

Summaries in English

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Das Werk : Architektur und Kunst = L'oeuvre : architecture et art**

Band (Jahr): **50 (1963)**

Heft 7: **Stadtlandschaft**

PDF erstellt am: **26.09.2024**

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'Townscape'—urban landscape—the term comes from England, and it has introduced to us the notion of the city and its environs as a totality excluding the collaboration neither of time nor of chance. It will be seen below that the Japanese as well are seeking new avenues: "group form" or "infinite form", such as is encountered under other aspects in the work of the German O.M. Ungers in the simultaneous existence of the "positive" and the "negative" (filled up and hollow). Finally, three minor installations (a garage, outdoor pool a residential town) have been selected by way of complementary illustrations of the "townscape".

"Group Form"

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by Fumihiko Maki

The term "group form" was created by the Japanese, Fumihiko Maki. It is a structure flexible in the single element as well as in the whole form—the formal unity residing in the "grain"; in composition the "megaform" of Prof. Tange gives flexibility to the elements only by establishing a big and stable frame. The "group form", which is itself only a case of what the author calls "collective form", as opposed to the compositional form of tradition, which even with Le Corbusier tends toward perfected and monumental objects, results from the dynamic equilibrium of generating elements and thus entails per se the possibility of not seeking the definitive solution and of thus allowing buildings as well as whole urban complexes to become modified as needs arise. A greater degree of relative elasticity characterizes the "megastructure" or "megaform" elaborated by Professor Kenzo Tange designed to serve as a frame for all the functions of a city or of a neighbourhood, with this reservation, that K.T. believes that he is able to determine in advance the long-range urban elements and others, whereas it is not impossible that new surprises in technological progress will bring about the senescence of the megaform, while the "group form" is designed essentially for adaptation to ever new situations.—One of the most interesting aspects of the idea of collective form resides in the fact that it is highly compatible with a modern regionalist spirit, in the sense that if the inevitable standardization of technology excludes the maintenance of the old traditional features in each construction in particular, the combination of the various elements is no less capable of variation from one region to another.—The author concludes by noting that all these observations are to be taken as so many attempts at raising in a viable fashion the questions emerging from the current situation.

Chance Architecture

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by Benedikt Huber

Forty years after the formulation and the approximately universal triumph of "functional" architecture, a reaction against the tyranny of technology alone is impelling the younger generation to embrace the organic, as a corrective to preconceived and derivative ideas, to explore what is simply given, what happens by chance. The "puttering of the centuries" evident in our old towns or in Mediterranean villages fascinates younger architects and is inspiring them to dream of "action architecture" (as we say "action painting") which in its formal freedom grants ample scope to the purely contingent, without for all that lapsing into outmoded idioms or mere romantic sentimentality.—The future will show whether this aspiration marks a new departure in the development of architecture.

Outdoor pool in Basle

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1961/62. Architects: Otto Senn FAS/SIA, Walter Senn FAS, Basle; engineer: H. Hosdorf SIA, Basle

This new open-air pool of the city of Basle comprises 3480 m² of pools and parking facilities for 230 cars, 300 motorcycles and 2000 bicycles. Sculptures by Lorenz Balmer and Hansjörg Gisiger.

Garage in New Haven, Connecticut

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1962. Architect: P. Rudolph, New Haven

This parking garage is intended to accommodate 1500 cars, and is to be rented on an hourly or monthly basis. Heavily reinforced concrete. Five ramps. Cost: 4.8 million dollars.

About the "New Town" Project in Cologne

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Author: Oswald Matthias Ungers, Cologne-Müngersdorf

The author's guiding idea is that one and the same principle obtains for the architecture of the individual house and for the city as a whole; this can be demonstrated from all historical periods, from Priene to New York. Neither a building nor a city is architecturally conditioned by economic, sociological factors, etc., but by its formal essence: hence the necessity of considering the city as a work of art. Now then, architecture has the double aim of creating an interior and an exterior and of correlating the "positive", solid volumes (blocks and complexes of blocks) and the "negative", spaces (courtyards and streets). This is what has been attempted in the neighbourhood plan presented here, a spatial town-planning project.

Emil Schumacher

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by Franz Roh

Born in 1912 at Hagen (Westphalia), E.Sch. studied from 1932 to 1935 at the School of Decorative Arts in Dortmund. At first he was greatly attracted by the Danubian German School around 1500, then by Matthias Grünewald; he subsequently admired in particular German Expressionism, independently of great masters. He then painted "poetic" representational canvases. After the war period (technical drawings), starting in 1945 there was again a possibility to pursue abstract art. 1952–1958: "tactile objects", exhibited in 1957 at Wuppertal (Parnass Gallery) and in 1958 at the Galerie Stadler in Paris. Beginning in 1959, he devoted himself exclusively to pure painting. Sch. became the most representative informal painter of north-west Germany. It was possible to say that his canvases are modern images of the "life of the soil", to borrow the term employed by the romanticist Carus. His most recent works, which are very impassioned, are composed of masses of colour in movement, where at times there can loom out phantom-like the suggestion of a head or of a body.

From Tachism to "Complex Colour"

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by Eugen Grominger

The subjectivist movement of tachism has been succeeded by very different trends. Besides the "new realists", who introduce the object itself into the picture, and the partisans of the strict "concrete form", there are active at the present time a number of painters who, in exhibitions put on in Wiesbaden and in Hamburg in 1962, called themselves the champions of "complex colour". There could be seen the German artists Bernd Berner, Gotthard Graubner, Reimer Jochims, Klaus Jürgen-Fischer, Lothar Quinte and the Italian Piero Dorazio. Although they differ widely among one another, their work has in common a transcendence of form via chromatic vibrations; as expressed by the North German Joachims: Pigment and canvas are methodically fused.—Colour, surface, rhythm are identical.

The "Dictionary of Swiss Artists of the 20th Century"

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by Hans Christoph von Tavel

Eight parts of 80 pages each have already appeared, and they will be followed by four or five more. Out of 20 or 30 thousand names, it has been considered sufficient to retain only 4 to 5 thousand. The aim of the work is not so much to record value judgments as to furnish a rich documentation, the sources of which are especially the archives of the Kunsthhaus of Zurich, now transferred, since the retirement of the first editor-in-chief, Eduard Plüss, to the Art Museum of Berne, where the collective project is going forward under the direction of Professor Max Huggler.