

Rye Bread Architecture

A Conversation with Herman Hertzberger

Herman Hertzberger once described his work as 'rye bread architecture', contrasting it with the flashy architecture of deconstructivism. Maybe that does not sound very appealing but with this approach he has in fact succeeded in producing an oeuvre of major importance that is both consistent and widely respected. Hertzberger's achievement has been to continue nothing less than the humanism of Forum and Team 10 into the present day. He began his career in the intellectual circle around Aldo van Eyck and the importance of collectivity and of the 'encounter' have continued to remain primary for him. His work does not contain any isolated artistic *tours de force* in the middle of nowhere; what you do get is a large number of (partially) public buildings, including schools, cultural institutions and one government ministry complex. The public domain has always been a crucial concern for Hertzberger, despite the fact that architecture has become a specialised designers' discipline and despite the depoliticising that architecture suffered from in the eighties.

According to Hertzberger, in our current concern with the public domain we have everything to learn from spatial organisation in primitive, close-knit societies. Hertzberger is at his best when he is commissioned to create spaces for children, that is, for a group where there is supposedly plenty of interaction. Just as in non-Western cultures where individualism plays a smaller role, the play of children does not yet admit of the extreme individualisation that adult citizens in our social-democratic society set such store by. Children have not yet developed any clearly defined identity and are much more capable of being genuinely open to each other. Hertzberger's architectural stages form the ideal theatre for that process of socialisation and his work has an appeal for anyone who appreciates the timeless importance of social intercourse.

But the neutrality of this notion leaves the content of this intercourse undefined and this also leads to a problem of differentiation. Contact between adults often proceeds in an extremely complicated fashion; anthropological commonplaces are simply not enough. It is true that anthropology as it is propagated by Team 10 provides a welcome change from the alienating idiom of Modernism, but it does not help one to make one's choices of content at a cultural and institutional level. Even in Hertzberger's domestic architecture, which one would think was the terrain *par excellence* for the values of family and for individualism, we get the same emphasis on collectivity. Photos of his work show not so much isolated objects, as humans in their capacity of social beings involved in some interaction or other against an architectural backdrop. It is rare that the individual in all his/her uniqueness is given any priority. This architecture is based on a fatherly concern with the vicissitudes of human beings, who are never allowed to be really autonomous. Too bad for an individual who would rather not have anything to do with the group. The problematic of the big city dwellers, their 'anonymity elevated to monumentality', to quote Otto Wagner, and their wish, based on self-preservation, to be left alone, remains a sore point in Hertzberger's work.

The great power that is nevertheless inherent in this oeuvre is to a great extent the result of his rewriting of the programme. His concern for the public domain means that the list of functional requirements is often complemented with a meticulous treatment of the marginal areas, that part of the design that is not yet entirely bureaucratised by programmatic demands, the in-between areas, connecting zones, and openings. It is there that the architect can claim to have a role in the construction and organisation of the building as well. His extraordinary preoccupation with the public domain can be seen everywhere; the result is that every detail becomes a public issue. In the end, in the view of the critic Kenneth Frampton, even something as specialised as the articulation of a structural joint, is treated as a matter for public concern.

Your former office in Amsterdam looked out on Rem Koolhaas' Byzantium building. Do you miss the view?

As a building I think Byzantium is really not at all bad, only it doesn't live up to its pretensions. I have to watch what I'm saying, however, because it's forbidden to make negative comments about colleagues in public. I even once received an official reprimand on the note paper of the Royal Institute of Dutch Architects in which their lawyers gave me a shot across the bows for my publicly expressed disapproval of the proposed demolition of Aldo van Eyck's orphanage. Apparently you are only allowed to say that sort of thing in a closed panel discussion. It is a shame that architects all too often treat critical comments as an attempt to harm their business interests.



Herman Hertzberger

In other words there are numerous mechanisms in your profession that get in the way of any serious discussion on content. Don't you think it strange that on the one hand you have won great acclaim for an architecture that is based on a critical approach, while on the other hand, as an individual architect, you have to play the game according to the rules of the trade?



De Drie Hoven, Nursing home, Amsterdam, 1975

All it is, in my view, is that colleagues are afraid that negative criticism will lose them commissions. This anxiety gets in the way of any discussion about the cultural importance of architecture. To return to Byzantium, you might think this fear was entirely unfounded. People's criticism of Byzantium hasn't harmed Koolhaas at all. It's true however that you can go too far with the freedom you have. The authorities also have some responsibility here. An administration with a feeling for culture should be prepared to take controversy in its stride and should be fully aware how vital it is that good architects like Van Eyck and Koolhaas are given the chance to design a couple of public buildings. In the quarrel around the preservation of Van Eyck's orphanage we are beginning to see something like a rehabilitation. Everyone who visits the Berlage Institute now says that it is extremely suitable for public events. Architecture means daring to take risks and if there is anyone who doesn't dare take risks it is the Dutch. I have been allowed to make a fair number of public buildings and I regard this as a sign that the authorities appreciate my work. I was given the commission for the Muziekcentrum in Utrecht, and have designed any number of schools and one ministry building.

Are you saying that you don't take any real risks?

Of course I am not completely without a feeling for strategy. In Holland I feel like a fish in water. I am aware of the limitations but on the whole I can live with them. Even so I take Rem Koolhaas seriously when he states that you have to be prepared to take more risks. An architect is someone who, as it were, builds strong legs for tables, while an artist does just the opposite; he saws the legs away from under you. Van Eyck and Koolhaas are the only two architects in Holland who try to do both. That's the way for an architect to make a greater contribution to culture and that's also where the notion of the architect as an artist really begins to mean something.

Do you also employ your strategic sense during the design phase, so that you get the chance to deploy your artistic skills?

If you get a flash of inspiration about urban development and the city planner in charge is against you, you can forget it. Unless you still manage to get your way by a back-door, by lobbying in the city council, for instance. But that's not something I really enjoy. Some people come into their own in conflict situations. They work best with daggers drawn; that means they often win, but they also lose sometimes. I sometimes make a concession to maintain a friendly atmosphere. I am dependent on my clients and that means I can't afford to have a quarrel with them. I also want them to be able to identify with the project. Being open-minded is the best policy for me; it certainly seems to have brought me good results.

It must be very difficult on the one hand to proclaim that 'being open-minded is the best policy' and on the other hand to state that you are the artist, that this is how you see things and that's how they have to be, in other words an extremely personal expression of an extremely personal attitude.

If a city planner tells me that I have to put an accent at the end of the street, I won't straightaway say I can't. But I have of course built up a certain amount of experience and that means that I'm now prepared to risk being awkward sometimes; this gives me a basis where I feel a little freer and that means perhaps that I even dare do a few things I wouldn't have done previously.

But on the whole your basic point of departure is harmony?

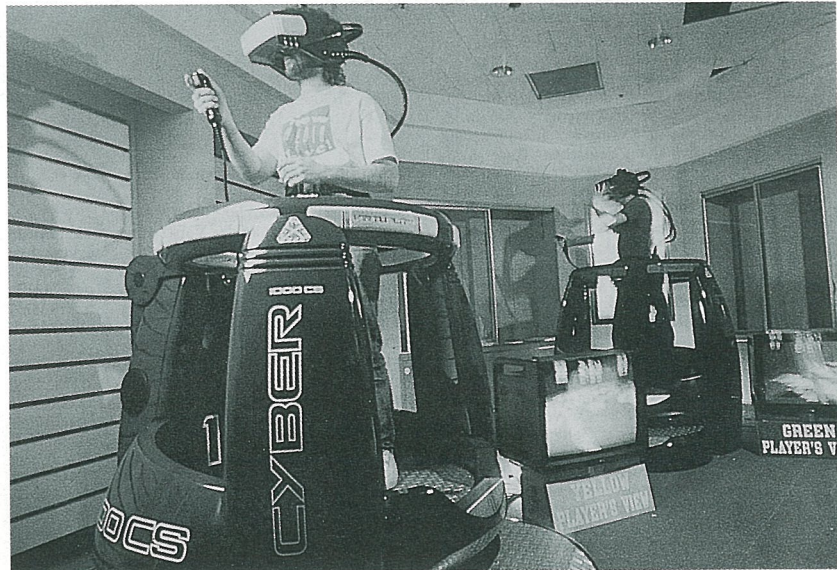
No, I really don't agree with you there. Look at the photos I've had made all these years; you'll often see a great contrast between the social situation and the architectural context. What's more, my rather rough-and-ready architecture has often put a question mark after the prevailing optimism. Or take the Vredenburg Muziekcentrum in Utrecht: that's probably been my most controversial building. I managed to make a place like that more accessible to the public. What couldn't be done by making the tickets cheaper was achieved by an architectural device that literally made the building more accessible by exploiting the fact that it was part of a shopping centre complex. I've done everything I could to eliminate anything too solemn. At the time it was a very effective statement and it contributed a lot to my reputation. I don't think you can do that sort of thing any more. A theatre or a public building doesn't need to feel particularly accessible any more. That battle has been won. What buildings like that need to express now is a festive spirit. All those grey materials don't feel right any more. In that sense the times have quite simply changed.

Do your buildings easily become dated?

Even though you always try and make your buildings effective for as long as possible they remain tied to the time they were made. In the Centraal Beheer insurance company building that time-tiedness is itself clearly stated. At a certain moment people stopped wearing jeans and wore two-piece suits to go to work. People started conforming again. That had a lot to do with high unemployment; people wanted to pass unnoticed. That whole festive atmosphere around the Centraal Beheer building with all those plants and other slightly weird features has simply vanished. Then they called in an interior decorator and spent millions of guilders just on making the building look respectable again. Apparently the operation was more or less successful. Now I get people coming and telling me that my building been completely ruined. In a sense the Centraal Beheer building has been spoiled but in another sense it is a triumph for me because the narrative of the structure has been able to bridge such a long span of time. I'm really delighted when the basic structure of a building lasts for a long time while the details have a short life.

In addition to changing notions about decoration, the design of the supporting frame also implies a cultural prise de position and is bound to show pronounced anthropological preferences. No matter what cultural questions your architecture raises, at the level of the basic structure what you offer is a form that is 'inviting' to Humanity, with a capital H. Isn't that so?

I am not likely to change my point of departure, but different accents are always a possibility, and I'm not necessarily the one who provides them. The Drie Hoven old people's home, for instance, had an enormous 'public' area. Currently more and more of that area is being turned into private space, which is a tendency



that I personally find quite disturbing. And the structure makes this possible, because it consists of nothing but pillars and you can build a wall wherever you like. All this is completely in line with the increasing trend towards individualisation. In every primitive culture you see a great emphasis on community and on a good balance between the public and the private. In the sixties and early seventies the balance even roughly tipped back again towards more public space, but that trend has now been completely reversed; in my opinion that is definitely a step backwards.

Measured by what standards?

By anthropological standards, the standards of primitive cultures. It is an article of belief for me that in a well functioning society there is a balance between public and private.

But does that separation between public and private always need to be seen spatially? You could also say that the public domain is more a mental concept.

Maybe. You could argue that people are constantly in touch with each other via their computers, or via television. But in a spatial sense – architecture is my profession after all – things are going very badly.

But does that also mean that things are going very badly with humanity from an anthropological point of view?

Certainly at the level of architecture and urban design. No matter how much my opinions and my approach to design changes, I will always continue to fight for improvements. I have three main themes which are also incidentally the titles of my lectures: *A Public Domain; Making Space, Leaving Space; and Inviting*



'Making space, leaving space', Apollo Schools, Amsterdam, 1983



'Inviting form', Baijan School, Amsterdam, 1986

Form. These three subjects remain crucial for me; the only other thing I would like to get across to people is that you don't always have to say things in the same language. I am not convinced that the language I used in the sixties and seventies was the most appropriate language for what I wanted to say then. I would like to spend some time now investigating whether I can't say things in a completely different way. Spatially, of course, but also in terms of materials. Maybe I have always made things too easy for myself; perhaps I told myself that if I stopped fussing about materials and just used a clearly defined kit, everything would all work out okay. I would now like to take on the challenge of trying other ways of creating space. The rise of graffiti is the umpteenth proof that the old approach no longer works. At the time I literally said that I thought it was important for people to be able to write what they felt on the walls, and that therefore it made more sense to work in concrete than in brick. But now I've seen the result, I've had to eat my words. What I'd like now would be to make a building out of marble. That would be a challenge, to see how I could use expensive materials to make something that would still be accessible to people. In fact that isn't a contradiction at all. The real contradiction is that buildings made of inferior materials have become inaccessible simply because people don't have any respect for them.

In addition to materials, figurative and narrative elements also play a role. There is always a sort of abstraction and neutrality in your buildings; they do not make any very specific statement so that symbolism has quite a modest role in them. In fact representation also doesn't play any part in your work. Wouldn't something that is figurative be just that inviting element you are talking about?

The whole area of symbolism in architecture is something that I have felt an aversion for; a friend of mine, however, Johan van der Keuken, a film director who has actually made photos of my work, structures his films with a whole series of connotations and associations. I can't offer any argument against the suggestion that I could or should do something like that too. But I'm not ready for it.

People like Nouvel and Tschumi try to find a metaphor for contemporary society. They make façades which are a statement and an abstraction at the same time and which work as an image of present day society.

It's not so much the façades as the metaphor that's often transparent; it is a bit superficial. But if you were to ask me who I think are the greatest architects at present, I would certainly include Nouvel in my list.

Even so I think that what he does is all a bit too hasty. I get the feeling you could demolish what Nouvel has to say with a couple of cobblestones in half an hour. A building like that, you can literally knock it to pieces.

That's actually what the metaphor is saying. What Nouvel is saying is that there aren't any cobblestones, cornerstones, coping stones or facing stones any more. There aren't even any touchstones. In fact there aren't any stones any longer. All we have is sensations, in his view.

I think that's too superficial a picture; it's perfectly clear that there still are stones. **The real skill lies in constructing a frame that you can put the life of the building inside of.** Then you can change it around later on, if you want. I think that with both Tschumi and Nouvel nothing at all is left of the building. After a couple of years you'll have to get rid of it all. Either it will have rusted or it'll be falling to bits or else there just won't be anything left of it. My main complaint is that there won't be any frame either where you'll be able to add something else later on.

The architects we're talking about start with an analysis of society and end up in architecture, but they could just as well have made a good film. They are more interested in speculation than in the discipline. You on the other hand make the frame your ultimate criterion, and that means that you stick with the discipline. Presumably you rate it higher than speculation?

Yes, though I should add that I like it very much when the frame is flexible enough both to assimilate and reject various periods. My design for the Media Park in Cologne does have those formal bits of frame, but, if you want a metaphor, it also has a sort of non-place in the middle.

That's the void of course, something that's very much in at the moment. An empty centre as a metaphor of the Verlust der Mitte, to quote the title of Hans Sedlmayr's famous book.

The question is can you make a place that does not just consist of the elements it contains. Perhaps that's where a sort of metaphor still creeps in. You can either highlight this metaphor or else you can shove it into a corner. The structural frame that you just described as supporting the metaphor is, as it happens, treated by a critic like Kenneth Frampton as being a metaphor itself: it is a matter not so much of the representation of the metaphor, but of making architecture itself present, as solid as can be, material and tectonic. A theory like that would be like a licence to continue on the same road, but with my Media Park project I have burnt my bridges behind me. What I have to do now is rediscover myself. I am no longer able to come up with a set of solutions that when put together would make up a complete story. It's a very difficult

moment for me right now. The thing that I regard as particularly important is to avoid being too specific. The less you define things the more people's own creativity is stimulated. It's strange, but that idea worked best in the Drie Hoven building, because there the structure was used literally as a neutral grid. I believe I have far more metaphors in my work than I've dared to admit, but they aren't metaphors that refer directly to society. I think that I will continue to be reticent in my symbolism, and that I will leave it to my viewers to interpret it as they please.

In the Montessori teaching method that you value so highly a certain structure is also provided within which one develops according to one's own abilities. It is a question of the individual coming into contact with the collective in the way that suits him or her best. But while the performance of the individual is facilitated an important aspect is overlooked and that is the attention that needs to be paid to the role played in one's development by strict isolated concentration. In the Montessori philosophy great stress is laid on the possibility of encounter, but almost none on the problem of the encounter. Loners and the more introverted children don't get on so well in that system.

That's obvious enough and there are a lot of people who have to get along as best as they can in that system. I've always been told that there's nothing more infuriating than being expected to finish off your house by yourself. There is certainly a germ of truth in that. It's the price you pay for the Montessori philosophy. I've also often been accused of making too great a demand on people's own inventiveness.

If we now look at the problem from an architectural point of view, doesn't your attempt to achieve a neutral structure come from a passion for space as a stage where social behaviour can have free play?

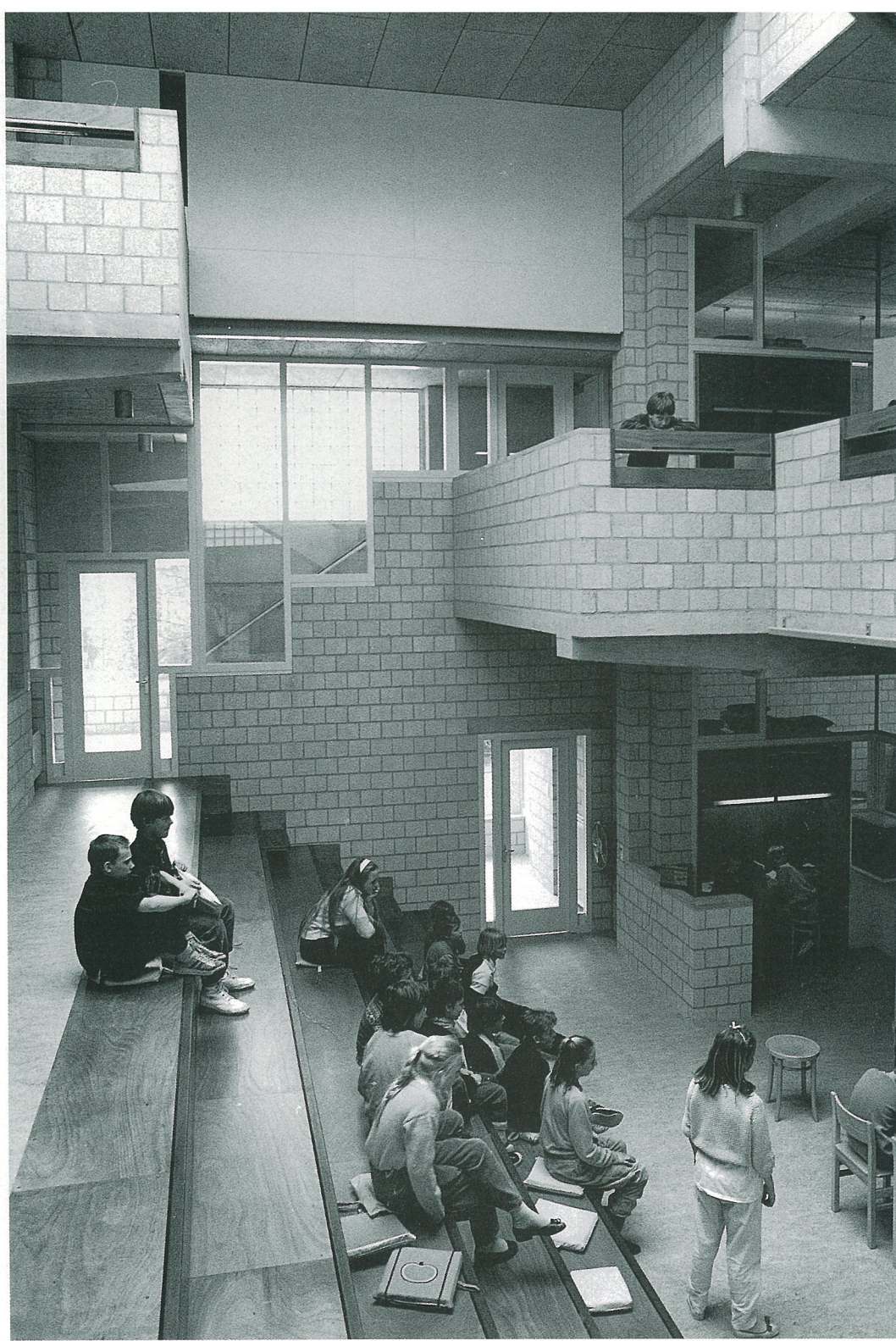
I used to think that space was a such a vague notion that nobody knew what it really meant. But I've changed my mind now. Space is the ideal concept, perhaps just because you can't define it. Spatial organisation, the idea that things are well placed vis-à-vis each other, that you have achieved the right perspectives, the right distances, the right measurements, and that within them you correctly expressed the needs of the group of people who will work in that building, the longer I work the more that becomes a definite principle. If I say space, I already mean public space and public space is the place where changes can take place. I once said that the street is the space for revolution. Revolution can't take place without the street. The street is a public living room; it is where people change the situation *together*. But the mass media have largely taken over the street now.

What about your famous indoor streets; is there something that needs changing there?

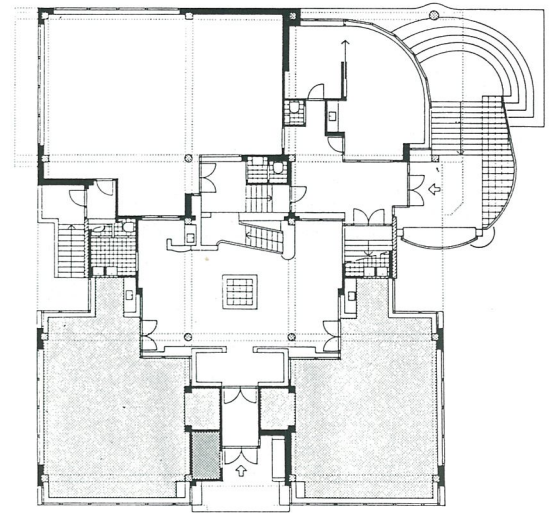
You do of course wonder what it means to talk about the public domain inside a building. I am of course entirely aware of the fact that life in the city consists of more than just borrowing sugar from your neighbour. It makes no sense to try and turn an indoor street into a sort of village. But a covered walkway in a block of flats can mean that people don't lie dead in their flats for weeks, without their neighbours noticing. You can look after each other's kids or borrow coffee or sugar. There's nothing so special about that, and I am also well aware of the dangers of too much social control. But I do think that a city that is entirely based on anonymity works less well a) because you don't borrow sugar from each other and b) because it is more dangerous. All those places where you are free to be anonymous are also places where you can get mugged or raped.

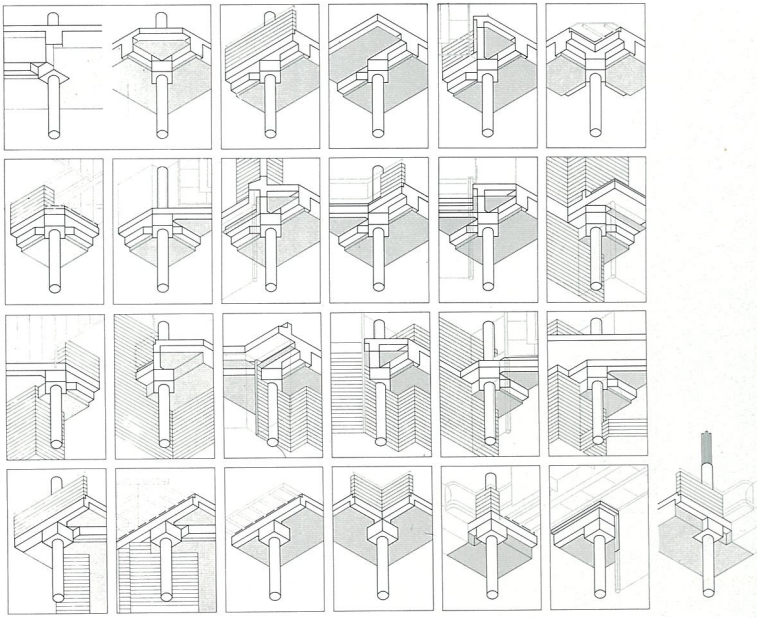
One big problem at the moment is the notion of public space in the city. Currently an enormous confusion prevails on this subject; you won't find anyone who'll give you a definition of the public domain that goes beyond public facilities or public security. Architecture or city planning should at least be able to do something about that. But that still leaves untouched an enormous area of what in a social, political and aesthetic sense might be thought of as the public domain. How is it that nobody talks about that any more, when you'd think that from the point of view of intellectual debate it would be the most interesting aspect?

The failure of socially committed architecture was bread and butter for the next generation of architects. It was stated that architects had no influence whatsoever on human behaviour. What they really meant was: let architecture just confine itself to building pretty objects in between all the other objects. Of course that is a dreadfully defeatist attitude, but if you open your mouth and say that architects can do something more, then they ask you to give them some examples. Maybe I'm a special case, but I actually can offer some examples, for instance the amphitheatre-like inner areas of the Apollo primary schools in Amsterdam. Currently, however, it is not fashionable to mention something like that. I think that architects at present are simply disillusioned and just leave it at that. They are all incredibly worried that their colleagues will laugh at them. They are afraid of being thought of as being too cosy, a fear that was fostered by people like Carel Weeber. He had a powerful argument there. But cosiness in fact is nothing more than

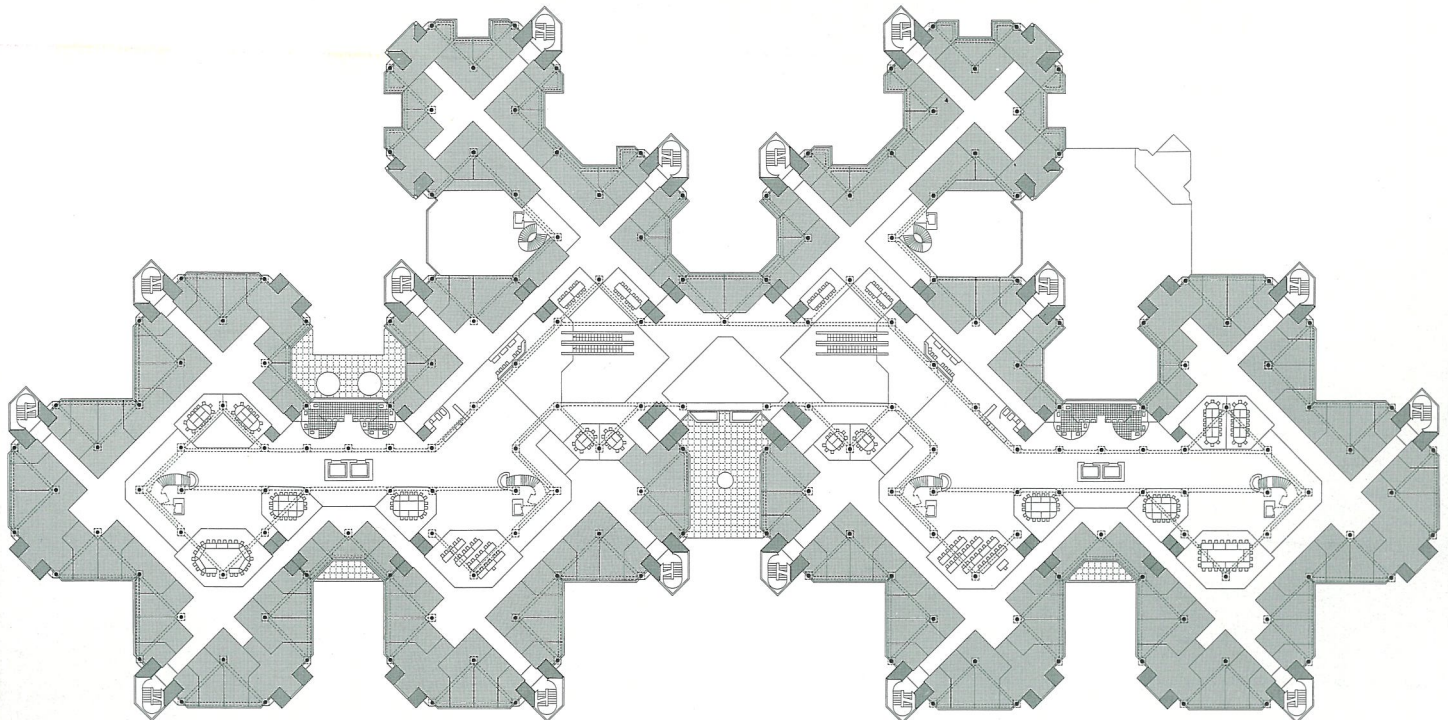


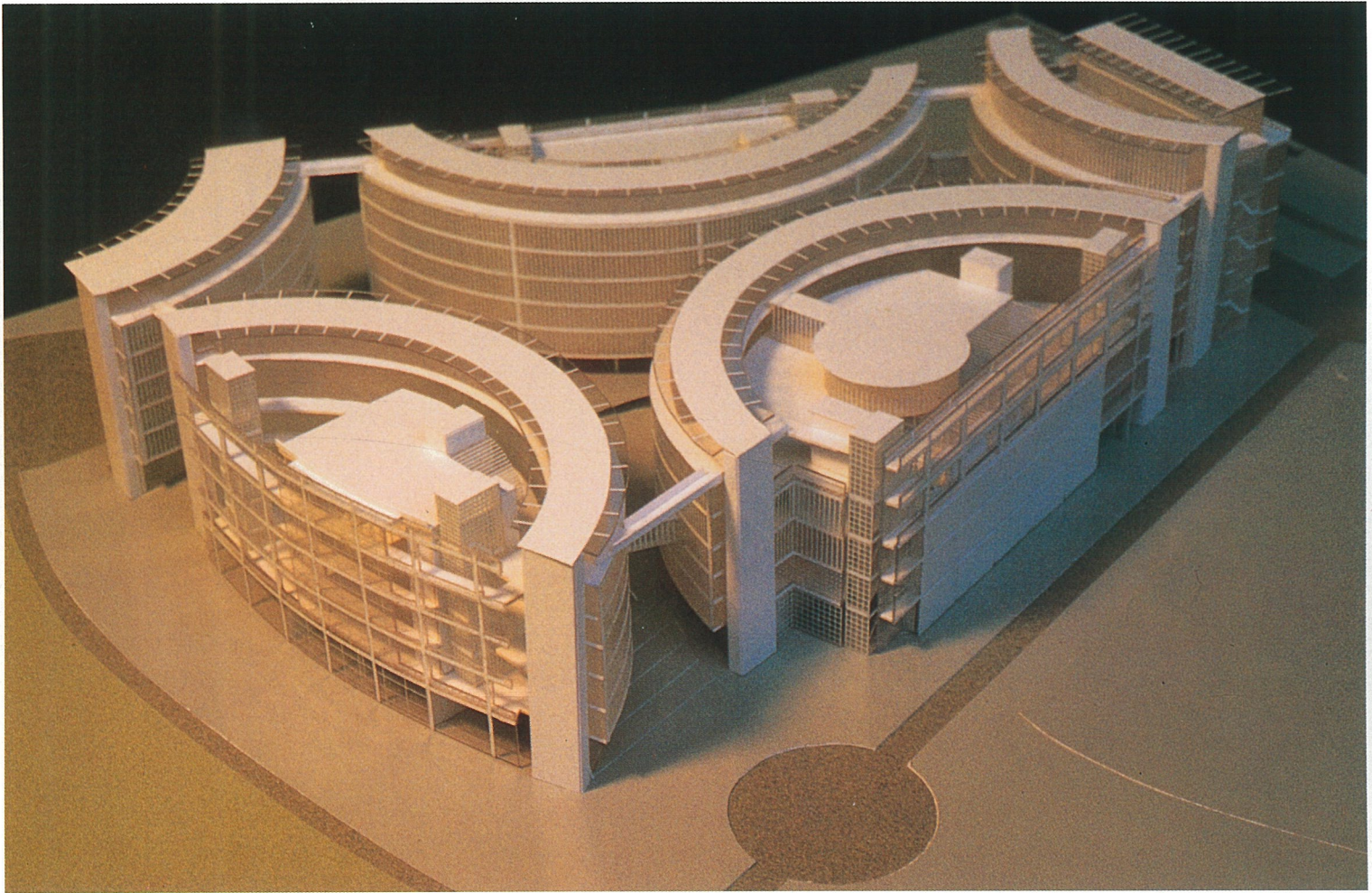
'Public domain', Montessori School, Amsterdam, 1983



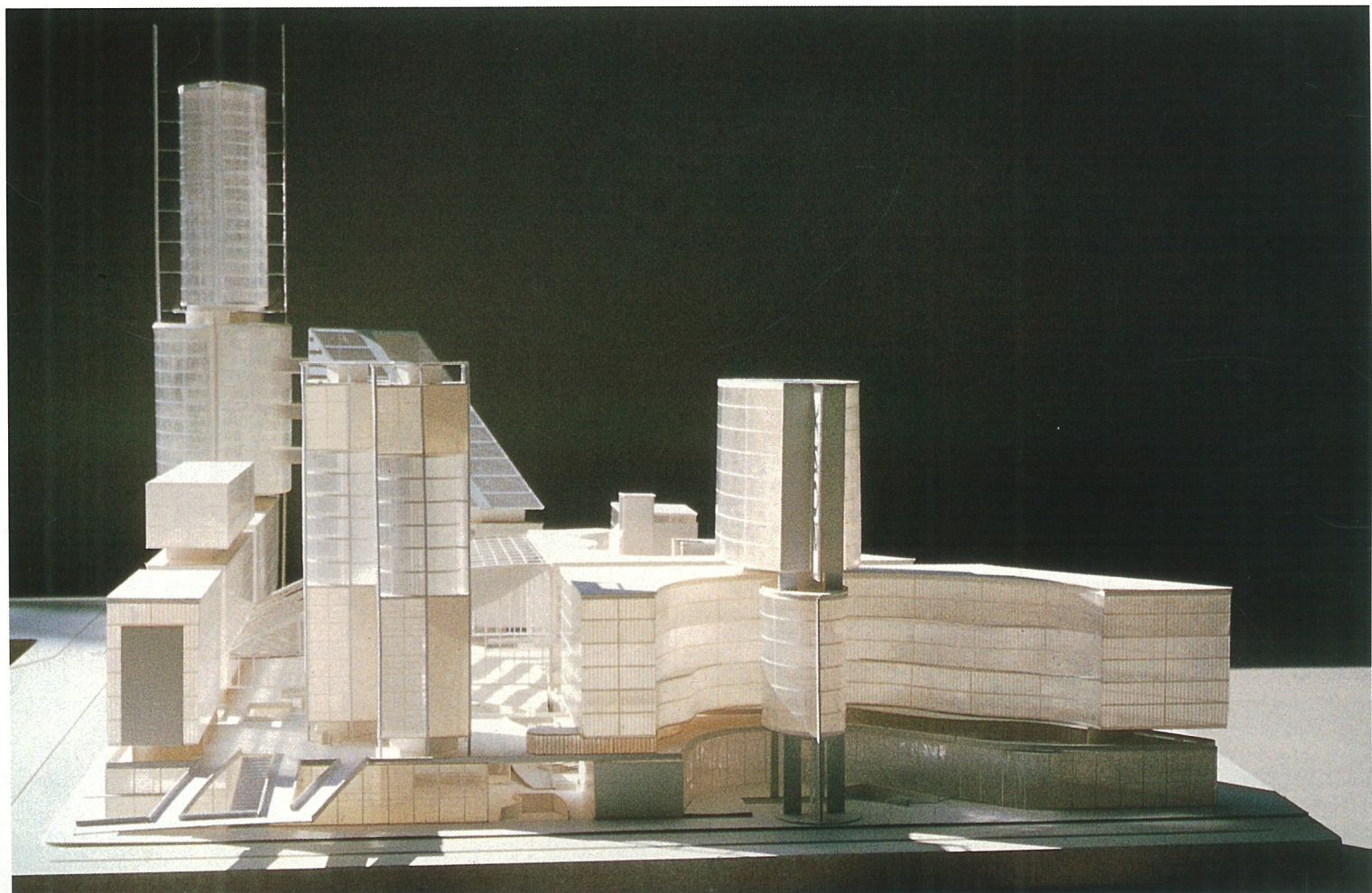


Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Hague, 1991





Media Park Cologne, competition entry, 1991



Sony Tower, competition entry, Berlin, 1993

the Dutch spirit that found its supreme expression in the Delft school and that has always existed everywhere. In that respect Carel Weeber has made a number of pretty demagogic statements so making sure that the whole matter acquired negative associations. The fact that you make road humps and try and build better play areas is now enough to earn you the reputation of being petty bourgeois. **What used to be called a sense of social concern is now regarded as paternalism** with the result that a good quality has suddenly become something negative, even though of course there definitely is a moment when social concern does turn into paternalism. But every attempt at social intervention has become suspect through a fear of being thought paternalistic and that's why nobody dares to burn his fingers any more by bothering about the question of public space.

You are now talking about how public space should be used, but there is also something that quite literally towers above all that, and that is the façade that partially determines the image of the city and that is an important function. In the Employment Ministry building the (bureaucratic) labyrinth of the ministry is expressed in the public areas through the metaphorical power of the façade. But you don't seem to bother so much about the urban context that is, after all, the recipient of that message.



Centraal Beheer, office space, Apeldoorn, 1972

With the Ministry of Employment building, I was given a remote place where there was hardly any suggestion of a street. That was why I put the street inside the building. As a result the street cannot fully be called a public space, but when 2000 people walk around in it, it becomes a public area in a way. Other people are allowed to use it; they are fairly open-minded as far as that goes. Even so this street is not entirely successful. There are features that are small and medium-sized, but I have omitted to include anything that is large-scale. I have now realised that I also wanted to include something really large-scale. That would have given it a monumental effect, not for the sake of being monumental but rather to get rid of the dichotomy between large and small. These only become really interesting concepts at the point when both large and small are absent. But in a building or a part of the city where both small and large measurements are well represented, it makes no sense at all to use terms such as large-scale or small; they don't mean anything then. To return to the main question of how it is that the designing of public space is no longer a theme that we are currently interested in: my view is that that's because we've got nothing to celebrate, unlike, say, Oriol Bohigas, with his project for new city squares after the death of Franco. There is something else that we can learn from Barcelona and that is that where everything is organised in a comparatively authoritarian way, the space for non-authoritarian structures can be designed in an authoritarian way. In our situation where everything is anti-authoritarian but is often also terribly bureaucratised, it's no longer possible actually to make anything new. We need people who are capable of exercising authority and of giving a lead in building beautiful public spaces.

Barcelona is a good example of a government policy that gives priority to the notion of harmonious open spaces being public living rooms. But in the work of Libeskind or Koolhaas you see that the notion of the public domain itself becomes a theme in terms of its fragmentation and because it no longer has any clear place within the paradigm of the democratic exchange of ideas. They employ another means to get out of the impasse, a method that gives pride of place to what is fragmentary and random. This could be another way of escaping the current malaise in urban design, and also one that is perhaps easier for the individual designer to achieve, if we agree that there's nothing to celebrate.

If urban design no longer has as its hallmark the principles of consensus, that doesn't mean it has automatically to be conceived of in so narrow a way; I have to admit I am suspicious of this tendency. As far as Koolhaas is concerned I haven't yet noticed deviations of this sort in his practice; just think of the IJ-Plein in North Amsterdam, that is in fact quite perfectly organised.

Libeskind is of course a completely different type. Even though he makes intellectual leaps that you lose track of, as a person he is easy to understand. I get the idea with Libeskind that he landed in this world as a nomad, that he has never had any roots, does not know where he belongs, and that means he is first and foremost a cosmopolitan. Our great strength – which is also a weakness – is that we have our roots in a country that is highly – perhaps too highly – organised, and which is wealthy enough to give everyone an opportunity. With the result of course as far as that goes that we inevitably end up being placed in a certain mental category.

But apart from the fact that his personality is so fascinating and intriguing, he also wants to deduce general conclusions from his cosmopolitanism. He claims that his view of the world, his theory are valid for everybody in the West, for humanity that has been uprooted ever since the holocaust.



That's just his projection. There isn't any consensus on that and to say that there is is repressive. The fact that he wants to impose a consensus on us comes of course from the fact that he is a moralist and wants to convince us of his point of view; as an artist too he feels obliged to bear witness.

That's not so idiosyncratic; after all, he has allies among the philosophers, Levinas, for instance, and among the architects, someone like Eisenman.

I see what you're getting at! Van Eyck's 'between' and the 'between' of Eisenman. I'm not much of an intellectual but I think that I shouldn't have much problem explaining the similarities and the differences between them. Theoretically speaking the differences are not so great; they're both concerned with an area where various things overlap, only Van Eyck of course gives it a human content while Eisenman certainly doesn't. He borrows a lot from Jacques Derrida. I'm not such an expert on Derrida but, as I understand him, Libeskind's concept of being *displaced* tallies perfectly with his notion that no single point can be seen as the centre. But to suggest that you can use this to make a public space that no longer has anything to do with democracy but only with the fragmentation of society, I've yet to be convinced of that.

And Eisenman's generalisation about the Jewish Diaspora, in which deconstructivist architecture is a reflection of the fate that is in store for all of us, don't you see anything in that?

It doesn't make any sense to me, architecture having that level of meaning. What I'd like to know is how Libeskind is actually going to make a real building. If he takes himself seriously he'd maybe better do just that. Because once he starts to make a building, he will have to think about its foundations whether he likes it or not. You can't duck the need for foundations! He also has the idea of designing the void. According to me you can't design the void; what you design is always space; the most you can do is to build it in a shaky or inadequate fashion and then it will indeed look more like a void than like a space.

Your space is something you can enter. It is a stage where activity can take place, while Libeskind's emptiness is something that you can quarrel with. In his extension to the Berlin Museum for instance, what you get is a structural line consisting of voids, a negative space that is a component part of the whole building.

Where these voids and the main route intersect, you bump into something that isn't there.

In my view he is completely wrong when he says that his spaces are based on the ratios of Schönberg's *Moses and Aaron*. That just doesn't make sense! You can't compare these things with each other and the fact that he's working on something like that is proof for me that when he comes to carry out his project he'll be faced with enormous conflicts. What you often see right now is a confusion between the representation of the space, the models and drawings, with the space itself. The representation becomes an end in itself, a sort of art form that can be so fantastically beautiful that it undercuts its own market, because in reality it can't ever be built that perfectly. You would do far better to keep your presentation a little businesslike so that when the thing is built people don't feel let down by the reality. I'm afraid that the direction people are heading now is just the opposite. It'll take a real architect to realise in practice the picture you get in that fantastic presentation. After everything he has said, Libeskind runs a great risk that we'll end up asking if that was all he meant.

With Koolhaas you could say that what he eventually builds is a little disappointing, after the fantastic concepts that he's come up with, but I think that he manages to pull the fat out of the fire. The Danstheater in The Hague is surely the perfect example of how, despite a limited budget and other considerable obstacles, one can succeed in making a genuinely surprising space in which the reality contains a vision that tallies with the original design. Koolhaas does not just write splendid scenarios; he is enough of an architect to see them through in practice.

But whether Libeskind will succeed I'm not sure. That's why I think that everybody who claims to have something to say and who also claims to be an architect, should straightaway be given the chance to build something. **For me the built result has primacy over the theory.**

I don't say that the philosophical theory should amount to less than a number of stones piled on top of each other, but **at a certain point I think that people who philosophise about architecture ought to try piling stones on top of each other instead of just words.**

Forest of Wallers, spectators waiting for cyclists in Paris-Roubaix