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New Visions of an Architectural Dialogue: Danish Domestic Landmarks and Nature

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Abstract

In an era of necessary reflection on human-nature relationship and the role of architecture as a mediator mean, some modern Danish buildings offer profound lessons for our own time.

The internationally renowned post-war Danish domestic buildings built in the 50's and early 60's, left a leading legacy that has greatly influenced the domestic sphere and has further led the world in terms of good design and welfare. They are deeply inspired by the relationship between humans and nature mediated through the architectural space, and offer exemplary sensory experiences of the natural world by complex mechanisms, sometimes without visual contact or a tangible link to the natural surroundings.

A range of facts lead them to this connection: 1. They show an ancestral respect for nature, rooted in a society that was based on agriculture for centuries. 2. They are linked to the principles of the artistic movement "Skønvirke", led by Jensen Klint, who impressed "Danish architects of the third generation" an intimate relationship with architectural tradition and its own craft, a shared feeling for the landscape - formed of topography, materials and climate -, and an architecture begotten in part by Nature, her principles of order and growth. 3. Their protagonists - Jørn Utzon, Arne Jacobsen, Eva and Nils Koppel, Karen and Ebbe Clemmensen, Vilhelm Wohlert, Jørgen Bo, Erik Christian Sørensen and Halldor Gunnløgsson and so on - were guided by Kay Fisker and Steen Eiler Rasmussen towards the study of international architecture as an important source of inspiration, outstanding Japanese, American and Anglo-Saxon architecture which is linked to Nature.

I present a piece of my ambitious research, showing how this fascinating dialogue takes place in some outstanding case-studies and through what means. Landscape, architectural and biophilic design approaches are integrated through the analysis of different parameters at diverse design scales. In addition, I foster some "Nature-Inclusive" architectural design strategies from these architectural Danish landmarks, to inform us of a sustainable contemporary design practice and therefore, to transform our reality into a better life.

Key words: Architecture, Modern Architecture, Denmark, Domestic Buildings, Nature. Biophilic Design, Sustainability

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