

# DOM magazine

The Art of Books and Buildings

# 12

October 2023



## A New Dimension

From new technologies like Reinforced 3D Concrete Printing (R3DCP) to expanding megacities through to buildings that help preserve biodiversity: in this issue of our magazine, we take a multifaceted look at the future of architecture and urbanism. Travel with us to the canals of Amsterdam, to Graz in Austria, to Dhaka, and to the Yangtze River, among others.

*See pages 4, 22, and 44*



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Layout: Masako Tomokiyo  
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Questions and comments:  
info@dom-publishers.com

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**DOM publishers**  
Caroline-von-Humboldt-Weg 20  
10117 Berlin, Germany  
T +49. 30. 20 69 69 30  
info@dom-publishers.com

**Publisher**  
Prof. h. c. Dr. Philipp Meuser

**Publishing Director**  
Björn Rosen

**Press**  
Gisela Graf  
gisela.graf communications  
Schillerstrasse 20  
79102 Freiburg, Germany  
T +49. 761. 791 99 09  
F +49. 761. 791 99 08  
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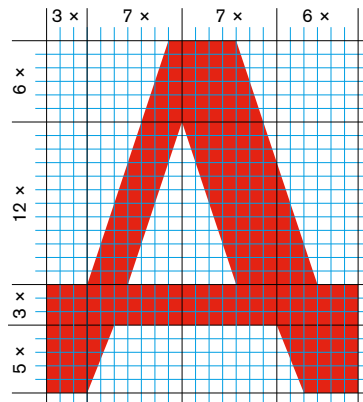
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### About DOM publishers

Our publishing house was founded in 2005. Since then, our editors, graphic designers, and architects have been working together at the intersection of theory and practice under a single roof in Berlin. We release up to 40 new titles each year, seeking to provide both budding and well-versed architects with a solid foundation for their daily work and to make a critical contribution to the contemporary discourse on architecture.

### 'Tell us about your logo!'

We designed our logo based on the Cyrillic letter д ('D'), in part to visually represent our early affinity for Eurasia. Semantically, it symbolises the published word; formally, it represents architecture, with its constructive, house-like form.

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*Germany/Austria/Switzerland*  
DOM publishers  
Contact: Sabine Hofmann  
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T +49. 9552. 93 10 12  
F +49. 9552. 93 10 11  
sabine.hofmann@dom-publishers.com

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*Latin America*  
Nicolas Friedmann  
Representaciones Editoriales  
Rbla. Badal 64, Ent. 1  
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Dear readers,

The American architect and visionary Buckminster Fuller, famous for his futuristic geodesic dome at Expo 67 in Montréal, once said: 'You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.' In this spirit, **we would like to break new ground with you** in this issue of our magazine.

One technology that many say will change architecture forever is 3D printing. From bridges to low-carbon housing, starting on page 4, we show you **five breathtaking projects already realised.**

Urbanisation continues to be a global trend. An extreme case is the capital of Bangladesh. Greater Dhaka, with its more than 22 million inhabitants, is already one of the most densely populated urban areas in the world. Starting on page 22, Mohammad Foyez Ullah, one of Bangladesh's leading architects, explains what a **more liveable future for the megacity** could look like.

By the way, Dhaka is also a venue of the 6th Biennale on Architectural and Urban Restoration (see page 18). We are a proud partner of the event.

Speaking of a more liveable future. Architecture can play its part in **preserving biodiversity and bringing nature closer to children and adults alike.** See for yourself on pages 44/45: the Yangtze River Estuary is sure to impress!

Even with all our enthusiasm for innovation, we would, of course, above all like to inspire you for an old cultural asset that we believe certainly has a future: books.

Yours,

Björn Rosen  
Publishing Director



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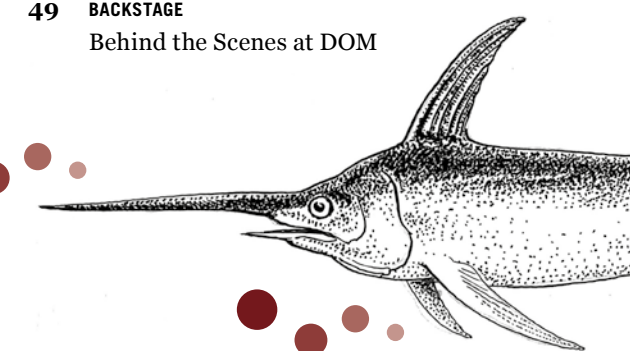
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# A New Dimension in Construction

Many say 3D printing will revolutionise architecture. Thanks to new technologies, plastic, concrete, or metal can be extruded in a liquid state and then hardened into its final form. We use the following pages to present five impressive case studies from our brand-new handbook on the topic.

**3D Printing and Material Extrusion in Architecture**  
 Construction and Design Manual  
 Kostas Grigoriadis / Guan Lee  
 225 x 280 mm, 384 pp.,  
 600 images, Hardcover  
 ISBN 978-3-86922-750-4  
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We are still in the process of deciding the final cover. Which one is your favourite? Email us at [aktion@dom-publishers.com](mailto:aktion@dom-publishers.com). We will raffle a small gift among all the participants.

**PLASTIC**  
 The 'Beyond the Geometry Pavilion' (design: Archi-Union Architects, 2021) serves as a gate into the Happy Valley amusement park in Nanjing, China. Its hyperbolic geometries extend 52 metres in length and 26 metres in width. It is composed of a steel skeleton frame clad with more than 4,000 contoured 3D printed plastic panels. These panels were prefabricated remotely in a factory, with printing paths and robot control files managed in real time by one of the design team members located in Malaysia during the pandemic. Each panel is printed in one of six different shades of pink arranged in a random pattern.





© Tom Mundy, DBT, ETH Zürich

**SANDSTONE AND PLASTIC**  
 The 'Smart Slab' (Digital Building Technologies at ETH Zürich, 2018) is a materially efficient, free-form building element prefabricated using 3D-printed formworks for concrete. It is the main load-bearing horizontal element of a residential unit for four occupants on the Empa and Eawag Campus in Dübendorf, Switzerland. For fabrication, the 78-square-metre pre-stressed concrete slab was split into eleven 7.4-metre-long segments. Due to the efficient distribution of material in slender ribs, the slab only weighs 15 tonnes. A conventional solid concrete slab for the same scenario would weigh roughly 45 tonnes.





© Adriaan de Groot | MX3D



### METAL

The MX3D Bridge (design: Joris Laarman Lab, 2021) is a raw steel structure that spans the Oudezijds Achterburgwal canal in Amsterdam's city centre. A critical part of the project was the extensive testing needed to prove the structural capacity of the 4,500-kilogram structure. The overall mass of the bridge is 7.8 tonnes, of which approximately 4.6 tonnes were printed. The bridge was printed in four main pieces, plus the four corner swirls, which were then manually welded together. Printing was carried out using a 6-axis ABB industrial robot fitted with a MIG welding machine and controlled using MX3D's software.





### CERAMIC

This façade of a boutique on Amsterdam's chic P.C. Hooftstraat is composed of 3D printed ceramic tiles, hence the name: 'Ceramic House' (architect: Studio RAP, 2023). By integrating advanced methods of ceramic 3D printing, algorithmic design, and artisanal glazing, Studio RAP generated ornamental ceramics fit for the twenty-first century. The façade of the higher floors is composed of 3D printed bricks glazed in three different shades of red. This algorithmically-derived ornamental façade is inspired by garment knitting crafts, and integrating pattern, relief, and colouration results in an exciting design language.





**EARTH**

TECLA (Technology and Clay) is a circular, low-carbon housing model that brings together research on vernacular construction, the study of bioclimatic principles, and the use of natural and local materials (design: Mario Cucinella Architects, 2021). The new technology applied here uses two synchronised printer arms simultaneously, with their movements optimised by the company's software. The resulting form consists of two dome-shaped, open-topped volumes. The ribs on the outer surface of the envelope provide self-shading for cooling. They are also hollow to allow air through to naturally ventilate the structure.





These books allow you to have it both ways: Journey into a new world from the comfort of your own home or carry along with you on trips all around the world. The concise texts are not only descriptions, but also commentaries.

# Sarajevo: Complex and Fascinating

Discover the architectural wonders of Sarajevo, a city that bears the vivid scars of its complex history. From hosting the 1984 Winter Olympics to enduring a brutal war in the 1990s, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina has woven its tumultuous past into its urban fabric. Today, this modern metropolis harmoniously combines the remnants of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian influence along with the striking architecture of the Yugoslav socialist era. This captivating architectural guide explores 150 landmarks spanning the last century, carefully divided into four enlightening chapters. Immerse yourself in the city's rich cultural heritage as the authors effortlessly navigate and bring to life the diverse architectural tapestry of Sarajevo. With detailed maps provided, you'll have no trouble pinpointing each building's exact location, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the city's architectural treasures.

Bivouac 'Zoran Šimić', Mt. Visočica, Filter, 2019



## The 100-Year Capital in 100 Buildings



**Tirana**  
Architectural Guide  
*Eled Fagu*  
With an introduction  
by Alfred Diebold  
134 x 245 mm, 208 pp.,  
450 imgs., softcover  
ISBN 978-3-86922-300-1  
**€38/\$49.95**



The architecture of Albania's capital is on show for the first time in this guide as a collection of 100 buildings that represent the construction of the city in the modern period, soon after the declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. Today, Tirana is a fusion of Ottoman architecture, the bourgeois architecture of the early twentieth century, fascist totalitarianism, and socialist realism within a post-socialist and contemporary architectural framework that is gaining more and more priority as a result of a renovation policy that seeks to promote development and Western integration through the use of architectural tools.

## 100 Iconic Buildings since 1925



**Kyiv**  
Architectural Guide  
*Semen Shyrochyn*  
134 x 245 mm, 304 pp.,  
620 imgs., softcover  
ISBN 978-3-86922-854-9  
**€38/\$49.95**

This guide is part of the *Histories of Ukrainian Architecture* programme initiated by DOM publishers in response to Russia's attack on Ukraine's sovereignty on 24 February 2022 (see also p. 41).



The *Kyiv Architectural Guide* presents more than one hundred notable buildings from one hundred years of the city's history, compiled by Ukrainian architectural historian Semen Shyrochyn. This book looks at typical residential complexes from the period of avant-garde architecture, imposing palaces from the Stalin era, iconic designs belonging to Soviet Modernism, and the most significant construction projects built since Ukraine gained its independence in 1991. In over 300 pages, this architectural guide proves that Kyiv is much more than the capital of Ukraine, but an inseparable part of the European community of nations.



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Our authors explore architecture all across the globe. Here, one or two of them will present a place close to their hearts.

298,000 residents  
63,000 university students  
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15 bridges over the Mur

## Sophia Walk and Anselm Wagner are not originally from Austria's second largest city – and can therefore describe its peculiarities particularly well, from the 'Friendly Alien' to *Pfiff*.

**Graz** is the second largest city in Austria, but it is a little hidden south of the main ridge of the Alps. If you're not flying in (benefitting from the advantages of the compact airport with its short distances), getting here does involve a certain amount of time – in keeping with the beautiful dictum, 'Austria would be a great country if you could iron it'. Arriving by train, on the other hand, can be an experience all of its own. The *Guardian* recently included the Zurich-Graz route in its 'Rail Route of the Month' series, praising it as an 'Alpine epic', an 'exhilarating, nine-hour journey' that 'trundles through the Swiss and Austrian Alps and soars to more than 1,000 metres above sea level'. We both came to Graz a few years ago for our jobs at the university – Sophia from Germany, Anselm from the west of Austria – and have

kept an outsider perspective on the peculiarities of this city, which many praise for its high quality of life. We feel like we are almost in Southern / South-Eastern Europe here. Mehlplatz in the historic centre, with its restaurants and bars, has a very Italian atmosphere, and generally speaking, rules apply less in this city than in, say, Salzburg or Frankfurt (this includes building regulations). It took us some time to get used to that. However, people are also more open, and you make contacts quickly.

**Park life.** Graz is divided demographically like few other cities. The prosperous bourgeoisie (often from Vienna) reside to the east of the Mur River, while the working class and migrants (e.g. from the Balkans) live on the westside. The medieval-baroque old town and the city park, laid out in the second half of the nineteenth century on a former Renaissance fortress, feel like a midpoint. In the park, all social classes meet to relax, take their kids to the playground, do yoga in summer, or ice skate in winter. After some people-watching, we recommend visiting relaxed Salættl (Erzherzog-Johann-Allee 3), a former flower pavilion. This is the only café / gastropub where you'll be served the fabulous 'Austrian Cosmo' – a cocktail made of vodka and redcurrant juice. Afterwards, head for Kombüse ('galley') directly opposite. Their powdered-dough fries are no culinary revelation, but extremely popular for satisfying cravings after a few too many beers (or Austrian Cosmos, for that matter).

The café/gastropub Salættl is housed in a former flower pavilion that originally dates back to 1888.



Stadtpark (city park), facing south with the former Burgbastei in the background



Most certainly not a white cube: the Kunsthaus, built in 2003, contributed to the city's reputation as a stronghold of architecture.

**Leisure.** The Kunsthaus (Lendkai 1) – called the 'Friendly Alien' by its creators Peter Cook and Colin Fournier – was built as part of the European Capital of Culture celebrations in 2003. This museum of contemporary art with its façade of iridescent blue acrylic panels not only has an eccentric exterior, but also a rather difficult interior most suitable for video art, which needs dark spaces. When spaces and exhibitions come together congenially, something remarkable always emerges, most recently in 'Connected. Peter Kogler with ...' in 2019 or 'El Lissitzky – Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. Utopia and Reality' in 2014. Any visit to Graz must also include a stop at Frankowitsch delicatessen



**Anselm Wagner**, born 1965 in Salzburg, studied art history, philosophy, and classical archaeology. He is a gallery director, art critic, and curator, with guest professorships in Vienna, Graz, and Minneapolis. Since 2010, Wagner has been professor of architectural theory and head of the Institute of Architectural Theory, Art History and Cultural Studies at Graz University of Technology.

**Sophia Walk**, born 1984 in Fulda, Germany, studied architecture in Wiesbaden. From 2015–2021 she was assistant professor in the Institute of Architectural Theory, Art History and Cultural Studies at Graz University of Technology. Walk was a member of Graz's Old Town Commission of Experts in 2021–2022. She has been an academic associate at Leibniz University of Hanover since 2023.

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Architectural Guide  
*Anselm Wagner and Sophia Walk (ed.)*  
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(Stempfergasse 2), a 10-minute walk through the old town from the Kunsthaus. Have a sandwich and treat yourself to a local drink, either a *Pfiff* (literally: 'whistle', that's what Austrians call a very small beer), a glass of Sauvignon Blanc (Styria, whose capital is Graz, produces excellent wines from this grape variety), or a refreshing soda lemon. **The Great Escape.** One sixth of the population are students, and you can sense it. There is always something going on in Graz. If you want to escape the hustle and bustle, we recommend a walk in Rosenhain ('Rose Grove'). Graz is located in a depression and surrounded by hills, with Rosenhain in the western part of town being one of them. In the baroque period, the neighbourhood was a retreat for the nobility, who built their little castles there. The city bought the land at the beginning of the twentieth century and villas were built. And you guessed it: this is one of the most beautiful and quietest places in Graz. Above all, you have a magnificent view of the city. A walk along the Panoramagasse when the cherry and apple trees blossom in spring is especially charming. If you want a longer excursion, travel about 50 kilometres south of Graz to the Slovenian border and just beyond it to Maribor – the second largest city in that country.



# Maritime Silkroad

From South Asia to Italy: This trade route, now more important than ever, has a long history. It's also the focus of the 6th Biennale on Architectural and Urban Restoration. DOM is a proud partner of the event and we are happy to present our books on the countries along this road.

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**Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh,** is the terminus of the Maritime Silkroad and the venue for this year's Biennale on Architectural and Urban Restoration. The image below shows the silhouette of the city with its many architectural influences.



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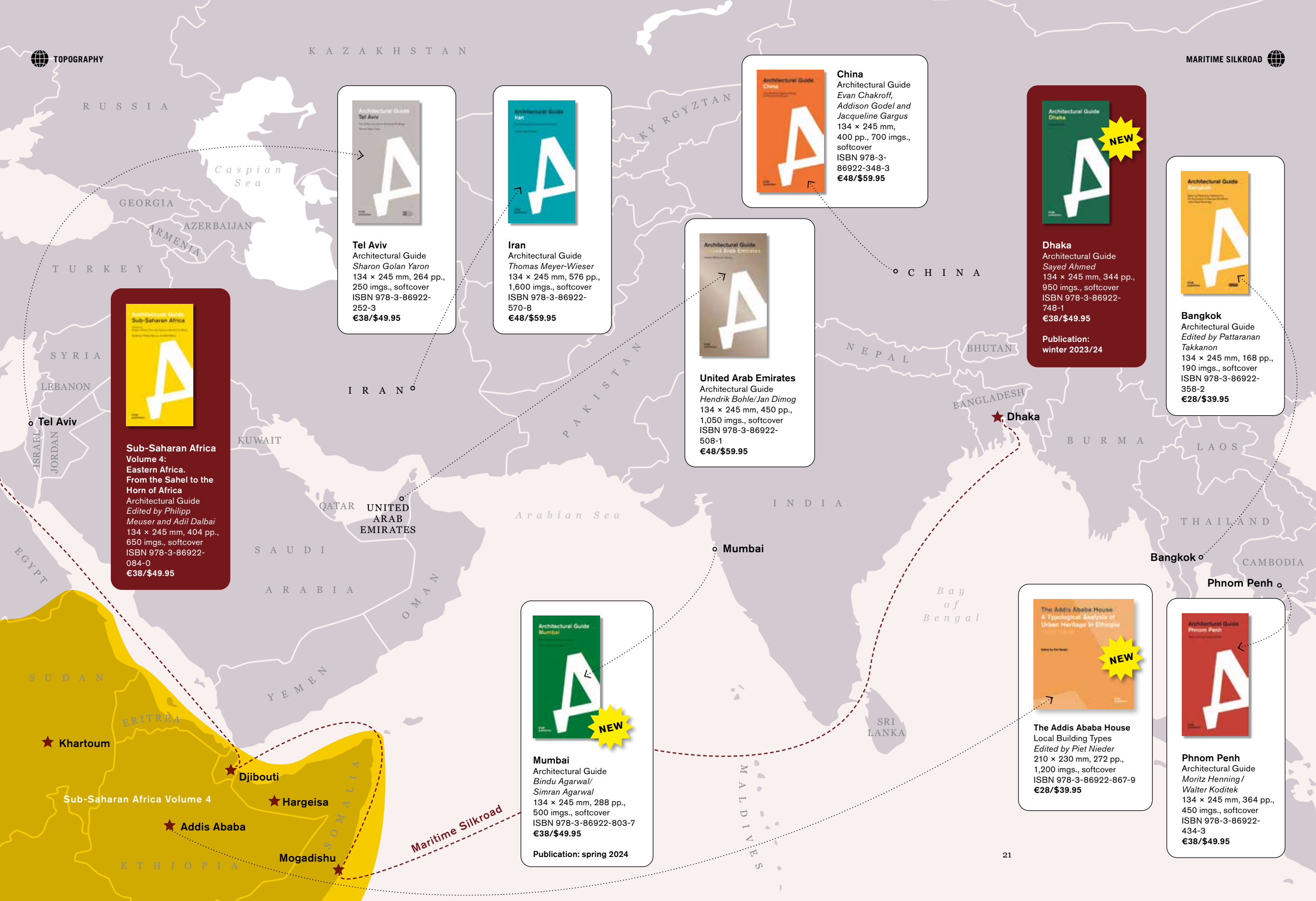
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# “We Should Not Identify as Social Activists”

Mohammad Foyez Ullah is one of the most important architects in Bangladesh. Our book on the capital, Dhaka, features some of his innovative buildings. In this interview, he talks about the challenges the megacity faces and his professional philosophy.

Interview: Björn Rosen

**Mohammad Foyez Ullah**, born 1967, has designed shopping malls, hotels, sports complexes, and a number of residential buildings in his hometown of Dhaka. He is particularly known for his ‘Green Buildings’. Foyez received his master’s degree in Architecture from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), where he then started his career as an educator. In 1994, he co-founded Vistaara Architects and in 2008 Volumezero Limited, where he is the principal architect.

© F.M.F.A. Shawon

– **Mr Foyez, despite being one of the biggest cities in the world, the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka isn’t well known abroad. You were born there, studied there, were a university lecturer, and have been working as an architect in the city since 1994. How would you describe it to someone who has never been there?**

Answering as an architect, I could first point out that there is a lot to discover here. The city holds masterpieces by Louis I. Kahn, and it’s a playground for modern architecture, while time seems to stand still in some parts of town. There is development by architects and a lot of development that is more spontaneous. All these are pockets of a multi-nucleus city. But for me, the beauty of Dhaka has less to do with its buildings. It lies in its resilience to the huge challenges it faces: the scarcity of land, the lack of infrastructure, the migration pressure because of the unprecedented economic growth ... Every year, 400,000 people flock to the city, and it embraces every one of them. There is work, there is something to do here. There is a dream about this city.

– **With its more than 22 million inhabitants in the metropolitan area, Dhaka is considered the ninth largest and seventh most densely populated city in the world.**

And by 2030 it will be the fourth most densely populated city. It’s a megacity! Water plays a central role. The city is on the lower reaches of the Ganges Delta. The mighty Buriganga River, along which Dhaka developed, once fed a network of countless canals and ponds connected to one another. They were a very important piece of infrastructure – a source of communication. Unfortunately, we allowed them to be depleted by unscrupulous businessmen and real estate developers. We are consuming all our wetlands and farmlands that were meant for water percolation. One major problem is that we lack proper physical planning. That being said, I think we should stop looking up to Western solutions. The answer is within us.

– **What kind of solutions do you have in mind?**

There are policies aimed at reducing density, but you cannot do this. Instead, you have to play with it – find new creative ways to deal with density. As architects, we have implemented this idea in some of our housing projects. Instead of creating new small spaces, it’s about



DHAKA

Aerial view of Old Dhaka (2023)

consolidating existing ones and making them accessible to the whole community. In this context, the city is already trying to create incentives for developers to go for block development. We are doing the same with our clients. Block development is sustainable, since it fosters interactions and social support between communities and within the neighbourhood.

– **What’s your favourite place in Dhaka?**

The old part of town epitomises Dhaka’s true vibe. I studied at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, whose campus is located between Old and New Dhaka. As students we often went to the old city to find inspiration. Our professors also sent us there to explore. I call Old Dhaka a living history museum. With all its surviving Bengal-style buildings – some of them 400 years old – and colonial architecture, it is still a very vibrant place. If you walk down its lanes and





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*There are policies aimed at reducing density, but you cannot do this. Instead, you have to play with density – find new creative ways.*

MOHAMMAD FOYEZ ULLAH

Sahjalal Islami Bank, Gulshan Avenue, 2016

streets, you'll be amazed to observe a traditional work-life culture and a sustainable mode of living in a community. People work on the first floor (you'll see iron or goldsmiths there, for example) and live on the floors above. Often living quarters are also rented. There is high urban density. Every inch is economically productive, but people are also very socially connected, with 20 or so families forming a community. There's also a certain social harmony, including between the different religious groups such as Sunnis, Shiites, and Hindus. That's a heritage we can build on. We cannot abandon Old Dhaka and put up skyscrapers. We have to reinvigorate and reinvent this way of living together.

**– Bangladesh as an independent nation only came into being in 1971 after breaking away from Pakistan. What role does architecture play for the identity of such a young country?**

We must search our roots in the wider boundaries of Bengal culture. There was long, continuous historical development from Buddhism to Islam, which ended abruptly when the Greco-Roman style, classicism, etc., arrived through British colonial rule. But that's behind us. From the 1950s onwards and finally since independence, we have been on our way to having our own modernist architecture. The pre-eminent figure in this was Muzharul Islam. We are equally influenced by Louis I. Kahn's Capitol Complex. The modernist school has been expressive here with a very strong response to our tropical climate. This is very unique. It distinguishes us from our neighbours.



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Above: EHL Moriyum Residence, Baridhara Diplomatic Zone, 2018



© F.M. Faruque Abdullah Shawon, H.M. Fozia Rabby Apurbo

Right: Simpletree Anarkali, Gulshan Avenue, 2015

**– Did you become an architect to follow in the footsteps of giants like Islam and Kahn?**

My career aspirations probably go back to my childhood. I was lucky enough to attend a public school in Chittagong, a port city with a unique topography of sea and mountains. The planning of the 150-hectare campus, and, of course, the curriculum, had a big influence on me. And I've always liked drawing. My older brothers followed the same path, so I'm sure that also played a role. By the way, my daughter got her master's degree in architecture from the AA School of Architecture in London.

**– Do you believe that architecture can change society, or even improve it?**

After three decades of practice, I can say: I have seen over and over again how people are influenced by interventions in the built environment. However, architects should not identify themselves as social or political activists. We make a huge impact by being sensitive to our environment and responsive to society, culture, and tradition. People appreciate that, and they can use our works as a reference. The job of an architect is to create examples. I am in favour of doing good work in this sense and not getting lost in rhetoric.

**– What are the main challenges for architects in Bangladesh?**

In a country like ours, it is difficult to opt for a moderately-sized practice. Often, it's not easy financially either. Every completed project in Dhaka, especially when done with climate, social, etc. in mind, is an achievement.

**– You are known as a green building designer. Is there a project you're particularly proud of?**

I regard 'Simpletree Anarkali', with its ability to conserve water and electricity as well as its environment-sensitive construction methodology, as my magnum opus. It was the first commercial building in Bangladesh to be LEED certified for shell and core in the gold category. Subsequently, we applied the experience and standards from this project to other buildings, such as 'Simpletree Lighthouse' and the headquarters of Shahjalal Islami Bank. It brings me joy to see when a project also has an impact on a city neighbourhood, such as with 'Simpletree Hashi' – a 10-storey residential building that is a fine example of the simplistic and spiritual nature of our designs.



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Sayed Ahmed  
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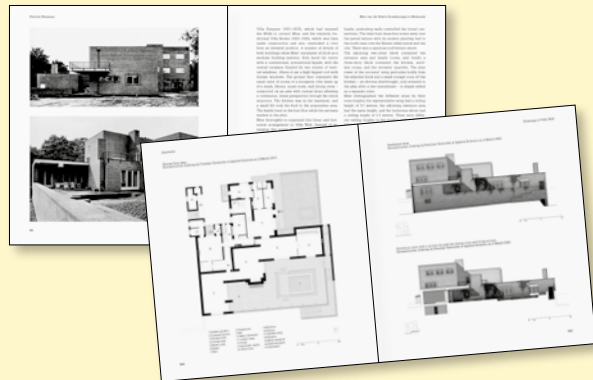
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Our book on Mies' first decidedly modern building is finally available in English and Polish as well as in a special German edition. Built from 1925 to 1927 and later destroyed, Villa Wolf is now to be rebuilt.

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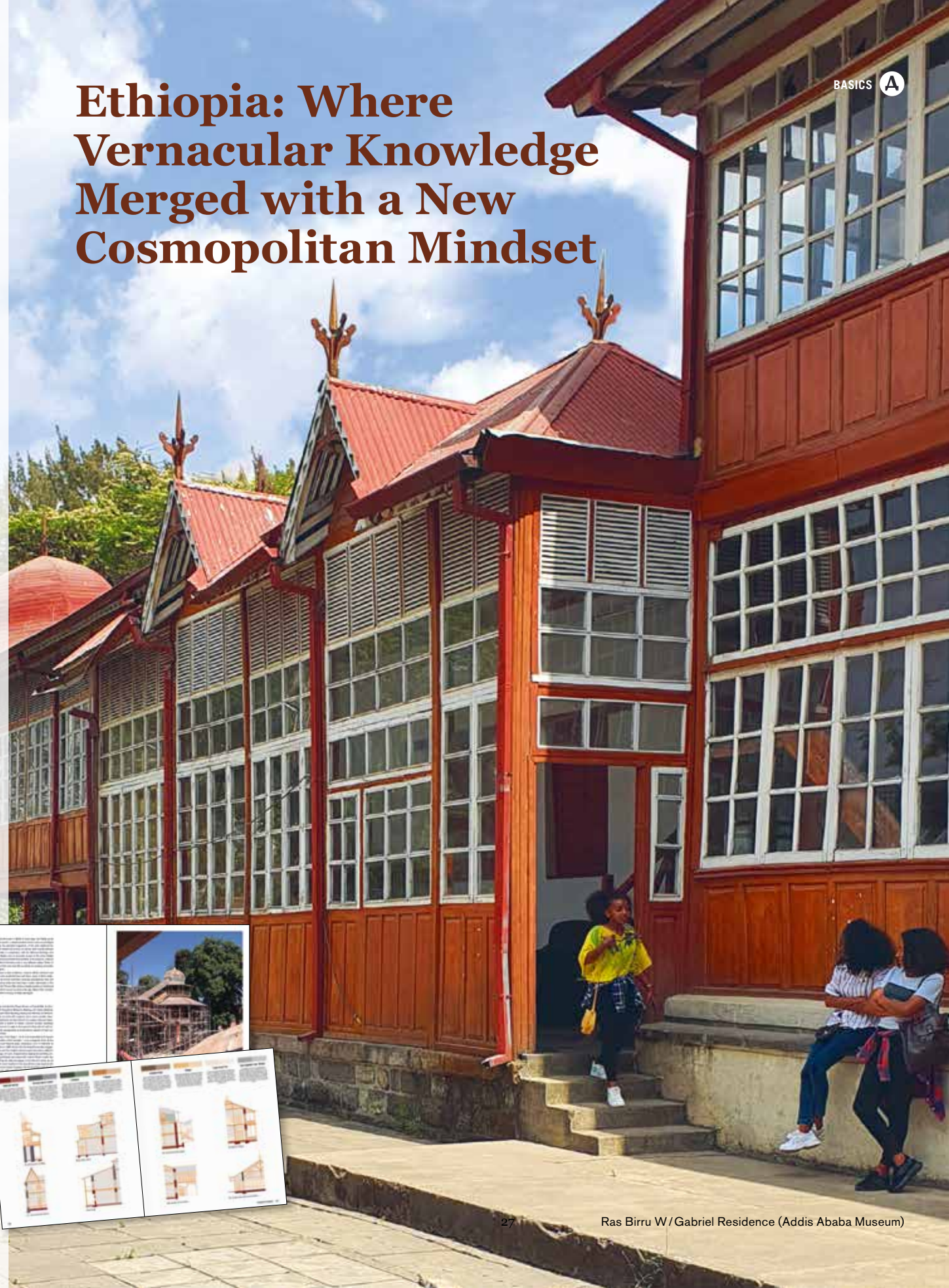
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Pavilion-like buildings of different sizes, made of stone, earth, and wood, characterised by expressive pinched roofs, generous verandas with curtain walls, and a high degree of detailing: In its early decades, the Ethiopian capital, founded in 1886, witnessed a very specific form of architecture. Today, those graceful, appropriate, and nature-based buildings are under threat of being swallowed up due to shortsighted economic interests. In cooperation with the Institute for Architecture in Addis Ababa (EiABC), architects of Berlin's Technical University studied this typology, named 'The Addis Ababa House', with regard to its embeddedness in local resources, climatic conditions, and local craftsmanship.



# Ethiopia: Where Vernacular Knowledge Merged with a New Cosmopolitan Mindset



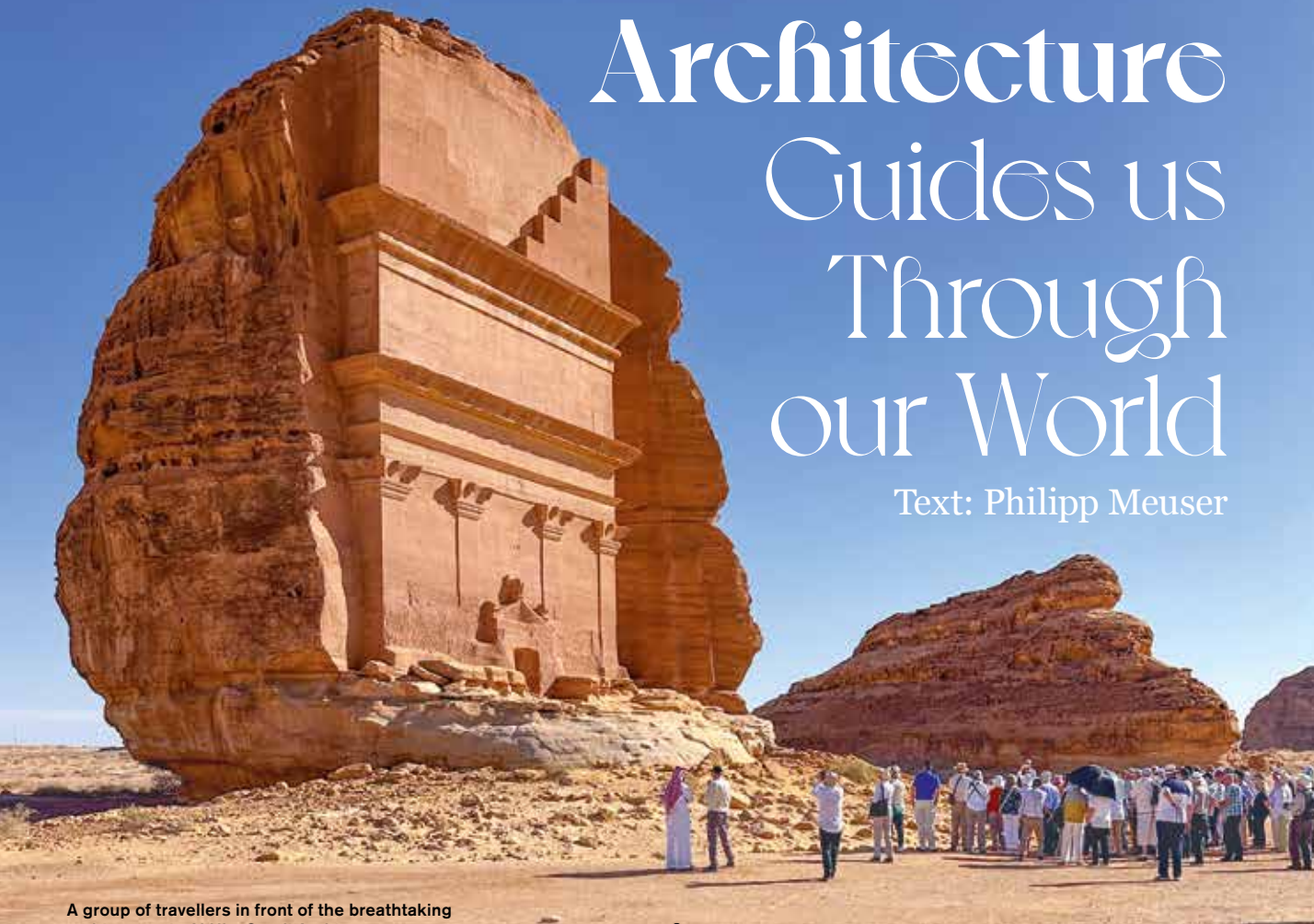


Understanding architecture also means visiting unknown cultures and places. Only then do we learn how to classify our own traditions. However, how can we identify a context we have never heard of? Are we able to see anything we do not know? An architectural guide, a hybrid between travel guide and architectural criticism, is a helpful tool for this.

# Building to Raise Awareness

## How Architecture Guides us Through our World

Text: Philipp Meuser



A group of travellers in front of the breathtaking architecture in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, 2023

Architectural guides are a sizeable niche in the book market, with almost 90,000 new books printed in this genre each year in the German-speaking world alone. These guides document the buildings of a city, describe them from an architectural or art history perspective, and situate them in their wider urban context. They are a little too specialised to be seen as pure travel guides and a little too heavy on words to be seen as popular photo books. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine the world of architecture without architectural guides. The genre has established itself across geographical, cultural, and religious borders as a valuable tool for evaluating the quality of a built environment. Every architectural guide is by definition also a travel guide, since architecture serves as a frame of reference for navigating a foreign environment, both as a social and a physical place.

There is no consensus on the origin of the travel guide. What is certain, however, is that even before they were explicitly labelled as such, travel guides have always informed their readers about architecture. The first works of this kind were most likely written in the second century. Between 160 and 177 CE, the Greek geographer Pausanias created a tourist guide to the places and monuments he had visited – a kind of territorial mapping of ancient Greece. This account allows us to understand the spirit that has driven man since ancient times to describe himself through places and to recognise himself in the evolutionary dynamics of historical geography. It took more than 1,000 years to continue developing this book genre.

Medieval pilgrims would document the locations of churches, places to stay, and markets during their journeys to holy sites to help others make the same journey. Travel literature was also inspired by the expedition reports of early seafarers. From the fifteenth century onwards, Portuguese sailors kept a log of their discoveries as they ventured into new territories. Of course, they were less interested in learning about unknown cultures than in locating resources to plunder. Nonetheless, the travel reports they sent back to their royal patrons became a source of inspiration for future explorers, such as Alexander von Humboldt and Charles Darwin almost four centuries later. The English biologist in turn influenced the architectural theory of early modernity. In particular, Gottfried Semper applied Darwin's theory of evolution to architecture while living in exile in

England between 1850 and 1855. This became the foundation of modern architectural theory and marked the birth of architectural criticism of the kind we still cultivate to this day.

### The Stone is More Stone than Before

Originally, everything about a Greek or Christian building meant something, and in reference to a higher order of things. This atmosphere of inexhaustible meaningfulness hung over the building like a magic veil. Beauty entered the system only secondarily, impairing the basic feeling of uncanny sublimity, of sanctification by magic, or the nearness of the gods. At most, beauty tempered the dread – but this dread was the prerequisite everywhere. What does the beauty of a building mean to us now? The same as the beautiful face of a mindless woman: something masklike (Friedrich Nietzsche).

Interesting architecture can be found across the globe. All who want to find their way around this rich world of built structures are dependent on informative guides. Although architecture can be experienced with the senses alone, it takes on additional layers of meaning when those who look at it are equipped with the right knowledge. As Heinrich Heine remarked: 'When we step into an old cathedral, we can no longer sense the esoteric meaning of its stony symbolism.' In other words, our experience of architecture can be demystified – and enriched – by commentaries and explanations. However, architectural guides should be far more than didactic primers. They should take their readers on an expedition into the unknown, opening up new perspectives on a sometimes strange world. And ideally, they should help readers understand that the architecture of a city is far more than the sum of its attractions. Architecture tells the story of people.

The value of architectural guides is not lost on their readers. In Germany, books in general are seen as cultural assets worth protecting and supporting. Specific rules govern how they are produced and sold. Germany and Austria, for example, have legally binding book price agreements in place. Moreover, many publications are financed at least partially by print-cost subsidies and grants and would in fact be impossible to produce without some form of financial support. Crime novels, popular cookbooks, and children's books are exceptions. Architectural guides, too, can be financed by the sales



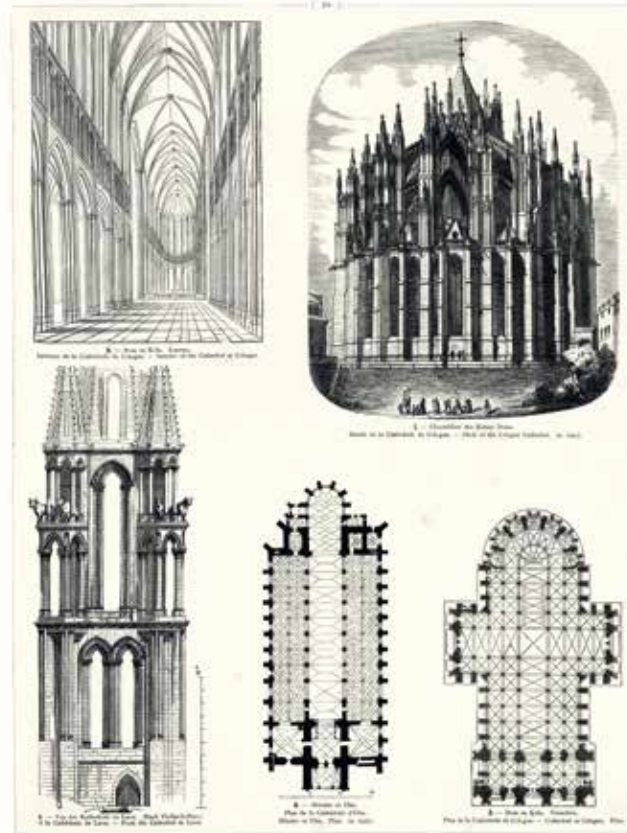
revenue alone – as long as they find a niche. It is hardly surprising that the world’s only architectural guide to the city of Osnabrück sells more copies each year than most architectural guides on New York, which have to stand out from a denser crowd of competitors. In short, there is certainly a demand for architectural guides, as long as they are underpinned by an appropriate concept. Of course, it is impossible to predict the success of a particular publication in advance. But the publisher would do well to understand what it is, specifically, that makes the titles in his or her publishing programme useful.

**A Taxonomy of Travellers**

So why is it that people travel? Here, we should understand the word ‘travel’ in the figurative sense. It does not have to involve journeying to a distant country. Many people like to go on small excursions into their immediate surroundings, seeking, for example, to discover the unique features of their own neighbourhood that they would normally overlook in their daily lives. Moreover, while travelling has become easier and more affordable, many people still like to explore exotic destinations from the comfort of their own living rooms – through television programmes or books. The term ‘armchair traveller’ aptly describes this disposition. A travel guide must cater to the specific goals of its readers.

At the same time, it would be safe to assume that all travellers would be interested in learning about the political situation in their foreign destination. Practical advice – for example, regarding the most affordable route – would also be of interest. Aesthetic travellers primarily seeking personal growth would also want to know about special sights and landmarks along the way. All travellers have their own preferences and priorities, but they also share a common set of interests and needs, whether they are travelling for business or pleasure, spiritual enlightenment or education, or indeed any combination of the above.

Aesthetic travellers may be further divided into two groups: those who want to experience other cultures and ways of life, and those who primarily want to see attractions and landmarks, which can, in turn, be either natural or artificial landmarks. Of course, travellers can have multiple interests and may well want to see both landscapes and cities. Moreover, every traveller will have a different notion of what constitutes an attraction.



**Fascinating Gothic:** Architectural wonders of today, controversial during their completion in the nineteenth century – such as the Cologne Cathedral in Germany

- The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World**
- 1 Great Pyramid of Giza
  - 2 Colossus of Rhodes (right)
  - 3 Lighthouse of Alexandria
  - 4 Mausoleum at Halicarnassus
  - 5 Temple of Artemis
  - 6 Statue of Zeus at Olympia
  - 7 Hanging Gardens of Babylon



Disaster tourism has become increasingly popular precisely because more and more people are finding beauty or an aesthetic quality in sites of natural or man-made destruction.

Motivations for travelling are subject to social and cultural changes. In the Middle Ages, pilgrims who journeyed to Cologne Cathedral were more interested in the relics of the Three Wise Men than in the more aesthetically pleasing reliquary that housed them. The unfinished cathedral, too, was seen primarily as a container for the sanctuary inside and was hence of secondary interest. The pilgrims’ travel reports reveal that architectural beauty was not a central focus of their journeys. By contrast, in 1828, during her journey down the Rhine, Johanna Schopenhauer was captivated by the sight of the cathedral: ‘that masterpiece of Gothic architecture’. She was enthralled ‘upon seeing the choir’s exterior, the sole completed section of this majestic temple.’ In her travelogue, Schopenhauer describes the cathedral and its ornamental artworks for pages on end, while barely mentioning the relics for which it had originally been built. Times had changed: perception of the colossal Gothic edifice had undergone a paradigm shift.

At the same time, we should also note that throughout history there has always been an aesthetic interest in architecture, albeit to varying degrees. This is perhaps best illustrated by the historical records concerning the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. These monumental structures were listed in full for the first time in the writing of Antipater of Sidon during the second century BCE. Although they included places of worship, such as the Statue of Zeus at Olympia and the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the reports focused not so much on their religious significance as the sheer human will and astonishing feats of engineering that enabled their construction. And so, works of architecture have been regarded as worthwhile travel destinations

for over 2,000 years. Of course, it was to be quite some time before reports on travels like this were produced explicitly as architectural guides.

What is it, then, that makes architecture so special? It is clear that all buildings are erected either consciously or subconsciously as monuments to a particular era, political system, or way of life. Any engagement with architecture is thus an engagement with wider aspects of human history and culture. Let us consider Victor Hugo’s famous ruminations on Gothic architecture in *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831). Hugo regarded architecture as ‘the great book of mankind, the principle expression of man at his different stages of development, whether as strength or as intelligence’. In times of low literacy, architecture was the primary means of passing down knowledge and ideas from generation to generation:

*When the memory of the earliest peoples felt overloaded, when mankind’s store of memories became so heavy and confused that speech, bare and fleeting, risked losing some on the way, they were transcribed on the ground in what was at once the most visible, the most durable, and the most natural fashion. Each tradition was sealed beneath a monument.*

Oswald Spengler made a similar argument in 1926: ‘The idea of Euclidean geometry was embodied in the earliest forms of classical ornament, and that of infinitesimal calculus in the earliest forms of Gothic architecture centuries before the first learned mathematicians of the respective cultures were born.’ Architecture was perhaps the most important repository of cultural tradition – one that was only much later superseded by the word. Engagement with architecture goes beyond an engagement with a physical entity. To the discerning eye, a built structure’s form, site, and traces of use reveal the history of humankind. Victor Hugo said as much of Solomon’s Temple:



*The idea that gave them birth, the word, was not merely in the foundations of all these buildings, but also in their form. Solomon's Temple, for instance, was not simply the binding of the sacred book, it was the sacred book itself. On each of its concentric enclosures the priests could read the word translated and made manifest to the eye and could thus follow its transformations from sanctuary to sanctuary until in the final tabernacle they grasped it in its most concrete form, which was still architectural: the ark. Thus the word was enclosed in the building, but its image was on the envelope, like the human figure on a mummy's coffin. And not only the form of the buildings, but also the site chosen for them reveals the thought they represented. According to whether the symbol to be expressed was smiling or sombre, Greece crowned her mountains with a temple harmonious to the eye and India ripped open hers to carve out within them those shapeless underground pagodas borne by gigantic rows of granite elephants.*

From the earliest pagodas of India to Cologne Cathedral, works of architecture were inscriptions of human history. These buildings not only embodied a religious idea; they were a monument to every human thought – and their architecture could be read like a book. Architectural guides are dedicated to this great book of humankind. They reveal how to decipher the history of people in façades, in different stages of urban development, and in the recurring architectural features of a built environment. Buildings illuminated in this fashion impart a history of technology, of art, and of religion. Victor Hugo expresses this idea clearly and succinctly as follows: ‘architecture [...] was the principal record of mankind [...] no concept of any complexity emerged in the world which was not made into a building; every popular idea, like every religious law, has had its monuments; finally, the human race has never had an important thought which it has not written down in stone.’ Hugo believed that this function of architecture ended in the fifteenth century. He went so far as to claim that the invention of the printing press precipitated the demise of architecture. This is perhaps more in tune with the fictional world of his novel than reality. Indeed,

Theodor Fontane still presented buildings and their interiors as the main attractions of his native region in his five-volume travelogue *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*. And it seems worth noting that the printing press, far from spelling the death of architecture as Hugo claimed, paved the way for a new invention that promoted journeys to see works of architecture: the travel guide.

### The Germ of the Architectural Guide

Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* was first published in 1831. Four years later, Karl Baedeker published *Rheinreise von Mainz bis Köln* (A Rhine Journey from Mainz to Cologne), which may be seen as the first travel guide in the German-speaking world. Of course, this book also had its forerunners, not least because it was a revised second edition of Professor J. A. Klein's *Rheinreise von Mainz bis Köln* (1828), whose rights Baedeker had purchased in 1832. However, while Baedeker did not, strictly speaking, invent the travel guide, he established it as a new format on the book market – one that is still associated with his name to this day. Texts written to help travellers have existed since antiquity. In the German-speaking world, travel writings reached their first peak of popularity in the fourteenth century. These were not yet travel guides as such and should rather be described as travel reports. The authors sometimes considered the aesthetic purposes of travelling; but they wrote first and foremost to provide information. Such texts emerged partially as a result of the theological journeys taking place at the time, which ranged from peaceful pilgrimages to violent crusades. Old trade routes and infrastructure underwent expansion, making it possible for a broader public, or at least those with the financial means, to entertain the prospect of travelling. Itineraries of journeys made by aristocrats were published to meet the growing demand for guidance on the practical matters of travelling. These early travel reports primarily offered information about wayfinding – and about where to find accommodation. But they soon began to also offer geographical and cultural information about the places readers might encounter during their journeys. Publications intended for secular travellers – merchants, for example – followed suit. Reports on expeditions and military campaigns to Africa, Asia, and America also made their way



Italian travel today. DOM publishers' programme includes five titles on Italian cities: Milan, Rome, Venice, Verona (and Lake Garda), and Torino. A title on Naples is in progress and will appear in 2025. Each title costs €38.

into the repertoire of travel literature. In the nineteenth century, a new kind of travelling emerged: the educational journey taken by the middle classes. This new perception of travelling is recorded in the writings of poets. August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, for example, believed from a young age that travelling was a key source of experience and instruction:

*I still clearly remember how I spent several days in 1811 studying maps to plot the route I would take with my parents from our small town to the capital of the Kingdom of Westfallen, and how I diligently memorised the attractions we would encounter on our way. One of my dearest wishes was to go on a great literary trip, having dutifully equipped myself with the right knowledge and resources.*

This tradition can be traced back to the Renaissance, when noble families began to send their sons on what became known as the ‘grand tour’: an educational journey through Central Europe, Italy, Spain, and sometimes as far as the Holy Land. This experience allowed young travellers to meet the royal courts of foreign cities, make contact with new trade partners, refine

their knowledge of culture, and embrace a spirit of cosmopolitanism. Friedrich Schlegel noted in one of his fragments:

*A work is cultivated when it is everywhere sharply delimited, but within those limits limitless and inexhaustible; when it is completely faithful to itself, entirely homogeneous, and nonetheless exalted above itself. Like the education of young Englishmen, the most important thing about it is le grand tour. It should have travelled through all the three or four continents of humanity, not in order to round off the edges of individuality, but to broaden its vision and give its spirit more freedom and inner versatility; and thereby greater independence and self-sufficiency.*

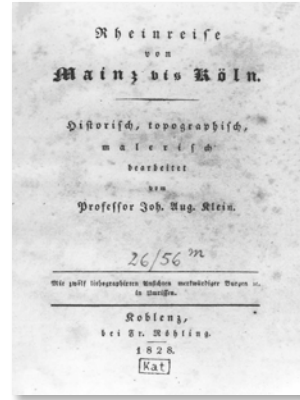
The grand tour gave rise to a new kind of literature: the *ars apodemica*. This genre of writing was intended to help travellers evaluate the experiences they gained during their journeys. The emphasis was no longer merely on what travellers saw, but on how the act of travelling shaped their worldview. Travelling became an aesthetic experience.



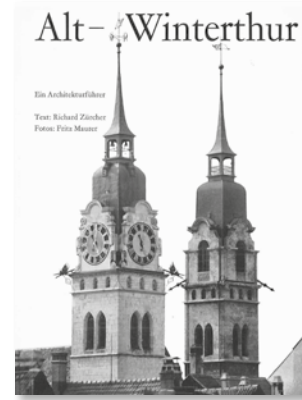
### The Birth of the Architectural Critic

Karl Baedeker took this tradition further, creating what became the prototypical travel guide both in the German-speaking world and internationally. One gets a sense of the popularity and influence of Baedeker's travel guides from a novel by Jules Verne from the nineteenth century. The narrator remarks that 'those who are unfamiliar with a country should best consult Baedeker's, or, if they are not in possession of this splendid little book, seek out a living guide'.

In 1832, Baedeker acquired the publishing rights to the abovementioned *Rheinreise von Mainz bis Köln*. His revised edition, published three years later, became the first title in a series of many travel guides. Baedeker's publishing programme initially focused on regions along the Rhine to capitalise on the burgeoning popularity of steamboats. Later, he moved his publishing house to Koblenz, this time to take advantage of the city's expanding rail network. His books initially offered practical guidance, but they soon also began to include descriptions of attractions, which they sorted into categories to provide a clearer overview. Baedeker also introduced star ratings, primarily for works of architecture, thus in a sense taking on the role of architectural critic. His star ratings became the subject of much derision, especially in conjunction with the subtitle of his first publication: *Handbuch für Schnellreisende* (Handbook for Fast Travellers). Critics argued that what should be an individual cultural experience would degenerate into mindless consumption of pre-digested ideas. The author Arthur Schnitzler described how his father would mock travellers for 'rushing through museums and galleries in foreign cities, faithfully clutching onto their Baedeker's [...] as if they were all, truly without exception, laughable subjects beholden to an imaginary obligation [...] and devoid of any artistic sensitivity or any true desire to learn.' Nonetheless, Baedeker's stars came to be seen as an authoritative judgment on whether or not an attraction was worth visiting. His guidebook became a veritable institution, and, like any institution, inspired opposition. Between 1927 and 1938, Piper-Verlag published *Was nicht im Baedeker steht* (Things You Won't Find in Baedeker's), a 17-volume series that was the work of many authors, including Klaus and Erika Mann, who contributed a travelogue on their journeys along the Riviera (1931).



Before the first ever travel guide in German was published: *The Rhine Journey from Mainz to Cologne*, by J.A. Klein, 1828



Probably the first architectural guide in the German-speaking world to have a title referring to this genre: *Alt-Winterthur*, 1964

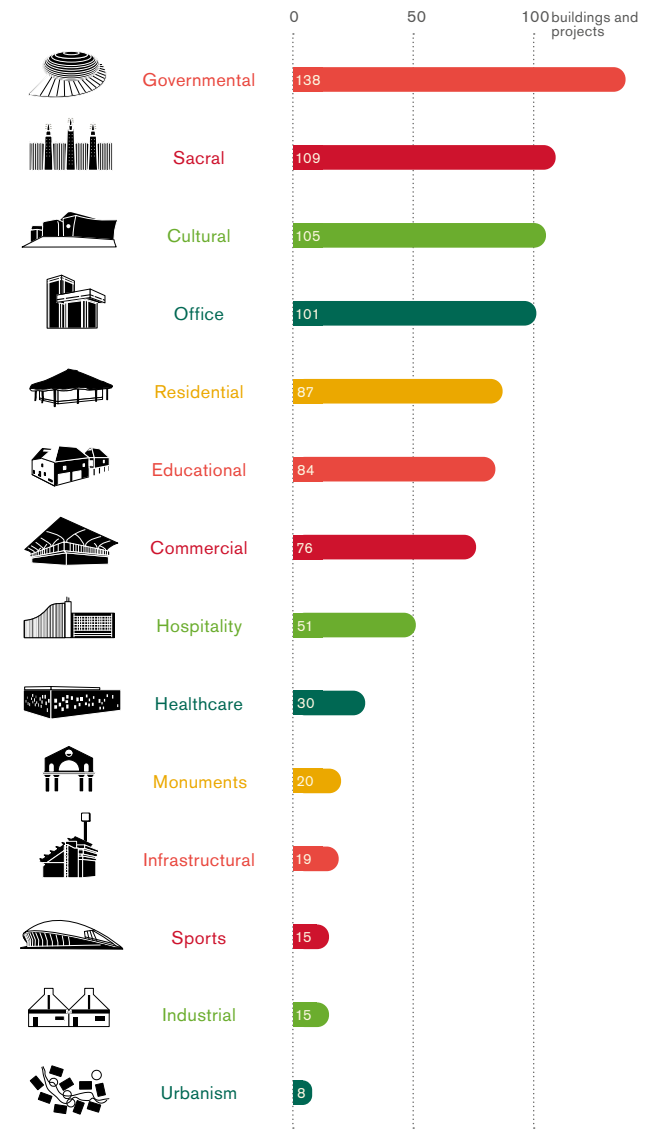
Other publishing houses established themselves, producing further travel guides dedicated to the attractions of different cities and landscapes. Georg Dehio's *Handbuch der Deutschen Kunstdenkmäler* (Handbook of German Art Monuments) was published in 1905; half a century later, Reclam-Verlag published its first art guides. *Alt Winterthur: Ein Architekturführer* (Alt Winterthur: An Architectural Guide) was published in Switzerland in 1964. This was the first book to be explicitly described as an architectural guide in its title. It marked the birth of a new genre in the book market, one specialising in what had in fact always been and still remains at the heart of all travel guides. Architectural guides document the buildings of a city or region by describing them from an architectural or art history perspective. But the best of them do more. They situate individual buildings within the context of their surroundings and investigate what the built environment reveals about the underlying social and political conditions. A country's policies regarding planning and construction offer deep insight into its economic and cultural landscape. Architectural guides thus ideally go beyond describing individual buildings to offer stories, digressions, and essays. They might also suggest walking tours that allow travellers to experience architectural ensembles in their wider context. They are aimed at all who desire a deeper confrontation with works of architecture – whether in a foreign place or in their own familiar environment.

### The Selection of a Building as the First Step in Architectural Criticism

Architectural guides represent a reduction of complexity. They represent a particular built environment using a finite selection of buildings. In 1919, Kurt Tucholsky wrote: 'Berlin combines the disadvantages of an American metropolis with those of small-town Germany. Its advantages are listed in Baedeker's guidebooks.' It seems he saw the travel guide as a compilation of a region's 'positive' features. However, architectural guides do not only document famous works of architecture. 'They also draw attention to buildings that people would perhaps normally overlook' (Jeanette Kunstmann). This is a task that requires foresight. When a city is visited by a traveller or described in a guidebook, it is transformed into a timeless utopia. Boris Groys has written:

*Our journey wrenches the city out of its historical topos and transports it into the utopian: when we travel through a city, its birth and death, for us, become undefined, ahistorical, which means we can only experience the city's eternity in the moment we pass through it.*

The architectural guide determines, at least for its readers, which aspects of the city will transcend time. Just like the gaze of a spectator, which can transform an ordinary object into a work of art, the gaze of a traveller can transform a building into an attraction. An attraction might be a 'beautiful' edifice, vaunted by city marketers, or an 'ugly' building, appreciated only by alternative travel planners. As soon as a building is given a commemorative plaque or is described in an architectural guide, perhaps with a star rating, it undergoes a process of sublimation. Rather than being guided by some intrinsic quality pertaining to a monument, our sense of monumentality is derived from the relentless process of monumentalisation, demonumentalisation, and remonumentalisation that is unleashed by the romantic tourist's gaze. It is a bold decision to publish a guide on the city of Pisa without mentioning its leaning tower or a guide on the city of Cologne without mentioning its cathedral. And it is equally bold to publish a guide on the city of Venice focusing only on buildings erected after 1950. The

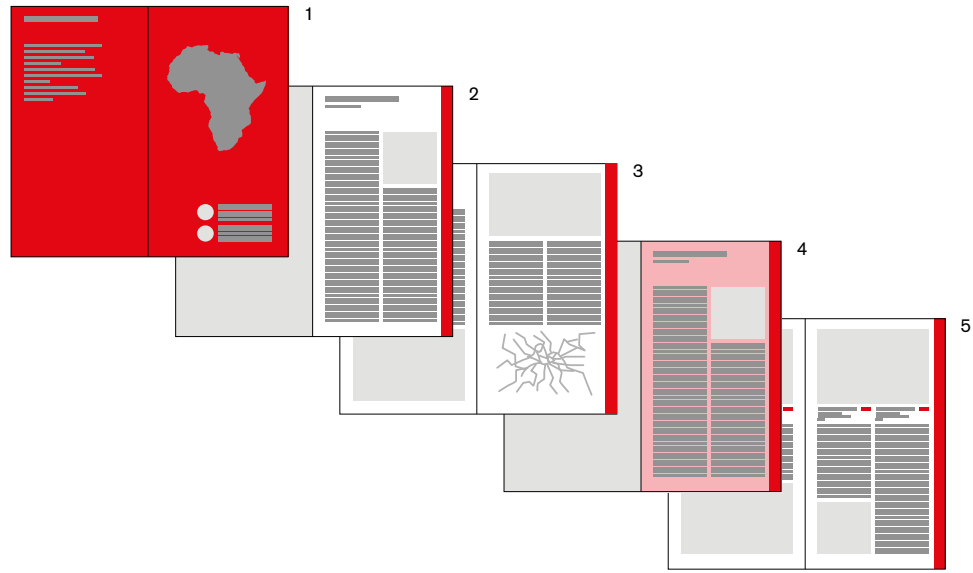


**Architectural Guide Sub-Saharan Africa**, a 7-volume set with 3,400+ pages, published in 2021: For the most part, this publication consists of concise and informative descriptions of more than 850 African buildings, which fall into various typologies. There are 10 to 30 buildings per country, ranging from traditional or pre-colonial structures to contemporary edifices. These include buildings generally considered 'representative' and those subjectively selected by the chapter coordinators.



ISBN 978-3-86922-400-8  
€198





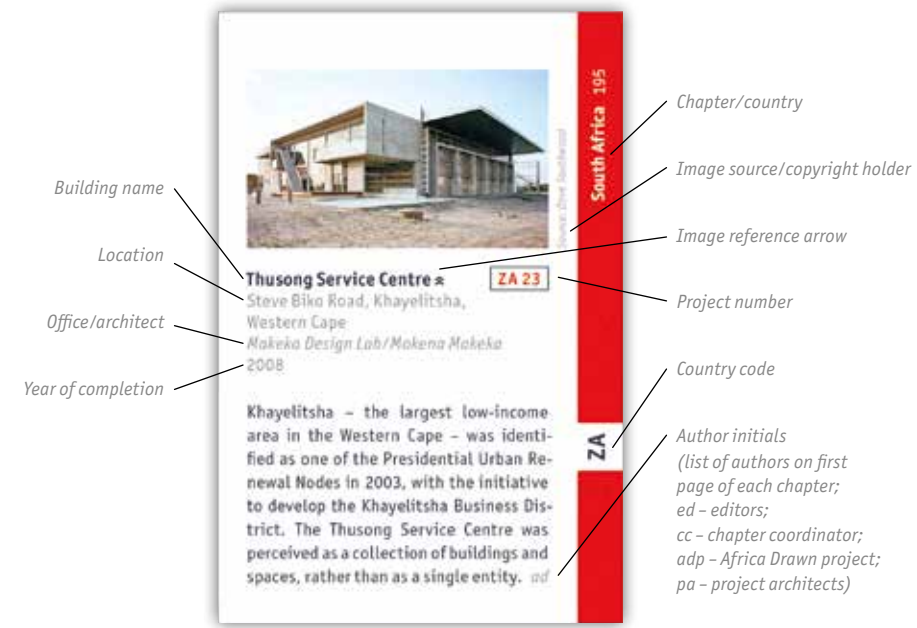
Typical structure of the 7-volume **Architectural Guide Sub-Saharan Africa** containing similar chapters for each of the 49 countries featured.

- 1 List of buildings and authors
- 2 Introduction
- 3 City portrait
- 4 Thematic article
- 5 Buildings and projects

selection of buildings should be carefully considered, unique, but also provocative. ‘Contemporary architecture,’ Karl Kraus wrote, ‘correctly identifies an absence but fills it with superfluous objects.’ As this aphorism shows, the polemic against contemporary architecture goes back a long way. This does not mean that all contemporary solutions are bad. Architectural guides must separate the wheat from the chaff and determine which works are truly original or have the potential to last long into the future. An architectural guide that presents an unorthodox selection of buildings is more likely to stand out – and is also more likely to introduce new perspectives to long-standing debates. Of course, the author of such a guide might be derided for his or her selection of buildings, and its readers might feel alienated because they cannot (yet) understand the author’s decisions. However, it is not the task of an architectural guide to affirm popular tastes. After all, perception of beauty is subject to social changes – and this applies to the beauty of the natural world as well as the beauty of art. Natural landscapes, for example, were not appreciated from the aesthetic point of view until relatively recently. While it is common for people today to spend their summer holidays at the beach or in the mountains, such destinations were largely out of the question for people before the nineteenth century. Mountains were inhospitable, insurmountable masses, and the sea was an uncanny, immeasurable force of nature. This is why Homer’s *Odyssey* is not filled with descriptions of beautiful coastlines but

with an enumeration of the dangers involved in sea voyages. Perception of architectural beauty is likewise subject to social and cultural changes. In his autobiographical travelogue *Italian Journey*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe recalls an incident that happened while he was sketching a set of ruins near the Italian border. The locals could not understand why someone would want to draw a building in such a state and began to suspect he was spying on it for military purposes:

*But when I mentioned the amphitheatre in Verona, which is known here by the name ‘arena’, the actuary, who had been collecting his wits in the meantime, broke in: that might be all very well, he said, in the case of a world-famous Roman monument, but there was nothing noteworthy about these towers except that they marked the frontier between Venetia and the Austrian Empire, for which reason they were not to be spied upon. I parried this by explaining at some length that the buildings of the Middle Ages were just as worthy of attention as those of Greek and Roman times, though they could not be expected to recognise, as I did, the picturesque beauty of buildings which had been familiar to them since childhood. By good luck, the morning sun at this point flooded the tower, rocks and walls with a lovely light and I began describing the beauty of the scene with great enthusiasm.*



Guidelines for use of an architectural guide

An earlier episode in *Italian Journey* revolves around a similar misunderstanding that took place during his trip of 1786:

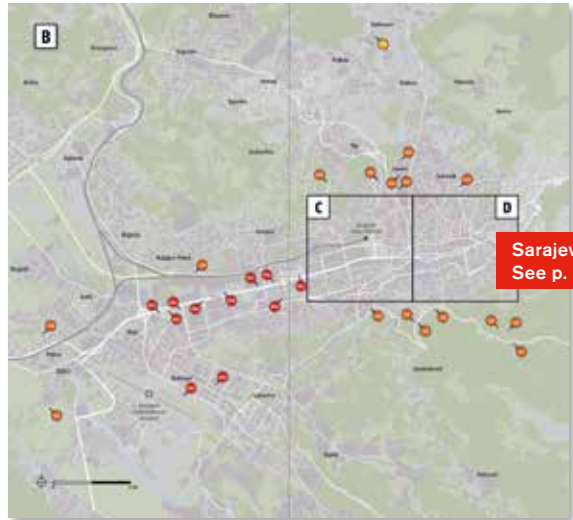
*A young man from whom I had inquired about the points of interest in this town showed me a house which is called the Devil’s House because the Devil, though usually bent on destruction, is said to have got the stones together and built it in a single night. The good fellow failed to notice what was really remarkable about it. It is the only house in good taste which I have seen in Trento and was probably built at an earlier period by some good Italian.*

Such discrepancies in people’s perception of beauty still persist to this day. Even now, one can relive Goethe’s experience – of being met with suspicion and bemusement – simply by photographing buildings at a busy intersection in an authoritarian state or studying the ordinary architecture of what are widely perceived to be dreary housing estates. Architectural guides must address and reflect on these fault lines in people’s judgements on beauty. Otherwise, they will merely reaffirm the standing of popular iconic buildings. They must, for example, offer a convincing explanation of why a seemingly plain multi-storey garage once won architectural prizes and still possesses a historical and aesthetic charm that perhaps only reveals itself to the more cultivated eye.

### Anatomy of the Architectural Guide

Architectural guides must meet a demanding set of requirements, which in turn stem from readers’ needs. First, they must be reliable, incorporating the latest research findings if necessary. Second, they must be comprehensible. Already, these two requirements seem difficult to reconcile. Their subject matter makes it necessary for architectural guides to use technical language, but they are not aimed exclusively at a technical audience. They must also be accessible to the broader public. Publishers therefore need to encourage their authors to describe technical architectural details and give background information on design and construction in a way that is intelligible to the general reader. It helps that many architectural terms have already found their way into travel literature and are, to a large extent, in common parlance. Authors may of course use more specialised terms if these are needed to illustrate recurring ideas – so long as they are defined in a glossary. Ultimately, however, the principal task of any guidebook is to communicate. The reader’s understanding is essential. Moreover, architectural guides must deliberately limit their scope. Cities, landscapes, regions, and continents – all of which have been the subject of an architectural guide – are all brimming with topics worth exploring. It is no simple task to choose just 200 buildings from tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of candidates. The architecture, history, and context of a single village church





can easily fill an entire volume. Decisions need to be made. An architectural guide can only serve as a launch pad for readers' own thoughts. A well-structured bibliography in the appendix can suggest where readers might turn for further research. The author can and should only set the process in motion and draw attention to alternative ways of thinking.

An appealing layout is another important element. This is often overlooked by the logocentric academics in the arts and humanities who are most often charged with reviewing travel guides. Readers demand an aesthetic dimension from architectural guides. The book itself must be an aesthetic object. Typography matters, as does readability. Beautifully arranged texts and illustrations can breathe life into even the driest of subjects. An expressive photograph in an elegant layout can make an unattractive building appear in a completely new light. Moreover, architectural guides are primarily reference books that are not necessarily read from start to finish – although this should equally be possible. They should provide easy access to specific information. An index of streets, architects, or buildings can help readers quickly find what they are looking for and provide a clear overview. An appropriate colour scheme or some other kind of design element can also make the structure of the book more intuitive. The text must be accompanied by illustrations. A work of architecture is visible – both as a stand-alone structure and as an element of a larger urban or natural context. High-quality architectural guides therefore include precise drawings and plans. Drawings can sometimes highlight the distinctive features of a building more clearly than a photo or colourful 3D rendering. Photographs, too, are essential. Reflections on architecture sometimes involve challenging thought processes and are far easier to understand if presented alongside large, rhythmically placed photographs. Photographs not only pace the reader's attention but also convey buildings' aesthetic qualities while analysing, critiquing, and contextualising the buildings themselves. In this regard, they are part of the tradition of architectural painting, in which buildings are illustrated for their own sake, while living beings, objects, and landscapes primarily serve as decoration or reference points to convey the buildings' dimensions.

A detailed map with the locations of the featured buildings is crucial for the quality of an architectural guide. From top: Sarajevo (2023), Tirana (2024), Chisinau (2023)

The discovery of perspective in Renaissance art was the crucial turning point that enabled architectural painting to evolve into an independent art form from the sixteenth century onwards. The Netherlands was at the centre of this tradition, as the birthplace of important pioneers such as the painter Hans Vredeman de Vries, who also wrote *Architectura* (1598) and *Perspective* (1604), both groundbreaking treatises on architectural theory. Architecture, accurately represented in perspective, became a worthy subject of paintings in its own right, no longer merely a backdrop for religious or mythical scenes.

Architectural guides place buildings in their wider urban context. This makes it interesting to consider the veduta, a genre which depicts a view of a city while prioritising topographical accuracy over painterly effect. Pioneers of this genre included Gerrit Adriaenszoon Berckheyde (1638–1696) and – more important for a theory of the architectural guide – Matthäus Merian (1593–1650), who was also a publisher. Merian published his detailed topographical cityscapes of Switzerland and Württemberg in books, thus bringing them to a wide audience. He also launched *Theatrum Europaeum*, a journal on the history of the German-speaking world that looked at cityscapes within their political context.

The history of the architectural guide was also influenced by the tradition of the panorama. Paintings of cityscapes laid out on a cylindrical surface were produced from the eighteenth century onwards, primarily in London, to provide knowledge of foreign cities and countries. Of course, it was difficult to translate the 180-degree perspective into book form. Moreover, the complexity of the modern city, a quality that could no longer be captured from a single perspective, ultimately led to the decline of the tradition of the panorama. The rapid industrialisation of cities gave rise to new buildings at such a rapid pace that panoramas could no longer offer up-to-date views of the urban setting. The last panoramic painting of London was exhibited at the London Colosseum in 1829. It had taken eight years to make, which meant that its illusion of reality could not be convincing for audiences familiar with the city. Today, architectural guides often attempt to provide an initial overview of a city or landscape from a bird's-eye perspective, sometimes with aerial photos, but in full knowledge that the architecture of a city or country

cannot be captured in a single image. Finally, the architectural guide must strike the right balance between texts and images. These must maintain a harmonious dialogue, with neither overshadowing the other. Ideally, photos should be more than mere illustrations; they should have an intrinsic value of their own; captions should be concise, not only describing but also commenting on what is depicted. The illustrations should ideally follow their own line of argument.

### What is the Function of a Travel Guidebook Today?

To answer this question, we must first acknowledge that many of the needs originally met by print publications are now taken care of by other media. Television programmes on foreign countries better serve those with an ethnological or political interest. Online platforms are more suited to providing information on the more transient aspects of a city, such as restaurants and hotels, which open and close in rapid succession. The architectural guide must focus on what is permanent in a city; it can monumentalise a brief snapshot of buildings from a specific perspective. Cities are in a state of flux; their elements appear and vanish, just like the texts and images that are ceaselessly uploaded and edited on the internet before being deleted. Against this backdrop, every architectural guide published in book form is a lasting declaration of love. Such guides have their place on our bookshelves, between photo books and scholarly tomes, and between city marketing and architectural criticism.



**Public Humanities in Architecture**  
Reflections on Heritage, Culture, and History  
Philipp Meuser  
210 × 230 mm, 176 pp., 170 images  
ISBN 978-3-86922-559-3  
€28/\$39.95

**Philipp Meuser**, born 1969, is an architect and publisher. He studied architecture in Berlin and Zurich with a focus on history and theory and he has a PhD in engineering. He has built and planned projects in Central Asia and Africa, among other regions, and has conducted research on prefabricated housing, Socialist Modernism, and the architecture of sub-Saharan Africa. He holds professorships in Kharkiv, Ukraine (Beketov University) and Providence, Rhode Island (Brown University).



# A Powerful Voice from Ukraine

Author and critic Ievgeniia Gubkina combines architectural history with cultural studies, and research with activism.

Text: Damien Leaf

Ievgeniia Gubkina's interest in Soviet-era architecture began not with buildings, but with stories. They were the exciting, tragicomic, dissident tales told in her family in the late 1980s when Ievgeniia was a little girl and communism was about to crumble. One tale was of her great-grandmother. In the heyday of Stalinist oppression and famine, the then 12-year-old was lavishly provided for in a camp of the Young Pioneers (the compulsory organisation for children) in the Crimea. But Ievgeniia's great-grandmother hated having to follow orders and snuck out, only to be asked after an adventurous return home: 'What are you doing here? We have no food!'

Forms Center. 'I try to jump between different contexts and topics.' Her first book with DOM, the *Architectural Guide Slavutych* (2015), is a case in point. It presents the fascinating history of the city purpose-built for the evacuated personnel of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant after the 1986 disaster. The book was followed by *Soviet Modernism. Brutalism. Post-Modernism. Buildings and Structures in Ukraine, 1955–1991*.

For their next joint project, Gubkina and DOM planned an architectural guide to Kharkiv, but then came the Russian attack. Now, next up is a collection of essays that – as in her childhood stories – combine historical

events, personal experience, and political reflection. The opinionated, combative tone is also in the best family tradition. In *Being a Ukrainian Architect During Wartime*, Gubkina gathers the texts and speeches she published during the first months of the war. The book opens with an interview she gave

to Ukrainian *Vogue* in March 2022 directly from the minivan that evacuated her and her family to Latvia. By then, a quarter of the buildings in Kharkiv had already been destroyed or damaged. Most of the subsequent texts were written in exile in Paris and have been read or published in various places around the world, including *Dérive* and *Architectural Record*.

Now, thanks to support from CARA (the Council for At-Risk Academics), Gubkina lives with her 14-year-old daughter in London. She is a Randolph Quirk Fellow and teaches at UCL Bartlett. She cannot say whether she will ever return to Kharkiv permanently: 'I try not to think about the future now.' In any case, she has resumed work on the architectural guide to the city. The book is scheduled for publication in 2024.

“My grandparents were perfect storytellers. Their tales from the Soviet Union would make a great HBO series.”

IEVGENIIA GUBKINA

Having grown up not only in a critical milieu, but also in a family of four generations of architects, engineers, and academics, Ievgeniia Gubkina was already familiar with the historical-political context when she later studied interwar modernism, among other things, in Ukraine. It surely also helped that she is from Kharkiv, which was the capital of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine from 1919 to 1934 and rebuilt to a large extent in the style of Socialist Classicism after the Second World War. 'I had the key. I just had to find the door,' she says.

In her hometown, Ukraine's second largest city, she studied architecture with a specialisation in urban planning, receiving her MA in 2008. Gubkina combines architectural history with cultural studies, and research with activism – in 2014 she co-founded the NGO Urban

## What is rozkvit?



Tetyana Oliynyk

Three questions for the co-editor of the book *Urban Coalition for Ukraine*, which reflects the work of the first year of the pan-European Rozkvit initiative.

### How do you pronounce the name Rozkvit?

'Rozkvit'. The word means 'flourishing' in Ukrainian, in a direct, but also in a metaphorical sense. This is to reflect the hope associated with the reconstruction of the country. One letter remains in Cyrillic as a reference to the origin.

### Who would you like to reach with this book?

Foreign professionals in need of information on Ukraine, students, and municipalities who are involved in reconstruction – there are plans for a Ukrainian language edition.

### Which chapter is particularly close to your heart?

Due to my background in professional education and because I am Ukrainian, it's probably the section on identity and culture. Even when we talk about reconstruction and rebuilding, our ultimate goal is to show what Ukraine is – and what it can be.

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Lilet Breddels with Tetyana Oliynyk and Fulco Treffers  
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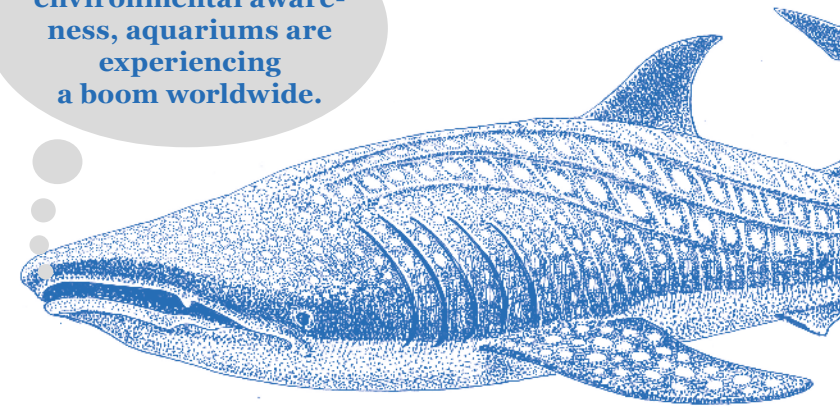


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Editors Natascha Meuser and Jürgen Lange at Aquarium Berlin (2021)



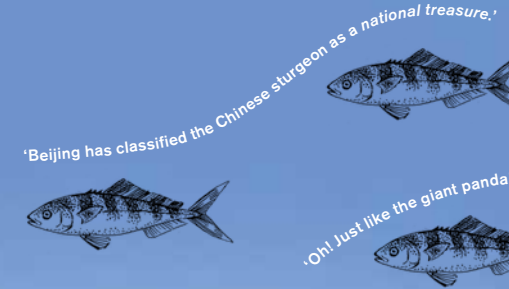
# Yangtze River Estuary

This project in Shanghai is the architectural envelope for an ambitious undertaking: first, to preserve species threatened with extinction and, second, to build popular support for ecological conservation. Let's take a closer look.

Text: Natascha Meuser



The building by Ennead Architects was completed in 2022. It is located on an island at the mouth of the Yangtze River and set within a 17.5-hectare landscape (design: Andropogon Associates, Ltd). The large image shows the east-west cross-section. You can find the Yangtze River Estuary in the book *Aquarium Buildings* (see p. 43).



## DESIGN

For the undulating, fluid forms of the building, the architects took their cue from the rippling surface of the river and the iconic landscape of the upper Yangtze. At the same time, the design is intended to evoke biomorphic anatomy and a vessel-like ark. It integrates sustainable strategies, combining a cross-laminated timber structural system, geothermal heating and cooling loops, constructed wetlands of local flora and waterborne plants for rapid carbon sequestration and a process of biofiltration for aquarium water.

## VISITORS

An immersive aquarium and exhibition area makes the institution's work visible. Suspended walkways and observation areas enable visitors to immerse themselves in a completely natural setting away from Shanghai's dense city centre. The building includes exhibition halls, a teaching centre, an auditorium, and a café / restaurant.

## WATER

The building has 32 interior and exterior pools that hold a total of more than 750,000 cubic metres of water. This complex system has been designed to mimic the river basin's micro-ecosystems (the tanks replicate the natural migration of the animals in bodies of water of different sizes and varying salinity). This way, it's possible to breed the animals as well as to facilitate their re-integration into the wild.

## ROOF

The combined surface area of the building's undulating roof is 24,000 square metres. Gently curving wooden structural ribs radiate around a central spine that joins the three wings of the building into a singular unified expression. Clad in translucent PTFE, the lightweight enclosure system envelops the interior pools to create a luminous, daylight-maximising interior.

## SPECIES

The aim is to protect the currently dwindling stocks of two species. The tanks contain 50 finless porpoises alongside 100 tonnes of Chinese Yangtze River sturgeon. Besides the Yangtze River Basin, the finless porpoises are also native to the Indian and Pacific oceans.





Only the last four digits of the ISBN are given: 978-3-86922-[-...].

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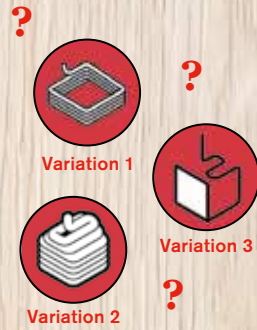




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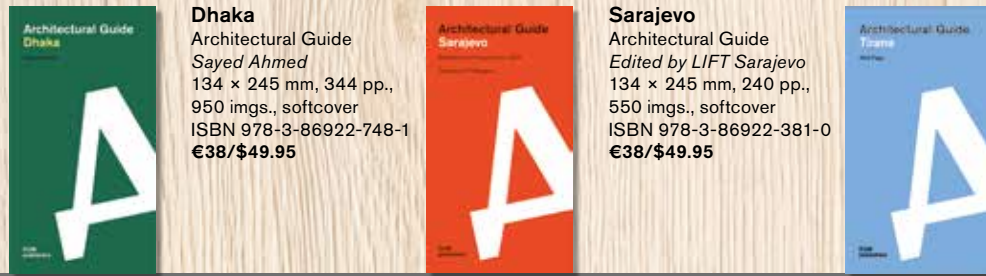
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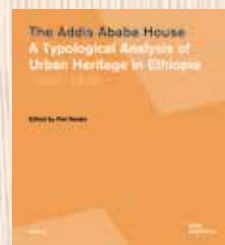
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## Around the World

It's pink and it's very popular – and now you can even win books with our DOM bag. Next time you place an order in our online shop ([dom-publishers.com](http://dom-publishers.com)), ask for a free bag. If you travel with it, send us a photo. For every picture we post on our Instagram account, we'll reward you with one of our architectural guides. We have gathered some inspiring examples from cities around the globe here. ◊



The DOM bag in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, at Tokyo's Narita Airport, in Tunis, and in Montréal (clockwise from top left).

Recently, the Arabic version of our book on the United Arab Emirates was finally published by Abu Dhabi-based publisher Kalima.



Our architectural guide to Chicago in the field.



His cats support our author Alp Gökalp crowdfunding for his book Azerbaijan. Art for Architecture.



Seen in Osaka's Maruzen & Junkudo bookstore: the Japanese edition of our manual on zoo buildings.





At this year's Berlin Book Festival: Joe Evans Chialo, Berlin Senator for Culture, Publisher Philipp Meuser, and Johanna Hahn, Managing Director at the local section of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association.



Together with our long-time author Natalya Solopova, a Paris-based architect and academic, we are planning a book on the French engineer Raymond Camus, an internationally influential pioneer of prefabricated housing.



A look at the first copies: The proud editors of *Urban Coalition for Ukraine* (see p. 41), Lilet Breddels and Tetyana Oliynyk. Top right: the third editor Fulco Treffers hands over a copy of his title *A Vision for Mariupol* to the mayor of the city, Vadym Boychenko.



The contract has been signed: We are looking forward to a joint project with Jakub Bródka! The architectural historian will publish an architectural guide to his hometown of Katowice, Poland.



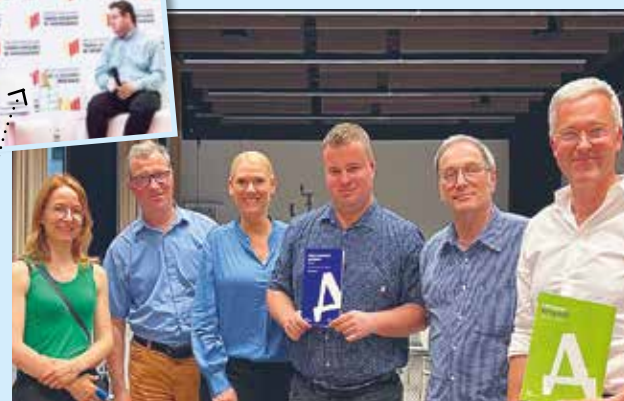
Our new titles were presented to the audience of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in San Francisco. The manual on aquarium buildings (see p. 42) is visible in the foreground.



Ukraine Summit at the Lviv Urban Forum in July 2023: Anton Oliynyk, Karsten Pålsson, Julian Chaplinsky, and Publisher Philipp Meuser. Top right: Pålsson presents his book *Urban Block Cities*.



Prince Asfa-Wossen Asserate, Dr. Genet Alem, and Piet Nieder, editor of *The Addis Ababa House* (see p. 27), at the public event on 'The Importance of Heritage for Sustainable Development in Urban Ethiopia' at TU Berlin.



Presentation of the bilingual architectural guide to Kyiv (see p. 15) with author Semen Shyrochyn (centre) at the Pilecki Institute in Berlin and at the book fair in Warsaw.



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A box of architectural guides

## We mourn the loss of three authors



**Bruno Flierl (1927–2023)**  
The historian and theorist was one of the most important and at the same time most critical voices in the architectural discourse of the GDR and later also in reunified Germany. He published 'Texts from Six Decades' with DOM.



**Jean-Louis Cohen (1949–2023)**  
The French architect, author, polyglot, and gifted communicator was probably the most outstanding art historian of our time. He had planned an architectural guide to the Moroccan metropolis of Casablanca with DOM.



**Peter Schau (1938–2022)**  
We only recently learned of the death of the urban planner and conservator from Mainz. With his book about the legendary architect Raúl Lino, published in 2021, he brought his second home of Portugal to a German audience.



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