# NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING

NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

2/3.2009



**Architectural Competitions** 

## NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING

NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

2/3.2009

### ARTIKLENE ER GRANSKET AV MINST TO AV FØLGENDE FORSKERE:

GERD BLOXHAM ZETTERSTEN, Associate Professor Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Institute of Art and Cultural Studies, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen

YLVA DAHLMAN, PhD, Senior Lecture Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala

ROLF JOHANSSON, Professor Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala

REZA KAZEMIAN, Associate professor Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

PETER THULE KRISTENSEN, Lecture Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art, Copenhagen

STEN GROMARK, Professor Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg

SATU LAUTAMÄKI, Eon PhD Design Center MUOVA, Vasa

HANS LIND, Professor Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

MAGNUS RÖNN, Associate professor Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

BRIGITTA SVENSSON, Professor Stockholm University, Stockholm

INGA BRITT WERNER, Associate professor Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

ÖRJAN WIKFORSS, Professor Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

LEIF ÖSTMAN, PhD Swedish Polytechnic, Vasa

### KOMMENDE TEMA I NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING:

Architecture, Climate and Energy



# Innhold: Vol. 21, No 2/3.2009

NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING - NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH	
	TEMA: ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS
4	In memory – Minneord
5 JONAS E ANDERSSSON, REZA KAZEMIAN, MAGNUS RÖNN	Architectural Competition – Editors' notes
9 HELENE LIPSTADT	VITENSKAPELIGE ARTIKLER Experimenting with The Experimental Tradition, 1989-2009: On Competitions and Architecture Research
23 ELISABETH TOSTRUP	Tracing competition rhetoric
37 KRISTIAN KREINER	Architectural Competitions – Empirical Observations and Strategic Implications for Architectural Firms
52 MAGNUS RÖNN	Judgment in the Architectural Competition – rules, policies and dilemmas
68 REZA KAZEMIAN	Design Interactivity and Communicative Quality Judgment versus Urban Design Competition – A Design Methodology Statement
79 ANTIGONI KATSAKOU	Collective Housing Competitions in Switzerland The parameter of innovation in architectural conception
94 CHARLOTTE SVENSSON	Speaking of Architecture A study of the jury's assessment in an invited competition
108 MARIANNE STANG VÅLAND	End user participation as an input to shape the brief in architectural competitions – A threefold translation process
123 ATHANASIOS KOUZELIS, IRO PSILOPOULOS, ANGELOS PSILOPOULOS	Innovative vs. Qualified The experience of competitions in contemporary Greece
142 REIDUNN RUSTAD	What is Contemporary Architecture? Changes in Architectural Competitions and Architectural Discourse
151 TORSTEN SCHMIEDEKNECHT	Routine and Exceptional Competition Practice in Germany as published in Wettbewerbe Aktuell
166 TOR MEDALEN	BOKANMELDELSER Marcus Johansson and Abdul Khakee: Ethics in City Planning

Gertrud Olsson:

167

HENRIK OXVIG The visible and the invisible – color contrast phenomena i space

ANNE BEIM

Anne Sigrid Nordby: Salvageability of building materials - Reasons, Criteria and Consequences of Designing Buildings to Facilitate Reuse and Recycling

173 Center for strategisk byforskning: SVERRE FLACK Bæredyktig kompakt by

Torben Dahl, Winnie Friis Møller (red): 174 SVERRE FLACK Klima og arkitektur

### IN MEMORY - MINNEORD

In memory of our friend, the lecturer, scientist and president

### Lena Villner

Lena passed away on Saturday 19 September 2009 after a short illness. Lena was a university lecturer of architectural history at the KTH School of Architecture and took an active interest in several areas, including teaching, research, administration and public activities. In 1997, Lena defended her dissertation about Tempelman, which was as interesting as it was liberating in its ease of reading. In 2005, her academic career brought her to the position of director of graduate studies. In 2008, she became a reader in architectural history. We will remember Lena in particular for her strong commitment to the journal on Nordic architectural research, Nordisk Arkitekturforskning, and for her hard work for the association. Lena was a knowledgeable and highly respected member of the supervisory board, and in the period 2002-2004, she served as president of the association Nordisk Arkitekturforskning. Lena will be sadly missed by us all.

Vännen, läraren, forskaren och presidenten

### Lena Villner

Lena lämnade oss lördagen den 19 september 2009 efter en kortare tids sjukdom. Lena var universitets-lärare i arkitekturhistoria vid KTHs Arkiekturskola och aktiv inom flera områden: utbildning, forskning, administration och utåtriktad verksamhet. 1997 disputerade Lena på en intressant och befriande lättläst avhandling om Tempelman. Hennes akademiska karriär fortsätt 2005 med uppdrag som studierektor för forskarutbildningen. 2008 blev hon docent i arkitekturhistoria. Vi minns särskilt Lenas starka engagemang för tidskriften Nordisk Arkitekturforskning och hennes arbete i föreningen. Lena var en kunnig och respekterad medlem av styrelsen och under perioden 2002-2004 var hon president i föreningen Nordisk Arkitekturforskning. Det är med stor sorg och saknad som vi minns Lena.

# What is Contemporary Architecture?

# Changes in Architectural Competitions and Architectural Discourse

### Reidunn Rustad

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research Volume 21, No 2/3, 2009, 9 pages Nordic Association for Architectural Research Reidunn Rustad Institute of Architectural Design, History and Technology, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway

### Abstract:

"What is contemporary architecture?" This question may have been the most important preoccupation of the modernist pioneers at the start of the 20th century. The importance of an architecture that is "true to our time" still lingers today. This text demonstrates how the meaning of this notion changes with time. The focus of the study is three years, 1927, 1964 and 2002: Three points in time, represented by three architectural competitions. Today, the idea of modern-day architecture no longer corresponds with the original

meaning of the term. What could be a new definition for an architecture that is truly contemporary?

### Keywords:

Contemporary architecture, urban planning, architectural competitions, architectural history, architectural theory, ideals, discourse, interdiscourse, paradigm

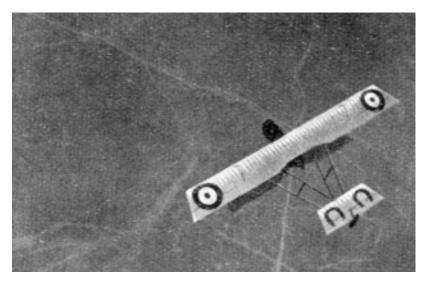
### Introduction

In 1927, at the Oslo Architectural Society, Johan Ellefsen gave a lecture concerning choice of building style and which type of architecture that was right for the modern epoch. This lecture was later printed as an article in the Norwegian architectural periodical *Byggekunst* with the title "What is contemporary architecture?" This was an article that, in retrospective, has been called the Norwegian Manifesto of Modernism. According to Ellefsen, a new style, or a new architectural language, should borrow its expression from technology.

For Ellefsen it was important that Norwegian architecture connected with the "central stream" of history. This flow, according to Ellefsen, was very strong and based on the galloping development of technology. The art of engineering should show architecture its way forward. The industrial buildings and machines like the airplanes, the steam liners and the automobiles were symbols of the modern world and should therefore be regarded as the signature forms of the time. In 1927, technology constituted the ultimate art form; it was seen as the most developed area of society. The art of engineering stood as an ideal for the rest of the world through its emphasis on pure meaning and function.

This paper is in large parts based on my thesis named What is Contemporary Architecture? - A Study of the Discursive Framework of Architecture, through Three Architectural Competitions and Three Points in Time. This thesis is a study of the ideals and values that at given times have been leading within the architectural discourse. The starting point is the belief in the importance of a contemporary architecture, a belief that seems to lie in the background of all architectural practice and public debate over the last 80 years.

The main question I aim to discuss in this text is the same as the title: what is contemporary architecture? In search of the answer to this question, the focus of the study has been on the most typical ways to design buildings the three given years, and on the theoretical meaning given to the contemporary notion of architecture. In this paper I will describe changes in the architectural discourse as seen in architectural competitions in Norway through three cases spanning over nearly 80 years, and further discuss "contemporary architecture" as a key concept when it comes to a general understanding of architecture.

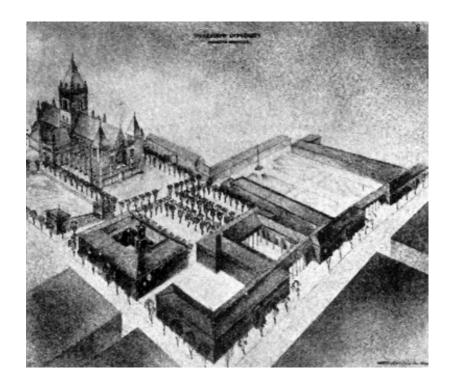


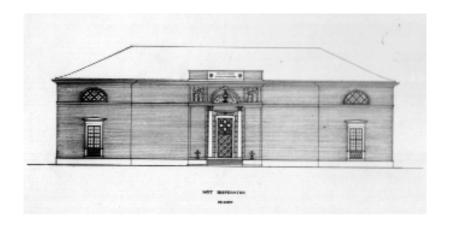
# Contemporary architectural designs, 1927, 1964 and 2002

The main objects of study are three Norwegian architectural competitions, from three chosen years. Competitions are in general exceptional sources of information, both because of their central position in the overall architectural discourse, as well as the use of both text and drawing as communicators of what is considered good architecture (or not). The objects of study are more precisely the competitions concerning Trondhjem Art Society in 1927, Rana Town Hall, Community Centre and Movie Theatre in 1964 and the Vestbane-competition held in Oslo in 2002. They may all be seen as combinations of building design and urban form. The given competitions show how architecture, through

Picture shown in article in Byggekunst, written by Johan Ellefsen. This and most of the illustrations in the article were borrowed from Le Corbusier's book Vers une architecture.

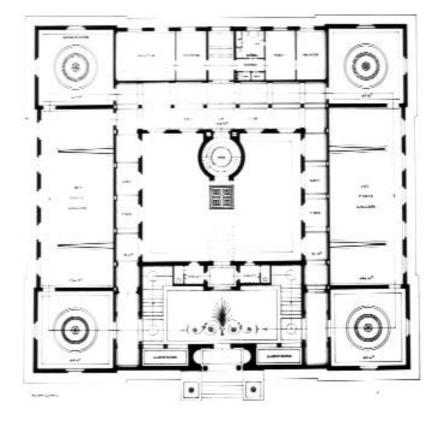
The project of one of the first price winners, C.J.Moe. The proposed gallery building is to the left on the illustration, towards the street "Bispegata".4





The façade towards "Bispegata", by C.J. Moe

texts and drawings, reflects sets of ideals and values, and how these both change and stay the same over time.



Case 1: 1927.

The architectural competition in 1927, concerning the new gallery for the *Trondhjem Art Society*, also included the design of the terrain belonging to the cathedral Nidarosdomen. The competition program requested building plans that should be equally beautiful and practical. The result was shared first price, won by C.J. Moe and D. Hofflund. Both of the winning proposals showed neo-classical building types. The designs emphasize things such as axes and central motives, large doorway and grandiose stairways. At the same time the gallery

building plays a supporting role in relation to the nearby cathedral. The main issue is that the area is depicted as an agreeable whole, a coming together of buildings and plazas. Foremost among the traits in the drawings is symmetry, the designs also reflect brick heaviness, solidness and stability. All proposals in the competition have the same quadratic building form. Embellishment, in the form of light ornamentation of structural elements, walls and other surfaces, comes through as an indispensable thing when it comes to communicating the building function and role. The inner organization is based on stringent floor plans and symmetry in organization, with rooms mirroring, "enfilade" and strictly defined spaces.

The designs and the jury's claims and statements show that values such as monumentalism, harmony, tradition, order and beauty were predominant in 1927, and represented what was considered good architecture. Classicism, mostly in the form of neo-classicism, was the architectural language the most common in 1927. This is an assertion that is supported by other competitions and the Nordic architectural periodicals of this year. Modernism as an architectural style was given some attention, but was depicted as something yet strange and unfamiliar. There was a clear difference between the common or typical way to design buildings and the rhetoric concerning the modern style. The material show how the existing architectural tradition is represented by a quite neutral rhetoric and mainly referring to itself, while Ellefsen in his article "What is contemporary architecture?" uses strong words and discourse outside architecture to make his point and convince other architects that there was a need for change.

We know today that Ellefsens request for change was fulfilled and that the lack of a modern style was solved through, as Ellefsen expressed, a contemporary architecture that borrowed its expression from technology. The actual change in Norwegian architecture may be said to have taken place in the years 1929 and 1930. In the period of these two years, almost all architects began designing building in the new and modern looking style. The architectural writer and historian H. Aars writes in an article in Byggekunst in 1931: "it was like a shell had fallen from our eyes" and further:

We have finally arrived at the stage where also Norway joins in this titanic orchestra that gives

First floor plan. C.J. Moe.

the 20. Century its wonderful rhythm, melody, color and form in stone, glass, concrete and steel. The foundation is laid and so is the path forward. Because this foundation is so pure and true, we can not go back to our old ways.<sup>5</sup>

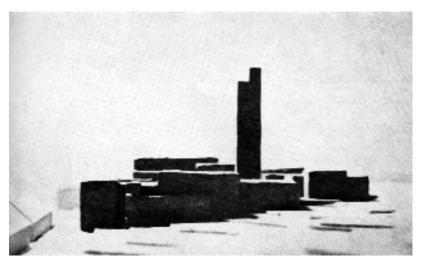
### Case 2:1964.

Modernism came through as a well-established architectural practice in 1964, this is apparent both when we look at the architectural periodicals and the competition of *Rana Town Hall, Community Centre and Movie Theatre.* The Rana-competion was won by three young architects, A. Telje, F. Torp and K. Aasen. They were later to form one of the most influential architectural studios in Norway.

The winning design shows an emphasis on the terrain and town structure. The different building functions are placed around an Italian inspired plaza. This plaza is positioned at the end of the central town axes that goes up from the harbor and passes the down town area. The plaza is pictured as an open space for all people, a ground of commonality. None of the existing, old buildings are given any weight, and the new and quite massive structure is something clearly different than the rest of the town's lighter buildings.

The jury wanted a structure that was economic and rational. The architectural expression reveals the use of industrialized materials and constructions; raw concrete is displayed and used as an aesthetic expression in its own right. The building shapes stands as the communicators of role and function, and the use of divided volumes reveals a resolve to break down dimensions and create variation in the experience of the new buildings.

The interior design depicts a new sense of space, it emphasizes open floor plans and variation in rooms and constellations. The larger rooms function as mediators between the office cells and the outdoor area.

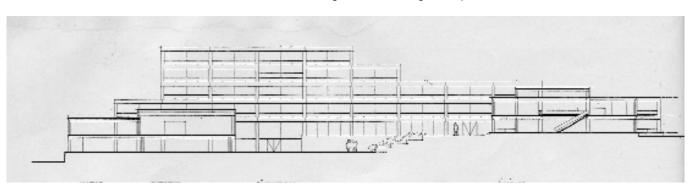


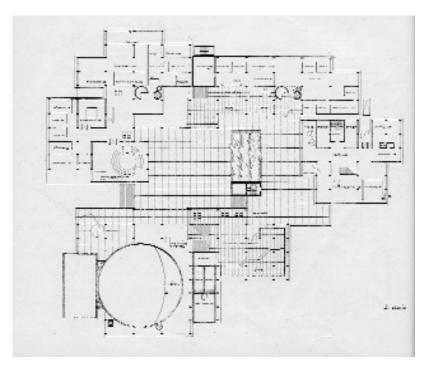
Winner project, model in clay, architects A.Telje, F.Torp and K.Aasen.<sup>6</sup>

The values shown in the Rana-competition may be said to be regionalism, new times, industrialized building processes and form (as a means to show the building's function and role). These ideals are the same as those shown in the Nordic architectural periodicals of that year; they played a prominent role in the architectural discourse. The same may be said for the new ideal of humanity, that architects should take sociological and psychological aspects into account when designing new buildings. Together, the competition and the periodicals show an increased emphasis on good urban environments and architecture as symbol for cultural meaning.

The architecture of 1964 stands for an almost total change compared to the neo-classicism of 1927, but may be said to be based on the principles put forward in Ellefsens article the same year. One could say, as Ellefsen in 1927, that the architectural design of the competition and periodicals of 1964 was founded on a dominating belief in technology as means to solve all problems. In 1964, all architects strived to make up to date architecture, appropriate for modern society, by exploiting the present day technology. The theoretical idea of a contemporary architecture might be said to have melted together with and given expression to

Section and façade towards the plaza, winner project.





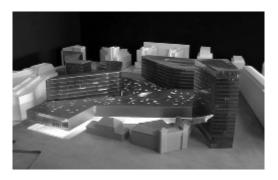
Main floor plan, Telje-Torp-Aasen.

the typical architecture of the day. The term contemporary architecture was now truly linked to industrialized building processes and functional forms. The emphasis was on the modern times and the future.

### Case 3: 2002.

The Vestbane-competition held in Oslo in 2002 was one of the biggest competitions ever in Norway, and held a widely multifunctional program where public library and shopping were central functions. Unlike the competitions in 1927 and 1964 that were restricted to Norwegian architects, this competition had international participation. The winner-proposal was created by the Dutch star architect studio OMA, in collaboration with a Norwegian studio Space Group.

The program of the competition stated that the new building complex should be an attraction in its own right; the buildings should show such originality and architectural qualities that they would catch international attention.



Model of the winner project and its nearby surroundings, OMA.7

Looking at the designs, the winning project's approach towards existing buildings seems to have changed compared to that of 1964; the scales and shapes of the new building forms interact with present modern building typologies in the neighborhood. However, when it comes to the old neo-classicistic railway station-buildings, *Vestbanen*, the choice of the winner proposal is to detach itself from these buildings. The old buildings seems isolated from the rest, and a new high rising tower leaves the Vestbane-buildings somewhat desolated, or more like shredded (surplus) culisses.

The buildings' expressions are made up of modern materials; surfaces dominated by glass and technological advanced constructions. The overall impression is that of contrast and dynamics, with the mixture of building forms and the middle "tube" stretching out to the surrounding streets. The buildings' shapes are, like in the Rana-competition, the main communicator of role and function. Known building types are used for the hotel, apartments and offices. In between these lays the free formed "tube", containing the unrestricted and shared areas and important public functions

The most significant architectural values conveyed in the *Vestbane-competition* were *innovation*, *interaction* (with the existing buildings and urban environment), *contemporaneity* and *form* (to show the building's function and role). These ideals seemed to be very much in accordance with the ideals the Nordic architectural periodicals of the year 2002 reflected. In addition, the competition showed an emphasis on the *commercial* aspects, an emphasis that was not so common in the architectural discourse.

The result of the Vestbane-competition led to an extensive debate both in the newspapers and in the architectural periodicals. The majority of architects showed a general agreement on what the most important ideals were, but not on what they really meant or how to achieve them. That is to say how one should build in accordance to these values. The belief in the importance of a contemporary architecture remained, though now it was portrayed as an ideal in itself and not in connection with some program of development. The notion of contemporary architecture seemed to be linked to a certain type of esthetic design, a modernistic language of architecture, based on the modern materials and constructions made possible by the latest technological development.

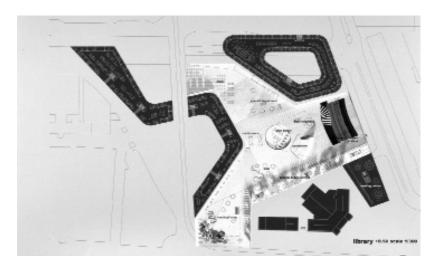
### Changes in design

The cases shows that the ideals and designs in architecture had undoubtedly changed between 1927, 1964 and 2002, but not in the same degree. Some of the most important similarities and differences in the way to draw and talk about architecture, in the design and what was emphasized in the competitions' texts, will be discussed in the following. I start of by discussing the changes in relation to urban context, then concerning architectonical expression and further inner organization. Lastly, I discuss briefly changes in the competitions' form and documents.

#### Urban context

A common trait for the three competitions was an adaption to, and a development of, the classical urban structure. The site plan of the 1927 competition, Trondhjem Art Society, was an adaptation to and a further development of an existing classical grid structure. In 1964 the new community center was placed in the end of an axis that started down by the fjord. This axis was part of a more recent, post-war urban structure, but could be called classical because of its strict use of axis and blocks. The grid was also the main principle for the structuring of the Vestbanen-site in Oslo in 2002, with one exception; the center building, the "tube", was displayed as an important structure precisely through its break with the prevailing urban structure. The interpretation of how to relate to the existing structure changed somehow, but the use of the classical urban structure shows no-the-less an remarkable sustain bearing in mind how rest of building art had changed, and the visions of the future town that were made in the mid-war period.

The relationship to the existing old buildings had, on the other hand, changed dramatically. Whilst, in 1927, there were only the building of some monumentality and glorious past that mattered, in the 1964-competition no older buildings were given any attention at all. In 2002, however, the relationship to the existing environment and building came through as exceedingly important. Any kind of old buildings had relevance as historical objects and tellers of identity. One apparent common trait between 1964 and 2002 was, however, the demand to build in a modern and contemporary style, nostalgia and copying (classical) building was seen as not desireable.



First floor plan, the shopping area.

### Architectural expression

The contrast between the architecture of 1927 on one hand, and that of 1964 and 2002 on the other, is quite striking and shows that the architectural tradition had changed a lot when it came to the design of buildings. The architectonical expression changes, from static, monumental and traditional in 1927, to dynamic, it becomes an expression of movement and change, in 1964 and 2002.

In 1927, the building shape was more or less already decided on; it seemed presupposed to be plain and square. Symmetry dominated the composition of the façades' openings and ornaments. The adornments purpose was to give people an idea about the building's function and role, as well as embellishment. In 1964, it was the plastic composition, the shape of the building itself, that came through as the most important and reflected the buildings use and importance. There was no ornamentation, instead the industrialized building techniques and the use of modern materials was exhibited. The use of volumes as the basic design principle was apparent also in 2002. The shape itself came across as dynamic through the use of asymmetry, long curved lines and big spans. The general use of modern material and construction seemed important, but unlike 1964, the choice of specific construction and materials was not showed; these selections were supposed to wait till the next phase in plan-

In general one might say that the expression changes from that of craftsmanship and traditional materials in 1927, to that of modern materials and constructions in 1964 and 2002. One might say that showing of modern and industrialized building processes, new techno-

logy or the supremacy of the art of engineering, becomes an important principle in it self after 1927.

### Inner organization

When it comes to interior solutions there are clear differences between 1927 and 1964, while the floor plans of 1964 and 2002 show many similarities. One goes from separated rooms bound together in straight alignment as shown in the competition of Trondhjem Art Society, to an emphasis on openness and movement in the Rana competition and the Vestbane competition. The rooms in 1964 and 2002 are not strictly organized; the flow of free interior spaces seems of major importance.

In 1927, the hall with the stairways was the most magnificent and important of all the rooms, and the central meeting point for all communications both horizontally and vertically. In the Rana competition the flow of space was guite different; the smaller rooms connected to a larger space, a main room where all communication to and from was to take place. The floor plans revealed a sense of openness and spaciousness, which is also very clear in the winner proposal of the Vestbane-competition; the main floor of the "tube" was shown as an enormous open area, and where furniture and other installations was the only thing that helped define more intimate zones or "islands". Glass was used in an extensive degree, first and foremost to accentuate the relationship between the outdoors and the interior, and help create the essential free flow of space.

### Form and documents

In addition to the changes in design, there are also some main differences (and likenesses) in the structure and documents of the competition, that is to say the competitions' invitations and programs, the presentations of the designs and the jury judgments. These changes can primarily be said point to a professionalization of the architectural practice.

One major change was the concerning who was allowed to participate in the competitions. In the 1927 competition, all Norwegian architects, no matter educational background, or lack of such, was invited to partake. In 1964, partaking was restricted to architects living in Norway, but also to those who were members of the official Norwegian association of architects, something that made necessary higher

architectural education. In 2002, the Vestbane-competition allowed international participation, partly according to new European standards, which made it possible for the international acclaimed "star-architects" to participate.

We can also see changes in the competition program; in 1927 and 1964 the programs were simple in form, with basic information of place, functions and goals, while in 2002 the program had grown in length and substance, giving much weight to site, historical background and architectural ambitions.

The documentation and presentation of the participant's designs changed too. Here, again, there are similarities between the material of 1927 and that of 1964. The basis these years are simple black and white drawings; black pen on white paper, with one or two outdoor perspectives. In 2002, under the influence of computer layout tools, the posters shone of color and advanced graphic design. The modern emphasis on the use of volumes, the plastic form of the building, is evident by the demand for a three-dimensional model; in 1927 this was not considered necessary, while a model was a natural and central part of the presentation in 1964 and 2002.

While both program and presentation of designs had changed, the form of the jury judgment stayed very much the same between 1927, 1964 and 2002. A not so pronounced change was the emphasis on practical solutions in 1964, whilst one in 1927 and 2002 seemed more focused of architectonical preferences and esthetic solutions.

### Discussion

"Contemporary Architecture" is a key concept in the architectural discourse and may be understood in two different ways, that is to say both theoretical and empirical. The theoretical understanding means that the notion itself is seen as a construction. This construction is both historical and social, that is to say formed by architects as a result of debate, group effort and communication over time. The importance of a contemporary architecture has its roots in the belief in a "Zeitgeist", a spirit of the time that is expressed in the architecture and other art forms of the period. The empirical interpretation takes its basis in the case studies and discusses how this key concept reveals itself through the architectural competitions.

### Theoretical meaning

This theoretical answer to the main question posed, "What is contemporary architecture?" is that the notion in itself is a social construction. The idea of a natural relationship between time and architectonic style, established itself in the architectural discourse during the 19th century. The belief in the need for a unique, "true" style for the modern epoch was a basic condition for modernism as style and for its dominance during the last part of the mid-war period. The first architects of modernism claimed that a contemporary building design was one that borrowed its expression from technology. The art of engineering was thus the starting point and the source for inspiration as the architectonical discourse went through an extensive inner adjustment of values, and the architects started designing buildings in a completely new

The meaning of the notion of contemporary architecture was originally seen in relation to a metaphysical being, the "Zeitgeist" (after the German philosopher Hegel) or spirit of the time, which gave the provisions for the artistic idioms of the day. The modern pioneer's main criteria for architectural quality were that it was in accordance with the epochs "Zeitgeist". Hence, as Ellefsen declared in 1927, a building should be a true reflection of the modern and technological based era.

In 1964 however, this theoretical meaning of the notion was beginning to dissolve, or was given additional connotations. Architecture should still reflect modern times (in general), but the emphasis had shifted slightly, more to the daily needs of people. As the architectural theoretician C. Norberg-Schulz, wrote in an article in *Byggekunst* in 1964:

There was not much fresh blood transferred into modern architecture, before those who are young today, under the pressure of fundamental questions, gave progress new speed. It is first and foremost the need for a richer and more human minded environment that is development's new force.8

In 2002 contemporary architecture may be said to have multiple significances: The expression was used to characterize everything from too fashionable building designs, to those with qualities so great as to have a lasting impact upon architectural discourse. The term in its more practical meaning, that is to say design wise, was (as we have seen) linked to a buil-

ding's visual appearance. The Danish architect and historian E. Nygaard stated that the whole of the social side of architecture has been substituted with, or changed into, aesthetics.<sup>9</sup>

### Empirical meaning

I put forward two alternative definitions of contemporary architecture as a notion. These definitions follow from the findings in the studies of the given years and competitions: The first definition suggested could to be seen in relationship to a given profession or a paradigm inspired by Thomas Kuhn's book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. 10 The paradigm gives the framework for architectonical designs, and general guidelines that are more or less permanent. The analysis of the three competitions has shown very few common traits between the architecture in 1927 and that of 1964, while there were equally many between 1964 and 2002. Among the likenesses between designs in 1964 and 2002 were the emphases on so-called modern materials and constructions, the buildings shape as the communicator of role and function, and the use of volumes and open floor plans. These traits may be said to have their background in a fundamental belief in technology as our era's salvation, a belief already stated in 1927 by Ellefsen in his earlier mentioned article. A paradigm is characterized by the presence of something holding it together (in the case of modernism the belief in technology), at the same time as it is also always changing. A paradigm could in principle, according to Kuhn, be upheld and developed as long as it does not meet a problem that cannot be solved within the given framework for a professional practice.

The second definition I suggest may be seen in relation to the need of interdiscourse. 11 A contemporary architecture is then an architecture that to a large degree relates to society, and to other professions and discourses. The analyses have shown that the degree of interdiscourse, or the contact between the architectural discourse and the rest of the society, has varied. In the competition of Trondhjem Art Society, the discourse came through as relatively closed. Still, in the architectural periodicals of 1927, one could trace a sort of curiosity and anticipation of change. In 1964, the architectural discourse seemed relatively open and in relationship to the general development of society. This is true both of the competition of Rana Town Hall, Community Centre and Movie Theatre, and the architectural periodicals. The architecture

of this year shows how a paradigm can make a well-defined framework for practice, and still be in accordance with the rest of the world. In 2002, the architectural discourse came through as relatively closed. Both the competition about *Vestbanen* in Oslo and the debate that surfaced after, show this. With few exceptions, the sources from this year give the impression of a debate much dominated by so-called truisms, matters of course or *objectivities*, values that all agree upon as important, but of which one has forgotten the original meaning. These truisms blocked the possibilities for a good and constructive architectural debate.

What is contemporary architecture, today? In the search for the answer to this question, a combination of the two proposed definitions above seems to be the best. Professional practice within the framework of a given profession, tradition or paradigm is necessary to ensure quality, constructive critiques and development according to commonly defined goals. Problems could be expected though, when the profession loses connection with important traits in societal development. As Ellefsen showed in 1927, the essential for answering the question "what is contemporary architecture?" is a basic attention to what is going on in society, combined with a will to think "outside the box".

### **AUTHOR**



Reidunn Rustad
Architect PhD
Institute of Architectural Design, History and Technology, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway reidunn.rustad@trondheim.kommune.no

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ellefsen, J. "Hvad er tidsmessig arkitektur?" *Byggekunst*, Nov. 1927.
- <sup>2</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. *Modern Norwegian Architecture*, Oslo 1986.
- <sup>3</sup> Rustad, R. Hvad er tidsmessig arkitektur? Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim 2009.
- <sup>4</sup> Illustrations taken from *Byggekunst*, Dec. 1927 and the archives of Trondhjem Art Museum.
- <sup>5</sup> Aars, Harald. "Byggekunstens utvikling gjennom de siste 25 år". *Byggekunst nr.5*, 1931 (my translation).
- <sup>6</sup> Illustrations taken from *Norske* arkitektkonkurranser, 1965.

- <sup>7</sup> Illustrations provided by *Statsbygg*.
- <sup>8</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. *Byggekunst* 1964 (not numbered).
- ° Nygaard, E. Arkitektur i en forvirret tid. Internasjonale strømninger 1968 –94. Christian Eijlerts Forlag, København 1995.
- <sup>10</sup> Kuhn, T. S. *The structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- <sup>11</sup> In the understanding of Norman Fairclough, see Fairclough, N. *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity, Cambridge 1992 and *Analysing Discourse – Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge, London 2003.

### **REFERENCE**

Rustad, R., (2009) "Hvad er tidsmessig arkitektur?", Trondheim: NTNU 2009:72 (PhD Theses)