several possible levels of events within the very density of discourse.”

The study of the Swedish public building situation in the 1960s and 1970s also reveals that architecture and public administration shared similar concerns, both tied to a sort of crisis of ideology that had been prompted by a critique of both architecture and government bureaucracy, and clearly amalgamated with the student uprisings and the critique of authority, inequality, injustice, imperialism,


and a large range of issue-related discontents. I argue, however, that KBS’ buildings and research projects should not primarily be seen as representations of political will, but as manifestations of a much more complex set of motivations—a composition of ideologies and practices which are united in their organizational belonging to KBS. This proposition requires scrutiny of the details of methods and practices that were employed at KBS, and their relation to standards, theories or ideologies.

Ways of Administering: Program Budgeting

Since World War II, the Swedish government had been actively trying to find ways of making public work more cost-effective, efficient, and achieving desired results. Particularly interesting in this regard was the experimentation with the new Program Budgeting system (Programbudgetering) introduced in 1967. It was first launched as an experiment, then gradually implemented in the organization over the following five years.4 In short, Program Budgeting should help with decisions regarding what “contributes the most for a given cost” or “achieves a given objective for the least cost.” The changing needs should be continuously assessed through “means-ends analysis and planning” with respect to both short-term (1-year) and long-term (5-year) planning. As such, the annual budgets would “follow plans” rather than “leading them.”5


main feature of the system was that each governmental agency should have an activity plan (what to achieve) that clearly stated the expected performances. The agency should then divide the activities into programs according to activity goals, and if necessary restructure the organization of the agency, i.e. determine where and how in the organization the work would be done. The agency’s budget should thus reflect this separation of activity goals, as each program forms separate items in an agency’s budget. Through planning of this kind, the budget represents both the agency’s organizational structure and what performances and results are expected from each program. The combined organizational complex of an agency, in which the area of responsibility was paired with programs, could be described in a chart (Figure 1).

Program Budgeting also promised higher efficiency and lower costs, and at the same time decentralized power to individual agencies without giving up political control of state operations. It differed from the government’s earlier budget systems as it put new priority on planning whilst still incorporating previous budgeting priorities of controlling and steering. The shift could be viewed as a mere change in administration perspective—as a new trend within public management—but a closer look reveals that the system made the economic perspective the dominant perspective in the interpretation of results and performance, as evaluations of the programs focused on the measurable, i.e. the system was directed at ensuring the cost-effectiveness of the government agencies’ activities. At the onset of KBS’ implementation of

Program Budgeting, the Director General Sixten Larsson predicted in 1968 that KBS would become a “commercial agency” within five years—a commercial public enterprise operating as a business “that buys, produces, rents, and sublets premises of all kinds.” Larsson was right about the direction of KBS’ future development, but it was not until 1993 that KBS was fully commercialized and reorganized into four separate entities. The three that remain today are Statens fastighetsverk, Akademiska hus, and Vasakronan.

Explaining Architecture’s Administration: KBS’ Structure Philosophy

In 1968, one year after the introduction of Program Budgeting, KBS officially adopted a structuralist theory of architecture and publicly presented the new ideas in an exhibition titled Arkitektur-Struktur that opened in the fall of 1968. The exhibition, which was commissioned by KBS and produced by the Swedish Museum of Architecture presented KBS’ work and introduced a new approach to building that came to be known as “KBS’ Structure Philosophy.” The ideas can be summarized in a set of concepts that pertains to the construction of new buildings: “Generality, Dimensional co-ordination, Classification according to component life, Adaptability.” KBS’ Technical Director, Olof Eriksson, explicated the ideas: “The chronological aspects must find conscious expression in planning. Those parts of the environment and the building that have differing life durations must be planned according to different time scales, from distinct technical structures,
and possibly exhibit disparate phases throughout the entire process.”

Eriksson concluded: “[T]he aim of the present work, is to formulate a point of view and a new set of concepts for building that recognize the plurality and mutability of reality and the potential of technology.”

The new ideas should be read as a critique of the prevailing architecture, and of Swedish functionalism since the 1930s.

The exhibition was intended to show “how the concept of function has changed” and what consequences the changes had on the design and building process.

Overall, KBS embraced the modernist developments in Sweden, especially with the increased interest in “social justice” and “public responsibility,” and the benefits of investigative work, although it mainly applied to housing. The functionalists’ work with standardization of building components and the progress that was made in building technology with the use of new materials, systems and methods were also regarded positively. However, KBS asserted that the main problem with functionalist architecture and its design process was the strong emphasis on functional analysis, or rather, the wrong methods of its functional analysis.

Prevailing practices insisting on finding finite solutions for design not only caused problems in adapting buildings to a new function, but also created flaws in the organization of the building industry and the process of building. KBS proposed new principles and methods for building and introduced the new thinking in relation to KBS’ mission of ‘premises production’ (Figure 2). One of the clearest and

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10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
most significant proposals put forth by KBS concerned the modification of the building process. According to KBS, a problem with the building process since 1930 was that the design phase took place at an initial stage of the building process, and the design choices of the architect were thus decisive for the outcome of costs and the technical requirements. The newly proposed building process should instead emphasize technical requirements and cost in the first stage, and make decisions based on them. The actual design phase should not start until all decisions were made, and then be a so-called ‘controlled design’ (Figure 3).

The proposed building process thus placed greater emphasis on the considerations of both functional and environmental requirements and on translating these into a building program. The requirements and the program then formed the basis for costing—not drawings and specifications. One way to understand this change is through the new emphasis on process. It was a change of the work with the building program, departing from specifying form and material and instead defining relationships of parts and their functioning. It was a shift from trying to describe what the building is to describing what it does. Another way to view the changes is through the broader, more general transformations within design and engineering in which the application of systems analysis led designers to work with programming rather than form-giving.
Building Practices Transformed

In the light of the growing ambiguity within the discipline of architecture, and of increasing difficulties of public policy-making and the escalating critique of the state, what reason was there for KBS to launch an official architectural theory? What could be gained by publicly announcing working methodologies and architectural ideas? And, in 1968—a time of great uncertainty, not the least in regards to architectural ideology—wasn’t there a great risk that the philosophy would fail and that the chosen path would be heavily criticized? Although KBS’ Structure Philosophy was clearly founded in architectural conceptions and theoretically and developmentally linked to contemporaneous national and international research and trends of the 1950s and 1960s, I argue that it was ultimately conceived as a response to the administrative and financial demands of the government, which had been put forward with a new appropriation bill and through the implementation of Program Budgeting.

When the exhibition Arkitektur-Struktur opened in 1968, KBS had only done limited tests working with the new ideas, and it is necessary to look at later works in order to study how they managed to implement the ideas in real projects. If KBS’ aims were to alter the building process, eliminating the conventional design phase in the beginning and adding a ‘controlled design’ phase in the end, it could be seen as diminishing the role of the architect and devaluing the significance of design. It clearly represents a shift in terms of values and points of view. In retrospect, KBS did not abandon the traditional process where building design is done early in the project. With
that said, there were still significant changes to the building process, primarily in a new emphasis on the initial phases of project planning. The difference to earlier procedures was that the new conception of function led to different outcomes of planning and program drafting. The work with functional and environmental requirements did not result in a building program that indicated material and spatial solutions. Instead, the work focused on the programming of the building. Thus, there was a new emphasis on the functionality of the building in relation to its users. During the time in question here—1963–1973—the users were scarcely consulted, and were instead theoretically perceived as individuals that would be invited to redesign, adapt and change the buildings once KBS had finished the design and construction phases.

Despite the failure to include users as participants in design, KBS’ Structure Philosophy was in fact a redefinition of the architectural project. This redefinition is explicit on two different levels. Firstly, there is a redefinition of the architectural object most clearly found in KBS’ restructuring of new construction and maintenance into programs. Building projects were no longer firstly perceived as the construction of buildings, but as the ‘production of premises.’ This is exemplified in KBS’ structuralist notion of ‘the separation of parts,’ where building parts and elements were to be separated according to their life span. It opened up a continuous inquiry into buildings’ functions and functionality, and of building projects’ start and end, and thus redefined the way we think of a building project. This meant that although individual buildings were accounted for in plans and budgets, it was the overall total production of premises in a specific area of operation (the
so-called ‘sectors’ of for instance offices, universities, law and court buildings, etc.) that mattered in the planning and costing of what to do and how to do it. Yet, the communication towards the outside and the general public remained the same—the final product remained the individual building. The redefinition of the architectural object could also be seen in relation to the use of grids and spatial meshes in KBS’ ‘modular planning,’ which besides being a pragmatic design and planning tool also systematically structured all elements, parts, materials, rooms, buildings, systems, etc. in relation to each other in a cohesive ‘attitude’ towards building. The architectural object is also clearly questioned in the shift from viewing the building or product as the object of investigation to instead emphasizing relationships between the user and the object.

Secondly, there is a redefinition of architectural practice that relocates the interest of design to be more about programming. This means that there is a heightened interest in the processes of defining the scope and the problem of design. Design is thereby viewed as a decision-making process that is best optimized if it corresponds to the issues and problems at hand. In this perspective, there is a certain delay in starting what are often regarded as the traditional core duties of the architect: giving form and specifying materials and construction solutions. It is in this diversion from modernist building specifications and functional analysis that the redefinition of architectural practice becomes paramount. The new practice of writing building programs and specifications should refrain from giving any spatial or material suggestions of building requirements, but
determine open descriptions on the functions that are needed. In clarifying what really happens within these shifts, I trace the increasing importance of ‘performance’ as a basis for stating building requirements, building specifications, and evaluation criteria. This development is related to a new emphasis on processes within the planning and drafting of building programs. The new practice could be described as ‘architectural programming,’ which, in the definition of architect Edith Cherry, is “the research and decision-making process that defines the problem to be solved by design.”

Understanding Architecture’s Historical Administration

I have studied the progress of ‘architectural programming’ at KBS and argue that this development caused a gradual shift in dominant features within the planning and design of buildings: from design products to design processes, from assessing results as what I call the ‘the quality of making’ to assessing ‘the performance of function.’ The change or reinterpretation of, or emphasis on performance goes hand in hand with a ‘new’ understanding of function that also prompted the use of other terms like “character requirements,” and in the specific Swedish context, the term “functional analytic requirements” (funktionsanalytiska krav) emerged as the Swedish language version of ‘performance

14. Although ‘the quality of making’ and ‘the performance of function’ are my designations, the transformation of this shift could be followed in the writings of critics and historians of the time such as John Summerson and Reyner Banham.
requirements’ within the building industry. KBS was highly involved in the national developments and was one of the institutions that promoted the transfer to more open and performance-based building requirements and specifications.

Olof Eriksson has in retrospect argued that procurement became the paramount responsibility of construction projects during the 1960s. KBS was then already a strong procurer and had, as the government’s builder, considered this role for a long time. The main change prompting Eriksson to speak about an increased significance of the procurer was his comprehension of how the assurance of quality in building projects was no longer in the hands of architects, engineers, construction workers, or any other building trade profession, but in the hands of management and managers. The shift could be interpreted as industrialization at last, as the line of command seemed to finally have been aligned with industries of manufacturing and other industrial production. But beyond the line of command, very few of the ideas for industrialized construction were actually implemented in the 1960s and 1970s. In the light of these changes, the procurer was the role in which economic steering and architectural quality most pointedly coincided, and the position with the best capacity to affect the outcome of architectural projects.

15. In Sweden, the use of performance requirements was established with Svensk byggnorm 67 (Stockholm: Statens planverk, 1967); whereas the most comprehensive overview of the state of affairs in regards to performance requirements in the Swedish building industry is Jens Knocke, En funktionsanalytisk byggnorm: Förslag till principer (Stockholm: Statens institut för byggnadsforskning, 1970).
In the midst of change and social and political turbulence, KBS appears as a strikingly confident actor, and the agency maintained a firmly staked-out route—an institutional direction that was arguably derived from the publicly announced theoretical position of the Structure Philosophy. The philosophy succeeded at the difficult task of merging theory and practice; it had been set out to reject ideological, value-laden decision-making, seeking instead to establish a scientific, neutral, and effective formula for the continuous planning and design of buildings. In this perspective, the Structure Philosophy should be seen as a rejuvenation of early modernist ideas, of the scientification of architecture, of instituting design as an objective discipline, but through realignment to an imminent political economy.

The architectural changes taking place at KBS during the 1960s and 1970s are intimately tied to the organization’s changes in administration. I wish to show with this research, it is not until architecture becomes associated with administration, and with economic, social and political agendas and systems, that we can understand broader meanings of architectural change.
Figure 1. Illustration of the relationships and interactions between programs and departments (Avd) as depicted in the government investigation SOU 1967: 11–13.
Figure 2. (Above) The building process of Swedish functionalism since 1930, as depicted in the exhibition catalogue of Arkitektur-Struktur in 1968.
Figure 3. (Below) A proposal of a new building process as depicted in the exhibition catalogue of Arkitektur-Struktur.
SWEDEN AS A KNOWLEDGE EXPORTER: THE URGENCY OF ARCHITECTURAL EFFICIENCY DURING THE COLD WAR

Angela Gigliotti

The relationship between modes of architectural production and economic and political power is a crucial knot that affects the condition of being an architect.¹ It is worth mentioning here that the definition of power itself is related to a potential and plural aspect of the human condition.² Thus, it is only through transmittable documents, which are combined in a bureaucratic body, that the power’s application into the actual mode of production is possible. A crucial shift in this regard was caused by the introduction of scientific management³ in production: the way in which knowledge was transmitted in fact shifted from an experience-exchange among skilled workers, to a substantial body of written recommendations prescribed top-down.⁴ This also affected the architectural profession: that is why architectural theoretical discourse has widely addressed the tools and instruments deployed by the profession, which implicitly or explicitly reinforce a national or supranational agenda and the transmission of power.

Welfare capitalism⁵ was a particular influencer for modes of architectural production, which I explore through the case of Denmark, and the substantial influence by its neighbour Sweden, with its particular strand of ‘middle way’⁶ capitalism, especially during the ‘gospel of productivity.’⁷ To do that, two main knots are at stake: how the relationship between architecture and international networks of power have been disseminated; and which tools and instruments are activated to enhance them. The present paper is divided into three sections. Firstly, the method of my archive review is outlined. Secondly, the wide framework concerning the export and import of knowledge is presented. Finally, the presentation of a mutual, osmotic as I call it, relationship between Denmark and Sweden results in a concluding discussion.

**Briefly on the Method**

My argument is supported by the evidence emerging from an archive review I completed of the journal *Arkitekten* ranging from 1945 to 1975, an era historians have called the ‘Golden Age.’ The archive review counts forty-one volumes; eleven monthly and weekly editions and nineteen bi-monthly ones. I conducted instrumental scanning to digitize all the information acquired and transform it into searchable documents. From there, I conducted two different analyses. The first related to the classification of each project published. This was made to get an overview of the quantity of architectural production in

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that time-span more than four thousand projects were indexed and displayed as a physical archive (Figure 1). In contrast, the second analysis consisted in carrying out a literature review across the whole archive, using a number of keywords related to the architectural profession (e.g. employee, employment, profession, labour, fee, wages, etc). As a result, I could select fifty-six articles which addressed issues concerning the architectural profession. This led me to argue that the Danish environment of architectural theory today suffers from a “loss of awareness”8 since, as my archive showed, there was a time in which architectural work was fervently discussed, beyond built outcomes.

The Golden Age

As was made visible by my journal review, Danish architectural production in those years was not only boosted by the local political project of the welfare state which served as client to many blossoming practices, but also by the substantial funds coming from the US and the Marshall Plan, which in particular awarded grants for the building construction industries under the Benton-Moody Program.9 However, these were not the only drivers. Sweden too, with a similar Scandinavian model of welfare was an important reference for Denmark in terms of efficiency, even before the advent of the Pax Americana. This has to be seen in light of Swedish measures that focused on a scientific organization of its bureaucratic apparatus: in fact, the Danish Ministry of Finance established a dedicated committee, The

Government Organizing Board (1943–61). This state body was responsible for submitting organizational proposals meant to reduce state expenditure for various purposes, training participants for investigations, and providing advice and information on the rationalization of office work. The general director was Carl Tarras Sällfors, a Swedish economist and forerunner of the industrial economy and organization, whose six principles since the 1930s would change the work life of a generation of white-collars, implementing principles of standardization within the newly born welfare economic system, even beyond Sweden’s national borders. This moment also marked the start of an osmotic relationship between Sweden and Denmark, where Sweden was perceived as an absolute driving force, thanks to its success in rationalization, industrialization, and standardization.

The Osmotic Bilateral Relationship

This relationship was supported by persistent propaganda, facilitated by a number of Danish institutions, above all the Danish Association of Architects, The Ministry of Housing’s Productivity Committee and the State Building Research Institute. The goal was to push the architectural discipline towards higher industrial productivity, efficiency and professionalism with the deployment of several media. The osmotic relationship with Sweden took in fact several forms (e.g. film festivals, itinerant exhibitions, articles, books, conference, reports etc.). I argue that there was

10. 1. Good labour conditions practices (e.g. good lighting, appropriate furniture); 2. Mechanisation of work in the largest possible extent; 3. Specialisation of work; 4. Improvement of means of communications for both oral and written exchange; 5. Standardisation of methods, forms, tools and so on; 6. Continuous studies to find the best modes of production to avoid unnecessary work. Paul Hauge, “Omkring Emnet Tegnestueorganisation,” Arkitekten, Ugeshæfte 47 (1943): 30–31.
a clear intentionality in presenting Swedish case studies within the Danish architectural discussion. To support this, I’ll present three different cases deploying various media: an educational film from Swedish factories; a handbook with specific guidelines; an exhibition with an associated publication promoting those peer architects who already shifted their architectural mode of production in answering to the ‘gospel.’ In general, what this shows is a political and economic agenda which aimed to overcome the organization of the Danish architectural profession which was based on small/medium-sized craftsmanslike practices organized according to an atelier-based model.

The first case is the screening, sponsored by The Danish Association of Architects in 1951, of a Swedish film about rationalization in a mechanical factory entitled Enklare mera bättre!11 in which a team of workers and managers goes for a field study in one of the efficient factories of the country. The film compares a work condition, in which many minutes are lost waiting around due to lack of organization with a post-condition of total efficiency. The pre-condition goes through a process of planning the organization, where also a physical scale model of the factory is used to convey the changes to the workers, together with a field study in some prominent factories to learn how to be efficient before reaching, at home, the final post-condition of total efficiency. As can be seen in the film, the long foreground of tools, charts and signs almost gave viewers the time to take notes and see useful solutions to improve the daily workflow (Figure 2).

The second case refers to *Haandbog for Bygnings-Industrien* (The Handbook of the Building Industry), which in its 1937 edition included a chapter entitled “Tegnestuens Organisation” (The organisation of architectural practice) describing the instruments needed to optimize the architectural workflow. This chapter explicitly refers to Sällfors’ work and lists tools and clear instructions divided into the six principles: mailing and negotiations; registration and storage of drawings; description and estimation of work; supervision of the building site; contracts and accounting and the nomenclature for technical materials (e.g. material samples, structure, study book and so on). The purpose, is “to provide a practical system for the arrangement of all the different work processes. The introduction of a systematic method entails job-saving and a better overview. The chapter is designed to allow any practice, small or large, to extract what suits it.”

Moreover, the chapter not only introduces the best modes of production but also markets the charts and the forms as an appendix, ready to be used in practice (monetizing additionally the tools offered to peers!).

The third and last case refers to an architectural exhibition with the same name as the second case, *Tegnestuens Organisation* (Figure 3). Hosted by the Akademisk Arkitektforening, it opened in Copenhagen in October 1943 and focused on how five leading Danish architects organized their workflows and modes of production. The associated publication shows specific tools and instruments deployed by architects Dan Fink, Preben Hansen, G. Steen Mikkelsen, Sv. Roloff-Nielsen

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and Palle Suenson. The focus of the exhibition was to offer a behind-the-scenes look at how the workflow is organized and how the data, such as drawings, articles and numbers, are catalogued and collected, also introducing ad hoc pieces of furniture. As noted by the editor H.E. Langkilde: “The core of the exhibition is how the five architects produce, how they have organized: registration, company storage, various documents, correspondence, drawings, accounting, etc. Both small and large practices are represented with different degrees of organization.”\(^1\)

Once again, as in the handbook, the transversal interest is addressed mentioning the various sizes of possible interested practices as a core task.

So it is clear how ‘Swedish,’ starting from the 1930s and for many subsequent years, became in Denmark a guarantee of innovation and efficiency to learn from. There were years when the use of architectural exhibitions in particular were a successful strategy repeated on several occasions and also activated to share content arriving directly from the USA, for instance the travelling exhibition *Amerika bygger*, (Figure 4) which reached Denmark in 1945, before travelling on to Finland and Norway.

### Concluding Remarks

I want to conclude by highlighting some of my key findings. First of all, the dependency of the architectural profession from a domestic economic system in its taking-off during the Golden Years, but also from the US and Sweden within an international frame of funding towards the standardization and efficiency of the modes of

\(^{1}\). Ibid.
production. Secondly, in my argument of an intentionality in the relationship between architecture and power, I think it is worth theorizing about what I termed the ‘hidden recipes,’ i.e. those tools that have allowed the transmission of a particular Western power. To those recipes, as shown in the above-mentioned cases, we can count manuals, specialized journals, magazines, reports, movies and exhibitions. What I argue, specifically, is that these disseminations had both an overt and a covert nature. The overt, official aim was to train (recipes) the architectural community to look at references produced by prominent peers in the field. But the covert, unofficial agenda (hidden), as I argue, aimed to instruct also the architectural community, in this case the Danish one, about which specific instruments, tools and rules that needed to be applied in the workflow to guarantee the necessary production for the building industry. So behind the drawings and photos of the latest works (design ability), one could also find a detailed description of the mode of production (organizational ability); learning not only how to design good works, but also how to satisfy the supranational network of power.

Lastly, this knowledge-exchange was promoted under the belief that the organizational aspects were consequential of a design ability. However, analyzing the findings, there is evidence of how they were independent down to the everyday practice with independent departments that almost never overlapped. Hansen, one of the five architects, said, when talking about the registration of drawings with an accurate coding system:
(…) The registration can be carried out by the architects themselves or by a Secretary. Here a problem arises—practitioner versus administrator—it is important to consider the extent to which Architects can be relieved by administrative assistance, partly because an architect has higher levels than a Secretary, and also because he is so rarely experienced in the procedure as she is.15

Hansen also emphasized the crucial organization role within a practice, specifically keeping the administration out of the drafting rooms and allocating the tasks correctly:

Even if the drawing room is under pressure with a project’s conception, it’s important to resist the temptation of including the administration’s labourers behind the drawing boards: something that looks so innocent could generate unfortunate confusion and the risk of fatal errors.16

If at that time the separation between administration and design practice in the architectural profession was stated as “the most important thing,”17 this appears to be almost lost nowadays, when the architect has to fulfil two sets of blurred and overlapping activities: one whose scope is the reification of the architectural projects; and another whose scope is the continued survival of the practice. And this is not unique to the Danish case, but opens up for a broader discussion on labour and work in architecture.

15. Ibid. Author's translation.
16. Ibid. Author's translation.
17. Ibid. Author's translation.
Figure 1. *Index Room*, curated by Angela Gigliotti and designed by OFFICE U67. Exhibition at Milano Design Week, 2017.
Figure 2. Still frames from the film Enklare mera bättre!
Figure 3. Cover Page of Arkitekten, Maanedshæfte XLVII, no. 1, 1945.
Figure 4. Cover page of the catalogue to the exhibition *Amerika bygger*, 1944.
ARCHITECTURAL CROSSROADS

Johan Mårtelius

Architectural culture has, for natural reasons, strong local and regional identities, but mostly also carries traces from remote relationships, geographically as well as historically. The recently increasing records of international reception of Swedish architecture, especially its modern history, points at widening perspectives of connections across borders. The symposium too confirmed this tendency and included a number of interesting examples of a widening interest, represented by on-going studies presented by international scholars.

Conversely, Swedish architecture has always been influenced by more or less remote examples. This is expressed not least in the two most iconic buildings of twentieth century Stockholm, the City Hall and the City Library, designed by Ragnar Östberg and Gunnar Asplund respectively, both with strong links to Mediterranean and other examples from far away in both space and time.

When plans were made for the permanent exhibition of the Swedish Museum of Architecture, opening in 1998, I was asked if I could suggest a section for the wider referential contexts of Swedish architectural culture. I truly agreed that this would be a relevant addition to the major display of Swedish architectural documents.
Besides some more specific connections, the backward and outward look is also a main reason for why the history of architecture, local as well as international, is a fundamentally integrated subject in the architectural discipline.

My proposal for fulfilling this aspect of the exhibition was to create a number of models of influential built structures in a wide and long time perspective. The idea was then realized through a student project at KTH, directed in collaboration with my colleague at the construction department, Sture Samuelsson, and with important assistance from the professional model builder Stig Victorsson. The group of final year students with interests in historical perspectives created models for the selection of buildings, reaching from the Egyptian pyramid of Djoser to twentieth century iconic works by Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Alvar Aalto and others. The wooden models were exposed as a separate department in the original permanent exhibition, and a number of them have since then continuously been exhibited in its later iterations.

My selection of objects for the models unavoidably contained a number of Italian buildings. Roman antiquity was represented by the basilica of Fanum, designed by Vitruvius, and by the Forum of Trajan in Rome. Naturally a number of later Italian cases were also included, such as the fifteenth century dome in Florence by Brunelleschi, a well-recognized historic highlight. And since one purpose was to use the model as an instrument to explore the history of the architectural profession, Alberti, Bramante and Michelangelo were naturally represented as well as, unavoidably, Andrea Palladio.
Less obviously though, even the final architectural project in the timeline, representing contemporary ideals of the 1990s, was chosen from Italy: Aldo Rossi’s floating theatre, the Teatro del Mondo of 1980, originally located by Piazza San Marco in Venice. As one aspect among others, the case of Venice could indeed serve to remind of the importance of this city since centuries back in the self-image of the Swedish capital. Furthermore, the mobility of the object itself, along with a strong character of place, makes it in an unusual way literally representing the very concept of “architectural crossroads.”

So how would a corresponding selection of models differ, after a quarter century? What would be the most recent example and the most distant one? The focus on the architectural profession, from Imhotep to Aldo Rossi, mainly excluded mediaeval, vernacular and non-Western examples. Today, this calls to be debated and an updated geography would probably expand to eastern Asia and beyond. The field of architectural history has expanded in recent decades, manifested in the yearbook for the museum that we put together in 2006, titled Världen i arkitekturhistorien (The World in Architectural History). And the most recent example could perhaps represent some technological innovation, but more reasonably sustainability and continuity across millennia. So perhaps reconnecting to the eternally attractive and wondrous Roman Pantheon or Constantinopolitan Hagia Sophia.
Figure 1. Historical highlights from the permanent exhibition in 1998. Models produced by students at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.
Swedish landscape architects active during and after World War II have often been described as working in isolation without contacts with international trends, inward looking almost as in a vacuum. I would like to challenge this view through three examples of Swedish women landscape architects, Helfrid Löfquist (1895–1972), Ulla Bodorff (1913–1982), Sylvia Gibson (1919–1974), and some of their professional exchanges. Löfquist’s contribution to the profession is discussed in a national context, Bodorff’s and Gibson’s in an international context focusing on their work within the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA). I would like to address some issues related to professional strategies in the post-war society, and my aim is to show how Löfquist, Bodorff and Gibson through formal as well as informal situations were able to interact with colleagues and perform professional exchanges in national and international contexts.

The handful of Swedish women who were working professionally as landscape architects during the first half of the twentieth century had some distinct characteristics in common. They were mostly trained abroad, which gave them contacts with landscape architects, architects and other professionals in various countries, but also left them without natural national platforms for contacts with former teachers and colleagues after returning home.
Hence, they had to build networks on their own, networks that could give them commissions and reputation. Contributing to professional journals and advertising in periodicals, newspapers and telephone directories became overarching aims for most women, and an important part of their professionalization processes. These materials and media could, along with associations and exhibitions, act as informal networks, connecting landscape architects with each other, and with architects and commissioners. Some of these networks operated in a national or Scandinavian context, while others, such as exhibitions and associations, brought opportunities to interact with international colleagues, schools and other people of interest when building a career.

**Methodological Considerations and Theoretical Approaches**

Landscape architecture is an ephemeral art form, and as most women landscape architects from the chosen period are rather unknown today, many of their works have already disappeared or been changed, because they as authors have not belonged to canon. This means that we to a higher degree have to rely on archival sources. But an obvious difference between male and female professionals within the field of landscape architecture is for the latter a lack of original sources, such as drawings, letters and other documents of official character from their own offices, as such collections are very rare. Thus, conducting research on women landscape architects involves being open to unconventional and differing methods to be able to trace their activities, commissions and work. Hence, an initial problem with researching women landscape architects was
to identify as many different types of sources as possible, and here collections from male architects and landscape architects have been important, as they generally are better preserved.

Since less attention has been paid to professional women than to their male colleagues, their networks have also been less in focus. However, as professional exchange indicates some sort of interrelationship or interchange between two parties or groups of parties that share a mutual idea of conditions and aims, associations and collaborations come in as suitable examples in examining professionalization processes. Collaborations between architects, landscape architects, designers, interior decorators and other professionals are common, or even necessary ways of working. ArkDes’ collections contain several well-known examples of collaborative creativity, such as Gunnar Asplund’s and Sigurd Lewerentz’s on the Woodland Cemetery. However, in architectural history overviews or in monographs on leading architects this way of working is seldom highlighted, perhaps because of a wish to put forward the essence and the authorship of the individual artist.

Trying to detect collaborations between male architects and female landscape architects turned out to be a fruitful way forward for the research. By using papers, documents, minutes, journals etc. from different archives, associations and people, it has been possible to combine information and to reconstruct professional exchanges and interrelations, as compensation for the women’s non-existent personal archives, and as a way of broadening the available sources. Through digitization even more
unpublished documents in various archives have become searchable and accessible. My theoretical approach has been a combination of gender studies and profession studies, as questions related to becoming a landscape architect and entering the profession have been important themes for my research.

**Collaborative Creativity: Helfrid Löfquist and Cyrillus Johansson**

The long and close collaboration between Helfrid Löfquist and the architect Cyrillus Johansson (1884–1959) forms a fruitful example of joint working processes. Löfquist was a highly respected landscape architect, but she left no personal or professional archive, which makes it difficult to come up with a more detailed presentation of her career and how she managed her office. On the other hand she was a diligent writer, publishing several articles and essays on specific commissions and on general ideas on landscape architecture. Her writings led me to Johansson’s archive at ArkDes which turned out to be an unusually rich source of information, especially as regards drawings, plans and sketches. The only original drawings from her hand that exist to date are kept in his archive. Johansson and Löfquist apparently used the drawing process as an act of communication. Some drawings are full of messages, explanations and questions. The architect expects feedback on planned details. The landscape architect makes changes related to his suggestions and at different stages of the design process. His notes show that he had difficulties in making certain choices and wanted feedback. While he made sketches with detailed instructions, she turned these into drawings, including plants lists and
working instructions that could be used both for showing the project’s progression to the commissioners, and by gardeners during the construction phases. And so they went on, working on the same drawings to indicate changes, referring to other drawings and sending messages to each other.

One of Löfquist and Johansson’s major collaborative projects was a building complex in Stockholm for the Swedish Armed Forces, usually called ‘Tre vapen’ or the Three Arms of the Fighting Services (the Army, the Navy and the Air Force), also including a building for the Military Record Office planned and mainly built during World War II. The Air Force’s administration buildings also include a memorial hall for fallen air force pilots. This project gives us the possibility to follow the process from the first known sketches to the finished commission, and in detail analyze the development between Johansson’s first sketches from the beginning of the 1940s to the inauguration of the garden some years later.¹

Johansson’s first proposal for the garden is very dramatic in its colouring and expression (Figure 1). We can see indications of running water and different types of trees, as well as indications of decorative elements such as a statue and a bench. Johansson’s many following sketches show proposals for the middle part of the garden, a section that obviously caused some problems in finding the final solution. The sketches are rather tentative in character and more based upon finding a form than coming up with any plant suggestions. Johansson is known to be interested

in gardens and gardening, but he was probably in need of an expert when it came to choosing plants. Löfquist’s detailed drawing based on the initial sketches contains information about the composition as a whole, as well as details about the individual plants, trees, shrubberies and flowers to be planted in the garden. The majority of the plant names are in Latin, which is the professional way of working. Some elements in the final drawing are very close to Johansson’s first sketches, like the pond with its characteristic shape and running water. Other elements, such as stepping stones, might easily be associated with the architect’s interest in Asian garden culture, an interest that was manifested even more clearly in his own garden in the outskirts of Stockholm. Yet other parts, such as the water stair, echo seventeenth century garden motifs, as found in Nicodemus Tessin the Younger’s drawings for the garden at Drottningholm Palace (Figure 2).

All through the drawings we get an impression of the landscape architect’s skills in transforming Johansson’s lively sketch into a detailed drawing to be used for planting the garden. Besides what the drawings and some written instructions tell us, we can only guess at how they communicated. Drawings were also made to be used by a gardener, and to be able to order the correct plants it was necessary to have the Latin names. However, it is quite clear that the architect and the landscape architect profited from the collaboration, particularly as it went on for years. Johansson’s office was big, well established and well equipped, certainly better equipped than hers, which was small and had a limited staff. She had some skills that were lacking in his office: knowledge of plants, a good hand with drawings, and an ability to turn sketches, ideas
and messages into plans that could be used for building and planting. From time to time their collaboration was obviously so intense and close that it is almost difficult to follow the comments on the drawing, and to say who did what and in what order. Their collaboration paved the way for a creativity that made their works and projects into something more than they could achieve working on their own: a collaborative creativity.

**Ulla Bodorff, Sylvia Gibson and the International Federation of Landscape Architects**

For the second example, we leave aside the intricate design processes and instead focus on collaborations within an organization: The International Federation of Landscape Architects. IFLA is today a global professional association with an agenda to promote landscape architecture as a field with high impact on the environment and on urban planning. Although some research on IFLA has been carried out much is yet unknown, especially concerning members from countries in the periphery, like Sweden and Denmark. As Dorothée Imbert has shown, professional organizations in a European perspective had political implications during the years before and after World War II, especially concerning the relations with their German colleagues.² This also goes for IFLA. To date, research has mainly been concentrated on the organization as such, not on the individual members in relation to their local contexts.

IFLA was founded during a meeting in Oxford, England in 1948, in conjunction with the international exhibition *Landscapes of Work and Leisure* held in London, in which several Swedish landscape architects participated. The participants formed the first body of the association, soon followed by a board and national delegates. National professional organizations selected their own candidates and members of the board voted on new nations becoming members. During the first years after its foundation there were members from approximately ten countries.

The primary goal of IFLA was to bring forward landscape architecture as a profession that could come up with important solutions in rapidly changing societies after the war, involving reconstruction works, industrialization and nature conservation. Other issues included promoting professional exchange, better training, and general recognition of the profession. These aims formed a strong relationship to the overall societal orientation at the time, such as welfare politics. Ulla Bodorff became a member of the IFLA board in 1949 and Sylvia Gibson joined as the Swedish landscape architects’ representative a couple of years later. By then both of them had plenty of experience of being abroad and in contact with colleagues in other countries (Figure 3). They were both trained in Britain, and Gibson had also lived abroad for periods in her youth. Bodorff and Gibson played a crucial role with a high level of engagement, and a serious commitment to carry through their aims. They acted in the name of IFLA, but they also became messengers presenting decisions

3. Ibid., 16–17.
4. Bodorff received a Diploma in Landscape Architecture from the University of Reading in 1935. Gibson had a General Horticultural Certificate from Swanley Horticultural College for Women awarded in 1939.
and results of IFLA to their Swedish and Scandinavian colleagues, and vice versa, bringing suggestions from the Swedish association to the international network.\textsuperscript{5}

My main source of information in this context is IFLA’s official minutes, which I have not been able to trace in Swedish archives, although several Swedes held central positions within the association. Finding them in a Belgian archive gave new input to my research. Through the minutes I have been able to search for statements giving evidence or indications of how Bodorff and Gibson worked within IFLA, how they presented their ideas and what strategies they had, and even how their suggestions and ideas were carried through to decisions by the board.

Bodorff’s assignments for IFLA included responsibilities for the financial side, finding funding for editing a journal and books, organizing image collections, as well as touring exhibitions of landscape architecture which also included interactions with national and international participating colleagues. This gives quite a different picture of her than the way she has been presented in a Swedish context, from obituaries to monographs. The Swedish presentations of her have several features in common, such as underlining her personal approach, her way of dressing or wearing her hat together with a cigarette, and her ability to arrange nice dinners. Although obituaries and monographs mention Bodorff’s involvement in IFLA, the importance is somehow reduced compared to what I have indicated here. A reason might be that her career was mainly viewed in a national perspective, presenting a

\textsuperscript{5} Gibson (and others) reported regularly on IFLA’s work, conferences and publications in the Scandinavian journals \textit{Havekunst} and \textit{Landskab}.
landscape architect closely involved with the formation of the Swedish welfare state.\textsuperscript{6} Going to the minutes of IFLA thus gives a somewhat different picture of the professional landscape architect and her work. Reading the minutes, one gets a clear impression of how self-confidently she acted, and that her colleagues believed in her and her work and had great confidence in her ways of finding solutions to problems and tasks.

The same goes for Gibson. Combining minutes from IFLA’s meetings, summaries of IFLA’s activities published in the Swiss journal \textit{Anthos} with Gibson’s publications and unpublished letters, shows that her commitment in IFLA consisted of participation in the training and regulations committees, assignment as auditor etc.\textsuperscript{7} Her different and sometimes vast assignments gave her a central position and the possibility to interact with colleagues in a number of countries. As the national representative of Sweden she had a central role when it came to discussions on training for landscape architects, but also to reflect upon how to give lectures for future landscape architects. This was of special importance from a Swedish perspective, as the landscape architecture training did not become academic until the 1960s, long after many other countries.

From the foundation of IFLA in 1948 until around 1970, almost every year Gibson participated in conferences, meetings, lecture tours and seminars in Scandinavia, Europe, the US, Israel and Japan. Many of these events were documented in essays, official minutes and IFLA


publications, such as *Space for Living. Landscape Architecture and the Allied Arts and Professions* (1962), *Shaping Tomorrow’s Landscape. The Landscape Architect’s Role in Conservation* (1964), and *Landscape and Human Life. The Impact of Landscape Architecture Upon Human Activities* (1966).  

We see here how the landscape architects aimed at interacting with other professions and academics, as well as showing that landscape architecture was an art that would benefit from networking with philosophy, art, music etc. The topics of the books go hand in hand with Gibson’s topic of her lecture tour in England in 1968: “Landscape for the Changing Urban Areas of Sweden,” published in *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architecture* in 1969, which in turn matches perfectly with her own practice during the 1960s. During this decade, her own office was involved in around 50 building projects mainly for new housing areas in a rapidly changing Sweden, a period recognized as the late period in the construction of the Swedish welfare state and the so-called Million Program. Her lecture tour in England gave her excellent opportunities to interact with British colleagues with similar tasks, and as her own notes show, she had informal meetings and dinners with colleagues almost every evening during the tour. Here we see how the formal network of IFLA met informal networks of colleagues at the schools where Gibson lectured, thus creating interactions between participating colleagues and societies.

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Bodorff’s and Gibson’s involvement with IFLA resulted in informal contacts with other leading landscape architects, such as Geoffrey Jellicoe, Sylvia Crowe and Brenda Colvin in England, René Pechère in Belgium, and Pietro Porcinai in Italy, as well as with colleagues in the US. For Bodorff’s and Gibson’s Swedish and Scandinavian colleagues these professional exchanges might to some extent have been invisible. However, the minutes of IFLA show that they were recognized as highly competent and that they were involved in discussions concerning training, professionalization, publications etc. As the association originally consisted of a small group of professionals they obviously came to know each other well, and here we see a wide range of interactions, such as exchanges of internships, discussions about book productions with publishers, and distributions of photographs for professional journals. IFLA’s book production and conference material also show that interactions between professionals widened the networks even more. The touring exhibitions and photo collections (Figure 4) laid the foundation for interactions between countries, municipalities and authorities as well as the public, and thus served as means of informing about landscape architecture as a profession—and this was, in the period immediately after the World War II, one of the most important goals for IFLA. The landscape architects of the member countries aimed through IFLA to have a central role in restoring and rebuilding town areas across Europe damaged by the war, and to have a say in new city planning.
Some Conclusions

Taking collaborations into consideration not only enriches our understanding of different authorships. Looking for collaborations is sometimes the only way to find out more about some women professionals’ contributions to building the Swedish welfare state or the public landscapes and workplaces. The examples used in this text are not cohesive, and they differ concerning available sources, material types and ways of working. However, they show us that studying collaborations in wider perspectives affords us possibilities to understand how projects came into being, how different types of skills could be used in creative processes, and how collaborations open the door for finding sources that otherwise would stay unused, or misunderstood because of a lack of context. The close collaboration between Löfquist and Johansson turned out to be a good choice for studying ways of working, material aspects, what their relationship was like, in what ways the collaboration could bring forward projects, and to what extent it would benefit Löfquist’s professional position. The conclusions are mainly based on the drawings and the internal messages written directly on them, and not on other types of written sources such as letters. Thus, the results are also consequences of how I as a researcher have interpreted the sources.

Membership of an international association could operate in different directions and on several levels. For Bodorff and Gibson their assignments for IFLA laid the foundation for connections and further exchange almost worldwide, materialized in the form of minutes telling us how they were engaged in questions related to professionalization.
processes, and also how they promoted better training, touring exhibitions, photo collections, books and journals. Thus, they were able to contribute to the achievement of professional exchange. On the other hand, it is almost as if their careers were divided into two, a national and an international, and that these hardly met, with the exception of such events as presentations to the press of exhibitions on Swedish landscape architecture going abroad, or international guests visiting conferences arranged by Swedish landscape architects. It is my impression that IFLA was more open minded towards professional women than the Swedish professional society in general in the late 1940s. Bodorff and Gibson, through their networks, had a close relationship to the overall societal orientation at the time, especially welfare politics. They were also deeply involved in designing private and public landscapes across Sweden for which the international connections could serve as sources of inspiration. Bodorff’s and Gibson’s training in England gave them other qualifications than their male Swedish colleagues had, but not necessarily other ways of designing landscapes and gardens. However, their long-standing commitments for IFLA gave them other experiences in bringing forward and promoting landscape architecture and in discussing training, professionalization, and the relationship between keeping, reconstructing and designing anew. The research method indicates that digging deeper into the archives and using unconventional search methods forms the basis for a variety of ways of interpreting sources and the professional works of women landscape architects.
Figure 1. First sketch for the courtyard of the memorial hall for fallen Air Force pilots by Cyrillus Johansson from around 1940.
Figure 2. The courtyard of the memorial hall for fallen Air Force pilots.
Figure 3. Ulla Bodorff presents her landscape planning for Fröslunda in Eskilstuna for British landscape architect Frank Clark from the University of Reading where she was trained.
Figure 4. Sylvia Gibson in front of a travelling exhibition of Swedish landscape architecture made for IFLA’s international conference and world’s fair exhibition in Madrid in 1950.
BEYOND CLASSICAL ALLUSIONS: STOCKHOLM MASS HOUSING EXPERIMENTS BEFORE 1930

Chiara Monterumisi

The 1930 Stockholm exhibition was promoted as a breaking point in Swedish architecture, especially for its proposals for novel housing production and design. Starting from that moment, Swedish building initiatives progressively gained worldwide acclaim on the account of mass production of household goods and effective planning and housing. Suggesting that architectural experimentation with housing started before this event inevitably challenges the almost mythical allure of the exhibition. This is not to underestimate all the energetic input of functional principles stretching from their (belated) arrival northwards till their later absorption in that humanized phase labelled the New Empiricism of the 1940s–1950s.\(^1\) Indisputably, functional ideas played a long-lasting role in Swedish housing construction, implementing considerable systematization of industrial construction. This influence seemed to persist until the 1980s when all these operations promoted in the previous decades were reconsidered as quite obvious failures.\(^2\)

The multiple interventions by Swedish architects, planners and politicians in tackling the housing question from the Stockholm exhibition onwards are commonly thought to have been, for the first time, no longer reserved for a privileged social elite, but available to the general population. However, such a view is only partly true because already before 1930

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some municipalities and building associations as well as certain newly established housing cooperatives, brought about transformations in planning provisions and erected housing blocks on an improved design for low-income groups: workers, single women and the elderly.\(^3\) Starting from such premises, the goal of this paper is to legitimize the inclusion of these “early rational efforts”\(^4\) expressing “proto-modern qualities”\(^5\) within the portrayal of a nation generally considered as inspiring for the rest of the world, especially for its contribution to housing produced in the ensuing decades.

However, the housing achievements of the 1920s were clear manifestations of the post-World War I bond between the welfare state and the building sector. It is no exaggeration to consider the interwar years as a sort of “proto-welfare state”\(^6\) which went on to underpin the concept of the so-called ‘People’s Home’ (Folkhemmet). As of the 1920s, housing started to become a public utility requiring the governments of many European countries, including Sweden (Figure 2), to promote wide-ranging programmes, though the extent to which they actually intervened varied from country to country. Substantial transformations in planning and experimentations with different morphological architectural models for housing the masses were called for. For instance, the Swedish delegation reported to the Inter-Allied Housing and Town Planning Congress held in London in 1920 that Stockholm was attempting to combat

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3. For example: the SKB — *Stockholms Kooperativa Bostadsförening* (Stockholm Cooperative Housing Association) established in 1916, followed in 1923 by the HSB — *Hyresgästernas sparkasse-och byggnadsförening* (National Association of Tenants’ Savings and Building Societies).
the ‘evil’ of a speculative tenement system along two main lines: to encourage the building of single family houses in suburban settlements and to support a reformed version of tenement housing upon co-operative principles in the outskirts of the city. Such a standpoint of inclusion points to modernity as a phenomenon of pluralities and with a larger acceptance of necessary non-synchronicities, where the contribution of the 1920s comes across as a crucial one in the overall development. The heterogeneity of expressions and approaches applies also to housing, one of the greatest concerns of modernization.

The contribution of some European countries and cities is well documented and copious by number of buildings and provisions, for example Frankfurt, Berlin and Amsterdam, whereas the understanding of Nordic realities, particularly instances before the 1930s, was and still is limited. Nevertheless, Aldo Rossi in 1961 included the experience of Stockholm in a short list of meaningful modern examples, where he coupled cities as follows: Frankfurt and Vienna, Stockholm and Zurich, Amsterdam and Stuttgart. His analysis does not offer any specific clue as to which projects he was referring to, making a possible scenario far from evident. It seems plausible, though, that Rossi was alluding to housing projects in Stockholm as being more in continuity with the existing urban pattern than those demonstrating a sharp contrast, like the Neubühl in Zurich, the Frankfurt housing estates of Ernst May and the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. One might say, then,

that despite the poor documentation abroad of the 1920s districts in the form of large courtyard blocks in Stockholm, they could have already attracted a certain attention.

Since the 1980s the term ‘Nordic Classicism’ has generally been preferred to the previously established ‘Swedish Grace,’\(^\text{10}\) thanks to the namesake travelling exhibition which focused on widening global knowledge of a multifaceted and mainly architectural phenomenon spanning the first three decades of the twentieth century. *Nordisk klassicism 1910–1930/Nordic Classicism 1910–1930* provided for the very first time a rich illustration of different projects and buildings—ranging from “cemeteries to cheerful unpretentious working-class homes”\(^\text{11}\) —most of which were practically unknown to the world at large.

In the last few decades, revisions of modern narratives by local scholars have cast aside many preconceptions about the achievements of the 1920s. Skimming through the pages of the functionalist manifesto *Acceptera* (1931), authored by the group responsible for the 1930 Stockholm exhibition, the strictures against the 1920s can be summarized under three main headings: employment of classical and traditional vocabulary in façades, arrangement in the form of large courtyard blocks, and insufficient typological experimentation.

Just over ten years after the *Nordic Classicism* exhibition, the travelling exhibition *Sweden 20\(^{\text{th}}\)-Century Architecture* (1998) spread the word still further about the architectural developments, particularly thanks to the seminal catalogue published in several languages. The combined exhibition

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Although all of these efforts have added a new worldwide understanding of that almost neglected chapter in modern housing, no-one outside Sweden has presented a systematic architectural investigation firmly based on archival material and primary sources so as to produce a first basis suitable for typo-morphological comparative analysis.

One partial exception was the exhibition *Housing. Now. Then. 99 Years of the Housing Question* (2016). Almost one hundred years on from the event that Gregor Paulsson described as a first expression of “social emphasis”\(^\text{12}\) in the Swedish context, namely the *Hemutställningen* (The Home Exhibition) of 1917, this new exhibition provided further revisions of the history of the housing question in Sweden. It aimed at encompassing research and practice as well as novel archival documents from ArkDes’ collections, but showed certain difficulties in widening the perspective on the recurring need for housing across the last century. These accounts have contributed to a revision of the development of modern architecture in Sweden.

The purpose here is to question the arguments promoted by the eminent figures organizing the Stockholm exhibition, who—together with certain other fellow architects—tended to overshadow the achievements of the 1920s. Such a viewpoint smacked of a propaganda-like approach, but once the ardour of new flag-waving

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began to wane, their criticisms likewise lost their sting. For example, Paulsson himself recognized how the 1930 Stockholm exhibition “was the fruit of the optimistic 1920s,” hence “part of the construction work of the 1920s through international collaboration.” And indeed, for all their apparently strong language, the actual experience of many architects was considerably more varied: they experimented with multiple architectural idioms, contents and programmes—including Swedish Grace—pointing one way or another to “an evolution rather than a revolution” and showing their capacity for critically recasting their approach to society’s changing requirements.

Of the many case-studies examined in my research project, the focus here is on two housing estates (Figure 4 and 5) built by the HSB and SKB cooperatives on the southern island of Södermalm in Stockholm: on the one hand, a sequence of interconnected courtyard blocks, namely Blecktornsområdet (1918–1930) by Sven Erik Lundqvist (the Draget block, 1922–1923), Gustaf Pettersson and Edvin Engström’s two Ryssjan blocks (1925–1929) and on the other hand, the Helgalunden district (1911–1926) with a particular regard to the large courtyard block of Metern (1926–1927) designed by Sven Wallander. Typological assemblages (Figure 8 and 9) accompanied by quantitative parameters and archival images are instrumental in supporting the convincing qualities of those housing districts. In my analysis, dwelling blocks and external areas are encompassed in CAD drawings of the district for the first time, a great advantage given that very few archival items present this data in one and the same drawing.

At first, the Acceptera authors complained how modern buildings, department stores and housing complexes alike were still governed by “out-of-date social values” which “don the garb of earlier cultures that will never suit them.”\textsuperscript{15} Although the clever working man opposes these, he builds what he opposes. “The probable explanation is that he seeks to gain prosperity but for natural reasons is incapable of immediately determining what form it is to take, partly from lack of alternatives, partly because it seems superior to adopt the form in which prosperity once was clad.”\textsuperscript{16} They did not reference a specific project, but they included a photo of the main entrance of one housing block, Vågskivan 37, designed by Wallander in 1927 (Figure 1, left). As a bold-face aphoristic caption, they wondered if this kind of building resembled a ducal palace or an haute-bourgeois dwelling rather than one suitable for ordinary people.

In fact, Swedish architects did not go in for dressing up dwellings all alike in classical motifs based on the mere intellectual snobbery of providing houses which would ape the buildings of the ruling class, but took a critical, distancing attitude to historical forms (Figures 3, 4 and 5). Anonymous buildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and traditional architecture were the sources of reference; these belonged one way or another to the daily mind-set of the new inhabitants. It was neither a matter of slavishly transferring some decorative elements—e.g. tympanum, giant pilaster strips, freestanding balustrades, sophisticated portals and dormers, cornices, nor traditional forms on the pastel colour plaster façade layout featuring repetition of basic (standardized for the first time) windows, but of employing these discriminatively with a high

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 153.
degree of abstraction. These instances of housing were to be an expression of the social status of wage-earners and the nouveau riche, and hence the façades would upgrade the social status of the inhabitants and their access to the wider community. Despite the employment of classical elements these new parts of the city of which façades are treated as a whole unit or a “neutral backdrop”\(^\text{17}\) preserved their own character, but actively (still) belong to the cityscape.

The second stricture regarded the employment of the ‘reformed perimeter block’ or ‘large courtyard block.’ This had a quite tepid ring, as if the authors were prepared to waive classical allusions for a while.

Developments in recent decades have revealed a clear progression towards a totally new type of town plan. The interiors of blocks have been cleared of overshadowing protrusions. T-shaped buildings have vanished and instead of a patchwork of small yards and protruding wings, there are now one or two large communal courtyards per block, often with gardens. Certainly, there has been long hesitation about taking this tendency to its conclusion and abandoning the closed block.\(^\text{18}\)

As further evidence one might take an aerial photo embedded in the text, in the caption to which they suggested that all parts of Stockholm which look like this should be demolished. In fact, the photo illustrates not a 1920s housing complex erected on the fringe of the city, but dense nineteenth century inner-city perimeter urban blocks. This proves how the enemy to combat was not built in the previous years, but in the last century.


\(^\text{18}\) Creagh, “acceptera,” 191.
On the contrary, the other image (Figure 1, centre photo) seems to take an almost diametric viewpoint. The authors deliberately concealed the wealth of variety in large courtyard blocks’ arrangement and the absence of protrusions in favour of air, light and greenery achieved in some 1920s housing districts. Indeed, they spitefully chose one which is not particularly successful in reforming the perimeter block because it suffers from the fault of cramping the communal block: the first two of the series of U-shaped blocks (1923–1929) along Norr Mälarstrand designed by Cyrillus Johansson and other architects. The caption dismissed these arrangements as “poor quality floor plans resulting from this contrived street backdrop.”\(^{19}\) The authors summarized the evolution from dense nineteenth-century urban typologies to the new open-city planning system via three axonometric drawings (Figure 6). This shows that their concern was in line with the European debate as promoted by the well-known motto ‘vom Block zur Zeile’ (from block to bar), first claimed by Walter Gropius (1929) and then by Ernst May (1930).\(^{20}\) In all such thinking, the model of the reformed urban block was interpreted as an intermediate step, where much more emphasis was placed on the final step embodied in the bar configuration. In a different perspective, the metamorphosis from the nineteenth century congested urban block to the intermediate step could be seen as the “first deep modification of the block as a formal, abstract unit but also of the block as a place for the location of activities with a clear and hierarchical articulation between interior and exterior space.”\(^{21}\)

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19. Ibid., 190.
In the 1970s, the first extensive study appeared on the development of this reformed typological arrangement responding to the key issue of any land policy, that is density. This is the PhD thesis by Björn Linn\textsuperscript{22} who dissects examples from the Nordic countries, Holland, Germany and Austria, where what he calls the large courtyard block (Storgårdskvarteret) was largely experimented. Some of these new residential designs on the urban fringe of Stockholm convincingly improved the interior spaces from a formal, social and hygienic point of view. The commitment and participatory philosophy of some key protagonists tended towards targets of this kind. Thus, the leading urban planner Per Olof Hallman—who designed the first proposals for Blecktornsområdet and Helgalunden—advocated a high degree of complexity in the design of the perimeter urban block, seen as a multiple, open-ended, even distorted dwelling exploiting the hilly site and encircling public spaces interrupted by street patterns differing in terms of shape and width. Taking his side, the director of Stockholm City Building Council Sigurd Westholm\textsuperscript{23} energetically—though amidst difficulty and compromise—conducted negotiations with the urban developers. In his view, new housing estates ought to meet the following conditions: the plot should be no more than half occupied by buildings; the rest being collective areas for the inhabitants without the dividing walls that stemmed from speculative construction of tenement buildings.

Further input in the planning debate came for example from the first Swedish female landscape architect Ester Claesson, who argued for the “pressing metropolitan demand for

\textsuperscript{22} Björn Linn, Storgårdskvarteret. Ett bebyggelsemönsters bakgrund och karaktär (PhD Diss., Tekniska högskolan, 1974; Stockholm: Statens institut för byggnadsforskning, 1974).

\textsuperscript{23} Stockholmsbyggen 1916–1940, eds. Lennart Holm and Sigurd Westholm (Stockholm: Stockholms byggnadsförening, 1993).
planted communal areas“. The various functions of the green areas and the provision of amenities were her key concerns, as expressed in some housing complexes’ green collective spaces.

Moving to the third and last criticism, the 1920s housing layouts were viewed as not having a sufficient differentiation of plan. Other negative comments in the text focused rather on housing conditions in the nineteenth century high-density block, than those designed in the 1920s. However, the authors of Acceptera do cite two dwelling units from the second decade of the twentieth century extrapolated from the general large courtyard block concept. The disapproval of a continuing lack of differentiation between bedroom and living room may be endorsed, since this was only achieved from the 1930s onwards, but such criticisms tended to overshadow any real improvements in dwelling layout during the years before the Stockholm exhibition.

Despite the limited size of most apartments—single-side one-room apartments—the dwelling cells met high standards as a consequence of a carefully designed layout tackling the demands of space, sanitation, hygiene, technical services and supplementary facilities (Figure 9). In 1921, the investigation Praktiska och hygieniska bostäder (Practical and hygienic housing) promoted by the Building Commission proposed some first remedies for the minimal dimensions of the flats. For example, the housing cooperatives extensively employed the kitchen layout by Osvald Almqvist whose studies were considered pioneering in the following years. From that time, the use of standardized doors, windows, carpentry and furniture started to appear on a large scale.

25. Creagh, “acceptera,” 199. The three main purposes are: housework/cooking; gathering the family around the dinner table/spending time together; resting at night.
What was also remarkable about the 1920s dwelling layout was the cooperatives’ effort to facilitate affordable standardized accommodation. This was possible by means of the standardized layout of many dwelling units (e.g. single-side one-room and double-side two/three-room) entailing very few modifications to suit the form of the district, particularly in the building corners. To a certain extent this recalls the pioneering direction drawn up by Paulsson in *Den nya arkitekturer* “The new architecture” in 1916. The Swedish critic drew considerable inspiration from other seminal accounts like *Die Architektur der Grosstadt* “The architecture of the metropolis” from 1913 by Karl Scheffler which discusses the current situation of the highly congested tenement block by private developers with cramped paved yards and its relation with the city. Note, too, that Paulsson is advocating a real improvement to be achieved only through proper standardization into types of dwellings within the so-called large perimeter block. Such a design concept in practice corresponds to pooling the many individuals within a housing complex.27

The present examination has shown how the 1920s housing arrangements have to be included in the Swedish contributions which in subsequent years figured so prominently in the multifaceted housing experiments in European cities. To end where I began, with Aldo Rossi’s account of Stockholm housing from the 1920s: far from cultivating any ideological perspective, he acknowledges how in all the inter-war examples, the Stockholm case included, such “experiences concretely envisaged coherent and harmonious configurations in a brand-new way, though still complementary to the development of the city.”28

Figure 1. Collage of three features of 1920s housing disapproved by the authors of Acceptera.
Figure 2.
Map of central Stockholm in 1930 highlighting the large courtyard blocks analyzed in the text.

1. Rödabergsområdet 1907–1929
2. Upplandsgatan 1914–1924
3. Blåkråkan 1928–1929
4. Morkullan 1927–1928
5. Ljuset 1929
6. Blecktornsområdet 1918–1930
7. Helgalunden 1911–1932
8. Diligensen Postiljonen Postsäcken 1927–1919

The Norr Mälarstrand estate mentioned in *Acceptera* corresponds to [A]
Figure 3. (Above) A selection of drawings of the housing district Rödabergsområdet: Cyrillus Johansson (Kv. Urnan 1929 and Kv. Verdandi 1922), Paul Hedquist (Kv. Humleboet 1926); Axel Bergman (Kv. Kakelugnen 1924).

Figure 4. (Opposite Above) Metern: main entrance from the arched portal and hilly collective area.

Figure 5. (Opposite Below) Blecktornsområdet: the green collective yard in-between the Ryssjan sequence of housing blocks and the green terraces equipped with facilities in Draget.
Figure 6. The process of metamorphosis illustrated by Gropius, May and the Swedish authors of Acceptera.
Figure 7. Typological assemblage of Metern.

Figure 8. Typological assemblage of Blecktornsområdet.

Figure 9. Two dwelling units employed in Metern and the block Ryssjan of Blecktornsområdet.
UNPACKING SLUSSEN: UNDERSTANDING CENTRAL URBAN INTERSTICES THROUGH ARCHIVE BASED RESEARCH

Álvaro Clua

Cities are shaped by buildings and infrastructures, but also by the progressive accumulation of unbuilt ideas made of paper. All of them shape a deep palimpsest—to use the expression of André Corboz—which needs to be carefully “scraped off” each time the city faces new requirements.¹ This continuous process of erasing and rewriting is especially evident in central urban interstices, strategic places where history seemingly becomes anchored and overlapped, registering the memories and subtle changes of a society.

Slussen in Stockholm is clearly one of those exemplary fragments and might be considered as a complete record of the key episodes that shaped the urban evolution of the city. This place echoes its origin as an important gate connecting the medieval city with its hinterland; as a place for exchange and maritime trade through three different locks named after Queen Kristina (1642), Christopher Polhem (1755), and Nils Ericson (1852); or as a serene garden around the sculpture of King Karl XIV Johan. Since the beginning the area around Slussen was occupied by buildings, infrastructures and uses, producing a thick layering preceding the new urban plan inaugurated in 1935.

¹. André Corboz, “El territorio como palimpsesto,” in Lo Urbano En 20 Autores Contemporáneos, ed. Ángel Martín Ramos (Barcelona: Edicions UPC, 2004), 34. Author’s translation.
That project was conceived by engineer and architect Tage William-Olsson and emerged as the last step of a fast sequence of proposals aimed at providing a clear urban form to that site.²

Despite the broad bibliography on Slussen’s history, little attention has been paid to the operative value of archive-based research to inform design decisions on such a complex site. The following aims to illustrate the value of such an approach by presenting new interpretations on the unbuilt proposals drawn between 1890 and 1931. These documents are now kept in several Stockholm archives³ and only some of them have been published in monographs on the history of Slussen.⁴

The hypothesis of this paper is that a cross-comparison of these proposals might shed light on the design strategies for the future Slussen. More generally, it could help to support the value of an archive-based research approach to contemporary urban interstices.

**Twenty-Eight Variations**

Twenty-eight proposals were produced for Slussen in the first third of the twentieth century (Figure 1). Each of them was designed by a different architect or engineer, and resulted from different commitments and aims, motivated

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². This paper synthetizes some of the arguments in Álvaro Clua, “The Interstitial Condition in Urban Articulation Projects. From the Slussen to the Stockholm of Tage William-Olsson in Four Stages” (PhD diss., Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya/Laboratori d’Urbanisme de Barcelona, 2017).
³. ArkDes; Stockholm City Archives; The Archives of Stockholm City Museum, The Traffic and Property Management Department.
by diverse public or private initiatives and focused on specific requirements. Most of them were developed independently of each other and, although some were finally approved by the authorities, none of them were either specifically promoted or became hidden in the exuberant archives of the city.

For this paper, a chronological sequence of the proposals has been produced keeping the same scale, orientation, frame and graphic style. Although some have been redrawn in order to follow the same graphic criteria, one of the initial findings is that this work had already been partially done and preserved at the Stockholm City Archives (archive of Stockholm Beauty Council). It is even plausible that Tage William-Olsson himself prepared it in 1931 in order to better support his ideas for the site. These plates not only depicted the architecture and the streets, but also the line of movement (in red) accompanied by occasional handwritten notes with the estimated cost of each proposal. This argues strongly for the idea that the plan for Slussen finally inaugurated in 1935 was not a pure tabula rasa but a project embedded within an existing substrate of ideas.

However, this comparison-based methodology assumes that some data is not relevant at this point. The analysis, for instance, does not take into account the architectural style which embodies each proposal, because it focuses on the spatial configuration. In other words, the style is here understood not as a calligraphy—essential in other kind of studies—but as a way of articulating the urban space. In this sense, it is worth noting that often the architecture style does not necessarily match the urban scheme. As will
be mentioned later, architecture and urbanism followed different tempos and, for instance, some classicist buildings were inserted into a clear functionalist urban layout and vice versa.

A general overview of the sequence might also be useful to draft some initial categories. To start with, it is worth underlining that most of the proposals were produced as a direct response to a new configuration of the maritime lock system: some of them duplicated the existing Nils Ericson lock, others moved it towards the south, whereas others simply covered it. This may distinguish a first duality in the approaches: those which were understood as a matter of hydraulic infrastructure, or those which aimed at giving a response to the whole area.

A second division could be made according to the general spatial configuration. The first proposal aimed at organizing Slussen with a viaduct or viaducts and a central building. This was the case of Knut Peterson’s (1903), the City Building Office’s (1904), Johan Gustaf Richert, Fredrik Enblom and Isak Gustaf Clason’s (1905) proposals, as well as the version by Coronel Birger Stafsing (1914), the two projects by Carl Bergsten (1913–1920) and even Karl Nordgård’s in 1923. The second group followed the first scheme presented by The City Building Department in 1902 based on building one main central ramp. This high number of proposals was encouraged, as will be discussed, by the approval of Ferdinand Boberg’s idea as a prescriptive scheme in June 1914.

5. Here we should include the proposals by Ferdinand Boberg in 1906, Per Olof Hallman in 1913 and 1918, Herman Ygberg in 1914, Ture Ryberg and Lars Israel Wahlman in 1919, and Gunnar Ekelöf in 1923.
Finally, a third group of projects understood Slussen as a large inclined platform that could solve the dramatic increase in traffic after 1927. Here we could mention the roundabout proposed by Sven Wallander (Traffic Department, 1927), a solution based on a traffic light regulated junction (The Slussen Delegation, Karl Nordgård), the vision published in the General Plan 1928 (City Planning Office) and, finally, those based on the use of the cloverleaf junction.

Likewise, the location and role of the buildings were addressed in different ways: there were isolated buildings and inhabited bridges, as well as examples of solutions that extended the pattern of the nearby urban tissues, intermingled the architecture with the road infrastructure or simply avoided any new building for the area. Regarding the old Southern City Hall, there were proposals like Boberg’s first version or Bergsten’s in 1920, which promoted its demolition. While some proposed the enlargement of the courtyard (Boberg and Bergsten 1913, Stafsing 1914, Wahlman 1919 and Karl Nordgård 1923), others opened it up in order to transform it into a public space (Hallman 1913, Ryberg 1919, William-Olsson).

However, beyond these initial categorizations, a chronological analysis of the 26 proposals might give further arguments for the ongoing decision-making process concerning Slussen. The remainder of this text aims to introduce a more thorough analysis of each proposal according to three main themes: Slussen as a monument, as a traffic machine and, finally, as an inhabited infrastructure.
Slussen as a Monument

The proposal signed by the City Building Office in 1902–1903 might be regarded as the first proposal of the twentieth century that understood Slussen as a whole urban project that combined architecture, hydraulic infrastructure, movement routes and new public spaces. The project concluded a sequence of precedents that had been mainly focused on the optimization of the hydraulic infrastructure and access control (see Oskar Nerman in 1890 or Richert and Enbolm, 1894). The new vision introduced a new urban layout based on a central viaduct linking Gamla Stan and a new set of buildings in Södermalm. The project aimed at integrating the infrastructure as part of the public space or, to put it in other words, to make the languages of infrastructure and architecture meet.

The same vision on the urbanity of the infrastructure was followed by the upcoming proposals signed by Charles Lindholm in 1904 and by Richert, Enblom and Clason in 1905. Both projects trusted in the location of a new central building which organized ramps around it. The urbanity of Slussen was meant to be achieved, like Otto Wagner’s vision for the Stadtbahn Wien, through the treatment of the infrastructure as a piece of architecture.6

The fact is that none of those visions were finally approved and, from 1906 to 1913, the city architect Boberg was commissioned to develop new images for Slussen. In his “Memorandum on the aesthetic features of the proposal,” he argued about the inherent contradiction between the reality of the place and the futuristic ideas that were envisioned for

the place: “where trains, steamboats, barges and sailboats pass near and below the streets, where the steam can be heard rumbling, where the locks open and close and the air fills with smoke and soot, this is not a place for a museum or another art institution, for example. But this is not an obstacle to give the place a stately and impressive atmosphere.” 7 His project was illustrated with a perspective drawing towards Södermalm and a bird’s-eye view, displaying a large central viaduct framed by two new buildings and porticoes. The resulting images, however, did not manage to show and provide for feasible solutions to integrate the tracks at the underground level with the live urban atmosphere at the upper one.

However, Boberg’s proposal was based on the demolition of the Södra stadshuset which was in direct confrontation with the ideology of the newly founded Society of St. Erik (1903). That institution was responsible for publicizing the history of Stockholm, ensuring the conservation of historical, landscape, artistic and cultural values, and helping to achieve a balance in the transformation and development of the city in relation to those values. Thus, in 1913, the Society prompted a new proposal designed by Bergsten and the port director Salomon Vinberg.

Bergsten’s project aimed at reconsidering the monumental axiality of Boberg’s by placing a large building with multiple facades that would meet the specific requirements of each side of the place. With this solution, Bergsten was trying to answer to the irregularities of the place by a multifaceted architecture, an attitude that made evident resonances with the new City Hall that Ragnar Östberg had been designing since 1911 on the other side of Lake Mälaren.

In the end, and despite the cultural opposition, the guidelines proposed by Boberg were finally approved by the City Council in 1914.\textsuperscript{8} After World War I, further proposals were tested along this line. This was the case of the proposals of Per Olof Hallman (developed from 1909 to 1913 but ratified in 1918), Ture Ryberg (1919) and Lars Israel Wahlman (1919). These three visions used the portico as a design tool to effectively narrow the open distance between the lock and Södermalm and provide for urbanity for this dramatic isthmus.

**Slussen as a Traffic Machine**

It is not surprising that Yngve Larsson referred to some of the aforementioned proposals as “terrible monumental projects.”\textsuperscript{9} Indeed, an important new layer was coming to the fore on the drawing boards: automobile traffic. Already in 1909 Josef Carlsson published in *Stockholms Dagblad* a proposal for facilitating both an easy transfer of boats through the lock and the continuity of automobile traffic. In a similar way, Sigurd Westholm and City Engineer Herman Ygberg worked on the feasibility of Boberg’s scheme in terms of traffic. However, the final decision to move the main maritime flux to Hammarby in 1914 certainly reduced the pressure for the traffic in the water system of Slussen and marked a turning point in the proposals. From that point on, the road and railway traffic became the main aspects of the place.


Precise charts showing the different traffic scenarios started to appear along with the upcoming proposals. Engineer Karl Nordgård, for instance, published a paper where he gave a convincing analysis of the traffic demands as a basis for his argumentation of his proposal for Slussen.10 One of the conclusions of this thorough analysis was the necessity to keep the dual historical connection between Gamla Stan and Södermalm by means of two parallel viaducts, instead of a single central one.

On the occasion of the preliminary works for the General Plan directed by Albert Lilienberg in 1928, new ideas went public. The one signed by Wallander (Gatukontoret, 1927) tried to solve, with effort, such a Gordian knot with a large roundabout on multiple levels. The tramway and metro system were allocated in the underground level. The second, signed by Nordgård as a member of the Slussen Delegation, insisted again on two lateral viaducts and transverse connections at the underground level. This proposal deeply influenced the last project by William-Olsson in 1931, as the X-shaped crossing at multiple levels proposed by Nordgård might be seen as a premonition of the cloverleaf. The proposal published in the plan of 1928 by the City Planning Office was, in turn, an attempt to combine both previous proposals by Nordgård and Wallander. All those proposals certainly pushed aside the “aesthetic features of the reconstruction of Slussen.”11 From that moment, attempts were made to insert the architecture, the uses and the public space into the intricacies of the infrastructure.

Slussen as an Inhabited Infrastructure

In 1924 William-Olsson, at the time engineer and student of architecture, published an article in *Byggmästaren* where he raised the discussion on the preservation of the Southern City Hall. As some of the previous proposals had called into question the survival of this building, William-Olsson suggested the possibility to convert it into a station for the existing north-south railway line. The proposal sparked an interest with Stockholm Beauty Council which, pressured by the shadow of Lilienberg’s 1928 plan, entrusted William-Olsson to develop new ideas for reusing the building. William-Olsson responded by designing a new project that deliberately discussed the previous proposals and tried to go beyond the renovation of the building and address the problem on another scale, i.e. implicating the city as a whole and resolving the traffic as a system. As Claes Caldenby has underlined: “This was to become one of his characteristic ways of working: converting building projects into town-planning projects (often without commission) as well as developing town-planning projects into detailed technical solutions.”13

William-Olsson’s proposal dated January 1929 (Figure 2) finally expressed a committed integration of road forms, architectural composition and the intended succession of the public space. The site was organized as a great open oblong space formed by a staggered cadence of squares and parking, with an edge architecture that defined its classic urban character and geometrically

resolved the link between the displaced ordinations of Södermalm and Gamla stan. It should be noted that in the same issue of *Byggmästaren* which featured the proposal by William-Olsson, there were also references to Götaplatsen’s exhibition complex in Gothenburg. In many aspects, the Slussen of 1929 followed a similar urban layout.

The proposal dated August 1929 was understood also as a dialogue with the urban project that William-Olsson himself was designing in Tegelbacken, on the other side of Lake Mälaren. In this new vision, the whole isthmus was structured along a spatial diagonal connecting elevator, Katarinahissen (inaugurated in 1882) and the sculpture of King Karl XIV Johan. That line divided the space into two different heights, proposing a subtle two-level crossing and confirming the alignment of Södermalm as a guideline for the new architecture and for the ramps descending to the water. The proposal was illustrated with sections, plans and an elevation, which made evident the differences between a modern layout of the urban composition but, at the same time, a confidence in Nordic Classicism to detail the new architecture.

In February 1929, William-Olsson published an article where he argued the suitability of using a cloverleaf junction to deal both with the continuity of the traffic and the topography.\(^\text{14}\) This unusual three-dimensional figure, influenced by American and German highway engineering, was going to be incorporated into the urban area. Following the logic of this sophisticated artefact, William-Olsson and engineer Gösta Lundborg drew up a new proposal in October 1929, with three large loop

roads featuring two modern and symmetric towers.\textsuperscript{15} The resulting infrastructure clearly recalled Berlin’s \textit{Weltstadtsplätze} impulse by Martin Wagner and, more specifically, Marcel Breuer’s proposal for Potsdamer Platz.\textsuperscript{16}

Beyond the discussion on the authorship of the application of the cloverleaf, the fact is that Lundborg played an important role in the design process. As a member of the Traffic Committee of 1930, he developed the final proposal with William-Olsson in 1931, a project that had many points of tangency with another of his parallel works carried out with Cyrillus Johansson for Slussen (Figue 3). Again, as some sketches by Johansson preserved at ArkDes clearly show, the application of the cloverleaf solution in the place arose not as an imposition but rather as an operative interpretation of the topography and continuity of movement.

The resulting project of Slussen impressed both the local urban culture and the international audience. Among them, it is worth mentioning the strong influence on Le Corbusier who, on visiting Stockholm in January 1933, was deeply impressed by the works in the Slussen area. Admiring of the magnitude of the transformation, he wrote in his \textit{Carnet de Voyage}: “It is a new scale introduced into the economy of the city.”\textsuperscript{17} During his trip, he met William-Olsson and began postal correspondence in which he praised Slussen with these words: “… The best souvenir [of my trip to


\textsuperscript{17}Archival material, Fondation Le Corbusier, B2 (10) 231b.
Stockholm] is from you and, more particularly, from your ‘Slussen.’” In the second letter, dated 15 January 1934, Le Corbusier wrote: “You have done in Stockholm the first great work of modern times: the crossing of the Slussen [sic]! Everything should be done at that scale. Don’t despair. Continue, propose, fight. Explain to the people of Stockholm how there are selfless technicians who are willing to offer their help to do the greatest thing that needs to be done.”

Le Corbusier also made some remarks on the project of Slussen, and more specifically on the drawings William-Olsson sent to him in 1933. On that occasion, he stressed that the new proposed buildings might be considered a “mistake.” For him, Slussen ought to be pure and exclusively a strategic traffic junction to link the main routes of his general masterplan for Stockholm. Slussen should remain free of any function beyond being a pure machine for the automobile.

The evolution from the project dated 1931 to its final construction in the hands of the building committee of Slussen ended by confirming the premonition of Le Corbusier. A comparison of the 1931 plan and the ensuing plans published in Teknisk Tidskrift (1932) and in Samfundet S:t Eriks årsbok (1932), shows how Slussen was progressively detached from any building, and the place became a powerful expression of the fascination of traffic efficiency as one of the emblems of modernity and

progress. William-Olsson finally acknowledged this with the words: “The shape of the cloverleaf design is undoubtedly conditioned by the continuity of traffic, its figure in plan as well as its ascent and descent spiral lines have a dynamic beauty derived from the laws of the movement of vehicles. This movement has such a formal force on its own that the design [of Slussen] has tried to leave it to be purely expressed as such.”20 These forms of “clear rationalism have the capacity to appeal to modern humans,” he wrote.21

However, beyond this fascination regarding the power of the machine, the fact is that the urbanity of the place was reconquered by means of a subtle and complex system of pedestrian passageways and buildings placed carefully in the intricacies of the infrastructure. The most important one, the so-called Blue Stalls, provided for shopping galleries and allowed continuous and secure itineraries until the prolongation of the metro system towards the north in 1957, and the ensuing decrease of through-movement in the galleries.

**Operative Archive Based Research**

This comparative study on the evolution of the key design strategies that informed the proposals for Slussen between 1890 and 1931 highlights some conclusions on the operative value of an archive-based analysis. To start with, it could be concluded that the unbuilt projects may influence the design decision-making process in, at least, two main ways. A first group includes those ideas that are able to inform future projects in a *proactive* way. They highlight lines, strategies

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21. Ibid., 128. Author’s translation.
or configurations that become stronger and more visible drawing after drawing. As a result, they become a powerful precedent for the upcoming decisions. This is well illustrated in the case of Slussen where some general ideas were explored and finally included in the final version of 1935: the use of the inclined plane, the prevalence of the two viaducts between Gamla stan and Södermalm, or even the vindication of new architecture and the underground level as two indispensable ingredients for the urbanity of Slussen. This argument could also be found in other minor details that were repeated proposal after proposal. That would be the case of the preservation of the Southern City Hall, or the idea of an axis of symmetry configured by the sculpture of King Karl XIV Johan. Several different proposals followed the same pattern.

On the other hand, some other ideas act as strong prejudices to the future or, in other words, they become powerful inertia forces that are able to shape future visions without being suitable strategies for the place. In other terms, these are proposals that are important for what they illustrate but, above all, for the paths they open and present for evaluation. This is the case of the approval of the central viaduct idea signed by Boberg, even though it did not meet all the requirements of the topography, itineraries of the place and Slussen’s condition as a natural isthmus. As has been argued previously, that concept became a tacit point of departure for many upcoming proposals. It was kept as a prerogative until the powerful apparition of the spatial logics of the automobile, which turned upside down the requirements for the place.
In the end, it might be argued that both groups of ideas act as a rich urban laboratory made of paper, with a strong potential for assessing contemporary projects. They configure a deep and accessible layering of knowledge which might be able to induce strong points of departure for the transformation of the place. Despite the fragility of these documents and the difference in their socio-historical context, archive-based research might be vindicated as an operative tool for addressing the future and testing the impact of projects. They should even be considered as a strategic substrate of the memory of the place and, for that reason, the analysis of these sources may help to understand any place as a ‘condensation’ rather than a ‘blank canvas.’ Conversely, when a project does not recognize the hidden traces of a place, it risks becoming a “too scraped parchment” without identity.22

In the case of central urban interstices, such as Slussen in Stockholm, archive-based research points also to the fact that they suffer from a strong perpetum mobile state, a necessary yet unstoppable process of transformation. These are places which, as noted by Martin Wagner in his vision for Potsdamer Platz, are supposed to be inexorably ephemeral. They register the subtle and dramatic changes of the city and, for that reason, architectural and urban archives should be constantly revisited and updated. They should be vindicated as powerful tools to explain, preserve and reinforce the collective memory of a place.

Figure 1. Twenty-eight projects for Slussen, 1890–1931.
Figure 2. Three proposals for Slussen by Tage William-Olsson. Clockwise from left: January 1929, August 1929, October 1929.
Figure 3. Proposal for Slussen by Tage William-Olsson and Gösta Lundborg, 1931.
RALPH ERSKINE AND ITALY: A DIALOGUE WITH THE HISTORIC TOWN

Antonello Alici

Ralph Erskine (1914–2005) has been described as a humane and site-sensitive architect.1 His engagement with the north has received great scholarly attention and general appraisal. To this condition he has widely contributed himself, emphasizing in public lectures and writings his experience of the north as well as his encounter with Swedish society and nature. Moving there from England in 1939, he experienced a positive energy. As he underlines, his interests in the community and the place, established early in his career, could mature and prosper and in the search “for a new, juster and more humane society”2 he found in Sweden an ideal land. Attentive to the vernacular, climatically responsive and distancing himself from schematic modernism, his distinguishingly personal architecture came to be express in all scales, from the overall topography of the site to the building profile. Peter Blundell Jones’s characterization of Erskine’s roofs can serve to illustrate the argument: “he [Erskine] found endless ways of celebrating its sheltering character, even dramatising the falling rain.”3

Erskine and the north is thus a well-established research topic that only recently has been met by a more scrutinizing approach. Yet, these contributions to the historiography remain with the discourse of the north. Yet, these contributions to the historiography remain with the discourse of the north. But what about Erskine and the south? My paper aims at filling some less explored chapters of his life, shifting from his investigations of the north to his experience of and approach to the south. His Italian travels and contacts are, in fact, lacking in his biographies and his commissions and competitions for Italian towns are given very little attention. Among Ralph Erskine’s Italian projects, designed mainly in the 1980s and early 1990s, I will here present the cases of three historic cities: Ancona, Firenze and Siena.

The Italian interest in the work of Erskine was established by Bruno Zevi and his circle. In June 1958 Fabrizio Cocchia published in L’Architettura. Cronache e Storia, an article focusing on Erskine—An English architect in Sweden—who “deserves a first place among European post-war architects of the younger generation.” The article presented Erskine as a representative of the postwar Swedish New Empiricism showing later “an exceptional originality.” His capacity for adapting the buildings to the city and to extreme conditions of the northern climate is evident in the projects published in the long review, from the housing in Gyttorp to house Molin in Lidingö, and from the hotel in Borgafjäll to the paper factory in Fors.

6. Ibid.
His participation at the CIAM ‘59 congress in Otterlo to present his investigations on the arctic and subarctic town offers the chance to meet Giancarlo De Carlo, from 1953 an Italian ‘youth member’ of CIAM. This started a long-lasting friendship, at the beginning inside the Team 10, between the two architects sharing a similar sensibility for the site.

In the following years, the magazine directed by Bruno Zevi shows a systematic interest in the evolution of Erskine’s work. In November 1974 when Stefano Ray, a professor at Sapienza University in Rome, provided, with the help of Gabriele Milelli, a far more complete review, including a selection of Erskine’s writings, an interview and a complete curriculum. According to Ray, “the use of low-cost materials, the attention to community problems, the ability to put imagination into industrial architecture, the breaking up of symmetrical organisms through a conscious ‘listing’ and stressing of functions” can be seen as ‘guidelines’ of Erskine’s work.

In the same year Erskine travelled to Italy through Germany. We don’t know if this was his first visit to the peninsula and we don’t have the itinerary. A few recollections stem from his young friend and collaborator Klas Tham, who was spending a year in Rome on a


scholarship at the Swedish Institute of Classical Studies to research the founding figures of the hill towns in central Italy, in the footsteps of Danish architect Jan Gehl.\textsuperscript{11}

The Italian connections were reinforced through De Carlo’s invitation to join the opening of his International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILA&UD) in the summer of 1976 in Urbino.\textsuperscript{12} Even if it is not verified that Erskine joined the first editions of ILAUD, he was following the results of the workshops and was aware of the importance of establishing a dialogue with the ‘layered town,’ woven into the place and its history, as suggested by De Carlo.

\textbf{Ancona, Rehabilitation Plan for Guasco-San Pietro, 1984–1985}

It was no doubt the interest raised by Italian magazines and the growing international resonance of his work that offered Erskine the opportunity to receive commissions in Italy. The first came from Ancona, an ancient port town on the Adriatic coast which suffered major damage in the World War II bombings of 1943–1945, an earthquake in 1972 as well as a landslide in 1982. The historic centre, with its Romanesque cathedral of San Ciriaco dominating the acropolis of Colle Guasco, was seriously dilapidated and had been almost abandoned by the population. The interest in the work of Erskine was partly linked to the relations established by Klas Tham during his year in Rome, notably with already mentioned Gabriele Milelli, a

\textsuperscript{11} Interview with Agneta and Klas Tham in Stockholm, 5 October 2019.
\textsuperscript{12} ILAUD was established by De Carlo in Urbino in 1976. It continued in some way the CIAM summer school that moved to Venice from England in 1952. De Carlo organized the final session in 1956. See Mumford, \textit{The CIAM Discourse} ..., 228.
professor of history of architecture at the University of Ancona, and an expert on the architecture of the Nordic countries. The invitation to Erskine by the mayor of Ancona in agreement with the Province of Ancona and the university was the result of a journey to Stockholm in 1980 to visit the exhibition of his works at the Swedish Museum of Architecture.\(^\text{13}\)

Two years later, the exhibition *Ralph Erskine. Architettura = Ambiente* was opened in Ancona with a public debate between Erskine and De Carlo. The catalogue features a long text by Erskine that deals with the community, its needs and participation, the necessity for a dialogue with the landscape in continuity with the previous generations, as well as the dignity of the place and the capacity of the place to give happiness.\(^\text{14}\) “If the architect is unable to answer positively to these questions, his project should be seen as a failure,” Erskine concludes.\(^\text{15}\) Finally, in January 1984, Erskine received from the municipality the commission to design the rehabilitation plan for the area of the former detention centre. With the support of Tham, who had a profound knowledge of the Italian hill towns, Erskine provided a thorough survey of the character of the ancient town and listed the damages in detail, thereby establishing a solid base for addressing the critical issues of the revitalization of the centre.\(^\text{16}\) Large plans and sections of the central town with the typical use of bright colours,

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13. Bruno Amoroso, an Italian professor of Political Economy teaching at the University of Roskilde in Denmark and a friend of Erskine also contributed to Erskine’s introduction in Italy suggesting to Ancona’s chief city architect, Giulio Petti, to visit the exhibition at the Swedish Museum of Architecture in Stockholm in 1980.
15. Ibid., 18.
full of sketches and written notes, presented the main strategy to revitalize the area. The project reintroduced a plurality of functions to ensure a long-lasting connection between the various areas of the town, while leaving the surviving monumental buildings, dating from ancient Rome to the Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassicism with a central role in the urban tissue.

The character of the hill town, 71 metres above the harbour, prompted Erskine to suggest a city elevator, a scenographic machine inspired by the nineteenth century elevator in Stockholm, Katarinahissen. The great concentration of monuments in the area—from the cathedral to the archbishop’s palace, the Senate, several palaces and churches—is proposed as being of primary value to the identity and memory of the place that the inhabitants had forgotten and abandoned. According to Erskine, this should favour a restorative process.17

The frequent visits of Erskine and Tham and the debates raised by their proposals represent a peak in the recent history of Ancona, a moment of democracy supported by open and transparent institutions. To raise an internal and democratic debate was undoubtedly Erskine’s main intention, which called for the citizens’ broad participation in the future of their city. Erskine declared that;

...our study has been a general one, therefore the proposals ought initially to be evaluated on the basis of their social and urban contents. Only when these aspirations have been made clear should the detailed technical aspects be taken into consideration.\textsuperscript{18}

His suggestions did not achieve this goal, and the local authorities were unable to focus on the most important part of the historic town; the reconstruction emphasized the external areas, so dooming the centre to become a sort of ghost town. After more that 30 years, during which other projects of high quality settled on the Erskine plan, the city of Ancona has not found the intellectual and political energies to regain possession of that core area which Erskine defined as his “pride [...] and the expression of his collective soul.”\textsuperscript{19}


In 1987, Zevi included Erskine in a group of architects invited to design the rehabilitation plan of the Fiat factory area in Novoli, at the north edge of Firenze. The factory was established in 1947–48, employing 1,000 workers for the production of precision components. The area became strategic to the development of the town already in 1962, when the General Town Plan designed by Edoardo Detti suggested a north-west passage to exit the city centre. In the 1980s a second investor, Fondiaria insurance company, was involved in a larger area, and Fiat was offered to move to a more convenient site in order to free up its old site for the new Palace of Justice. As the appointed consultant

\textsuperscript{18} Ralph Erskine, \textit{Un centro adriatico} ...

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
at the Town Planning Office, Zevi suggested that Fiat set up a design team led by the American landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. In turn, the team’s design was given to 14 architects responsible for the individual components of the project.\textsuperscript{20} Giovanni Klaus Koenig, invited to record the phases of the whole project, wrote a detailed history of it.\textsuperscript{21} Koenig remembers how in the first official presentation of the Fiat staff, Lawrence Halprin already had a clear idea of a central park, designed in natural forms, with a stream descending from the top corner where the Palace of Justice was to be located. Florentine citizens soon opposed the idea, as they were expecting a ‘giardino all’italiana’ in the style of Boboli Gardens.

The methodology of Zevi proved to be revolutionary. He organized design workshops where all the architects had to work together on the same paper. The architects were hosted in a ‘buen retiro,’ Villa La Sfacciata, equipped with every comfort, brought to live together and enjoy nice breaks in a swimming pool and a beautiful park. Erskine was tasked with proposing the general plan of the housing area, and local architects with designing the individual buildings. The proposal, conceived together with Klas Tham and Christer Malmström, shows a radial composition of volumes, with the density and height of the buildings growing from the inside towards the edges. Evidently, the overall idea was to create a cluster that could give a sense of community protected by the external traffic, and with a good quality of spaces equipped with private green and public parks and all the facilities for the inhabitants. The strategy proposed by Erskine was

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
to consider the whole city in order to avoid the risk of reducing Novoli to a monofunctional centre.

Following the spirit of Florence, Erskine proposes a local centre and opposes the closed shopping center which he considers alien to European cities in general.\textsuperscript{22} He proposes to give more space to housing and to move some of the other functions to other areas, distributing commercial and craft activities along the streets and squares as is the tradition of Florence, and to equip the residential areas with playgrounds, open-air theatres and exhibition spaces.

Despite a positive result at the second workshop, when the various components and ideas seemed to resonate well, during the third stage Bruno Zevi expressed his opposition to the choice of an introverted plan that would risk being isolated from the city. In fact, on different occasions both Zevi and Erskine resigned.

At the end of the workshop I became convinced that, even if in Italy and abroad many, architects and not, would declare to agree with these objectives, my colleagues in the Novoli project, with the exception of my Scandinavian team, do not agree with this setting. It seemed therefore likely that someone were to withdraw from the project and it was obviously easier for me to retire.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 207.
Siena, Invited Competition for the Area Piazza Matteotti-La Lizza, 1988

In the same years, Erskine had the opportunity to work with another iconic urban space, the city of Siena. He had the chance to visit Urbino, Siena and San Marino following De Carlo and the Ilaud summer workshops in the 1970s and 1980s. In the summer of 1982, the Ilaud school moved to Siena after six years in Urbino and opened an interesting new dialogue with a most iconic historic centre in Italy. So there was a profound reason for Erskine to accept the invitation to participate in a competition for the replanning of a vast area bordering on the ancient walls’ limits.

The area, midway from the historic centre and the grand open space named ‘la Lizza’ by the Sienese, had suffered major alterations in the first half of the century and lost its dimension and role in the connection between the centre and the periphery. De Carlo suggests the character of the place and the reasons for the competition by describing how people used to enter the open space, ‘filtered’ through a dense urban fabric and series of narrow streets “… not unlike those that unfold parallel to a coastline behind the docks of a harbour…”24 The comprehensive interventions during the post-war years into that city structure made the brief of the competition very complex, as Bernardo Secchi confirms:

Confronting oneself with Siena [...] meant confronting oneself with the functional, morphological and typological complexity that that specific context suggested and imposed, but also with the extremely important ‘off-scale’ theme.\textsuperscript{25}

In an article of \textit{Casabella}, the proposal of Erskine, designed with Christer Malmström, is given minimal space showing only the image of the aerial view, as only the selected entries are published in a proper way including a description by the authors. The commitment of Erskine to the project is revealed by his private archive, which contains an entire set of sketches and perspectives for the area. The aerial view shows the signs of a pedestrian line (a reminder of the Strøget in Copenhagen, in my opinion) and the capacity of playing with the composition of big volumes aimed to shape the reconstitution of the lost character of the urban fabric. The selection was very strict and the jury did not consider Erskine’s proposal to qualify to the second stage.

The short and unsuccessful series of the Italian projects of Ralph Erskine includes two more works, a seaside natural park in Marina di Palme (Fermo, Marche) from 1989 and the Bus Terminal in Ancona (1996-), the only project approved and built to its foundations during the 2000s. It was later interrupted due to a landslip in the area and opposition voiced by the municipal authorities.

The Italian chapter of Erskine’s career needs a proper investigation through the archival sources in ArkDes and in the towns where he worked. A key to better

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
understanding might also be his relations with De Carlo and with Italian colleagues and young students meeting in the Ilaud workshops, who were bridges to the local culture. The conclusion of this paper, aiming at understanding Erskine’s transfer of his experience of the northern town and landscape to the southern context, leaves many open questions. Erskine explains in an interview how the same basic interests and a close sensibility linked him to De Carlo from the times of the Team 10.26 And it is an intriguing task trying to discover what resonances his travels to Italy had on his subsequent works in Sweden and Great Britain in the 1990s.27 To pick one example among many, the project for the Aula Magna of Stockholm University campus suggests a dialogue with the iconic glass front of the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Education (Magistero) in Urbino by De Carlo. Other questions deal with his capacity to understand the spirit of the Italian historic town. To the reasons his proposals failed could be added the scepticism of the Italian authorities and the strong opposition of the conservation authorities to the insertion of new buildings in delicate historic contexts. On the other side, however, is Erskine’s ethical stance, which drove him to refuse to accept compromises with the investors and betray what he considered to be the spirit of the place.

Qui e’ scomparso: lo spostamento della città che un distretto della guerriera – con (con questa) una sistemazione informale e bisognoso non senza instabilità per
sostenere modernizza una porzione maggiore con alla spinta della man della parte
le basi dei cui accorsi e porta e il nascente
visuale di controp cultural della città. Unemeritazione
assonimatica sulla città, medita
una legge e principie cie d’obbligo ma non una “necessità”, ma anche con obbligo sociale.
Figure 1. Ralph Erskine with Klas Tham, Rehabilitation plan for Guasco-San Pietro in Ancona, 1984–1985.
Figure 2. Ralph Erskine with Klas Tham, Rehabilitation plan for Guasco-San Pietro in Ancona, 1984–1985.
Figure 3. (Above) Competition sketch of ‘La Lizza’ in Siena by Ralph Erskine, 1988.  
Figure 4. (Below) Axonometric view of Ralph Erskine and Christer Malmström’s competition entry for Piazza Matteotti-la Lizza in Siena, 1988.
Figure 5. (Above) Axonometric view of Ralph Erskine’s urban renewal proposal for Firenze Novoli, 1987–1988.

Figure 6. (Below) Plan of the Firenze Novoli proposal, 1987–1988.
These are some reflections on the ArkDes 2018 Symposium on Architectural History, an attempt to support or extend or reinterpret some of the contributions. To celebrate the academic framing, the title and the structure of these reflections come with a reference to Italo Calvino, but also to Kenneth Burke, who emphasised the antireductionism to be gained by answering all the six basic interrogatives: what, when, where, who, how and why.¹

Who?

A first brief meta-reflection on the symposium is the question, who was there? It is striking that 11 of the 15 paper presentations are of foreign background, even though three of the 11 are working more or less temporarily at Swedish institutions. This foreign interest in Swedish architectural history is of course quite flattering and a much-needed potential endorsement for that history. The flipside of the uneven distribution is the absence of Swedish architectural historians. The reason for this could

be found in the downgrading of architectural history, both at universities and technical universities in Sweden. There are simply not that many architectural historians, and those there are, are very busy with basic teaching and have little time for research. Whether this also means that they are not up-to-date on recent research paradigms and to what extent that is a problem, I will leave as an open question.

What, How, When, Where?

Four more of the basic interrogatives are grouped together here, somewhat intermingled as they were in the presentations. A first question might be, what can be included in history? One of the absent Swedish friends was Emilie Karlsmo of Uppsala University, who could not come because of too heavy a teaching load. She said that had it been possible, she would have contributed a paper on the architectural history of conversions or transformations, a large part of the work of architects but something that is almost completely left out of traditional architectural history, with its focus on the new and “epoch-making.” But, as Stewart Brand claims, “a building is not something you finish, but something you start.”² In this there is also an interest in the everyday life of architecture, “what happens after they are built,” and thus also in everyday architecture, as opposed

to the traditional bias towards the “Sunday architecture” of churches and museums.

Another widening of the subject is an ambition to describe the whole design and building process, and not only the architect’s work. Several papers deal, not unexpectedly, with the agency of legislation, institutional framework and the “paraphernalia” or tools of architectural work. This is characteristic for the contributions of Erik Sigge, Angela Gigliotti and Stina Hagelqvist. This also includes the interest in the important but often forgotten (female) collaborators of whom Catharina Nolin reminded us. A further broadening of the subject which is big internationally, but clearly underrepresented in Sweden, and also in this symposium, is construction history. Technology research seems uninterested in its own history and architectural historians do not seem very familiar with the field of technology.

Traditionally, the time perspective of architectural history has maintained a distance of at least one generation. This also means that archival documents have tended to be more important sources than oral history. Janina Gosseye and Naomi Stead in their keynote lecture brought up questions about who is able to speak and who is heard in oral history, and the risk of missing the collective work. This risk of “epistemic injustice” seems, however, at least as great with written documents.
Isabelle Doucet’s presentation about the counterculture of the 1968 generation points to the emergence of a different kind of architect, working with less “heroic” remodelling and planning tasks and often not leaving much of a trace in the archives, although potentially possible to uncover in an oral history.

The whereabouts of an uneven geography was brought up by Daniel Movilla Vega, Ulrika Karlsson and Karin Reisinger in their different presentations on projects in the far north of Sweden. What happens to self-esteem in a shrinking settlement, and how is the process documented, if at all? What does the “planetary urbanisation” mean for the “geographies of despair,” with their highly problematic political consequences? And what epistemic injustice is done to the Sámi people, who somewhat surprisingly played only a marginal role in these presentations? “It is tricky to sit here in Stockholm,” as it was formulated in the debate, and this is a challenge for ArkDes which, after all, has a national assignment.

Architectural history “in the expanded field” might perhaps be a way of summarising a majority of the presentations. There were attempts at a widening of the what, how, when and where, or of the categories of commissions, of aspects of the building process, of access to the very contemporary past and to forgotten places outside the “urban norm.”
**Why?**

A last brief meta-reflection on the symposium is, why this interest in the everyday and the everywhere now? Janina Gosseye in her presentation mentioned the critique of globalisation and the increasing need to “reframe.” In a Swedish context, and especially for ArkDes, the current official policy also points in this direction, having launched the term “Designed Living Environment” (“Gestaltad livsmiljö” in Swedish) in 2017, and emphasised “what architecture and design can bring to the development of society, for the benefit and enjoyment of all.”

No new bureaucratic term is needed to make this statement, even though the desire today to add design to architecture is obvious.

And there is nothing really new about this. “Architecture concerns everyone” (“Arkitektur angår alla”) was a phrase used in the 1990s by the Swedish Museum of Architecture. “Architectural history, not monument history” was a programmatic statement made by Anders Åman in a 1970 anthology of articles by a young generation of Swedish architectural historians. More or less all contemporary Swedish architectural historians were educated in this spirit. This can even be traced back

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further to Gregor Paulsson’s ethnologically inclined studies of Swedish urban environments in the 1940s, and along that line also to Swedish 1930s Functionalism.⁵

The Six Memos

It is easy for me, as one of these 1968 generation architectural historians, to sympathise with the ambition to widen the subject and to fill the lacunae that traditional architectural history has left us with. But remember how the 1990s replaced the everyday 1970s with the monographs of star architects, and beware the risk of getting stuck in a pendulum movement, repeating a simplistic reductionism, only the other way around. We need architectural history to tell us the whole story: how architecture for the whole week is made, Sunday as well as Everyday, together in a critical dialogue. Italo Calvino’s book Six Memos for the Next Millennium is, after all, a book about how literature is made, based on in-depth knowledge of classics, and its final memo is about Multiplicity. Moreover, the literary critic Kenneth Burke used the six interrogatives to achieve a “complete statement about motives” and to counter the risk of reductionism.

BIOGRAPHIES

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COLOPHON

Editors
Christina Pech & Mikael Andersson

Design
Matthew Ashton

Translations
Comactiva Language Partner AB

About the type
The typeface Gill Sans has been used throughout the publication. Designed by Eric Gill in 1926 for the British branch of Monotype, the typeface is based on Edward Johnston’s 1916 Underground Alphabet, the corporate font of the London Underground.

About the paper
This publication is printed on Munken Print White 1.5 100g and Arctic Silk + 115g.

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Printed and bound in Latvia

First edition 250 copies


The symposium was held at ArkDes, Stockholm, on 18 December 2018.

It was organized by Mikael Andersson and Christina Pech and convened by Christina Pech.

Acknowledgements
The following people contributed to the symposium and the publication and we would like to thank them for their participation and support:

Frida Melin and Johan Örn, ArkDes collection curators, for presentations of their work.

Janina Gosseye for her keynote lecture (co-authored with Naomi Stead).

Antonello Alici, Álvaro Clua, Isabelle Doucet, Angela Gigliotti, Stina Hagelqvist, Ulrika Karlsson, Angelo Maggi, Martina Malešič, Chiara Monterumisi, Daniel Movilla Vega, Catharina Nolin, Karin Reisinger and Erik Sigge, for their paper presentations.

Mikael Andersson, Helena Mattsson, Johan Mårtelius, Martin Rörby and Malin Zimm for acting as moderators.

Thordis Arrhenius, Claes Caldenby and Emilie Karlsmo for being part of the external scientific committee. Arrhenius and Caldenby also for their concluding comments.

Kieran Long and the entire team at Arkdes, especially Suji Lee and Elisabet Schön for their practical and organizational skills during the day.

And lastly, Peter och Birgitta Celsings Stiftelse for their generous support to this publication.