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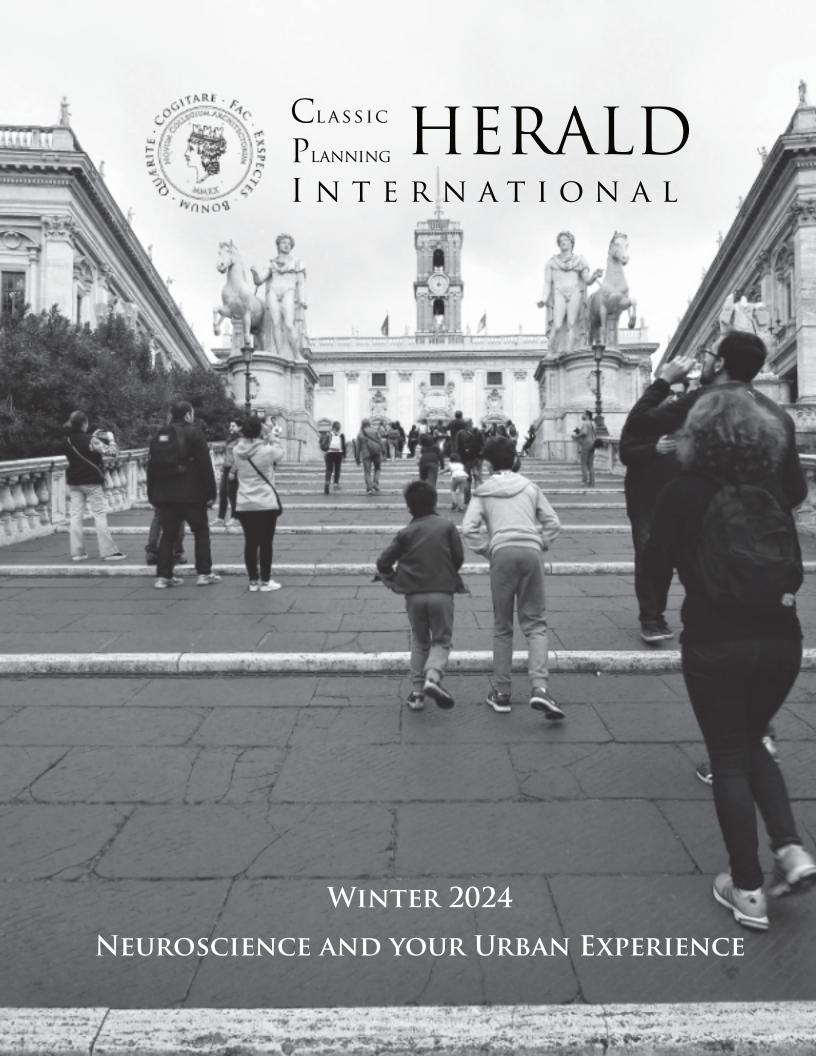
The Classic Planning Herald International is a magazine dedicated to the discourse within the New Traditional Architecture community.

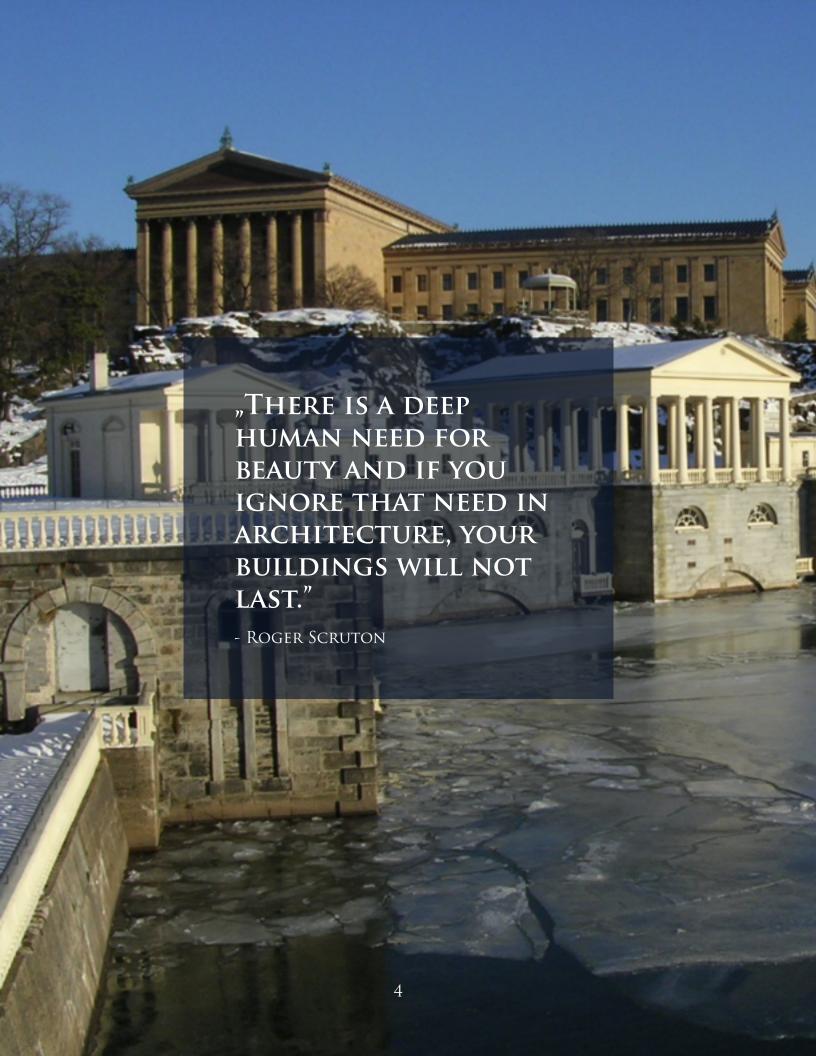
#### **ABOUT US**

The Classic Planning Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN: 86-3428097), based in Washington D.C. It is the premier institution in the New Traditional Architecture scene for education, research, networking and consulting. Future faced, we collaborate with our New Traditional Architecture allies to strengthen the exchange of ideas, advocate for the cause, and provide goods and services for the community as a whole. Led by Dr. Nir Buras, the CPI stewards the knowledge bases of the classical method for the built environment as described in part in the Art of Classic Planning (Nir Buras, Harvard University Press, 2020) through teaching, research, and application to the highest level of practice, education, and scientific rigor. Our motto is, 'How can we help?' Classic Planning™ is a registered trademark of the Classic Planning Institute.

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# WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

## BY IMMO WORRESCHK

Dear readers, We at the CPI wish you all a Happy New Year, good health, and all the best in your endeavors in 2024! We are also happy to present you with the Winter edition of the Classic Planning Herald International.

As human beings, we experience architecture and our surroundings through our senses. This means that understanding the link between neuroscience and our built environment helps us figure out the "do's" and "don'ts" in architecture and urbanism and how we can thus positively impact human well-being. Hence why this edition is dedicated to introducing you to some fundamental neuroscientific research results and concepts which are relevant for our field.

Also, we are happy to announce that both the Neuroscience section and the Crafts section will be a regular edition to the magazine moving forward.

2023 was very busy for us at the CPI, so please catch up with what has been going on in our organization and also our outlook for 2024 in our "Report from the CPI".

Again, we are extremely grateful for the great work of our amazing

contributors to this edition and also to you, our readers for taking the time out of your busy day to read through this edition. Let's make 2024 a magnificent year for all of us!

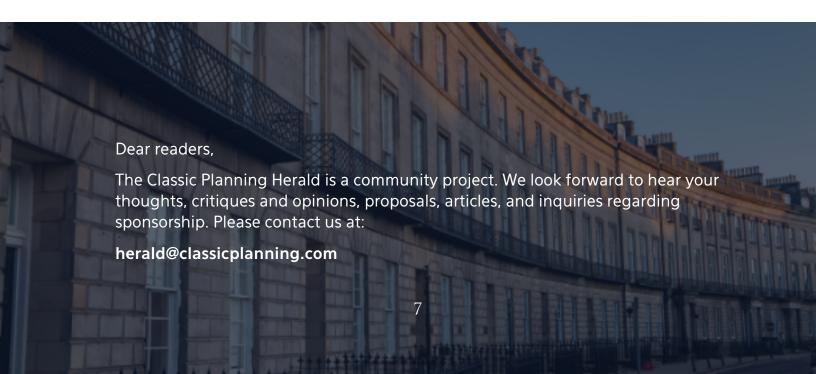


Hailing from Oldenburg, Germany, Immo Worreschk's interest in complexity led him to study urban planning at Bauhaus University Weimar and at the Univ. of Amsterdam, and landscape architecture at TU-Munich. He worked as a Junior Architect and Planner in Munich before returning to north Germany. Disillusioned by the empty promises of Modernism, Immo's interest is to create enduring places and that life orientated towards, the true, the good, and the beautiful.

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The last quarter of 2023 was action packed for us at the Classic Planning Institute. We were not just able to connect with many old and new friends in the New Traditional Architecture Community both in the digital and physical space, but also work on many great projects. We'd like to share with you a little retrospective of the last three months and 2023 in general and give you an overview of what is in store for the CPI in 2024!

## **IMCL CONFERENCE 2023**

In October, the Classic Planning Institute Team attended the International Making Cities Liveable (IMCL) 2023 conference in Poundbury, UK. Starting in 1985 as an opportunity to share and examine case studies of great liveable, urban places, IMCL 2023 was the 59th conference held and the first attended by the CPI team.

Just two and a half hours from London, Poundbury is an urban extension to the town of Dorchester, in the county of Dorset in southwest England. Poundbury was designed "in accordance with the principles of architecture and urban planning as advocated by His Majesty, King Charles III". Poundbury proved a rich laboratory in which to gather to examine this year's IMCL theme of "The Ecology of Place: From Understanding to Action". The conference program included walking tours, presentations,

discussion panels and breakout sessions spread across locations in Poundbury and Dorchester.

Dr. Nir Buras, Principle of the Classic Planning Institute, was invited to present during the conference's first day's plenary session his work, titled "Journey to the Center of the Brain: Neuroscience for Buildings and Cities". Unfortunately, Dr. Buras was unable to travel to Poundbury due to illness however the CPI team did what we know to do best, adapted



Based in London, Alison Hogg spent her early life in Sydney, Australia where she completed her studies in Human Geography. A Fellow and Board Member of the Classic Planning Institute, Alison currently balances her professional career in the technology sector with pursuits of beautiful classical architecture. and provided a solution: Dr. Buras delivered his work via video to the live audience. In his presentation, Dr Buras covered four key areas of his frontier neuroscience work: Aesthetic Experience, Memory and Place, The Hand-Eye-Brain Nexus and Perception of Cars as Large Animals. Met with audible 'aha's from the crowd, his work was a hit with the audience.

The conference contained a packed agenda of talks with opportunities to network, connect, and make new friends. The CPI contingent was increased on Friday with additional Pablo Álvarez Funes and Immo Worreschk joining the conference. Not wanting to miss a good party, the CPI-team joined the Closing Party and held court in fabulous fashion.

Below: Prof. Marcial Echenique and Robert Adam answering questions from the crowd at the Tertulia taking Place at Grosvenor Chapel in Mayfair, London.



# Tertulia and CPI live in London

In the aftermath of the IMCL conference, the CPI-team took the opportunity to continue festivities with friends in London. Saturday evening was the night of the Tertulia.

The Tertulia is a wider program of gatherings organised by Pablo Georges Nascimento in commemoration of the 100-year anniversary of the publication of Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair, by Nobel laureate poet Pablo Neruda, which were published in 1924 at his grandfather's editorial in Chile. This Tertulia was pinned as a "Modern versus Classic" battle. between Professor Marcial Echenique, Emeritus University Professor of Land Use and Transport Studies and former Head of the University Department of Architecture at Cambridge University; and Robert Adam, leading classical and traditional architect, urban designer, author and educator. Moderated by our very own Mr. Funes, CPI Head of Education and senior architect, the Tertulia took an interesting turn when both speakers found that they agreed on more than they had expected. Supported by friends and hosts. Pablo G.N. and Laurenzo Mefsut, the Tertulia concluded with reflections on the evening's discussions over wine. Not wanting

to call it a day just yet, the troop proceeded onward to the pub to continue discussions and merriment.

The following day, Mr. Funes, took a small group of CPI and friends on a guided tour of the Victoria & Albert museum, which contains the world's largest museum of applied arts, decorative arts, and design. Mr. Funes lead the tour, taking the group on a tour of some of his most favourite exhibits. The museum houses a collection of over 2.27 million objects and while our tour was comprehensive, we realistically could only cover a small percentage of the wonderful collection of objects. We took a short tour of the adjoining neighbourhoods of Kensington, Belgravia and Chelsea to visit notable architectural locations.

Finally, on Monday we joined a guided tour of Hampstead, an affluent residential community of north London. Lead by local resident and friend of the CPI, Pablo George Nacimiento, we met in the afternoon and were taken on a tour of the notable sites of beauty in Hampstead.

A couple of weeks later, CPI friend and Placemaking guru, Ryan Smoler passed through London on his way back to the US. Having attended the IMCL conference to present his work on placemaking, we spent some time observing neighbourhoods of London, keeping an eye out for



Above: The CPI-team enjoying themselves at the Victoria & Albert Museum together with our friend Ruben Hanssen, founder of "The Aesthetic City" Youtube channel.

notable benches for 'Seatober' campaign.

Reflecting on 2023 and outlook to 2024

The last quarter of 2023 also saw the completion of the year one class at the **Classic Planning Academy** with six students graduating due to their excellent work. In 2024, we are looking forward to year two of our

educational program with seven students already having signed up. Future faced, the CPA is also seeking academic accreditation. We are also continuing to provide biweekly free classes and thank all the people who attended in 2023.

The Classic Planning Studio also worked on three major projects. The Napa Valley Housing, a Garage in Zionsville, and the Indianapolis Canal access. As well as, a proposal for the urban renewal of Indiana Avenue in Indianapolis is nearing completion.

In the Classic Planning Laboratory, the research about how cars are potentially neurologically processed as large animals proceeded. Dr. Buras was also invited to speak at the UX+D Conference at Tufts University in July as well as the IMCL 2023 conference to share his research.

The **Traditional Architecture** Gathering 2023 was hosted by the Classic Planning Stoa with key notes delivered by Lucien Steil, Phil Esocoff and Prof. Witold Rybzcynski. Also highlights of this event were the celebration of Young Leadership, as well as the Founders of the New Traditional Architecture Movement and the 2075 Architectural Awards (for buildings which will still look good in 50 years!). We are grateful for the support of our generous sponsors Vetter Stone, Architectural Polymers (APFormliner) and Arban Precast Stone, as well as the board of directors consisting of Dr. Buras, Mr. Funes, Roger Jackson and Phil Esocoff for making this event possible. In 2024, our upcoming event **Traditional Architecture Gathering 2024** is going to take place from Friday, April 11th to April 13th 2024 and will be co-produced by the CPI, as well as the Traditional Architecture Group in the United Kingdom. We seek to increase the production value of one of the most relevant events in the New Traditional Architecture Community, by hosting a hybrid event it three

Below: CPS proposed design for an urban waterfront right next to Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis.



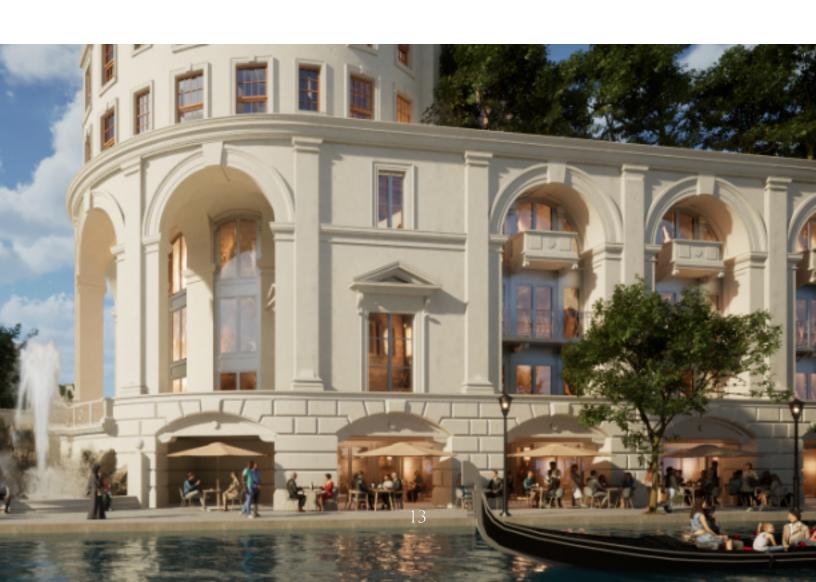
locations - London, US East Coast, and the digital space. Please stay tuned for further updates.

Also, October saw the release of the first issue of the **Classic Planning Herald International**, which is our new quarterly magazine dedicated to the New Traditional Architecture community.

The Classic Planning Tours have been kicked off by Mr. Funes giving a guided tour of the Victoria & Albert Hall in London. We are also happy to announce that the Classic Planning

Discovery Tour in Florence was announced recently which is going to take place from March 17th to March 24<sup>th</sup> 2024.

2023 also saw the onboarding of new faces at the Classic Planning Institute who have swiftly become valuable members of our team. Mr. Worreschk joined the team as a volunteer in the production of TAG-23, as well as Ms. Adrianna Broome in late June as our Social Media Manager. Also Ms. Berenice Ratcliff, Esther Odoku and Bruna Bittencourt have joined the CPI in



early December as team members for the production of TAG-24.

The Classic Planning Institute has further established a rock-solid legal framework with the CPS now becoming an LLC. Also Mr. Aaron Harburg and Mr. Mark Favermann have joined our Board of Directors.

### GRATITUDE

We thank Léon Krier, Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Seth Weine and Richard Cameron for their continued support of the Classic Planning Institute. We were greatly saddened to get news of the passing of the great Rob Krier and extend our condolences to his family and friends.

Also, we would like to thank Michael Diamant of "New Traditional Architecture", Nadia Everard and Noé Morin of "L'Table Ronde d' Architecture", as well as Ruben Hanssen of the "The Aesthetic City" for the great work they are doing in spreading the message and reviving the wisdom of the classical method.

Finally, we thank all of you readers, students, clients and attendees at our events for making 2023 a very successful year for the CPI and hope for your continued support. The good thing about the future – it comes one day at a time. So together, let's work on making the world a better place day by day.



# WELCOME TO OUR NEW TAG-24 TEAM MEMBERS!



Berenice Ratcliff as Event Manager



Bruna Bittencourt as Executive Producer



Esther Odoko as Administrative Assistant.

Left Page: CPS design for a mixed-use parking garage in Zionsville, IN.



# TAG-24: FROM ROMANTIC TO PRAGMATIC

While most of today's architecture and urbanism speak to "sustainability" and "equity," the buildings and urban fabric built since 1950 use about 65% of today's energy in the production of their materials, fabrication of their components, in their lighting, conditioning—and the traffic they cause. We have to do something about it right now—and traditional architects, classic planners, and building arts practitioners are a fulcral part of the solution.

Under the theme **From Romantic to Pragmatic**, TAG-24 brings to the table these distinguished actors in the field of the built environment. Experts, scholars, and enthusiasts from the strongly related, leading edge—and rapidly growing—fields of Traditional Architecture, Classic Urbanism, and Skilled Building Arts.

TAG-24 will address today's most critical issues: climate change, ecological destruction, the necessary genuine sustainability; and the now-obvious links between personal experience, neuroaesthetics, and physical well-being, biophilia, and manual skilled construction in the built environment.

TAG-24 will be hosted in the CPI STOA and co-hosted by the Traditional Architecture Group in the UK on **April 12-13-14**, **2024**. This will be a hybrid event with two live venues, one in the UK and one in the US. Some of the themes will be:

DAY TWO

DAYONE

Day Tuber

Day One	Day Two	Day Three
The Future of Technology lies in the Hand & The	The Sublime, Artwork, Architecture & Sculpture	Stewardship of Resources
Architect's Hand	-	Climatic Adaptability of
	Practice, Conservation &	Traditional Architecture
Neurosicence and Urban	Teaching in the UK	
Health, AI & Futurism		Goodbye Futurama for a
	Timeless Durability and	real 15 minute city
Relighting the Torch for	Seismic and Vernacular	
the Building Arts	Resilience	Town and Country
Students, Youth and	Urban Adabtibility and	Memory and Place -
Pioneers	Resilience	Shaping our Urban
		Future

SAVE THE DATE & STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER UPDATES



# NOTHING IN ARCHITECTURE MAKES SENSE EXCEPT IN THE LIGHT OF NEUROSCIENCE

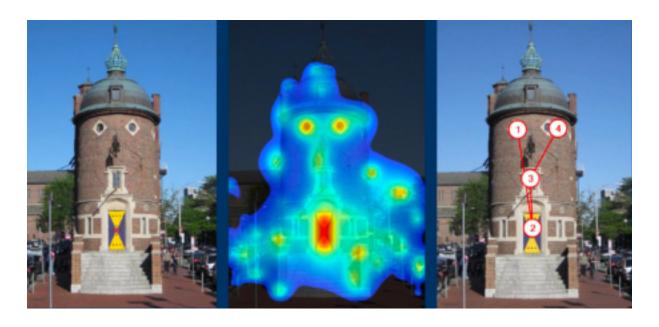
BY <u>Vernon Woodworth</u>, <u>FAIA</u> - Secretary of the The Human Architecture + Planning Institute Inc, (the Hapi.org)

"Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution" declared Theodosius Dobzhansky in a 1973 essay. This statement summarizes the impact of a paradigm shift that has redefined what it means to be human. As products of evolution our biology represents the interaction of genetic inheritance and mutations with environmental conditions. This interaction, carried out over millions of years, has occurred within the context of living systems that define ecosystems, bioregions, and the allencompassing biosphere. In response to the Delphic maxim to "Know thyself", therefore, we must make an accounting of our evolutionary nature, the fabric of our being woven from the warp and woof of organism and environment.

As latecomers on the evolutionary spectrum mammals evolved to form attachment bonds, starting with prolonged infantile dependency and extending into family systems, peer groups and predominantly monogamous mating patterns. Early hominids learned to employ tools in cooperative hunting and expanded

expressive vocalizations into the magical dimension of the spoken word. Rapid brain growth enabled greater social communication while the introduction of agriculture promoted permanent settlements, ultimately resulting in the development of culture as a new factor in the evolutionary process.

The story of our evolution as a species is retold in the development of each new embryo. From tadpole to toddler our central nervous systems replicate our phylogenetic journey. Extended infancy periods allow greater brain growth, responsive to the critical human learning experiences of touch, vocal prosody, facial recognition, and emotional interaction. In this critical developmental process we learn safety, familiarity and communication as pleasurable experiences that reinforce our sense of self while restoring wellbeing in the healing state of homeostasis. The functioning of our central nervous systems is calibrated in these early interactions, establishing the basis for our future relationships and interpersonal styles.



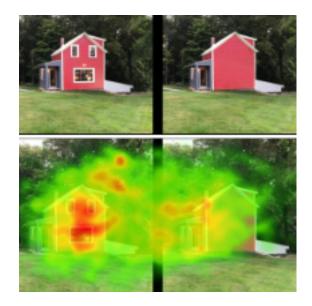
Above: VAS can help us understand how buildings catch our eye, such as much-photographed, Harvard Lampoon Building, in Cambridge MA: it suggests a face, its 'eyes' and 'mouth' capturing our attention instantly. [1]

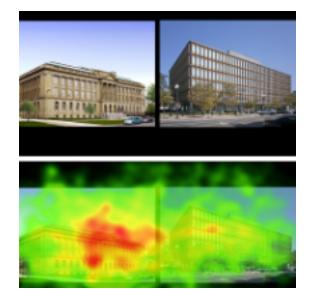
Perhaps the most significant insight of an evolutionary approach to our inherited nature comes from the growing understanding of the phenomenon termed 'biophilia'. The implications of this phenomenon, whereby physical and mental health are facilitated, productivity and creativity are increased, and cognitive functioning is restored, demonstrates the extent to which our functioning and wellbeing are impacted by environmental conditions. Research shows that our perceptual and cognitive systems are drawn to the ubiquitous fractal patterns found in nature and will not respond to blank walls or rigid grids.

The phenomenon of 'pareidolia', whereby random stimuli are

perceived as meaningful objects or sounds, is a parallel phenomenon demonstrating our sensory processing as an active, generative system based on expectation and evolutionary priorities. Facial recognition, for instance, is critical to the survival of a newborn and closely associated with the sympathetic nervous systems hard-wired responses of fight, flight or freeze.

Humans have evolved an additional strategy to this repertoire, a downshifting of regulation that facilitates social interaction, complete with enhanced facial expression to communicate emotional states. Given the interactivity and sensitivity of our immune, endocrine, and central





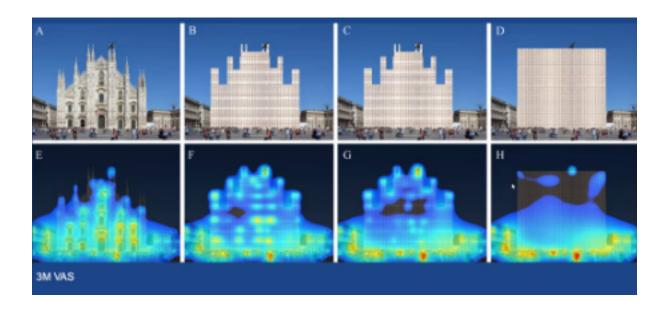
Left above are two photos of a house in upstate New York; the original on the left; on the right the windows are photoshopped away. In a pairing of the two, the heatmap glows reddest where viewers looked most in a 12-second interval, indicating how the brain is hardwired to ignore blankness. Eye-tracking studies consistently reveal how details matter in building design; they draw us in [2]

Right above are two images from a 2020 Harris Poll comparing traditional and modern civic buildings: Note how red heatmap falls on traditional building, not the modern. [3]

For both heatmap studies, the biometric software *iMotions-online* was utilized.

nervous systems to environmental stimuli we are now beginning to understand the extent of the subliminal impact of our built environments. This has fueled a recent interest in the promotion of 'evidence-based' design, whereby specific outcomes are documented and appropriate means implemented to optimize the user

experience. Among the strategies employed are biometric monitoring devices that track and record heart rate, galvanic skin pressure, eye motion, and other physiological variables. By exposing subjects to environments or visual images and tracking responses by means of biometrics a snapshot of the impact these stimuli produce can be



Al-software, such as 3M Visual Attention Software (VAS) also predicts how detail matters in design. In this study of the Milan Cathedral, conducted by Alexandros Lavdas, the heatmaps dissipate the less detail the building shows. [4]

captured. This method has been shown to produce different results from questionnaires or surveys, suggesting that conscious responses may be learned, while physiological responses maintain their evolutionary mandates.

Biometric monitoring is beginning to open a new window into the health and wellbeing impacts of built environments that will alter design education, practice and regulation. While we have been largely ignoring these impacts since the advent of the Industrial Revolution the toll of

inattention to environmental quality has been rising in the form of increased stress and related illness. Once the guarantor of human safety, built environments now often convey an atmosphere of indifference or hostility towards the basic activities of communal work, spontaneous social gathering and commerce. Car culture may be largely to blame, but car culture is part of a larger alienation from healthy human interaction and nature in favor of the gross domestic product. Lost in the pursuit of wealth and economic power is any understanding of the evolutionary necessities of supportive relationships. Ironically the modern lifestyle driven by consumer values, fancy cars and high mortgage rates is reducing our ability to determine our destinies by locking us into endless circles of debt. Without agency and supportive relationships,

in environments that lack safety and aesthetic appeal, health is compromised and wellbeing is elusive. When the public realm does not communicate the values of a regulated and diverse culture it fails in its responsibility to provide a container for cultural evolution.

Amidst the wealth and glamor of the modern metropolis the signs of devolution are easy to spot, in the homeless populations, the neighborhoods still reeling from redlining, and the interstate highway projects that severed living urban arteries. In pursuit of health and wellbeing for all every means available should be employed. Understanding our basic human needs and evaluating our physiological reactions, in conjunction with an understanding of our evolutionary inheritance, present excellent starting points in reaching these goals.

#### Credits

[1] © Ann Sussman.

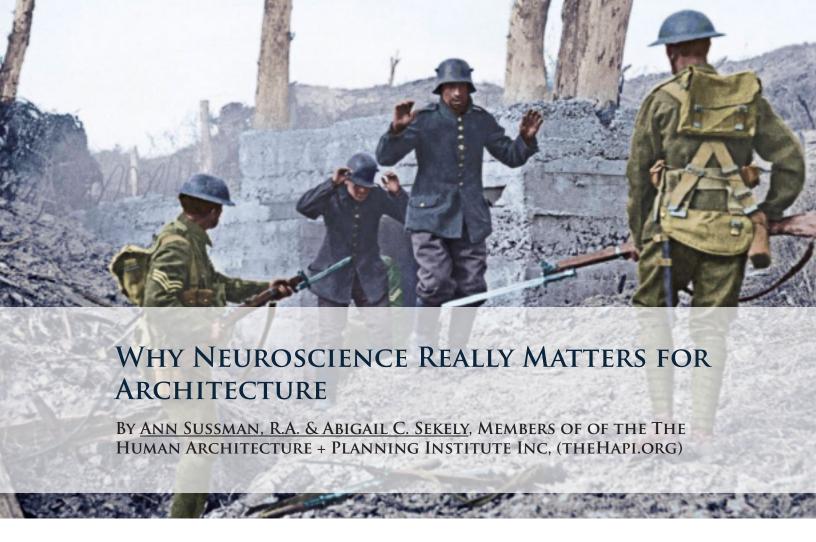
[2] Original image  ${\Bbb C}$ Kathy Chow, photoshopped and heatmap images,  ${\Bbb C}$  theHapi.org.

[3] © The Harris Poll, original, National Civic Art Society, (NCAS); heatmaps: ©theHapi.org.

[4] 3 VAS study conducted by Dr. Alexandron Lavdas:  $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$  the Hapi.org.



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New understandings in neuroscience are transformative for fields outside biology, including architecture, because they help us 'see' ourselves in new ways and provide a new lens to understand how things we make – including buildings – impact us!

Indeed, perhaps in no field will the impact of these biological findings be as potentially transformative – or revolutionary, as architecture!

Why? Because what 21st-century biology [1] makes clear is that the mind is not a 'blank slate', no 'tabula rasa' [2] – what humans needs to see, to feel at our best is largely

preset by our unique multi-millionyear evolutionary trip.

Our brain harbors internal biases to look at objects with bilateral symmetry, detail, and face-like attributes and this turns out to be not at all accidental – these are what we're built to see! Our perceptual system evolved for our survival as a social species, and the impact of that journey is replicated externally in the patterns that define traditional architecture worldwide. Our biology is at the root of this architecture's timeless appeal everywhere.

How, then, did Modern Architecture come about, with its blank facades,

Left page: German soldiers surrendering to the British at Pilkerm, West-Flanders in 1917 [3]. World War I saw especially dolorous combat conditions with the troops fighting over devastated moonscapes, while being subjected to constant shelling, shooting and gas attacks day and night. Note the 'functional' architecture of the bunker in the background.

Right: Walter Gropius in the dressuniform of the Hussaren Regiment 15 as a 'One-Year-Volunteer' in 1904. He served with distinction as a noncommissioned officer on the western front all througout World War I. [4]



hard-to-find front doors, and lack of ornament and detail? That too, has its roots in our biology and more recent human history. While traditional architecture reflects what a healthy, social primate needs to see to be at its best, and to draw us together as a community; Modern Architecture does the opposite, mirroring brain disorders, reflecting the dissociated states of its key 20th-century founders.

As the Common Edge article, *The Mental Disorders that Gave Us Modern Architecture* [5], explains key founders of the modern approach, including Walter Gropius and Mies

van der Rohe, both World War I veterans, have been retrospectively diagnosed with PTSD [6] (posttraumatic stress disorder), a diagnosis that was not in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) [7], health care professionals use, until 1980 – a full decade after their passing.

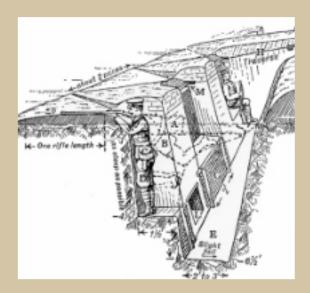
Both Mies and Gropius served in the German army, surviving the mass death and destruction of the world's first industrialized war, with its 40 million casualties [8], social collapse, and subsequent urgent need to rebuild



Right: Gropius' architecture expresses his brain disorder. Gropius' house in Lincoln, MA, suggests a bunker like he would have known on Western Front. [9]







Above: His home office is laid out like a bunker as shown in this 1914 English manual, with no way to see outside unless you stand up. [10]

Their new Modern paradigm for architecture, placed forgetting the past as foundational, which is now understood as quite typical with PTSD; 'a common defense mechanism' [11] that the brain uses to protect the survivor from painful memories.

Looking at Gropius' house in Lincoln, Massachusetts, built in 1938, a year after he began teaching at Harvard's Graduate School of Architecture, and 2 decades after his military service – we also observe other typical PTSD behavior; 'reenactment' [12].

Here the survivor also replays the past traumatic experience, both consciously and/or non-consciously, in an effort to heal from it.

In Gropius's case, the look of his suburban American house, resembling a bunker, the layout of his home office, suggesting a trench, and his bedroom, a 'dugout' where men slept in the trenches, are all very predictable, experts explain (see remarkable photos on the left page):

"If you never told me who lived here, I could tell this person has been traumatized," said Michael Kramer, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the VA NY Harbor Healthcare System, after looking at these photos. "It's a house built for safety; it's classic PTSD."

"With the house parallels you show, it's obvious," added Jim Hopper, PhD, a trauma psychologist and teaching associate at Harvard

Medical School. Ashley Doukas, PhD, a psychologist at the NYU School of Medicine, noted, "In looking at the Gropius house, it's a direct expression of how trauma works."

The responses of trauma experts here underscore the importance of considering the historical framework in which Gropius and his contemporaries operated – and something equally critical: the need to bridge disciplines, so that today's architects and design educators understand the human experience the way today's medical professionals do. We will only build a better, more sustainable world – when we do!

Or as Buddhist teacher, Daisaku Ikeda, said:

"A successful vision of the future, is not possible without an accurate knowledge of the past."

#### Notes and Credits

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[9] ©Ann Sussman.

[10] ©Ann Sussman.

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Ann is president of the Human Architecture + Planning Institute (theHapi.org) a nonprofit dedicated to understanding the human experience of the built environment, and improving its design through education and research. A licensed architect, her expertise is using biometric tools, including eye tracking, to reveal how our experience of buildings begins subliminally. Her book, Cognitive Architecture, Designing for How We Respond to the Built Environment, (Routledge, 2015, 2021) won the Place Research Award from the Environment Design Research Association (EDRA) in 2016. She has taught a course on buildings and our biology at the Boston Architectural College (BAC) since 2018.

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Abigail serves as the Executive Director of the Human Architecture + Planning Institute. Since 2020 she has explored the intersection of architecture, neuroaesthetics, and historic preservation. Employing advanced technologies including eye tracking and facial expression analysis in her ongoing research, Abigail explores cognitive responses and emotional states, unraveling the intricate relationship between individuals and the built environment. To explore this work more deeply, read recent publication Using Eye Tracking to Reveal Responses to the Built Environment and Its Constituents by Rosas, Sussman, Sekely, and Lavdas [13].



# theHapi.org

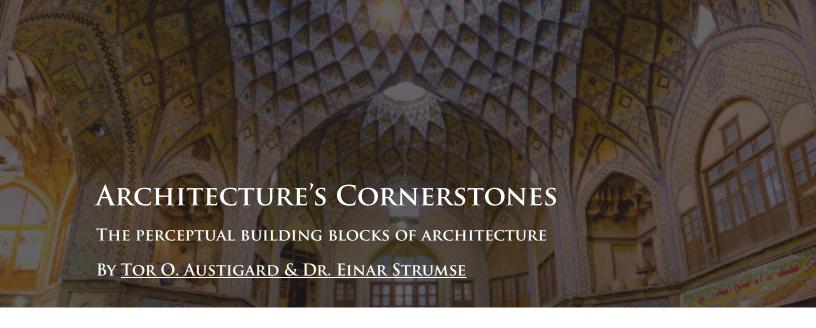
# The Human Architecture + Planning Institute Inc, (theHapi.org)

Our nonprofit's mission is to promote evidence-based design, using biometric and other tools to reveal hidden aspects of the human experience that direct our behavior in the built environment.

We promote science using the latest technologies, including eye tracking, that demonstrate how the human body and brain respond to our surroundings before we are consciously aware of what we are looking at.

Read an article on theHapi's recent research, Using Eye Tracking to Reveal Responses to the Built Environment and its Constituents, published in the Journal of Applied Sciences! [13]

Interested in collaborating or learning more? Do reach out to us; together we can build a hapi-er world!



How many times have we clicked on blurry pictures of highway bridges and traffic lights to prove we're not robots? How can it even in 2024 be so difficult for computers to understand which images contain what? This tells us a lot about how humans perceive objects and the environment.

When a wind-up mouse darts across the floor, it is the sum of many small details that determines whether we are tricked into thinking that it is a real mouse or not: fur, whiskers, ears, movement. We quickly retrieve knowledge about real mice from our long-term memory, and that that knowledge is projected into the ongoing perception. [1]

And when we discover something black and round under its belly—a wheel—we understand that this is just a windup mouse.

The example shows us that our perception is not flat and neutral like a camera; it's hierarchical, meaningful, and based on an enormous number of recognizable

and categorizable objects and their details. And these characteristics underlie our ability to recognize highway bridges and traffic lights from blurry images better than a computer.

Architecture and the built environment were traditionally made up of such recognizable and categorizable objects: roofs, windows, chimneys, downspouts, and door handles. Each object was further made up of recognizable parts—think of all the components that make up a window, or all the tiny components involved in assembling and attaching a downspout to the wall.

For several decades there has been a whole field of research on how we perceive our surroundings, the objects they contain, and what pleasure we derive from them: environmental psychology. This research indicates firmly that there are universal human preferences in perception, across cultures and individual taste. Researchers Rachel

and Stephen Kaplan have summarized these universal preferences in four points [2]:

- **1. Coherence:** How well the various elements in the environment are connected or fit together.
- **2. Legibility:** How easy it is to orient oneself in the surroundings.
- **3. Complexity:** How many different elements the environment consists of
- **4. Mystery:** Whether you can find out more of what you see if you explore the surroundings.

Further summarized, we may say that we prefer environments that satisfy two basic human needs: the need to understand (cohesion and readability) and the need to explore (complexity and mystery). Windows that consist of visible subcomponents like hinges, sills and muntins help us to grasp that it is a window and encourage visual exploration. By emphasizing the forms of the subcomponents, ornamentation may drive both understanding and exploration [3], quite contrary to the Modernist claim that ornamentation impedes understanding of the true forms of architecture.

More specifically aimed at the built environment, the research of Arthur Stamps shows that people prefer ornamentation and visual details, measured on the number of bends and angles in the building silhouette. [4]

We will repeat that part: "...the number of bends and angles..."
Meaning: the more, the better.
Compare that with the Modernist maxim "Less is more", which to our



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knowledge still stands without support in science.

The mathematical concept that best describes this phenomenon is the fractal. The relation in size of one object compared to its subcomponents or to the distance between them, can be measured as a factor. When this basic shape repeats up and down in size, you have a fractal. A tree branch splits into smaller branches and twigs, and their comparative sizes are typically fractals. A tiny Y-shaped twig can realistically represent a tree in a scale model, because its proportions are the same as a full-scale tree. The same applies throughout nature, from the coastline of a country [5], to the treetops of a forest or the surface of a rock. Nature is inherently rugged, and rugged in surprisingly systematic ways.



Above: Romanesco broccoli as an example for fractals occuring in nature. [6]

Humans have evolved to function in this environment, and understanding and exploring the environment has been essential for survival. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that research has found that humans generally prefer environments with fractals, and with geometrical factors that resemble those found in nature.

Modernist buildings, especially when designed by early 20th century Modernist architects that were trained in classical architecture, may possess overall harmonious proportions based on such factors. However, this insight is not applied further down in scale, into building components and ornamentation.

Based on the principle of fractals, a two-story building will need a certain number of design subdivisions, or "levels" of detailing, to be beautiful—typically around 7. Often these subdivisions will correspond well with the functional measurements of building components. Or conversely, the overall measurements and design of the building can arise from the measurements of functional building components. Ornaments can help emphasize this structure, as well as filling in visually necessary detailing where there are no functional building components to work with.

This is precisely what you will find in traditional architecture. Not only in Europe, but in cultures across the

world. It is reasonable to claim that traditional architecture across all cultures represents accumulated, tacit knowledge about human psychology and mathematics that has only recently been revealed by modern science.

The magic of all this research on neuroscience, environmental psychology and mathematics, is that none of it is fundamentally conservative, or really says anything about style. While learning the language of classical architecture and acquiring the tacit knowledge of traditions are indispensable, only the creativity of architects will set the limits of how this language and knowledge may in the future evolve into something new.

#### **Notes and Credits**

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This is a reworked version of the article "Arkitekturens Grunnsteiner" originally published in the Norwegian cultural magazine "Samtiden" on September 3rd 2023. The original article can be found under: https://samtiden.no/frapapirutgaven/2023/arkitekturens-grunnsteiner [29th Dec. 2023].



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# WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BRAIN WHEN YOU WALK DOWN THE STREET?

BY DR. AENNE BRIELMANN

What makes people want to live in a city? What makes it agreeable, desirable, beautiful? Even though people agree that cities like Barcelona, Lucca, and Rome have an appeal that is reflected in the number of yearly visitors, the answer to the question of what it is that makes them so attractive seems elusive. Recently, however, collaborations between architects, urban planners, psychologists, and neuroscientists have started to unravel this question. Together, they start to identify the mechanisms that make an urban environment beautiful and, as a consequence. conducive to human well-being.

The basis for these new collaborative efforts is the insight that people's perception and interaction with the built environment relies on the same basic brain mechanisms that psychologists have been investigating for more than a hundred years. When you walk down the street, your brain engages in interconnected, repeated cycles of perception, evaluation, and reaction. Within far less than a second, this

perception mechanism already sends out a signal that indicates how well your sensory-cognitive system can deal with the things you perceive. Crucially, this signal comes with a judgment – things that your brain can easily deal with send a positive signal, difficult to process inputs a negative one. We feel this signal as our initial gut reaction to the things we perceive. It is the immediate, automatic 'Oh, how nice!' or 'Ew, that's ugly...' response. Only later does your education and social training impact how you judge the appearance of your environment.

Still, that initial signal is powerful. Your eye- and hand-movements are not only guided by the objective features of your environment. The processes that direct your eyes and hands are not a sterile cognitive calculation but constantly altered and guided by affective responses like the one we just described. Our eyes and bodies are drawn towards things that are appealing – beautiful – and they automatically retreat from those objects that elicit negative emotions.

What does this mean for our interactions with the built environment? We prefer to walk on streets that are attractive, and we are more likely to approach buildings without hesitance that look good. It is a simple consequence of the fact that humans, just like other animals, strive to maximize positive feelings and the feeling of beauty is one of



Aenne Brielmann is a postdoctoral researcher at the Hector Research Institute of the University of Tübingen, Germany. She received her BSc and MSc in Psychology from the University of Konstanz and her PhD from New York University. Aenne Brielmann's work tackles the question of why and how people value sensory experiences. Their computational model of sensory value consolidates theories and empirical data from psychology with reward-learning algorithms from machine learning. The aim of their research is the integration of sensory value into the big picture of human behavior and cognition. This also includes the question as to how the sensory value, or beauty, of the built environment influences how people feel and move in them.

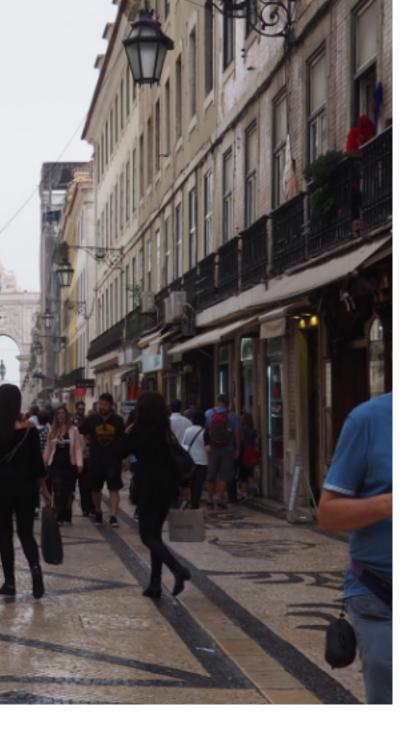
these. Neurophysiologically speaking, the experience of beauty activates the same reward centers in the brain that also respond to the fulfillment of our most basic needs. Not coincidentally, then, a more pleasingly built environment also improves the overall well-being of those who live in it.

Based on these insights, it is only logical that we should thrive to build beautiful cities. But what makes a building, a street, a neighborhood beautiful? There seems to be no easy answer available with the phrase "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder" looming over the issue. And while it is true that people differ in their aesthetic preferences, not all hope is lost. There are properties of the visual environment that are intricately linked to human perception in its most basic form and therefore lead to some universal principles that can guide the design of environments that are appealing to the vast majority of people.

The most significant of these principles is fractal dimensionality. Fractals are patterns that repeat themselves within an object at increasingly smaller scales. Fractals are omnipresent in nature – the contours of clouds, the forking of tree branches, the outlines of a mountain range on the horizon. It is likely because nature is filled with fractals that our visual system has a particularly easy time processing them. Even the movement of our



eyes follows a fractal-like pattern, as if they were set to mimic the structure of the patterns that our brain most expects to encounter. The ease of processing and understanding fractal patterns also leads to an intuitive and near-universal liking of such fractal patterns.



We find exactly such natural fractal patterns in the cities we started this little essay out with. The streets of Barcelona and Rome are filled with buildings whose facades and outlines follow fractal patterns. What is more, the old cores of these cities support our visual brain by other means, too. The streets are meant

for walking, not driving, forcing, and allowing people to take in their environment at a speed that their brains can keep up with. By and large, buildings are limited to a few stories, so orientation along a horizon line remains possible. And on top of being organized and decorated with fractal patterns, the façades along their streets also present a face-like structure – one that our perceptual system loves because it is one that it processes the most and that our brain has even developed a specialized brain region for.

So, hopefully, when you walk down a street, your brain will have an easy time processing the built environment around it. It will find fractal and face-like structures that enable it to process its environment efficiently and consequently send you positive affective signals back. This will happen at every step, every second or so, and the affective signals will guide your movements along the streets. With the new collaborations between urban designers, architects, psychologists, and neuroscientists, we have started to unravel this ever-repeating process. It is now up to them, the public, and policy makers to act on these insights.



## HERALDING THE ARTS & CRAFTS

**EDITOR - PATRICK WEBB** 

Good architecture can ameliorate the sins of poor planning, and the saving grace of the human hand redeems even a meagre design.

Consequently, I can say with utmost confidence, as supported by a long historical track record, that there is no good urbanism without great architecture and no great architecture without outstanding craftsmanship. The Arts & Crafts are foundational for human flourishing generally and specifically for any renascence of traditional architecture.

For the longest time I, like many traditional artisans, was entirely mute... much to express, no voice to do so. Although there certainly exists sign, symbol, vocabulary, and calculation, for the most part traditional handicraft is non-verbal rather, it is doing, ritualistically reenacting a drama that has played out over millennia. Nevertheless, due to the imposition of our Modern Industrial society to the extreme detriment of traditional craft some artisans are taking the time to find their voice. What is needed next are platforms to hear their stories, to learn from the wisdom embedded in the craft itself. As a small contribution to this pressing need

the Herald of the Classic Planning Institute is opening this regular editorial column dedicated to the traditional Arts & Crafts.

WHAT SUBJECTS CAN SUCH A COLUMN HOPE TO DISCUSS?

Certainly, there is a lot of demystification that needs to take place. The typical reaction when seeing a traditional artisan at work is amazement, often accompanied with the remark that, "nobody does that anymore". The value of hearing from working artisans, be they timber framers, masons, smiths, glaziers, muralists, carpenters, or plasterers to name a few, is sure to be well received. Explanations of means, methods, and materials as well as what makes an appropriate architectural specification from the artisans that are masters of their craft are of inestimable practical value to owners and designers and will be among the editorials you can expect to find here.

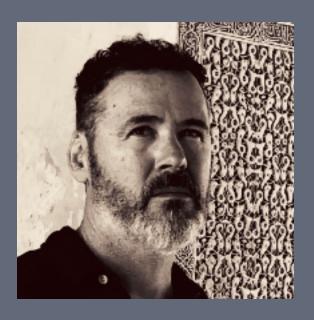
Costs are always a primary concern and a frequent excuse for not considering craft is that it's predetermined to, "cost too much". However, you always must watch the man with the measuring tape, specifically because the parameters of what exactly is being measured will determine the result. Modern society tends to reduce all value quantitatively to dollars and cents, euros, or pounds. Arts & Craftsmen are among those that perpetuate



Above: Patrick Webb in action. [1]

traditional values and measures that are qualitative, ecological, social, cultural, and sane. In a time where the materialistic paradigms upon which our Modern societies rest are failing, the perspective of the craftsman is one we can no longer afford to ignore.

Last but not least we intend to openly confront the elephant in the room: Artificial Intelligence. Of course, A.I. is nothing new, we've been living with it for some time. Our societies have been organised by algorithm, statue, and code for centuries. Most all our food, clothes, shelter, medicine, and transportation has likewise been industrially mechanised for nearly as long. However, with the rapid advances in processing power in combination with more refined methods of 3D printing, waterjet, laser etching, and CNC machining, the threat to the



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Arts & Craftsman, just beginning to regain a small measure of their former stature after a century of degradation under the assault of architectural Modernism, is visceral and real. Will every joy and pleasure of our creative spirit and the human hand be turned over to the machine? We will put all the hollow promises of beauty and creative expression to the test and expose our technological society for what it is: an instrument of dominance, one with no regard for human needs or dignity.

Leo Tolstoy once wrote, "There is no greatness where there is no simplicity, goodness and truth." In harmony with these words this columns intends to present an alternative: live honestly, with yourself and with others. Make no false justifications, build or refurbish an authentic home that you want to live in. Fill it with craft that is both useful and beautiful. Employ men and women who care deeply about their work and want to give you the best. It may be at first a daunting concept but eventually it is a liberation to realize that you can actually eat, drink, love and live in a place that contributes to your happiness.

Credit

[1] This image is used by the courtesy of Hunt Studios.

#### THE ELEPHANT IN THE AVANT-GARDE

HOW LIES BECAME TRUTH, AND A SMALL COTERIE BECAME DICTATORS
BY PROF. JAMES STEVENS CURL

It has always struck me as very odd that Modernism was almost universally adopted in the West after 1945 when it was really only fashionable among small numbers of wealthy bourgeoisie between the wars. Indeed, in the 1920s and 1930s a dignified stripped Classicism was the usual architectural language for official buildings, while in housing traces of the Arts-and-Crafts movement could still be discerned as well as simplified Classicism. Modernism was almost totally confined to industrial architecture. or to buildings associated with transport. What happened to ensure that Modernism became dominant after 1945, not only in architecture, but in public art, housing, and just about every other part of the built environment? A new book goes some way to suggesting a solution [1]: it dissects the weaponising of art as propaganda, from its extremely violent origins in Revolutionary France, to the extraordinary adoption of supposedly avant-garde art by the United States of America.

Any clear-sighted person who studies the pictorial propaganda produced under the ægis of the Nazis (posters, film, sculpture, postage-stamps, etc.) must concede that it was remarkably effective, drawing on traditionalist art linked to nature, the family, and the homeland, but rejecting so-called 'Modern Art', which the NSDAP associated with large cities, internationalism, and decadence. In painting, the 'new realistic tendency', in which every detail was rendered with exactness, celebrated ordinary people, often farming families in domestic settings or working, and peasant women wearing regional costumes. It also featured idealised female beauty, as in the oils of the 'Master of the Curly Pubic Hair', Adolf Ziegler (1892-1959), though Ivo Saliger (1894-1987) was equally expert in that popular field, and there was plenty of heroic stuff idealising soldiers, sailors, and airmen, and, of course, Nazi Party activists such as those uniformed members of the Sturmabteilung.

In 1937 two big exhibitions were held in Munich: one was concerned with 'degenerate Art', and featured Expressionist, Abstract, Cubist, etc., work, so that the public could compare it with the finely crafted representational paintings on show at the Great German Art Exhibition in the newly erected House of German

Art designed by Paul Ludwig Troost (1879-1934). In 1934 Professor Hans Adolf Bühler (1877-1951), no mean painter himself, criticised the 'art' promoted by academies and museums, because it was above the heads of lay people, who did not understand it or like it. It was art for a select few—the art intellectual and the art market. [2] Such 'art', he declared, had no value, only a price. It was no longer the friendly Goddess, healing and blessing: it was only a whore.

Powerful imagery was also employed in the Soviet Union to promote ideology, to celebrate the Party and Stalin, and in fact function as propaganda. Again, it was representational, often heroic, and made an impact on ordinary people, who did not need to have obscure abstractions explained to them. What became known as Social Realism was common to both totalitarian States. In architecture, too, a stripped, elemental Classicism was used to inform civic and official architecture, while factories and other utilitarian structures were made of mass-produced components, and were to all intents and purposes, 'Modernist', devoid of any traditional architectural styling. In both the Soviet Union and National Socialist Germany the increasingly abstracted nature of painting and sculpture were regarded as evidence of rich bourgeois decadence, a view widely

accepted by the ordinary working people virtually everywhere: indeed, opinions of the more outlandish experiments of Modernist artists were hostile in both the democracies and the dictatorships. Modernism was the prerogative of a small group of wealthy self-appointed arbiters of taste, who looked down upon the preferences of the Many with contempt, regarding them as mere Kitsch.

Now the term Kitsch means rubbishy pretentious trash; anything that is shoddy, tawdry, mawkishly sentimental, and in bad taste. When applied to any of the arts it suggests false, superficial, spurious imitation of real artistic creations, so implies that Kitsch art apes something without any real understanding or depth whilst at the same time trying to please, soothe, and reassure. However, it has also been described as the cultural revenge of the proletariat, identified as an aspect of Camp taste that values the outrageously hideous for its own sake. I have a certain sympathy for the latter view, which strikes me as rather more accurate.

In 1939 the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the dismemberment of Poland caused more than a few flutterings in the artistic dovecotes. Up to then, officially sponsored Social Realist murals in American official buildings were, in terms of content and compositional-representational

[Fig.1] To the right: Call by Cultural Leaders of Germany urging everyone to vote Hitler into a position of supreme power, published in the Nazi Party newspaper, Völkischer Beobachter of 18 August 1934. The name of Mies van der Rohe (minus the diæresis over the ë of Mies he had given himself in the 1920s to hide the unpleasant associations with what is rotten, seedy, poor, wretched, crummy and out of sorts which Mies conjures up in German, rather than the cuddly, pussy-cat, soothing sound it suggests in English) appears in lines 6 and 5 up from the bottom. On 19 August 1934 Hitler set Germany on its path to mass-murder, war, ruin, and disgrace.

[Fig.2] At the Bottom: Detail of the proclamation signed by the deified Modernist in Völkischer Beobachter (18 August 1934).

#### Aufruf der Rulturichaffenden

Berlin, 17. Muguft. Die unterzeichneten Berfonlichfeiten richten folgenben Mufruf an Die Offentlichfeit:

Bolfsgenoffen, Freunde!

Wir haben einen der Größten beuticher Geichichte zu Grabe geleitet. An feinem Sarge iprach ber junge Gubrer des Reiches für uns alle, und legte Befenntnis ab für fich und den Zutunftswillen ber Nation.

Wort und Leben sette er jum Pland für die Biederaufrichtung unieres Boltes, das in Einheit und Stre leben und Bürge des Friedens sein will, der die Boller verbindet. Wir glauben an diesen Juhret, der unsern helben Wunsch nach Eintracht erfüllt hat.

Wir vertrauen seinem Wert, das hingabe fordert jenseits aller frittelnden Bernünftelet, wir leben unsere hoffnung auf den Mann, der über Neusch und Dinge hinaus in Gottes Borschung gläubig ist.

Weil ber Dichter und Runftler nur in gleicher Treue jum Bolt ju ichaffen vermag, und weil er von ber gleichen und tiefften ilberzeugung findet, bag bas heiligfte Recht ber Wölfer in ber eigenen Schidals bestimmung besteht, gehören wir zu bes Führers Gefolgichaft.

Wir fordern nichts anderes für uns, als was wir anderen Bölfern ohne Borbehalte jugestehen, wir muffen es für dieses Bolt, das deutsche Bolt, sordern, weil seine Einheit, Freiheit und Ehre unser aller Not und Wille ist.

Der Juhrer hat uns wiederum aufgesordert, in Bertrauen und Treue zu ihm zu fteben. Niemand von uns wird sehlen, wenn es gilt, das zu befunden.

Werner Brumelburg, Ernft Barlach, Rubolf G. Binbing, Sans Friedrich Blund, Berleger Mitreb Brudmann, Richard Curinger, Profellor Cmil Fahrenfamp, Erich Feperabend, Guftan

Frenffen, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Brofessor Dr. Cherharb Sanfitaengl, Guitav Savemann, Erich Sedel, Brofessor Gugen Sonig, Being Ihlert, Sanns Johlt, Georg Ratte, Crwin Rolbenheuer, Berner Krauft, Franz Lent, heinrich Lerfch, Brofessor Rat! Lörcher, Architeft Walter March, Agnes Miegel, Borries Freiherr von Münch-

haufen, Emil Rolbe, Paul Pfund, Sano Bfigner, Brofeffor Dr. Withelm Binber, Mico van ber Robe, Brofeffor Dr. h.c. Baul Schulge-Raumburg, Sermann Stehe, Richard Strauf, Joseph Thorat, Generalintendant Seing Tietjen, Oberbürgermeifter Dr. Weibemann, Arnold Beinnuller.

Professor Dr. Wilhelm Binder, Mies van der Rohe, Professor Dr. h. c. Baul Schulte-Raum=

techniques, not all that different from similar works carried out under totalitarian régimes, so something had to give. There were attempts to promote the idea of a true American art not indebted to Europe, and so spurious links between the art of Native Americans and the crude art of untutored American primitivism were artificially manufactured. I have seen wonderful exhibitions of Native American design in Dumbarton Oaks, and I can state categorically that any alleged connections between that and American limners entirely indebted to the Western traditions are complete fantasy, a fake connection for which gurus like Alfred Hamilton Barr (1902-81) can be held responsible. Unsurprisingly, Native Americans had no interest in imitating Western art, for before the invasion of colonising Europeans. indigenous decorative arts were untouched by the traditions of Europe, and the people who created them had no wish to participate in any supposed cultural narratives of the West. Attempts by Barr & Co. to co-opt Native American art in the advancement of their flimsy ideology were at worst cultural appropriation, and at best selfrighteous condescension.

The war in Europe led to a curious state of affairs in the USA, for the American avant-garde, which, thanks to the machinations of Nazi sympathisers such as Philip

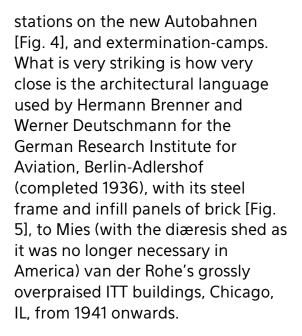


Fig. 3 Opel works, Brandenburgander Havel, built in 190 days in 1935 to designs by Heinrich Bärsch (1899-1971) in a Modernist style that belies conventional wisdom concerning National Socialist attitudes to architecture (collection JSC).

Cortelyou Johnson (1906-2005—who had an aloof disdain for the opinions of the masses), had already helped to lever Germans such as Walter Gropius (1883-1969), Ludwig Miës van der Rohe (1886-1969), and other Bauhäusler into positions where they could impose Modernist indoctrination on American architectural education (part of a process Sibyl Moholy-Nagy [1903-71] aptly dubbed 'Hitler's Revenge', given previous attempts by some German immigrants to ingratiate themselves with the National Socialists [Figs. 1 & 2]). This small, élite, avant-garde architecture, and the former were actually quite supportive of it for certain building types such as factories [Fig. 3], gas



Fig. 4 Service-station for the German State Highways by Paul Hofer (1909-95) and Karl Johann Fischer (fl. 1920s-40s), a good example of the Modernist architecture adopted by the National Socialists for the Autobahn system (collection JSC).



In 1939 President Roosevelt publicly endorsed MoMA, and very soon that



Fig. 5 Part of the German Research Institute for Aviation, Berlin-Adlershof (1934-6), by Hermann Brenner and Werner Deutschmann (both fl. 1920s-40s), impeccably Modernist architecture of the Third Reich, with obvious similarities in the steel frames and brick infill-panels to Mies van der Rohe's ITT Campus, Chicago, II (1941 onwards).

institution became the Temple or Arbiter of Modernism, the new artistic religion of the USA which held that representational art was the enemy of the new, true, democratic, honest, fresh, exciting, fashionable, really American avantgarde, and that, similarly, the Modern Movement in architecture, which Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-83), in his ominously titled and pernicious 1936 book. Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius, hailed approvingly as 'totalitarian' because it was a 'genuine style as opposed to a passing fashion', was now to destroy the great Beaux-Arts trajectory that

had been the glory of American architecture. Pevsner, of course, also attempted to give Modernism respectable antecedents by claiming that Arts-and-Crafts architects and artists were 'pioneers' of the Modern Movement, just as MoMA endeavoured to invent connections with aspects of an American past. But Modernism was actually a complete severance and brutal rupture with everything that had gone before. In America, an art policy was created whereby a supposed avant-garde art embraced by a small coterie of the rich élite entered the service of the State, just as Nazi idealism served Germany, and Stalin-approved Socialist Realism served the USSR.

When governments use acolytes of the self-appointed avant-garde as willing tools of the State, we should all be very, very afraid. Michael Pearce's book "Kitsch, Propaganda, and the American Avant-Garde" [1] should be read by everyone as a corrective to the downright lies that have been spread about the supposedly 'democratic' nature of Modernism, for, as Pevsner very clearly stated (with approval too), the essence of Modernism was totalitarian. It still is just that.

#### Notes

[1] Michael J. Pearce (2023): Kitsch, Propaganda, and the American Avant-Garde (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

[2] H.A. Bühler was editor-in-chief of the monthly arts magazine, Das Bild. His remarks on art are taken from an article of his published as 'Zum Geleit' in Das Bild in 1934, freely translated. It was a theme to which he returned many times, and his opinions resonated with many, who disliked being force-fed uncongenial stuff they perceived as ugly and unworthy of the label 'art' at all.



Prof. James Stevens Curl has been fascinated by real architecture since childhood, appalled by what passes as 'architectural education' (which he identified from his first experiences of it as indoctrination, bullying cruelty, even brainwashing), disgusted by the ugliness, waste, unhumanity, and failure of environments created by Modernism, and in the last years of his life, is investigating what has gone wrong. He is contemptuous of the fraudulent 'history' peddled by Modernist partisans, and is determined to expose impostors and dangerous falsehoods while he still has the strength to do so.

## Classical Architecture

Language, Variety, & Adaptability

#### JAMES STEVENS CURL

A new edition of James Stevens Curl's *Classical Architecture* will be published in 2024 by John Hudson Publishing. This is an opportunity to order a copy signed by the author and with your name included in the book as a supporting subscriber. Signed copies will only be available directly from the publisher.

The original edition in 1992 was described in Architectural Review as 'the clearest and most accessible account of the history and use of the language which has produced most of the great masterpieces of Western architecture.' Like that edition, and the subsequent one of 2001, the new book describes the fundamental principles and various aspects of Classical architecture in a series of concise chapters, in clear and straightforward language. It outlines the origins of Classical architecture in Antiquity, and describes its continuous development through its various manifestations during the Renaissance, its transformations in its Baroque and Rococo phases, its re-emergence in 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century Neo-Classicism, and its survival in renewed forms up to the present day. The volume will be profusely illustrated with black-and-white and colour photographs, and with detailed annotated line-drawings for which the author is well known. It includes an expanded illustrated glossary, almost a dictionary of Classical architecture in itself. The recipient of an Arthur Ross Award (2019) by the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art of America in recognition of his contributions to preserving and advancing the Classical tradition in architecture, Professor Curl celebrates the richness of the Classical architectural vocabulary, grammar, and language, and demonstrates the huge range of themes and motifs found in his chosen subject. His work provides a basis for understanding this rich source of architectural design which has been at the heart of Western culture for well over two-and-a-half millennia, and continues to be widely studied and practised worldwide.

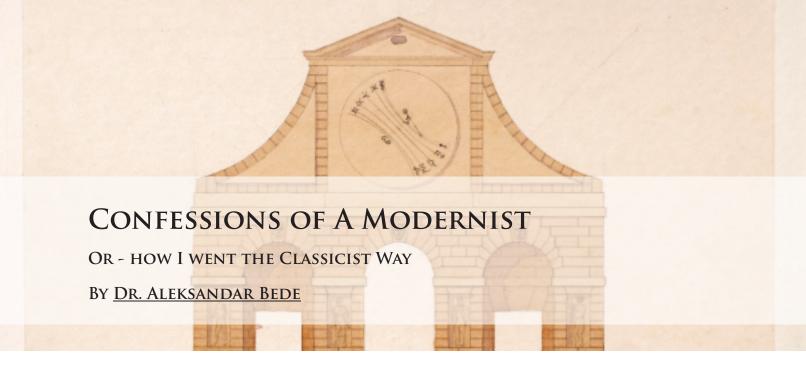
The book will be published in hard cover in a large and accessible format, with approximately 300 pages and high production values. The price of a signed copy with your name included, to include carriage within Europe, will be £70, or \$US 100 outside Europe. These prices are guaranteed until 31st March 2024, and compare with £90 for the regular hardback on publication. For this purpose 'Europe' will be as defined by the Royal Mail. Publication is expected in the second half of 2024, and those who reserve a copy will be kept informed of progress.



To order a copy, or with any queries, please contact the publisher by email at john@johnhudsonpublishing.com or complete and return the form to 22, Stratford Grove, London SW15 1NU, UK, either enclosing a sterling cheque payable to John Hudson Publishing Ltd, or to obtain details for bank transfer or invoicing via PayPal.

The *Befreiungshalle*, near Kelheim, Bavaria (1842-63), by Leo von Klenze (1784-1864)

Name (Block Capitals)
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Postcode/ZIP
Telephone
Email



I went to university to study architecture in 2005, at a school that was founded by postmodernists in 1990's as an alternative to the ossified mainstream education in Serbia. But this alternative turned out to be a total implementation of the anything goes approach. Now that I think about it, we weren't really taught any design principles by the professors in terms of architectural language and composition. They based their lectures mostly on the examples of postmodernist, deconstructivist or high tech architecture, while we were encouraged to take the road of endless strive for minimalism in our designs, in the name of 'purity'. Left to our own devices in this supposed complete freedom of personal expression, our projects somehow always ended up looking like Koolhaas or whatever we picked up from the likes of Dezeen and ArchDaily. When it came to urban planning, even if we were required

to read Camillo Sitte, Rob Krier and the critics of the Athens Charter and modernist zoning, they were quite uninterested in how we applied that knowledge in our projects.

Therefore, I cannot really say I was taught traditional urbanism, as the school wasn't tackling the problem seriously.

This experience, of being exposed to the profound unseriousness about the worldview of the postmodernists, has left me, my peers and our teaching assistants in search of a more stable architectural paradigm. We found it in high modernism. After all, we were surrounded by the masterpieces of Yugoslav modernism from 1950's and onwards. This epoch seemed to us as the golden age of aesthetic consistence, and it felt like it was up to our generation to bring it to the world's attention. That's how I ended up dedicating much of my career to the historical research of post-WW2 architecture. I was at the source of this knowledge, as the

Left page - An exercise in adapting Palladio's Villa Barbaro for Cambridge: Aleksandar's measured drawing from the CSCA summer school in classical architecture in Cambridge, 2023.

original materials were laying around in local archives, unexplored in their thousands. I loved the archival research, and the thrill of discovering cool blueprints and beautiful drawings. The enchantment by sleek modernist drawings made me cling onto the period even more, even if a lay person would object my published pieces about it with the simple "But it's ugly!" argument. "Peasants," I thought, "if only they understood the genius design and saw the drawings."

I did realize something though: the drawings always looked better than the built results. The magic of modernism is primarily graphical. It also looks better in photos, especially old ones. Meanwhile, I had no problem with historical architecture. Our school had even put a great emphasis on education in the history of architecture. But it never occurred to them that you could also employ that knowledge into building something new. So, I didn't know that it was possible, or even morally acceptable. On the other hand, I think I've always intuited that modernism and historical architecture don't go together at all,

no matter how thoughtful the interpolation was executed in historical context. So I'd say I wasn't ever inherently against classical and traditional architecture per se.

#### A TECTONIC SHIFT

I'm not entirely sure what finally made me open the door for classical and traditional architecture then. But I would say it was part of the broader tectonic shift in my understanding of the times we live in during the past several years. This shift was especially accelerated since 2020 and many people seem to have experienced something similar. It included the eerie feeling of walls closing in, while something spiritually malevolent was out to get us. "The world is a vampire," as The Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan would say. It also became shockingly easy to be excluded from polite society for the most innocuous wrongthink or miscalibrated humor, so old social alliances were falling apart too. As a result of all those twists and turns, my professional interests seem to have been reoriented from ideology to truth, from concept to beauty. And that was the context in which I, a terminally online person, stumbled upon the New Classical scene and the neuroscience's intrusion into architecture. Upon being exposed to all the evidence, arguments, experiments and cool examples, I was completely bought. No remorse,

no looking back, no stages of grief or anything like that. I didn't fight it. "I guess I'm a classicist now" I must've uttered, knowing full well what an absolute nonsense that would've sounded like to my colleagues. Oh well, yet another exclusion in these open-minded and enlightened times, I've been through worse. All in all: it turned out that the aforementioned peasants were right all along about modernism.

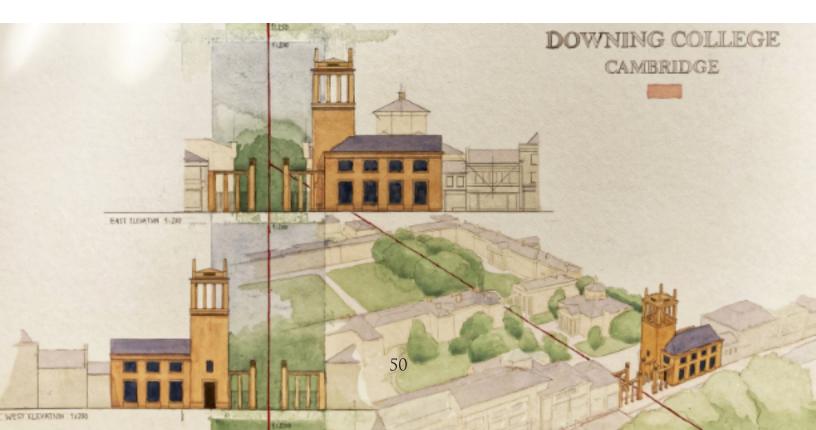
## IS CLASSICISM THE NEW AVANT-GARDE?

But when I think about it now, it made a lot of sense for me to end up here. New classical movement in architecture fits perfectly into what I was always doing. Namely, I was always studying the avant-garde, and looking for the most forward-thinking creators in arts, architecture, and culture at large. And I realized: the New Classical

Movement is the ultimate avantgarde in architecture today. THAT's what drew me in. And the fact that it is subversive, dissident, and that it faces immense resistance from the establishment. Absolutely punk. Actually, scrap that, I never liked punk nor saw it as avant-garde, it had no such power... New classicism is what grunge was to the dying 80's, or what trip-hop steered the 90's towards. Its creations are also undeniably beautiful, on top of being the avant-garde. New classicism is Lana del Rey of architecture, that's about right. Just endless vibes.

#### Classicism is not Conservatism

All in all: I haven't actually changed. It's the times and the world around me that have changed, I'm just staying true to my ways. I still admire modernist drawings and cleverly



designed buildings, but I appreciate them more as history than a viable design approach for 21st century now. I'd also like to point out that there is nothing conservative about the new classicist movement. It's all about exploring new frontiers, at least for my generation that had zero education in classical architectural design. Besides, I can't possibly be a conservative. I scored the 99th percentile in creativity and openness to experience, in those Big Five psychological tests. I'm meant to be riding those kinetic sculptures on wheels into the desert sunset at Burning Man or something.

However, the consequence of all of this for me was that panic has set in: once I chose this pill, I realized I knew nothing about my craft in which I was supposedly educated, because I didn't know classical architectural language. Ever since then, I've been trying to catch up, in a frenzy of selfeducation, endless scrolling, online courses, and finally summer schools. Namely, I went to the CSCA's summer school in classical architecture in Cambridge and Engelsberg this year. What an amazing experience. And everyone there was interested in my conversion story, which at that point I still was struggling to articulate. But at some point, pieces fell into their place in my mind and it all started making more sense. That's, eventually, how I was able to write this little confession of an essay.



Dr. Aleksandar Bede, an architect from Novi Sad, Serbia, earned his Ph.D. degree in urbanism at IUAV (Venice, Italy). He dedicated much of his career to the research of history of 20th century architecture and urbanism, and published books on modernist topics in Serbia and Germany. He edits Serbian architecture magazine DaNS, and was a board member of local and national architectural associations. Since recently, he's been pursuing self-education in classical architecture, and he attended the Centre for the Study of Classical Architecture summer school in Cambridge, UK and Englesberg, Sweden in 2023.

Webpage: www.bede.pro

Left Page: Details from Aleksandar's final design for the entrance into Downing College, from the CSCA summer school in classical architecture in Cambridge, 2023.

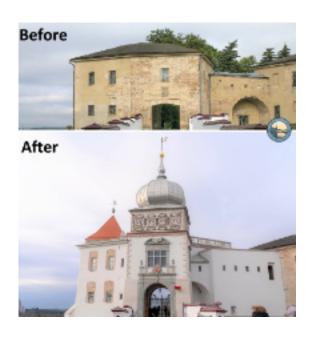
#### PRACTICE SHOWCASE

#### **EDITOR - MICHAEL DIAMANT**

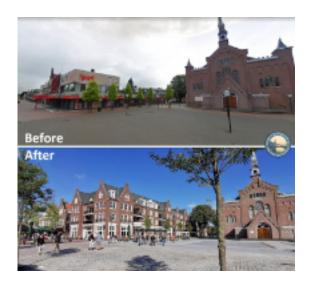
Michael Diamant has picked two recent new traditional architecture projects to showcase. Please find his work at New Traditional Architecture and Architectural Uprising Sweden (Arkitekturupproret).



Michael Diamant is the founder of the social media network New Traditional Architecture. Since its inception in 2013 it has helped to popularize the classical architecture tradition and changed the public discussion about architecture in Scandinavia and beyond. Today content from his social media pages can be found all over the internet, increasing interest in new traditional architecture and inspiring more to become classical architects. While much of his focus has been on content creation. Michael has increasingly been interviewed in media, podcasts, and newspapers about his views on architecture and urban planning.



Old Grodno Castle (Grodno, Belarus)



Casquette (Hoogeven, The Netherlands)



## OLD CASTLE OF GRODNO

Architecture Firm: V. Bochkov's original plan for the reconstruction and realised by Grodnograzhdanproekt Institute [1].

Completion: 2017

Location: Grodno, Grodno Oblast, Belarus

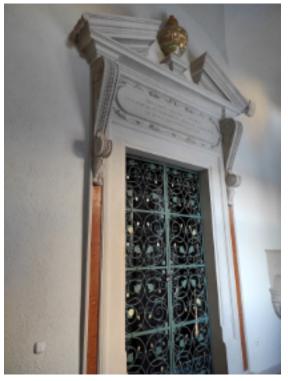
© Photocredit is unknown or to Planeta Belarus [2].

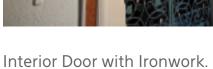


Inner Yard.



Ironwork Gate.







Stucco work and murals.

Below - Scenic view of the castle and the Memel river.



"The country of Belarus is for most people an unknown part of Europe. The territory has a rich history as part of various political entities and since 1991 an independent nation. Sadly the second world war hit the country hard with most cities and villages in ruins and a loss of a quarter of the total population. Furthermore, both jews and poles that were key components of urban life were heavily reduced in numbers. New traditional architecture in the country consists of mostly new church buildings, though there are several urban reconstruction projects in the capital Minsk of various quality.

This reconstruction project of the Old castle of Grodno is interesting (and not alone) as it challenges the current consensus on how long after a building was destroyed that we are "allowed" to rebuild it. In general most people in the West accept that we can reconstruct buildings that were lost in the second world war. but further back? In Central and Eastern Europe, buildings that have been ruins for hundreds of years are now reconstructed. And in the case of the Old castle of Grodno, since the Great Northern war and thus more than 300 years ago. Interestingly, criticism of the project has mostly been of its execution and lack of historical accuracy in certain sections. But no modernist "compromise" like in the case of

Berlin's castle or Frankfurt's old town were demanded.

My personal opinion is to reconstruct more old ruins if it is done in a way that is acceptably authentic. A building serves a place much better than a ruin and is also a more living historical memory. The rebuilding process itself helps to connect us with previous generations as we become their partners rather than spectators. And this is becoming ever more important as many young people today are taught to disregard previous generations' wisdom since the latter did not hold up to today's social norms. Back to the case of Grodno, a beautiful new landmark has been recreated which if nothing else will bolster civic pride. And that is worth more than "authentic" ruins."

#### Michael Diamant

#### Credits

[1] Grodnograzhdanproekt Institute. URL: https://www.ggp.by/ [09th Jan. 2024].

[2] Planeta Belarus. URL: https://planetabelarus.com/ [09th Jan. 2024].



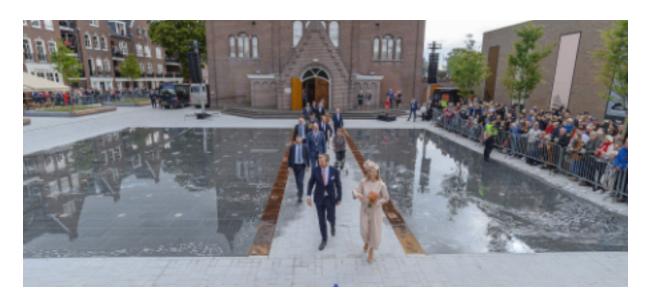
## **CASQUETTE**

Architecture Firm: Friso Woudstra Architecten BNA [1]

Completion: 2019

Location: Hoogeveen, Province of Drenthe, Kingdom of the Netherlands

© Photocredit is to the architecture firm [1]



Above: King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Queen Maxima kicking off an official state visit to the region of Drenthe on the new Kerkplain.

"The Netherlands is with few expectations not a hotbed for exciting new traditional architecture. There are better projects of course, but in general the ambition level is merely to blend in. This will of course most likely change in the future as the country has a successful Architectural Uprising and a well visited summer school in traditional architecture.

But what Dutch new traditional architecture lacks now in visual excitement, it compensates with sheer quantity of good city repair projects. The new builds will as mentioned not stun anyone but they will create a harmonious backdrop. They do this by removing modernist "contrasts" at the same time as their own anonymity lets the older classical buildings shine undisturbed.

This project called "Casquette" is at Kerkplain (church square) of Hoogeveen. A large 19th century church was flanked by ugly modernism on both sides. In an attempt to revive the square, a set of modernist shop buildings adjacent the church were demolished and replaced by a new traditional mixed use. Combined with new stone paving and a water spectacle, a formerly quite dead square has got a new breath of life. And while there is lots still to be done in the vicinity, the project has shown the power new traditional architecture can have in transforming an urban place where no one wants to be into a focal point of life."

**Michael Diamant** 



Above: New façade and water feature.

#### Credit

[1] Friso Woudstra Architecten BNA. URL: https://frisowoudstra.nl/ [09th Jan. 2024].



# INTERVIEW: REACHING BEYOND THE BUBBLE

WITH <u>Ruben Hanssen</u> -Founder of "The Aesthetic City"

Dear Mr. Hanssen, thank you for taking the time. Your YouTube channel "The Aesthetic City" has become one of the fastest growing channels on architecture and urban design. Why is that?

First of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my perspective in your wonderful publication. On the one hand, the success of the YouTube channel was a bit of a surprise. On the other hand, it also wasn't. I'd like to explain why and also how I came to start the channel in the first place:

My first video, 'What Makes Buildings Beautiful', was released in October 2022. As a first video, it didn't get high view counts, which isn't a surprise. It's very rare for a channel with only one video to go viral directly. Then, in early February, I published my second video, 'This Town Did The Impossible', about urban renewal of the French city Le Plessis Robinson. It got some views, but then the view count dropped, and I thought I needed to make another video to get another shot at

growing. But then, around early March of 2023, something incredible happened: the second video suddenly started going viral. The graph went basically vertical – and the channel grew incredibly rapidly. This success with the second video was quite unexpected!

But I believe that there is a good reason for that. Because on YouTube, there simply isn't anyone who shares the same vision on the importance of beauty and who packaged that in a video that was suitable for a big audience. There are almost no videos that show clear examples of places that do things right with New Traditional architecture!

When I began making videos, I already felt that this was a message and a type of content that was missing. We all love architectural beauty, many normal people outside of the architectural profession included, but why is no one talking about and promoting it? So, from the very start, I had a strong belief that at some moment, my content would catch on – because there simply wasn't any competition. I made the type of video I would like to have seen myself, and that seems to have worked.

Why do you see value in the traditional approach to architecture and urbanism?

Traditional architecture and urbanism are the most holistic, openminded, and logical approach to building. It doesn't selectively exclude or forbid the use of certain types of knowledge or frameworks, like contemporary architects ignoring any pre-WW2 knowledge. Instead, it embraces the totality of our history and uses it to create the best possible types of buildings or urban design.

Furthermore, the traditional approach to architecture and urbanism is ingrained with higher values, like the pursuit of the Good, the True and the Beautiful. These values were deliberately replaced with values that don't always have outcomes that are positive for us as human beings. Innovation and rejection of the past don't automatically lead to a 'good' outcome. They are also at odds with another 'modern' value: functionality. Sometimes, you need to embrace the past to come to an optimally functional building!

Finally, I simply believe the traditional approach is more fun, and it's comprehensible. There is so much to learn, so much history to dive into and apply in new designs. And to do this well, one needs to learn frameworks. Happily, that's what traditional architecture and urbanism offer as well: order, in the form of this architectural language, with its own hierarchy and rules. What I didn't like in architecture

school in Delft, doing my bridging program and MSc. in Urbanism, was the complete lack of any design frameworks or rules I could learn. Some may call this design freedom, but as a student, I just wanted something to hold on to, something to master before venturing into uncharted territories where I could eventually claim this freedom.

#### Why did you become an urbanist?

I was always attracted to cities, and I liked drawing buildings and city plans. As a child, I played SimCity a lot (a city building videogame), further increasing my interest in cities. When I came to Amsterdam to study and I had to choose a degree program, I was attracted to Urban Planning, as it was the only program focused on cities. The theoretical approach started to bore me eventually and I decided to go to Delft to study Urbanism, which was a more creative program. I loved the creative energy at the faculty, but I soon discovered that the focus was mostly on superficial solutions. For example: urban farming on rooftops, or social experiments incorporated in the street design. What I wanted to learn was how to create attractive urban fabric, streets which are beautiful, and which are nice to live in. Unfortunately, that's not the key focus in the MSc. program I followed. But I never lost that interest in how to create beautiful places.

## How did you get involved with the world of New Traditional Architecture?

I worked for an engineering consultancy firm for a while, in a team that created 3D visualizations. During COVID, our team was in a bit slower water, and as social life also came to a halt I had more time to browse the internet. I discovered a number of interesting accounts on Twitter [now X] covering architecture and urbanism. I suddenly realized that there was an entire world out there of people who thought about buildings and cities like I did.

That was an important moment, as I realized it wasn't me who was crazy, but perhaps it was the world that had gone mad!

My real introduction to the world of New Traditional Architecture was the INTBAU excursion to Heulebrug, where I met a number of people who would become friends, and where the Utrecht Summer School in Traditional Architecture & Urbanism was born.

# Many people all around the world admire Dutch urban planning and architecture. Why do you think that is?

The Netherlands is a very compact country, and we have been forced to deal with our rivers and the sea in an endless battle against the water. This has disciplined the Dutch into being very orderly with their space, and it

has resulted in a great number of very impressive waterworks and planning rules that kept our lands neat and organized. Economic growth in the 16th and 17th century has led to many beautiful towns with compact, often fortified, historical city centers.

Since the 1970's, after heavy protests against the increasingly frequent inner city car accidents (many of them involving children), the Dutch began investing heavily in safer cycling infrastructure. This has had the effect that the Netherlands is now a worldwide example in this regard. It didn't spontaneously arise out of some quaint 'Dutch' way of doing things, like some people might think. We were just as car addicted as other countries, but due to popular action, we've turned that around.

Our cities are also famous for their canals and their water infrastructure in general. I'm not sure if this is emulated as often. Holland has also produced many famous Modernist architects, the Superdutch phenomenon starting in the 90's for example. This has put us on the radar internationally. But the Dutch have also started building a lot of new traditional housing from the 90's onwards, as the housing production was commercialized and developers soon learned that people really liked 1930's style housing, or the typical brick houses with pitched roofs.





Ruben Hanssen is founder of The Aesthetic City, a platform that promotes a more beautiful, liveable built environment through the production of content like videos and a podcast. The Aesthetic City has 40K followers on X (Twitter) and its YouTube channel has now over 100k subscribers. Ruben has a degree in Urban Planning at the University of Amsterdam and in Urbanism from Delft University of Technology, studies that he finished in 2017. He is the co-founder of the Utrecht Summer School of Traditional Architecture and Urbanism, 'Let's Build a Beautiful Citv'.



Dutch architecture - Bad examples



I don't know if the Dutch have fully deserved their fame however, especially when it comes to the modern examples of urban planning and architecture. The Amsterdam canal rings and the smaller historical Dutch towns such as Leiden or Den Bosch are definitely worth the attention, but what we built after WW2 in terms of urban design isn't that spectacular.

## What is the state of the Dutch architectural scene in 2024?

We currently face a tsunami of ugly and repetitive blocks in the Netherlands, but there are also glimpses of hope. Many cities are densifying, and the big projects all end up with architects that design the most hideous buildings that deface the cities they are placed in.

Smaller projects, like urban extensions or smaller infill projects, aren't all as bad. There are many beautiful, respectful traditional designs, and we have a fair number of architects that design traditionally.

But any public building is unlikely to be traditional, and even the historical city centers aren't safe. At Leidseplein in Amsterdam, a horrible and totally out-of-place white cube, draped in prismatic glass shell, will deface the entire square.

The good news is that everybody in the Netherlands can feel something is wrong with how we build, and there are more and more media outlets giving attention to the matter.

## How is New Traditional Architecture received in the Netherlands?

The Dutch in general love it, as proven by how popular new traditional housing is. Many newly built urban extensions are built in traditional Dutch style, although I would still call them 'compact car suburbs with good bike access' — they look traditional, but they are set up as monofunctional urban extensions, or sleeper towns.

In more intellectual circles, there is still a strong preference for Modernist design. By 'intellectual circles' I mean the class of opinion makers, journalists, politicians, many government officials, and the architects themselves of course. They tend to look down on new traditional architecture, which they find 'nostalgic' and 'homey', even 'provincial'. But they have double standards, as they privately seem to prefer traditional and classical design, because guess where they live: in the nice canal houses or '20s and '30s homes, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. They like it for themselves, but when we want to build more of it because there is a lack of this type of housing, it's suddenly reactionary.



Also Dutch architecture - How glorious!



In some sense I do 'get' their unease with new traditional architecture. They feel that it doesn't strive forward, it always refers to the same type of provincial, predictable smalltown Dutch architecture. I feel they want something new and exciting. But they are throwing the baby out with the bathwater by rejecting the traditional and classical principles that make buildings beautiful and good, while I believe there are ways to achieve something new by using those same principles.

I believe the Netherlands badly needs architects like Patschke, Sebastian & Julia Treese or Tobias Nöfer from Germany to teach us how to design 'big city blocks' in their timeless, modern yet classical style, like their designs in Berlin and Düsseldorf. Their work is elegant but sober, and I believe it could work wonderfully in the Dutch context.

What do you hope to achieve with your YouTube channel and podcast and what can people expect from you and "The Aesthetic City" in the future?

We are facing a battle of ideas. Modernism is dead, but it's still walking. It's being taught in universities, it's being practiced in offices, but its ideas have failed spectacularly. Research like Ann Sussman's and popularity polls are confirming what we already know: what is left of Modernism needs to

be replaced with a more humanist, popular view of architecture.

But if the masses still believe in the lies that have reigned since the 1960's, we will forever be stuck in this twilight, and people will lose hope. We need to rekindle the flame of passion in the hearts of millions of people, and traditional architecture can do that. People ache for beauty and authenticity, which has been robbed from them.

There is one problem though: we have all the ideas, they're there and they're good, but traditional architects and classicists are hopelessly bad at communicating them to a wide audience. The ideas stay in stuffy, two-hour lectures on YouTube with 1000 views or on congresses where not even a single 'regular' public official can be found. I visited the IMCL congress in 2022 and 2023, and I wondered: where are all the planners from cities like Amsterdam, Cologne, Paris – why aren't there any other planners here to learn?

We need to 'break out' with our ideas to the masses, so they become visible. Because I believe the world is ready for these ideas. People need to start believing we can still build beautifully, and they need to have the intellectual ammunition to defend against all the fallacies and lies they will be faced with once they start speaking out in favor of traditional architecture.

I hope that my YouTube channel and Podcast will serve as a springboard of our ideas and grow as large as possible in order to reach a maximum number of people. Hopefully, people will at some point feel empowered to act. We might even reach students in architecture school, or faculty members who have doubts with the current architectural dogma. Who knows! Part of the fun is knowing that my videos end up in unexpected corners of the world, spark ideas in unexpected people, and hopefully change the world by means of the butterfly effect.

I might be an idealist doing this, but I firmly believe that by taking action in this way, we really can achieve something.

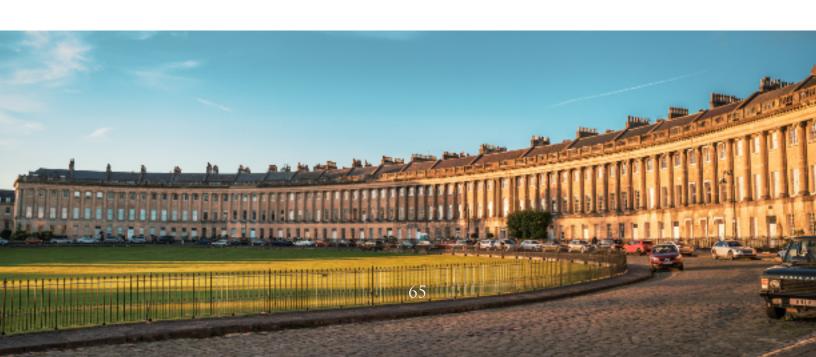
Future faced, we can expect many more videos, on many more projects and topics. I'm working on translations as well, into multiple languages, although I need to outsource this process and it proves to be challenging.

I'd love to write a book as well, at some point, but I think the time isn't ripe for that yet.

There is an increasing number of invitations to talks, even a developer who is interested in my views on beauty, so that will become more important as well. But the platform stays front and center for now, as I have a large list of videos I still want to bring out. There needs to be a large body of knowledge available to the masses, and this means there is a lot of work to do!

You are also involved in organizing the "Let's build a beautiful city" Summer School at the University of Utrecht. Where did this idea start and how was it received?

In 2021, when on an excursion in Heulebrug, Belgium, I met for the first time with many interesting people. Mieke Bosse, from Scala Architecten, and Joseph Jutras, a Canadian based in the Netherlands who founded the Institute of





Traditional Architecture, both had the idea to start a summer school of traditional architecture and urbanism. Flavio Díaz Mirón, who later founded INTBAU Mexico, also joined to become one of the main instructors, and we got help from Vincent Veneman and Alexander van Tuyll. With this team we set out to organize the school, and the first edition was a great success.

The school is set in the beautiful city of Utrecht, which is located very centrally in the Netherlands, and has a stunning historical heart with plenty of good urbanism and human scaled, beautiful architecture to learn from. An international group of leading experts came to teach, like Robert Adam, Dr. Nir Buras, a number of Dutch architectural historians, and in 2023 we welcomed María Sanchez and Pedro Godoy

from Guatemala, who worked on Cayalá.

The greatest thing was to see the students really blossom; they were finally able to draw things they never could in architecture school. Many heard a lot of information for the first time, showing the importance of this different approach to learning urbanism and architecture. More importantly, many of our students found new friends. All with all it has given me a lot of hope, and it is a clear sign that it really is possible to make a real change in the world. You just need to have a clear purpose, find a team of driven people, and make time to execute. And by finding a wide range of sponsors, we could finance the school without too much difficulty. I believe these summer schools will act through the butterfly effect: every student flies back home after having gained this knowledge, and (hopefully) brings about a bit of change in their environment, setting in motion a chain reaction of sorts. And seeing the energy behind these ideas, how it resonates with young people, it really makes me believe we have the future. This movement has the vitality which the status quo is now lacking.

# If you would like to share a piece of advice with your fellow New Traditionalists on how to further the cause, what would that be?

Build bridges! Find ways to somehow engage politicians, entrepreneurs, journalists, activists with your work. I know many New Traditionalists are already doing a bit of activism on the side, but we need to consciously grow our network and work together with companies, the media, and politics to make sure our ideas are able to spread and be become firmly cemented in society.

I've seen the power of connection and network firsthand: by helping along with the Dutch architectural uprising movement, but also with the Utrecht Summer School of INTBAU the Netherlands, I saw what happened when people find each other and start working together. Something new appears, that wasn't there before, and this 'entity' gets a new forcefield that influences other people in turn. I feel we are only a couple of steps like these away from real change in our society.

But we will need to make sure to connect to as many people as possible, so we create this stronger forcefield that will attract new people, from all walks of life.

Part of this process is being aware about how invisible we currently are as a movement. I might get a couple of million views on my videos, but even that might not be enough, because not everyone watches YouTube. We need newspaper articles, we need television programs, radio shows, billboards before some people will be somewhat aware of what we are doing.

I love what I'm doing, but I hope I won't be the only one communicating our ideas – because there is so much work to do. So, we must all step out of our comfort zone and connect with others. Then the following step begins: the debate. But we have already won that because our solutions are more humane, more beautiful, more functional. The rest of the world just needs to discover for themselves.

# Mr. Hanssen thank you so much for taking the time and all the best to you in 2024!

#### Credits

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Through team expansion, public talks, and publishing, we strive to reach a broader audience, sharing insights and sparking discussions on creating more aesthetically pleasing and livable urban spaces.

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