



Opus 40

Berger + Parkkinen, Die Botschaften der Nordischen Länder, Berlin

With an introduction by Klaus-Dieter Weiss and photographs by Christian Richters. 60 pp. with ca. 65 ill., 280 x 300 mm, hard-cover, German/English

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The Embassies of the Nordic Countries in Berlin are political architecture of a particular kind, political architecture that does not assert a claim to power, but that is a self-portrait in the best sense of the word. The vision, which is already a reality on the level of architecture and design, aims to combine individual interests within a greater whole: the ancient democratic ideal that has perhaps never been expressed in a more beautiful and convincing gesture than in this combination of five countries, six buildings and six teams of architects, chosen in five national competitions for the individual buildings and a European competition for the central design concept.

It is certainly no coincidence that such convincing symbolism of joint responsibility and action is not a success due to one of the European mammoth institutions but to the comparatively small Nordic countries Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland. Perhaps it is not even a coincidence that the concept of the individual sections that form an individual whole and while doing so preserve their individual quality as well as the unity comes from a young Viennese architectural practice whose principal protagonists, the Austrian Alfred Berger and the Finn Tiina Parkkinen, think and work across boundaries. A crucial factor was the location in Berlin, because it was only here that the new buildings for all five embassies could be commissioned at once.

Berger + Parkkinen's architecture risks striking breaches of boundaries, not just between the countries involved but also between urban development and architecture, and technology and art. Urban space is an integral part of the embassy complex, to the same extent as nature. Materials and furniture indicate different cultures. And yet the composition, for all its openness and transparency, works to exact spatial sequences and precise external lines for the building, within the 226 metre long and 15 metre high band of meandering copper. The idea that the work of Alvar Aalto is being unexpectedly continued here comes involuntarily to mind.

Klaus-Dieter Weiss is a free-lance author and journalist. He develops his contributions to architectural criticism and theory against a comprehensive typological and historical background. Christian Richters studied communication design at the Folkwangschule in Essen. He is one of the most sought-after architectural photographers in Europe today.

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Architektur in Einzeldarstellungen
Architecture in individual presentations

Herausgeber / Editor: Axel Menges

- 1 Rudolf Steiner, Goetheanum, Dornach
- 2 Jorn Utzon, Houses in Fredensborg
- 3 Jørgen Bo and Vilhelm Wohlert, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk
- 4 Aurelio Galfetti, Castelgrande, Bellinzona
- 5 Fatehpur Sikri
- 6 Balthasar Neumann, Abteikirche Neresheim
- 7 Henry Hobson Richardson, Giessner House, Chicago
- 8 Lluís Domènech i Montaner, Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona
- 9 Richard Meier, Stadthaus Ulm
- 10 Santiago Calatrava, Bahnhof Stadelhofen, Zürich
- 12 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Charlottenhof, Potsdam-Sanssouci
- 13 Pfaueninsel, Berlin
- 14 Sir John Soane's Museum, London
- 15 Enric Miralles, C.N.A.R., Alicante
- 16 Fundación César Manrique, Lanzarote
- 17 Dharna Vihara, Ranakpur
- 18 Benjamin Baker, Forth Bridge
- 19 Ernst Gisel, Rathaus Fellbach
- 20 Alfredo Arribas, Marugame Hirai Museum
- 21 Sir Norman Foster and Partners, Commerzbank, Frankfurt am Main
- 22 Carlo Scarpa, Museo Canoviano, Possagno
- 23 Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, Oak Park
- 24 Kisho Kurokawa, Kuala Lumpur International Airport
- 25 Steidle + Partner, Universität Ulm West
- 26 Himeji Castle
- 27 Kazuo Shinohara, Centennial Hall, Tokyo
- 28 Alte Völklinger Hütte
- 29 Alsfeld
- 30 LOG ID, BGW Dresden
- 31 Steidle + Partner, Wacker-Haus, München
- 32 Frank O. Gehry, Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa
- 33 Neuschwanstein
- 34 Architekten Schweger + Partner, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe
- 35 Frank O. Gehry, Energie-Forum-Innovation, Bad Oeynhausen
- 36 Rafael Moneo, Audrey Jones Beck Building, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
- 37 Schneider + Schumacher, KPMG-Gebäude, Leipzig
- 38 Heinz Tesar, Sammlung Essl, Klosterneuburg
- 39 Arup, Hong Kong Station
- 40 Berger + Parkkinen, Die Botschaften der Nordischen Länder, Berlin
- 41 Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners, Halle 3, Messe Frankfurt
- 42 Heinz Tesar, Christus Hoffnung der Welt, Wien
- 43 Peichl/Achatz/Schumer, Münchner Kammer-spiele, Neues Haus
- 44 Alfredo Arribas, Seat-Pavillon, Wolfsburg
- 45 Stüler/Strack/Merz, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin
- 46 Kisho Kurokawa, Oita Stadium, Oita, Japan

- 47 Bolles + Wilson, Nieuwe Luxor Theater, Rotterdam
- 48 Steidle + Partner, KPMG-Gebäude, München
- 49 Steidle + Partner, Wohnquartier Freischützstraße, München
- 50 Neufert/Karle + Buxbaum, Ernst-Neufert-Bau, Darmstadt
- 51 Bolles + Wilson, NORD/LB, Magdeburg
- 52 Brunner und Partner, Flughafen Leipzig/Halle
- 53 Johannes Peter Hölzinger, Haus in Bad Nauheim
- 54 Egon Eiermann, German Embassy, Washington
- 55 Peter Kulka, Bosch-Haus Heidehof, Stuttgart
- 56 Am Bavariapark, München
- 57 Gerber Architekten, Messe Karlsruhe
- 58 Espace de l'Art Concret, Mouans-Sartoux
- 59 Otto Ernst Schweizer, Milchhof, Nürnberg
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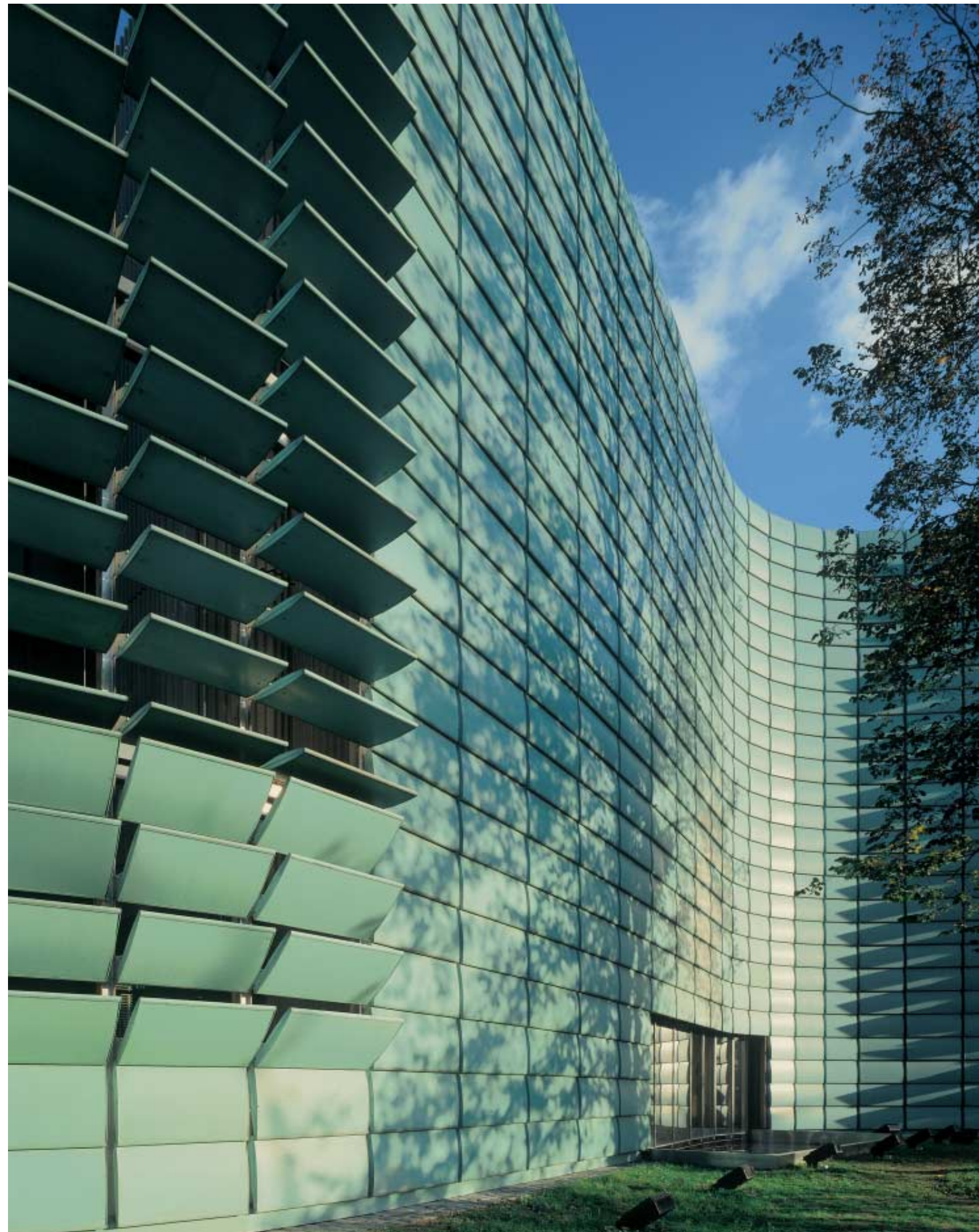
Die Botschaften der Nordischen Länder in Berlin verkörpern eine politische Architektur besonderer Art – eine politische Architektur, die keinen Machtanspruch etabliert, sondern im besten Sinne des Wortes ein Selbstportrait, eingekleidet in eine »Botschaft«. Die Vision, die auf der Ebene von Architektur und Design schon Realität ist, gilt der Vereinigung von Einzelinteressen zu einem größeren Ganzen – das uralte demokratische Ideal, das vielleicht nie zu einer schöneren und überzeugenderen architektonischen Geste gefunden hat als in dieser Verbindung von fünf Ländern, sechs Gebäuden und sechs Architekten-Teams – ausgewählt in einem europaweiten Wettbewerb für das zentrale Entwurfskonzept und in fünf nationalen Wettbewerben für die Einzelgebäude.

Sicher ist es kein Zufall, daß eine so überzeugende Symbolik gemeinsamer Verantwortung und gemeinsamen Handelns nicht einer der europäischen Mammut-Institutionen gelingt, sondern den vergleichsweise kleinen nordischen Ländern Dänemark, Schweden, Norwegen, Finnland und Island. Vielleicht ist es nicht einmal ein Zufall, daß das Konzept der individuellen Einzelteile, die ein individuelles Ganzes formen und dabei ihre Eigenheit ebenso wahren wie die Einheit, aus einem jungen Wiener Architekturbüro stammt, das mit seinen Hauptakteuren, dem Österreicher Alfred Berger und der Finnin Tiina Parkkinen, grenzüberschreitend denkt und arbeitet. Entscheidend war allerdings der Standort Berlin, weil nur hier die Aufgabe entstehen konnte, Neubauten für alle fünf Botschaften zum gleichen Zeitpunkt zu realisieren.

Die Architektur von Berger + Parkkinen wagt sinnreiche Grenzgänge, nicht nur zwischen den beteiligten Ländern, sondern auch zwischen Städtebau und Architektur sowie Technik und Kunst. In den Botschaftskomplex ist der Stadtraum ebenso integriert wie die Natur. Materialien und Möbel zeigen unterschiedliche Kulturen. Dennoch wird die Komposition bei aller Offenheit und Transparenz innerhalb des 226 m langen und 15 m hohen mäandernden Kupferbands von exakten Raumfolgen und präzisen Gebäudedekanten bestimmt. Unwillkürlich kommt der Gedanke auf, daß hier unverhofft das Werk von Alvar Aalto fortgeschrieben wird.

Klaus-Dieter Weiß ist freier Autor und Publizist. Seine Beiträge zur Kritik und Theorie der Architektur entwickelt er vor einem umfassenden typologischen und historischen Hintergrund. Christian Richters studierte Kommunikationsdesign an der Folkwangschule in Essen. Er gehört heute zu den gesuchtesten Architekturphotographen Europas.







S. 26/27
1. Das Kupferband von Westen.

S. 28, 29
2, 3. Detailansichten des Kupferbands.

4, 5. Das Kupferband in der Nacht.

p. 26/27
1. The copper band seen from the west.

p. 28, 29
2, 3. Detail views of the copper band.

4, 5. The copper band at night.





6. Die Südostecke des Komplexes. Links die Rauchstraße, rechts die Klingelhöferstraße.
 7, 8. Blick von der Rauchstraße auf den Komplex. Links die Dänische Botschaft, rechts das Gemeinschaftshaus.

6. The southeast corner of the complex. Rauchstraße on the left, Klingelhöferstraße on the right.
 7, 8. View of the complex from Rauchstraße. The Danish Embassy on the left, the communal building on the right.

