

In the beginning of the forties, the need to provide housing, commercial, administrative, cultural or industrial accommodation in sufficient quantity and on the basis of a higher standard, generated the idea of a plan for greater Stockholm. This plan, which became approved town-plan in 1952, materialized from several decisions:

a) to organize city-extension in well equipped suburban units comprising: dwellings, services, business, ewentually, light-industry,

b) to build proper traffic ways, the subway becoming the principal connection for inhabitants traveling from suburbs to the centre.

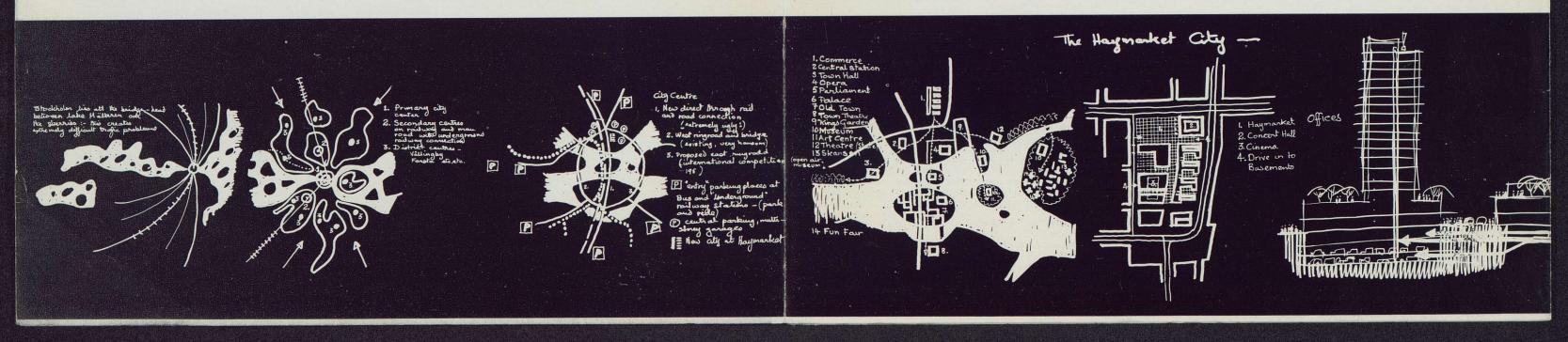
c) to reshape the ancient business- and cultural centre (Norrmalm district and adjoining zone) in order to make it fit for its function as a focus for the collective life of the city.

Later on, the rapid expansion of the city and the corresponding decrease of available building ground in the interior of the administrative limits of Stockholm led to the constitution of a regional association between Stockholm city and several agglomerations comprized in its influence zone (in its widest sens). This asociation prepared a regional plan in order to coordinate the development of each individual body within the newly formed region.



The function of the core of Stockholm (Norrmalm) as an urban centre for the whole region was maintained by the plan. The idea having guided the planners is that of a decentralized agglomeration posessing a well developed central area. This conception is right the more as the rale of the city is mainly commercial, administrative and culturel 70% of working people being engaged in services) and justifies a well equipped core, with easy access, facilitating personal contacts. In that way two distinct environments emerge: the central zone with its core (Norrmalm) with an outspoken city-character and the suburbs, for the greatest part recently completed. democratic community alone dem In the first sketch I have tried work of the extremely difficult the skerries to the east form which is over 100 kilometers long second sketch shows the propose of the suburbs, for the greatest part recently completed.

It is against the background of what is said above about Stockholm as a total structure that the city must be judged. Its commercial function, its trafic by car, bus and underground, and its miliea will succed or fail as part of the success or failure of the total plan. It is perhaps this planned remodelling of the structure of an ancient but expanding west european town, not as the result of a war and its destruction, but of a creative will to modernise and plan which makes Stockholm so interesting — and surprising. The problems of communal purchase of city property in a



a report on stockholm

by Ralph Erskine

democratic community alone demand a highly developed social instinct! In the first sketch I have tried to place Stockholm's city in the framework of the extremely difficult traffic concentration of the region the skerries to the east form a complete barrier and Lake Mälaren which is over 100 kilometers long can only be crossed at few points. The second sketch shows the proposed (and already partly built) structure of the »urban federation» of Stockholm. In the third sketch is a schematic presentation of the solution of the problem raised by the above mentioned traffic concentration.

The new »Haymarket» city is only one part of a large and complex city structure, — it is this larger organism that I have tried to illustrate in the fourth sketch. The structure of this larger city can be experienced as a number of chains of functions, with Haymarket as a point of departure, one such chain.

Planning in Sweden is mai authority although some mast are subject to the approval of Urbanisation process in Sweden migration from rural areas (a densely populated centres. Thes nly a responsability of the municipal der to provide accomodation for a population whose standard is er-plans and detail plans in general constantly rising. Planning as a merely municipal (communal) affair the State.

is a direct consequence of continuous griculture becoming mechanized) to

has newertheless its limitations as it tends to exploit the grounds within its own borders without consideration to separate landscape and townscape. The result is the well known urban sprawl which e centres have to be readapter in or- afflicts most for our continental cities. One should notice here a reac-

and square to the »King's garden» — an unique city park with daily free performances in the summer, and a permanent exhibition of the best of Swedish industrial design. From here it stretches along the quays of the sea past the National Art Gallery to »Ship Island», former naval base and proposed art centre where the museam of Modern Art is already completed, and where the city has its youth hostel on the fullrigger »Af Chapman».

The Haymarket city itself is planned around a pedestrian precinct in which is included the old Haymarket with the Concert Hall, and it abuts on to the new main north-south trafic route through the city. In vertical structure it has three basements with garage, with partially mechanised parking floors, and with loading bays and storage space. There are two storey terrace buildings with shops, restaurants and a large cinema, and above these are tower blocks for offices.

Architecturally this city is not exceptional and excessive traffic concentration may give future problems, but as a notable example of modern city milieu it shows great promise. The interrelation of outdoaar spaces, the old Haymarket with its sloping floor, the new main pedestrian street, and the smaller squares and courts with their connections through

Another function chain is from Haymarket with its character of street arcades give a variety of spacial experiences without over-complication,

give a human scale without sentiment, and an articulation to the experience of the different shops. It is, moreover, very noticable that the lack of »virtuosity» in the architecture and in the paving of simple concrete slabs gives true city character: — »in a shopping centre there is nothing as interesting as shops and goods».

The traffic, the show windows, entrances to underground stations, advertisements and people — people strolling or hurrying, people on the square drinking coffee, people streaming out of the cinema or sitting amongst the flowers on the roof terraces, - these are the decorative elements of a city, and these are the unchallenged dominants in Stockholm's Haymarket.

The absence of trees and planting in the paved surfaces unquestionably adds to the establishment of city milieu — here vegetation would be an impediment hindering crowds and hiding show windows and advertisments. Planting is to be found on the roofs of the shopping terraces, lifted out of the rush of the street level.

Even the tower blocks are not oppressive in spite of their proximity to one another, — they are there, they are neutral, and they are a background which demund no greater attention. When one of the five

tion which has set in recently in the form of the creation of regional associations, endeavouring to solve this problem.

The municipal assembly in Stockholm exercices its powers through a specially elected body of administrators. Each of these is in charge of a certain department. The so-called councillor for town-planning affairs is assisted by the director of planning generally an architectneers and research workers). ner of specialized departments.

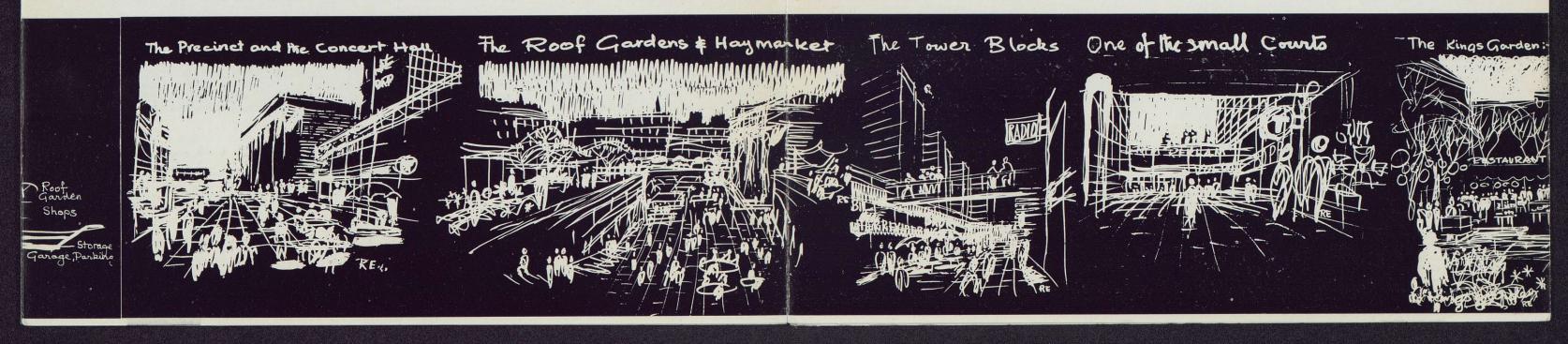
well known architects who are each designing one of the tower blocks was the inception of the plan asked what his building would be like he answered that in the interest of the whole and of neighbourliness it would vary somewhat in detail but would in the main be like the first to be built.

Stockholm city is as yet uncompleted, it can change under the dynamic of its growth, it will be a mixture of good and poor guality (as for example some of the shops that have moved in), but it can well be followed wilth interest by architects, town planners and city fathers in other towns and countries.

a few words with

DR. YNGVE LARSSON

Former member of the municipal council and in charge of town-planning had to be gained for supporting the scheme. The Chamber of Commerce affairs in the very crucial years (1940-46). Dr. Larsson appears to me for instance showed a good comprehension and gave his total support. as a very happy mixture of the scholar and the man of action, still after Besides, there were some favourable circumstances: retirement actively engaged in the campaign for a better environment. Here are some of his opinions about the reorganisation of Stockholm of »- a continuous policy of investment and of acquisition of land by the which he undoubtedly was an inspired leader: municipality



planner, who controls a large office of technicians. (architects engi-

Plans prepared by the town-planning office are forwarded for imple- tion of decayed areas in centra mentation to the executive body and for execution to a certain num-

In order to be able to carry out town planning schemes, the city has

been endowed with extensive chase of property especia bublic works.

These powers enabled the munici per consent of owners — the

»Definite ideas concerning the future image of the city took shape at the beginning of the forties, although a certain number of important measures were already carried out during the thirties (traffic regulations for instance as in the case of the Slussen junction). The ewer growing pressure caused by population growth, the requirements for better standards, the needs of an ever increasing vehicular traffic obliged public men to take a stand on these questions.

Ralph Erskine caring for a working majority.

Evidently, the reorganisation of the city, making necessary important works and expenditures, cannot be undertaken without the support of a stable majority. Being the representative of a minority group in the council it was difficult for me at that time to secure the majority by political means. Sound argument was necessary. Important public bodies rights for compulsory pur lly in the case of rehalilitazones and in that of execution of financial compensation whereas leaseholders had the choice between financial compensation and or the acquisition of equivalent value in floor space in the newly planned buildings.

To assure its commitments, the city had to carry out the reshaping of the central zone as rapidly as possible.

pality to acquire — mainly by pronecessary ground. Owners received

»— the existence of semi-public corporations carrying out the projects», — a perfect understanding, during the time of my office, between the political administrator and the technical adviser (Architect Sven Markelius).

— One can notice by now:

- a definit improvement in communications center zone-suburs by the creation of the subway,

— a rapid occupation of available floorspace in the newly built or planned premises in the centre,

— a satisfactory development of the newly built secondary centres in the periphery

 steady rhythm in the planned decentralisation of some administrative or industrial activities in the suburbs. despite a period of initial resistance.

Concerning future development

Due to the continuous growth of the city a certain decentralisation of public administration seems advantegous. Certain individual parts of the town should benefit from a right of self-determination within the frame of a central administration, a fact which would probably allow them to develop better their own personalities. Such a trend could lead Facts and figures. Number of inhabitants (1956) amounts to approx. 1.080.000 (15% of total population). — About 380.000 péople living in central area, 700.000. — in the suburbs. Actul planning is based on a prevision of approx. 1.450.000. —

ewentually to a kind of urban federation, a proper antidote to the undefinite and undistinct growth of the metropolis.»

City as a milieu.

»The city as a milieu has become to-day many-sided.» Dr. Larsson feels a sympathy for the young architects who are enthusiastic about the dynamic aspect of city-life and who newertheless prefer to arrange their home in some readapted log cabin in the suburs or under the roof of centuries old tenement in the old part of the city.

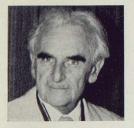
»Poetry, remains an ultimate clue of good and sound planning.»

André Schimmerling

LEGENDS (photographs). 1. The city of Stockholm in its administrative limits. The whole town area is divided into groups of suburbs of such a size that they can conveniently form the basis for main centres. In gray the central zone dating from the 19-th century. (By courtesy Arkitektur–V. 1956.) – 2. Model of the new Haymarket centre (in construction). – 3. Model of the residential suburb of Farsta (detail). Architects Sv. Backström and L. Reinius. – Characteristic for the planning in the outer suburbs. The document shows the centre and its residential surrounding. For bibliography on planning see page 10. –



FOR



But, Mr. Neutra. What are your design principles?

THE QUESTION YOUNGER MEN HAVE ASKED THE OLDER MAN, NEEDS HUMBLE PONDERING

Contributions to our »FORUM» if written in french, english or german, are published in their original context.

not to claim knowing exactly what is going on in me when I creatively tune in on the Universe. I can perhaps say what stimulates me or what stimulation I seek in order to find myself going into action. That would be a good deal if one knew it in some particulars.

I am sufficiently of a Zen Buddhist

One could think to pieces a creative act, or try to follow its motivation from time fraction to time fraction. because physiologists have measured cerebral processes by indirect methods to play in thousandths of a second. It would be a tough but fascinating job to monitor such a process like a sports reporter who radices, blow by blow, a football game.

Or also, one could in a more old fashioned way, lay down some absolute, but speculative principles of »design I follow». Or one could poll on responses, huge control groups of several hundred to several hundred thousand persons, of various age levels, ethnic backgrounds, sex or even acquired professions to digest these »statistical findings of experimental psychology on principles of design». They would undoubtedly be clarified by actual such observed responses. It can be seen, the matter becomes very unwieldy and very controversial for the purposes of a practical career or what to do about it. So let us return to the first scheme which has no full scientific safety, thoroughness or provability, but seems pragnatically valid by a reason which is not easily refuted.

The reasoning looks sound when other hypotheses and explanations become far-fetched. Undoubtedly, my own career appears to be completely contrary to what normally is advised or prognosticised concerning an architect getting on in his practice: having »contacts», marrying an influential society lady and hostess, holding membership in a country club, enjoying influential political associations, fitting into the demands of a certain tradition, or »give them what thew want», or even speaking» their language» when I started my career in the midst of millions of born Americans, without myself even having had English in school, in a vast foreign country, thoroughly strange to a Viennese boy -I am sorry to say, I had provably none of the above mentioned benefits. So all I know about my career is not what I »read in the papers», as good old Will Rogers used to say. I shall have to rake my own personal memory.

When asked how my designs have evolved, or have I begun to make a living with them, or how I got on against all odds, I also fail to have abstract principles to offer. I don't know of any mysterious mathematical »module» or any patent medicine capsule to be taken three times a day. The best I know is what I can consciously remember as making me tick and produce, what stimulation enabled me to »get into the act» first, with timidity and later an increasing hit of »elan» in fact with a passion so that I did not fail concretely according to the retrospective testimony of now quite a large control group. This is all I can safely relate or talk about with any profit to any perhaps hopeful listener. It is eminently practical and not far fetched speculation or long haired philosophy. But I still feel the deep sympathy I could share with that »control group of human beings». Architecture becomes a very human affair to me.

While unconscious of any artistic rules or following any abstract principles. I very early enjoyed falling thoroughly in love with the few prospective clients who showed faint signs of trusting me. I was fascinated by the magic working of »empathy» and tried to practice with all my heart this natural gift of feeling oneself into another person and into his problems of personal and environmental relationships, with the humans closest to him, with his site, with his room and with his furniture. Far from considering it an »obligation» or a chore »as per contact», I did it with such shining eyes and red ears that the faint prospect got interested in this young man who was so genuinely interested in him, and who thus seemed to open up a new vista onto his problem. The faint prospect changed into a real one and finally into a confidence-bearing client. This, I found, in turn transmuted me into a wizard so that I could perform miracles, exalting to myself, even for clients with much less capital than confidence. My attention became so fixed on human relationship to surrounding circumstance and a physiological penetration of the being who trustingly would think of putting into my hands his next thirty years of future, - his marital and parental happiness, his business future as an insurance company manager, or his political future as chairman of the board of Education, that I began to perform, quite unconsciously perhaps, with an emphasis not on fashionable. well advertised installations, less on coarsely conspicuous shapes and materials, paraboloids, zigzags, curvacious charm, but rather on much more minute humanly sensitive values and responses which in subtle combination might go on and last over the amortization period or, if possible, for happiness and after. A subconscious rule became to shrink away from the fashionable. Of course to indulge in it and the passing show or brass band is also human, and a very common risk for all of us. I believe I managed to dodae that risk.

If any »narrower form principles» can at all be deducted afterwards from a life's work in environmental design, they most definitely do not play a role in space alone or still less on twodimensional paper stretched smoothly on the drafting board. These principles would, or I have said before, even beyond all possibilities of photographic record of the finished product, deal with time-space, in other words, with processes and responses, with fatigues and irritations piling on for hours, months, years and decades. Physiological modules are here powerful. One ought to know about them. My designs may have been novel and shocking when I was rather lonely in a hemisphere, and vainly longing for companionship or acceptance, but they were newer sensational. Always they were conservatively done, with a time dimension in mind, and suffused with a questioning curiosity: how long will this formal and coloristic combination last? How fast will it psychologically wear off? How long can you laugh about this joke? When do you start to get bored by this flashy formal trick? Has every design a yawn at its end? Or have we, billions of individuals, newertheless all of one human race, performed in millions of years, perhaps made durable and secure adaptations to certain surroundings, shapewise, coloristically, etc., so that we do not, cannot, get sick and tired of certain »natural» features. Sometimes, remarkably, we have no goodbye yawn, before the next fashion or novelty starts! These enduring values are momentous to watch, I thought.

Honestly, I am not on the payroll of Pittsburg Glass when I say there is a safe outlook through a large window onto changing clouds and changing dynamics of illumination, and possibly such lasting vitality become to me the oninous matter in design's fate.

Vital survival - it emerged for me as the title of a book; no publisher would see his way clear to publish it in full. It emerged more as the topic of a vast research, literature and design activity to follow, to occupy the minds of generations to come — generations jammed on freeways, with all inlets and outlets blocked, beathing millions of cubic feat and exhaust gasses under skies which have turned from California blue to milky, sopy smog beyond the telephone poles and crisscrossing wires. I have often said, and repeated with a shudder, that annually 12 million know-how Americans cool their too hot heels in psychiatric waiting-rooms. One wonders where they all found a place to park cars, and then suddenly one understands that perhaps they did not find a place and this may have been exactly what made them mentally so disturbed.

In short, if we design cages for polar bears, we must know polar bears and even love them. If we design for man. we must know him passionately and systematically. I do say, we must ewen love him. We must love man, woman, and child, who according to the Report of the Eisenhower Committee on Space Problems, approach in a couple of centuries a paretty forbidding sign: "NO STANDING SPACE ON DRY LAND», (although there is plenty of plankton protein in the ocean water. Design for a correlated man-made setting so drastically superseding the natural scene of post paradisical safety and balance has newertheless its original integral, imminant principle. It still plays within the limitations of our human organic make in our own physiologicallyg determined time-space which seems to run out while we are crammed between a hundred thousand commercially backed patent applications, beteen the irritations and the tasty enticements of a thousand flashy fashion magazines, and a million monomanic Madison Avenue advertising pages of terrific value per suare inch. Perhaps we can tell »the wholesome means toward design» less a remarkable module or modulor and more an attitude of taking that multidimensional organic human entity of ours more seriously than the glorious traffic of millions of progresses that scratch badly each others fenders. -



Alison and Peter Smithson

ARCHITECTURE AND ART

In a conversation with a young architect intensely concerned with Architecture and Art, it was suddenly revealed to us that the old relationship between architecture, painting, and sculpture, was something we no longer wanted. It is not that it is too difficult to attain, but it is no longer necessary.

cal nature of this statement, but regard it as a necessary attitude in view of the anti-Art architecture which we practice. Looking back to that moment, the question being put was, what use are sculptors and painters to-day, surely canvas and stone are obsolete? The answer being given, NO, we don't think so, materials are never outmoded, only ideas. But, he protested, the museums are killing us, art has been made something to be stared at with quides, to be written about, not lived - when artists worked for religion and helped to make churches and cathedrals, it was somehow all of a piece. Surely it is necessary for them to help in building to-day?

We are fully aware of the radi-

NO, we replied, it is inconceivable that we should work in the old way with painters and sculptors. It is too depressing an idea to even contemplate.

So, artists a r e useless?

NO, we replied again, without them our architecture would be impossible, we feed off them. what they have revealed to us is built into the architecture itself. A new kind of relationship has been established.

We had long been groping for a rationalisation of our distrust of traditional attitudes.

When le Corbusier had spoken of arts», we wondered what he meant. When he tried with Lipchitz at the Villa de Mondrot, or with himself as 'artist' in the Pavillon Suisse, or at the Unité d'Habitation, to formalize the relationship between architectuer and painting and sculpture, it wes always a failure (only in his own flat where Legers, Ozenfants, et al, are scattered about as possessions is one moved).

»Gardez-nous du pleonasme!» says le Corbusier, »I find myself instinctively the adversary of forced art, of 'art made to order.». But why is the rough-concrete on the Unite an essential part of it. when the art-works (modular men, stiles, glaced screens, etc.,) are se trivial?

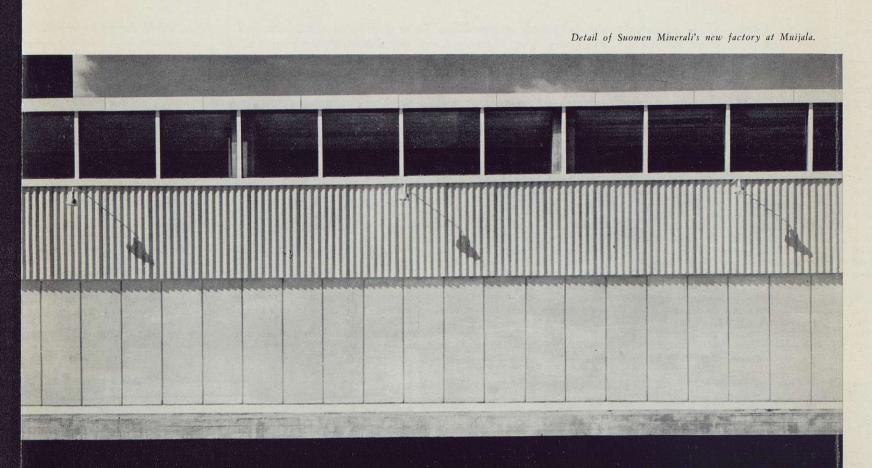
Because the architecture is complete without them.

They are there because le Corbusier is chasing yesterday's dream when today's reality is already there.

Architecture, painting and sculpture, are manifestations of life, sitasfying real needs; of man, and not of each other They influence each other in a poetic way, but they are equally and as mysteriously influenced by industrial techniques, the cinema, supersatasfying real needs; of man, and old tin cans

Alisan and Peter Smithson June

Alisan and Peter Smithson June 1954. (Revised June 1959)



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LETTERS' TO THE EDITOR

some spontaneous thoughts concerninug 'le carré bleu'

I sense a strong desire for reorientation in architectural education. By education I mean the formal system by which methods of analysis and investiaction (if any?) are imparted to the architect in the course of his training. The architect is blinded to the reality of his environment by his involvement with the perpetuation of traditional formalism - i.e. what is usually called 'the architectural heritage'. (reality here means that which actually exists as opposed to that which is perceived to exist - fact as opposed to conjecture). This system is dependent upon predetermined elements related to the problem by more than limitation of the imagination.

We might call this system the 'old' or 'romantic' landscapel It depends upon a central point of view from which the creator observes the kaleidoscopic landscape of form and society. He selects his 'inspiration' with the calculated indifference of the connoisseur.

The 'new' or 'realistic' landscape is the result of a modified space-time relationship produced by the acceleration of communications and scientific methods of investigation. Man now has a new perspective of his environment ranging from microscopic to aerial photographic observation. The situation is no longer static and the new perspective is not limited to purely visual factors.

This position seems to be the reverse of humanism. Man is now a peripheral observer searching for the centre of the Universe. Perhaps this centre also contains a humanising factor. I find a dearth of evidence to this effect in 'le carré bleu'.

Malcolm Quantrill. April 60 .---

LA THEORIE ET LA PRATIQUE

Extraits d'une lettre de notre collaborateur au Maroc.

Je suis, en matière d'Architecture, partisan de la théorie instable qui se nourrit des connaissances modernes et de culture contemporaine, sans en espérer la matérialisation immédiate dans la forme étudiée. Pour tout dire, je ne crois pas que la théorie fasse

10

l'art, mais au'en matière de forme la pratique précède la théorie, l'exemple donne la lecon.

L'Architecte est un individu particuliè rement spécialisé dont la nature est constituée de telle manière qu'elle lui permet de transformer subconsciemment les besoins en formes au moyen d'un acquit en perpétuel mouvement, et chaque artiste dans le cadre des exigences formelles dictées par son époque exprime sa personnalité.

La forme ne peut être l'application systématique et intégrale d'une théorie. Elle doit, par contre, être en sympathie avec un ensemble de principes, une doctrine, qui est la digestion lente et continue des connaissances utilas. L'art de construire comporte évidemment une large part technique qui, elle, nécessite l'application de théories appropriées. Mais la forme en tant que volume occupant l'espace transcende ses contingences en échappant a la logique courante.

Le créateur lui-même se retrouve en étranger devant la forme créée.

constater que les plus grands artistes ont évilé le jugement précis de leur oeuvre et que la compréhension la plus profonde vient souvent du dehors. Ils restent en ligison étroite avec leur art par une curieuse équivoque, semblable a celle de la mère justifiant le caractère de son enfant en le comparant au sien.

La forme belle est celle qui traduit ce complexe de connaissances et de besoins décantés au travers d'une nature exceptionnelle.

Comme vous le voyez, cher ami, mes préoccupations risquent peut-être de vider le débat plutôt que de l'enrichir. L'art ne contrôle pas la réalité, il la crée.

Je reste pourtant sensible aux termes de l'article »Morphologie de l'expression plastique», bien qu'il ait servi de base a mes observations, car j'y trouve une étude analytique extrêmement intéressante d'un des aspects de la morphologie de l'Architecture qu'il était utile de mettre en lumière. Car, si je reste convaincu qu'il n'est pas possible d'établir une théorie systématique de la composition en Architecture, je ne suis pas contre la théorie, a condition que les résultats la justifient.

THE AUTHORS LE CARRE BLEU

Il est remarqueble, a ce sujet, de



Ralph Erskine ARIBA AMTPL scottish architect, was established in Sweden (Drottningholm) since the end of the thirties. He shows a special concern for evolving a style particularly adapted to harsh climatic conditions. This trend is apparent in some of his recent works, as for instance a villa in Lisö, shopping centre in Luleå. He is also author of theoritical studies on subarctic habitat, presented at the last C.I.A.M. meeting at Otterlo. -



Yngve Larsson Dr. Phil., who since 1912 was engaged in public activity. In 1934 he was elected member of the city-council of Stockholm (1934-54) later an executive on the board for administration and for town planning affairs (1940-46). He was a representative in the swedish parliament for the liberal patry (1946-52). In addition he is the author of numerous studies pertaining to town-planning practice and administration.

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The cover illustrates a detail from the newly built Haymarket centre in Stockholm

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