

ARCHITECTURE IN THE RINGTURM

FINLAND: Architecture in the 20th century

6th December 2000 to 19th January 2001

Curator: Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki

Press viewing: Tuesday, 5th December 2000, 10.30 hrs

Opening: Tuesday, 5th December 2000, 18.30 hrs

Exhibition site

Wiener Städtische Allgemeine Versicherung AG
Ringturm Exhibition Centre
A-1010 Vienna, Schottenring 30
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Opening hours

Monday to Friday: 9.00 to 18.00 hrs; entrance free
(Closed on public holidays and on 29th December)

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Photographic material available on request

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In the series of ARCHITECTURE IN THE RINGTURM events, the Wiener Städtische is staging the exhibition *Finland: Architecture in the 20th Century* from 6th December 2000 to 19th January 2001, which gives an overview of the architectural work of this Scandinavian country.

Finnish architecture: Finnish architecture has enjoyed wide-ranging international interest throughout the twentieth century. Particular high points were the period towards the start of the century, when architecture together with other cultural areas provided support for the campaigns for national independence (1917), and the 1930s, when the young, independent nation's image was characterised by modern, functional architecture. This was followed by the reconstruction phase of the 1950s, when a unique Finnish interpretation of the post-war modernism was developed, with characteristics rooted in the Finnish topography and climatic conditions. The end of the 1990s may be considered the last pinnacle of the century, as demonstrated by the interest of international media, critics and historians.

The theme: the focal point of the *Finland: Architecture in the 20th Century* is the development of the society and its influence on and combination with questions relating to municipal and private architecture and construction practice.

The exhibition seeks to show the many and varied answers which have been found in response to the same architectural problems and how these relate to solutions from earlier periods. The objective is to represent the typical features of each period; at the same time an attempt is made to answer the question "What is architecture?" Spatial concepts, structural considerations, details and materials are all explained. The underlying principles behind architecture – such as rhythm, proportion, surfaces, light and time – are demonstrated using masterpieces from Finnish architectural history.

The content and structure of the exhibition illustrate the various themes representing the different periods, and the differences and contrasts are underlined by essential historical events.

The periods: Finnish architecture is shown in the exhibition in ten time periods.

Building up a Finnish identity	1900–1909
Optimism and development of urban visions	1910–1919
Links with Europe, a period of change	1920–1929
Functionalism and technology	1930–1939
Consequences of the war and reconstruction	1940–1949
The strength of the everyday	1950–1959

Taciturn beauty	1960–1969
Built space for production and education	1970–1979
Thesis and antithesis	1980–1989
Towards a new century	1990–1999

On the basis of this subdivision the exhibition provides an overview of the architectural creativity of this Scandinavian country. It takes in a wide sweep from the buildings of the Finnish Jugendstil or Art Nouveau period, such as the work of Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen, Aulis Blomstedt, Erik Bryggman, through buildings by the famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto up to the buildings of the current age. The exhibition is completed with a display of the master plan for the Nordic diplomats' accommodation in the new diplomatic quarter of the new capital Berlin by Berger + Parkkinen, who have their practice in Vienna. This present-day link with Austria has developed from the teaching activities of the Finnish architect Timo Penttilä (from 1980, successor to Roland Rainer as Principal of the Academy of Visual Arts for one and a half decades).

Numerous original plans, drawings and models provide examples of the top-quality architecture Finland has produced. A comprehensive collection of pictures with explanatory texts on a number of projects covering the whole output of the century is presented in the form of long illuminated displays, bringing together the internationally-renowned works to form a "Panorama of Finnish architecture".

The exhibition: The exhibition was conceived in 1999 for Frankfurt. As Finland was featured centrally at the Book Fair at the German Architecture Museum, a presentation of approx. 140 of the most significant buildings was given over an area of more than 1,000 m² – buildings by architects such as Alvar Aalto, Eliel Saarinen and many others, including some of the latest projects from recent years. After Talin (Estonia) and Paris, Vienna is now the fourth site for the travelling exhibition.

This is the first comprehensive review of Finnish architecture of the 20th century, and was put together by the Museum of Finnish Architecture working together with the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt. It has been designed for a wide public and should among other things strengthen the role of architecture as part of the cultural and artistic life in Finland.

During the exhibition, furniture by Alvar Aalto from the current production series will be available for use; this has been provided by the company Artek. The companies Tervakoski and Finnforest as well as Finnair have also supported the exhibition.

The catalogue: Six illustrated essays give an insight into details which are all too unknown in this country. The range spans the historical development over individual

decades of the last century right up to the current situation facing architecture in Finland today.

With contributions from Ritva Wäre (Director of the Finnish National Museum), Riita Nikula (Prof. of History of Art, University of Helsinki); Pekka Korvenmaa (Director of Research, University of Art and Design, Helsinki); Sirkka-liisa Jetsonen (Architect, Researcher); Timo Tuomi (Science Manager, Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki); Marja-Riitta Norri (Architect, Director, Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki). Edited by Adolph Stiller. Lavishly illustrated, approx. 200 pages, Verlag Anton Pustet, Salzburg, price approx. 400 Austrian schillings.

The curator: The curator for the exhibition is the Museum of Finnish Architecture.

Marja-Riitta Norri, Director

Timo Tuomi, Science manager

Kirsi Leiman: Exhibition installation

Hanna Galtat, Secretary

Founded in 1956, the Museum of Finnish Architecture is the second oldest museum of architecture in the world, and an internationally renowned institution, particularly for its exhibitions and publications.

Since 1957 the museum has put on a constant series of travelling exhibitions outside the national boundaries, which have led to a high level of worldwide awareness of Finnish architecture.

Press information on Architecture in the Ringturm can be found under

<http://www.wienerstädtische.at>