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AALTO BEYOND FINLAND
Architecture and Design

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Contents

4 Silvia Micheli, Esa Laaksonen
Alvar Aalto, citizen of the world

12 Tiziano Aglieri Rinella
Spreading ideas: Reception and significance of Alvar Aalto’s participation in the Milan Triennale (1933-57)

20 Antonella Armetta
The reasons for a project that was never performed: Alvar Aalto and the residential complex in Pavia (1966-68)

30 Laura Berger

43 Esin Bölükbas Day
Facing the Middle East: Aalto’s design effort for architectural modern spaces in Iraq

50 Virginia Cartwright
Ephemeral buildings - lasting effect: Aalto’s designs for the Paris and New York Worlds’ Fairs

61 Chiu Chen-Yu
Aalto’s house and studio in Riihitie and Tetsuro Yoshida’s Das Japanische Wohnhaus: The missing link

72 Eva Eylers
Showcasing Paimio Sanatorium: Varsinais-Suomen Tuberkuloosiparantola and its strategic role for Alvar Aalto’s international career

81 Ilaria Fiore, Federica Stella
Istituto Alvar Aalto: A connection between Italy and Finland through the work of Leonardo Mosso

91 Vladimir Frolov
Alvar Aalto and Alexandr Zhuk: Nordic trend in late Soviet Leningrad architecture and the resistance to the Modernism

102 Matt Grant
The influence of Alvar Aalto on New Zealand architecture: Rod Smith and the architectural firm of Smith Clarke Grant and Associates (1965-1969)

111 Leif Högfelt Hansen
Japanese inspirations in the architecture of Alvar Aalto

120 Kurt Hunker
Aalto for Everyone

129 Dörte Kuhlmann
Alvar Aalto: A Finnish cosmopolitan in post-war Germany

138 Michelle Laboy
Modern childhood landscapes: Aino Aalto’s engagement in the international experiment of the modern nursery school
Sarah Menin
The Aalto gene: The development of mind space in Colin St John Wilson's architectural thinking and his role in disseminating and developing Aalto's architectural thinking

Antony Moulis
Relating the interior and the shell: Spatial dialogues in the work of Alvar Aalto

Daniel Naegle
Colin Rowe and another Aalto

Ulrika Passe
Capturing the Nordic light in Italy?

Lucia Pérez- Moreno
Alvar Aalto in Spain: The reading of Finnish architecture in the Spanish architectural scene during the Sixties

Antony Radford
Light, form and responsive cohesion in the North Jutland Art Museum

Antony Radford, Stephen Schrapel
Dickson and Platten, Romaldo Giurgola and Aalto's Influence in Australia

John Roberts
Aalto and Utzon: Atmospheres beyond Finland

Jairo Rodriguez Andrés
Round-trip: Aalto's impact in post-war Spanish architecture and influence of this foreign culture on Aalto's work

Cecilia Ruiloba
Zagreb Central Hospital: Similarity and proposal

Szymon Ruszczewski

Michele Sbacchi
Aalto's principles of urban space and planning in connection to William Wurster and Lewis Mumford

Maria João Soares, Clara Germana Gonçalves, Susana Santos
Aalto revisited: Manuel Tainha and Álvaro Siza

Maria João Soares, Clara Germana Gonçalves
With, through and in the forest: Aalto, Gehry and Fujimoto

Carlotta Torricelli, Ursula Koren
Following the grace: A Baltic dialogue

Michele Ugolini, Stefania Varvaro
A great 'Cathedral of the Arts' for Shiraz: The ground, light and shadow, the horizon

Kristo Vesikansa
Practicing in Aalto's shadow: CIAM PTAH Helsinki and Le Carré Bleu

Frank Weiner
More cloud than clear: Aalto's influence on two American practices

Sotirios Zaroulas
Paimio as a model
Few modern architects in Germany are as highly respected as Alvar Aalto. Many critics and historians, such as Sigfried Giedion, Göran Schildt or Henry-Russell Hitchcock, to name just a few, identify Aalto as representing a different kind of modernism, one who is sensitive to human and social issues and close to nature. In particular, in post-war Germany he was regarded as one of a few international modernists who could be described as politically neutral, and therefore ideally suited to create a new Germany, helping in healing the deep wounds of the war. This essay will focus on such readings of Aalto that mystify his presence in Germany as a ‘different modernist’, one who was inspired by unspoiled ‘Finnish nature’. The German magazines followed the international trend of setting Aalto’s architecture in opposition to universal Corbusian modernism, which was held responsible for the construction of inhuman ‘machines for living in’ and lifeless, over-scaled and monofunctional housing developments. Ever since they first met, Aalto and Le Corbusier were close friends and they highly respected each other. They shared many interests, such as painting and publication work, both looked for inspiration in nature when designing, and shared an interest in standardization and questions about contemporary society. In comparisons between them, Aalto is usually said to have taken a less radical position, which contributed to his reputation as the more human or sympathetic architect.

Aalto in Wolfsburg
On July 8 1962 the Finnish newspaper Uusi Suomi published an article about a lecture Aalto had then recently given, where he talked, among other things, about his work in Wolfsburg, Germany. The newspaper proudly quoted Aalto’s reflections upon modern life, including how in those days basically everybody was somehow involved in industrial production. This had become particularly obvious in a city like Wolfsburg. Most of its 60,000 inhabitants, both men and women, were working in the Volkswagen car factories. Much of the public income was spent on building projects that were intended to overcome the monotonous life of the factory workers. While the amount of leisure time was increasing, many people had no idea how to spend it. Therefore in Wolfsburg it was first decided, Aalto stated, to build a public library. Soon other functions were added, including auditoriums for music and lectures, as well as a Volkshochschule, an education centre for adults and children. Exhibition spaces, club spaces and seminar rooms were also included to the program. The new Cultural centre was not the only major building planned for the city—a theatre, botanical garden and concert hall were soon to follow. The Uusi Suomi article concluded that Wolfsburg certainly was one of the best organized cities in Europe. It was no coincidence that the city of Wolfsburg decided to commission Aalto to design such an important building—primarily because of his reputation as a social and humanely architect. After the war the city was desperately searching for cultural strategies to overcome the negative reputation of its young history, an industrial town brought into existence by the Nazi regime.
Aalto knew how difficult it was to give the city a particular positive character, and that could not happen over night. It would need time and power to mobilise people and create aesthetic order.

Aalto himself seemed very proud to have received such a task. In a speech he gave in Mexico City in 1963 he recalled that the mayor of Wolfsburg had phoned him, lamenting that his city possessed no character and asked if he could help him to improve the situation. If Aalto agreed, the whole city would be at his disposal. In a point of fact, the design of the Wolfsburg Cultural Centre was decided through an invitational competition rather than a direct commission. Aalto won the competition in 1958, construction started that same year and four years later, on 31th August 1962, the Cultural centre was opened. Aalto's building was situated adjacent to the new town hall designed by Titus Taeschner and corresponded with the threefold arrangement of the main facade of the latter as well as the idea of a curtain wall clad with natural stone. At that time Porschestrasse street, which runs from north to south alongside the building, was still a four-lane main street with heavy traffic. Since then, it has become a pedestrian zone. Aalto's project, with its two-storey building with small shops inside and the rising cubic volumes of the auditorium, established a carefully planned transition to the ten-storey town hall. However, the view towards the distant mountain scenery of the Klieversberg remained unspoiled, allowing the new building to set a contrast against the natural silhouette. Large parking lots to the north and south of the building articulated the character of the city as a car production site.

Aalto was given great freedom when planning the architectural ensemble. A small publication produced for the opening of the building praised the design as a combination of practical-functional and artistic aspects, thereby demonstrating the creative ambition of the city of Wolfsburg. Aalto knew how important it was, in particular for this town, to establish a new humanistic genius loci. In order to escape standard post-war functionalism, Aalto typically used what could be termed 'dialectic oppositions' in the design. However, while acknowledging Aalto's wide range of ideas and forms, in this particular case some critics disliked his re-use of the fan shape that was already an established architectural motif in his works. The Architectural Review pointed out that the origin of this idea could be seen in the Helsinki's House of Culture. The English magazine claimed that the use of the fan shape in Germany was more interesting in Aalto's Apartment building in Bremen.

Aalto and monumentality

Nevertheless, the prominent fan shape of the Wolfsburg Cultural Centre with its marble façades certainly marks this building as an important public centrality in the city. Some of the thinking behind such ideas may be traced back to Giedion and his associates. In 1943 Giedion, José Luis Sert and Fernand Léger had written their famous declaration Nine Points on Monumentality where they claimed the need for monumentality as an expression of the highest human cultural needs, as the evolution of modernism:
The people want the buildings that represent their social and community life to give more than functional fulfillment. They want their aspiration for monumentality, joy, pride, and excitement to be satisfied. The fulfillment of this demand can be accomplished with the new means of expression at hand, though it is no easy task. The following conditions are essential for it: A monument, being the integration of the work of the planner, architect, painter, sculptor, and landscapist, demands close collaboration between all of them.  

They demanded the careful planning of town centres with monumental public buildings, for this would be the only way to save the life of the modern city. Aalto, himself a promoter of monumental architecture since the 1920s, shared these suggestions, trying to give the Culture Centre in Wolfsburg a monumental character. The façade for such a public building had to be in marble, since Aalto considered it as 'the original stone for monumental architectural forms'. It is no surprise that many of his mature public buildings and civic centres were distinguished by marble façades. These included the Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, which was intended to be part of a larger civic waterfront, all clad in marble. In his 1953 essay The Decline of Public Architecture, Aalto seems to follow more or less closely Giedion's thinking when elaborating that traditional European towns were divided into two parts: on the one hand 'housing' and on the other hand 'public spaces', including parks, arcades, monuments and sacred places. Aalto argued that this order had been altered ever since the French revolution, in particular by the Anglo-American tendency to place in downtowns commercial buildings, which do not offer the same quality provided by public buildings.

And yet the status of public buildings in society should be just as important as the role of the vital organs in the human body, if we do not wish our societies to become polluted by traffic, psychologically repulsive and physically stressful.

In the wake of Giedion's theories, Aalto acknowledged the importance of public buildings for a city and approved monumentality for this building type. In a famous speech Aalto gave to the Architect's Association of Vienna in 1955 titled Between Humanism and Materialism, he said that the old question of form and monumentality was an existing reality for the architect and his main task was to 'humanize the machine age'.

About ten years before, when Swiss architect Alfred Roth visited Helsinki in 1953, he was impressed by the architectural works he visited. In particular he appreciated the works of Aalto, predicting a great future for his architecture. He stated that Aalto's name would be mentioned in the same league as Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier; that Aalto was then in an extraordinary productive phase and that in a few years the fruits of this work would bring amazement to the world. He also claimed that what he had seen in the capital of Finland was full of strong creative ideas, permeated by the vital power of architectural design, impressed by musical rhythm, and demonstrating a sense of great sensitive form. 'On this soil,' he argued, 'Aalto's ingenious work was growing and prospering, carrying the warm streaks of true humanness and reflecting a cosmopolitan spirit.' Roth concluded that this unique approach would soon become a seminal path in the architectural development of our time.

The German network
As already pointed out, while building in post-war Germany, Aalto was always regarded as the 'man from the north', a foreigner who was rooted in unspoiled Finland and therefore not connected with the negative impacts of World War II, in particular with any chauvinistic right-wing or Nazi ideology. Finland did not emerge as a 'winner' from the war and it was not strategic nation in industrial terms. It was a country physically dominated by forests and lakes and was still associated with pure and clean images such as a simpler life, honesty and unspoiled nature. Even when Aalto and Le Corbusier were working on simi-
lar ideas and projects, Aalto’s approach was interpreted differently. For example, Aalto’s Hansaviertel housing block in Berlin, built for the same Interbau exhibition as Le Corbusier’s Berlin Unité, was praised as an example of human architecture while Le Corbusier’s building was regarded as highly rational and functional. Similarly, while Ernst Neufert’s standardization concepts seemed lifeless—and arguably connected to Nazi ideology—Aalto’s humanised standardization appeared as politically neutral, with its emphasis on practical everyday life, reflecting a democratic Scandinavian simplicity.

Many theorists have reflected upon the circumstances that induced Aalto to name his beloved self-designed motor launch ‘Nemo propheta in patria’. While some see it as a sign of disappointment towards the reception of his work in his homeland, it may also shed light on his awareness of the importance of international networks. It is recognized that Aalto was exceptionally good at networking internationally. Since the 1920s, he established close friendships with many European leaders of the Modern Movement, including important German architects such as Walter Gropius, Ernst May and Ernst Neufert. Contrary to the canonical interpretations, which claim that he was non-political, Aalto was indeed rather active in the political debate about the character of the future Finnish society. Moreover, alongside Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright, he represented the new type of 20th century cosmopolitan and internationally operating architect.

The young Aalto was well aware of the importance of social networks in the architectural discourse from the outset of his career. After opening his office in Jyväskylä in 1923, he and his wife and collaborator Aino Marsio decided to move to Turku for strategic reasons in 1927. They not only had several projects in the city but also recognized that Turku was better connected to Sweden and Europe, facilitating their international journeys and visits to their Swedish colleagues, such as Uno Åhrén and Sven Markelius. In 1933, the Aaltos decided to move their office again to Helsinki.

It was through Markelius, who was a personal friend of Walter Gropius, that Alvar Aalto received an invitation to join the second CIAM conference in 1929 in Frankfurt. This marked the beginning of further networking activities with many CIAM members. The most important figure was, of course, Le Corbusier. Aalto is reported to have admired Le Corbusier more than any other modern architect. As Alan Colquhoun pointed out:

This may perhaps be partially explained by his recognition of powers of intellectual formulation which he himself lacked. But it may also owe to certain preoccupations which they had in common. These preoccupations included an admiration of both the architecture of peasant societies, particularly around the Mediterranean (which dates back to their early involvements in National Romantic movements), and the architecture of Neoclassicism, which they saw as providing a core of traditional doctrine outside the confines of modernist doctrine.  

At this important meeting Aalto also befriended Walter Gropius, László Moholy-Nagy and, of course, Sigfried Giedion, who from then onwards was an important advocate of the international network of modernist architects. It was in Frankfurt that Aalto also first met Ernst May, at that time a city councillor who, together with Giedion, opened the second CIAM Congress. Aalto met Werner Hehebrand too, who had been working with May. Both
men later became very important for Aalto, and their friendships soon became stronger. In 1930, on their second trip to Germany, the Aaltos stayed with the Cropius family in Berlin and met László Moholy-Nagy. They met again with Walter and Ise Cropius in Berlin and Stockholm in 1931 and were visited in Finland by Moholy-Nagy accompanied by Ellen Frank.

However, Aalto's connection to Germany was due not only to friendships with those associated with the Bauhaus. There was an 'older' connection, and this can be seen in Henry van de Velde's architecture. The leaders of early 20th century rationalism in Finland, Sigurd Frosterus and Gustaf Strengell, had introduced the young Alvar Aalto to the work of the Belgian-born architect who had settled in Weimar. Frosterus had worked for four months van de Velde in Weimar in 1903 while Strengell, also an important influential Finnish critic, promoted and discussed his works. Frosterus was among the first to clearly formulate the idea of 'the modern' which was certainly influenced by van de Velde. In 1904 Frosterus and Strengell published a pamphlet criticizing National Romanticism and instead demanding that architecture was supposed to become more international, more technological and more scientific. Van de Velde spent his last years in Switzerland where he and Aalto finally met and even became friends. In many ways, Aalto regarded van de Velde as his predecessor, for instance in his notion of 'organic architecture' (as an organic union of function, construction, materials and form) and also in the way the Belgian master dealt with shaped wood. In 1957 Aalto wrote an obituary on van de Velde for the journal Arkitehtti, saying that Finland had first learned about van de Velde from Frosterus and Strengell and that van de Velde's works would continue to live on as an organic impulse. According to Aalto, 'the indirect significance of van de Velde and his time cannot be measured.'

It is less known that Otto Vollkers, a member of the German Werkbund and editor of the magazine Stein Holz Eisen, had discovered Aalto in the late 1920s when he saw a report about the Tapani-talo apartment building in Turku published in Arkitehtti. In 1929, Vollkers was the first to present Aalto's project as a model for functional modernist housing in Germany under the title Neues Bauen in Finnland. Two years later, Vollkers published the just finished Turun Sanomat building in his magazine. He had intended to publish a book on Aalto's work, but he was unable to finalize the projects due to the political circumstances.

As it is well known, the most important figure for the growth of Aalto's reputation in Germany—and around the world—was Sigfried Giedion. As partner of the Zurich-based furniture store Wohnbedarf, he was able to promote the sale of Aalto's Artek furniture in Switzerland. As secretary of CIAM, he was one of the leading theorists of the contemporary architectural discourse. When Giedion published his article on the Turun Sanomat building in the German architecture magazine Bauwelt 1931, Aalto immediately received major recognition in the German-speaking world. At this point, the political situation in Germany had already become quiet difficult and by way of his German friends Aalto was well informed about what was going on.

**Aalto and Ernst Neufert**

There has been some discussion, including unjustified accusations, about the role of Aalto during World War II and his contacts with people associated with the Nazi regime. Aalto certainly was not in favour of Nazi politics, despite the fact that he stayed good friends with Ernst Neufert during and after the war, knowing that his German colleague had a privileged position under the Nazi regime. Neufert had been appointed by Speer as expert for standardization (Reichsbeauftragter für Baunormung). The fact that Adolf Hitler included Ernst Neufert in 1944 in the so-called 'Gottbegnadetenliste', which listed the 1041 most important artists of the Nazi regime, prevented him from being sent to the war frontier. While many of his international architect friends had to emigrate in order to escape the Nazi regime, some were able to remain in Germany and Aalto was wise enough to take a more or less neutral position and maintain his extensive networks. Neufert's own career had also suffered at the beginning of the Nazi regime. In 1926, after having worked as a project architect for Walter Cropius, he was appointed full professor and head of the building department.
at the Staatlichen Bauhochschule in Weimar. However, in 1930 he lost this position, as did Otto Bartning and many others. Consequently, as a freelance architect looking for work, in 1933 he started a long trip through Scandinavia, ostensibly for the purpose of writing about contemporary architecture in North Europe for the magazines Bauwelt and Monatshefte für Baukunst und Städtebau. Neufert visited Finland and he was very keen to meet Aalto. At this point, he was still optimistic that he could publish his essays on Nordic modern architecture in Germany, despite the fact that it had already become very clear that the Nazi party only favoured heroic classicism or variations of Heimatstil connected to their ideologically infused blood-and-soil theories. On 30th September 1933, Neufert briefly met Aalto in Helsinki, but for unknown reasons the following day he seemed to be forced to travel back to Germany. Further letters were exchanged between Neufert and Aalto: they were friendly in tone and addressed issues such as the promotion of Aalto's projects in Germany. They also shared another interest, having worked on various options to rationalize and standardize architecture and furniture. However, as opposed to Neufert and Le Corbusier, Aalto always preferred a rather flexible standardization rather than a rigid system.

A sketch by Aino Marsio-Aalto, drawn for the exhibition of the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design in autumn 1930, shows a woman doing housework. The pencil drawing depicts her sat at a kitchen counter, with carefully selected measurements of the furniture so that she can easily reach all the necessary parts. It looks very much like the typical Neufert sketches of the famous architect's data Bauentwurfslehre, which he published in 1936. It is possible that Neufert was influenced by the Aaltos' drawings, such as this one. In any case, he was very keen to learn about the various approaches of their concepts for standardization. In 1938 Neufert was appointed by Albert Speer to rationalize apartment building construction in Berlin. The more responsibility Speer received within the Nazi regime, the more important Neufert became. However, this did not affect his friendship with Alvar Aalto. This sheds a light on the very pragmatic if not opportunistic position that Aalto kept during this time. Aalto was rather well informed about what was truly going on, and was not blind towards the totalitarian brutal rule of the Nazis. Schildt explained, for instance, how Aalto took care of the young Jewish Danish architect Nils Koppel, who had once worked for him. Koppel was supposed to be sent to a concentration camp but was released upon request by Speer (supposedly initiated by Aalto). Koppel escaped to Sweden and was able to work again for Aalto later on. Despite his close connections to Neufert, and therefore to one of the leading architects of Nazi Germany, Aalto was never accused of supporting the wrong regime. When the political situation improved after the war and some of the emigrants were able to return to Germany, Aalto was happy to return to some old friendships.

**Aalto, or the possibility of a new Germany**

During the years of reconstruction in Germany, Aalto received so many commissions and support that he could have easily worked there for the rest of his life, as Schildt pointed out. In times of difficult politics, there is often a tendency to turn towards nature—as an innocent, yet neither culturally nor politically inflated terrain—and so Aalto, with his reputation as a nature-orientated architect from a 'neutral' northern country, was seen as the best choice as a leading architect in post-war Germany. On 4th June 1969, he was appointed a member of the famous German Order Pour Le Merité for science and arts. By that time, Aalto had received quiet several exceptional international awards, including the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture from the Royal Institute of British Architects (1957) and the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects (1963). Also, he was nominated Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1957 and he was a member of the Academy of Finland from 1955, becoming its president from 1963 to 1968.

One has to keep in mind that post-war Germany had the ambition to create a new image for itself. Of course, destroyed cities needed to be rebuilt and providing housing for the countless people who had lost their home was a primary task. However, supported by the Marshall Plan, it was important for the divided country to ensure its new position as a
country of the western world, as opposed to East Germany. Hence, the goal was to demonstrate western modernist ideals through architecture.

The IBA in ‘West Berlin’ (1958) was a significant opportunity to make use of contemporary architecture to promote certain political ideas. On the one hand, it was crucial to distance the new era from Nazi Germany with its oversized megalomaniac public structures and, on the other hand, it was important to establish an anti-pole to East Berlin and its ties to the Soviet Union. Therefore the IBA liked to present itself as both a humanist and international experiment, by the use of the modernist functional architectural language and clinging to the International Style. To create an international atmosphere, the IBA Berlin invited 53 architects from 13 countries, including Alvar Aalto, Oscar Niemeyer (Brasil), Pierre Vago (France), Walter Gropius (USA), Arne Jacobsen (Denmark), Fritz Jaenecke and Sten Samuelson (Sweden), and among the Germans Max Taut, Hans Scharoun, Wassili Luckhardt, Hubert Hoffmann, Egon Eiermann and Willy Kreuer. The layout for the exhibition site was created by Otto Bartning in 1954.

Aalto’s 8-storey Residential building at Interbau, in the so-called Hansaviertel in Berlin (1954-57), was his first realized project in Germany. It was soon followed by a competition entry for Marl Town Hall in 1957, but remained on paper. One year later, Aalto received the commission for another residential building in a new neighbourhood, Neue Vahr, in Bremen (1958-62). Unusual among his works, this residential building was a 22-storey high-rise apartment block. Aalto was generally known for criticising high-rise buildings—he regarded them as a ‘dangerous way’ of building. In his essay Debate between an Architect and a Professor, written towards the end of his life, Aalto talks about an unknown professor who wakes up at night after having a nightmare and cries: ‘Who is going to save me from Vällingby?’

This modern suburb of Stockholm represented to Aalto the dark side of modernity, for its lack of scale, anonymity and dull repetition. However, he did not always stick to this rule: for example, in 1934 he recommended a development of 14-storey high apartment blocks set in a virgin terrain in the Munkkiniemi district of Helsinki. Later on, he concluded that such housing situations were not human.

The residential buildings in Berlin and Bremen were the only ones Aalto built in Germany. After receiving the commission for the Wolfsburg Cultural centre (1958-62) he focused on public and sacral buildings. The positive results obtained in Wolfsburg led him to receive further commissions in the vicinity—in 1960 the Wolfsburg Church, parish centre and vicarage, and a little bit later the nearby Detmerode Church and parish centre (1963-68). The most important project seemed to be his winning entry for the Essen opera and music theatre in 1959. Aalto had great ideas for its general shape—a huge organically shaped volume clad in white natural stone. Inside it was all indigo blue, creating a very elegant atmosphere. He received positive criticism for his unusual approach, but unfortunately, due to political circumstances and lack of money, the construction of the theatre was delayed several times. Eventually, it was finished long after Alvar Aalto’s death in 1968, under the supervision of Elissa Aalto. The concert hall of the Finlandia Hall reflects in a similar manner some of the important design ideas originated from Essen. Despite Aalto’s popularity in Germany, not all of his competition entries were successful: his design for the Leverkusen Cultural centre (1960), his competition entry for the British Petroleum offices, Hamburg (1964), the plan

Left: Alvar Aalto, Parish center, Detmerode, 1963-68.
for Castrop-Rauxel town centre (1965), the competition entry for Wolfsburg theatre (won by Scharoun 1966) and the plan for Kranichstein centre, Darmstadt (together with Ernst May in 1969) were never realized.

The political situation in post-war West Germany was in many regards very uneasy, as the Cold War was going on and the cruelties of the Nazi regime and the wounds of the war were still hurting. The ambition to demonstrate to the world a different regenerated Germany became very strong in the late 1950s and 1960s. While it was clear that the Soviet Union was certainly not a model for art and architecture, it seemed equally problematic to emulate the United States. Hence, it seemed logical to turn towards those European countries that were least affected by World War II or Nazi (and other totalitarian) politics. Democratic protestant Sweden, with its neutral position during the war, seemed the best choice and Finland was somewhat placed in the same category, although it had been involved in the war. Giedion helped to argue within the theoretical architectural discourse why Finland was even more than Sweden a country ‘in the middle’ (Japan being a country of the East and the United States being a country of the West, while Europe could be seen in the middle), and thus able to reconcile opposites into a Hegelian synthesis. Giedion claimed that Finland had preserved its traditions and ancient cultural practices, an argument that was supported by the exotic language that separated it from the Indo-European languages of northern Europe. According to this interpretation, Finland was regarded as a typical Scandinavian country with a somewhat exotic touch to it. And Aalto, being a Finnish architect, seemed the best choice to bring his cultural background and way of life to Germany in order to create a new society with a new architecture. Like Giedion, also Alfred Roth praised Finnish architecture in this regard:

> Generally speaking, we can call the Finnish architecture situation as particularly lucky. Imaginativeness, a sense for the important things, discipline, generosity, inner freedom, compelling simplicity and animation are the most important attributes. Additionally, there is the social orientation which finds expression in public social and cultural facilities that are included in every dwelling, in every school.²⁹

Since his CIAM experiences, Aalto’s work had always been close to modernism yet not quite as radical, rational, standardized or pure as many of his modernist colleagues were doing. In Germany he was interpreted as following the organic tradition as it had been proposed by several German expressionist architects, but it was clear, that Aalto’s approach was somewhat differently from Hugo Häring, Erik Mendelsohn or even Hans Scharoun. Whereas the latter were associated with organic forms, Aalto was rather associated with an organic way of thinking about architecture, with a means of addressing social and human issues.³⁰ In post-war West Germany, modernism had long reached its peak and, as Giedion explained, Aalto came at the right time. He did not have to prove anything and was in a position to challenge some of the assets of international modernism—it was now possible to ‘dare the leap from the rational-functional to the irrational organic’.³¹ Reyner Banham even concluded that Aalto with his organic architecture did not need to save the International Style any more, but was capable of ending it.³² In post-war Germany, Aalto was acknowledged as an outstanding personality with diplomatic and philosophical skills. He represented the new generation of European architects—indisputable, intellectual, cosmopolitans—and was seen as someone who took responsibility for his work.

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17. Susanne Müller, Aalto und Wolfsburg, cit.: 33.

18. Aino and Alvar Aalto, together with visual arts promoter Maire Gullichsen and art historian Nils-Gustav Hahl, had founded the Artek company in 1935.


20. Letter from Neufert to Aalto, Sept. 22, 1933, A.A.S.


23. Letter from Neufert to Aalto, June 1944, A.A.S.


The rich body of papers produced for the 2nd Alvar Aalto Researchers Network Seminar ‘Aalto beyond Finland - Architecture and Design’ by scholars from different countries is an extraordinary attempt to illustrate the international environment in which Aalto worked from the beginning of his career and how his genius for making contacts made him a citizen of the world. At the same time, the research presented here is revealing of the internationalisation of Aalto and his work, shedding light on the cultural exchange occurring between Finland and the world in 20th and 21st centuries.

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