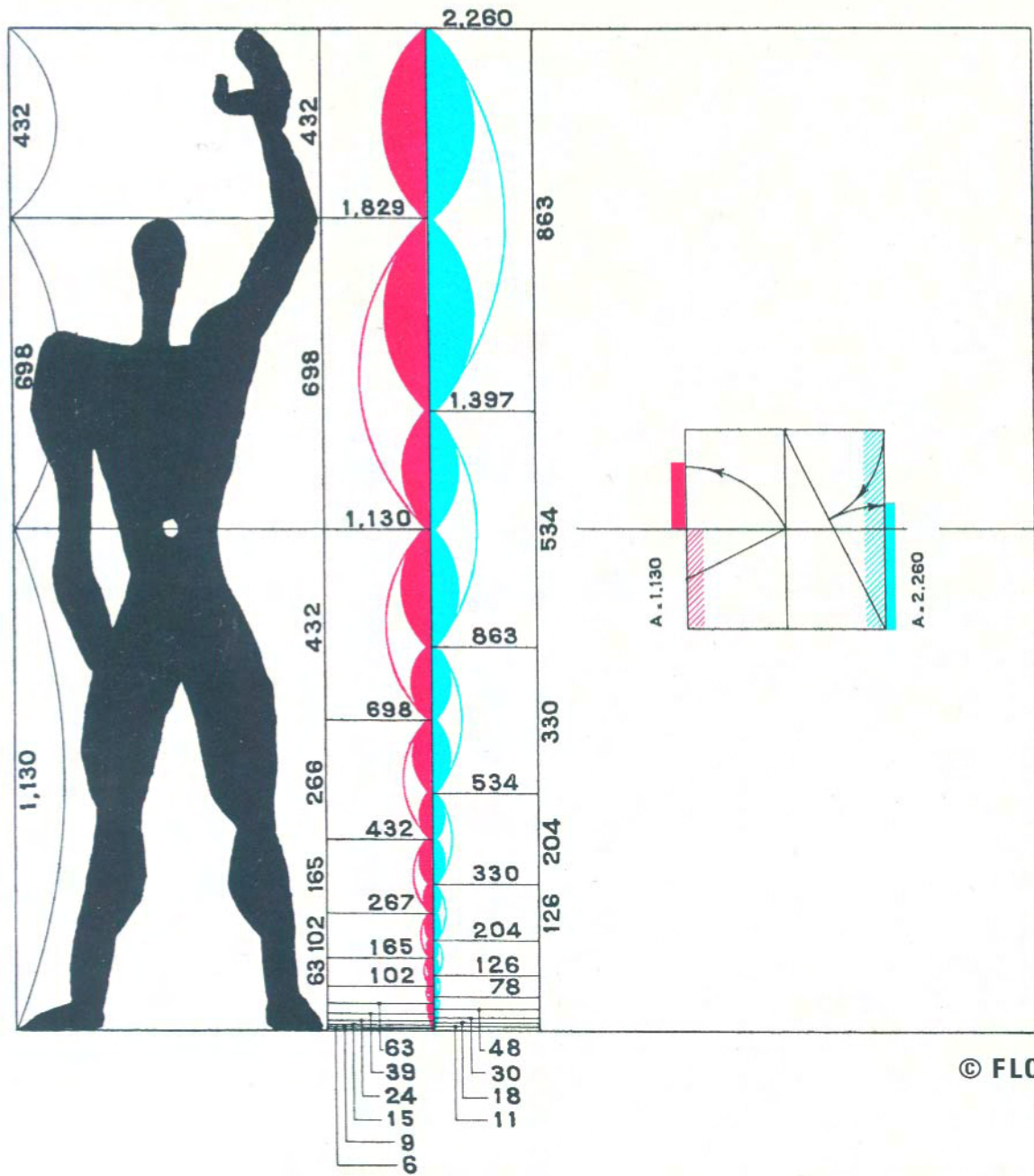
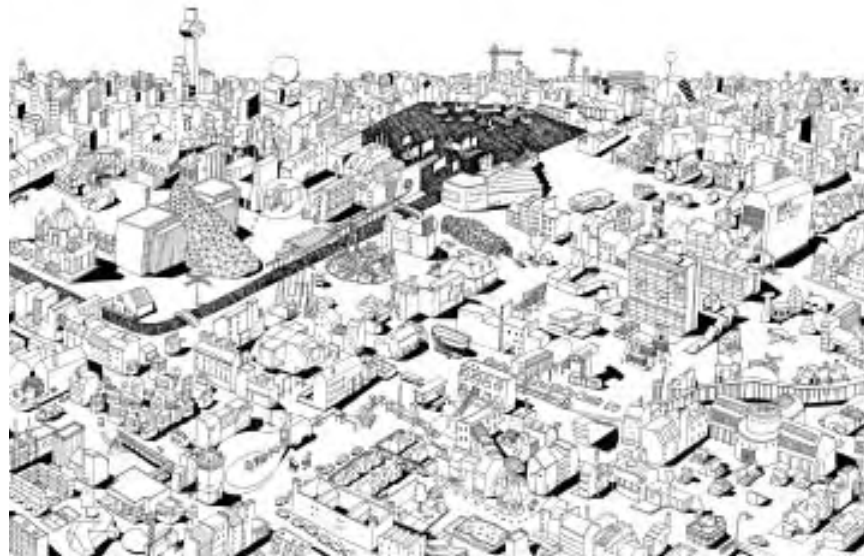


The StoJournal for Architects

Bernard Tschumi, SARC Architects, Peter Barber Architects, Jestico + Whiles, Ecker Architekten, Totems Communications GmbH, ...



Le Corbusier: Le Modulor 1945. (c) FLC/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2008



"raumlabor Welt" is a sketch of a synthetic city drawn from the group's designs.
Visualisation: raumlabor_berlin

The inside story ...

... from three renowned architects whom [ark] has interviewed for you in three different countries: Finland, Lebanon and Germany. Here's what we asked raumlabor_berlin from Berlin, Nabil Gholam from Beirut and Antti-Matti Siikala from Helsinki:

"Apart from designing buildings, architects have always pursued other lines of work as well – as furniture and product designers, project developers, advisors, development aid volunteers ... In what fields outside of their "conventional" occupation will architects be involved in particular in the next 10 years, and why? In which of these areas have you already acquired experience?"

raumlabor_berlin, Berlin, D

Jan Liesegang, born in Cologne in 1968, is one of the founding members of the interdisciplinary architectural group raumlabor_berlin. In addition to architecture, the nine group members also work with urban development, planning public spaces, landscape architecture and artistic projects and installations. Jan Liesegang studied architecture at TU Berlin, the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen and the Cooper Union School of Architecture in New York. He received his degree in 1997 and was awarded the prize for the best thesis.

We feel that the bulk of the architecture produced today is of a very low level with regard to both function and quality, and believe that this standard must be improved. Greater quality is required not only in the field of energy efficiency, but also in terms of improving our entire living environment through reconfiguration and reprogramming. Architects must act more as the designers of the processes of societal transformation, and work together with people from other fields in the political sphere – they must fight to ensure that the creation of space is not dominated solely by strategies of economic exploitation. Our changing work world is giving rise to a growing number of the unemployed, of people working flexible hours, and a reduction in the space required by industry in our cities. The result is the creation of new free spaces, something which gives rise to new challenges and new demands for spatial configuration. Ever faster transportation links and the ubiquity of mobile telecommunications create new networks and change the character of territories and public spaces. We believe that the resulting uncertainties about what is permissible in the public sphere are a true opportunity.

[Cross Section]



"Silver Pearl Congress Center and Spa" was a temporary festival centre for the G8 summit in 2007. Photo: raumlabor_berlin



The sculpture "Küchenmonument" (Kitchen Monument) was created in conjunction with *plastique-fantastique* of Berlin. It is comprised of an entrance box panelled in zinc sheet with a pneumatic bubble made of translucent film. Photo: Marco Canevacci



Jan Liesegang has been a member of the academic staff at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design since 2001. Photo: raumlabor_berlin

When growth was dominating, the architect's primary job was to conceive new structures and thus new ways of enclosing space. Today, it is often the case that more space is enclosed than is actually needed. Societal and economic processes have robbed portions of our constructed environment of their original purpose. Boundaries are becoming unstable; they are no longer defined by a single function and are starting to dissolve. Empty spaces are arising in the centre, and new centres are being created along the edges. We are working at many of the places which have lost much of their meaning, function and value. We strive to view these spaces not as having been cut off, but instead through a lens which focuses on their role as a link, and to provide them with new impetus, to reshape and reprogram them. For us, this is the key to a city which is able to offer people versatile spaces for their own utilisation.

Public spaces are our primary area of activity, and we often collaborate with theatres in our projects aimed at invigorating and appropriating these public spaces. These projects are usually aimed at bringing the theatre into the city in order that it can participate directly in the social processes and conflicts.

For example, we are currently working with two theatres and an opera house in the Ruhr to develop "Eichbaumoper", an opera. Eichbaum is a tram stop on Line U18, which runs between Essen and Mülheim. It is a neglected place in the middle of a motorway junction on the A40 which is infamous for its dismal pedestrian underpasses and as a dangerous place prone to vandalism and violence.

The opera takes place in an "opera hut" that has been set up on site. Collaboration between specialists from the fields of composition, words and space in conjunction with the direct confrontation with the everyday conditions and local residents of this area gives rise to a new form of opera. We see the temporary conversion of this station into an opera house as a process of revitalisation, one which can facilitate the conception of long-term reconfiguration measures for it. The idea is to take spaces in which people feel abandoned and isolated and to turn them into a collective theme; it is about confrontation, dialogue and participation.



Nabil Gholam has been working primarily from Barcelona since 2006.



The AZ House is located on the Maamltein Cliff, giving it a spectacular view out over the Bay of Jounieh.
Visualisation: Naji Sleiman



The headquarters of the logistics company CMA CGM and the Platinum Tower extend above the Beirut skyline.



Visualisation: NGAP and Pascal Vacher

Nabil Gholam, Beirut, LIB

Nabil Gholam, born in Beirut, studied architecture at the Ecole d'Architecture Paris-Villemin. Following his degree with distinction, he obtained a masters degree in urban development at Columbia University in New York, where he received the "Best Thesis Award". After completing his training, Nabil Gholam worked in France, Spain, the United States and China before founding his own agency, "Nabil Gholam Architecture & Planning" (NGAP) in Beirut in 1994. It has had a small office in Barcelona since 2006.

Over the next ten years, globalisation will be even more evident than in the past. A new global consciousness will be created that will lend new dynamism to the economic and cultural development of the international community as it grows ever closer. This process will also result in changing work procedures in numerous fields, with significant consequences. NGAP has been one of the participants in development and change in the Mediterranean and Middle East for 14 years now, an area where flexible approaches are needed to meet the new demands and conditions that are resulting from the pressures of globalisation. In order to do justice to these requirements, we must supplement the standard tasks of architects with a whole range of additional services, such as commercial project development, resource management and the development of environmental protection strategies and project studies.

It is especially important that we expand our range of services for our customers in the Arab world, where it is often necessary to import specialist knowledge and expertise. We must often assume the role of the developer, and are taking greater account

of cultural requirements and environmental protection aspects with our work. We believe that this rapid development will give rise to a new hybrid of architecture and product development whose task it will be to define feasible and profitable projects, and to take into account the interconnection of architecture and ecology. At the same time, architects are also being asked to take on an additional series of tasks in the creative realm, such as brand management, public relations and interactive planning, as well as traditional marketing and advertising activities. We have the impression that this dissolution of boundaries between creativity and planning will result in a boost to innovation, particularly due to the fact that the architect is being called upon to supply usable solutions for the manifold problems with societal identity and tradition. We are trying to use our architecture to firmly anchor people in their own reality, to achieve tangible improvement in their quality of life and thus to make a lasting impression on our direct environment.



The courtyard of the Kone Building in Espoo is shielded from the wind, and enjoys a nice view out over the bays and the sea.



Wood dominates the architecture of the Metla building, headquarters of the Finnish Forest Research Institute. Photographs: Jussi Tiainen



Sarlotta Narjus and Antti-Matti Siikala are SARC Architects from Helsinki.

Antti-Matti Siikala, Helsinki, FI

Antti-Matti Siikala was born in Turku, Finland in 1964. He studied architecture at the University of Technology in Helsinki, where he received his Master of Science in Architecture with Distinction in 1993. Antti-Matti Siikala joined Jan Söderlund & Co as a partner in 1995. In 1997, the office was rechristened SARC Architects LTD, and he and Sarlotta Narjus – with whom he has been working since he was at university – are currently in charge. Antti-Matti Siikala has been a professor at Helsinki University of Technology since 2002.

An architect's job has always been extremely varied. As an urban planner, they are responsible for developing large areas, while as planners of individual buildings they must oversee each phase of construction, from landscape design through to interior design. With technical requirements becoming ever more complex and demanding, the architect's role as a coordinator has continued to develop. They must be kept informed of all technical areas being dealt with by a wide range of specialists and designers, as this is the only way in which architects can serve as a central contact person for their customers in all concerns, regardless of whether they concern construction engineering or acoustics. In order to do justice to these demands, not only are design talent and a trained eye for aesthetics necessary, but also a good understanding of the technical and economic aspects of a construction project.

An architect who is also able to seamlessly integrate the corporate culture and brand identity of their client into their planning is able to offer their customer a great deal of added value. As an adviser for workplace management, the architect must also be

able to put himself into the relevant working culture and to obtain a detailed overview of the workflows.

As environmental awareness increases, architects must give sustainability and environmental friendliness an ever greater role in their projects, and dealings with ecological and ethical questions will result in their taking an even more pronounced role as designers in future. There are tremendous new challenges to be met here, particularly with regard to the utilisation of space and large-scale urban planning. In addition to the environmental issues arising from developing the building site, utilisation of existing urban spaces and individual buildings for new purposes also entails new challenges and opportunities for architects. As those around them become ever more specialised, the importance of the architect in the traditional role as a versatile manager and coordinator continues to grow.