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GLI SPAZI DELLA SPERIMENTAZIONE  
NELLA CITTA E NEL TERRITORIO  
CONTEMPORANEI

# CHALLENGE OF SET FRAMES

NUOVA ARCHITETTURA CONTESTUALE

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Thesis by Aida Idrizbegovic Zgonic



Housing, Brussels, Belgium, Architect: Mario Garzaniti

Photo: Architectural Review 72/10

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**XXI CICLO DEL DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN**

**“Challenge of set frames”**

**TITOLO TESI DI DOTTORATO**

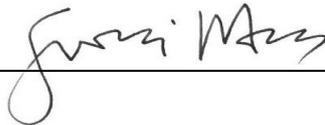
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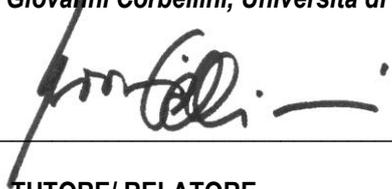
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**ARCHITECTURE IN CONTEXT** IN THIS THESIS IS NOT TREATED AS A SYNONIM FOR REGIONALISM OR REGRESSIONISM, BUT RATHER AS FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESSFUL NEW ARCHITECTURE IN THE HISTORIC OR MIXED SETTING.

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AS I CHOSE THE TITLE CHALLENGE OF SET FRAMES, I DID NOT REALIZE THAT IT WOULD COME TRUE IN MANY WAYS... AS LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES OF SPACE CAPTURED AND CONSTRAINED THOUGHTS...GETTING OUT OF THESE BORDERS HAS BEEN REFLECTED ON THE WORK AS THE THESIS PROGRESSED...

ONE NEEDS TO SHATTER THE FRAMES, ONLY LATER TO GO BACK TO THEM.

## I.1 INTRODUCTION

**Architectural design in context mainly has been simplified to two opposing attitudes:**

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INITIAL ARGUMENT

“Principle of Contrast” that is essentially the principle of ignorance towards the existing urban tissue and surroundings. **Contrast creates an exciting outcome and debate, but when this is repeated over and over again, without substance behind it, the theory becomes an excuse not to deal with the complexity of the context.**

Principle of “blending –in” when the new building superficially resembles, reflects its neighbors’ by repetition of some elements of style. **Even though these buildings create visual continuity the “blend in or nostalgic concepts” seem to lack the strength and credibility of their arguments, and fall into traps of in-distinction.**

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CURRENT RELEVANCE OF TOPIC

This topic has been a subject of research and a number of successful objects have been incorporated into the existing fabric. But even today the number of appropriate infill is fairly low. There are a number of reasons behind it: not enough training in architecture schools for this type of design task, the fear of architects to relate to any element that resembles the vernacular or to learn from the past, pressure from investors ...etc. Some architects feel the boundaries as a creative trap and steer away from these projects or take the design into own safe zone, conveniently expressed as contrast with the old.

Areas of town with historic and mixed identity (different historical periods, building types, functions...) are attractive setting for urban rehabilitation and building of «infill» structures. These zones provide a certain character to the future building, are well connected to the town and have a good infrastructure base for building.

Even though the design and construction possibilities are stronger than ever, the result is getting less diverse. Most of these buildings are solid architecture work, elegant paved with high quality materials but have a tendency to “uniformity, calculated simplicity and reduction.”

This is ever so visible when a building is erected in a mixed or historic context, and they tend to override basic human emotions and needs such as sense of belonging, individuality, local cultural condition, sense of past and diversity.

The everlasting tension between old and new adds value to the existing neighborhood and the new building, and provides a great challenge for the architect.

**Both principles (contrast and blend in) lack an essential ingredient – relational attitude towards the place or building.**

**This relationship is achievable through use of contextual strategy expressed in two basic principles: either one will establish a dialogue with a building or one will create tension between them, but in both cases it means engaging with all of the complexity of boundaries and extracting the essence and turning it into a meaningful visual and functional resolution.**

This is not by any means just another name for “blend in” and “contrast” terms, dialogue and tension are established through the process of negotiation with its existing surroundings.

The aim of the thesis is to explore different architectural solutions and expressions to the problem of building within the set frames, boundaries weather they are physical or circumstantial.

The main focus is not to propagate that either approach is more correct or legitimate than the other, but rather to investigate what makes a certain design (in dialogue, in tension, provocation..) successful and meaningful.

The authors preference is for solutions of the dialogue principle - how to make the contemporary infill or the addition - to reflect the ambience to some extent, to correspond, to have a dialogue with the pre-existing building sequence but keep its own integrity an authenticity.

To come up with yet another ...-lism, would not be productive, so the focus is on the eternal pursuit for the answers the challenges put forth by pre built environment.

**With no strings attached to a particular purist style or suffering from nostalgia, have architects have finally found a meaningful relationship between the building and its context?**

One of the best examples of infill buildings that demonstrate all necessary qualities that a structure needs to have in order to establish a relationship with its surroundings:



Museum of Art, Celle, Germany Ahrens Grabenhorst Architekten BDA Hannover, 2006

photo: [www.kunst.celle.de](http://www.kunst.celle.de)

The box of light: Comparatively small building, with colored lights that change and produce a different ambience every time.

Here the scale and the volume of the building carry the load of “fitting in” but are not self sufficient. This building is a great example of an object that represents the **concepts of dialogue and tension, depending on light conditions** - visual purity, modesty and subtle hint of dialogue during daytime, and explosion of color and dominance in the night.

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**KEY WORDS: SITE/CONTEXT NEGOTIATIONS INFILL RELATIONAL ATTITUDE PROCESSES TENSION DIALOGUE**

## I.2 METHODOLOGY

### Theoretical research

The methodology will rely on the systematic research of the existing reference books, relevant architectural magazines and internet sites on the given topic (articles, essays and couple of conferences).

All theories will be evaluated with points made on their contribution to the development of the contextualism (post-modern, critical regionalism), but more important are the lessons derived from those theories that are actual even today.

### Comparative analysis of relevant case studies

Each case study will be catalogued with a chart that will contain with relevant information and pictures and a standardized questionnaire. Questionnaire is simple and has been answered by architects and non professionals.

Study and analyses of the case studies is the core of the work and all the conclusions later drawn.

From the very beginning it was clear that the forces behind good design combine both physical and metaphysical qualities of a certain space, building. Methodology and analyses of meta - physical features have proven to be slightly elusive to measure, to be placed into neat tables and diagrams.

In many ways there was **reverse methodology**, since it took a while to find the common denominator in successful objects. This was not obvious at first when this thesis begun and it is fair to say that methodology evolved together with work. The aim was to look at to relevant examples as diverse as possible and to take the ones that provide the most important lessons – how was it achieved?

The word that is used is intentionally is **successful-functional** - not good design, since the notion of good and bad carry the burden of subjectivity.

SYNTHESIS OF LESSONS LEARNED

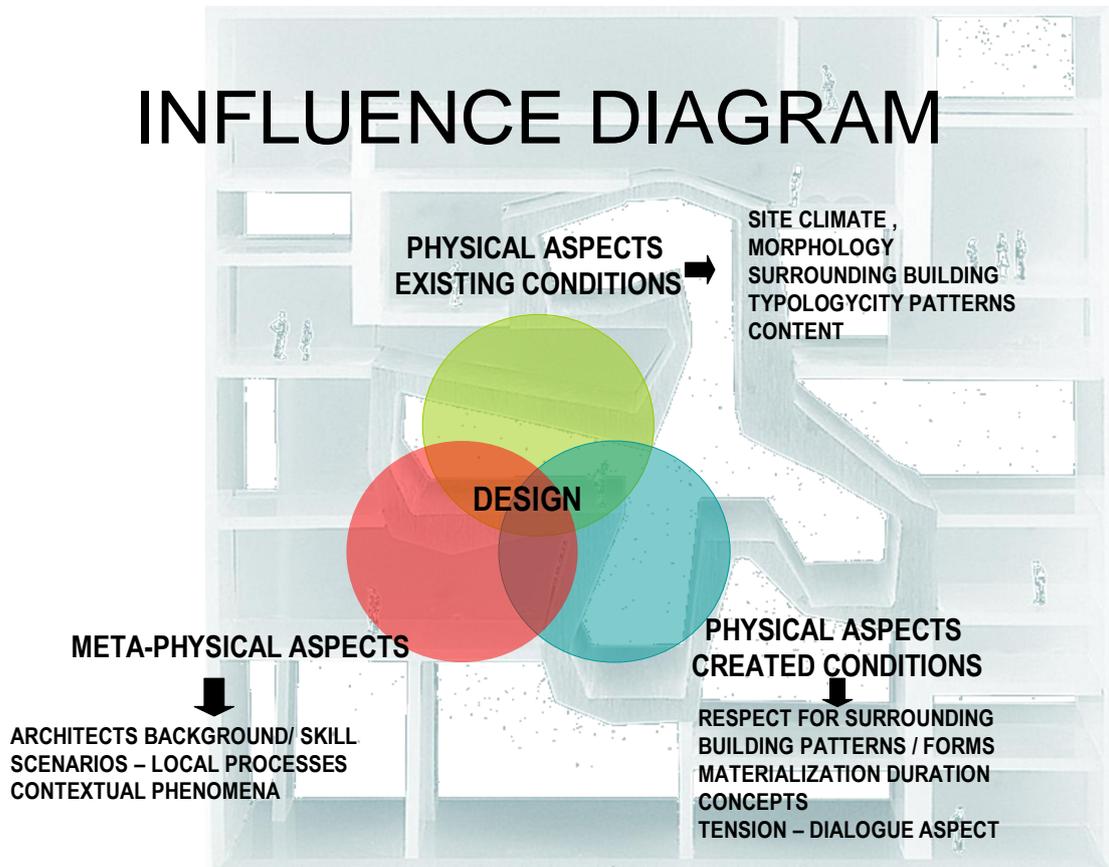
Actually the main discourse of this thesis is not to separate the successful design from the less, but to address the issues that are behind the creative force of design for certain situations.

The following table represents a checkup list with minimum of requirements marked that are the obligatory elements in all successful design examples.

The final was the synthesis of the lessons learned and definition of underlying design processes (principles) and how to use the site to ones advantage.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS (PRE – EXISTING CONDITIONS)	MINIMUM OF REQUIREMENTS	DESCRIPTION
<b>RESPONSE TO SITE</b>		The ultimate condition,
CLIMATE, MORPHOLOGY CONDITIONS	•	The sensible thing to take into account, not absolutely necessary
CITY URBAN PATTERNS		Short analysis with conclusions, and reason for acceptance or not
CONTENT	•	The meaning behind the work – use
<b>PHYSICAL ASPECTS (CREATED CONDITIONS)</b>		
ACKNOWLEDGING AND RESPONDING TO INPUTS OF THE SURROUNDING BUILT ENVIRONMENT		I – none, intentionally II – just basic follow up on height / volume III – accepting this as a deliberate concept
MATERIALIZATION	•	Choice of suitable materials for realization of idea – critical
DURATION	Temporary / permanent	Influences all decisions, temporary – push the boundaries, provoke-an absolute must, permanent – test of time
INTENTION	•	Concept – programme must be clear
TENSION DIALOGUE ASPECT	•	An obligatory underlying aspect
<b>METAPHYSICAL ASPECTS</b>		
ARCHITECTS BACKGROUND/ SKILL		personal experience and skill are the most important tool in this chain of design
LOCAL PROCESSES	•	Including or being able to comprehend any of these metaphysical aspects will land the design in the sphere of breakthrough and authenticity.
CONTEXTUAL PHENOMENA, SCENARIO		

## I.3 CONTEXT



**Context – circumstances or settings – determinants that shape the complex conditions of the existing urban fabric.**

DEFINITION

- The notion of design in context is loaded with heavy ideological burden of the concept of genius loci and its numerous opponents that treat the issue with contempt.
- Defining the context is also a part of the actual architectural task, since the answer to the question what is context is part of the resolution to what is the essential substance of the new building.

## CONTEXT(S)

### IDENTIFICATION OF CONTEXT

Primary level of communication between the new dwelling and its surroundings is of course visual, but it might not be the overriding determinant of the context that is most relevant to the project (sometimes it is social, political statement etc...).

**Primary context:** the adjoining buildings or structures that determine the height, scale and other architectural features, which is overpowering in most cases when building in urban areas.

**The immediate context** of adjacent buildings and site conditions:

**Urban/environmental aspect:**

- **Topographic** (landscape, orientation...)
- **Climate** and how it reflects on building design
- **Traffic** (pedestrian and vehicular)
- **Urban tissue** patterns

**Architectural**

- **Adjacent** and local architecture, patterns and forms
- **Visual references** - dominant
  - The worth and uniqueness
  - The consistency of the neighborhood
  - Proximity of monuments and landmarks etc.
  - Scale, volume, patterns

**Situational**

- **Programme -function** (purpose of the building)
- **Time** ( the present and the building period of existing buildings)
- **Values** ( social attitudes)
- **Special features** - peculiarities

All of the mentioned above can have many interpretations and can change through time. The architect is the one that has to distinguish the relevance and influence of each item.

**Sub-context** : determinant that gives the building a wider opportunity to relate to the site that can play a role in determining the overall character and it may or may not be obvious and can be expressed in variety of ways:

- **Ambient ( built environment)**
- **Ambient (natural context)** definitely overwhelms the design, and architects mostly resort to traditional regional forms and materials but within the contemporary trends. (Houses and hotels in Alps, Mediterranean coast, cottage houses in the country...).
- **Cultural/ Traditional (religious)**
- **Event** - Cause for building (public purpose, private investor, for a big event...)
- **Collective memory, memory of place:** Recognition, significance, history..
- **Other (sometime less obvious) qualities of a site that can be emphasized by architecture** – the place for the architect to be intuitive and explore , **that is create own site essence – the new added value**

**Sense of place** - Genius loci, Feng Shui (considering intangible “energy flows” and other beliefs are a serious factor in building design in the far east...) Oriental (Middle eastern, Byzantine and Islamic observations about space – more chaotic organic approach still struggling to be interpreted in modern architecture) The sense of place is very different from culture to culture and the buildings are in many cases based on peoples strong believes on the “energy flow” and similar intangible premises.

**Architects personal context:** Ultimately in the end it all comes to the person synthesizing all the information and translating it into architectural language. Skill, experience<sup>1</sup>, intuition and creativeness are the most important link in the process, but is the one that in work of this type can be the least analyzed. The work can provide direction and insight for professionals, to be more informed and hopefully make better choices.

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<sup>1</sup> *Even though the “western” influence in architecture is predominant, one can not simply reapply the same approach anywhere. The basic principles are stand but the means to achieve the architecture can differ (for instance some will require use of more traditional forms and materials that an architect bred in western tradition would?).*

For the concept of contextuality to survive it is necessary to constantly explore and broaden its definitions and outreach. The new structures should engage in a dialog with particulars of a certain place and time. In the core of architecture is the place, and its meaning, but this time it is not because one is constrained by the limitations, rather willingly use its advantages as powerful tools in the process of design.

IMPORTANCE OF PLACE



Didden Village, Rotterdam, MVRDV Architects 2007/2008

(photo: MVRDV, <http://www.designws.com/fotopagina07/mvdrv800.htm>)

The project is in centre of Rotterdam and uses the shapes of archetypical Dutch houses, but making a provocation by colour. In this case study it is very visible how the use of context, place, and local architecture is a platform for an innovative architectural statement.

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PRIMARY CONTEXT SUB-CONTEXT AMBIENT MEMORY PLACE

## II.1 CASE STUDIES

### GENERAL

Case studies are most essential when it comes to uncovering the intentions behind successful design. The way to extract the essence is through comparative analyses of various types of interventions.

1. Small interventions and additions
2. Urban infill sites
3. Landmark building extension

Comparison is aided by the table bellow, to achieve objective results as possible it was filled out by 12 persons each, architects and others.

**As it is in many cases there is no absolute objectivity, or absolute truth in assessment of architectural work, but that is not the aim here. The main focus is on showing the hidden thought process behind the final result, as the strongest argument for design evaluation.**

<i>BUILDING:</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation	Relation to the site in physical and strategical sense		
Arch. design	The quality and innovation of the design itself+ feasibility and function		
Scale relation	To the neighborhood, can be disregarded but with a strategical decision		
Quality of materials	Quality and appropriateness of materials for the task		
Relation to adjacent buildings	Responsiveness – does not mean following their example but rather a mutual value increase		
Authenticity	Integrity of the whole sequence (distinction) meaning, innovation integrity of design		
Contextual strategy	dialogue	tension	provocation
Comments:	Additional explanation for the points made		

## SMALL INTERVENTIONS AND ADDITIONS

Nowhere is the **tension between old and new more visible than in additions and extensions. This confrontation creates a fragile balance**, when skillfully done increases the value of both parts.

*“Additions, after all, have a standard for judgment built into them: how are the old and the new getting along? In recent additions, how is the new understanding and treating the old, and how is it enlisting it in its propositions about our new problems and possibilities? In reaching a judgment about the state of the art of additions, it is crucial to remember one ground rule: it doesn’t matter what they look like.”<sup>1</sup>*

Additions seem to have rules of its own within the theory of contextualism. **The general rule is to respect the old – build with new.** This is more applicable the smaller is the addition compared with the existing structure. Another “golden rule” is to interconnect the two parts; usually the new extends and reaches out to its older host.



City Museum Ljubljana, Slovenia Ofis Arhitekti, 2004

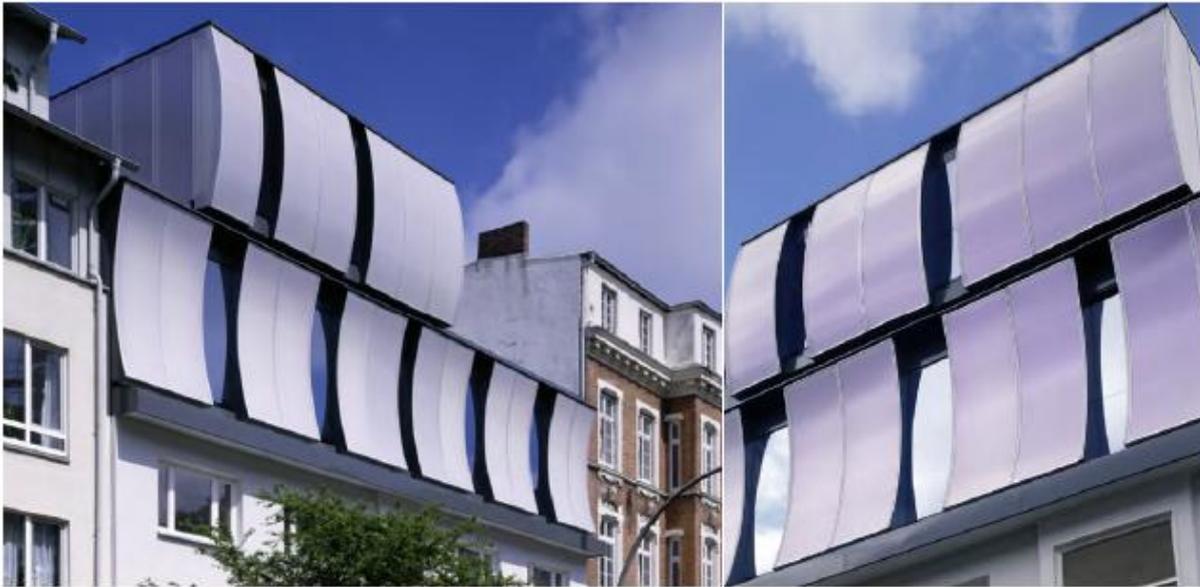
Photo:<http://www.ofis-a.si>

The visual output must reflect the meaning, but also it holds on to its high standard of materialization and architectural innovation. Reaching a balance is the most important, very arrogant or very timid solutions do not produce good results.

**This extension (picture above) shows us exactly what one needs to achieve, a bold architectural statement that accentuates the old part of the building as well without losing any of its spotlight.**

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<sup>1</sup> Article *Innovation and Insight In the Contemporary Architecture of Additions* by Paul Spencer Byard, *Regeneration* Number 23, Fall 2005/Winter 2006 of Harvard design Magazine



Photos: C@ver Hejsener, Hamburg

Juliusstrasse, Hamburg (Detail Magazine) Spine Architects, 2004

<http://www.spine-architects.com/work/work.html>

IN the example from Spine architects the proportions are right, and basic design simple, but by creating the wave movement they add a bit of movement they created a breakthrough design without sensationalism.

- When one deals with small infill structures (passages, connections or buildings) it is almost possible to “*get away with anything*”.
- The “smallness” of intervention gives the freedom to experiment, innovate and find new ways to relate to its surroundings. The design of such buildings is constantly on the edge between looking chic or isolated.
- The petite infill structures push the limits and explore the concepts for building in context. Weather it is elegant or avant-garde, it has to make a statement since it has only but a few moments to catch an eye of a passer-by.

Case studies

ADDITIONS

**PRATT INSTITUTE, 2005**

Architect: Steven Hall

<i>BUILDING: PRATT INSTITUTE</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials		•	
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialog</b>	<b>tension</b>	<i>provocat</i>
Comments:	One of the examples that creates tension and dialogue at the same time, structurally dialogue, but tension with materialization. A type of formula		



Photo:

<http://images.google.ba/images?hl=bs&um=1&q=+site:1.bp.blogspot.com+pratt+institute+steven+hall>

As stated above smaller additions onto a large building really do take on a life of its own.

**Here the architect creates continuity and disruption at the same time, which is almost a formula when it comes to additions.**

**Architectural detail is simple in basics with the window element that almost looks like an ornament.**

There is also unusual materialization - an economical industrial material was used to create a translucent effect.

Case studies

ADDITIONS

**SARPRATISTAT OFFICES, 2000**

Architect: Steven Hall



<i>BUILDING: SARPRATISTRAT OFFICES</i>			
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>high</b>
Urban continuity, site relation		•	
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings		•	
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	dialog	<b>tension</b>	provocat
Comments:	<b>Tension achieved through oddness</b>		

*“the exterior expression is one of complimentary contrast” an optic phenomena with chance-located color is especially effective at night when the color patches reflect in the De Single Canal” goes as an explanation of this project from its architect.*

This building draws its success from its **ultimate oddity with everything and even itself**, there is nothing really complementary here, nor needs it to be. The materialization carries something primordial about it and the strangely shaped widows enhance this effect.

The reason it works is scale and volume are perfectly proportioned and the surrounding buildings are quite indistinctive.

Photo above: <http://www.stevenholl.com/>

Photo bellow: <http://www.stevenholl.com/project-detail.php?type=mixeduse&id=41&page=1>



Case studies

INFILL

**NEW ART EXCHANGE, 2008**

Architect: Hawkins Brown

<i>BUILDING: NEW ART EXCHANGE, Nottingham</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation		•	
Arch. design			•
Scale relation		•	
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings		•	
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	Interesting building but no real connection		



NEW ART EXCHANGE

[http://www.architeria.eu/index.php?p=p\\_625&sName=NEW-ART-EXCHANGE&sLang=en](http://www.architeria.eu/index.php?p=p_625&sName=NEW-ART-EXCHANGE&sLang=en)



The object has some visual architectural elements similar to the precedent example, *The Sarpratistat offices*. Apart from its materialization the black brick it is hardly in any kind of relation to the neighborhood.

However, the building itself has enough “self-esteem” to stand on its own, especially since its context is very mixed already – with the high rise in the back. In a way it mocks the high rise and its square windows.

Case studies

ADDITION

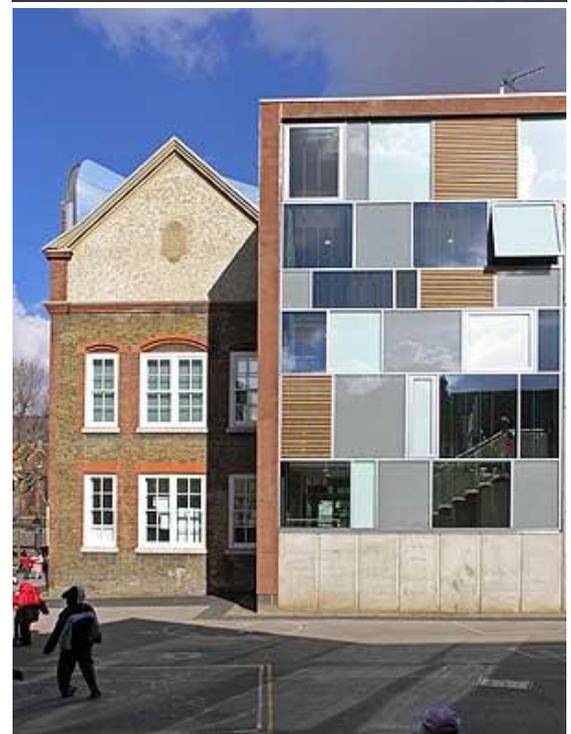
**SIOBHAN DAVIES DANCE STUDIO, 2006**

Architect: Sarah Wigglesworth

RIBA Award Winner 2006

An extremely successful refurbishment and addition for a dance studio in London. The interior is very expressive and is connected to the function and the exterior.

This is one of the most successful **examples of dialogue, a familiar encounter without evocative elements.**



<http://www.swarch.co.uk/>

<i>BUILDING: SIOBHAN DAVIES DANCE STUDIO</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	tension	provocat
Comments:	A truly masterful concept of dialogue without obvious elements, a familiar encounter		

Case studies

ADDITION

**OPERA IN LYON, 1993**

Architct: Jean Nouvel

<i>BUILDING: OPERA IN LYON</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to building			•
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	<b>tension</b>	<b>provocat</b>
Comments:	<p><b>Seemingly in dialogue, with the baroque oval addition - Nouvel slips in an ironic comment on grandeur posture of the opera houses.</b></p> <p>The overall visual effect is one of stylistic unity and continuity.</p>		

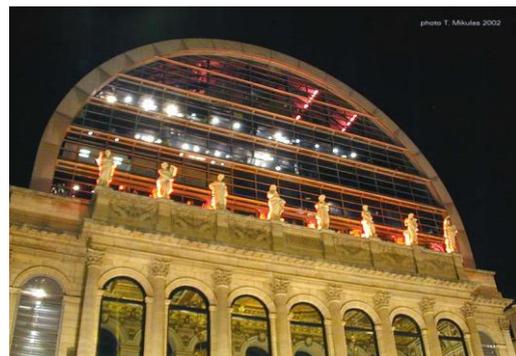


Photo: <http://www.athenaeum.ch/lyonoper.htm>

Case studies

ADDITION

**HOTEL EVROPA,**

**SARAJEVO 2009**

Architect: Sead Golos

Reconstruction and addition



<i>BUILDING: HOTEL EVROPA</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials		•	
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialog</b>	tension	provocat
Comments:	The idea is good but materialization (wood imitation panels) did not reflect the original concept		

Hotel Evropa is one of the objects in line with a new kind of thinking, even though the materialization is not as initially conceived, the concept is bald and interesting.

**A concept of shutters can be compared to the shutters concept in the following page by Herzog and de Meuron. In both cases the shutters are used to soften the interaction between the object and its surroundings.**

In this case the shutters are a resonance from the traditional shop shutters on the small commercial structure in the Old Town in Sarajevo.

Case studies

INFILL BUILDINGS

**APARTMENT BUILDING, PARIS, 2000**

Architects: Herzog and de Meuron



Front elevation and courtyard view

<i>BUILDING: APARTMENT INFILL, PARIS</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity , integrity of design			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	tension	provocat
Comments:	Dialogue with a subtle hint of mimicry		

“The sophisticated shuttering system is used as a visual and sun barrier, in this instance acts as transitional element towards the neighborhood and as an appeasement offering in order to fit in with the natives.

“The building itself by this has not lost any of its edge, to the contrary it has only gains since a - **“sheer glass façade might have been a harsh intrusion, but the undulating, layered, shuttered system maintains the wall surface while creating a changing pattern of distinct, repetitive openings like the neighboring buildings.”** ( quote Herzog &de Meuron)

[http://housingprototypes.org/project?File\\_No=FRA023](http://housingprototypes.org/project?File_No=FRA023)

## Case studies

## INFILL BUILDING

**SOCIAL HOUSING, 2007**

RUE LOUIS BLANC 45, PARIS

Architects: ECDM Emmanuel  
Combarel and Dominique  
Marrec

<i>BUILDING: PARIS SOCIAL HOUSING ECDM 10 ARR.</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials		•	
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	tension	provocat
Comments:	With a small twist ( window pattern) the building goes from bleak to characteristic		

Photo and quotes:

[http://www.architeria.eu/index.php?p=p\\_621&sName=17-SOCIAL-HOUSING&sLang=en](http://www.architeria.eu/index.php?p=p_621&sName=17-SOCIAL-HOUSING&sLang=en)

This building is the living proof that good architecture does not need to be expensive and that responsive and concepts produce aesthetic clarity and coherence.

*“If a dominant characteristic could be singled out in the agency’s work,” according to Marrec and Combarel themselves, “it’s the determination to propose a simple architecture within a strict logic without any nostalgia or stylistic concern.” (by ECDM)*

*This is not a “spectacular” example but rather represent a realistic challenge and situation architects face all the time and its architectural resolution is very indicative of the way so called ordinary low cost projects should produce.*

Case studies

INFILL BUILDINGS

**CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER (CAC), 2005**  
CINCINNATI, OHIO

Architect: Zaha Hadid

Photo:  
<http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/ohio/cincy/hadid/cac.html>

**Colour, massing** of volumes the strong and strict forms, take command over the surrounding buildings and take them to the next level.

Even before seeing who and where it is possible to see that this building generates cosmopolitan nature and really evokes the architecture of the US.



<i>BUILDING: ARTS CENTER OHIO</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity , integrity of design meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	<b>Tension created through forms not contrasting materials or colors, as if the building wants to fight off the mediocrity that surrounds it</b>		

Case studies

INFILL BUILDING

**HAAS HAUS, VIENNA 1987-1990**

Architect: Hans Hollein

This building is in the center of the City - opposite the Cathedral – and in the main street in Vienna.

Even though the materials used are high quality and the building seems to go along with the existing – the overall result is indistinctive, mediocre building that has no architectural concept and innovation.

This is a school example how just following the general rules of fitting in do not generate a positive result, neutral at best.



Photos: [www.greatbuildings.com](http://www.greatbuildings.com), [img\\_8286.jpg](http://img_8286.jpg)



<i>BUILDING: HAAS HAUS VIENNA</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings		•	
Authenticity, integrity of design meaning, innovation	•		
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	No contextual strategy		

Case studies

INFILL BUILDINGS

**IDEA STORE, WHITECHAPEL 2005**

Architect: Adjaye Associates



Photo: [http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/bts/archives/librairies/08\\_Whitechapel/](http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/bts/archives/librairies/08_Whitechapel/)



<i>BUILDING: IDEA STORE</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings		•	
Authenticity meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	dialog	<b>tension</b>	provocat
Comments:	Tension achieved through elegance of patterns  The new building lifts the value of entire neighborhood		

Uncompromising individual style of Adjaye in this case is combined with very elegant façade patterns that visually prevail over the massive building, go a long way to separate the building from street pattern insensitive similar examples.

## Case studies

## INFILL

**KUNSTHAUS, GRAZ, AUSTRIA 2007**

Architects: Peter Cook and Colin Fournier

<i>BUILDING: KUNSTHAUS, GRAZ</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation	•		
Arch. design			•
Scale relation		•	
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings	•		
Authenticity , integrity of design meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	Designers aimed for avant garde, and now here it is to stay for good....		

The comment to the right states wishes – what the building should mean, does it really or **is it just an intrusion? There is no intent for a provocation in this case only maybe to counter rejection by architects over the prevailing distaste for blob forms.**

Among the blob concepts this is one of the most successful examples, **for the design consistence and coherence and transparency**

**Such buildings are of course needed, strictly as exceptions.**



The aim to be innovative and to mix an amorphic structure with very precisely structured historic core of Graz in order to produce a iconic trade mark building for the city. The designers hoped that it would become “an interface between past and future”.

Has the task been achieved only the future can tell.

<http://images.google.ba/images?hl=bs&um=1&q=+site:upload.wikimedia.org+KUNSTHAUS+graz>

Case studies

Landmark building extension

**NELSON ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART, KANSAS CITY, 2006**



Steven Holl -, Missouri, USA (Photographer: Andy Ryan)

<i>BUILDING: NELSON ATKINS MUSEUM</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity , integrity of design meaning, innovation			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialog</b>	tension	provocation
Comments:	Saturated minimalism and the ultimate dialogue effect		

Photos above: <http://www.stevenholl.com>

The placement of the exhibition spaces in translucent boxes is rather unusual; it was done to free the structure while the exhibition is underground.

It is leaning towards disappearance of architecture or reducing its impact to the advantage of the site.

This building has been analyzed from many aspects in this thesis since it is a classic example of **site responsive and innovative architecture without the pomp and fanfare.**

Case studies

Landmark building extension

**DIOCESAN MUSEUM, COLOGNE, GERMANY, 2007**

Architect: Peter Zumthor



<i>BUILDING: DIOCESAN MUSEUM</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity, integrity of design			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialog</b>	tension	<b>provocation</b>
Comments:	Extraordinarily bold choice of material rare result dialogue with a hint of provocation.		

To some an obvious strategy would be using glass – a more safe but worn out approach. The move with concrete was extremely bold solution, and produced a surprisingly elegant coexistence

**Coexistence of fragile ruins – and plain concrete?**

Zumthor’s task was to display the excavated ruins and preserve the Böhm chapel, yet to cram enough gallery accommodation onto the site to display the extensive diocesan collections. At the same time, all historic elements had to be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

Picture: AR, November 2007

Case studies

Response to local architecture

**TURKISH CULTURAL CENTER IN SARAJEVO**

Architect: Amir Vuk Zec

<i>BUILDING: CULTURAL CENTER SARAJEVO</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings		•	
Authenticity , integrity of design			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	tension	provocat
Comments:	Dialogue with a subtle hint of mimicry		



This is quite a good example of the design in context, contemporary architecture form spiced up with local flavor that makes sense since the object is in the vicinity of the Old Town .

Without the window detail the mass and proportion would place this building as nothing more than contemporary ordinary.

Even though these windows **evoke regionalism in Sarajevo** they are a kind of provocation since **this is the first and only example of open use of local elements without pathetic sentimentalism.** (see other examples in the Part III quasi critical regionalism in BiH)

Case studies

Response to local architecture

**DET BLÅ HJØRNE, OR “THE BLUE CORNER”, 1989**

Architect: Vandkunsten arch.

The Blue Corner, represents a rather successful attempt at integrating new architecture into an older neighborhood of well-established aesthetic character.



<i>BUILDING: BLU CORNER</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity , integrity of design			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	tension	provocat
Comments:	Dialogue with a subtle hint of mimicry		

This example shows how with simple means it is possible to have it both ways – a **powerfull contemporary concept hidden among the historic settings**. Few things contribute to this success –

- **excellent massing and proportions,**
- **splitting the corner as if two independent buildings,**
- **leaving the corner a void**
- **visual tricks – making elements appear vernacular at first but when looked at closely they are not so**

Photo :<http://katieincopey.wordpress.com/2008/01/25/det-bla-hj%C3%B8rne/>

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSES**

**THE SEEKO'O HOTEL IN BORDEAUX 2007**

King Kong Architects



<i>BUILDING: SEEKO HOTEL</i>			
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>high</b>
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design			•
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity , integrity of design			•
Contextual strategy	<b>dialogue</b>	<i>tension</i>	<b>provocat</b>
Comments:	Dialogue with a subtle hint of mimicry, provocation		

The Seeko'o Hotel in Bordeaux is fitted into its historic context like a gigantic block of ice to "melt in".

Tall vertical windows in the homogeneous urban setting along the street are used in abstract way without any frames, cut to different depths- almost pretending to be windows.

From the urban point of view and street continuity it does its intended task of melting in.

It almost acts as a parody to the row of buildings in the street.

Subtle responses to the surroundings establish a dialogue in which the new building's identity is strengthened.

Photos: [www.wayfaring.info](http://www.wayfaring.info)

**OFFICES IN SARAJEVO, MULA MUSTAFA BASESKIJA STREET NR. 3, 2008**

ARHITEKT co.



<i>BUILDING: OFFICE BUILDING SARAJEVO</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation		•	
Arch. Design visual		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials		•	
Relation to adjacent buildings		•	
Authenticity meaning, innovation integrity of design	•		
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	None of the above		

Similarities of these two projects stop immediately after noticing white cube with long window frames.

The comparative analyses of these two buildings demonstrate the difference between similar visual resolutions and concepts with meaning.

The latter solution, even though architecturally a median result lacks any kind of relation to the context and concept.

These two examples are a clear confirmation of the concept of the thesis: it is not about the visual approach it is about the process undertaken to achieve it.

## CONCLUSIONS – LESSONS LEARNED

The trend and evolution of the design in context is clearly visible on the presented case studies and examples. From the “old school” classic approach on the Haas Haus in Vienna, where the concept of “reflection” in the glass and general correspondence to the adjacent building heights does not really come across as inventive design, to a more soft and exciting approach in works of Sarah Wiggleworth – The Siobhan Dance Studio that is not afraid to borrow some familiar patterns and give them a new meaning.

The extravagant approach such as the Kunsthaus in Graz, new library in Prague belong to “the spur of the moment” kind of thing that is an interesting concept at the time but in the long run it disrupts the city tissue.

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### The main lessons learned from the examples are:

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- **The new infill buildings must be established and confident enough on its own, with creative and innovative design**
- **When reaches out to “borrow” something from the neighbors or the past or the memory of place it must be intentional part of the programme, concept.**
- **A contextual building without strong concept and attitude on its own can sometimes be as equally degrading as an uninventive context-ignorant infill building.**
- **The new contextualism is the part not of regionalism but actually is part of realistic needs to improve the urban conditions. This is also part of the new ethics and aesthetics that are interconnected more than ever in all the successful example.**
- **The fusion of context – content – concept is necessary and inevitable**
- **All of the successful buildings had unexpected solutions, visual tricks, or used something familiar and given it a fresh look and meaning**

## II.2 THEORIES

**The origin of debate** of fitting the new buildings with the old originates to the modernist movement, since **their ignorant attitude to the past provoked a later counter-reaction** (the example of reconstruction of Berlin, (Appendix 3- Masked Nostalgia, Chic Regression, Harvard Design Magazine).<sup>2</sup> The modernist movement still has a strong appeal to architects all over the world, and it is especially visible in the market of high standard single-family houses.

The **postmodernist have reinstated variety** in architecture and among this legalized contextualism. They also (through works of R.Venturi) brought the so called “irony” in architecture that put the theory of contextualism into new tracks.<sup>3</sup> It brought the recognition of ambivalence, complexity and adornment

Critical regionalism by K. Frampton, **tries to be a counter measure in an increasing dominance of placeless architectural design**. Although not applicable as a formula to all problems it can stay as a very powerful tool in the practice of building in historic/mixed environment. *Kenneth Frampton: “The fundamental strategy of critical regionalism consists of mediating the effect of universalistic civilization with elements which can be directly connected to the specificities of a specific place...”*

**The Delft conference was a turning point in the debate of critical contextualism and the design in context in general.** It is often referred to as a reference on the issue. It also was a breaking point with the major theoretical approaches and has given way to practice to resolve some of its questions.



**School in Bangladesh,**  
**Architectural Review Awards 2006**  
Anna Heringer, Eike Roswag, Berlin

*new and refreshing local identity  
can be achieved by exploiting the  
immediate*

<sup>2</sup> Harvard Design Magazine, by Sebastian Schmaling, Masked Nostalgia, Chic Regression : “Redesign, for decades stigmatized by Modernist purists as an inferior architectural speciality, reserved for the artistically timid and creatively challenged, has finally become a legitimate part of contemporary architectural practice..”

[www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/publications/hdm/back/23\\_Schmaling.html](http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/publications/hdm/back/23_Schmaling.html)

<sup>3</sup> Source Wikipedia : Combining surprise with tradition, the Vanna Venturi House includes numerous references to historic architecture. Look closely and you will see suggestions of Michaelangelo’s Porta Pia in Rome, the Nymphaeum at Palladio, Alessandro Vittoria’s Villa Barbaro at Maser, and Luigi Moretti’s apartment house in Rome.

## Modernism

Modernist architecture emphasizes function, honest and pure building solutions. The first modernist buildings were industrial, so the use of technology and the break with tradition was logical. <sup>4</sup>

The modernists view space as a homogenized, pure, objective and neutral, form that follows function etc.

The architecture is successful in cases of highly intellectual aesthetic concepts with a substantial budget, but on mass scale such as housing and urbanism it has failed completely.

Its architecture theory completely disregards the past, and context to make way for a brand new world. (There are exceptions of course)

## Re-branding Modernism

Once again modernism is coming back, re-branded, since its ideas and forms give the architecture **timelessness, simplicity and elegance.**

Its ideas are still one of the most powerful drives in the contemporary architecture, only today there is not such stylistic unity and the borders between different approaches are blurred and recombined.



**RIBA Award Winner 2007**



**Three buildings, Munchen**

**Architect** Allmann Sattler Wappner

*The roofs and façades of the three building forms are all homogeneously clad, without visible jointing, in surface-blasted steel panels. The surrounding open areas are covered by square-format steel panels with continuous, monumentalised leaf patterning.*

[www.detail.de:issue](http://www.detail.de:issue) 10/2002

<sup>4</sup> By the 1920s the most important figures in Modern architecture had established their reputations. The big three are commonly recognized as Le Corbusier in France, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius in Germany. Mies van der Rohe and Gropius were both directors of the Bauhaus, one of a number of European schools and associations concerned with reconciling craft tradition and industrial technology.

Modernism may be found in the work of Berthold Lubetkin (1901-1990), a Russian architect who settled in London and founded a group called Tecton. The Tecton architects believed in applying scientific, analytical methods to design. Source: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

## Postmodernism

Postmodern architecture evolved from the modernist movement, by combining new ideas with traditional forms. The postmodernists have surprised made ironic comments through their works – placing familiar shapes and details are used in unexpected ways.

**R.Venturi** The key ideas of postmodernism are set forth in two important books by Robert Venturi: *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and *Learning from Las Vegas*. Even though Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown have developed a formidable and comprehensive theoretical approach on contextuality, this is only partly reflected in their work. Some of the buildings have a slightly formalistic and rigid appeal.<sup>5</sup>Postmodernism has given a new life to the ideas of building in context,<sup>6</sup> even though some of the practical work of the post modernists did not always follow on the theory.

**The ingenious concept of irony is not used in the current trends; it requires substantial knowledge and confidence to implement.**

**The idea of postmodernism has a new role today. It has set the architecture world free of many dogmas that have been holding the creativity, intuition and retro –chic.**



*“Spanish squeeze Grimshaw’s new cultural centre in the Galician city of A Coruña is strange, unexpectedly enjoyable and more than a little mad. It arranges itself in a way few art galleries would dare. It is nothing like any other building in the city, yet it responds to its context with charm and confidence. Squaring an ambitious brief with a tight site could have resulted in a toned down version of the 1996 competition-winning design” Photo and text:*

*[http://www.e-architect.co.uk/madrid/fundacion\\_caixa\\_galicia.htm](http://www.e-architect.co.uk/madrid/fundacion_caixa_galicia.htm)*

<sup>5</sup> When Robert Venturi built the mothers house, he shocked the world and changed the way we think about architecture The design of **Vanna Venturi House** looks simple. The house has a sense of symmetry, yet the symmetry is often distorted. For example, the façade is balanced with five window squares on each side. The way the windows are arranged, however, is not symmetrical.

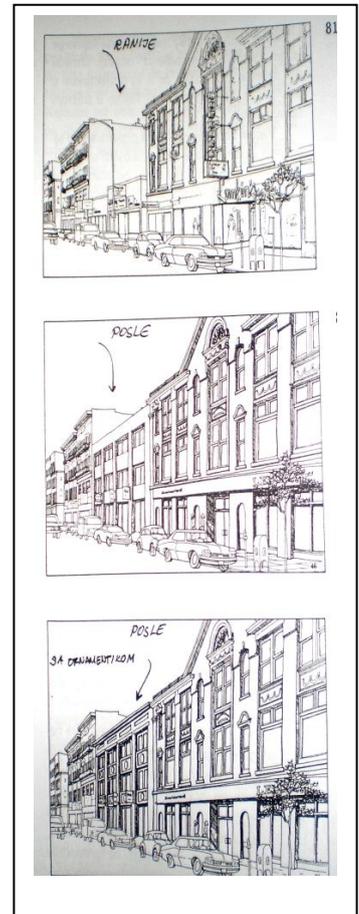
<sup>6</sup> In *Bosnia and Herzegovina* the post-modern movement was not as strong as the modernist. There are not many buildings of this style and particularly not many in context. But its concepts are relevant for the future of contextualism in BiH.

## Architecture in Context – Brent C. Brolin

This book published in **1980**, takes us through **relevant examples** of the time to explain the complexity of “fitting the new buildings with the old”. The publication arrived at the time when architects were rediscovering “visual continuity” of the streetscape and postmodern movement was strong.<sup>7</sup>

Even though most of the examples shown in the book are outdated, some important conclusions have come out of this research that is valid today:

- all different approaches can be used as long as the realization is highly skillful
- there must be a **meaningful visual relationship** between the old and the new
- in many cases when the architect followed the **usual guidelines for fitting the new with old** ( scale, proportion, floor height...) the result was not good enough, or **the building was just plain..**
- so this led to conclusion that the design must also be **daring enough** to have the proper effect

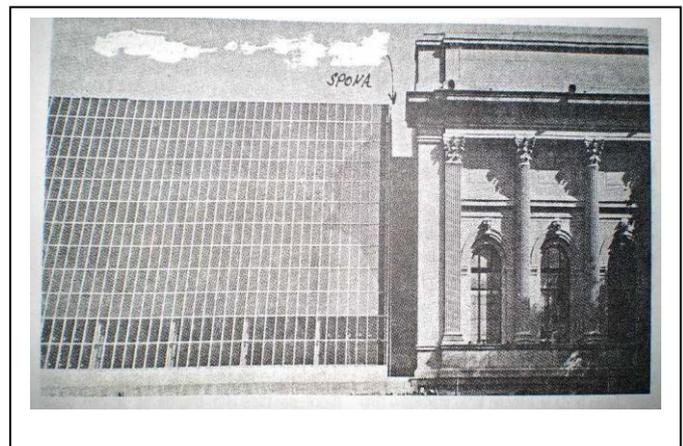


## Annex to the Metropolitan Museum in NY. By Roche, Dinkeloo Arch, 1979.

Typical “contrast” solution to the annex, the buildings connected with commonly used break-link.

If this was an exception, one could accept this approach, but the building is plain and uninventive.

The picture to the right (nr. 160 in the book Architecture in context, scanned).



<sup>7</sup> The following is not an exact English quotation since the text is translated from the publication of IRO “GRADJEVINSKA KNJIGA” Belgrade, 1985

On modernist architecture: “ *My hypothesis implicitly includes the fact that the modernist terms –new forms for new functions- and the so called “honest” expression of the interior function on the façade does not hold any higher moral ground, virtue or value of the object.*”

“They (modernists) have designed their projects like they exist in some sort of spatial and visual vacuum.”

### Critical regionalism – Kenneth Frampton

Critical regionalism is an approach to architecture that points out to placelessness and lack of meaning in Modern Architecture calls for use of contextual forces to give a sense of place and meaning<sup>8</sup>.

According to Frampton, critical regionalism should adopt modern architecture critically for its “*universal progressive qualities*” but at the same time should value responses particular to the context. Emphasis should be “*on topography, climate, light, tectonic form rather than scenography and the tactile sense rather than the visual.*” Frampton draws from phenomenology to supplement his arguments.<sup>9</sup>

The debate on Critical regionalism does not seem to cease, it is a highly relevant and useful theory in architecture, but still it is up to individuals to critically asses all the relevant aspects of both sides, Thesis promotes that the **meaning of place is not equal to the place as a region**, but goes beyond which allows the theory to develop in new directions such as use of local processes, local phenomenology etc.

According to Tzonis and Lefaivre: “*critical regionalism need not directly draw from the context, rather elements can be stripped of their context and used in strange rather than familiar ways*”.

Critical regionalism is different from regionalism which tries to achieve correspondence with vernacular architecture. In many countries (as it is case with BiH) it has developed into a form of quasi critical regionalism, and the moment not producing quality architecture.

**Critical regionalism when used in contemporary solutions must shun the burden of “backwardness” and confidently reach into treasury of refreshing local identity and be the force behind metamorphosis and mitigation of values of traditional architecture.**

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<sup>8</sup> The term critical regionalism was first used by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre and later more famously by Kenneth Frampton. Frampton put forth his views in “*Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six points of architecture of resistance.*”

<sup>9</sup> As is evident in its title this section moves from the abstract general site condition to strategies of topography and so on. Modernization favors the tabula rasa approach to clear and flatten the site, thereby optimizing the economy of earth-moving equipment and also making way for the rational layout of building. This removal of topography is a gesture of the universal technique resulting in placelessness. Critical regionalism would instead embrace the topography as a manifestation of the regions geologic and agricultural history. This then would be transferred into the form of any building placed here, the building set into the terracing contours of the land. Consistent with the writing of Heidegger, is this revealing of form brought into being by the site. **By Scott Patterson, Critical Analysis of Towards a Critical Regionalism by Frampton, 1995**

### The Delft Conference in 1990 – Review<sup>10</sup>

The term Critical Regionalism, just being formulated at the time, and perhaps not yet well understood. It proved to be a difficult and contradictory, also lacking a visual component that can be conveyed by some form of stylistic unity. Regionalism was seen as a return to vernacular or local motives, while the “Critical” part included distancing techniques that still were not fully understood or perhaps defined.

So the Conference in Delft University invited mostly “philosophically inclined critics” rather than famous architects to debate on the issue and help the practicing architects define and justify their work in this manner, as well as to allow this theory to evolve.

**Critical regionalism can thrive as a question of one’s place in the world** and the role of architecture in it, and so the theory has reached a point where the **architects concerned with the values rooted in local context find it hard to resist the “melting pot force of modernity”**, so a clear course of action for the practice has yet to be defined.

**The Delft conference gave rise to the debate of critical contextualism and the design in context in general. It is often referred to as a reference on the issue.**

**It also was a breaking point with the major theoretical approaches and has given way to practice to resolve some of its questions.**



**The Scottish Storytelling Centre**  
designed by: Malcolm Fraser Architects

RIBA 2007 WINNER

*“This site, combining the historic ‘John Knox House’ with the adjacent Netherbow Arts Centre, marks the historic, mediaeval main port of entry into the City of Edinburgh.*

*The rebuilding uses the sense of urban compression and arrival to recover the idea of ‘Gateway’ as historic event, and as metaphor and tale”.*

<http://www.malcolmfraser.co.uk/projects>

<sup>10</sup> Review by Richard Ingersoll, Rice University, Context and Modernity, Delft, June 12-15 1990.

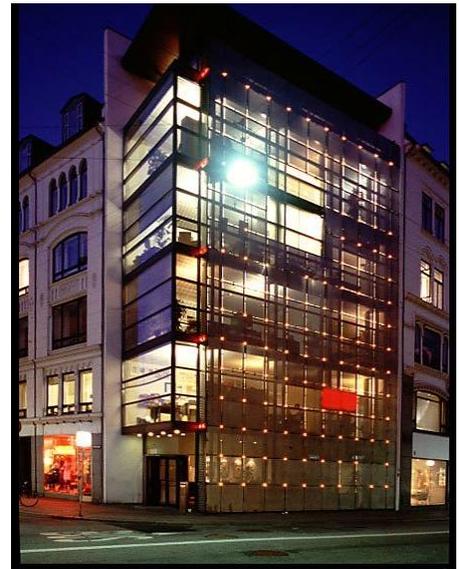
### **New age – no strings attached...**

The June 1995 issue of Architectural Review has shown several projects of new infill buildings and their respective urban solutions.

The buildings presented are very aware of their surroundings but still do not lack the quality or the character on its own.

BT building in Copenhagen, a small transparent building, surgically fitted into the city fabric, upgrades the value of the area without making an obvious intrusion, with a special accent on the night when it becomes alive for the process of paper making.

**Less theories – more practice** approach has produced some great results over the past 15 years. **With no strings attached to a particular purist style or suffering from nostalgia, architects have finally found a meaningful relationship between the building and its context.**



**BT Newspaper building in  
Copenhagen By Henning Larsen**

<http://www.arcspace.com/architects/larsen/bt.htm>

### **The “Critical” reconstruction of Berlin<sup>11</sup>:**

as noted by H.Lefebvre: *“a cultural process that takes oscillates between destruction and reconstruction...” The dialectic method – the interpretative redesign of existing structures or fragments as architectural or urban collages.*<sup>12</sup>

Despite the presence of worlds renowned architects the architectural critic still is ambiguous about the embrace of the results. It was a project of re-creating the context and building in it, as well as having a social and political role. This entire project demonstrated the desire to re-capture the memory of a place and inclination towards familiar building forms.

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<sup>11</sup> *“After the Wall had gone, there was a great opportunity not just to unify but to reestablish the old historical center of the city,” recalls Berlin architect Hans Kollhoff, who has worked on many of the projects. The 50-year interruption in center-city development preserved, paradoxically, something of prewar Berlin. The rare possibility thus exists to realize a vision of urban life distinctly at odds with the chaotic and exploding forms of the American and Asian cities of the second half of the century. “There was severe damage” to Berlin, says Kollhoff, “but people retained a certain image of their city, a very precise image, and they want to regain something of that old world.*

**Harvard Design Magazine, by Sebastian Schmaling, Masked Nostalgia, Chic Regression: ...**

### III CONTEXTUAL STRATEGIES

Contextual strategies derive from the “*critical experience of architecture through contextual parameters*” and the continuous search for the contextual processes.

CONTENT

#### Phase 1 – Negotiation with site/situation/context

Site negotiations take into consideration all spatial and situational peculiarities, that are a starting analytical point for the design.

#### Phase 2 – Choice of contextual process

A process that involves recognizing the boundaries and resolving how to break out of them at the same time. A local (site) contextual process can be used in the design phase, can be reflected in the design or can be a permanent quality of a building – ability and tendency to transform and adapt.

#### Phase 3 – Contextual tactics – tools

The last phase is architectural visualization through concepts of creating tension or dialogue with the context with or without a hint of provocation, in these cases as a tool that enables the architect to cross the defined boundaries and expectations.



Five Franklin Place, New York,

UN studio Ben van Berkel architect

[www.fivefranklinplace.com](http://www.fivefranklinplace.com)

**A context is a synthesis of place, time and situation (attitude).**

But context is also an ever expanding, changing determinant that evolves with the city and its functions. The boundaries placed upon with the context can only be broken through the process of acknowledge, recognition.

**In order to conquer the limits, the first step is to respect and define them.**

**The contextual strategies – call for pushing the boundaries through processes, ever transforming entities with scenario concepts or finding the hidden underlying spatial phenomena and incorporating and visualizing them through architecture.**

Every aspect of life somehow includes some kind of boundaries which are determined by objective factors and in some cases by personal attitude. Recognizing and defining these boundaries takes wisdom, knowledge and courage. Exactly the same goes for the aspects of architectural design, as it is an integral part of our lives and a direct reflection of it.

The process of recognition of architectural boundaries is actually the first (and necessary) step in going beyond them.

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#### CHALLENGE OF SET FRAMES (LIMITS)

Architecture imitates life in many aspects, especially in its dualistic nature that balances between the physical and metaphysical qualities, both part of its essence.

There are numerous boundaries to be broken, but only one that needs to be contained – an architect's ego, arrogance that is one of the biggest obstacles in good design. Another boundary is so called "architectural puritanism" that looks down upon some aspects of architectural design in context as something that does not belong into "signature style" of an individual or of a certain current trend.

### III.1.1 SITE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

#### Site resolution

In his book (**Points+Lines**) Stan Allen formulates:

**“Working with and not against the site, something new is produced by registering the complexity of the given.”**

*“Instead or with of architectonic clarity we prefer an extended sensibility for atmospheric complexity and SYNTHESIZED qualities such as vernacular expression, linguistic subtlety, operational pragmatism, research bi-products and structural intelligence. This act of synthesizing by evocative strength and suggestion has been explicit in transforming and recapturing existing structures and buildings”. Helen and Hard, Architectural office Norway, Article in A10 Magazine Issue Sept/ October 2008,*

Site resolution is by far the most important component in the design process, the object can be more or less appealing, but the urban tissue is highly sensitive to mistakes. Mostly with the infill buildings there are two cases<sup>1</sup>:

- Either the building parcel is tightly squeezed between objects
- Or the urban matrix is not entirely structured and consists of numerous variables.

This interaction can have numerous manifestations, as long as it “*tells the story*” of the relationship: **building – context - site**.

Process of negotiation is the key component in establishing a relation with the site, it is a process in which something is given up something gained, just like any negotiations, it has to generate mutual value increase.

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<sup>1</sup> First case “the squeeze” looks like a straightforward result; one has to consider access, passages, urban grain scale, connections (BT building in Copenhagen).

The second case, requires great skills in site resolution: the structure, the flow of cars and pedestrians and all of the above-mentioned. (good examples are the Black Diamond Library building in Copenhagen and the already mentioned Kastner and Ohner shopping mall in Graz).

When designing in a built environment, the limits are heavily present, but ever challenging. In general the concept of this work is aimed to surpass the long outdated definitions and notions about the design for a context, for a site.

**Site – context – situation broadening of definition of site into definition of situation.**

The ever present transformation of the urban tissue and pressing needs of communities must be addressed in a new more complex way. Attempts to work with the site, without addressing the broader issues is simply not enough any more, thus resolution of the site becomes dealing with a situation.

*“Site appraisal:*

- **Intensive programming:** *In practice, intensive programming, but also an elastic yet precise relation between spatial accommodation and formal intervention.*
- **Distraction:** *Camouflage, mimicry, wit, deception and stealth – tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised - enter the **catalogue of architectural means** to reprogram the dominant logics of space in the city.*
- **Site Accommodation:** *Resolution of site conditions...Working with and not against the site, something new is produced by registering the complexity of the given.*
- **Field conditions:** *Form matters, but not so much the forms of things as forms between things.*
- **Post collage:** *Fluid models of exchange, differential unities and free floating intensities replace the critical model of recuperating difference through ever escalating fragmentation<sup>2</sup>.*

**Situation carries within all preconceived notions about the qualities of space (such as bio climatic conditions, morphology, patterns...etc) but and also various current issues ( events, politics, social component etc).**

**In this way, in dealing with situation, the architecture is able to convey targeted message and to project the qualities of space.**

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<sup>2</sup> Stan Allen, Points+Lines, Diagrams and Projects for the City, Princeton Architectural Press, Year, pg.16,17

Discovering the resonance to a certain situation, requires extensive analyses of all components that contribute to it, recognizing overriding factors that will have the most influence to the design – node points (sometimes it is bioclimatic aspect sometimes it is to express political ambitions of a certain community).

#### Site Determinants:

- Determine the constants (the insurmountable spatial qualities that are hard to ignore – for instance like extreme climate conditions.)
- Determine the transformable, change elements ( greenery – change through seasons), occupancy day night etc
- Determine the peculiarities, special features and nodes that will endorse the design
- Determine the points where the design will have to give back – make up for lost ground (F. Ghary with the building in Hannover, where he made a simple but efficient “twist” to design to make up for its “disrespect” for the scale of the neighborhood...



*Francois Roche, Parking lot **working in landscape (site)**, **The Asphalt spot**, Japan*

*<http://www.new-territories.com/roche%201997.htm>*

*picture <http://whywhywhywhywhy.com/2005/03/francois-roches-dangerous-parking-lot/>*

### III.1.1 PROCESSES:

The notion of an ever changing building entity, in which the process is not finished when the object is built, but can be later transformed. That is an ancient invention that allows the structure to transform to answer to new demands in future. But here we are talking about transformation process that occurs somewhat faster, determined by owner or user or architect.

Site phenomenon or local phenomenology<sup>3</sup> is also a process where distinctive or peculiar qualities of space become projected into the new building, become evident and resonant. The phenomenon can sometimes be elusive, like in the case of Nelson Atkins museum extension, but its representation very convincing.

**Two, in their essence similar approaches, trying to find the undelying meaning and push the expected boundaries of built space. The results are however quite different – in the case of S.Hall architecture the result is poetic but expressed through clean firm language, while F.Roche is more like work in progress, boulderless space.**



Java Island, Canal Houses, Amsterdam

*Architects selected for the project included Rene van Zuuk and Bjarne Mastenbroek*

<http://architypes.net/place/java-island-canal-houses>

<sup>3</sup> *Architecture and Phenomenology Second International Conference, Kyoto Seika University, Japan June 26, 2009 (Friday) to June 29, 2009 (Monday) In continuation of the First Architecture and Phenomenology Conference, which was held in Haifa, Israel during May 2007, the Second Architecture and Phenomenology Conference explores diverse relationships between phenomenology and architecture. The committee members of the Conference invite papers on the relation between architecture and phenomenology, and on phenomenological interpretations of architecture at various levels. Despite criticisms made by other schools of philosophy such as neo-Marxism, structuralism, post-structuralism, postcolonialism and so forth, phenomenological lessons on life-world, language, perception, body, creation and ethics inspired consistently leading architects and writers in architecture.*

*The Conference will explore architectural and urban lessons of recent development in phenomenology itself such as the ideas of 'being given' and 'saturated phenomenon' by Jean Luc-Marion and 'generative phenomenology' by Anthony Steinbock. Lastly, the Conference will engage with the contemporary situation in which discourses on materiality, sustainability, and digital design and fabrication claim to have opened new arenas in the manner that we apprehend and design environments. The Conference investigates how phenomenology offers itself as a valuable lens through which the openings and limits of these discourses can be evaluated.*

**Both though firmly place their architectural substance in REGIONAL / LOCAL processes and events.**

**Local processes** are an essential part of all scenarios: The famous Java Canal example - new row of houses on canals in Amsterdam, in completely contemporary language (reinterpretation of some traditional elements) follow the local building processes that unmistakably give it a place and identity, but are also ironic. Here the local processes, and forms were put in motion to generate a new value.

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It is this principle at its best \*- as a two way street – drawing inspiration from the local conditions but they also generate it – generated phenomenon

GENERATED PHENOMENON

With the principle of phenomenology / scenarios it is actually inevitable to be regional / local in the design aspect, since these concepts are quite abstract themselves they **draw meaning from actual building/local phenomenon.\***

All of the works of F. Roche gain and at the same time generate local issues and scenarios, while the S.Hall ties the phenomenon closer to the building itself.

The context is provided by the socio-economic conditions that have lead to a place being as it is - both the setting (current character) and historic context (time line). The revelation of this connection has resolved most of the issues concerning the difference of this approach to the critical regionalism that tends to interpret only the built environment ( its patterns, forms etc).

**All this surmounts to an unapologetic local – regional approach without taking any of its contemporary edge.**

**Within it it encompasses the principle of irony, provocation which can not exist without without the subject of their irony, provocation. So although concepts “ inspiration from constellation of stars etc” can work on a certain level and in some exceptional cases, the building must keep its appeal for many years to come.**

In this case, regionalism (localism) has to be regarded through this prism in order to push forward with the idea of genius loci. It is actually that we look and find new inspiration in the always same persistent genius loci phenomenon.

## LOCAL PHENOMENOLOGY

**Local (site) phenomenology is a philosophical design based on the physical experience of the context of and its sensory properties.<sup>4</sup>**

Phenomenology, in general favored an approach to design that was highly personal and inward looking. This perception is now applied to the perception of site and local phenomenon or even the adjacent building hidden phenomenon.

Even though some phenomenologists were critical of modernism and the International Style in particular, phenomenologically-oriented architects favored the clean and the simple over the complex or the organic.<sup>5</sup> It is mostly the case even now, since more complex forms distract attention from the pure idea.

Phenomenology and scenariology are both processes in design and they continue even when the building is built ( with fluid elevation, lights, changes in seasons *in S.Hall projects, he makes attempts to manipulate the phenomenological effect that his work will have on its eventual viewers. He moves to mold perception through the use of sound, color and light, which he controls through his choice of materials.*)

Architectural perception depends on the understanding of intention.

**The intention – the message is the most critical part of the decision making process, it has to come clear through architecture without a three page long explanation of the design. If there is no intention the rest of the process loses vision and clarity.**

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<sup>4</sup> **History of phenomenology** Beginning in the 1970s, phenomenology, with a strong influence from the writings of Martin Heidegger, began to have a major impact on architectural thinking. Christian Norberg-Schulz was an important figure in this movement. A Norwegian, he graduated from the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule ETH in Zurich in 1949 and eventually became Dean of the Oslo School of Architecture. His most important writings were *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980) and *Intentions in Architecture* (1963). These books were widely read in architectural schools the 1960s and 1970s. Another architect associated with the phenomenology movement was **Charles Willard Moore, who was Dean of the School of Architecture at Yale from 1965 to 1970.**

<sup>5</sup> The approach that was most at odds with phenomenology was that of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. . Though interest in phenomenology has waned in recent times, several architects, such as Steven Holl and Peter Zumthor, claim to be phenomenologists. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, professor of architectural history at McGill University, is also known as a defender of phenomenology

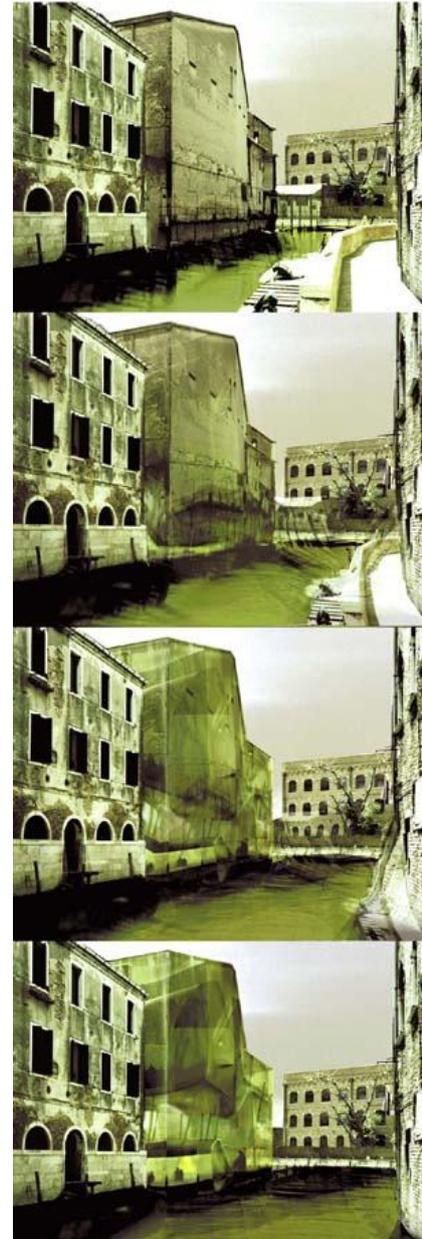
## SCENARIOS

Experimental and inventive, the architecture of Francois Roche R&Sie... seeks to be profoundly critical and “deceptive”: an architecture which “contrasts a non-form which seems made of material from each situation”...

- “Making with...” is their way of describing their research into a critical experience of architecture through a mutation of contextual parameters.
- Scenarios of hybridization, grafting, cloning, morphing give rise to perpetual transformation of architecture which strives to break down the antinomies of object/subject or object/territory”.<sup>6</sup>

Scenarios, as a category above concept or context provide a mitigation of values to a more complex thinking and complementary design. Scenarios add a 4th dimension into projects, design process or the realization itself.

No matter what the scenario is two basic underlying conditions (emotions) weave through them all – Tension/Dialogue. Creating these conditions (subtly or outwardly) through scenario or concept is one of the primary tasks of an architect.



Venice, Aqua Alta 1.0, 4,000 m2, 1998 Photos: <http://www.new-territories.com/roche>

**Regarding scenarios and processes in the context, allows the design to leap into new category from “visual matching” exercise to a multilayered design.**

**Use of a scenario or a process broadens the term “Context” since it incorporates tangible and intangible features and characteristics and activities.**

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.new-territories.com/roche> This architectural office does not believe in branding and architects status so they change the office name from time to time and their web site is challenging at best and constantly transformed according to their belief.

### III.1.1 Provocation

**Design sometimes is on the razor thin edge between provocation and construction. Such buildings are needed, as an exception, to push the limits on how we feel and think about space, because not everything can fit into a box.**

- The question is will time wear out the ability of a certain design to shock, to provoke?
- How to distinguish an avant-garde provocation from the lame excuses of arrogance?



Jan Kaplicky Prague, National Library

2007 Competition

Photo: [www.bdonline.co.uk](http://www.bdonline.co.uk)

**Provocation can turn into an everlasting value only if the provocation is not just a spatial one, but also provokes rooted opinions, values, and characters.**

Provocation has many tasks, but a provocation concept that can sustain its edge over a long period of time (couple of generations) is a truly successful project sometimes even if its architecture is not. Nowhere is provocation as effective as it is in the urban centers, **since its “edge” is sharpened by the contrast and conformity of historic areas.**

In the case of the Prague library there is no such substance, but merely an unusual space whose attraction will diminish after the first sight. Unexpectedly the Nelson Atkinson Museum by S. Hall is more of a provocation that has turned upside down the world of museum design.

For its defense the Kaplicky library had in mind also political provocation, to counter the soviet era mind setting, but it was kind of late for such action. Also what definitely undermined this project was the author insisting that the project can be transferred to another city or country.

This is a provocation that works in many levels, not just the visual, but also a disturbing intellectual provocation, that uses the absence of common architectural space to stir emotion. Its concept and architectural execution work together to create a building that emphasizes a genuine feeling of loss.



Jewish Museum  
Berlin, Germany *Daniel Libeskind, 2001*

<http://www.daniel-libeskind.com/projects/show-all/jewish-museum-berlin/>

The intent itself is not provocation but to provoke contemplation.

And with this example it is possible to explain the intent and role of provocation: it fails in the project that are designed to shock to provoke at first, but without any further message, the concept fades away.

Provocation/ ridicule of certain mentality, character of a community can be a part of the genius loci phenomenon and a great design platform. Each place, location has different “buttons” that can be pushed to create provocation, but one thing is quite certain, only visual will not have a lasting effect, one must find the underlying intellectual note that will be part of the general concept.



Erwin Wurm, Vienna, Austria

[lifewithoutbuildings.net](http://lifewithoutbuildings.net)

**The best moments of provocation are when combined with one of the principles of Dialogue and Tension, with a subtle message on its own.**

**It is really the dualistic nature that provides the ultimate provocation and authentic architecture, like the examples of Seeko hotel, Bordeaux, Opera in Lyon where the provocation becomes an eternal comment statement about the conformity of existing historic tissue.**

### III.1.3 TENSION

Creating an overriding sensation of tension between the volumes, is a more preferred among architects than achieving harmony, maybe because most of these projects/objects are won through competition.

The wonderfully intelligent solution of Museum of Art, Celle, Germany Ahrens Grabenhorst Architekten BDA Hannover, 2006 demonstrates **the eternal scenario of dualistic nature of things,(jin and jang).**

It is possible to create many degrees of tension **from subtle - to “drama queen”** (like the Tate extension), and this is always part of the intended concept/process/scenario.



Herzog and de Meuron

Proposal for Tate Museum Extension

Photo: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

To create tension is in some aspects easier and in some more difficult to achieve than the dialogue. Because the starting point can be broader, but on the other hand it can easily veer off into a context ignorant building.

Creating tension - is always between two entities, in context ignorant concepts it is each block on its own.

Tension requires some form of interaction between the two built entities, it has many successful examples with smaller interventions since it is easier to be daring and experimental in a smaller scale.



Hearst Tower, New York USA

Architect: Foster Partners

Attempt to create tension but not there yet

Photo: [www.archrecord.construction.com](http://www.archrecord.construction.com)

For the further explanation of the tension principle, three buildings with seemingly similar (visual elements – deconstructive type surfaces) façade concept is taken in order to easier show the difference in the process before visual resolution.

This building has the most attitude confident concept out of the three, the total surprise element of the corner tower, and massing, as well as the urban continuity give this building an advantage over the elegant Hearst Tower that lacks a punch point and the Tate museum, kind of too predictable but still exciting solution that has little real connection to the original building.



HEADQUARTERS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN BILBAO, SPAIN 2008 Coll-Barreau Architects

Photo:<http://www.contemporist.com/2008/09/29/basque-health-hq-by-coll-barreau-architects/>

The outer skin – the jagged shape with folding glass is highly futuristic, but visualize the building without it, it becomes one of the stones in the street mosaic.

**But overwhelming is the gloomy, nearly gothic façade elements that reflects the adjacent building and then breaks them up into thousands of pieces. Even when dispersing its neighbours it is communicating, addressing them in a certain way.**

**This is the essence of the tension principle – creating an opposing attitude, a dramatic comment (ironic perhaps) to the conformity of the existing architecture.**

### III.1.4 DIALOGUE

Dialogue is a more difficult process to achieve, since it carries within two seemingly opposing attitudes: to integrate and to stand out. The architect must **intentionally and obviously** reach out on a visual level (the usual: scale, color, material, shapes...), but also on the conceptual level, in essence to present the neighbouring with a new fresh twist, such as in all of the examples bellow, it is evident that the new buildings carry the seeds of “architectural genetic material of its surrounding” but grows into something new.

Dialogue as a part of scenario sometimes does not obviously state the designers’ intentions, and is less favored by so called “starchitects”.



Residential Corner San Francisco, California.

Kennerly Strong Architecture

<http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/bts/archives/>

The building in San Francisco also carries unconsciously the genes of its predecessors. Rooted in with color and massing, the architectural elements are diverse, almost having all types of windows but with gracious proportions overall projects harmony.



Dolce and Gabbana Showroom, Milan, 2006  
+ARCH Fresa Fuenmayor Garbellini Tricario

#### Entirely contemporary ode to classicism

Complementary in the scale relation, color, and the origin of style (the new building is a classic in a way).

Seemingly effortless finesse and elegance, the architects have made a sophisticated and distinctive style that carries within “*sensation, tradition, culture and Mediterranean nature.*”

<http://www.archdaily.com/2458/dolce-gabbana-headquarters-studio-piuarch/>



**Dancing House (Tančící dům)**  
Prague, Czech Republic

<http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/dancinghouse/index.htm>

The building is an example of deconstructivist architecture, with an unusual shape. It is inspired with a couple (Ginger Rogers and Fred Astair) dancing together. **Even though it starts with an abstract inspiration it is surprisingly well connected to the context and has created the visual continuity that almost blends in but at the same time distincts itself.**

- To build in this environment is quite challenging. It is possible to give a contemporary building authenticity and roots, but must at the same time be careful **not to overdo** and create a shrine to the past. **Subtle reminders and sophisticated details can convey the message of the context, rather than an obvious resemblance.**
- **In all of these examples color has an important role and the general scale and volume seem to be strating point of design in Dialogue.**



*Kastner and Ohner shopping mall, in Graz built in 1994 by Szyszkovitz and Kowalski*

Architect, Frank Gehry 1996 One of the best examples is the shopping mall in Graz- a challenging corner building in an irregular urban setting.

**A great example of creative/critical contextualizm at work - new extension is contemporary, but the architect fools us with a few logical and familiar things.**

## III.2 CONTEXTUAL TACTICS

Contextual tactics is a set of tools that help us achieve the wanted result in design. Actually the most successful projects are those that break some basic rules but then make up for it with a spark of genius, as once Picasso said: **Art is a little lie that helps us uncover the truth.**<sup>7</sup>

*In Event-Cities 3, Bernard Tschumi “explores the **complex and productive triangulation of architectural concept, context, and content**. “There is no architecture without a concept, an overriding idea that gives coherence and identity to a building. But there is also no architecture without context -- historical, geographical, cultural -- or content (what happens inside). Concept, context, and content may be in unison or purposely discordant. Against the contextualist movement of the 1980s and 1990s, which called for architecture to blend in with its surroundings”, Tschumi argues that buildings may or may not conform to their settings -- but that the decision should always be strategic”.*

The concept is inevitably the most important part of this triangulation since the concept within also determines the context relationship and the feasibility of the content. The fusion of context – content – concept is necessary and inevitable

Part of the concept is inevitably a final visual resolution to the architectural task.

All of the successful buildings had unexpected solutions, visual tricks, or used something familiar and given it a fresh look and meaning

Materialization is an essential component and sometimes the starting or integral part of the concept. So in the visual sense there is a triangulation of concept – materialization and longevity ( permanent or temporary structure).

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<sup>7</sup> Inspiration for title and quotation ORIS Magasine, Croatia.

### III.2.1 VISUAL RESOLUTIONS - CONCEPTS

Choosing a concept that reflects the strategy/situation is a crucial point of the design process;

As elaborated in Contextual strategy, the concept is not the starting point of design in context; it is a tool, an essential tool in the process. It is the point where the triangulation of concept – content – context meets, backed by strategical - intentional decisions.

The notion of durability as well as materialization is also an integral part of this process.

The principle of dialogue is slightly more endorsed here by the author, it is harder to achieve, but its results are more favorable to the continuity of urban street fabric. That is not by any notion that tension is lesser, it is just that its application calls for more scrutiny because of the fine line between creating tension between old and new, and “contrast”- that does not create new value but it is each building to itself.

As previously stated all concepts and styles are endorsed and legitimate even the modernist concept as a tool.

Design in context and concepts of modernism can co-exist and even complement each other and still retain their own integrity. It is the overall idea that has to be coherent glue between the present and the past.

**The idea of modernism is not and should not be abandoned, since there is an everlasting human longing for purity and perfection.**



Lock-keeper's Graduate Centre, London E1  
Surface architects, RIBA winner 2006

Photo: [www.architecture.com/winners/2006](http://www.architecture.com/winners/2006)

**HOTEL FOUQUET, PARIS,  
FRANCE 2007**

Architect  
Edouard François

This is one of the most important examples and contributions to the everlasting debate of “fitting the new buildings with the old”.

**It started out as a provocation – fake historic moulds, but has evolved into some kind of disturbing dialogue, a transitional hub from the past.**

Here the most important part is the wrapping the visual resolution to the “Fitting” problem.

**This object teaches us one of the most important lessons in the contextualism :**

- 1. how valuable and necessary is the need to question everything,**
- 2. to rethink the ethics of “honest” design**
- 3. to spice up the architecture with some irony and sense of humor.**



*Photo and quotes: Architectural Review 45/11, Nov 2007*

*“François has turned historical conformity on its head, wrapping part of his remodeled building in an ingeniously moulded concrete carapace that bears the imprint and rhythm of a typical Haussmann facade.*

*Though the Haussmann wrapping paper is obviously fake, it does have a tenderly observed veracity that raises issues of meaning and authenticity. **In this context, the soft option would have been to create a seamless historical replica that blended with its surroundings, rather than attempt to make something clearly of its time. So which approach is more ‘honest’?***

*An explicit ‘can’t-see-the-join’ mimicking of history, or a cover version that brings something new to the party by intelligently synthesising past and present? Haussmann lives on, but has been abstracted and transformed into something else. ‘The rhythm is there and one feels that something unique lives in all these decorations’, says François. **Through this funky up architectural alchemy, he makes us see the past with new eyes.***

s for the visual resolution – it is the final stage in the process and a crucial one.

It has been noted that a good result on a particular site can be achieved through **many different ways, architectural styles.**

The thesis seeks the many faces of truth in the variety of solutions.

- Form a dialogue or create tension, indifference produces only itself
- Use visual tricks and illusions
- Everything must be deliberate, intention very clear



Musee d'Quai Orsay, Museum of African and Asian art,

Paris, France 2007/2008, Jean Nouvel Architects

The greenery gives this elevation a permanent change effect, through the season change ,a form of a scenario with the dialogue principle. This is also an ancient invention, ivy or rose bushes, but the technology applied here is all new – rubbery spongy matter with pockets filled with earth and moss.

Concepts: ironic vernacular, eclectic, mirroring, distortion, fake historic, metamorphosis, chic nostalgia, abstraction, re-branding, interpretation, reflection, ghostly echo, local physical or metaphysical phenomena ....

- The ultimate goal of building design is to make a **recognizable, functional and feasible structure**.

- When building in set into a pre-existing built environment with mixed/historical values it offers many advantages but also poses some limitations or sets frames for the future building.



- Actually in any case the building, in one way or another responds to the context, by resembling, interpreting it or contrasting it.

*Martin Lesjak INNOCAD architects*

*The Golden Nugget*

[http://www.baunetz.de/sixcms\\_4/sixcms/detail.php?template=dt\\_apple\\_zoom\\_eng&id=160818](http://www.baunetz.de/sixcms_4/sixcms/detail.php?template=dt_apple_zoom_eng&id=160818)

- How to create a building that **blends in and is distinctive** at the same time can seem contradictory at first, but it is really a functioning “formula” for building in context.

*The gold shade, which is at its brightest in the cladding of aluminium shingles on the street façade, fits in with the decorated yellow façades of the neighbouring buildings. The golden walls 'fold' inward from the façade into the interior space, becoming painted surfaces.*

- Architecture must look “back and around” in order to go further, Also it is valuable to look into a huge number of successful projects concerning building conversions, interiors (there the mix of old and new, retro, ethnic...anything can happen) that have established an excellent dialogue with the present, past and the context. So why is familiarity, warmth, respect for past looked down upon when it comes to external shield of the building? There is a number of architects that make design in line with what I call the new contextualizm:

- As an original concept “the contrast formula” was an ingenious idea and it really works in some cases, but the over abuse by architects today seems more like an excuse not to deal with the issues of mixed and historic contexts.

- The “thought process” – the response to the context is especially important and visible in infill building...

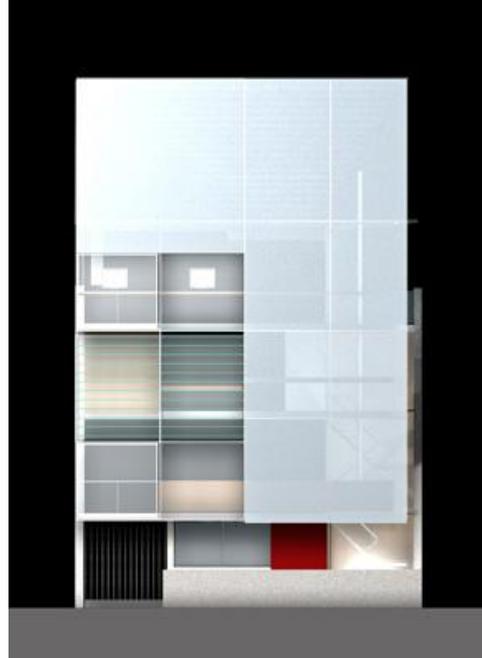
### III.2.2 CONTENT

**Content** is the essential part of the scenario, since it determines **activity and concept**. To which degree does the content determine the outcome of the design?

The most lavish designs are without a doubt museum extensions and similar projects, while residential objects tend to fall into a less experimental category.

This also has to do with the client since for big object the client is the state or the city and they have architectural juries more inclined towards breakthrough solutions, while the small private investor is more conservative.

Is this a Residential building? Office?



The importance of content, although difficult to show in this thesis, which is concentrated on visual, is the utmost ethical argument and the ingredient that revives the area, especially in the less visually attractive projects.

This decision must be part of the scenario – concept, must be strategic and intentional.

**The evolution of materials has allowed us to separate the “skin” of the object from its interior, leaving the decision to the architect – would one purposely incorporate and give a strong sense of content.**

**Content is an efficient tool of contextuality, giving meaning and connecting the architecture through function.**

**The function serves as reality check and roots the building to the community, acting as a cohesive glue of all other phases of design process and when building takes life.**

### III.2.3 MATERIALIZATION

#### Old and new encounters

How does choice of materials affect our intended scenario, is materialization part of it or is it sometimes decided in the end? Material can be a **powerful and an explicit** tool.

In previous times it was a direct expression of locality – use of local and available materials. Today the development of technology allows the stretching of design boundaries (Du Pont, Weyerhaeuser).

Materials as a part of scenario have been demonstrated in F.Roche works. Individual tailor made titanium sheets for F.Gehry buildings...It is inevitable, materials are no longer a tool, they are an integral part of the architectural concept.

Historic buildings are made out of stone, wood or brick, either plastered or faced with stone or brick. In the case of contemporary addition or infill it is possible to use same materials in new ways or other contemporary materials such as glass, concrete, steel, etc. This interaction between materials creates different visual resolutions as well as interactions of components.

#### Glass



Common use of glass as reflective surface in historic sensitive areas

Surface of New acropolis Museum, Bernard Schumi Architects

Glass is commonly used in new buildings and also in building additions to historic structures since. Glass today has endless possibilities with pattern, print and color, that makes it a universal material for all purposes. In design in context: The transparency makes it is visually acceptable, it does not threaten to overpower the old structure.

Glass is also used as a reflective surface in sensitive areas, but this approach has been over and mis-used in many locations as the easy way out of the problem

**Metal** is used as façade element as sheet or semi transparent cover. The use of metal is in most cases successful since it has shimmering reflective qualities, but makes a bald statement in the design ( Bilbao Museum, The Hague example, The rust – in Brussels ( intro cover page photo), Sarphistaat offices (in case studies)

**Concrete** is not the material one thinks of first as an exposed façade surface for the design in historic areas but two inventive examples prove this wrong. Extraordinary dialogue of ruins and concrete in P.Zumthors example in Koln ( case studies) and the Hotel in Paris ( with moulds) on pg. 64.

**Organic** ( wood and green) Wood ( or wood imitation panels) is a popular material, that immediately has a strong traditional reminiscence and is considered less imposing. It is best when applied in smaller projects or surfaces like the project ( picture at the bottom of page *Vicco's Tower Architect: 51% Studios* , RIBA Award 2008).

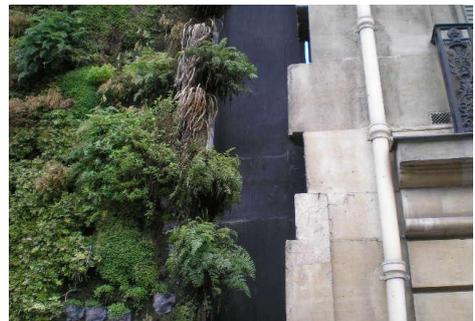
Also an ancient invention but a new way of realization is the organic greenery on the façade of Musee d'Quai Orsay by J. Nouvel, that camouflages the building.

**Stone and brick** are oldest materials but have transformed themselves into modern materials as well. They always work well in the design in context because of their immediate link to the existing buildings. Constant innovation and surprising uses of these materials will ensure good architecture.



The Hague, by the Dutch architecture office [Archipelontwerpers](http://www.archipelontwerpers.nl).

[www.archipelontwerpers.nl](http://www.archipelontwerpers.nl)



### III.2.4 LONGEVITY – DURATION OF A BUILDING IN MATERIAL AND DESIGN

Duration of a building is a pressing issue, especially in the light of the latest trends to recycle, reuse - the **environmental** aspect. Cost of maintenance, possibilities for repair? There are already some lessons to be learned from architecture from sixties and seventies, in many cases the buildings are obsolete and require extensive money for repair and transformation.

Can contemporary buildings be later transformed, redesigned? What lessons can we learn from the past?<sup>8</sup>

Difference between the design that becomes part of the heritage and city image and the one that comes out of fashion (outdated), or lacks any character? This is one of the most difficult issues of contemporary design. This is where the ideas of scenarios and ever transformable buildings comes to rescue.

**How do we design to stand the test of time? Duration is also inevitably part of the design program...\*this building will self destruct in 15 years ..**

Take the example from the cover page, the proposal for Library in Prague, what will proud residents of a city like Prague think of this in 10 years, a fling designed to capture the eye of competition judges??? If this was designed for a temporary exhibition or as an expo pavilion than...



*Kaufhaus Tyrol Innsbruck, 2006 Johann Obermoser*

[http://www.worldarchitects.com/index.php?seite=at\\_profile\\_architekten\\_detail\\_de&system\\_id=133686](http://www.worldarchitects.com/index.php?seite=at_profile_architekten_detail_de&system_id=133686)

<sup>8</sup> *“We can apply to new architecture lessons we have learned from new buildings that are incapable to last 30 or 40 years....Understanding the past and paying it the compliment of appropriate technical upgrades, can perfectly happily sit alongside a vibrant programme of new architecture and construction designed to last. **Respect is not a synonym for sentimentality.**”* ( Architectural Review – view *“Learning from Longevity”* by Paul Finch

### III.2.5 ACTIVE ETHICS AND AESTHETICS<sup>9</sup>

This cutting edge of innovation/ processes is one place where an active ethics is most in demand, *but is often called for in the cases of “design for context”*.

Neil Leach, in his essay in the book *Architecture and its Ethical Dilemmas*, “*investigates the link between ethics and aesthetics. He defines aesthetics as the integral process of architectural design.*”

The ethical architect must work in favor of improvement of the urban local conditions, must strive to engage the social – situational factor into design. This is the ethics of new contextualism.

The worries about sometimes over contextualizing design are realistic but not needed, if the architect follows basic strategic decisions put forth in this thesis and also never stops questioning and innovating.

The example of the Hotel Fouquet in France (pg.64) clearly shows that there is still a lot to think about and to discuss. The building was a slap on the face to rigid urban regulators (especially the case in BiH) that constantly preach pastiche, and blending in. The active ethics reminds us that it is the meaning and authenticity that matter.

The **new wave of contextualism** calls for a more refined and brave approach. The blending in or contrasting is simply not enough anymore, and does not provide good architecture in most cases. The new contextualism can be simplified as **authentication and distinction + feasibility and function.**

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<sup>9</sup> *In a sense ethics and aesthetics come into contact whenever modes of artistic creation or design and questions of social relations and components of subjectivity participate in any given problem or project. Following a moral code, whether it is legislated or inscribed by professional practice or naturalized through being embedded in one belief system or another, is not in its own right a challenge. In fact, adhering to some moral code is often habitual, such that we do not pause to consider our actions except to say that something is simply not done, or that some action is inappropriate.*

*The far harder task is grappling with the mobile tactics that have to be provisionally employed through an active ethics. In the creative domain of architecture this ethics is on the ground. It admits the contingency of everyday problems and considers the tripartite concerns of the environment, social relations and new subjectivities, and how these three forces are intimately intermingled.*

***Dr Hélène Frichot is a senior lecturer in architecture at RMIT University. This essay is partly derived from collaborative research being undertaken with Stephen Loo of the University of South Australia.***

There is another issue that seems to have separate rules and where ethics and contextualism seem to turn their heads. Maybe since these buildings brand or iconic building significantly raise the value of the area or an entire city so for an ethicist that is sometimes enough and also for the contextualist.<sup>10</sup>

Authenticity<sup>11</sup> is the essence in the design process, and carries within it quantitative and qualitative features that can be measured and set up as guidelines, as well as some transcendental values *that can probably be better described by poets than architects*. Unfortunately it is the indescribable that gives the edge to the structure.

In order to be authentic (in a given context) **one must be able to see the architects thought process** transferred into building design, and **the building must be rooted** into its site (through landscape, micro urban design or a subtle sense of familiarity).<sup>12</sup>

**Responsible contextualism is ethics at its best.**

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<sup>10</sup> *Judging the Icon*

*How did things get this way? How did global culture evolve so that one trend-setting building could reverse the economic trends of a flagging conurbation? That question would take us far from architecture into the greater orbits of political power, the world art market, the celebrity system and branding.*

*While these well-aired realms already receive the lion's share of attention, I prefer to look at the story from within architecture's point of view: how it has changed and is changing in response to these same pressures. If architecture is not any more immune to the media and commerce than art, and if the iconic building is creating **an epochal shift, then the real question becomes how to judge these unlikely concoctions, how to differentiate between an interesting departure and a dull stab at sensation**. Charles Jenkins *Iconic Buildings*, pg.21*

<sup>11</sup> Synonyms: substance, validity, genuineness, realness, legitimacy, actuality, trueness, veracity, sincerity....

<sup>12</sup> *"Amidst the ongoing flurry surrounding critical and post-critical architectures, we must pause to evaluate the recent proposals as they directly affect the future of architectural discourse. Must "projective" architectures get rid of all traces of critical thought in their effort to accelerate the discipline? Today, as sweeping technological advances promise possibilities for numerous design agendas, we should remember what was eventually lost in previous architectural movements blindly guided by the rhetoric of "advancement." An Overview of "Post-Criticality" in the Last Five Years of Architectural Discourse May 6, 2007, Jason Nguyen, Drexel University*

## IV BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA CASE

### Quasi critical regionalism.

Even though we live in an ever globalizing world, not all things are the same everywhere. Coming from BiH, Sarajevo I am bound to have a counter reaction to quasi regionalism and quasi contemporarism taking place today in our society. Just as I write this I found that there is an exhibition in Zurich called BALKANOLOGY<sup>1</sup> dedicated to this phenomenon.

That is why it is essential to have a contextual strategy, a meaningful approach to the issue. Sarajevo and BiH has already been hard hit with the mass modernist movement that has produced some good architecture, but not so in general, well of course socialism has something to do with it.

There is another realistic (regional, cultural) issue to deal with. Bosnia and Herzegovina is both physically and mentally on the crossroad between eastern and western architectural practices, and for now it almost has the worst of both worlds, clinging to quasi traditional forms, afraid to step out, and the worst kind quick consumerism building of commercial and residential spaces that provide no real architectural value.

The most famous architect J. Neidhart, but unlike many other he has shown a great deal of interest in the past especially the bosnian-ottoman houses. Together with D.Grabrijan he wrote a book Bosnian architecture the road to modernism. At the time not many buildings were incorporated into the existing urban fabric since it was the time of great expansion of the cities, and there are only a few examples of modernist buildings in context.

In order not to cling to the bitter feeling (the above mentioned counter reaction) I have set upon a journey to find the “holy grail” of contextualism...No one found it yet, but that does not stop me or anyone else from trying, but as I see in some examples some have come pretty close to it..

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<sup>1</sup> *The situation in South Eastern Europe is prototypical for urban development in transitional and post-conflict situations, from Prishtina to Belgrade, where weak or missing institutional structures make it impossible to achieve the regulation of construction processes. The wild, volatile spread of informal building structures is the aftermath of the kind of urban crisis that follows social upheavals or wars. At the same time, independently of regional particularities, these urban developments display a new kind of urban form that is quite different from informal settlements in countries outside Europe. Their specific forms result from a new intermeshing of spaces through visual worlds communicated by the media, migratory movements and cash flows.* **Kai Vockler**  
**Balkanology**

## CRITICAL / UNCRITICAL REGIONALISM IN BIH

Over the past ten years the country is caught in an architectural nightmare of uncritical regionalism that is partly due to “revival” of identities of peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina and partly a trend of all transition countries in Europe.

Except for a few honorable exceptions this devastates and degrades the rich historical layers and multi cultural contributions to the architecture of its cities.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional house from the Ottoman times (there are a few different regional styles) has been most studied and reinterpreted by contemporary architects.

The stylistic appeal of the typology is inevitable, but the interpretation has not come too far, the reinterpretation material here is mainly organization of the house that corresponds to local qualities and contrast between materials.



Traditional Bosnian house from the Ottoman period (Svrzo House from the XVII century - a museum today)

The outstanding results came from architect Zlatko Ugljen (won the Aga Khan Award for architecture 20 years ago). The critical regionalism at its best with the architect Zlatko Ugljen in the years even before the definition of the term (designing and building famous villas for than President Tito in the natural and urban context, hotels in Mostar and Stolac etc). Other cases have only been quasi-regionalism, and this trend is carried even today with few honorable exceptions.

This is still an ongoing process since these residential areas are wanted on the property market and since many of the traditional houses are diminishing, new buildings pop up like mushrooms daily.

**Transformation and change are inevitable; it is how we do it that will matter.**

<sup>2</sup> An intricate net of mediaeval, oriental, Austro-Hungarian and modern architecture, although mostly brought by outsiders seems to belong there. Also it is a country in Europe with mixed populations of catholic, muslim, orthodox and jewish as indigenous to the same land for centuries.

Examples of current trends - the designs lack: baldness, creativity, hint of provocation, irony, respect :



Architecture without architects, examples in the Old Town, Sarajevo

The strong stylistic appeal of the Bosnian ottoman style house was applied to many objects built in traditional residential areas, but with little success.

These buildings are the living proof that even when borrowing forms, elements and details, the result is not contextual harmony, but rather devastation. The reason for this is that there is no thought of architectural concept or creativity or using the contextuality process as a tool not a purpose.

The buildings just above are bigger public buildings (one commercial and one library) with slightly more awareness to the overall concepts, but still bellow the necessary mark for quality of design and inventive reinterpretation of traditional elements. (The building on the left can be given little more credit for achievement.)



Photo in the middle: Gazi Husrefbeg Library extension,  
Project designer and manager: B. Izetbegovic and City  
Planning Authority, still in construction

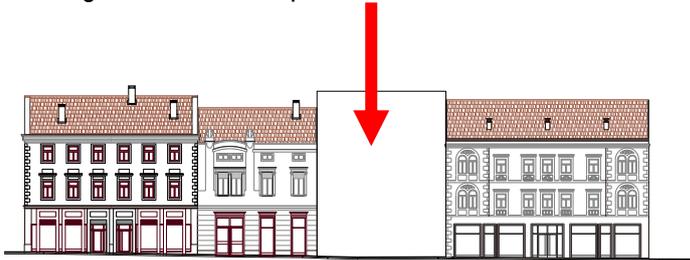
Photo bottom: Mixed use commercial object, by DOM  
Architects co., 2007

**Example:**

1. There really is no need to follow the height restriction or window scheme or anything else like it unless it is a part of the process
2. Use of materials, contemporary can create an ancient effect and vice versa

The methodology is: After negotiation and resolution the issues of the site, comes the choice of strategy inevitably connected to the choice of tactic to achieve that.

To the right is a real example in the main street in Mostar, BiH



**Not to overanalyze the hypothetical building now, this is only on the level of visual exercise – schemes not projects:**

Strategy – Tension/provocation with use of typical regional arch. elements...(nr. 1) and nr 2 by following a pattern fro the adjoining building...



Nr 1 – odd encounters with familiar shapes





Creating provocation with simple elements – the provocation of mentality, a fake residential area exposed as a shopping window – houses in Mostar are traditionally walled, or closed but everyone is just dying to know what the neighbors are up to

In BiH case there is a danger of ‘over-contextualising’; and ignoring the context on the other hand. What are the most important lessons that should be applied while designing?

- Respond to the essence of place, history and geography: the architectural practice can not just follow behind in contemporary trends that are out of reach in most cases but to accentuate the best there is use the contemporary process for the local phenomenon
- Respond to the urban grain, to steer away from the urban grain is always risky territory, but sometimes necessary, in BiH historic grain is usually organic and tiny (the ottoman) or straight and structured (austro- hungarian). The reasons and concept in this case must be very strong ( like the City hall building in Sarajevo huge austro-hungarian structure in the middle of small one story structures, but it has endured for its grandeur and dramatic improvement of the areas image.
- Use high quality, locally distinctive, and sustainable materials and detailing, from the rich layers of architectural genetic material, that is recomposed every time
- Aim to add value to the urban area, this is especially important when investors do not have the means for visual stimulation, that a functional stimulation can make up all the difference ( like Hotel Evropa, the example from Sarajevo, the first five star hotel generates enormous value for the town).

## V CONCLUSION(S)

Transformation of the urban tissue has always been present, renewal, additions and infill is ancient invention, they are necessary in order to keep the city up to date and vibrant.

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### GENERAL

In order to meet the challenge of set frames, boundaries the architect must resort to inductive and deductive architectural methods. This means that the process starts and ends in the elements that make up the context (time, place, event and structures).

Two essential ingredients in successful design as elaborated in the work are site – **situation negotiations and contextual strategy.**

Site negotiation is basically a deductive discipline complemented by research and analyses, in order to separate the dominant elements or to uncover hidden qualities of space (and accentuate them).

This is especially visible in examples where the site qualities were accentuated, like the Parking lot in Japan by F. Roche.

**This process is then continued as induction, ambient synthesis – the architectural expression. The strategy outlines the content – context – concept relation, and sets the stage for the final visual resolution of the problem.**

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### GLOBAL VS. LOCAL

Although the dominance of globalization is very strong and overwhelming, there is no need to resist it. The counter-reactions are quite strong everywhere and it only confirms the need for a healthy regionalism. The clash of these trends can produce positive results in many aspects of architecture. Their interaction will generate new qualities, experiences and styles.

This interaction will need constant questioning and critical reasoning of the relevant issues:

- regional architecture and how it is being (re)defined,
- interaction(s) between the regional and the global,
- the intersection between past and contemporary architectural productions,
- the regional architectural/cultural flows,
- the trends of regionalism and how they coexist, compete or contradict with the process of globalization,
- How regional architecture can surpass the limitations of constant forms of the past

All of these issues do not require a general answer, but rather every time when designing a building they need to be addressed, and re-assessed since the answer to these questions will provide the architect with the directions. The principle endorsed by this thesis is “individual tailor made” architecture that has a relation with its surroundings, without pretentious theoretical claims<sup>1</sup>.

**The whole world – one site**” is the overriding force in architectural design today. No matter how hard we cling onto our history, tradition, locality ...all of it quickly diminishes before the next grand museum addition, when architects claim to draw inspiration from “a certain constellation of stars” (D. Liebskind for Victoria and Albert Museum)

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<sup>1</sup> *Editorial of Architecture d' Aujourdhui, Jan-Feb 2006 - Common and community sense in architecture: “Between the hysteria of the spectacle and the rule of the market, the room for (architectural) maneuver does not cease to shrink. Anything that cannot be transformed into an event or merchandize is simply forgotten....common and community sense crosses the centuries and the issue of aesthetic judgment. It is something that is not definable exclusively by rational criteria, but it builds a community... But does the community and common sense still exist...?”*

## CASE STUDIES

There was/is a great pressure on the contemporary architect to come up with new “revolutionary” building concepts and personal philosophies. As a result there is “fashionism”, certain forms and concepts look interesting for a couple of years, such as “blob” forms, but this pressure also bore some exceptional development in building, techniques and ingenious architectural solutions.

Tangible and intangible components that strongly influence the outcome of the design. As seen through many examples the new building can be “a good student” and follow all the rules but the end result is an indistinguishable object.

Let’s stay with the example of Nelson Atkins Museum, the realized strategy – a museum placed underground so the above ground is free (content), and integrated with the site and as concept - minimalist translucent boxes – a ghostly reminiscence of the existing building - created an extraordinary poetic structure that in its essence derives from its context.



Kansas City, The Nelson Atkins Museum, Steven Hall

Photo: <http://www.stevenholl.com>

A strong architectural concept can carry the building even when it is not deeply related to context (Sarpratistraat offices, S.Hall) but only as exception, while a “contextual” building ( Haas Haus) lacks the backbone and is indistinctive.

The finest examples that have all three pillars (context, content, concept) are Siobhan Dance Studio, Dolce and Gabbana showroom in Milan, The Dancing building in Prague, Coll Barreau Health Headquarters, etc.

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**CONCLUSIONS ON WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ARCHITECTURE****1. CONCEPT: Contemporary innovative confident**

- *Adjust to circumstances the design signature style of architect*
- High quality design and authenticity

**2. CONTEXT SITE: Explored and worked with**

- give the building sense of site, connection to the topography or whatever comes as node
- tradition, ambience

**3. CONTEXT BUILT ENVIRONMENT: Respect, borrow, reuse and adapt with attitude**

- *Adapt and learn from the surrounding historic buildings*
- Historical reminiscence or memory of place must be subtle and refined

**4. CONTENT, ETHICS: Meaningful, functional, adding value, improving urban conditions**

- *Revive the area with vibrant function(s)*
- *Create urban continuity*
- *Question and innovate*

**By far the most important lesson from the case studies is that the examples that are the most successful have fully satisfied the relation between concept – context – content.**

What is important is to take the momentum created by these more or less famous examples and translate them into the everyday practice in infill constructions that are eating away the urban tissue of our cities.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the moment is still quite architecturally raw but provides many opportunities for design in context. The country has several architects that have the right grip on the issue of contextuality and are not afraid to explore the relation to architectural heritage.

The path forward is of course pushing the boundaries of inventive architecture and in engaging in dialogue with many layers of context. The context (cultural and architectural) is very rich and complex in this case, and deserves respect and sensibility to the various issues.

The mentality is really in between the east and the west and this is reflected in architecture, so professional ethics is extremely important in order not to veer off into uncritical localism or sentimentalism.

Distinguishing between a healthy and productive regionalism and the populist compliance in design is sometimes razor sharp thin line (Turkish cultural center).

The practice in BiH must look and learn from the world examples, and adjust the principles to local circumstances. **In majority of infill or addition cases it is necessary to develop the dialogue principle rooted into the context-concept-content relation.** There are very little examples that follow the dialogue process since they fall into the trap of quasi critical regionalism.

On the other hand there are quite good buildings (as individual) that can go into the “tension” but mostly **context ignorant** category, but this is the classical product of the architectural school in BiH, Sarajevo.

Hotel Europa – addition and reconstruction - an attempt to reflect the traditional shutters from the old town and project it onto its façade shows sign of progress in thinking even though realized the quality of material (Trespa) did not meet the requirement.

Provocation is not even worth mentioning, there is not something even close, not even a subtle one.

IN THE CONCLUSION THERE IS A LITTLE MORE ON BIH SINCE THE LESSONS FROM THE THESIS SHOULD SERVE TO IMPROVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE THERE.

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The best part of the contemporary architecture is that it does not longer carry the burden of a particular purist style and that all approaches are explored and legitimate. This is also true for the new type of “contextualizm” that co-exists without accusations of “regressionism”.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

**The accent today is on substance, quality and consequential relationship of the object with its adjacent surroundings.**

Are we finally on the loose from formal contextuality of complementing and contrasting the surrounding buildings?

**The new contextualism, argued in this work, does not advocate regionalism.**

The emphasis of **new contextualism is in the exploration of boundaries of context and pushing them to new territory (local phenomenology, processes etc)** and emphasizing the **connection** between the architectural concept and context.

**It is actually is a part of realistic need to improve the urban conditions, carried out through a new relation between ethics and aesthetics.**

## VI SUMMARY

The principle endorsed by this thesis is architecture that has a relation with its surroundings, without pretentious theoretical claims. To explore tangible and intangible components that influences the outcome of the design.

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### INTRO

The relevance of the subject has been confirmed over and over again with constant renewal of historic cores. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the process is gaining momentum, with unfortunately more inappropriate infills and quasi regional trends.

The main goal of the thesis is not to endorse a certain approach or architectural style, but rather to entice the struggle between the boundaries, frames which limit and provide inspiration at the same time.

The definition of Context is multilayered and needs to be explored in each case separately. There are different levels at which the context relates to the structure as immediate physical context, and in various situation sub contexts.

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### CONTEXT

Every building or structure needs to engage in a dialogue with the situation, the past and the particularities of a certain locality in order to be a successful and functional design.

Relevant case studies and previous theories have been presented in a clear format that enables us to evaluate different approaches. The examples vary from “classical cases such as Haas Haus in Vienna to the new and refreshing such as Siobhan dance studio in London.

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### CASE STUDIES AND THEORIES

The theories presented show the development of contextual theories, one of the most influential like Critical regionalism by K. Frampton to new theories expressed in the liberated architectural processes.

## CONTEXTUAL STRATEGIES

Contextual strategies explore the latest trends of infill architectural design. It broadens the definitions of context into a process of negotiation with context through different parameters. The strategies include the processes such as local scenariology and phenomenology that finds the underlying meaning of tangible and intangible aspects of context, place.

Contextual tools and tactics allow us to form a visual resolution between the context and the structure that is reflected in one of the following principles (or a combination)

- Provocation – whether it is a subtle hint of provocation or the entire structure is aimed at this
- Tension/ Dialogue – the essential relationship of new structure and the existing, sometimes includes both

## CONCLUSION

Constant recycling of historic areas is a necessary process that deserves a fresh look each time, but at the same time it deserves our respect. The new approach to design in context allows different (of course contemporary, innovative) approaches that need not apologize for negotiating with the existing situation.

**PHOTOS: BESIDES ALL PHOTOS THE SOURCE IS STATED, USUALLY A WEB SITE PAGE. PHOTOS THAT HAVE NO STATEMENT ARE TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR OF THE THESIS.**

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THE INTERNET SITES CHANGE CONSTANTLY SO SOME REFERENCES MIGHT BE ON OTHER LOCATIONS, FOR INSTANCE THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW HAS CHANGED ITS WEB SITE AND SOME THINGS HAVE BEEN MOVED.

## VII APPENDIX

**VII.1 APPENDIX 1 - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA CASES THAT DID NOT MAKE THE FINAL CUT BUT STILL SHOW THE TENDENCIES OR THE INFORMATION ON THEM WAS INSUFFICIENT**

### **CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, SARAJEVO 1998**

The following case study shows two opposing newly incorporated buildings in a mixed area (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings) in Sarajevo. They also show two different approaches of design for an infill building.

<i>BUILDING: HIGH SCHOOL, SARAJEVO</i>			
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>high</b>
Urban continuity, site relation		•	
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation	•		
Quality of materials		•	
Relation to adjacent buildings	•		
Authenticity	•		
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	Clear and simple building but no connections		



**HOUSING PROJECT 1999**

**ARCHITECT: AMIR VUK ZEC**

<i>BUILDING: HOUSING, SARAJEVO</i>			
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>high</b>
Urban continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials		•	
Relation to adjacent buildings			•
Authenticity		•	
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	Achieved dialogue, not a breakthrough design		



Family housing object placed in traditional neighbourhood in Sarajevo built in 2003

Architect: Maida Karahasanovic

## New Federal Government Building in Mostar, BIH

Competition winner 2009 – project phase

Architect: prof. Amir Pasic



The programme – content was a enormous number of square meters of office space for the government.

The context is – Mostar the mediterranean type city with extraordinary climate conditions

The more immediate context was an old building that is supposed to carry the load on top of which additional space would be built.

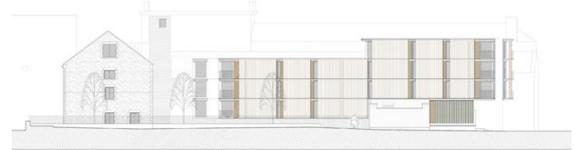
**The architectural concept is one of „invisible“ architecture, that is a principle of reflection but this time not of surrounding object but of the exquisite Mostar sky that will help the huge building volume „disappear“ into thin air.**

**APPENDIX 2 - WORLD EXAMPLES**

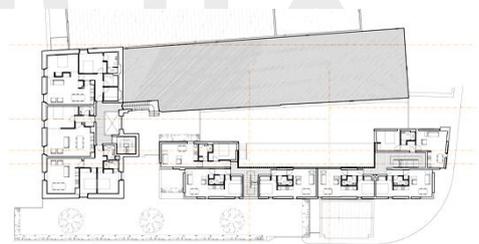
**ASSEMBLY ST., EDINBURGH**

**SUTHERLAND HUSSEY ARCHITECTS**

<i>BUILDING: APARTMENT BUILDING</i>			
Ratings	low	med	high
Urban continuity, site relation		•	
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to adjacent buildings	•		
Authenticity , integrity of design		•	
Contextual strategy	dialog	tension	provocat
Comments:	A form of detached dialogue, maybe not even any form of strategical decision		



Again concept with shutters, even though the building is a good piece of architecture within the current trends it seems completely detached from the location



## **RICHARD MURPHY ARCHITECTS DEAN BANK LANE**

### **APPARTEMENT BUILDING**

*“The site is unusual in that it has two very different elevations: a street side elevation to Dean Bank Lane and a much larger and more exciting elevation terminating directly into the Water of Leith, and viewed in particular from the bridge across the river at Stockbridge. The existing unexceptional former industrial building on the site was demolished and replaced with a block of 11 apartments. The materials are green oak and steel to the river with the gable elevations being an extension of the roof metal material.”*

**Awards Scottish Design Award Best Residential Project 2006**



<i>BUILDING: OFFICE BUILDING, RIJEKA CROATIA</i>			
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>med</b>	<b>high</b>
Continuity, site relation			•
Arch. design		•	
Scale relation			•
Quality of materials			•
Relation to building			•
Authenticity meaning, innovation		•	
Contextual strategy	dialogue	tension	provocat
Comments:	Result is quite good, slightly indistinctive		



Commercial and office building in Rijeka

Fiume, Croatia

Additions, when indistinctive, do produce the visual continuity, but they lack the excitement. The addition in Rijeka is a good example that shows that simple and blending in solution can be achieved through unusual materialization (metal rods), and the process of so called vertical mirror effect when the bottom part is upside down reflected in top part.



Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Tim Rolt, RIBA  
WINNER 2008

<http://www.architecture.com/Awards/RIBAAwards/Winners2008/WestMidlands/WolverhamptonArtGallery/WolverhamptonArtGallery.aspx>



Pier arts Centre, Gavin Fraser, SCOTLAND AWARD  
WINNER RIBA 2008

[http://www.e-architect.co.uk/awards/best\\_building\\_in\\_scotland\\_award.htm](http://www.e-architect.co.uk/awards/best_building_in_scotland_award.htm)



Chelsea College of Art

Allies and Morrison architects

<http://www.alliesandmorrison.co.uk/>



Palestra Alsop architects

RIBA AWARD 2007

Photo:<http://www.architecture.com/Awards/RIBAAwards/Winners2007/London/LondonWinners2007.aspx>



Trieste, near the train station PAM Market



Bergen, Norway infill housing



Belgrade, photos, Main street

**APPENDIX 3****RELEVANT ARTICLES AND EXCERPTS**

Critical Analysis of  
 "Towards a Critical Regionalism"  
 by Kenneth Frampton,

Scott Paterson

**The Resistance of the Place-Form**

The last three sections develop a set of criteria, considering the mediation of the impact of universal technique and regional particularities, moving from the scale of the site, either urban or non-urban, to the body and its appendages.

The Megalopolis is taking over the city. It replaces the place bound urban form with theoretical networks and distributive logistics. The universal technique generates placelessness, or an indistinguishable domain. Heidegger provides a metaphysical grounding in the which boundaries can be discerned. Boundaries defined as "that from which something begins its presencing." <sup>11</sup> Heidegger also shows that being can only take place in a clearly bounded domain. Only within such a bounded domain can architecture resist the pressure of the Megalopolis.

Essential to Hannah Arendt is also the bounded domain. It is in this 'space of human appearance' that society exists and gains its power. Density of people living together creates the always potential interchange and action of a 'polis'. By contrast the urbanity suggested by Venturi paradoxically loses its reason for a collective. Families at home watching their televisions do not a city make. They don't care for urban form. They live in Megalopolis.

The example of the perimeter block is given as testament to the defined space of density wherein lies potential political activity and a resistant place-form. Where is Megalopolis? This section seems to suggest an aregional approach to defining form based on a defined place. The two, form and place are inseparably linked by that hyphen between them. This can be applied anywhere. Frampton suggests that Venturi needs it as well as Melvin Webber. But the perimeter block? This seems again to be a European import. Diagnosing the condition in America as a problem to be solved with foreign agents. Which I would say is not always incorrect.

**Culture vs. Nature: Topography, Context, Climate, Light and Tectonic Form**

As is evident in its title this section moves from the abstract general site condition to strategies of topography and so on. Modernization favors the tabula rasa approach to clear and flatten the site, thereby optimizing the economy of earth-moving equipment and also making way for the rational layout of building. This removal of topography is a gesture of the universal technique resulting in placelessness. Critical regionalism would instead embrace the topography as a manifestation of the regions geologic and agricultural history. This then would be transferred into the form of any building placed here, the building set into the terracing contours of the land. Consistent with the writing of Heidegger, is this revealing of form brought into being by the site. Mario Botta is cited as using the phrase, "building the site." This refers to not only how his buildings rest on or into the ground but how it reconstructs the site in its various forms, historical, vernacular, geologic, etc. "Through this layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality." <sup>12</sup>

Not going into detail, Frampton applies the case of topography to the urban fabric and follows with a discussion of climatic response. By paying particular attention to the light conditions one must resist the influence of universal technique and its tireless repetition. The window, a critical element in the expression of architecture, has the ability to inscribe the character of the region through its placement in the wall. The interest of institutions to have a controlled climate is antithetical to place-form strategies. The placeless character of museums and galleries in the even distribution of light is to be resisted by allowing an expression of the local light condition and climatic swings. The 'place-conscious poetic' can be guaranteed by the constant inflection of a region. The occurrence of the fixed window and climate control are sure signs of the domination by universal technique. However important these may be, the real issue for Frampton is the tectonic and not the scenographic. The autonomy of architecture, resides in the poetic resistance to gravity, the unmasked discourse between the beam and the column. This structure is not to be confused with the economies of skeletal frameworks for the tectonic, the relation between the material, craft, and gravity, is to be a structural poetic in contrast to the representation or gratuitous coverings of the facade a la Graves, or scenography. Two problems arise here. First, why did he not explore these issues in the previous example of Utzon's church. Surely the lighting in the nave is magnificent. We are given little to go on. How do local lighting conditions determine a region? For Many places are likely to have similar exposure to the sun. Possibly he is considering this, too, in a poetic way rather than a technical way, i.e. not discussing the sun angles and its affect on the location, size, and shape of the window. Regardless, the strength here is the attention to thoughtful and sensitive architecture, i.e. where to bring light into a building, rather than a recourse with the region. The second is the male overtones to a poetic structure. The resistance to forces is akin to the power of man to fend of nature and all that garbage. Also, what is worse, the woman is resigned to surface treatment, scenography, and pure image covering up a demoralized skeleton. Anyway, the effect of this is to direct ones attention away from the critically regional and begin to consider this as a polemic on the tectonic. The kind of situation where one asks themselves what is he really saying.

### **The Visual vs. The Tactile**

Here he goes the extra mile to substantiate the priority of the tectonic over the scenographic. Through the example of Aalto's SŠynatsalo Town Hall of 1952 he describes the use a tactile surface's ability to make legible the architecture. The brick steps on the exterior leading to the council chambers affirm the foot as it meets each tread. Inside the chambers the floor is wood therefore giving another reading and so on throughout the building, I would assume. This argument follows a book I know titled Thermal Delight in Architecture by Lisa Heschong where she describes the constant reinvigoration of alternating hot and cool sensations experienced while walking down a tree lined street. But he never brings this transcendental tactile tectonic back into the discussion of a critical regionalism except to say that it resists the technical.

### **Conclusion**

By resisting the visual, and thus the perspective of Western tendency, Critical Regionalism brings to our senses all the range of human perceptions. Perspective as rationalized sight suppresses the senses causing a distancing similar to what Heidegger has called "the loss of nearness." <sup>13</sup> The tactile physically opposes this visual surfacing of reality, a medium conditioned predominately by the media industry and showing up in the architectural works of Graves, Venturi, etc. The return to touch will realize the poetics of construction, the tectonic. And the region? It has vanished.

## Learning from longevity

**Architectural Review, The , Feb, 2006 by Paul Finch**

When architects design buildings, how often is duration an explicit part of the programme? This is a grey area largely avoided by clients and designers. And it is true that longevity will depend to a large extent on maintenance regimes, and long-term beneficial occupation. Unless there is certainty about these factors, is there any point in worrying about the future? The answer must now be a resounding 'yes'. There is increasing concern about the use of resources in respect of natural and manmade environments, and a concomitant desire to minimise waste, in terms of energy and materials, in both construction and subsequent use. The inevitable creation of new buildings in a healthy economy makes the exploitation of existing resources of more than passing interest. As we have argued here before, the idea that a building should have a first use and then be demolished to make way for the next big fashion is offensive. It is absolutely at odds with architectural thinking interested in doing more with less (or with the same). On this basis, demolition should be, if not the last resort, at least a conclusion reached only after thoroughly analysing the possibilities of refurbishment, extendability, or giving new life based on a different sort of use.

We can apply to new architecture the lessons we have learned about buildings that are incapable of lasting more than thirty or forty years. Those lessons should inform what we create today; certain buildings (for example Germany's Federal Environment Agency headquarters in Dessau, AR July 2005) can become exemplars of what we should expect, albeit in dilute form, from any significant new building or collection of buildings. Another example, the Richard Rogers Partnership National Assembly for Wales, featured in this issue, has been designed to have a minimum life of one hundred years. A question that arises from such a programme is whether we should be creating any new buildings without such a life expectancy; and were we to adopt such a strategy, what would be the architectural and specification consequences? The answers might form the basis of more intelligent regulatory regimes for buildings than the usual mish-mash of outdated and uncoordinated rules.

Elsewhere in this issue, we review buildings that have found welcome new leases of life in one way or another. Architectural ingenuity in knitting together past and present shows no sign of diminishing and, in some way, is increasing as a result of stricter requirements from those interested in conservation and heritage protection. It is a great pity that an antipathy to new architecture has too often informed conservationist ideology. A fundamental case for respecting any existing heritage concerns the intellectual, physical and economic investment already made in it; this is nothing to do with what the building or area looks like. Rem Koolhaas has recently made the case for protecting 'hutongs' in Chinese cities rather than pursuing a policy of careless demolition and compulsory export of their communities to sites that are miles away, and comprise dumb high-rise blocks that tenth-rate Modernism gave the world. Understanding the past, and paying it the compliment of appropriate technical upgrades, can perfectly happily sit alongside a vibrant programme of new architecture and construction designed to last. Respect is not a synonym for sentimentality.

## Spanning cultural difference

### *Architectural Review, The , August, 2007 by Paul Finch*

One of the drawbacks of globalisation is the tendency towards homogenisation—in that witty post-modernist phrase, 'the same difference everywhere'. This issue of *The Architectural Review* focuses on Japan, a country with a culture which has managed to remain distinctive architecturally without resorting to historicist copying (which raises problems of the degree of skill and commitment required to do it properly, quite apart from the lack of precedent for contemporary building types like airports). Asking what it is about Japanese architecture that makes it Japanese (apart from its authors) is to raise profound issues of history, geography, geology and an empathy for what it means to be part of a particular culture. To considerable degree, globalisation represents a threat to that distinctiveness, washing over it with the worst commercial ethos of internationalism—that one size should fit all. The legacy of an earlier incarnation, International Modernism, across too many parts of the globe is a depressing one of wrong building, wrong place, wrong time.

That is a warning for those clients who demand landmark icons from today's architectural giants, under the impression that the built results will provide a profoundly rooted identity. This may be true sometimes, but there is no guarantee. In a world with the same distinctive icons everywhere, then none of them will be distinctive in any meaningful way, instead becoming icons in the old sense of the word, that is to say similar representations of the same thing, the same thing being architecture itself. There is also a warning for architects. Attracted to the new breed of global client like moths to a flame, there is every danger of ignoring fundamental tenets of architecture in favour of show-off designs which lack the integrity of work by Hadid or Koolhaas, for example, where engineering experimentation is part of an extraordinary new architectural story.

The development of technology, particularly in relation to design and communications, has made it inevitable that architects operate in a more global way, not least because they can look at the work of almost any practice at the press of a key. However, it is just as true that an architectural education gives people a certain commonality of outlook, with or without the internet; there is also a recognition of shared values, or at least shared ways of looking at things, which amount to a common language. An element of that language is the way one thinks about a possible new building, for it is at this moment that architectural intelligence is applied to the specific, not the general. It is the moment where the architect can say: 'One world, my site'.

### Current discussions –Competition for a design for an extension of Stockholm City Library

Architectural Review April 2007

A major international competition (1170 entries) to create an extension to library designed by E.G. Asplund has come to its second phase, to choose a solution between six remaining proposals.

The project is relevant for this discussion since it has all the elements of contextual “drama”. A famous historic building, landscape, location in the center, built environment and the desire of the officials to have an outstanding new architectural masterpiece.

The finalist entries shown here demonstrate the line of thinking of the judges; the Asplund building must be respected and the landscape used and recognized.

Nr. 4 is primarily a sensitive response to the building and the site, and a similar approach is with number 2 – the cut into the landscape where the old building is a volume and the new is a void.

The proposal nr. 3 leaves the Asplund building in “splendid isolation”, and could be a big volume for the site.

Nr. 1 is a diagram-like solution; ramps pave the hill, but have little regard to its famous neighbor.

The fifth solution is all about the continuity of the city fabric, but the solution is not “spectacular” enough.

