Lukket og slukket! — det hermetiske hus som tankeobjekt

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Permeating the impermeable — the hermetic building as an object of reflection

I. Åbning | Bygninger og kamerahuse har noget tilfælles. Lukkemekanismen er ikke blot afgørende for det fotografiske kamera og dets fastholdelse af øjeblikke, mekanismen er også essentiel for vores opfattelse af en bygning, sådan som denne forbinder sig med sine omgivelser via døre og vinduer, snart åbne, snart lukkede. Som kameraet har sin linse har huset sine anordninger for lysindtag og passage. Bygning og kamera har også det tilfælles, at ligesom husene ofte besidder geometrisk anlagte kanter og omrids, så fungerer kameraet i henhold til indre geometrisk anlagte koordinater.

Det fotografiske kamera opfatter vi grundlæggende som en lukket anordning, hvis lysindtag doseres i meget afmålte doser, hvorimod bygningen til sammenligning er en levende organisme, der med sine åbninger udveksler sig med omverdenen. Hvor fotografiapparatet grundlæggende er det mørke kammer, så skifter bygningers indre rum mellem lyse og mørke zoner.

I kraft af sin perforering demonstrerer bygningen et liv døgnet igennem, folk strømmer ind og ud på givne tidspunkter, tænder for lyset, åbner vinduer for at kalde på nogen eller for at få frisk luft, folk træder ud på balkoner, åbner og lukker persienner etc. Disse huller i muren udgør sammen med skorstenen de kanaler, hvorigennem bygningen ånder som en levende organisme

I en foruroligende afdeling af Jesper Rasmussens værker er husene forseglet, ja, ikke blot er døre og vinduer afviklet, også gaden er tømt for sit brus af mennesker, biler, blinklys, cykler, flagstænger, skilte etc. Bygningerne optræder solitært, de virker endog mere lukkede end bunkers og siloer, eftersom forseglingen går på tværs af alle forventninger. Det virker således berettiget at kalde dem *off-locations* — tilsynekomster uden for sted. Evakuerede i ordets mest gennemtrængende betydning bliver de i det indre stedløse. Husene optræder som massive, blokligende modeller i 1:1 udsat for en kronisk stasis. Med dette ryk fra det velkendte til det ubeboelige skabes en virkning, der mentalt er ligeså frapperende i sin indvirkning på vores virkelighedsbilleder og erindringer, som den straks følgende spekulation over den billedteknisk frembragte soliditet i husene, dvs. spørgsmålet om, hvordan denne kommer i stand. Man reflekterer over et teknisk stunt, der fremtræder som en hård og kompromisløs tryllekunst hinsides kendte menneskelige intentioner.

Her skal der spørges til, hvilke genrer af bygninger der er udvalgt, og hvad massivitet betyder for tidserfaringer i arkitekturhistorien? Desuden om betydningen af konventioner knyttet til tyngde inden for kategorien det monumentale, samt hvilke rejsefæller Jesper Rasmussen kan tænkes at have i den moderne kunst?

II. Monument og masse | I flere tilfælde har han udvalgt bygninger fra danske storbyer. Bygninger med status af lokale monumenter: museer, hoteller, patriciervillaer,

I. Opening | The building and the camera share a common feature. The shutter mechanism is not merely key to the photographic chamber and its preservation of the moment; the mechanism is also key to our understanding of a building in terms of how it relates to its surroundings by means of its doors and windows — open one moment, closed the next. Just as a camera has its lens, a building has its devices to allow the passage of light. An additional similarity can be found in the way that a building often possesses geometrically applied edges and contours, just as a camera functions in relation to geometrically applied coordinates.

Our fundamental understanding of the photographic camera is of it being a closed apparatus that lets in light in measured doses; the building, in comparison, is a living organism, which with its openings and apertures interacts with the outside world. Whereas the camera is fundamentally a dark chamber, the rooms of a building alternate between dark and light zones.

As a result of its perforations, the building demonstrates round-the-clock life: people stream in and out at certain times, switch on lights, open windows to call out to passers-by or to get fresh air, people step out onto balconies, and open and close blinds. These holes in the building's walls, together with the chimney, constitute the channels through which the building breathes as a living organism.

In an unsettling part of Jesper Rasmussen's works, the buildings are completely sealed up. Not only have doors and windows been done away with, but also the street has been cleared of the hustle and bustle of humans, cars, flashing lights, bicycles, flagpoles, signs etc. The buildings stand alone and solitary, appearing more closed than bunkers or silos with their level of sealed-up impermeability surpassing all expectations. The term '*off-locations*' seems highly appropriate here — apparitions outside space. Evacuated, in the most penetrating sense of the word, these buildings remain empty, belonging to no place. The buildings appear as solid, block-like, 1:1-scale models subjected to a chronic stasis. With this lurch from the familiar to the uninhabitable, an effect is created which is mentally as immobilising in its impact on our view of reality and memories; we immediately begin to speculate on the solidity in the buildings created by means of the imaging techniques, i.e. the question of how this has come into being. We reflect upon a technical stunt that appears as a tough and uncompromising magic trick beyond known human intentions.

To this, we must ask which genre of buildings has been chosen and what solidity means for the experience gained over time within architectural history. Questions must also be asked about the importance of conventions related to the concept of monument, and about other figures in

markante ejendomme — bygningsværker der fra starten ønsker at sætte sig tydelige spor i borgernes bevidsthed.

Museerne, således KUNSTEN i Aalborg (tidligere Nordjyllands Kunstmuseum) og Nationalmuseet i København, må tænkes at være repræsenteret af flere grunde i Rasmussens modificerede fotografier. Dels opstår der et kinesisk æskesystem, hvorunder hans fotografiske værker tematiserer museer, i hvilke de 'naturligt' hører hjemme, dels er museer, på linje med billedernes bygningsværker, relativt lukkede udadtil. De forvarer skatte fra kunst- og kulturhistorien anbragt på indersiden af lukkede mure.

I fotografierne bliver man således i særlig grad mindet om Th. W. Adornos udsagn gående ud på, at der er mere end en fonetisk forbindelse mellem ordene mausolæum og museum. I begge tilfælde er noget indkapslet med henblik på bevaring og stadig ihukommelse. Det privilegerede objekt, de jordiske rester eller kulturgenstanden forvares for en lang eftertid bag solide mure.

Kunstværker undergår i museet en relativ mortifikation, for så vidt som de rives ud af deres levende sammenhæng i atelieret, og deres konkrete livsverden, for at blive ophængt og konserveret bag solide mure i tyste sale. Det som er monumentalt indebærer i selve sit udspring et ønske om at understøtte erindring, at trodse tidens rov i tingene. For mausolæets vedkommende tjener dets kompakte opbygning ønsket om at sikre mindet og de jordiske rester af den gravsatte, mens museet forvarer kunstværker og artefakter, der i princippet langsomt mumificeres, samtidig med at museumsbygningen arkitektonisk gennem sin imposante udformning vil nobilitere de indeholdte skatte.

De ægyptiske pyramider udgør et paradigmatisk billede på monumentalitet. Deres opstablede masser af kvadrer og tillukkethed træder op mod tiden og trodser dens tand.

Nationalmuseet

the world of modern art who share an ideological kinship with Jesper Rasmussen.

II. Monument and Mass | In several works, Jesper Rasmussen has selected buildings from Danish cities. These buildings all share a status of being a locally recognisable landmark or monument: museums, hotels, patrician villas, buildings of outstanding architectural quality — buildings that from the outset want to leave their mark on the consciousness of ordinary civilians.

Supposedly, there would be several reasons for why Rasmussen represented the museums — such as *KUNSTEN* in Aalborg (formerly the North Jutland Art Museum) and the National Museum in Copenhagen — in his modified photographs. Firstly, there is the 'Chinese-box' effect. Here, Rasmussen's photographic works thematise museums where these 'naturally' belong; partly, these museums, in line with the buildings in the pictures, are relatively closed to the outside world, being custodians of artistic and historical cultural treasures that have been placed within the closed walls of the building.

In the photographs, we are particularly reminded of Theodor W. Adorno's statement to the effect that there is more than a purely phonetic connection between the words '*mausoleum*' and '*museum*'. In both cases, something has been encapsulated for preservation, both physically and in our memories. The privileged object, worldly remains and artefacts are preserved for long-term posterity behind solid walls.

In the museum, works of art undergo a relative mortification in so far as they are torn from their animate context in the studio and transported out of their concrete world to be suspended and preserved in the silent halls of the museum.

In their very origins, all things monumental inherently possess a desire to sustain and support the memory of something — to defy the inevitable oblivion of time. In terms of the mausoleum, its compact construction serves the desire to preserve the memory and the earthly remains of that which it entombs; similarly, the museum preserves artworks and artifacts that, in principle, slowly become mummified, and at the same time the museum building — through its imposing design — architecturally bestows an air of nobleness upon the treasures it houses.

The pyramids of Egypt represent a paradigmatic image of monumentality. Their huge, stacked mass of square blocks packed tightly together stand defiantly in the face of time. A 20th century archaeologist, who was fascinated by precisely the fact that these constructions were already 2000 years old when Caesar first saw them, exclaimed in awe, "Man fears time, but time fears the pyramids." This statement itself provokes a sublime shock as it places the pyramids themselves in a category of near incomprehensibility. For what can stand up against time itself?

En arkæolog fra forrige århundrede, som netop var fascineret af det forhold, at pyramiderne allerede var to tusinde år gamle, da Cæsar så dem, udbrød med ærefrygt: "Man fears time, but time fears the pyramids" (Mennesket frygter Tiden, men Tiden selv frygter pyramiderne). Et udsagn, der i sig selv udløser et mindre sublimt chok, idet det placerer pyramiderne i selve det umådeliges kategori. For hvad kan rejse sig i mod tiden selv?

En fundamental gestus hos mange betydelige kunstværker består i at standse tiden, idet kunstneren afsætter en mere eller mindre håndgribelig evighedserfaring i det værende gennem sin singulære gestus.

Den moderne kunst, underlagt en accelleration af forandringer i den samfundsmæssige situation, udviklede imidlertid ganske sigende en paradoksal doktrin, der tidligt optræder i Charles Baudelaires siden berømte bestræbelse på at fremelske erfaringen om en *beauté fugitive*, en skønhed i selve det flygtige.

Synet på det arkitektoniske monuments anliggende var, indtil det 19. århundredes modernistiske gennembrud, at stille sig over tiden og indstifte varighed gennem stabile, metafysiske referencer, som naturens orden, det klassiske formsprog, kanoniserede historiske stilarter, det guddommelige, de geometriske grundformer, det bestandige etc. Pyramiderne som bygningstype, understøttet af deres tilstedeværelse på tværs af en række urgamle civilisationer (i Kina, Mellemøsten og Latinamerika), opfattes som den paradigmatiske manifestation af denne viljesakt.

Dens knejsende masse kan yde modstand mod vejr og vind, mod entropiens lov, men den har på symbolplanet også rod i tidlige religioner. Mennesker har beregnet tiden ved at tage pejling ud fra landmassiver, som det pyramidelignende bjerg ved Kongernes Dal.

Solens bevægelser over himlen, dens op- og nedgange og videre dens stilling ved jævndøgn, har man kunnet fastlægge ud fra positioner i relation til højdedrag ved horisonten. Dette sker med religiøs ihærdighed under vilkår af naturidolatri, dvs. typer af samfund hvor omverdenen beherskes gennem rituelle besværgelser parret med begyndende målinger, der blev stedfæstet med stensætninger som vi kender dem fra den nordiske oldtid eller fra Stonehenge i England. Tunge, svære stenmasser rejst i et storstilet forsøg på at tøjle eller anråbe noget så uhåndterligt som tiden.

Pyramiderne blev som bekendt ydermere opbygget ud fra beregninger over stjernehimlens bevægelser.
Man kan således konkludere, at massivitet ikke blot vedrører kampen mod glemsel i de menneskelige samfundsdannelser og et værn mod nedbrydende fysiske kræfter - tyngde og svær masse er også i sit symbolske udspring forbundet med kortlægningen af noget så flydende og svært forståeligt som tiden.

A fundamental gesture of many significant works of art is to stop time, since the artist expounds a more or less tangible experience of the eternity of being through his or her singular gesture.

Being subject to an acceleration of change within the social situation, contemporary art has, however, quite tellingly developed a paradoxical doctrine. This doctrine appears early on in Charles Baudelaire's famous endeavour to cultivate the experience of a *beauté fugitive* — a beauty in the volatility of time itself.

Prior to the 19th century modernist breakthrough, the view of the architectural monument was of a creation that defied time, instituting duration and longevity through stable, metaphysical references. Such references included natural order, the classical idiom, canonised historical styles, the divine, the basic geometric shapes, and the durability and resistance of materials. Supported by their presence in a number of ancient civilisations (China, the Middle East and Latin America), the pyramid — as a building type — is seen as the paradigmatic manifestation of this act of will.

Its towering mass may provide resistance to wind and weather and against the law of entropy, but symbolically too it is firmly rooted in the cultures of early religions. People have calculated the time by taking bearings from features in the landscape, such as the pyramid-shaped mountain at the Valley of the Kings.

The sun's movement across the sky, its rising and setting and its position at the equinox, has been determined from its position in relation to the hills on the horizon. This was practiced with religious tenacity as a form of idol worship or idolatry, i.e. types of communities where the outside world is controlled through ritual incantations paired with initial measurements —measurements that were permanently marked out by stones, such as we know from Nordic antiquity or from Stonehenge in England. Heavy, hard rock masses raised in a large-scale attempt to curb or defy something as unwieldy as time.

The pyramids were similarly constructed in relation to calculations of the movement of the heavens.

Here then, the conclusion can be drawn that massiveness not only relates to humanity's fight to avert oblivion and to protect against destructive natural forces — but that gravity and great mass are also, on a symbolic plane, associated with the mapping of something as fluid and incomprehensible as time.

III. Identity | Even though Jesper Rasmussen's images of compact structures are far distant from the monuments of prehistory and calendar-based religions, these nevertheless raise questions about the relationship between time and architecture.

In the monumental and massive buildings of Neoclassicism, as in the buildings of French Revolutionary

III. Identitet | Selvom Jesper Rasmussens billeder af kompakte bygningsværker ligger fjernt fra monumenttyper i forhistorien eller i kalenderreligionerne, rejser de ikke desto mindre spørgsmål vedrørende relationen mellem tid og arkitektur.

I gravitetiske bygningsværker inden for nyklassicismen, således den franske revolutionsarkitektur (med hvilken Rasmussens værker i nogle henseender deler patos) arbejdes der i udtalt grad med skyggen, som et tegn på tidens gang, samt bygningens og det menneskeskabtes "andethed".

Men hos Rasmussen er skyggevirkninger droslet ned. Lyset falder som et egalt orienteringslys, med rudimentære skygger under gesimsbånd og ornamenter. I enkelte tilfælde kastes der ganske vist store slagskygger over gavle og lignende, men ofte tjener disse en abstrakt komposition, som i værket *DUMBO*.

Bygningerne fremtræder i reglen ikke som noget solur med markante, ekspressive skyggedannelser og den dertil knyttede skarpe skæring ind i plastisk-atmosfæriske kontrastvirkninger. Vi er således ikke blot på afstand af nyklassicismens høje patos af manende, tunge slagskygger, vi er også på afstand af skyggernes hermed beslægtede teatralske effektfuldhed i malerier af Giorgio di Chirico og *pittura metafysica* i det hele taget, hvor skygger og forladthed smelter sammen.

Når der kan være grund til at nævne Giorgio di Chirico, er det bl.a. fordi denne i mange tilfælde inddrager bygningsmotiver, der nok er typologisk velkendte fra "klassiske" historiske byer i Sydeuropa, men på en sådan måde, at disse, gennem deres isolation på maleriernes arkitektoniske scene, fremstår som sære hieroglyffer eller klodser fra byggesæt, halvt ubegribelige tegn, der er faldet ud af tiden, in absentia fra enhver fortrolig sammenhæng.

De Chiricho

architecture (with which Rasmussen works share — in some respects — pathos) their construction is to a large degree marked by shade, as a sign of the passage of time, as well as the "otherness" of the building and other manufactured objects.

These shadow effects are, however, toned down in Rasmussen's work. Here, the light falls as smooth orientation-light, with rudimentary shadows under cornices and exterior ornamentation. In some cases, however, great shadows are cast by gables and similar features, but these often serve as an abstract composition, as in the work *DUMBO*.

In general, the buildings do not appear as some form of sundial with distinctive, expressive shadowing and sharp slashing of the contrast plastic-atmospheric effects this usually entails. Here, we are not only far removed from neoclassicism's high pathos of admonishing, heavy shadows; we are also far removed from the related theatrical impressiveness seen in the paintings of Giorgio di Chirico and *pittura metafysica*, where shadows and abandonment merge.

And a reference to Giorgio di Chirico here is well founded. In many examples, he includes building motifs that are typically familiar from 'classic' historical cities in southern Europe, but he does so in such a way that they, through their isolation within the paintings' architectural scene, appear as strange hieroglyphics or bricks from kits, half incomprehensible characters that have fallen out of time, in absentia from any familiar context.

But let us return to the principle of abandonment, the experience of the deserted and passers-by depicted as almost unperceivable afterthoughts.

In engravings from the 18th and 19th centuries, we see people milling about the bases of the great Giza Pyramids. These people are depicted as creatures so small that they are on the verge of vanishing into obscurity completely. Often they are shown sitting on camels, in such a way that their size, their concealing clothing and their fleeting transit across the desert indirectly tells about the 'human ant's' capitulation to the mysterious and eternal gesture of the monument.

With the necessary differences, the sealed buildings in Jesper Rasmussen's works evoke a related effect. As a result of their accentuated fixedness and hermetic-mass effect, the importance of the lives lived and the live traffic in and around the building elapses before them — all traces of everyday life are erased from the scene.

We are presented with an expression of compressed duration paired with a muted, partly eerie sealing. A metaphor appears through the editing of the photographic material by a distant master of ceremonies, a manager of reality, who grapples with extremely large volumes and yet seems oriented toward discretion. The sealed-up building strives to become anonymous.

Men lad os vende tilbage til princippet om forladthed, oplevelsen af det menneskетomme og oplevelsen af passanter som en ufattelig biting.

På stik fra det 18. og 19. århundrede ses de mennesker der færdes ved Giza-pyramidernes fod som så små, at de netop er til at knipse bort. Ofte sidder de på kamelryg, således at både deres størrelse, tilslørende klædedragter og den adspredte transit gennem ørkenen indirekte fortæller om menneskemyrens kapitulation over for monumentets gådefulde evighedsgestus.

Med de nødvendige forskelle har de tillukkede bygninger i Jesper Rasmussens værker en beslægtet virkning. Grundet deres betonede stilstand og hermetiske massevirkning glider betydningen af det levede liv og den levende trafik i og omkring husene på forhånd af på dem, dagligdagens spor skrives ned.

Vi stilles over for et udtryk for komprimeret varighed parret med en stum, delvis spooky forsegling. Et billedligt udtryk, der er fremelsket ved redigering af det fotografiske materiale, foretaget af en distant ceremonimester, en virkelighedsbestyrer, der tumler særdeles store voluminer og dog synes at være orienteret mod diskretion. De tilknappede huse tilstræber et incognito.

I renæssancen talte arkitekter om, at en bygning i sin helhed og detaljer burde være så organisk integreret, at man ikke kan fjerne noget eller lægge noget til uden at værket svækkes. Hos Rasmussen kunne man snarere spørge, hvor meget kan man trække fra, uden at bygningen mister sin identitet? Det er utvivlsomt vigtigt, at man kan genkende og identificere de repræsenterede bygningsværker, eller at man tror, at et forlæg/udgangspunkt findes. Noget af den foruroligende virkning består imidlertid i, at det viste og genkendelige er underlagt en systematisk fysiognomisk svækkelse. Det udløser et pludseligt ritsj i bevidstheden samtidig med, at man ser den omhu,

Vitruvius

In the Renaissance, architects spoke about a building in its entirety: details should be as organically integrated as possible so that no feature may be added or removed without compromising the work. In the case of Rasmussen, the question is rather how much can be removed from the building before it loses its identity. It is undoubtedly important that the ability to recognise and identify the represented buildings remains, and it remains key that we believe that an overall grand design or core idea still exists. One of the disturbing effects, however, is that within that which is portrayed (and recognised) exists a systematic physiognomic weakness. It triggers a sudden jolt within our consciousness and we become aware of the care, meticulousness and merciless exactitude employed in the act of completing the operation.

In the second half of the 19th century, when Paris was predominantly characterised by the extreme traffic circulating around the city's network of boulevards, some sensitive outsiders who enjoyed reading the city's 'text' began to wander the streets at night. Their nocturnal sojourns allowed them to experience the massive stooping properties, weighty city blocks and monumental buildings that lined the abandoned streets of the time — all of which projected elongated stasis and stood as masses of stacked, cut stone.

About the act roving the streets of Paris, Walter Benjamin later stated, "One wanders through the city between walls of stone". This feeling is further enhanced at night, when the atmosphere imparts both a greater sense of closeness and a greater sense of distance. In such a twilight, the body works itself into the city heavier and indistinct channels. The body becomes, as phenomenologists would say, one flesh intertwined with the stone's and material's resistance.

Vitruvius

langsomhed og nådesløse kompromisløshed, hvormed operationen er gennemført.

Da Paris i det 19. århundredes anden halvdel overvejende blev præget af en ekstrem trafikal cirkulation gennem hele nettet af boulevarder, begyndte nogle følsomme outsidere, der holdt af at læse byens tekst, at vandre om natten, for at opleve de på dét tidspunkt forladte gaders tyngde af ludende ejendomme, karréer og monumentale enkeltbygninger i deres stort udspændte stasis, deres masse af opstablede, tilhuggede sten.
Overhovedet om det at gå i Paris sagde Walter Benjamin senere: "Man vandrer i byen mellem mure af sten". En følelse der yderligere forstærkes om natten, hvor alting atmosfærisk på en gang opleves tættere på og længere væk. Kroppen arbejder sig i en sådan tusmørkesituation ind i byens tunge og mere forskelsløse kanaler. Kroppen bliver, som fænomenologer kunne sige det, ét kød med det stenede og med materiens modstand.

Op imod trafikkens strøm i dagens løb, hvor byrummet var viltert dynamisk, oplevede de omtalte nattevandrere (kaldet noctambulister) byens morfologiske fasthed, boulevardernes sejge kapper af stenbelægninger under facadernes i mørket homogene murværk.

IV. Nogle arkitekturmotiver i dansk kunst | Kobberstik og tegninger, der viser europæiske metropolers berømte bygningsværker fra renæssancen til det 19. århundrede, har tilsvarende en forkærlighed for at vise byens ikoniske bygninger, gader og pladser — helt uden mennesker eller blot med få spredte staffagefigurer, solitære mikroskopiske passanter henover Nytorv eller Kgs. Nytorvs, som det synes, stort anlagte flade.

Hammershøi

Against the traffic flow during the day — where public spaces were wildly dynamic — these night hikers (called *noctambulists*) experienced Paris's morphological solidity, the tough stone mantles of the boulevards below the homogeneous masonry of the night-time façades.

IV. Some Architectural Motifs In Danish Architecture | Copper engravings and drawings depicting the famous structures and buildings of the European metropolises (dating from the Renaissance through to the 19th century) also display a predilection for showing iconic city buildings, streets and squares — completely void of people or with merely a scattering of staffage or accessory figures, solitary microscopic passers-by traversing squares and other openly planned urban areas, including Copenhagen's *Kongens Nytorv* and *Nytorv*.

An early example of presenting buildings and allowing these to speak through the façades' own vocabulary can be found in the domestic Danish engravings of Copenhagen's churches, palaces and grand houses in the 18th-century work *Hafnia Hodierna*, published by Lauritz de Thurah. Here, the façades are purely and concisely depicted, without any human presence whatsoever. In an intriguing manner the windows are erased into opaque, black squares.

Later, the façades of more upscale properties are similarly portrayed, though in another medium — namely in the early photographs of the mid-1800s that depict the city's squares and streets. As a result of the constraints imposed by the technology of the time (the long exposure times required) rows of houses appear deserted. In addition, the photographs were taken early in the morning to avoid as few disturbing elements entering the frame as possible.

Hammershøi

Et tidligt eksempel på det at præsentere bygninger og lade dem tale ud på facadekompositionens egne præmisser, forekommer i de hjemlige stik af hovedstadens kirker, palæer og slotte i oversigtsværket *Den danske Vitruvius* fra 1700-tallet, udgivet af Lauritz de Thurah. Facaderne står her helt rent og koncist beskrevet, uden menneskelig tilstedeværelse.

Senere optræder facader på fornemme ejendomme, på anden vis, i de tidlige fotografier fra midten af 1800-tallet, visende byens pladser og stræder. Husrækker der af tekniske årsager fremstår mennesketomme som følge af fotografiernes lange eksponeringstid. For at undgå forstyrrende elementer fandt optagelserne sted meget tidligt om morgenen.

Det forbløffende ved disse billeder er de svage spor af en enkelt vogn eller fodgænger, der dog ikke for alvor kan ses, fordi de ikke opholder sig længe nok i billedet til at efterlade andet end et æterisk, i billedet uforklarligt, sløret spor. Selve optageteknikken, som den var, tenderer mod at annullere det, der blot passerer forbi, hvorved facaderækkerne får et stærkere egetliv. De virker scenografisk suveræne, som var de alene med hinanden.

Så sent som ved århundredeskiftet 1900 optræder hos brødrene Sven og Vilhelm Hammershøi en forkærlighed for at lade byens monumenter tone frem i en atmosfære af ophøjet, rugende betydning, hvor byen ladt alene synes at meditere over sin egen eksistens. Vilhelm Hammershøjs fremstillinger af hovedstadens monumenter og eksteriøre rum, eksempelvis Amalienborg, Marmorbroen eller Asiatisk Kompagnis huse på Strandgade, virker mættede med spørgsmålet: hvad er det, der indstifter byens håndgribelige fysiske betydning, forstået som det over lang tid identitetsskabende, selve det umiskendelige ved

Palle Nielsen

The amazing thing about these images is the faint trace of a single vehicle or pedestrian — an image that is not in reality visible, because the object does not stay long enough in the picture to leave behind anything but an ethereal, indiscernible, blurred trace. The recording technique of the day tended to cancel out objects that passed through the frame during exposure, whereas the static lines of the façades linger. They reign scenographically supreme, as if they existed in a world where there was nothing else but each other.

As recently as the turn of the 18th century, the brothers Sven and Vilhelm Hammershøi displayed a penchant for letting the city's monuments emerge in an atmosphere of exalted brooding, where the city — left to itself — seems to meditate on its own existence. Vilhelm Hammershøi's representations of Copenhagen's monuments and outdoor spaces, such as *Amalienborg Palace*, *Marmorbroen* (The Marble Bridge) or the Danish Asiatic Company buildings on Strandgade, seem saturated with the questions: What is it that establishes the city's tangible physical meaning in terms of its long-term identity, itself unmistakable for any city? What are the qualities (which at special moments of esoteric pleasure or in the picturesque depiction) we cannot get enough of and that catch us unawares — despite our sober analytical contemplation? There is something left behind in the beauty of a building and its architectural significance.

One characteristic of Vilhelm Hammershøi's approach is his transfer of the finely calibrated setups employed with still-life painting to the painting of interiors, understood as the exact location of things and self-absorbed figures joined together in carefully composed architectural interior. This continues in his portrayal of monuments in the city based around selected elements. For example, the composition of an equestrian statue in front of a grand façade or *Marmorbroen*, which majestically and with great dignity connects to the entrance to *Ridebanen* (the horse parade ground) at the *Christiansborg Palace*. Above all, these results stem from a strategy of simplification and from an assumption that an elevated sense of space and architectural character exist as entities in their own rights.

The young boy called Palle from the 1942 Danish book *Palle alene I verden* awoke to find himself alone in the world; the lonesome Palle himself would be able to silently slip through Hammershøi's rooms and out into the streets of Strandgade or to the great squares of Frederikstad, remaining in the architectural silence that on its own speaks for itself.

The author Niels Barfoed has aptly noted that grey rendered façades of Tøjhusgade (which although never depicted by Hammershøi remains the most Hammershøi-like of all of Copenhagen's streets) stands as an extreme example, with its grave, sealed façades standing resolute in their dismissive indifference. The buildings seem com-

en by, egenskaber man i særlige øjeblikke af esoterisk nydelse, eller i den maleriske fremstilling ikke kan få nok af, respektivt komme bagom, trods en nøgtern analyserende fordybelse. Husenes skønhed og arkitektoniske signifikans besidder en rest.

Et træk ved Vilhelm Hammershøis fremgangsmåde består i overførslen af stilleben-maleriets fint kalibrerede opstillinger til maleriet af interiører, forstået som den eksakte placering af ting og i sig selv absorberede skikkelser, sammenføjet i et arkitektonisk nøje komponeret interiør. Dette fortsættes i hans fremstillinger af monumenter i byen ud fra selekterede elementer. Eksempelvis i kompositionen af en rytterstatue foran et palæs facade eller Marmorbroen, der majestætisk, som et element af stor værdighed, kobler sig på indgangen til Ridebanen ved Christiansborg. Fremfor alt er disse resultater af en strategi gående ud på forenkling og antagelsen om, at der gives sådan noget som en ophøjet rumfølelse og arkitektonisk karakter i og for sig.

Palle alene i Verden kunne for den sags skyld tyst gå gennem Hammershøis stuer og videre ud på Strandgade eller til Frederikstadens store plads og vedblive med at være i arkitekturens afstemte stilhed, hvor den taler ud fra sig selv.

Forfatteren Niels Barfoed har træffende bemærket, at Tøjhusgade, som Hammershøi ganske vist ikke anvendte som motiv, er den mest "hammershøiske" af alle københavnske gader, netop som følge af, at dens gråpudsede facader i ekstrem grad fremstår alvorstungt tillukkede, sig selv nok i deres bortvendthed. Bygningerne virker komplet uanfægtede af det empiriske liv, vore forbigående daglige gøremål.

En anden dansk kunstner, der hører til Jesper Rasmussens aner, er grafikeren og tegneren Palle Nielsen. I visse af dennes synkretistiske arbejder med europæiske byscenarier oplever man den relative mennesketomhed som essentiel bestanddel af byrummenes scenografiske intensitet. Over huse og åbne pladser hviler en latens af eksplosiv, henholdsvis ruinøs betydning. Prospekterne er svangre med katastrofe, det udvalgte inventarium over kontinental-europæisk bygningskunst vil, som det her tegner sig, ved tidernes afslutning blive til sammenstyrtede brokker. Husene lever under truslen om et sådant perspektiv.

Dette perspektiv udgår hos Palle Nielsen fra en konkret historisk erfaring om byernes ødelæggelse, idet man samtidig mindes om, at fysikkens love arbejder i selv de mest resistente materialer ved disses nedbrydning ud fra den fysiske lov om entropi.

Sidstnævnte tema er i parentes bemærket endnu mere udtalt hos én af Nielsens egne, store forgængere, den italienske grafiker fra 1700-tallet G.B. Piranesi, hvor endog kolossale lukkede murværk af kvadrer med præcise snitflader fremtræder hjemfaldne til forvitring og som metaforer for den glemsel, de vil trodse.

pletely unperturbed and unaffected by empirical life and by our transient daily chores.

Another Danish artist who shares Jesper Rasmussen's way of thinking is graphic designer and artist Palle Nielsen. In some of his syncretistic work with European urban landscapes, we experience the relative human emptiness as essential component of the scenographic intensity of urban spaces. A latency of explosive and ruinous importance rests above the city's buildings and open spaces. There is an impending sense of foreboding, the selected inventory of the continental-European architecture will, as portrayed here, become nothing less than piles of collapsed debris. The buildings all live under the threat of just such a destiny.

Palle Nielsen formulates such a prospect of ruinous disintegration based upon concrete historical experience of urban destruction. Here, we are reminded that the laws of physics — in this case, the physical law of entropy — affect and transform even the most resistant materials.

Incidentally, the latter theme is even more pronounced in the works of one of Nielsen's own great predecessors, the 18th century Italian graphic artist G.B. Piranesi. In Piranesi's works, even the colossal, sealed, block masonry with its precise cuts and lines appears vulnerable to weathering, thus becoming a metaphor for the oblivion it intends to defy.

IV. Photographic Post Production Vs. Doccumentation Of The Moment | Jesper Rasmussen's sealed buildings are in their own way disturbing, but are more faceless in their character. They are not as saturated with a character of nobleness or melancholy as the buildings in Hammershøi's works, and they are not as impregnated with mystery and a European sense of crisis as Palle Nielsen's monuments.

Admittedly, Rasmussen's processed photographs do possess a related and quite extraordinary architectural sensibility, yet they cannot evade the fact that they have been created using a degree of technical magic. On first impression, they immediately intrigue us; the objectifying, bright lights conjure up a sense of wonder within us. Nevertheless, when we ask ourselves how this expression actually is created and how it can be done, the technical merits of the works begin to enter the equation.

But at the same time — just like with any photograph — we reflect on the amazing phenomenon of the passing of some fleeting moment in time. Time evades us; we cannot touch it. It is imperceptible — invisible yet present as a fundamental element in all of our lives.

The Latin maxim *tempus fugit*, meaning time flies, is an appropriate epithet. The irreversibility of time during the on-going passing of the moment can be said to possess a continuous, semi-fascinating, semi-catastrophic

IV. Fotografisk efterbearbejdning vs. dokumentation af øjeblikket | Jesper Rasmussens forseglede bygninger er på deres egen måde foruroligende, men mere *blank face*-agtige. Ikke så nobelt eller melankolsk stemningsmættede som Hammershøis lærreder og ikke så imprægneret med en mytisk og europæisk krisebevidsthed som monumenterne hos Palle Nielsen.

Rasmussens bearbejdede fotografier besidder ganske vist en beslægtet, ganske ekstraordinær arkitektonisk sensibilitet, alligevel kan de ikke sige sig fri for et drag af teknisk magi. De virker umiddelbart intrigerende, idet de slår beskueren med undren som følge af det objektiverende, klare lys. Ikke desto mindre spørger man: Hvordan er dette udtryk kommet til veje? Hvordan lader det sig gøre? Billederne indbyder til kommunikation vedrørende deres tekniske forudsætninger.

Men samtidig – på linje med ethvert fotografi – en erfaring om det forbløffende ved det just foregåendes forsvinden. Tiden som sådan forløber, man kan ikke røre den, den er umærkelig, heller ikke synlig og dog bestemmer den gennemgribende over vores tilværelse.

Det hedder med en latinsk sentens: *tempus fugit*, tiden flygter. Tidens irreversibilitet under det stadige tab af øjeblikke kan hævdes at besidde et fortløbende, halvt fascinerende, halvt katastrofisk islæt, hvilket gælder så meget desto mere for den moderne epoke med dens accellererede procesformer af destruktion og frembringelser. Den kollektive bevidsthed stirrer forbløffet tilbage på de livsformer samt de steder, der er gået tabt, men som endnu lever i erindringen.

Fotografiets tiltrækningskraft, som et i flere henseender udpræget moderne medium, skyldes dets evne til at fiksere og statuarisk ophøje øjeblikke. Øjeblikke der netop "har været", som en anden fotofilosof (Roland Barthes) sagde. Øjeblikke varer jo kun et øjeblik for at blive afløst af et nyt. Rasmussens manipulation af sit fotografiske materiale udfordrer på symbolplanet øjeblikket mere end fotografiet i reglen formår, dels som følge af den omfattende postproduktion, der løfter dem ud af det øjeblikksbestemte billedes natur og ind i det stærkt bearbejdede motivs forholdsvise tidsuafhængighed. Det øjebliksbundne udfordres endvidere som følge af motivernes massivitet, den tunge uigennemtrængelighed vi pr. sædvane forbinder med tidløshed. Fremfor alt neutraliserer efterbearbejdningens manipulationer udgangspunktet i det fotografiske materiales øjebliksafhængighed.

V. Huses ansigter | Der stråler ud fra alle fotografier, der primært viser en bygning, en art hemmelighedsfuld pagt. Husene synes tilbageholdende i kraft af det, vi tror de har bevidnet, men ikke umiddelbart kan se (og som fotografen med sit personlige blik kunne tænkes at vide eller spørge til).

Jesper Rasmussen reducerer bygninger til først at være facader. De ses *en face*, og der stopper det. Idet vi nærmer

element, which is all the more relevant to the modern era with its accelerated forms of destruction and creation. The collective consciousness stares amazedly back at the life forms and the places that have been lost yet live on in the memory.

Photography's attraction, which in many respects characterises it as modern medium, stems from its ability to fix and statuesquely elevate moments — moments that "have just been", as another photo-philosopher once said. Moments last only for a fleeting moment in time, continually being replaced by the next moment. On a symbolic level, Rasmussen's manipulation of the photographic material challenges the moment more than photography usually manages to, partly as a result of the extensive post production that lifts his works out of the momentary nature of the image and into the highly processed and relatively time-independent motif. That which is bound by the moment is challenged further as a result of the subjects' massiveness, the heavy impermeability we associate with timelessness. Above all, the post-production manipulation neutralises the point of origin within the photographic material's dependence on moment.

V. The Face Of A Building | There radiates from all photographs that primarily depict buildings a sort of mysterious pact. The buildings seem hesitant because of what we believe they have witnessed, but cannot immediately see (and like the photographer, with his or her personal view, we imagine may know or ask about).

Jesper Rasmussen's first move is to reduce buildings to façades. They are seen *en face* and that is it. As we approach them, we come face to face with their elevation, a border-like appearance. These frontages represent the buildings' physiognomy.

Furthermore, normally when we look at a building, it assumes an anthropomorphic projection: we view the building not as a thing but rather as a creature containing physiognomic features within its openings and façade configuration. With its portals and window openings, it can look like a mask with eyes, nose and mouth — as much a living creature as it is an inanimate entity. Nonetheless, the systematic obliteration of these 'facial features' comes across as unpleasant, almost like an attack on both the building itself and on its viewer who reflects him- or herself in the two-way relationship.

Architecture is fundamentally perceived as a container for a composite of lived life. When a building appears abandoned or without visitors (as they frequently do in today's photographs) it stands out, drawing attention to itself as a kind of *objet trouvé*, cleansed of the many contextual threads of normality. Hermetically sealed, as is radically depicted in Jesper Rasmussen's architectural images, a building stands difficult to pry open and difficult to make intelligible from an everyday architectural perspective.

os dem står vi *face to face* med deres opstalt, en grænsetilsynekomst. Husenes front er deres fysiognomi.

Ydermere kan der i almindelighed ved synet af huse indfinde sig en antropomorf projektion: Huset fremstår ikke som en ting, men som en skabning, det rummer med sine åbninger og facadeorden fysiognomiske træk. Det kan med portaler og vinduesudskæringer ligne en ansigtsmaske med øjne, næse, mund, et væsen ligeså meget som en ting. Den systematiske udviskning af disse "ansigtstræk" virker da i tur og orden ubehagelig, som et angreb på selve bygningen og dens beskuer inden for spejlrelationen.

Arkitektur opfattes grundlæggende som container for et sammensat levet liv. Når huse vises forladte eller uden besøgende, som hyppigt i nutidens fotografi, træder de ud af rækken, pegende på sig selv som en art *objet trouvé*, renset for normalitetens mange kontekstuelle tråde. Blankt forseglet, som det på radikal vis effektueres i Jesper Rasmussens arkitekturbilleder, er et hus yderligere svært at lirke op, vanskeligt at gøre intelligibelt ud fra en dagligdags erfaring med arkitektur.

Virkningen kan minde om typer af *mutisme* i andre kunstretninger. Den stumme rolle på film eller i en teaterforestilling er ofte yderst virkningsfuld, fordi vi leder efter en årsag, bombarderer figuren med hypoteser, idet vi føler os afskåret og kommunikativt krænkede i henseende til menneskelig gensidighed.

Litteraten Claus Bratt Østergaard har i en samtale sagt: "Bevidstheden strømmer altid mod det, som er lagt øde", de zoner i bevidstheden, der er ramt af en tavshed. I psykoanalytisk forstand forstået som det traumatiske, det øde-lagte vi pr. definition ikke kan finde ord for.

Man kan hertil føje, at det som er lagt øde ubevidst aktiveres i skikkelse af typer af symbolske repræsentationer, såsom det ikke hørlige skrig i stumfilm, ørkenen hos Samuel Beckett, Munken på stranden hos Casper David Friedrich, den pludselige afbrydelse af Arnold Schönbergs *Moses og Aron*, de afsvedne landskaber hos Anselm Kiefer etc.

VI. En vis usynlighed | Walter Benjamin mente, at arkitektur er et fænomen der opleves adspredt, så at sige ud gennem øjenkrogen i forløb af funktionsstyret vanemæssighed. Det bebyggede er således noget, der simpelthen er der, idet vi bevæger os rundt med opmærksomheder rettet mod diverse praktiske forhold, henholdsvis slentrende i egne tanker. Jesper Rasmussens på en gang fokuserede *og* afvisende billeder af bygningers ydre gør disse dramatisk spændte i den antitetiske konstellation. Bag de lukkede facader er bygningerne absolut genstridige, de slår fra, samtidig med, at de kalder på at blive 'pakket ud'.

The effect is reminiscent of types of *mutism* in other art forms. The silent role in a film or play is often highly effective because we strive to find a cause. We hypothesise wildly about the silent figure, from whom we feel cut off and who we feel is communicatively violating us in terms of human reciprocity.

Lecturer Claus Bratt Østergaard once stated in an interview, "Consciousness flows always against that which is laid waste", the zones of awareness affected by a silence. In a psychoanalytical sense, this can be understood as the traumatic — that which is destroyed which, by definition, we cannot find words for.

To this it can be added that that which is laid waste is unconsciously activated in the guise of types of symbolic representations, such as the inaudible screams in silent films, the desert of Samuel Beckett, the monk on the beach with Casper David Friedrich, the sudden interruption of Arnold Schönberg's *Moses and Aaron*, and the parched landscapes of Anselm Kiefer.

VI. A Certain Invisibility | Walter Benjamin believed that architecture is a phenomenon that is experienced in a moment of distraction, so to speak, out of the corner of our eyes in the course of operationally controlled habit. Buildings and other elements that have been constructed are things that simply exist in the background as we move around with our attentions directed to various practical issues and drift about deep in our own thoughts. Jesper Rasmussen's images of building exteriors that are both focused and repellent at one and the same time create a dramatic tension in the antithetical constellation. Behind the closed façades, the buildings remain stubborn; they shun us yet beg to be 'unwrapped'.

They stop all that is routine and crave attention. But firstly they are telling us to stay away! — just as do boarded-up buildings with their nailed-up doors and windows to keep out intruders. There is, however, nothing temporary about the sealing up of the buildings in the pictures, nor are they earmarked for demolition.

The sealing up of the buildings is not merely a makeshift measure to protect against hurricane or burglary, but texturally a fully integrated part of the façades perfect masonry. The closed façades are plastered, smooth and quite homogeneous with the rest of the masonry. The buildings seem to have been planned this way from the beginning by individuals with a paradoxical agenda. After all, what we expect of a building is shelter, an enterable interior and an overall character of 'insideness'. In this respect, Rasmussen's façades seem moderately eerie and their block-like form seems alien.

De standser den rutinemæssige tilstedeværelse, fremmer opmærksomhed. Men de siger i første omgang: hold dig borte! På linje med huse der er sømmet til med brædder og plader for at forhindre tyverier, typer af indtrængen. Der er dog intet midlertidigt over lukningen af billedernes bygninger, ej heller er de udrangerede som kondemneringsmodne.

Forseglingen er ikke nogen interimistisk foranstaltning mod orkan eller indbrud, men stofligt en fuldstændig integreret del af facadernes perfekte murværk. De lukkede facader fremstår afpudsede, jævne og helt homogene med den øvrige del af murværket. Bygningerne synes tænkt sådan — af personer med en paradoksal dagsorden. Af huse forventer vi jo ly, hulhed, overhovedet en karakter af "indeni". Bygningsfacaderne hos Rasmussen forekommer på den baggrund moderat uhyggelige, blokformen virker *alien*.

Vi genkender ganske vist hurtigt de arkitektoniske forlæg, opdager at der er tale om kendte bygninger fra byen. Herved indtræder en række dobbelttydigheder: For det første indebærer maskeringen af den kendte ejendom en elementær, til dels morsom mærkværdiggørelseseffekt. For det andet støder man på paradokset af skærpet opmærksomhed over for en bygning, der i øvrigt er manipuleret til udtryk for glemsel og en fatalt svækket mening. Sidstnævnte forhold kunne være en refleksion over antagelsen om, at vi ikke ser arkitektur på de daglige ruter, når vi først er kørt forbi nogle gange. Selv ikoniske bygninger fra Bella Vista i Klampenborg til Hotel Astoria ved Hovedbanegården i København virker måske som blotte signaltegn, der giver en i al væsentlighed ubevidst orientering, medens vi "stryger forbi".

Imidlertid kan fotografiernes lukkede facader også pege på, at monumenter ikke blot opfylder funktionen at indeholde historisk hukommelse, men at de uvilkårligt gennem årene må lide den tort at blive allegorier for glemsel.

Admittedly, we do quickly recognize the architectural model, and we are well aware that these are famous city buildings.

As a consequence, a number of ambiguities arise. Firstly, the masking of the well-known property involves an elementary, partially amusing, curiosity-evoking effect. Secondly, we encounter the paradox of a building that has been manipulated to express oblivion and a fatally weakened sense of being actually attracting an increased level of attention.

The latter could be a reflection on the assumption that once we have passed it a few times, we cease to see architecture in our daily journeys to and fro around the city. Even iconic buildings from *Bellavista* in Klampenborg to *Hotel Astoria* by *Copenhagen Central Station* may seem like meagre 'signposts' that merely assist our largely unconscious orientation while we dash past them.

However, the closed façades of the photographs also point out that monuments not only fulfil the function of containing historical memory, but they inevitably over the years have to suffer the indignity of becoming allegories for oblivion.

Few remember anymore the circumstances surrounding the making of these works, nor their intended meaning. In other words, it is not known what their intended content was at their time of construction, let alone their basic level of functionality. Their significance has faded away, while the signifier remains. In the photographs of Jesper Rasmussen, this signifier has been crossed out, paralysed and sealed off. All we are left with is a simple shell.

VII. Iconoclasm | Here, we are dealing with a unit of reductionism akin to a form of iconophobia and abstraction. This is both relevant and logical as the etymological

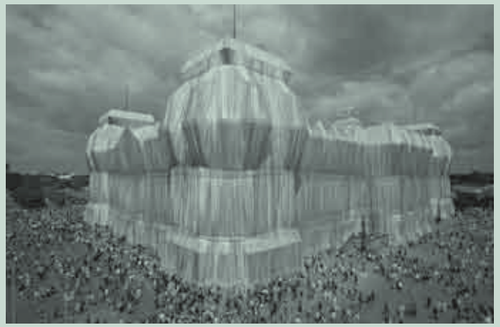
Bella Vista

De færreste husker længere de nærmere omstændigheder omkring tilblivelsen af disse værker, henholdsvis hvilken mening de ville bringe til torvs. Med andre ord ved man ikke, hvad der var deres tidstypiske indhold endsige deres elementære funktionelle plan. Deres signifié fortoner sig, mens signifianten står tilbage. I Jesper Rasmussens billeder bliver denne signifiant ydermere streget over, lammet og forseglet. Man står tilbage med en enkel skal.

VII. Ikonoklasme | Vi har at gøre med en enhed af reduktionisme i retning af billedforbud og abstraktion, hvilket er logisk nok, fordi det at abstrahere etymologisk kommer af at trække fra. At vi i reglen kommer til kort mht. at begribe byernes huse, underbygges i fotografierne af en udhævet ikonoklasme. Beslægtet med måden hvorpå radikale protestanter under Reformationen rensede kirkerne for billeder og anden udsmykning, har den moderne kunst ud fra andre forudsætninger i *minimal art* udarbejdet sin egen ikonoklasme, sit eget billedforbud, der blev til modernismens apoteose som abstraktion.

Dette indfandt sig i 1960ernes kunst i form af arbejdet med helt ensartede, ornamentløse elementer, der sammensat i rækker eller felter synes at udspringe af industriproduktionens serier af anonyme fysiske emner. Emner der i deres rationalistiske og produktionsæstetiske tilvirkning udforskes hinsides kunstnerens subjektive, eksistensielle "selvudtryk". Kunstneren anvender præcist kalkulerede fysiske emner (kasser, plader i stål, krydsfinerplader, fliser, gitterelementer) af en *no nonsense*-agtig masseproduceret karakter, for derigennem også at undersøge den industrielle masseproduktions omsiggribende prægning af vore fysiske omgivelser. Flere repræsentanter for *minimal art* kom fra arkitekturen, nogle havde bygget *curtainwall*-skyskrabere på Manhattan og var begyndt at tænke over, hvad disse hyperrationaliserede, ternede

Christo



meaning of the verb 'to abstract' comes from the Latin 'to draw away'. The fact that we usually are able to comprehend the urban buildings in the photographs stems from an emphatic iconoclasm. Analogous to the way the radical Protestants during the Reformation cleansed churches of pictures and other decoration, modern art (based on other factors pertaining to *minimal art*) has developed its own iconoclasm — its own iconophobia which came into being as abstraction through the apotheosis of modernism.

In the art of the 1960s, this arrived in the form of working with all uniform ornament-free elements composed of rows or fields that seem to emanate from the series of anonymous physical elements coming from industrial production — elements which in their rationalistic and production-aesthetic processing are explored beyond the artist's subjective, existential 'self-expression'. The artist uses precisely calculated physical elements (boxes, steel sheets, plywood, tiles, lattice elements) of a no-nonsense-like mass-produced nature to investigate the pervasive imprint I left by industrial mass production upon our physical environment. Several representatives of minimal art arose from architecture; some individuals had built curtainwall skyscrapers in Manhattan and had begun to think about what these hyper-rationalised, cubic boxes covered with glass and held together by steel profiles meant in terms of their execution of gestural-ornamentation and by the site-specific nature of the building's form.

In a number of his installations, Jesper Rasmussen has verged on minimal art, for example in the form of wide laminate-wood-panel staircases, with their serially repeated form. In off-location photographs with the sealed buildings, purely serial elements occur quite rarely, but there are precursors of such his execution of the 'frieze' of the *Danish National Museum*'s façade facing onto

Whiteread

æsker dækket med glas holdt sammen af stålprofiler kunne betyde i og med deres afvikling af det gestisk-ornamentale og det stedsspecifikke i bygningens skikkelse.

Jesper Rasmussen har i en række af sine installationer tangeret minimal art, således i form af brede trætrapper i laminatplader med disses serielt gentagne forløbsform. I *off-location*-fotografierne, med de lukkede huse, optræder ganske vist sjældent rene serielle elementer, men der er tilløb til sådanne i udarbejdelsen af "frisen" over Nationalmuseets facade mod Stormgade og i modifikationerne af såvel Bella Vista som Nordjyllands kunstmuseum KUNSTEN.

I en række af Jesper Rasmussens off-location-billeder optræder hybrider mellem traditionel bygningskrop og udforskninger med udspring i minimal art.

VIII. Slægtskaber i den internationale kunst | Til hans åndsfæller i nutidsskunsten hører utvivlsomt Christos bogstavelige, og af kunstneren selv fotografisk dokumenterede, draperinger af store, berømte bygningsværker fra Pont Neuf i Paris til den tyske Reichtagsgebäude i Berlin. Draperingen optræder her som et storstilet forbløffende og dog nøgternt tæppefald ned gennem de velkendte, ofte reproducerede gengivelser af sådanne monumenter. Idet han beklæder monumenterne opnår Christo bl.a. et rabiat omslag i stof-karakteren henimod blafrende, bastede og foldede facader. Noget i sig selv lidt spøgelsesagtigt, midlertidigt og tankevækkende — som objekter under trylle-kunstnerens lette tørklæder — genstande der kan fremdrages eller påny rent ud forsvinde.

Desuden, set i et snævert arkitekturhistorisk lys, foretager Christo en revitalisering af 1800-talsarkitekten Gottfried Sempers doktrin gående ud på, at arkitektur grundlæggende drejer sig om *drapering* af en struktur, et behængt skelet, som tidligt i beduiners telte, løvhytter og meget mere. Tilsvarende belyser Semper forbindelsen mellem begrebet drapering og fænomenet dragt. Bygningen forstås i udgangspunktet som en struktur iklædt en dragt.

Blandt andre af Jesper Rasmussens åndsbeslægtede i nutidskunsten hører Rachel Whiteread, der i første omgang blev kendt for at fylde alle indre værelser, stuer og hulrum i et mindre, nedrivningsmodent victoriansk byhus ud med en blanding af cement og gips, for derpå at fjerne hele husets ydre skal. Frem trådte en lys blokform med rummene i negativ. Denne strategi for at transformere hulrum til udfyldt masse har hun ført videre til skabe, reoler, større og mindre stykker inventar. Også her synes det at dreje sig om en kommentar til den relativt moderne opfattelse af selve rummet, forstået som et kvantum luft omspændt af vægge, som noget centralt i arkitekturen. Det hulrum hvori noget essentielt finder sted, noget hvis flygtige natur lader sig udfylde/indkapsle, indtil grænsen for forstening.

Stormgade and modifications of both *Bellavista* and the *KUNSTEN* museum of modern art in Aalborg.

In a number of Jesper Rasmussen's off-location images, hybrids between traditional building form and explorations with origins in minimal art appear.

VIII. Kindred Spirits Within The World Of Contemporary Art | Christo — with his literal and self-photographically documented draping of large, famous buildings, from the *Pont Neuf* in Paris to the German *Reichtagsgebäude* in Berlin — shares an unmistakable ideological kinship with Jesper Rasmussen. Christo's draping acts as a large-scale, amazing and yet sober curtain fall through the familiar, often reproduced, reproductions of such monuments. By dressing monuments and recognisable buildings, Christo achieves an ardent reversal of the nature of material, creating billowing, tightly shrouded and folded façades. Something in themselves a little unnerving, fleeting and thoughtful — as objects under the conjurer's silk handkerchief — objects that can be brought to light or once more spirited away.

Moreover, in terms of architectural history, Christo prompts a revitalisation of the doctrine of 19th century architect Gottfried Semper. The essence of his doctrine is that architecture is fundamentally about the draping of a structure, a skeletal frame draped in an outer canopy like the tents of early Bedouins or garden-party marquees. Similarly, Semper illustrates the connection between the concept of draping and the phenomenon of costuming or clothing. The core of his ideology is that a building should be understood as a structure dressed in an outfit or suit.

Among Jesper Rasmussen's other kindred spirits in the field of contemporary art is Rachel Whiteread. This English artist first became known for filling all internal rooms,

Magritte

Som hos Rasmussen er der heller ikke længere hos Whiteread, levnet hulrum eller åbninger. Huset *ser* ikke længere tilbage, sådan som Jean Paul Sartre engang bemærkede om den hændelse, at et vindue bliver åbnet i en gade, man går igennem. Denne handling ud mod gaden vil få den forbipasserende til at føle, at han bliver set. Ligesom gården på en bakketop med sine lysende vinduer om aftenen synes at se tilbage på en.

IX. Bygningen som spejl for kroppen | Traditionelt ville bygningskunsten markere sine åbninger med rammeværk og ornamenter. Selv hos arkitekter, der som C.F. Hansen på nyklassicistisk vis arbejder med ret store, rolige murflader, vil der være markeringer af arkitektoniske 'begivenheder', som vinduesåbninger eller døråbninger, via forskellige former for indramning af åbningen med profiler af forskellig art. Foldningerne i disse profiler har en familielighed med de foldninger og udhævninger, der gør sig gældende ved den menneskelige krops åbninger såsom læbernes udbulning, ørenes svungne foldninger og kvindens labeae.

Netop fordi vi er så fortrolige med åbningernes begivenhedskarakter, og markeringen af disse, kan vi være tilbøjelige til at opleve deres fravær som et fænomen, der ligger i forlængelse af det 20. århundredes rationalistiske tiltro til den nøgne, ornamentløse flade, som den gjorde sig gældende i arkitekturens hvide modernisme.

I Rasmussens tilfælde opleves denne afvikling imidlertid snarere som noget "unheimlich", jf. Freuds begreb herom. Fordi Rasmussen systematisk udraderer alle mennesker og åbninger, sniger disse sig tilbage i vores bevidsthed som dysforiske impulser, noget unheimlich/uhyggeligt ved det ellers hjemlige og fortrolige. Det fortrængte vender tilbage, men nu som noget "hjemløst", der huserer i, på og omkring den givne bygning.

Magritte øjnede i sin tid noget unheimlich i Manets berømte billede af en familie, der stift med pater familias i strunk repræsentativ positur på balkonen mellem inde og ude mod boulevarden, står omgivet af sin giftefærdige datter og hustru. Magritte registrerede, som allerede Manet, det dødlignende i den spidsborgerlige families repræsentative anstrengelser. Han laver i forlængelse heraf sin version af billedet, hvor alle familiemedlemmer er indføjet i tilspigrede ligkister. Magrittes turnering af det verdenberømte maleri er uhyggeligt i det makabre, men det antager, trods personernes indelukkede dødsstivnen, vitsens akutte karakter. Dette til forskel fra Rasmusens off-location-billeder, der virker helt lakoniske, uden at man på den anden side kan frakende dem en vis dødsviethed.

X. De perfekte indre rum | I Jesper Rasmussens billeder af interiører som badeværelser og køkkener, får det hermetiske et klaustrofobisk twist. Badeværelser har i forvejen af hygiejniske grunde ret store rensede flader. Den

halls and cavities in a small, condemned Victorian townhouse with a mixture of cement and plaster and then removing the house's entire outer shell. What emerged was a light block form with spaces as in a photographic negative. She has taken this strategy of transforming cavity to filled mass further, extending the technique to cabinets, bookcases, and large and small pieces of furniture. Here too, the comment being made seems to be about the relatively modern concept of space itself (understood as a quantity of air engulfed in walls) as a central element in architecture. The cavity in which something essential takes place, something whose fleeting nature allows it to be filled out/encapsulated until the limit for petrification is reached.

As with the work of Rasmussen, Whiteread's work leaves no cavities or openings. The building no longer looks back, such as Jean Paul Sartre once remarked about the event of a window being opened in a street we are walking along. The mere sound of this action facing the street will make the passers-by feel that they are being looked at — just as the farm on a hilltop with its bright windows in the dark evening seems to look back at us.

IX. The Building As A Mirror For The Body | Traditionally, the art of architecture emphasises its openings by framing these and surrounding them with ornamentation. Even among architects like C.F. Hansen (whose neo-classical approach to work is characterised by rather large, unobtrusive brick surfaces), we find indications of architectural 'events' such as window openings and doorways. These indications manifest themselves by means of various types of framing of the opening using various forms of profiling. The folds in these profiles have a family resemblance to the folds and protuberances found around bodily orifices, such as the protrusion of the lips, the curving folds of the ears and the labia of a woman.

Precisely because we are so familiar with the character and delineation of openings, we tend to see their absence as a phenomenon that is an extension of the 20th century rationalist faith in the nude, unornamented surface, as applicable to the white modernism of architecture.

In Rasmussen's case, we experience this this more as something disturbing — or *unheimlich* in the terminology of Freud. Because Rasmussen systematically eradicates all humans and openings, these sneak back into our consciousness as dysphoric impulses, bestowing an *unheimlich* or scary quality upon something we otherwise perceive as homely and familiar. The displaced returns. But now it returns as a something 'homeless' that haunts the building inside and out.

In his time, Magritte saw something *unheimlich* in Manet's famous painting, *The Balcony*. In the painting, a family patriarch poses — in a stiff and representatively upright posture — on a balcony, straddling the threshold between the building's interior and the boulevard outside;

skærpede lukning af rummet virker beklemmende, man er i videre forstand afskåret. Selv muligheden for at modtage noget udefra gennem vandhaner og rør er elimineret, ej heller kan man på rørene morse så meget som ét nødtørftigt signal til omverdenen. Samtidig med at det man kan se, gennem den åbentstående dør, blot er gentagelsen af et spejl, der på linje med et Möebius-bånd viser tilbage til den absolutte privatheds selvspejlinger i forgrunden. I Rasmussens arkitektoniske fotoværker kan man hverken komme ud eller ind.

Køkkenet, i samme kategori, overspiller på en måde, der både kan virke humoristisk og gruopvækkende, det "hvide snit", som en aktuel modebølge allerede har etableret som æstetisk ideal for nutidens køkkener. Det haptiske, impulsen henimod en kropsengagerende interaktion med greb, inventar eller redskaber, er elimineret.

Roland Barthes har i sit fototeoretiske bogessay *Det lyse kammer*, apropos det sort/hvide fotografi, påpeget, hvorledes det hvide i flere kulturer er et symbol på død: afrikanske hvidmalede mennesker i rituelle danse, de hvide skikkelser i det japanske Noh-teater — og kunne man tilføje - den kristne forståelse af ligklædet m.m. Rasmussens *all-white*-interiører optræder dødlignende, antiseptiske. Helt cool i deres perfektion og tekniske finish, idet man tilsvarende mindes om Jean Baudrillards påpegning af, at ordet perfektion er beslægtet med tidsformen perfektum, det i bund og grund afsluttede.

Trods den gennemgående hermetiske bestemmelse optræder der træk, som principielt står i kontakt med en mulig omverden, eksempelvis værelset med en enlig radiator. Denne forekommer bibeholdt af skulpturelle grunde og måske som tegn på situationer, hvor nagelfast inventar bliver særlig synligt ved ind- eller udflytninger, mens den ikke overbeviser om at være mere end en attrap. Nok er den et immobilt element i boligen, men noget der blot kan tænkes at fungere som katalysator for erfaringen om tømning. Radiatoren siger: bank gerne på mig — og klap så i! Man forventer heller ikke, at den spiller nogen rolle for dette rums temperaturbevægelser. Temperaturen i alle Rasmussens off-locations er ensartet, der findes hverken vådt eller tørt, vind, vinter eller sommer, koldt eller varmt. Billedernes univers er egalt tempereret.

Fotografierne af kunstnerens ophængninger af sine værker i museumssale gentager det menneskelige, samtidig med at deres formater, proportioner og indramninger demonstrerer et proportionalt afstemt samspil med de eksisterende sale. Salenes rumligheder kan pånyt i tur og orden forekomme indelukkede, således at der opstår en *mise en abîme*: fotografiske fremstillinger af vinduesløse rum optræder i tur og orden i en serie fotografier af vinduesløse rum.

Rum der er hvidmalede efter princippet for *the white cube*. Det moderne udstillingsrum par excellence, den

he is flanked by his marriageable daughter and his wife. Magritte, as Manet had before him, had already registered the deathlike element within the bourgeois family's representative exertions. Taking this idea further, Magritte produced his own version of the image in which all family members have been encased in coffins sealed shut with wooden nails. Magritte's take on the world-famous painting is disturbing and borders on the macabre, but, despite the entombed rigour mortis of the subjects, it assumes the acute character of a joke. This differs from Rasmussen's off-location pictures, which seem quite terse; nevertheless, we cannot deny that these possess a leaning towards the mortal.

X. The Perfect Interior Space | In Jesper Rasmussen's photographs of interior rooms, such as bathrooms and kitchens, the hermetic element brings forth a claustrophobic twist. For hygiene reasons, bathrooms already have quite large, expunged surfaces. The intense enclosing of a room has an unnerving effect; we are, in fact, cut off from the outside. Even the possibility of receiving something from outside through taps and pipes has been eliminated, and nor can we tap out a simple yet necessary Morse-code SOS along the pipes to the outside world. At the same time, that which can be seen through the open door is just the repetition of a mirror in line with a Möbius band that returns the image back to the absolute reflections of privacy in the foreground. In Rasmussen's architectural photographic works, we can neither get in nor get out.

Belonging to the same category, the kitchen too overplays its role in a way that can act as both humorous and horrifying — the 'lobotomy', as established in the current trend as an aesthetic ideal for today's kitchens. The haptic, the impulse towards a physical interaction with handles, furniture or tools, has been eliminated.

In his photographic theoretical book-essay *La Chambre Claire* [Eng. *Camera Lucida*], Roland Barthes, on the subject of the black-and-white photograph, pointed out how in several cultures white is a symbol of death: African white painted people in ritual dances, the white figures in the Japanese *Noh* theatre — and even the Christian understanding of the Shroud. Rasmussen's all-white interiors appear deathlike and antiseptic. Totally cool in their perfection and technical finish, akin to Jean Baudrillard's observation that the word 'perfection' is related to the grammatical 'perfective' tense, i.e. that which expresses the completion of an action.

Despite the all-pervading hermetic domination, traits do occur that in principle offer contact with an outside world, for example, the room with a solitary radiator. This effect is maintained thanks to sculptural elements and perhaps as a sign of situations where fixtures become particularly visible when moving in or out of a building, yet it is not

berømte overalt hvidmalede white cube, synes overhovedet at være en størrelse, der slår ind og konceptuelt virker i en række af Rasmussens arbejder.

Ikke kun det for modernismen klassiske galleri-interiør, the white cube, men også parallelfænomenet til kuben i den hvide arkitektoniske modernisme, som den paradigmatisk etableredes med villaer af Le Corbusier og Adolf Loos, er på spil. Ikke mindst Loos' blokagtige, hvide villaer kan have særlig interesse i denne sammenhæng, fordi Loos gennem at afskrælle alle ydre ornamenter på sine huse, vendte disse indad under et ydre billedforbud, der virkede som en provokation på hans samtid.

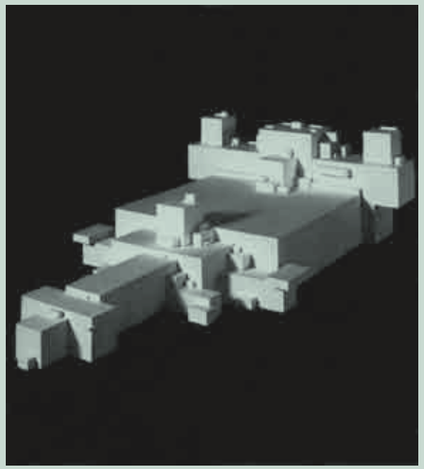
XI. Timescapes | Vi har drøftet tidsdimensionen i det tidlige fotografi, det besættende ved at trænge ind i selve tidens indre "struktur" gennem den lange eksponeringstid, som delvis udviskede tilstedeværelsen af det forbipasserende.

Blev Paris i anden halvdel af det 19. århundrede overvejende præget af strømmende masser af mennesker, hesteekvipagernes muskulære kraftudfoldelse og snart efterfølgende bilers krydsende flugt under broer og gennem alléer som en "kanonkugle gennem rummet" (Marcel Proust), da gælder det i endnu højere grad for nutidens storbyer, at det motorisk-dynamiske dominerer perceptionen.

Byerne er i dag præget af elektriske strømme, krydsende trafiklinjer, blinkende skærme, mobiltelefoni, bølgende *brand-scapes* og optimeret hastighed. Rummet sitrer, husmasserne tilter set fra køretøjer, facaderne er præget af reflekser, transparens, indkik til en mangfoldighed af simultane begivenheder og levende billeders kolonisering af det offentlige rum. En proces der har taget fart siden hovedstædernes tekniske modernisering i forrige århundrede.

Der opstår et kompliceret forhold mellem tid og rum, det pludselige, de springende opmærksomheder mod

Malevitj



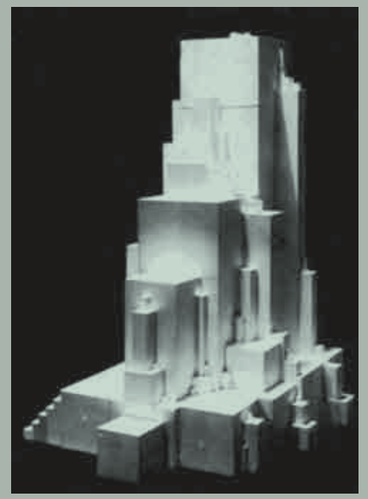
convincing enough to come across as anything more than a mere theatrical prop. It is true that it is an immovable element inside the residence, but it simply serves as a catalyst to stir up an experience of moving out and emptying the building. The radiator it telling us: tap on me — and then shut up! Nor do we expect that it plays any role in affecting the room temperature; the temperature in all of Rasmussen's off-locations is uniform: there is no wet or dry, no wind, no winter or summer. The universe of his images exists at a constant temperature.

The photographs of the artist's hangings of his works in the museum halls repeats the element of being void and deserted of human life. Simultaneously, the sizes, proportions and framing of these works demonstrate a proportionally balanced interaction with the existing halls. The spatialities of the hall can again, one after another, become enclosing, creating a *mise en abîme*: photographic representations of windowless spaces appear one after another in a series of windowless rooms.

The painting of rooms and spaces adheres to the principle of the *white cube*. The modern exhibition space *par excellence* — the famous 100%-white-painted cube — seems even to be an entity that has entered and conceptually affected a number of Rasmussen's works.

And not only the white cube of modernism's classic gallery interior, but also parallel phenomenon to the cube in the white architectural modernism, as is paradigmatically established in the villas of Le Corbusier and Adolf Loos. The blocky, white villas of Loos' are of particular interest in this context because, by peeling all external ornamentation off, his building Loos turned them inward in an external iconophobia, which seemed like a provocation on his contemporaries.

Malevitj



korte eller længerevarende begivenheder, der hopper ind og ud af perceptionen, skaber indviklede relationer mellem oplevelsen af rummet man befinder sig i, det spatiale og selve tidsfaktorens ryk og skiftende modaliteter. Man kan således tale om byernes rytmisk krydsende/overlappende rumtid, deres *timescape*.

På tværs af accellerationer samt den tiltagende dematerialisering af bylandskabets synsindtryk, forstået som transparensfænomener, genskin og fluoriscerende skærme, opretter Rasmussen med sine skulpturelt modificerede bygninger, et dramatisk kontrapunkt. Husene står helt stille, medens de knæk og foldninger de på forhånd måtte besidde, som eksempelvis Bella Vista, bliver tydeligere.

Det store udtræk af altaner i byggerier langs Københavns nye havnefront, der er udgangspunktet for et andet off-location-billede, skaber en plastisk virkning, med aner tilbage til Kazimir Malevitjs berømte *arkitekton*'er, en art skulpturelle laboratorier for arkitektonisk tænkning.

Hos Malevitj optræder forskellige forsætninger, knaster eller udhalede ortogonale former i et nøje afvejet statisk-dynamisk spil af skalaspring, af skalakontraster, som også griber ud efter rummet omkring dem - midt i den grundlæggende fasthed.

Det gælder for en række af Rasmussens bearbejdede fotos, at de har effekter man kan sammenligne med Malevitjs arkitekton'er. Han har da også direkte i form af skulpturer indgående arbejdet med disse.

Et andet af Rasmussens værker, billedet af Hotel Astoria ved Hovedbanegården, er imidlertid kendetegnet ved mere futuristiske, "urbane" fartlinjer, der dels fremkommer ved gadens perspektiviske flugt ned langs bygningen, dels i DSB's gamle symbol af stort kronede vinger på hjul, opsat i bygningens front parret med huskroppens indrykkede sokkelzone, der løfter den i sit fremstød.

Astoria

XI. Timescapes | We have earlier discussed the dimension of time in early photography, the obsessive nature of penetrating into time's inner 'structure' through the long exposure times, which partially obliterated the presence of the passers-by.

If late-19th century Paris was heavily characterised by the streaming currents of crowds of people, the muscular exertion of horse-drawn carriages, and later, the criss-crossing of motorcars under bridges and along boulevards like "cannonballs through space" (Marcel Proust), then for our modern cities, the urban perception is dominated by the dynamic of motorisation.

Cities are today characterised by electrical currents, crossing lines of traffic, flashing screens, mobile telephones, billowing fire-scapes and optimised speed. The urban space quivers and vibrates; seen from vehicles, the mass of buildings slants inwards, façades are characterised by reflections, transparency, glimpses into a myriad of simultaneous events, and the colonisation of the public sphere by moving images — a process that has continued to accelerate since the technical modernisation of our capital cities commenced in the last century.

Complex relationships between time and space occur, the sudden, the projecting attentions towards short- or long-term events that jump in and out of perception, creates complex relationships between the experience of the space we find ourselves in, our spatial surroundings and the lurching and changing modalities of time itself. We can indeed talk about our cities' rhythmically intersecting and overlapping space-time: their *timescape*.

Across accelerations and the increasing dematerialisation of the cityscape's visual impressions, (in the sense of transparency phenomena, glare and fluorescent screens) Rasmussen creates a dramatic counterpoint with his sculpturally modified buildings. The buildings stand perfectly still, while their inherent kinks and folds (such as are evident at *Bellavista*) become more evident.

The large extension of balconies in the buildings along Copenhagen's new waterfront developments, which is the starting point for another off-location image, creates a plastic effect which has a history that dates back to Kazimir Malevich's famous *architectons*, a kind of sculptural laboratory for architectural thinking.

In the works of Malevich, we see different offsets, knots or drawn out orthogonal shapes in a carefully calibrated static-dynamic game of scale projection of scale contrasts, which also reaches out after the space around them - in the middle of the fundamental firmness.

The same applies to a number of Rasmussen's processed photographs; many have effects than can be compared with Malevich's *architectons*. In fact, directly in the form of sculptures, he has worked with these in depth.

Hvor Rasmussens øvrige arkitekturbilleder udmærker sig ved et køligt, helt objektivt orienteringslys, er Astoria-fremstillingen mere atmosfærisk, diset, som når morgenen gryr. Hotellet og de tilgrænsende byrum står i et romantisk slør, fremfor alt er dets særlige virkningsfuldhed anlagt i antitesen mellem bygningens dynamiske fremstød i et fejende perspektiv og dens massevirkning via lukning og tømning af omgivelserne.

Hvor mange billeders statiske klodser under tag er genstridige som kompromisløs autonom kunst, er Astoria antydningsvist romantisk som følge af den disede atmosfæriske lyssætning. Billedet besidder en særlig performativitet. Atmosfæren af gryende dag indstifter en stemning af noget "verträumt", en by der drømmer om sig selv, der gør det til en Hammershøi for det 21. århundrede.

Rasmussen skaber et arkiv af arkitektektoniske fotografier, der snart omdanner bygninger til sarkofager, snart til elementer i en by, der føres tilbage til sin egen blokagtige modelkarakter, med alt det arkitekturmodellen indebærer af flere udkast og muligheder, en verden der er ved at pikke sig ud af ægget, et potentiale.

Inspireret af filosoffer som Heidegger, Husserl og Derrida har den arkitekturteoretiske tænkning siden 1980'erne, været optaget af en art *de-komposition*, som indebærer, at man, idet bygningen tænkes i sin skikkelse som *Bau*, samtidig i konceptionen indarbejder dens *Abbau*, altså en i selve værket anlagt refleksion over dens tilblivelse, som denne involverer funktionsdiagrammer og den fysiske kompositions delelementer. I forhold til sådanne selvrefleksive værker er Rasmussens diskurs mere tilbageholdt i sin "betydningseksplosion". Den leder et andet sted hen end det kompleksitetsparadigme, og den *ars combinatoria*, der har været fremherskende på den arkitektoniske front. Men gennem sine helt egne, på forenkling anlagte, abstraktionsprocesser opbløder den fastlåste "locations" og sætter den fysiske omverdens store husbrikker i spil, samtidig med at der spørges til: Hvordan er forholdet mellem omverdensorientering, tid og erindring i relation til daglidagens håndfaste mindesmærker?

Hvad fotohistorikeren Graham Clarke i sin bog *The Photography* har sagt om det fotografiske medium som sådan, forekommer på træffende vis at gælde for Rasmussens værker;

> "Langt fra at være et bogstaveligt billede eller et spejlbillede af verden, er fotografiet en uendelig bedragerisk form for repræsentation. Som objekt annoncerer det sin tilstedeværelse, men modsætter sig definition. Det er i sidste instans en forseglet verden (...) et komplekst spil af nærvær og fravær."

Hans fotografier udløser som næsten alle fotografier – og som omhandlet i det foregående – spørgsmål om det tekniske og dermed spørgsmål til mediet som sådant. Og heri er der anlagt en metarefleksion, der går videre end den blotte manipulation af arkitekturmotiver, om end disse virker som katalysatorer for overvejelserne om det tekniske og billedernes særlige forudsætninger. Desuden, som det tilsvarende er blevet diskuteret oven for, afsætter billederne omfattende problemstillinger vedrørende temporalitet: varighed, ideen om tyngde, øjeblikket, det forstenede moment mv.

Via den avancerede efterbearbejdning overvindes på den ene side noget af fotografiets forankring i det irreversible øjeblik, det øjeblik der som sådant er en singularitet (kun identisk med sig selv), og som ikke kan reproduceres, fordi det ikke kommer igen. På den anden side rummer disse billeder, trods overvindelsen af det øjebliksbestemte gennem efterbearbejdningens teknik og motivernes forsegling, et element af sorg, der altid er til stede i fotografier, i vores forsøg på at gøre det som straks bliver udvisket af tidens gang mere modstandsdygtigt, dels i form af det enkelte fotografiske vidnesbyrd dels i form af albums, serier og samlinger af fotos.

Rasmussens billeder er allegorier over tid og hukommelse, over husene og fotografierne af disse som spor; spor af det vi spejler os i gennem vores eget blik gennem kameraet, der i fotografiet som objekt rejser sig som noget uden for os, som noget forskelligt og tredie. Det vidunderlige er, at vi ikke blot opfinder billederne, men at de også i processens spejlrelationer opfinder os.

What photography historian Graham Clarke says about the photographic medium in his book *The Photograph* seems aptly to apply to Rasmussen's works:

> "Far from being a literal image or reflection of the world, the photograph is an infinitely deceitful form of representation: As an object, it announces its presence, but resists definition. It is ultimately a sealed world (...) a complex game of intimacy and distance."

As do almost all photographs, his photographs trigger (and as referred to earlier) questions about the technical aspect of photography, and, as a consequence, question the medium as a whole. And herein we find a meta-reflection that goes beyond the mere manipulation of architectural motifs, though these act as catalysts for reflections of the technical element and the particular premises of these images. In addition, as discussed above, these pictures throw up major issues regarding temporality: duration, the concept of gravity, the moment, the fossilised torque, etc.

On the one hand, some of photography's roots in the irreversible moment can be overcome by means of advanced post-processing — the moment, as such, is a singularity (only identical to itself). It cannot be reproduced because it never reoccurs. On the other hand, despite overcoming the moment by way of post-production techniques and by sealing shut the motifs, these images include an element of sadness. This element is always present in any photograph and stems from our attempt at making that which is about to be erased by time resistant to the march of time, both in the form of the individual piece of photographic evidence as well as in the form of albums, series and collections of photographs.

Rasmussen's images are allegories of time and memory, allegories of the buildings and photographs of these as traces. These are traces in which we reflect ourselves — through our own eyes through the camera. In the photograph as an object, these stand as something outside of us, something different and alien. What is wonderful is the fact that we not only invent images, but that in the reflection inherent to the process, these images invent us.

Another of Rasmussen's works, the image of the *Hotel Astoria* at *Copenhagen Central Station*, is characterised by more futuristic, 'urban' speed-lines. These partly result from the perspective of the street streaking along the side of the building, and partly from the old *Danish State Railways* adornment of crowned wings on wheels set atop the front of the building combined with the indented base, which serves to enhance the thrusting effect.

Whereas Rasmussen's other architectural images are characterised by a cool, quite objective orientation, the Astoria depiction is more atmospheric and hazy, reminiscent of daybreak. The hotel and the adjacent spaces are enveloped in a romantic veil, and, above all, powerful effect is particularly achieved through the antithesis between the building's dynamic thrust into a sweeping perspective and its mass effect through closing off and emptying the surroundings.

The static roofed blocks in many pictures are as stubborn as uncompromising autonomous art; however, the misty atmospheric lighting bestows the Astoria with a slight sense of the romantic. The picture possesses a special performativity. The atmosphere of the dawning day establishes a mood of something *verträumt* or dreamlike — a city which dreams of itself, making it a Hammershøi for the 21st century .

Rasmussen has created an archive of architectonic photographs that will soon transform buildings into sarcophagi — into elements in a city that are fed back to its own block-like character, with all that that architectural model involves of multiple drafts and opportunities: a world that is about to peck its way out of the egg — a potential.

Since the 1980s and inspired by philosophers such as Heidegger, Husserl and Derrida, architecture theory has been engaged in a kind of de-composition. This thinking implies that the building in its form be thought of as *Bau*, while in conception its *Abbau* is incorporated (i.e. that in the creation process itself there should be reflection on the building's genesis, as this involves function diagrams and all the individual elements used in its physical composition). In relation to such self-reflective works, Rasmussen's discourse is more restrained in his "*betydningseksplosion*" (explosion of meaning). Compared with the complexity paradigm and the *ars combinatorial*, both of which have been at the forefront of recent architectural thinking, Rasmussen's discourse leads in a different direction. But through its very own abstraction processes, based around simplification, it softens fixed 'locations' and brings the physical world's bricks into play. At the same time, it poses the question: What is the relationship between orientation with the surrounding environment, time and memory in relation to today's tangible monuments?