

Summaries in English

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The Administration Building of the National Old Age Insurance Service in Helsinki 221

1955-1957; architect: Prof. Alvar Aalto, Helsinki

Once again the great Finnish architect displays the inexhaustible quality of his creative imagination and at the same time demonstrates the versatility and independence, with respect to all formal principles, of architecture that is in the truest sense modern. He has likewise sought to keep the building on a human scale, to "debureaucratize" the effect made on the beholder by the structure.

Administration Building of J. R. Geigy S.A., Basle 227

1957/58; architects: M. H. and K. A. Burckhardt FAS/SIA, Basle

Now that the Geigy plant has been surrounded by the expanding city, the grounds can hardly be enlarged by new purchases. The modernization of buildings or the creation of new elements (as in the example) thus calls for an overall plan which is worked out very systematically and, seeing that in this case there is available an area of only 30 m. x 30 m., it has been decided, despite objections raised on the part of the authorities, to erect a 12-storey tower structure, plus the attic floor and two basement floors. Also, an underground telephone central and air raid shelter.

The New Philips Building in Zurich 231

1957/58; architect: A. E. Bosshardt FAS/SIA, Zurich
eng.: Schubert & Schwarzenbach, Zurich

There was available for these new Philips premises a site of 5,000 sq.m., thus making it possible to give the building the considerable depth of 33 m., the offices and workshops being disposed around the periphery. A column outside serves as a distinguishing sign and the lobby is decorated with two mural compositions by Lecoq and Lecat.

Offices and Shops of the Furniture Cooperative, Basle 235

1956/57; architect: Hans Fischli FAS/SIA, Zurich

On the site of an old building which was razed for this purpose, there have been erected two cubic structures at right angles to each other, one with 4 office storeys, the other reduced to ground floor only and serving as shop. This pavilion has a steel structure, whereas the main building is of concrete. A large luminous mast 21.60 m. high serves as a distinguishing sign. - The deliberate simplicity of the arrangement has entailed a construction cost of no more than 109 fr. per cu.m.

Economic and Town-Planning Aspects of Supermarkets and Shopping Centers 239

by Walter Affolter

It is in America above all that the progressive mechanization and rationalization of business have led to the creation on a vast scale of modern supermarkets, i.e., huge, self-service food shops, also including departments for other types of articles, and shopping centers, or in other words, closely coordinated groups of independent retail shops. This development has been conditioned, moreover, by the continuous expansion of cities (and of their satellite towns), increasing motorization, as well as by the bigger returns accruing from this concentration of trade. In Europe, and especially in Switzerland, traditional habits (loyalty to old shops, regular daily orders by housewives, etc.) are more deeply rooted, but an analogous development is nonetheless under way, one difference fortunately being that, here in the Old World town-planners and architects are playing an important role in determining the actual lay-out of this kind of center. The most striking example of this is the center at Vällingby, near Stockholm (70 shops for around 60,000 inhabitants). In Switzerland, the desirable demographic base is a population of from 20,000 to 30,000 in the vicinity, and in view of the fact that there are far fewer available sites than in the USA, there should be envisaged a certain number of shops comprising several departments. - We should likewise indicate the importance of a good location easily accessible from main thoroughfares, as well as of provision of sufficient parking space.

Exhibition Hall of the Orrefors Glassworks, Sweden 241

1956/57; architect: Bengt Gate, Stockholm

Steel and glass construction contrasting with the surrounding forest. For display of beautiful Orrefors glassware, old and new.

Storage Depot of the Val Maggia Electric Power Station at Avegno (Ticino) 243

1956/57; architect: Prof. Rino Tami FAS/SIA, Lugano-Zurich

Very functional building, used essentially as storage depot for cables and other power transmission equipment.

Cuno Amiet 245

by Franz Meyer

The Bernese master has celebrated this year his 90th birthday, on the occasion of which the Kunsthalle in Berne organized a huge exhibition covering the whole range of his work. Amiet is a powerful creator, and his works, viewed all together, give an impression of unity within complex variety. Amiet is of the same generation as Vuillard, Bonnard and Matisse, and at Pont-Aven he was directly inspired by the experiments of the "nabis" and of the neo-impressionists in general. It was in this spirit, attracted, however, not by interiors but by outdoor scenes, that he painted, e.g., "The Breton Woman" in the 90's, then the landscapes of Hellsau and Oschwand, which were for him a kind of "Inland Brittany". In the paintings that follow there is expressed the need to assimilate what he had learned from Van Gogh and also from Hodler, and likewise at the turn of the century C. A. found himself playing the role of mediator between the revolutionary art of the French and the painters of the German group known as "Die Brücke". A little later, he went in particularly for the big composition ("The Harvest" in 1915, "The Fountain of Youth"), in which he combines both the free colour effects of Fauvism and conscientiously disciplined drawing. Besides, it would be wrong to attempt to classify such rich, vital creations in a strictly regular succession of phases, C. A. always deliberately varying his technique according to each individual work. Whatever may emerge on the surface, Amiet's work in the last analysis has always striven to express in colour a love for created things—a love, moreover, which in the great paintings of 1957 and 1958 goes hand in hand with a certain mysterious inner profundity, which is the ultimate mark of the true master.

The "Cultural Circle" of the Industrialists of West Germany 252

by Hans-Friedrich Geist

The democratic endeavour to make our cultural heritage available to as much of the population as possible—always a characteristic endeavour of the Swiss—is likewise one of the most heartening movements now under way in West Germany. Evidence of this, among other things, is furnished by the "Kulturkreis" founded in 1951 by the German Federal Association of Manufacturers. This new organization is intended mainly to encourage patronage of the arts by individual leaders in the business world, a patronage, however, which above all involves sustained contact with young artists, who are aided and encouraged at every stage of their work. The activity of the Circle assumes the following forms: 1. Purchase or commissioning of works of art to constitute a collection, as well as the organization of travelling exhibitions in the industrial regions, the intention being to bring art home to the workers. 2. Stipends for budding artists (painters and sculptors, architects, industrial designers, musical composers; in the literary field, it is the view of the Circle that it is more difficult to discover new talent and therefore it restricts itself to the awarding of prizes to writers whose work gives evidence of combining traditional values and fresh creativity. Thus prizes have been awarded, among others, to Max Rychner, F. G. Jünger, etc. - 3. Donations (Folkwang Museum, in Essen, - the restoration of the great baroque organs at Ottobeuren and of the "Paradise" of Lübeck Cathedral, etc.) - 4. Book publications and, since 1954, a Year Book. - Since its foundation, the Circle has made available 1,500,000 marks for cultural purposes.