

ARCH 465 | Contemporary Architecture and Theory
2021-2022 Spring Term | Lecture Report

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**Report 03 | Critical regionalism and
Examples**

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INTRODUCTION

In this report, the seventh lecture of ARCH 465: Contemporary Architecture and Theory will be investigated. This lecture starts with the explanation of the contrasting relationship of the two particular sides of architecture. One of the mentioned sides is the quite reasoned, and repetition-based architectural language as a result of international style. The other one is rather a nostalgic approach that sometimes got criticized for obtaining excessive number of historical references. These conflicting terms called for a third side to this topic, finding a way to compliment historical references yet be centred around reason.

Critical regionalism is considered as the key point of this lecture. The lecture starts by the introduction to three authors that idealized this third side -both historical referenced and reasoned- to design: Christian Norberg-Schulz, Kenneth Frampton, Curtis, Willian J. R. Initially, their points were not exactly the same; however, their way of thinking were in align with each other. Then, the lecture continues to exemplify some projects in which are designed by these authors, and in bias with their idealizations. This third way to design generated a shift of paradigm that led to significant projects that found a middle ground between dogmatic functionalist approach and classism. At the

very end of the lecture, it includes more detailed explanations of those who used these principles, and some structural examples.

The aim of this report is to investigate two buildings mentioned in the lecture which had a design approach that implemented both non-repetitive language and ideal number of historical references - which are all designed during close to modernism but in different ways- and question rather what they did was a good call or not. Thus, the report will be about the ways that these projects succeeded at conveying the ideals that the authors pointed out.

DESIGN IN TERMS OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EXISTING TRADITIONS OF ITS SITE: ALVAR AALTO, Town Hall

Town Hall was designed and constructed by Aalto in 1949, at the center of a small farming town in Finland in which Aalto initially started his design as a competition project. In this specific project, a successful indication onto the vernacular architecture due its relation to the usage of traditional materials and resources from the site where the structure is designed for, Säynätsalo. This makes Aalto's Town Hall quite distant from the international style way of thinking where a building is considered as a prototyped that is can be implemented onto any site without special thinking to relate onto its existing surrounding. The structure is

immensely connected with the site both tangible and intangible ways. Also, can be seen in his different works, Aalto is known for his brickwork and timber constructions that is in relation with -in a way- his own signature and the local examples on his sites. It is clear that the rectangularity, plaster usage, and prototypical approach of the international style is not visible in this way of design.

CONVEYENCE OF THE HISTORICAL REFERENCES: Jørn Utzon, Bagsværd Church:

This church project is found to be an eligible example to critical regionalism in terms of using modernist materials for giving historical references. As Utzon uses white plaster and reinforced concrete

panels, he also projects the vault system that has been used in church design before modernism. This can be stated as monumental, yet in a different manner than classical eras. The implementation of historical references is quite critical since it is easy to cross the line between imitation and inspiration. Nevertheless, the works of neo-classical architecture are impressive, the design and approach that Utzon carries can be seen as more revolutionary.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, there has been many approaches on design, conveyed rather via publications or constructions; and no answer is wrong or

correct. In this report, two buildings have been investigated from a closer perspective to find the reason behind their success in implementing critical regionalism approach into their designs as a middle ground of the repetitive and excessively historical approaches. One reason found was that they were all in alliance with the historical side of the given sites, and the urban fabric -at least the vernacularity concept- that respects the local surrounding and not rejecting the works of

the past by implementing ideas from both modernism and classical eras.

REFERENCES

Frampton, K. (1985). *Modern architecture*. Thames and Hudson.

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