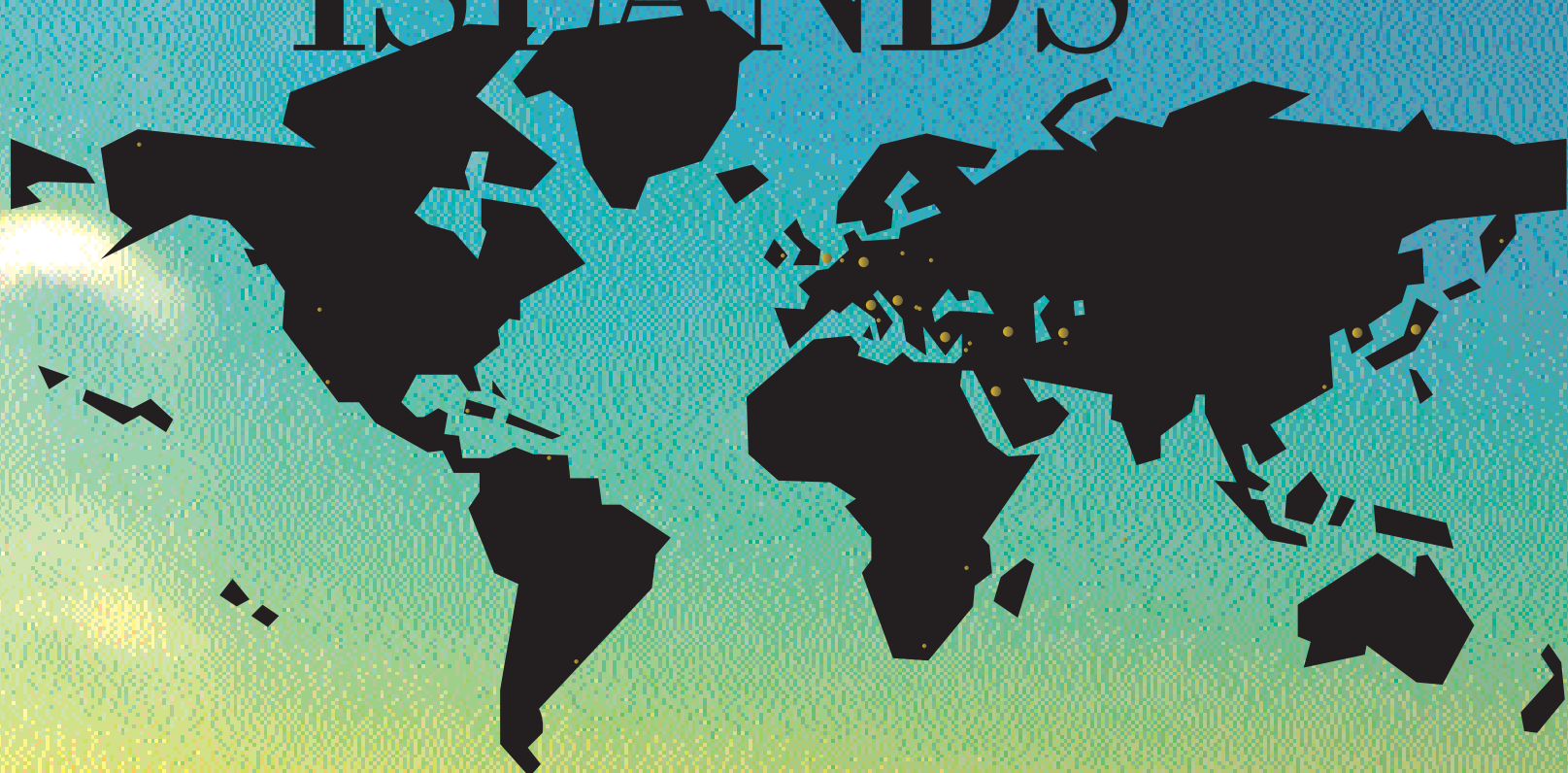


ISLANDS



Marmara
Germany
Italy
Bosnia-Herzegovina
South-Korea
Japan
Saudi-Arabia
Kreuzberg
Johannesburg

West Bank
Djeneral Jankovic
Globocica
Chamam
Afghanistan
Cayman Islands
Hong Kong
Przemysl
Rio de Janeiro

Caracas
The Hague
Arusha
Guantanamo Bay
Diego Garcia
Dublin
Naples
Nevada
Alaska

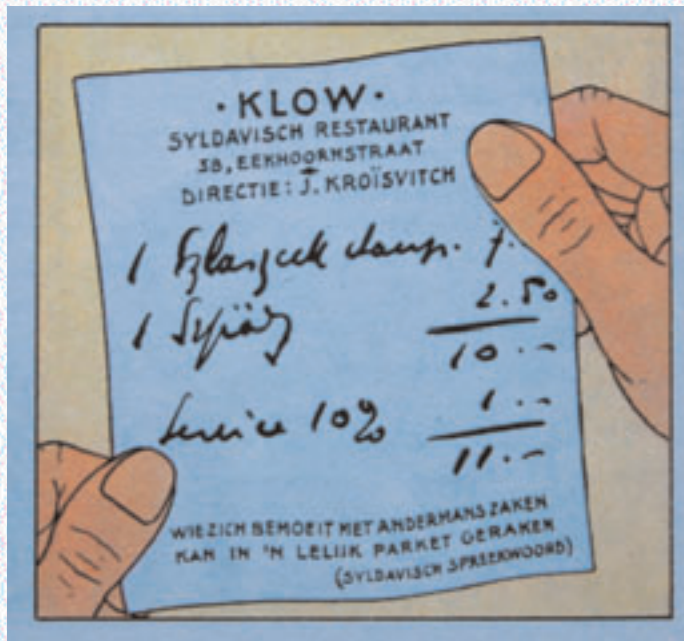
Jenin
Silicon Valley
Itaq
Sverdlovsk
Principality of Sealand

NO FLY ZONE

Mind your own business

A brief analysis of the 'single issue space'

Ole Bouman



*"He who minds other people's business,
Can end up in an awkward position."*
(old Syldevian saying)

The history of the nation-state is not a simple one to tell, but the historians generally agree on which characteristics this state must have to be accepted as such. Since the late Middle Ages in various European countries, the trend has been to monopolise the executive power through a legal authority, monarchy or republic, that considers itself sovereign over the different levels of the social interplay of forces. At very least, this authority has the exclusive rights to jurisdiction, the printing of money, the levying of taxes, the exercise of force, the exploitation of colonies. Often, the specifying of the form of education is also subsumed, along with defining a symbolic order which is expressed in different representations of power. In some cases this strong state even develops into a totalitarian system, in which the public legitimacy is placed under the control of an oligarchy. But whether a democratic order or a dictatorial regime is concerned, the basis of authority lay in the monopoly of power.

Europe has had plenty of time to export this form of government.

During the twentieth century, the idea has become accepted around the world that the community of peoples is a community of states, with the most striking expression of this belief being the United Nations. Although definitely less stringent than on the national level, people strove for an international rule of law which would apply to everyone. Rules were created, treaties signed, sanction restrictions invented. The ultimate aim was a world in which people agreed to be subjected to a set of universal laws.

More famous than any real-life person are the fictive characters who are known for exercising these laws. Heroes who are concerned with everyone who prefers to be outside this international order. They are the good guys like Superman, James Bond, Tintin. Using orthodox methods or unorthodox ones, they serve civilisation and therefore deal with the Evil that is repeatedly rebelling.

However, in the past 15 years there has been a drastic change in this image. With the fall of the Soviet empire, with the rise of new markets in the Far East, but perhaps most significantly with the fading of the Great Stories in the imagination of the world community, it has become extremely difficult to make an universal claim on the establishment of a rule of law. Whoever attempts that despite everything is

What was earlier the exception to the rule has now become the rule. Not just because of individuals and network organisations which establish their own projects as the norm, but also because the states are doing this so much themselves.

rapidly pulled up short by reality. The reality of a proliferation of frontier justice, do-it-yourself activism, tribalism, ad-hoc philosophy, free states, etc. What was earlier the exception to the rule has now become the rule. Not just because of individuals and network organisations which establish their own projects as the norm, but also in the meantime amply by the states themselves. Against the will of the international community, preventive attacks are carried out, walls built, camps established, soldiers trained, extragovernmental death warrants issued, tariff barriers erected, preferential treatment given, treaties broken, secret lobbies created, government funds removed from the public eye, etc., etc. Added together, a gigantic breakdown of the rule of law is taking place, with an equivalent infringement of the civil rights based on it. This much is certain: the world community is suffering from a chronic lack of trust. Institutions like the UN, the EU, the International Court of Justice, the Geneva Convention are mere formalities compared with the extremely vigorous forms of frontier justice. Indeed, he who interferes in other people's business can end up in an awkward position.

Those who have recognised the reconfiguration of power described above are also aware of the laxity with which the long-term discussion

about this is being conducted. In the past few years there have been analyses published, in this periodical as well, about the interaction between globalisation and regionalisation. There the tendency to unite the world in economic and technological terms is contrasted with the need to emphasise the local identities. The temptation to keep on doing this is undiminished, but given the frontier justice thinking that is spreading widely, it would be better to speak about globalisation versus moral fragmentation. Regions, interpreted as areas of land or as programmatic zones, as mutual interests, as separate social sectors, that is as 'single issue spaces', are becoming increasingly aware that more and faster results can be achieved if their own territory and profile are protected rather than conducting laborious lobbying in the various committees of the decaying international institutions. Instead of trying war crimes in an International Court of Justice, it is better to build an extraterritorial camp for nameless and lawless incarceration for an indefinite period. Instead of pleading in the European capital for women's rights in conservative member states, it is preferable to moor a floating abortion clinic near Gdansk for immediate results. However diverse the examples are, they all have in common the inclination to do something on your own initiative.

NO FLY ZONE

1

Also in architecture, and in this periodical, it was proper to substantiate designs in terms of complexity, chaos theory, indetermination and other versions of a postmodern vocabulary. But there is much more to architecture than just being an illustration of the rest of the world.

There is another aspect besides the geographical one, where the debate suffers from conceptual weakness. For years at the various social discussion forums, they have been pounding away at the end of the 'Great Stories', at the inexorably increasingly 'complex' world, at the necessity for 'differential thinking', at the 'dialogue with the Other', at the 'New Complexity' defined by Jürgen Habermas. Quite often, a deed of intellectual correctness confirmed that the whole was no longer comprehensible. Now most of all, it is becoming clear that the whole can no longer be controlled.

The reader is probably wondering by now what this has to do with architecture, with cities and the visual culture. Well, in any case with the architectural representation of this complexity. Also in architecture, and in this periodical, it was proper to substantiate designs in terms of complexity, chaos theory, indetermination and other versions of a postmodern vocabulary. But there is much more to architecture than just being an illustration of the rest of the world.

In this *Archis* a series of examples is presented illustrating how the tendency to want to do things your own way leads to an entirely new spatial configuration. In other words, architecture is on the front lines in the implementation of this new world of fragments. For a long time

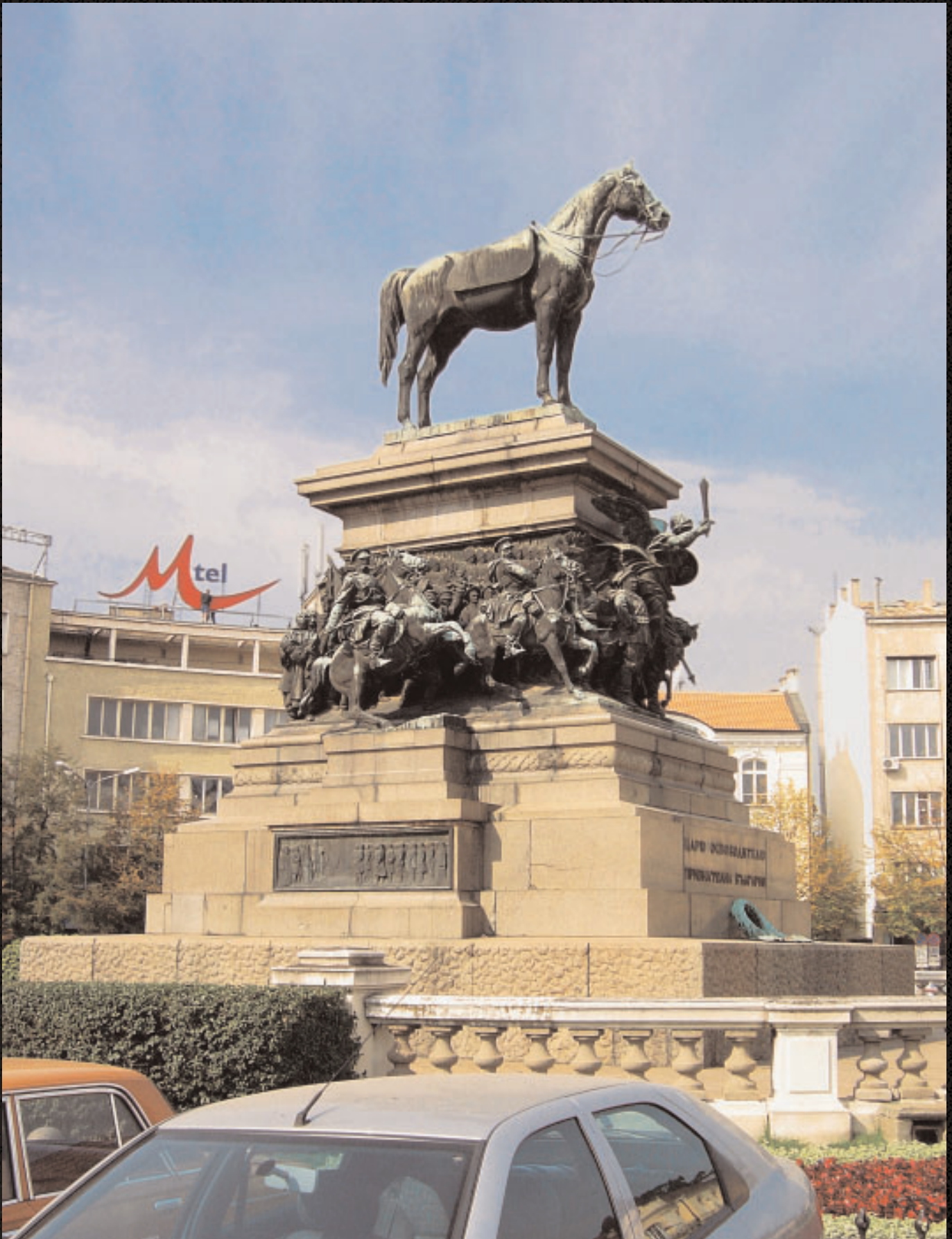
it was a wonderful vehicle for spreading the Great Ideologies, for establishing the majestic powers, for conducting social disciplining. It was also a wonderful vehicle for exercises in nihilism. But it is again a wonderful vehicle for the true heterotopia, for the miniature stories and subsidiary interests, for the excess of individuality, for the global re-ordering according to the network principle.

Each order needs its own architecture. Even anarchy.

NO FLY ZONE



Rodney Graham, *Vexation Island*, 1997. (Video still).
Courtesy Donald Young Gallery, Chicago



Visual Irregularities 2. Equestrian statue of the Russian Czar Alexander II, in front of the Bulgarian parliament building in Sofia (Alexander liberating Bulgaria from five centuries of Turkish rule in 1878), a victim of the illegal metal trade. From the series 'Hot City Visual' by Luchezar Boyadjiev, 2003.



above Germaine Kruip, *Mont Saint Michel* 2003.

below Wolfgang Staehle, *Yano a (pareakiki harani)*, 2003. The communal accommodation of the Yanomami indians in Watoriki, as viewed from the Stone Mountain (Amazon region, Brazil).



above Gabriel Orozco, *Common Dream*, 1996. Cibachrome, edition of 5.
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

below Magic ball, New York 1996