

Anni Vartola. **Undisciplined Multiplicity: Postmodernism in Finnish Architectural Debate.** Doctoral thesis. Aalto ARTS Books 2014.

Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture,
Department of Architecture
Supervisor: professor Aino Niskanen
Tutor: professor Pekka Korvenmaa



Abstract

The doctoral thesis examines a cultural phenomenon labelled postmodernism as well as its reception within the field of architecture in Finland. The research questions are: How was postmodernism understood in the Finnish architectural discourse? How was postmodernism received in Finland? How did postmodernist themes affect the ideals of Finnish architecture?

The research clarifies our understanding of late 20th century Finnish architecture, and yields new knowledge about the theoretical and ideological principles that guided Finnish interpretations of both modernist and postmodernist architecture at the time. The idea of postmodernism seems to have been diluted to become a question of style and taste within Finnish architectural discourse. Postmodernism was received as an unwelcome architectural trend of American origin which threatened the domestic architectural tradition.

The ideological reforms of postmodernism were nevertheless accepted, and the arguments of postmodernist architectural theory were used to defend the new notion of modernism that had developed at the beginning of the 1990s. The architectural values that were revived by postmodernism include, for example, respect for the site-specific conditions and local building traditions, appreciation for the history of architecture as a resource, and understanding the meaning of architecture in regard to human emotions, sensoriality, memory and experientiality as part of the human interaction with architecture.

The dissertation is a monograph written in Finnish, and it is based on written archive sources and theoretical literature on architecture, art and cultural philosophy. The main research material is the body of articles, reviews, essays, critiques and projects published in architectural journals, exhibition catalogues, seminar proceedings and other similar sources in Finland from the 1970s to the 1990s.

In addition, the interpretations presented in the dissertation are based on background information gathered from thematic interviews with ten Finnish contemporary architects. The research topic has also been approached by means of architectural study trips around Finland in 2010–2013.

Keywords

architectural theory, postmodernism, modernism, Finnish architecture, architecture of the 1980s, architectural history, architectural discourse

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Further inquiries: anni.vartola@arkvv.fi.