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Design as Cultural Pattern

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by Shinji Koike

After being made director of the Japan Design House, founded in 1960, Shinji Koike visited the West and as a result of this journey came to the conclusion that the satisfactory level of design in western countries was due to the fact that the latter had not experienced that sudden rupture which came about in Japan as a result of her coming suddenly into contact with the West. Thanks to this the west has been able to continue working on a common basis without discontinuity whereas for the Japanese their problem is to unify the present dualism of traditional and modern ideas, which at the moment are juxtaposed rather than synthesized.

The Role of the Far East in European Art

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by Antonio Hernandez

The influence exerted by the Far East on western art has come from both China and Japan in such a way that it is possible to consider its impact as a single factor, to compare, for example, the craze for "chinoiserie" of the Rococo period or the taste for Indian art once fashionable in England with our present situation with regard to Japanese art. Disregarding the remarkable imitative efforts (in porcelain and lacquer) to which we owe so many delightful 17th and 18th century works in ceramics alone (Delft, Frankfurt, Hanau, Saint-Cloud and, after the development of European porcelain, Meissen and Sèvres), we are above all struck by the fact that on at least three occasions the art of the Far East has acted as a catalyst for tendencies which without its agency would not perhaps have been completely fulfilled—the decorative liberty of rococo, impressionist art being confirmed by the discovery of Hokusai and Japanese prints in general, and, in architecture, the encouragement that Japanese building gave to F. L. Wright and Bruno Taut as regards their ideas on the open plan and the interpenetration of interiors and exteriors. As for the significance that Japan may have for us today, this stems, from among other factors, from the importance that the Far East necessarily has for the United States, which is similarly a country bounded by the Pacific. Affinities can be seen in painters like Mark Tobey and Sam Francis. Affinities, it should be said, and not a slavish copying of models. Generally speaking, we can say that although there should be no question of the West imitating the East, we nevertheless feel it necessary in the future for us to transmit something of its essence and spirit in a different form.

Tradition and Modernism in Japanese Architecture

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by Aligül Ayverdi

Aligül Ayverdi is a Turkish architect living in Japan. While showing the technical and demographic reasons that have led the Japanese to abandon their 2,000-year-old tradition in domestic architecture, he also demonstrates that the conflict between old and new was the same as our own but that the Japanese architect has been able to come to terms with it more successfully than we have. It is, above all, in domestic architecture that the Japanese can and must attempt to reconcile old and new.

Toward a new Landscape

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by Tomoya Masuda

The extreme intensity of modernization in conjunction with the rapid growth in population density has led to the destruction of natural surroundings in Japan with the result that the function of modern Japanese architects is to re-create the countryside by way of the symbiosis of architecture and its frame, rather on the lines put forward by Louis Mumford—an ideal, by the way, that was anticipated in traditional Japanese architecture. The structures, the ordering brought about, will, however, not exclude liberty if the Japanese architect knows how to maintain in his work the ancient Japanese law of aesthetics, which, unlike its rigorously visual counterpart in the West, is based on the principle of "minor variations".

A New Zen Temple

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1957. Apartment, Hall of Meditation and Garden of Ryōsen-an Temple, Section of Daitoku-ji Temples, Kyoto

The property of the First Zen Institute of America in Japan, Ryōsen-an temple is a rigorously traditional structure (but in Japan copying means something quite different from what is understood by the word in Europe).

The Old and the New

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In these notes on a conversation held with Werner Blaser SWB, Basle, L. B. comments that our discussions with Japanese artists are, it is true, based on the following two themes: the old and the new and the European or Japanese character of the works in question. He points out, however, that these two pairs of categories are intimately related together. Even though the Japanese handicrafts have, like our own, succumbed, the "tea school" is maintaining the production of worthy products. The examples chosen as illustrations will give some idea of the exquisite simplicity which is characteristic of them.

Young People's Scientific Centre in Okayama

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Architects: Yoshinobu Ashihara and collaborators, Tokyo

A planetarium, a museum and a meeting-place for 300 visitors to be used by the children of the province of Okayama.

Project for a Hotel on a Cliff

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Architects: Kuo Mo-lin, Shin'ichi Okada and Fujio Shima, Tokyo

The building will harmonize with the beauty of the natural surroundings and will have behind it a form of hanging garden.

Projects for the Olympic Games in Tokyo 1964

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Basic plan: Takayama Laboratory of Tokyo University

The Stadium (architect Masachika Murata) and the Gymnasium (architect Yoshinobu Ashihara) will be two of the permanent buildings in the Komazawa Park.

Fritz Huf

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by Peter F. Althaus

Born in Lucerne in 1888, Fritz Huf carried out his first sculptures in that town after an apprenticeship as a goldsmith. Between 1912 and 1914 he lived in Frankfurt and there became famous for his busts. In 1914 he moved to Berlin and was not slow in becoming the most famous portraitist among the avant-garde circles. He held regular shows at the "Sezession". Busts of Werfel, Lasker-Schüler, Rilke, etc., and also of Rathenau, whose son-in-law he became. In 1924 he left Berlin for France, first at Toulon, then at Fontainebleau. Hailed by Kasimir Edschmid as one of the masters of expressionism, he tended increasingly towards static forms. As from 1928 he gradually moved from what he later called neo-classicism and allied himself in Paris with the major representatives of living art. In 1933 he was a member of the Abstraction-Creation group. In 1940 he returned to Switzerland (Lucerne, Gentilino and then Geneva) where he remained until 1949, when he returned to Paris (Maisons-Laffitte). We thus have a long transitional period of formal research, the end of which was dominated by the example of Brancusi and, perhaps, Nicolas de Staël. In 1952, after the death of his wife, he lived for a while in Rome and only emerged gradually from his artistic and personal crisis. Since 1957 he has been living at Gentilino (Ticino). His work is now purged of all narrative elements and has attained a new fullness informed solely by simplicity and what is essential.

Trends in Contemporary German Painting

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by Franz Roh

As a general rule, contemporary German painters have remained non-figurative: Sonderborg and the "plastic" painting group. Constructivism is still with us (Raum, Fruhrtrunk, etc.). The Zero group (Mack, Piene) wish to "go beyond the sadness of the finite" by using physico-technical means thanks to which the "light machine" will replace painting within the strict meaning of the word.