



NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research

1-2014

Chief Editors:

Claus Bech-Danielsen, cbd@sbi.aau.dk

Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Madeleine Granvik, Madeleine.Granvik@slu.se

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Unit of Landscape architecture, Sweden.

Anni Vartola, anni.vartola@aalto.fi

Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture, Finland.

For more information on the editorial board for the journal and board for the association, see <http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/pages/view/Editors>

Submitted manuscripts

Manuscripts are to be sent to Madeleine Granvik (Madeleine.Granvik@slu.se), Claus Bech-Danielsen (cbd@sbi.aau.dk) and Anni Vartola (anni.vartola@aalto.fi) as a text file in Word, using Times New Roman font. Submitted papers should not exceed 8 000 words exclusive abstract, references and figures. The recommended length of contributions is 5 000–8 000 words. Deviations from this must be agreed with the editors in chief. See Author's Guideline for further information.

Subscription

Students/graduate students

Prize: 250 SEK, 205 DKK, 225 NOK, 27.5 Euro

Individuals (teachers, researchers, employees, professionals)

Prize: 350 SEK, 290 DKK, 320 NOK, 38.5 Euro

Institutions (libraries, companies, universities)

Prize: 3 500 SEK, 2900, DKK, 3200 NOK, 385 Euro

Students and individual subscribers must inform about their e-mail address in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the e-mail address to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no

Institutional subscribers must inform about their IP-address/IP-range in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the IP-address/IP-range to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no

Payment

Sweden, pay to: postgirokonto 419 03 25-3

Denmark, pay to: Danske Bank 1-678-0995

Finland, pay to: Sampo Bank 800013-70633795

Norway, pay to: Den Norske Bank 7877.08.13769

Outside the Nordic countries pay in SEK to SWIFT-address:

PGS ISESS Account no: 4190325-3, Postgirot Bank Sweden, SE 105 06 Stockholm

Published by SINTEF Academic Press

P O Box 124 Blindern, NO-0314 Oslo, Norway

CONTENTS

SCIENTIFIC QUALITY – EDITORS’ NOTES.....	5
ANNI VARTOLA, CLAUS BECH-DANIELSEN AND MADELEINE GRANVIK	
NINE FACTS ABOUT CONVENTIONS IN ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY.....	9
MARC GOODWIN	
ARCHITECTS AND END USERS: BOUNDARY OBJECTS IN PARTICIPATORY BRIEFING AND DESIGN.....	35
KARI HOVIN KJØLLE AND SIRI HUNNES BLAKSTAD	
ERKKI KOISO-KANTTILA AS THE DESIGNER OF LAPLAND’S TYPE-PLANNED HOUSES.....	65
ANU SOIKKELI	
FEATURES OF URBAN SPACES AND COMMUTING BICYCLISTS’ AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE.....	89
HARPA STEFÁNSDÓTTIR	
MAPPING DANISH LIGHTING TRENDS.....	117
LONE STIDSEN, NIELS THUESEN AND POUL HENNING KIRKEGAARD	
BOOK REVIEW.....	141
ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS – HISTORIES AND PRACTICE REVIEWED BY HENNU KJISIK	

NINE FACTS ABOUT CONVENTIONS IN ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

MARC GOODWIN

Abstract

This study is one of the first to use content analysis of images as a means of interpreting architectural discourse. Nine facts were extracted from a detailed analysis of images that appeared in 3493 pages of the *Finnish Architectural Review (ARK)* between 1912 and 2012. Close attention was paid to the types of images used repeatedly in order to focus on key editorial and photographic decisions. Editorial decisions consisted of type, size, chromatic scale and number of images. Photographic decisions consisted of human presence, weather, depth-of-field and camera orientation for interior and exterior photographs. Data, which quantifies the frequency of each type of image, indicates that there is a strong reliance on visual conventions in *ARK*. When considering the limited range of images used in the publication, it becomes clear there is little correlation between the complexity of architectural language and environments and the simplicity of its depiction. That discrepancy suggests there is a need for research and development in the field of architectural photography in order to better inform readers about the diversity of architectural practices. This argument will be unfolded in this paper and supported both by data and practitioner insights.

Keywords:
architectural photography, content analysis, editorial practices, conventions, Finnish Architectural Review

Introduction

Research in architectural photography is often focused through the lens of cultural theory favoured by architects who write. Whilst such writers have done much to contribute to the study of a specialized branch of architectural representation, they have often done so to the detriment of photography's ontological status as a practice in its own right. In doing so, they have frequently obfuscated the analysis of photographs by treating them as transparent windows via which the subject matter – architecture – can be seen. Such accounts fail to consider the steps taken to construct a photograph and disregard the conventions that determine those steps. Therefore, architects' *observer* based analysis of images made by photographic *practitioners* has led to the development of a debate about the use of photography without sufficiently considering photography as a practice. The debate centres too often on normative thinking about photography *en masse* instead of adopting methodology for analysing the form and content of photographs themselves. Arguments are often overly reliant on binary oppositions – the positive and negative aspects of photography within architectural practice – lacking a nuanced interpretation of photographs.

In order to look at both the discursive practices of architects and the effects of commission and publication standards on photographs, an analysis of images could provide a fruitful source of information. Such an analysis would not only recognise the constructed nature of photographs but would also take a step towards increased dialogue between architects and their commercial partners. Architectural photography is recognised as a constituent part of architectural practice, yet it is poorly understood as a practice in itself. Less still is known about the ways in which commission and publication practices have led to the development of conventions in architectural photography. Steps taken to analyse the content of images used, the frequency of publication of certain images, and the discursive practices and values those statistics reveal would replace the current black box scenario with an information rich area of enquiry. If, in addition, more information were obtained from photographers about their practice, then judgment could be based on image content and participant testimony instead of cultural theory and observer speculation. Such an analysis is needed both for the clearer reading and understanding of architecture through photography as well as to provide a means for better understanding the collaborative nature of architecture with other professions.

The *Finnish Architectural Review* (ARK) has proven a useful source of data for this type of analysis. This is so not only because of the countless charts, sections and plans published in the pages of the journal; its photographs can also be mined. They say much about the photographic and editorial decisions made by the Finnish sector of the architectural community for approximately one hundred years. In addition, a brief

interview with the current editor and chief of *ARK*, together with research done by editorial staff, provide a response and counter-balance to the independent research conducted.

This paper was written to identify the editorial and photographic decisions and the conventions that inform them. The paper will first address some previous literature on architectural photography. Then the focus will narrow to Finnish architecture and the specific material provided by *ARK*. Key concepts will fall into two categories: the first consists of editorial decisions, the conventions they establish and their potential effects on the variety of architectural images published; the second will look at the limited role photographers have played in the establishment of conventional practices. Ultimately, this paper induces nine facts about photographic conventions, questions the current role of architectural photography in the understanding of architecture, and argues that a re-think of its convention-based limitations is overdue.

Literature review

Before moving further into the specific research in this paper, a brief overview of salient publications on the subject of architectural photography¹ is provided below. As stated already, most of the publications about architectural photography have been by architects. A chronological shortlist of significant publications may help to situate the reader in this field of enquiry before arriving at the research question.

1. *Anaesthetics of Architecture* (Leach, 1999) is a direct attack on the use (abuse, misuse, overuse) of imagery in architecture. Professor Leach, himself an architect, claims images have a mind numbing effect on their viewers. This short book is a vitriolic outburst from cover to cover, designed to associate imagery with the death of grey matter and good architecture. A product of its time, the book relies heavily on Baudrillard's notion of the simulacrum as support for its many assertions.

2. *Privacy and Publicity* (Colomina, 2000) is a seminal work on the use of images by two celebrated architects. The focus of Professor Colomina's critique ranges from gender studies to media theory, but is heavily weighted on two architectural archetypes: the anti-image architect and the image-friendly architect. This is achieved through a close and thorough account of the work of Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, and the relation of each with photography and related media.

3. In 2002 Kester Rattenbury, reader in Architecture at University of Westminster and Architectural Critic, edited *This is Not Architecture: Media Constructions*. It evolved out of her doctoral thesis, offering reflection on the intersection between architectural, photographic and editorial practices.

1 For more on this topic, see the Canadian Architectural Archives: <http://caa.ucalgary.ca/bibliography>.

4. *Constructing a Legend* (Čeferin, 2003) looks at how Alvar Aalto, the Museum of Finnish Architecture and the *Finnish Architectural Review* constructed a brand of Finnish architecture based on a carefully crafted image used to promote Finnish architecture internationally in the 1950s and 60s. The work of architect Petra Čeferin focuses specifically on architecture and its photography in Finland. The museum was the main source of photographs sent to foreign curators, architects, critics – it was the ‘gatekeeper and guardian’ of the identity of Finnish architects and architecture (Čeferin, 2003, p. 37). Before long, a self-referential language emerged in the press, which established a standard vocabulary for discussing buildings seen only in photographs (Ibid., p. 143), this vocabulary soon became stereotyped and repeated en bloc by critics and scholars. Crucially, Čeferin points to arguments constructed by professional writers (journalists and critics) on the basis of established professional conventions rather than through personal analyses derived from first-hand knowledge. In order to appear professional, conventional language must be used in journalism, even where the writer has no idea about the veracity of certain statements they make. The purpose of writing becomes to follow established norms, not reveal new information. Tellingly, Čeferin argues that architects and the state supported this constructed and confined way of seeing in post-war Finland (Ibid., p. 148).

5. *Is it all About Image?* (Iloniemi, 2004) is intended as a toolkit to be used by architects rather than as a critical analysis of their practices. However, Laura Iloniemi, PR specialist, offers first-hand accounts taken from her personal experience as a PR agent for various architecture firms. This practice-based reflection provides critical insight into industry uses of images.

6. *Building With Light* (Elwall, 2004) is the work of a celebrated RIBA historian of architectural photography. In this work, Elwall repeatedly argues that architecture would not exist in its current form without photography. The book is heavily reliant on historical, ‘iconic’ architectural photographs to tell the story of architectural photography, though the texts are also critical and engaging.

7. *How Architecture Got its Hump* (Connah, 2006) makes a similar argument to Elwall’s, but nuances it by saying that the architectural photograph is limited in terms of what it shows and how it shows it – the same position is taken in this paper. Connah is critical both of architecture’s limited use of photography and of photography’s stunted contribution to the reading of architecture.

8. Architect and theorist Juhani Pallasmaa ended a fifteen-year exploration of the subject with the publication of *The Embodied Image* in 2011 (Pallasmaa, 2011). His point is similar to Connah’s; however, the distinction lies where Pallasmaa opposes the commercial image to the poe-

tic image, arguing in favour of the latter. Like Leach, he believes that a heavy reliance on images, especially photographs, has been bad for architecture. However, Pallasmaa's argument is centred around Gaston Bachelard's notion of the poetic image.

The general tone of these books is one of dissatisfaction. Architects argue that over-reliance on images has had a negative impact on architecture. Some think the type of images used need to change. But none of them seem ready to consider that well-intentioned criticism by architects for architects is not an effective means of opening up this debate. If architects wish to reach a broader public with their work and ideas, perhaps they will also need to consider a wider range of voices to listen to, outside their community.

Photographers have had little to say about the work they do or how it is used by other industries, and architectural photographers are no exception. Typically, photographers write manuals explaining certain procedures commonly followed, but rarely do they take the time to analyse their practice or how their work fits into a larger context. Exceptions are as follows:

1. *Photography and Architecture* (De Maré, 1961) is the work of a celebrated architectural photographer of the fifties and sixties. Part of the book is a manual for aspiring photographers which explains some of the basic technique and equipment required. Most photographers stop there, in terms of writing. In the introduction, however, Eric De Maré states that his purpose is to raise the general public's appreciation for architecture. He argues that the practice of photography is a good way to develop an eye for seeing architecture.

2. Julius Shulman published several books about his career and one about architectural photography: *The Photography of Architecture and Design* (Shulman, 1977). He is the most detailed and forthright photographer writing about his own thoughts and practices, and thus is important to the topic for far more than the interest his fame has brought to it. *Photography and its Architecture*, a title which suggests a response to De Maré's book, was released by Taschen in 1999. It is essentially a celebration of Shulman's long, successful career, offering neither a reflection on architectural photography nor a critical review of Shulman's photography.

3. *Architecture Transformed, A History of Architectural Photography from 1839 to Present* (Robinson and Herschman, 1990) offers a comprehensive photographic history punctuated by textual arguments about key components of that history, similar to Elwall's more recent book. Cervin Robinson is a celebrated photographer, though he refrains from any reflection on his own practice, nor does he choose to offer insight into the industry in general. His task in this book is clearly that of a historian.

4. Most recently John Comazzi published a monograph, *Balthazar Korab: Architect of Photography*, in 2012. The book is essentially a collection of photographs, though the twenty-page biography offers some quotes and insights from Korab himself. Significantly, Korab preferred to be thought of as an architect who takes pictures, and not as photographer.

Research questions

The research discussed in this paper is one of four sections of a doctoral thesis currently in its final stage. The thesis analyses the role of photography in architecture by identifying conventions, addresses the theme of atmosphere in architectural and photographic discourse, visualizes each in practice led research, and finally tests the response of photographers and architects to conventional and atmosphere-based photography through embedded learning.

This paper focuses on conventions. It does so by examining the types of images used in an architectural journal over a period of one hundred years to identify trends and standards within that publication. Doing so has made it possible to test the assumption that architectural communication is increasingly reliant on images, as is asserted by all of the writers in the literature review. The experiment involved tracking the number and size of images used in the journal, as explained in greater detail below. This quantification allows for qualified assertions about the rhetorical devices routinely used by that publication.

When considering the limited range of images published, it becomes clear that there is little correlation between the complexity of architectural language and environments and the simplicity of its depiction. That discrepancy suggests there is a need for research and development in the field of architectural photography in order to better inform readers about the diversity of architectural practices. Hence it is also the goal of this research to question architects' reliance upon a small set of conventions as the metrics for determining the viability of architectural photographs for purchase and publication.

Research method

Research employed content analysis of images appearing in the *Finnish Architectural Review* (ARK) – one year per decade – from 1912 to 2012. From a sample of 1/10 of the overall material it may seem difficult to draw conclusive evidence, yet the number of pages and images looked at was so vast.² Content analysis was done under strict conditions. Pictures were viewed under the same light in the same room for several months to reduce variables and outside influences to a minimum. Procedures for content analysis followed guidelines provided by *The Handbook of Visual Analysis* (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001) and *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

² 3493 pages.

Research centred on *ARK* for several key reasons. It is one of the oldest publications of its kind (appearing for the first time in 1903), after *Deutsche Bauzeitung* (1866) and the *Architectural Record* (1891). (Jetsonen, 2003, p. 25) The first photograph was published in the first journal of the sort in 1856, the *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* (Sobieszek, 1986, p. 4), which places it some forty years earlier than the beginnings of *ARK*. The *Revue* ceased publication in 1870 and *ARK* is still active. *ARK* was immediately one of three candidates for the study. The other two journals are produced by large, populous, culturally diverse countries, whereas the case with *ARK* is just the opposite. Finland is a small, young, somewhat homogenous country – it is no exaggeration to assert that *ARK* is produced by Finnish architects, for Finnish architects.

Not speaking Finnish was a decisive factor in choosing *ARK* for a case study, strange though it may seem. During the process of content analysis there was no temptation to correlate images with text, because I was not able to do so. Content analysis was therefore focussed entirely on images. This focus provided an ideal limitation of variables needed for a controlled research environment. However, upon completion of the image-data-mining process, short summaries in English provided at the end of the journals were used to provide historical information to check assumptions derived from content analysis. Additionally, the 100-year Anniversary issue of *ARK* 3/2003 and the master's thesis of *ARK*'s graphic designer, Leenamaija Laine, were invaluable companions later for cross-referencing this method with more conventional historical evidence about editorial practices at *ARK*.

From the research conducted it was possible to formulate nine separate facts. The following analysis provides a look at the data used to support each of these facts as well as a brief exposition of that data. Facts are the product of original research conducted entirely via the method just explained.

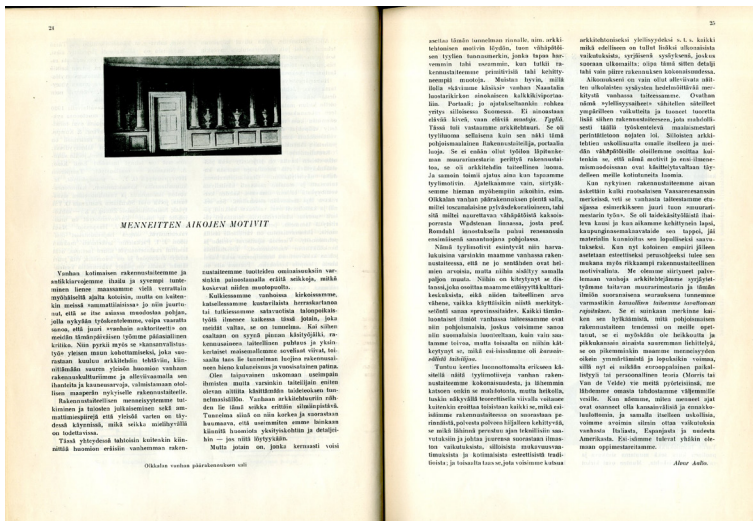
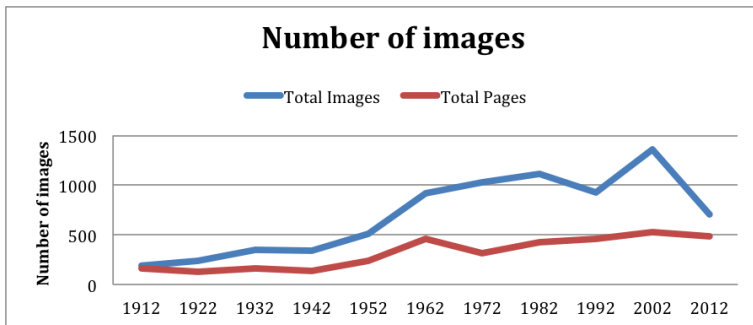
The photographic parameters chosen – human presence, weather, depth of field, composition and orientation of the camera – reflect key decisions taken by an architectural photographer at work. Of course, a limitless number of decisions could be addressed and discussed. However, Stephen Shore parsed photography into four aspects in his seminal work (Shore, 2007), Szarkowski chose five (Szarkowski, 2007). Hence, four to five were taken as a guideline with significant precedents in photography theory.

The editorial decisions – type, size and number of images, black and white vs. colour – were chosen as the minimum number that might correlate with photographic decisions to produce a total number of key facts. Keeping the number under ten was important to avoid saturation. The resultant number was nine, creating a near balance between

the two types of decisions surveyed without forcing the number for the sake of symmetry. It was also a happy coincidence that nine rule sets are established by Palladio in his famous book, *Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* (1570). Coincidentally, architect Peter Zumthor also discusses exactly nine atmospheres in his seminal treatise *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments – Surrounding Objects* (2006).

Analysis of images in the Finnish Architectural Review 1912–2002

Fact 1. Images occupy progressively more of the journal over time³



3 Changes in the appearance and layout of the journal may to some degree reflect the changes in the editorial staff over the years. A list of editors-in-chief is as follows: Bertel Jung, 1903–05; Waldemar Wilenius, 1906–07; Sigurd Frosterus, 1908–11; Birger Brunila, 1912–16; Alarik Tavaststjerna, 1917–19; Carolus Lindberg, 1921–27; Hilding Eklund, 1931–34; Yrjö Laine, 1935–36; Martti Välikangas, 1928–30; Yrjö Lindgren, 1937–40; Aulis Blomstedt 1941–45; Nils Erik Wickberg, 1946–49; Veikko Larkas, 1950–51; Nils Erik Wickberg, 1946–49; Aarno Ruusuvaori, 1956–57; Nils Erik Wickberg, 1958–59; Pekka Laurila, 1960–66; Kirmo Mikkola, 1967–68; Tapani Eskola, 1969–70; Esko Lehesmaa, 1971–72; Jussi Vepsäläinen, 1972–77; Markku Komonen, 1977–80; Marja-Riitta Norri, 1981–88; Kaarin Taipale, 1988–92; Pentti Kareoja, 1992–95; Esa Laaksonen, 1996–99; Jorma Mukala, 2009 onwards. Significant changes to layout and format took place for example in 1968 with sub-editor, Maj-Lis Lappo, and in 1996 under chief-editor, Esa Laaksonen (Laine, 2003, p. 55, 65).

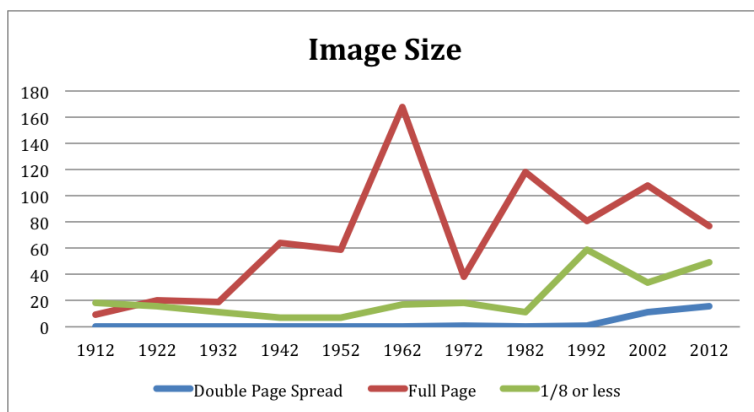
Figure 2
Finnish Architectural Review 1/1922, pp. 24–25.



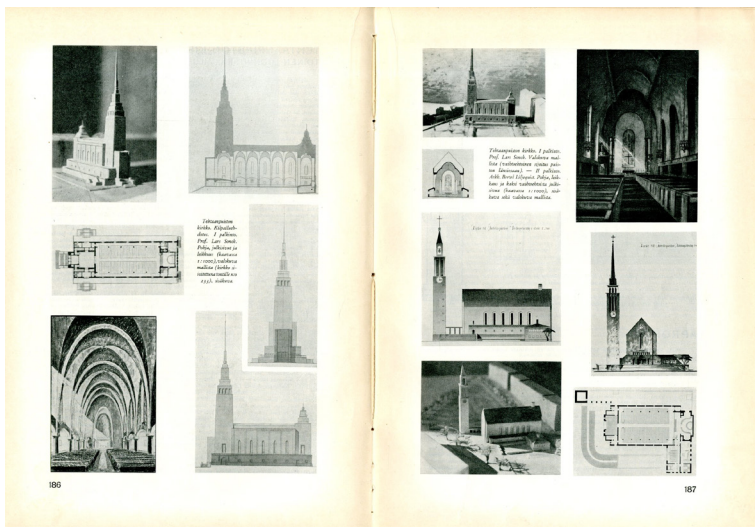
Figure 3
Finnish Architectural Review 1/2012,
pp. 50–51.

The earliest journals were essentially comprised of written articles illustrated by small images. In contrast, visual culture features more prominently than writing in current editions of *ARK*. That shift is illustrated in figures 2 and 3. Figure 1 shows a general rise over time in the number of images featured in the magazine. The trend towards image over text is not without fluctuations, but the chart clearly marks the rise in the use of images by *ARK* from 1912 to 2002. Since 2002, it will be seen that the trend has reversed. However, if there are fewer photographs in the journal since then, it is mainly because it features large images that take up entire pages, or spread across two pages. The overall trend for the century analysed has clearly been for increased reliance on images to tell the story of architecture.

Fact 2. Large images become prevalent in the journal over the same period⁴



4 According to Laine (2003, p. 24), the size and number of images in the early 1900s was often determined by the amount of space left over after the space text was calculated. She also writes that because of a shortage of other material, they started to give more space to plans in 1918, and that in the 1950s greater attention was paid to international publications, and their layout conventions were often followed. Photographers Simo Rista and Heikki Havasken are quoted as saying that black and white presents a more harmonious image but also requires more work from the photographer (Ibid., p. 27, 50, 77).



Images become not only more numerous but also larger over the course of the period analysed in the present study.⁵ The presence of true, single-image, full-page bleeds and double-page spreads comes particularly late in the history of the journal, and is essentially a contemporary phenomenon. Earlier publications opted for a combination of image and text on most pages, or a mosaic of smaller images used to fill the pages with considerably more empty space around images than currently found.

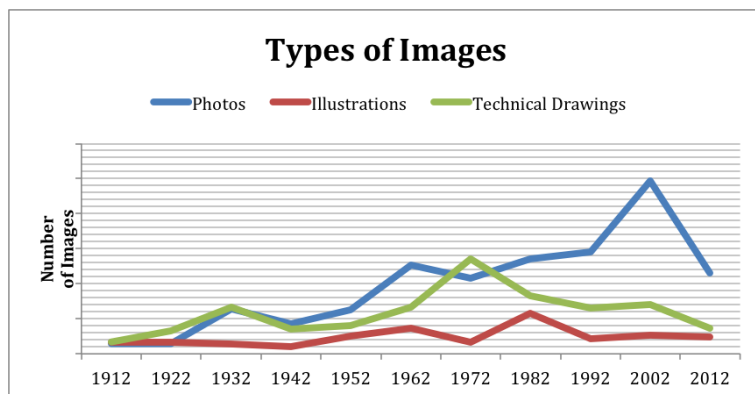
Figure 5 (left)
Finnish Architectural Review 12/1932,
pp. 186–187.

Figure 6 (above)
Finnish Architectural Review 11/1962,
p. 241

5 One year per decade.

An example of this is the 1932 page layout seen in figure five, where small images are tiled and large borders are left between images. This *passe-partout* style of image presentation is used until the 1990s. Pages in the journal were filled with text and small images for the first three decades; that format later became far less common as larger and more numerous images made their way into the publication. A notable exception is 1972, however, which proved a reversal of this overall trend.

Fact 3. Photographs become the images of choice in the journal⁶



6 The quality of technical drawings went into decline in the 1930s; hence other mediums gained popularity (Laine, 2003, p. 35).

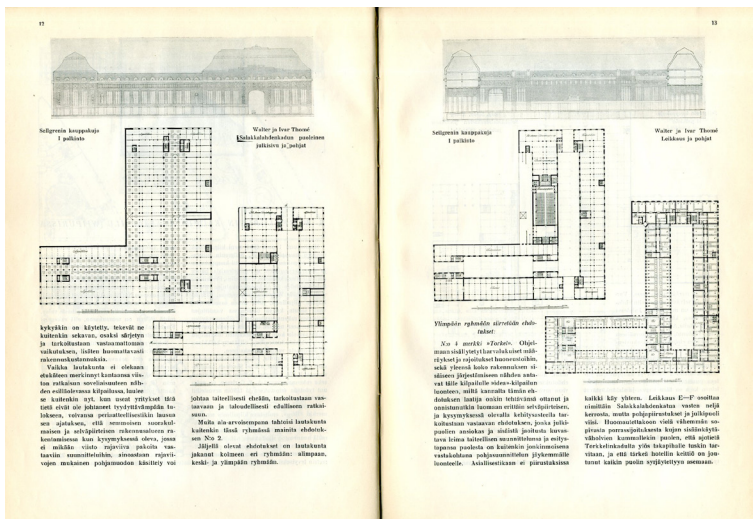


Figure 8
Finnish Architectural Review 1/1922,
pp. 12–13.

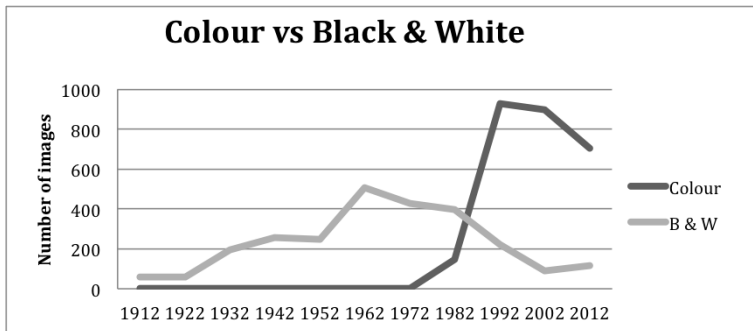
Images have been divided into three categories for this study: technical drawings, illustrations and photographs. At the outset, photographs were the smallest and rarest of images used. That relationship with other images clearly inverts over time. Production and reproduction costs had much to do with the change. It became cheaper, faster and easier to make photographs and print them in journals like this.⁷

It seems fitting to point out here that ARK does not commission photographs, but receives a selection directly from architects. However, they do have suggested guidelines they ask contributors to follow.⁸ So while the editorial team of the journal is to some degree at the mercy of the architects in terms of submissions, they both request a certain type of image and of course have the final word on what makes it into print. At the outset of the journal's history, the low incidence of photographs meant illustrations were often the means of rendering buildings to the reader's imagination. Photographs and photo-realistic renders have almost entirely replaced those drawings, as can be seen in figure seven. The data-centric world of 1972 is clearly revealed in that chart, where both the number of photographs and illustrations drops whilst the number of technical drawings increases. Moreover, during that year photographs were reduced to the quality of line-drawings, having their grey-scales removed in favour of ultra-high contrast black and white images.

7 In 1880 the half tone-process became economically viable, and the new technology was fully exploited by many journals in the 1890s (Robinson and Herschman, 1990, p. 2).

8 The 2009 Guidelines include: attention paid to vantage points and atmosphere. For interiors, the inclusion of fireplaces, flowers, and living environments is suggested in lieu of empty spaces. For exteriors, photos taken from all sides, during different times of day and throughout the year are requested in order to give readers a complete picture. Detail shots are additionally requested. Images should be submitted without cropping where possible, so as to give more options for the editorial images. Submissions comprised of several images are requested, but the architect is welcomed to suggest which images are preferred. The last point is telling, for many of the guidelines are not followed according to the data produced by this study.

Fact 4. Black and white is replaced by colour in the 1980s⁹



9 The first colour photograph I came across in this study was in 1982, other than advertising photographs in colour in the 1972 editions. However, Laine (2003, p. 24, 49) points out that occasional colour illustrations were included as early as 1906 and a rare colour photograph was printed in 1956.

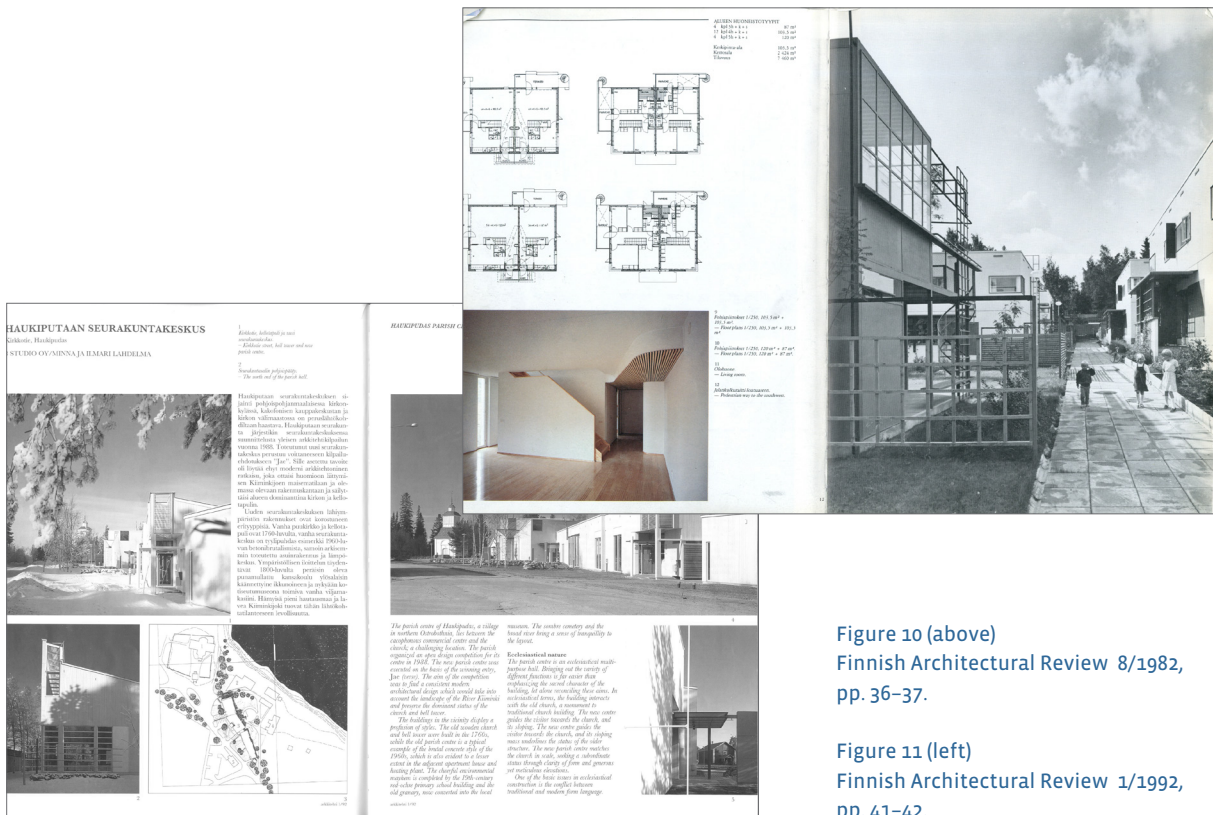


Figure 10 (above)
Finnish Architectural Review 8/1982,
pp. 36–37.

Figure 11 (left)
Finnish Architectural Review 1/1992,
pp. 41–42.

It is no surprise that images were exclusively black and white in the beginning, and that they were replaced by colour photography at a later date. It might, however, surprise some to see that change does not occur until the 1980s. It was technically feasible though more expensive to reproduce colour much sooner than that. Laine (2003, p. 24, 49) points out that a colour illustration was featured once in 1906 and a rare colour photo appeared in the review in 1956. But in addition to budget, there is reason to believe resistance to change and architecture’s alignment with fine-art practices are also reasons for the late arrival of colour into the pages of the journal. It was not until the late 1990s that galleries started exhibiting colour photography. Prior to that, only black and white images were considered artistic.¹⁰

10 Charlotte Cotton writes in *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*: «it was not until the 1990s that colour became the staple of photographic practice» in the fine art world» (2004, p. 12).

Equally interesting is the small but significant rise in the use of black and white images in the 21st century after 40 years of a constant decrease in number. Likewise, it is important to mention that the journal has always featured small black and white portraits of architects in a directory at the end of the publication. Were the instances of these removed from the data sets, the number of black and white photographs would be reduced by at least 25% from the 1990s onwards.

Fact 5. People come and go in this publication

There is no clear evidence to suggest a trend towards putting more people into photographs. The graph fluctuates over the hundred years analysed. However, human presence peaked in 1992 and has been on the rise for the past decade.¹¹ This fact parallels textual references to ‘the human’ in this and other architectural publications: human scale, a sense of place, user-friendly design, etc. However, photographic conventions established in the 19th century are still being followed today. This is due in part to the technical nature of equipment used¹² and partly to the established visual conventions of drawing and painting discussed in the literature review. As a result, people are almost never included in architectural photos. But when they are, it is as a blur, a smear, or a swarm of ants. This issue is often discussed. Indeed it receives as much attention as the values of human scale.

- 11 Many of those people appear in portraits and travel photography, not as actors in an architectural setting. The 10–20 portraits found in the directory at the end of the journal which potentially give a misleading view of the number of black and white images in the journal do the same with data regarding human presence.
- 12 Large, cumbersome cameras holding glass plates with low sensitivity, causing long exposure times which effectively removed pedestrians from pictures. It could be argued that technical cameras such as the Alpa, Cambo WDS or Arca Swiss used by some architectural photographers, are nearly as heavy and difficult to use. None allow you to look directly with a viewfinder, and they have to be focussed with a laser. However, many are now using DSLR cameras with Tilt/Shift lenses. Moreover, ISO is no longer a problem, and shutter speeds only need to last several seconds for nocturnal photography.

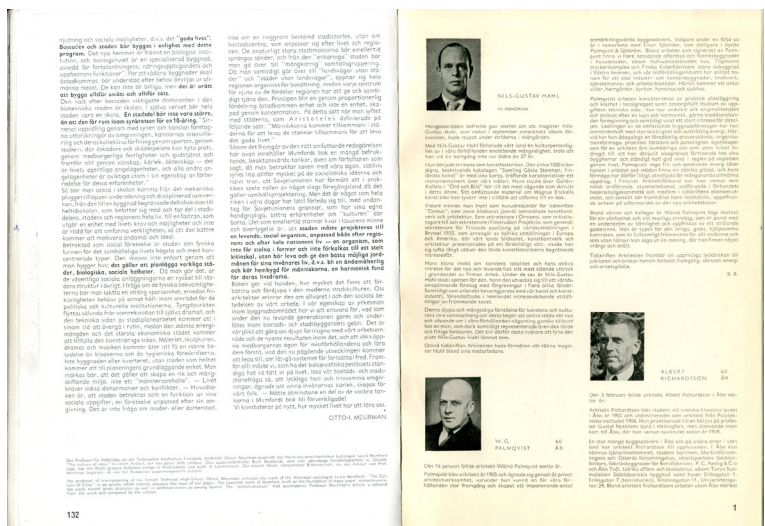
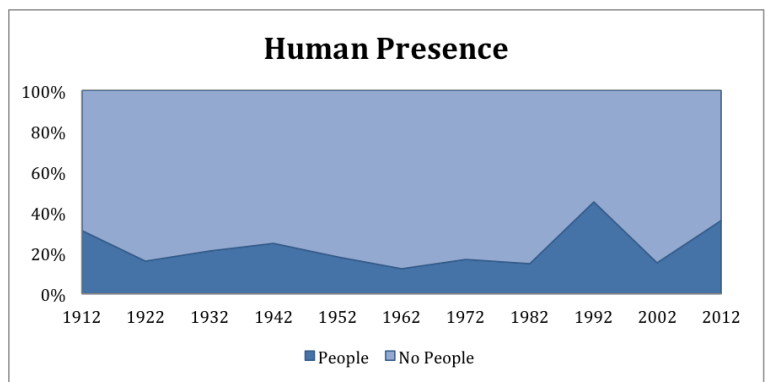


Figure 13 (left)
Finnish Architectural Review 1942, p. 1 of yellow pages at the end of publication (133).

Yet with the exception of the work of Iwan Baan, whose work can be seen in the *ARK 1/2012* edition, as well as in most architectural publications, few photographers feature people in their photos. Again, as mentioned in section four, black and white portraits shot in studios were included in the tally for this data set. If those photographs were removed from the data, the incidence of people would drop almost to zero.

Fact 6. Finnish weather is not represented in the journal

As with the vast majority of architectural publications, *ARK* publishes images of buildings and urban settings almost exclusively under ‘Mediterranean skies’. For half the year, Finland is cold and dark, and during much of that time it is pelted with rain or covered in snow. That kind of weather is not represented in the journal by the architectural photographs

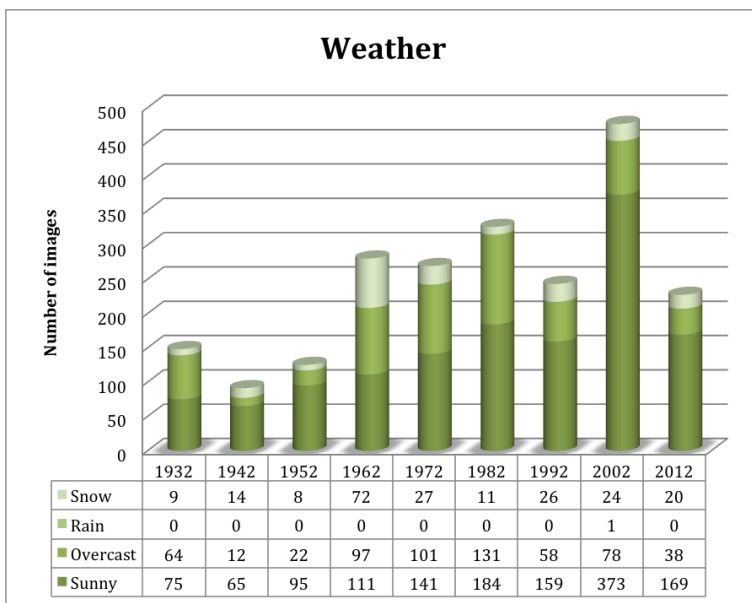


Figure 15
Finnish Architectural Review 8/1982,
p. 25.

selected, which opts almost exclusively for fair-weather photographs with the occasional picture of a snow-covered building under blue skies. Architects say much about the need for strong shadows to give the impression of volume and bring out surface detail and colour saturation. However, does that mean that fine photographic work more representational of the countless places around the globe where architecture is envisioned and depicted is not possible? One look at fine art, documentary photography of the built environment will provide an answer.

Fact 7. Interiors are shot with very limited compositional variation

Architectural photographs can be divided easily into two basic categories: interior and exterior. The logic behind this division is both architectural (the design of indoor and outdoor spaces) as well as naturally photographic (weather and vantage points for exteriors, lighting and composition of people and elements such as furniture and props for interiors). A goal of this section was to determine the number of interior shots typically in use. It became evident from looking at repeated images

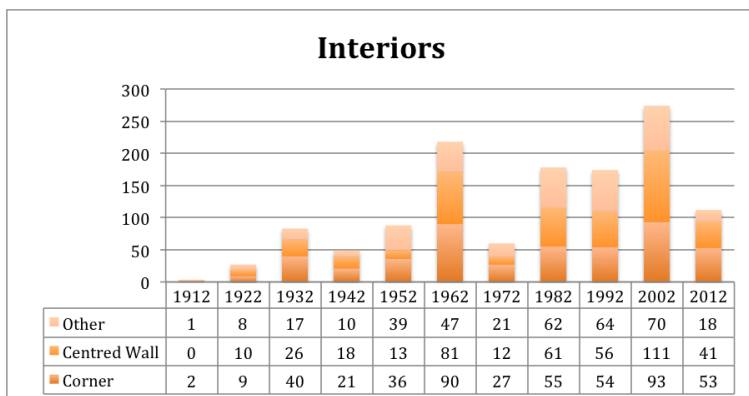
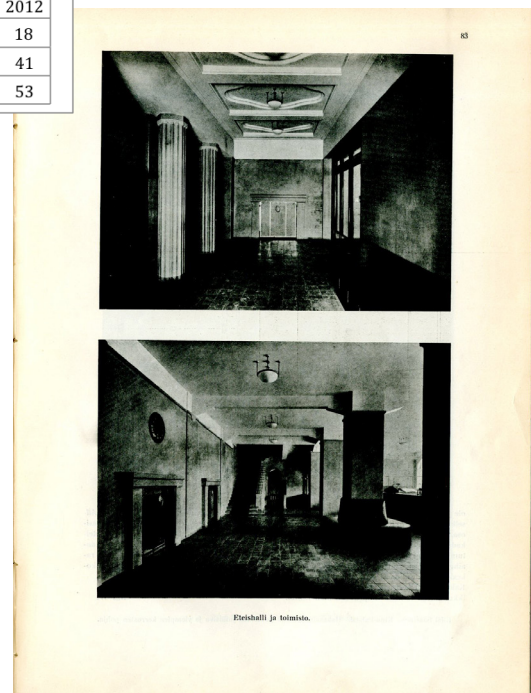
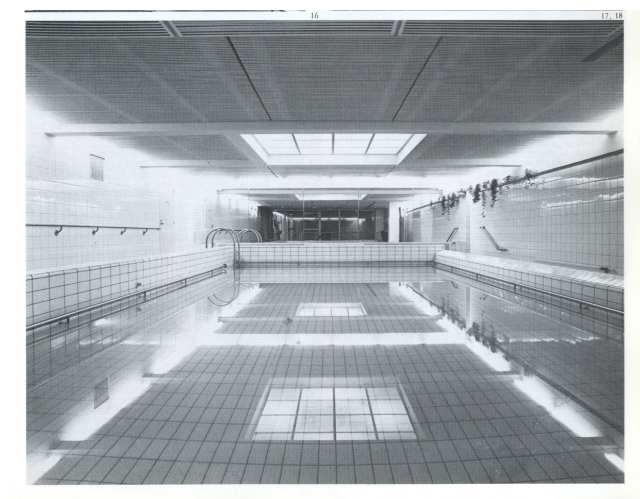


Figure 17 (below, left)
Finnish Architectural Review 1/1922,
p. 83.

Figure 18 (below)
Finnish Architectural Review 8/1982,
p. 59.



that a subdivision into two main shots was possible: the centre shot and the corner shot. The third category – ‘other’ – was not statistically significant, on the whole.¹³

In short, from a compositional point of view, there are only four shots: axial images which centre the corner of a room or joint of two façades, or axial images which place the camera in the centre of that interior wall or façade. The majority of interior shots do not deviate from that pattern during the 100 years examined. Here is an example of a stylistic reduction that reduces the way space is perceived. It is another example of limiting discursive possibilities to a very small number. Figures 17 and 18 show how this technique of depiction spans the decades, eroding to some degree one’s awareness of the passing of time when looking at such images.

Fact 8. Exteriors are shot with more compositional variation

Numbers do not reflect a similar bifurcated set of images with a negligible third category when exteriors are scrutinised with the same method. Any shots which did not satisfy the requirements of the four specific categories were placed in ‘other’. If the camera was not level with the

13 Notable exceptions are 1952, 1982 and 2002. However, on the whole it was clear that particularly interior but also exterior photographs featured compositions centred on the corner or centre of a building.

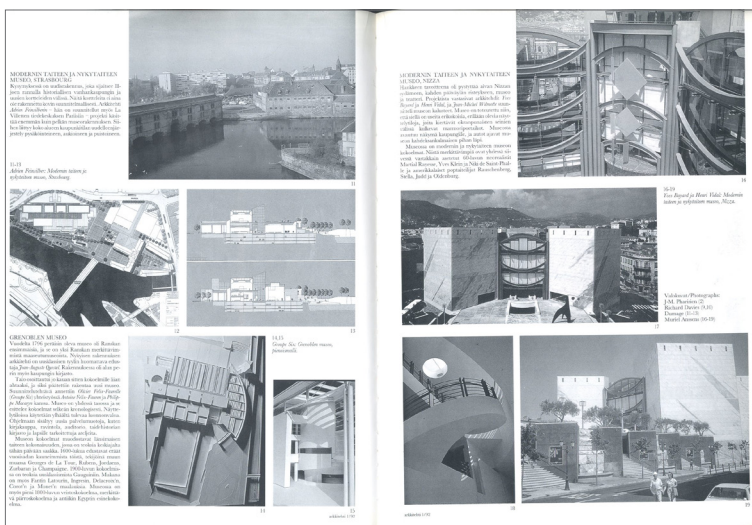
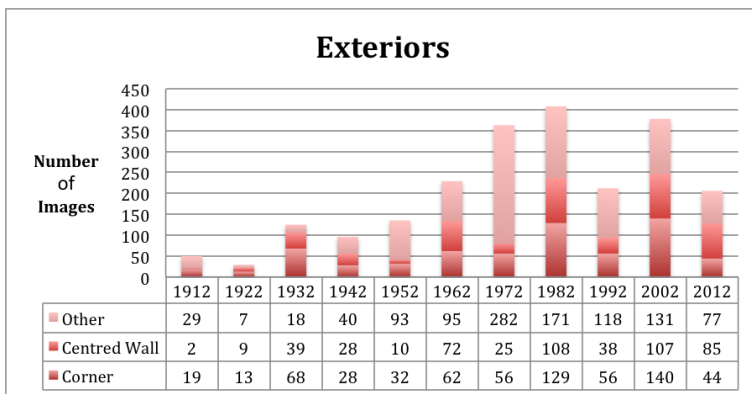


Figure 20 (above)
Finnish Architectural Review 1/1992,
pp. 54–55.

vertical plane and either parallel with the horizontal plane of a wall or aimed at a corner (internal in courtyards) it was placed in ‘other’, for example. Equally, if there were people or objects placed in front of the building in such a way as to confuse the subject matter in a given image, it was placed in ‘other’. The same is true for aerial shots and street photography seen in figure 20. Hence it is not surprising that a large number of images fall into the third category. Rather, it was the number of images that still fit perfectly into the binary opposition of corner and centre shots that was a source of amazement to this researcher.

Fact 9. Depth of field is maximised in this type of photography

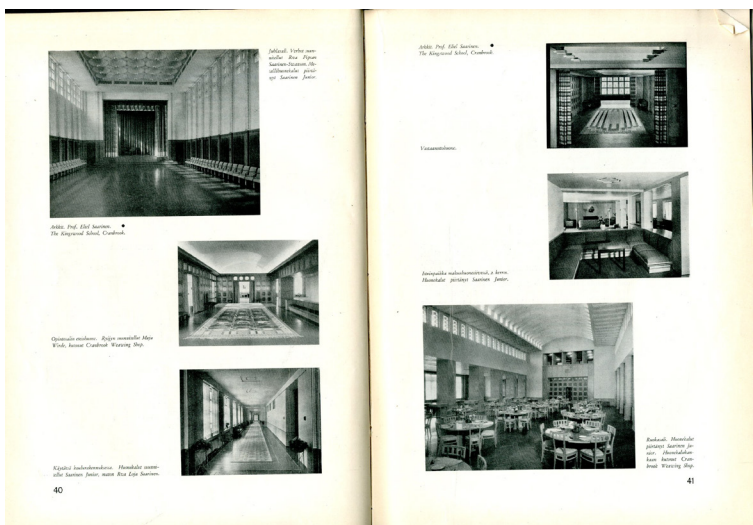
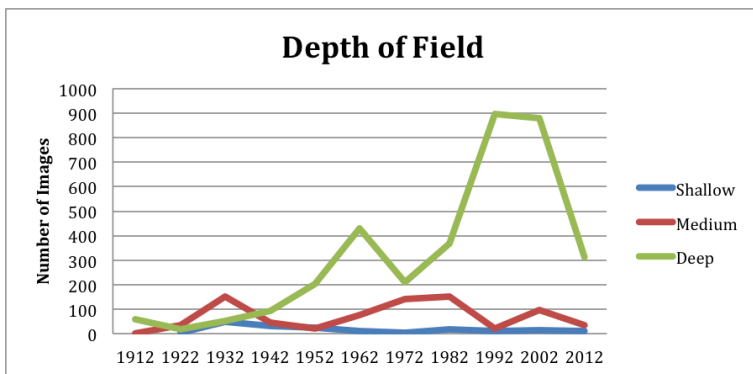


Figure 22
Finnish Architectural Review 12/1932,
pp. 40–41.

This set of data suggests that architects like things in focus. One of the main characteristics of architectural photography is sharpness and maximum depth-of-field. The practice of applying selected focus through the use of fast lenses, tilt/shift lenses, and post-production simulations of either/both effects is a common practice in commercial and fine art photography.¹⁴ The lack of such images in a publication such as *ARK* might indicate a reluctance to follow ephemeral or even long-term trends; conversely, it might evince also reluctance to embrace pluralistic means of representing architecture. As with the categories for weather, composition, colour and the inclusion of people, a singular solution is applied repeatedly with little exception for the period of one hundred years.

14 An almost inexhaustible number of examples could be produced, but a short list would include the tilt shift aerial photographs by artists like Vincent Laforet, the «miniature faking» work of Olivo Barbieri, and the popularity of Lensbaby and Instagram which have democratised the technology as well as the technique.

Discussion

Architectural theorists have written a lot about how images have hijacked architecture, but who gives the hijackers orders? Taking up the photographer's perspective, this paper suggests that editorial decisions determine in the kinds of images specialists and non-specialists alike are familiar with. We are supposedly living in an innovation driven world, yet this study suggests there is reason to believe the case is otherwise in the architectural community. Is it possible to speculate why? Panofsky writes, in his famous book on perspective, that «*the result [of the discovery of Renaissance perspective] was a translation of psycho-physiological space into mathematical space; in other words, an objectification of the subjective*» (Panofsky, 1991, p. 66). As with the discovery of vanishing points and the application of the grid to drawing, certain techniques in architectural photography appear to have provided a clear, satisfying system for the realistic depiction of buildings that deploys a code from one architect to another.

Perhaps, as Čeferin (2003) observed of architectural journalism, it is simply quickest, safest and easiest to follow established conventions. Robert Sobieszek asserts in his book on 19th century architectural photography, *This Edifice is Colossal*, that «*what had become pictorial convention during the 1850s still obtains [sic] today in the photography of most corporate headquarters and government buildings*» (Sobieszek, 1986, p. 7).

The findings presented in this paper support that assertion, but it is not entirely clear why. First hand experience as a photographer may shed some light. I have found that, as with most commercial practices, time and cost are key factors. Each are kept to the minimum required in order to produce a product that meets the professional standard. Little thought is given to the meaning of such activity or the cyclical effects of commissioning a certain type of image. A limited circle of people is commissioned to produce a limited type of pictures. The images are a kind of code amongst specialists – that code determines the 'professional looking' quality recognised by architects. However, in practice the repetition of that code is produced because ultimately little time is spent on the research and development of other types of images. Established conventions are followed, not questioned.

Results produce a clear picture: professional architectural photography relies upon the implementation of standardised, stereotyped imagery with little deviation from formulaic practices. Whilst photographs have come to occupy more space in the journal over time, the type of photographs has varied little. We see the same angles, the same light, the same weather, the same empty spaces over and over again. We see time frozen; life is placed somewhere between a museum and the still-life photographer's studio.

The duration of this practice suggests it has been successful. But do these conventions communicate effectively to non-specialist readers? *ARK* has limited circulation¹⁵, and most of the copies goes to members of the Finnish Association of Architects and to institutions, such as libraries, where the next generation of designers are educated. In the 100 year anniversary issue of *ARK*, historian, writer, architect, member of the Finnish Board of Antiquities, and editor of *ARK*, Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen, writes: «*The Review takes it as its greatest responsibility to advance the public's knowledge of architecture and architectural taste*» (Jetsonen, 2003, p. 27). Doing so via an extremely limited discourse of stereotyped images is a practice that must be scrutinised further.

15 According to Miina Blot, the current assistant editor of *ARK*, the circulation is 4400 copies, of which some 3000 go to SAFA members, the rest being regular subscriptions.

In response to these and other questions, Jorma Mukala, the current editor-in-chief of *ARK* had much to say in an interview he granted me in February 2014. Firstly, he was staggered by the news that analysis turned up only one picture in the rain during the period scrutinised. He enthusiastically suggested a special issue of *ARK* dedicated to rain and the appearance of a selection of building materials under varied weather conditions. When pushed further about the lack of varied weather conditions, he said «*It tells quite a lot about the Finnish mentality. There's too much rain outside. We don't want to see it in ARK! Finnish people want to go to Italy where there's nice people and sunlight. So we try to invent Italy here.*» When pressed to answer why the practice of using pictures shot in sunny conditions is not a Finnish phenomenon, but a widespread and perhaps universal practice, he answered that: «*it is quite a narrow culture – architecture – we know what is happening all around.*» Taking out a copy of the *British Architectural Review (AR)*, he continued, «*I take influences from abroad. I look at the reviews from different countries and of course I try to bring in things which influence me.*» Presumably, many editors have done the same in the past and continue to do so.

Mukala was in agreement that architectural photography has not changed much over time. He believes that pictures taken of Aalto's works at the time of completion would be published if submitted to contemporary journals today. Not only has the photography altered little, he went on to say, «*The way journals use photography have not changed much. Maybe architecture tries to give a concise description: landscape, exterior, main interior spaces – and that's it.*» With regard to the kind of photographs one sees repeatedly he said: «*the problem is we try to give a kind of neutral, objective kind of photo. Expressive photos are too expressive.*» When pushed on the meaning of words like expressive and objective, he recognised that: «*Objectivity is one expression. For me objectivity is not real. It's a style, absolutely – the architectural review style.*»

As with many cultural practices, the implementation of conventions over time creates a sense of what is natural and real. Art historian WJT

Mitchell discusses the idea of the natural versus the conventional in his book *Iconography*. He writes that Ernst Gombrich, one of the most notable art historians of the 20th century, tried to argue the existence of a dichotomy of natural signs (images) versus conventional signs (language). Mitchell concludes in opposition to Gombrich that the natural is elided with the conventional – they are one and the same (Mitchell, 1986, p. 88). As Blaise Pascal once said, custom is our nature; hence, any assertions about objective, optical truth must be placed in doubt.

The belief that certain images are objective rather than conventionalised styles has serious implications, both societal and commercial. Firstly, because it raises an obvious question: what are the effects of this limited vocabulary of images on design? As we are talking about the designers of the built environment, the question is worth serious consideration. For when asked a different way, the question is whether or not standardised images with little variation limit the number of design concepts that are eventually built. Secondly, there is the question of brand identity. One wonders why the architectural community is saying so little as separate companies through the photography they commission and publish. What is it about architects that make them favour similar, undifferentiated images – a practice that appears to span a century of trends and economic, sociological, governmental and technological changes?

Moreover, why do they tend to work with just one or sometimes two photographers in each country? Isn't that a sure way of making everyone's work look the same, when focussed through the same lens? Perhaps, there is the default assumption that it doesn't matter, since professional architectural photography produces objective, neutral photographs that allow the individual designs of each architect to shine through. But if neutrality is just another style, and international style in architecture went out of fashion a long time ago – why is the same not true of the international style of architectural photography? Conventions appear to provide the answer.

There clearly is a rulebook which stipulates specifically what is and isn't good architectural photography. Just as the 19th century was all about Greco-Roman Orders or Gothic windows; the 20th century avant-garde was essentially a dogmatic, systematised response to the nineteenth century riot of styles, putting a modern universalised system in its place. Similarly, contemporary architectural photography reveals an adherence to a system based on conventionalised beliefs about the right way of doing things – the only way. The amusing thing about those rules is how silly they seem in retrospect.

A book which illustrates that point perfectly, written in Barcelona in 1960, is simply titled: *Urbanity*. A rule book for the would-be urbane, it starts off by listing duties to God, including: «entering the temple, genuflexion,

postures, during mass, of the sacraments, other religious solemnities, prayer and song». (1960, p. 9) These are not perhaps the key issues that concern the contemporary reader of *Monocle* or the *New Yorker*. The rules are several, precise and of the following sort (Ibid., p. 36):

When visiting the Mother Superior you must remove your apron.

Before entering her room, ask permission, and if the door is closed, tap lightly, waiting for an answer.

Once inside, you will neither examine nor look at what is on the table, and will maintain a respectful distance, without sitting unless indicated by the Mother Superior.

Upon entering, you will kiss the hand of the Mother Superior and will respectfully exposit the reason for your visit. Upon finishing, you will thank the Mother Superior for her time and you will once again kiss her hand.

Upon seeing the Mother Superior you must stop to greet her, let her pass and not continue on your way until she has done so.

It is not correct to telephone people who warrant respect.

Clearly, we are privileged here to a glimpse at another world. It is one that teaches an obvious lesson: rules change. That fact is key because it means that what seems like optical truth today becomes tomorrow's flat earth. When the book was written, Spain was governed by a dictatorship, and society's rulebook was written largely by the church. Things have certainly changed since then. Countless research projects has been done on both the mechanisms and results of such change. Whilst I prefer not to stretch the dictatorship comparison too far, I do see the architecture community's use of photography as limited by its adherence to a short list of conventions. I think photography could serve architecture very well as a means of doing research into these sorts of conventionalised practices, contributing to the reading and appreciation of architecture by specialists and non-specialists alike.

Conclusions

Content analysis of the images in *ARK* has served as a means of addressing the broader issue of conventions in architecture and some of the default beliefs that have helped to establish such conventions. Words like as 'objectivity' are often used by architects to explain and justify those conventions. Hopefully this paper has caused the reader to question the objectivity of statements about objectivity.

Equally in doubt, perhaps, is the methodology of this study. Sample size and scope are significant limitations, amongst a host of others.¹⁶ Future research would require an increase to the number of issues analysed. By doing content analysis of one year out of ten, one can only speak with certainty about that year. Each year does not necessarily represent the other nine years of each decade that were omitted from study. However, continuity across the decades in several areas suggested this was less of a problem than a future challenge.

In terms of scope, this is a regionally specific study, and it would be equally worthwhile to correlate or falsify these findings in other regions. If this analysis of *ARK* can be taken as the vertical component of a study, deep in time but narrow in scope, an architectural encyclopaedia such as the *Phaidon World Atlas of Architecture* falls naturally onto the horizontal axis. Applying similar methods to that publication would produce a fuller picture about the editorial practices of a broader architectural community. It would be interesting to the resultant data about a global publication. A cursory glance suggests the *Phaidon World Atlas of Architecture* erodes the sense of place via its selection of photographs in the same way *ARK* does.

It is of course tempting to end on a strong statement like that, but it paints an unfair picture. This paper is not an attack on *ARK* or the broader architectural and publishing communities. An architectural photographer myself, I think it worthwhile to point out the obvious: that photographers have absented themselves from the debate and bear much of the responsibility for the problematics discussed here. However, accountability is surely less at issue than which steps are viable and suitable to address the problem and improve the current state of affairs.

Investigation into the reasons behind the conventions followed in architectural photography as well as the success or failure of other options are two obvious directions to follow. Increased dialogue between editors, architects and photographers will address the elephant in the room by asking whether or not uniformity and repetition are really the best way to get a sense of place. Furthermore, it will expose the problematics of several default beliefs raised in this paper which can only create new opportunities for architects, academics, critics and photographers alike.

Photographs are frequently treated as transparent windows on the world. But it is easily argued that they are actually constructed via the application of specific decisions to do one thing and not another. What those things are can be intuitive and unconscious, as in the case of the snapshot, or specific, conscious and codified through training and experience. The nine facts selected here are a way of identifying some of those decisions in order to make them visible to the reader.

¹⁶ *Space Occupied* was a key issue, and it proved one of the hardest to determine because conventions in graphic design changed drastically over time. Full-page bleeds and double-page spreads are a recent invention. But what is to be made of pages where images do indeed cover a double page spread, but with ample empty space around each, as seen in figure 1? Ultimately, it was decided that mosaics of images would be counted as full pages of images. Early use of orthochromatic film renders all skies overcast in early publications. This problem means some degree of guesswork is at times required. It was not possible to determine the weather with any degree of accuracy for the period from 1912 to 1932 or in 1972, due to poor image quality. Images from those years were not counted in the weather section. In order to minimise the problem, of human error, images were itemised four times: twice by myself and twice by an assistant. For the most part numbers corresponded, but where this was not the case the discrepancy was never more than ± 5 images per category.

Editorial decisions are subject to the range and number of images supplied by the architect and/or photographer. Photographic decisions are conditioned by the current brief supplied during the job, as well as by prior commissions, by current and past publications the photographer has seen. The point here, however, is that editorial and photographic decisions have much to do with the appearance of architectural photographs and those images have much to do with the comprehension of architecture. The decision to follow conventions is a decision. Architects, photographers and editors alike have agreed to do so for over a hundred years with little deviation from established norms, as evidenced by this study of one of the world's oldest architectural reviews.

To make that point has been the first goal of this paper. The second is to postulate some of the potential causes of that decision. A third, more idealistic one, would be to ask the reader to consider effects of that decision. What does it mean to represent the world in such a narrow way? What does it do to architecture? Architectural photographs and the journals they are published in are not neutral documents; rather, they must be taken as part of the design process that ultimately shapes not only the world of the media, but also the built environment we live in, due to their role as the source book and rule book for the way things look.

- Čeferin, P., 2003. *Constructing a Legend: The International Exhibitions of Finnish Architecture 1957–1967*. Helsinki: SKS (Finnish Literature Society).
- Colomina, B., 2000. *Privacy and Publicity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Comazzi, J., 2012. *Balthazar Korab, Architect of Photography*. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Compañía de Santa Teresa de Jesús, 1960. *Urbanidad*. Barcelona: Altés, S.L.
- Connah, R., 2006. *How Architecture got its Hump*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Corbin, J. A., & Strauss, A. 2008. *Basics of qualitative research*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cotton, C., 2004. *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- De Maré, E., 1961. *Photography and Architecture*. London: The Architectural Press.
- Elwall, R., 2004. *Building with Light*. London: RIBA.
- Iloniemi, L., 2004. *Is it all About Image?* London: Wiley-Academy.
- Jetsonen, S., 2003. Along the Years. *Finnish Architectural Review*, 2, pp. 25–27.
- Rattenbury, K. ed., 2002. *This is Not Architecture: Media Constructions*. New York: Routledge.
- Laine, L., 2003. *Houses built with ink: A century of the Finnish Architectural Review, visual history and spatial narratives*. Helsinki: Helsinki University of Technology.
- Leach, N., 1999. *Anaesthetics of Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Mitchell, W.J.T., 1986. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mukala, J., 2014. *Personal interview*. Interviewed by M. Goodwin. Helsinki, 5 February 2014.
- Pallasmaa, J., 2011. *The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Panofsky, E., 1991. *Perspective as Symbolic Form*. New York: Zone Books.
- Robinson, C. and Herschman, J., 1990. *Architecture Transformed. A History of Architectural Photography from 1839 to Present*. New York: Architectural League of New York.
- Szarkowski, J., 2007. *The Photographer's Eye*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.
- Shore, S., 2007. *The Nature of Photographs*. London: Phaidon Press.
- Shulman, J., 1977. *The Photography of Architecture and Design: Photographing Buildings, Interiors, and the Visual Arts*. New York: Whitney Library of Design / Watson-Guptill.
- Shulman, J., 1999. *Photography and its Architecture*. Cologne: Taschen.
- Sobieszek, R.A., 1986. *This Edifice Is Colossal: 19th Century Architectural Photography*. New York: Intl. Museum of Photography at George Eastman House.
- Van Leeuwen, L. and Jewitt, C., 2001. *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Zumthor, P., 2006. *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments – Surrounding Objects*. Basel: Birkhäuser.



Biographical information

Marc Goodwin
Department of Media, Photography
Aalto University School of Art, Design and
Architecture
Address: Hämeentie 135 C,
00560 Helsinki, Finland
Tel: +358 465 886 566
www.archmospheres.com
www.marc-goodwin.com
E-mail: marc.goodwin@aalto.fi

Marc Goodwin is a doctoral student at Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture where he also teaches courses in architectural photography.

He is an architectural photographer with ten years of experience working with architects and publishers in Finland, Denmark, Spain, Italy and the UK.

Recent publications include the Finnish Centre for Architecture (2014), the *Finnish Architectural Review* (ARK 2/2013, ARK 5/2012), *The Journal of Artistic Research* (JAR 3/2013), *Pro Interior* (3/2013, *A+U magazine* (2012).

In addition to his dissertation, he is currently working on an extensive, interpretive, photographic project for a book titled *Event Space* by Professor Dorita Hannah (Routledge, 2014), is co-editing an anthology of photographic essays with Professor Merja Salo and Doctor Mika Elo, and curated a recent exhibition at the Finnish Museum of Architecture titled *Grey Matter* (May 2014).

