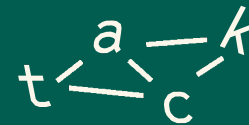


Retracing Visual and Formal Migrations of Tacit Knowledge within Communities of Practice

Teaching Module 4



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
Architecture and its Ways of Knowing

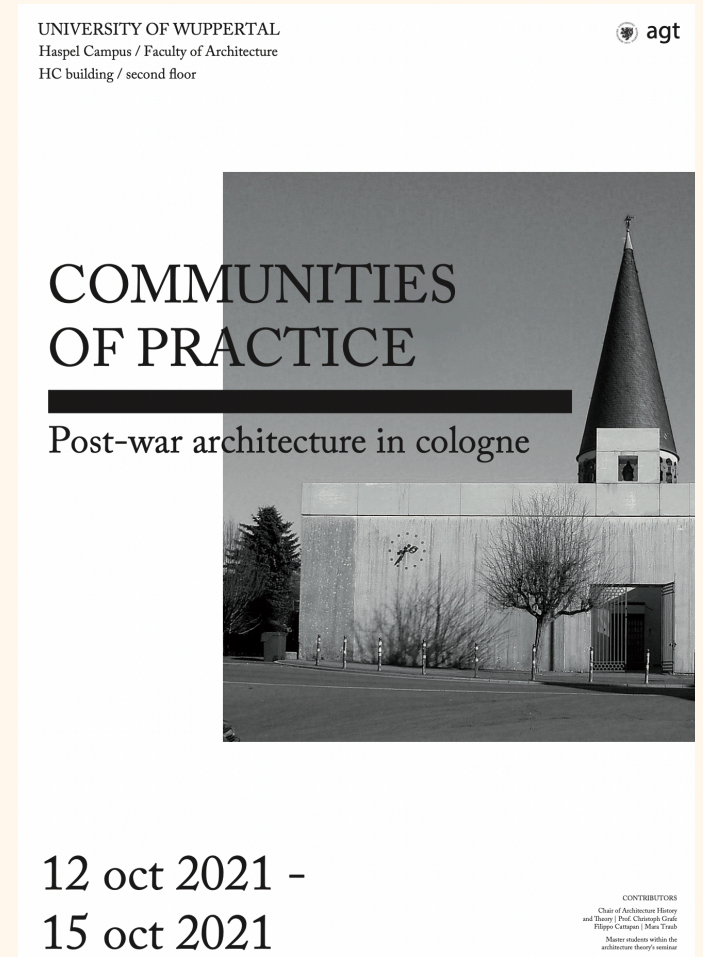
Module Aims

Aim of the module is to operatively reflect on the visual dimension of tacit knowledge in architecture.

Key epistemological framework will be the interpretation of images proposed by **Leroi-Gourhan** in his 'Gesture and Speech', as aesthetic, social and cultural tools.

The 'iconological panel' used by **Aby Warburg** for his 'Atlas Mnemosyne' will be the proposed tool to address such visual knowledge in research purposes.

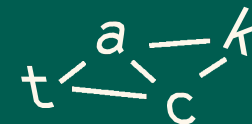
The seminar and exhibition '**Communities of Practice: Post-war Architecture in Cologne**' will be presented as an effective example of such methodology.



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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Images as Aesthetic Tools

“Freedom, that fragile element of the human edifice, rests upon the **imagination**, both in the sense of illusion and in that of emancipation through the use of **symbols**. The Australanthropians' world was already an imaginary one to the extent that it was founded upon the first materialization of what were in effect symbols taking the form of **tools**; so is the world of an average person of today all of whose knowledge is derived from books, newspapers, and television and who, using the same eyes and ears as our remote ancestor, receives the reflection of a world that has expanded to the proportions of the universe but has become a world of images, a world the individual is plunged into but cannot participate in except through the **imagination**.”

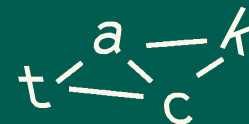
André Leroi-Gouran, *Gesture and Speech*, (Paris, 1966), The MIT Press, 1993, p. 401.



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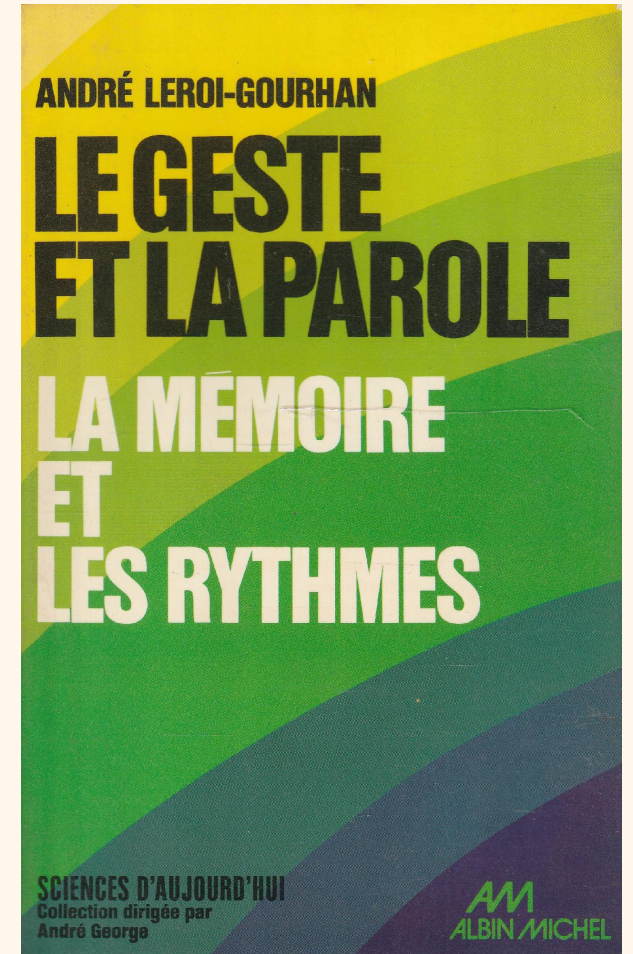


Communities of Tacit Knowledge
Architecture and its Ways of Knowing

Images as Social Tools

“Without language coming into play at all, the color of an individual's tie will show his position within a human group as precisely as the robin's red breast in a society of birds. But unlike physiological or technical features, the wearing of a vestimentary distinguishing mark is a symbol that gives rise to several **social images** at once. As a characteristic of function it lies just inside the technical range; as a portable and conventional badge it comes very close to figurative representation. That is why we have placed social aesthetics at the point of contact between the **technical** and the **figurative** spheres.”

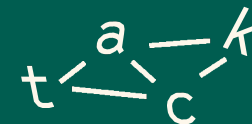
André Leroi-Gouran, *Gesture and Speech*, (Paris, 1966), The MIT Press, 1993, p. 192.



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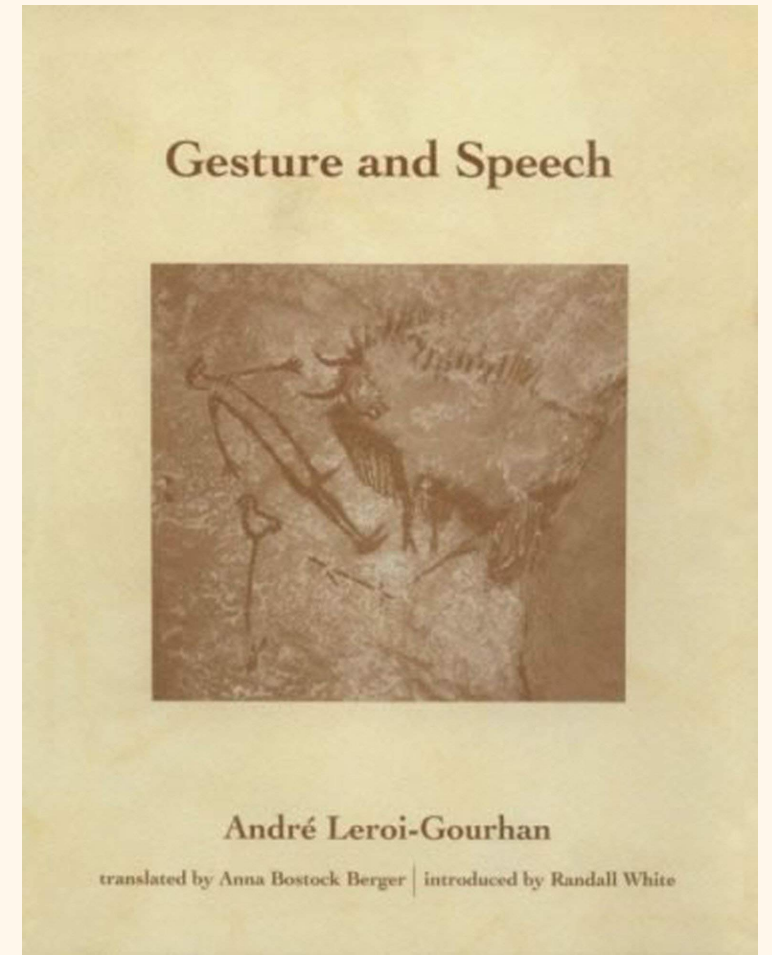
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Images as Cultural Tools

Leroi-Gourhan interprets images as cultural tools that allows individuals to actively participate in the collective dimension of the social body of which they are part.

Through the sensory, motor and visual synthesis with these material supports, humans contribute to the construction of their own social and **cultural awareness**.

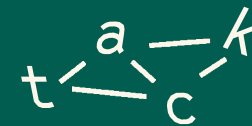
The very idea of beauty, the aesthetic value we associate to objects and images, thus seems essentially **utilitarian**, as it makes possible the affective insertion of the individual within his **community**.



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Visual Comparison and Analogy

Warburg uses this method to visually investigate the permanence and **migration** of a series of recurring themes across cultural topographies and centuries.

Visual **comparison** and **analogy** make it possible to relate even heterogeneous and distant materials.

The **panel** becomes the open field, the physical and conceptual support on which images are freely composed, where visual and formal affinities are simultaneously attempted, verified and staged.

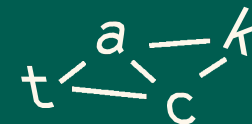
(Aby Warburg, 'Atlas Mnemosyne', Panel 32)



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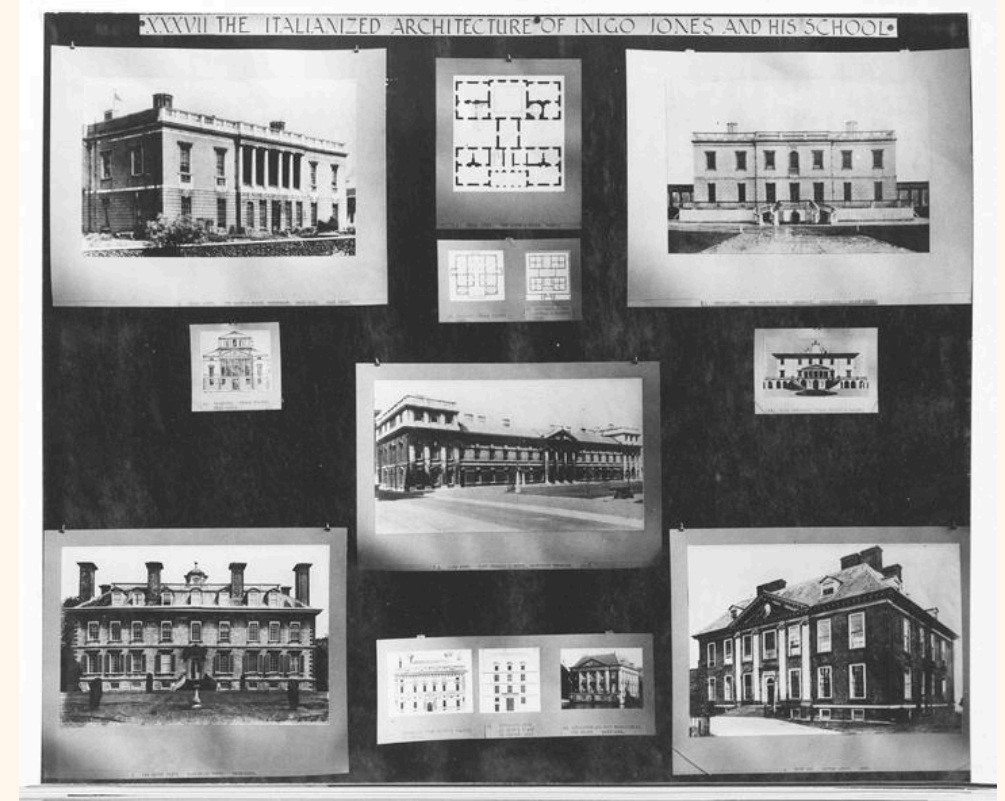
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The Panel as Research Tool

The panels used for the exhibition 'English Art and the Mediterranean', curated by Rudolf Wittkower and Fritz Saxl in 1941, are a very meaningful example of the visual approach of iconology applied to exhibition **display**.

In particular, the panel on Inigo Jones' architecture shows a peculiar visual **affinity** between the **pattern** of the images' arrangement, much more symmetrical and central than the one adopted by Warburg for his Mnemosyne Atlas, and the planimetric layout of the Palladian villas which are presented.

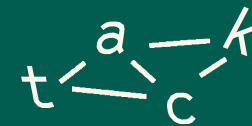
(Rudolf Wittkower, Fritz Saxl, 'The Italianized Architecture of Inigo Jones and his School', 1941)



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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Communities of Practice: Case Study Cologne post 1945

Cologne's architectural culture is specific to a city which looks back on a history of two thousand years.

In the context of Northern Europe this implies a heightened sensibility for aspects of **history** and its **continuity**.

This experience seems to have a profound impact on the thinking and practice of architecture, also in the period after **World War II**, when it was one of the most destroyed cities in Germany.

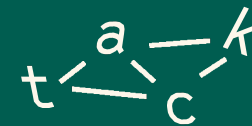
(Cologne after the heavy bombing in 1945)



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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An unlikely community of singular protagonists

Rudolf Schwarz: arch-individualist and intellectual figurehead against all odds

Gottfried Böhm: the middle generation of a dynasty and a versatile designer

Emil Stefann: Church architect

Heinz Bienefeld: Vitruvius in bricks

Oswald Matthias Ungers: global intellectual and theoretician architect

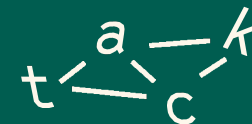
(Rudolf Schwarz, Wallraff Richartz Museum, Cologne, 1953-57)



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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An unlikely community of singular protagonists

The community includes **Rudolf Schwarz**, an arch-individualist and intellectual figurehead against all odds, **Gottfried Böhm** representing a middle generation of an architectural dynasty and a versatile designer, **Emil Steffann**, a church architect, and **Heinz Bienefeld**, who has been described as an architect taking Vitruvius into the twentieth century. Finally, but crucially there is **Oswald Mathias Ungers**, whose position as a global intellectual and theoretician provides a critical perspective: how did his context in Cologne (where he started as an architect in the 1950s) affect his position in an emerging architectural discourse in the 1970s and 1980s?

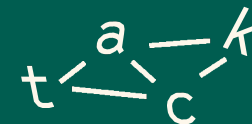
(Gottfried Böhm, Herz Jesu, Bergisch Gladbach, 1959-60)



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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An unlikely community of singular protagonists

The major protagonists of the architectural culture of Cologne seem to be united in their interest in typological and formal examinations of **continuity**, and their disinterest in aligning themselves with functionalist dogmatism.

Their oeuvres are woven into each other, by **biographical commonalities**, but also by the appearance and reappearance of the interest in **traditional typologies**, **sculptural appearance**, and **materiality**.

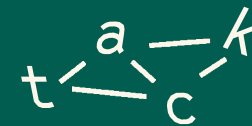
(Heinz Bienefeld, Haus Nagel, Cologne, 1966)



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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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Research Questions

Does the fact that these architects operate from one city, or in one city constitute an **architectural culture**?

Are **commonalities** theorised or are they the result of **intuitive attitudes**?

What does this mean for the **habitus** of the architect?

For Cologne, was the distinction between the **sacred** (very important) and the **profane** (hand over to the chaos of the everyday) inevitable?

Why only **men**? (Or: where were the **women**?)
Can we learn from this historical experience?

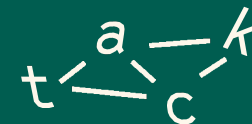
(Oswald Matthias Ungers, the architect's house, Cologne-Müngersdorf, 1958)



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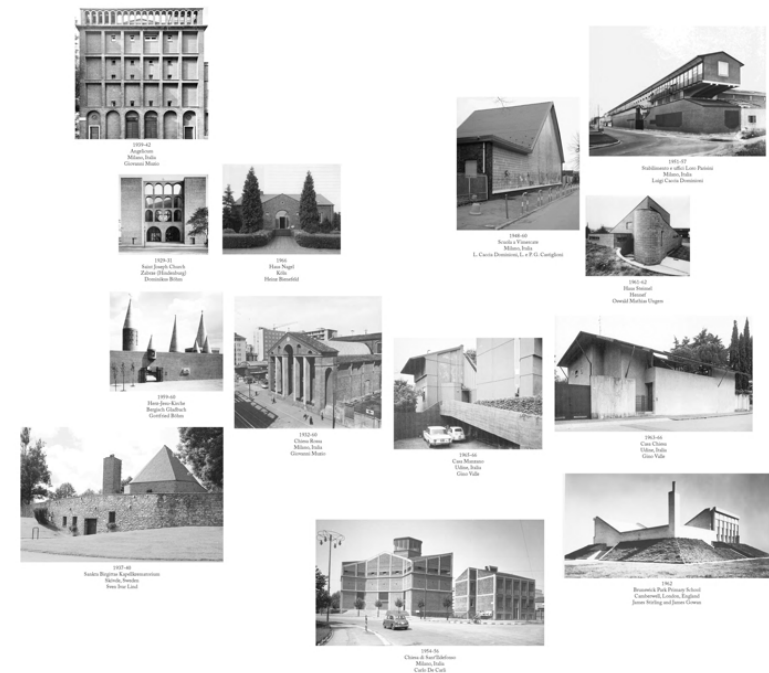
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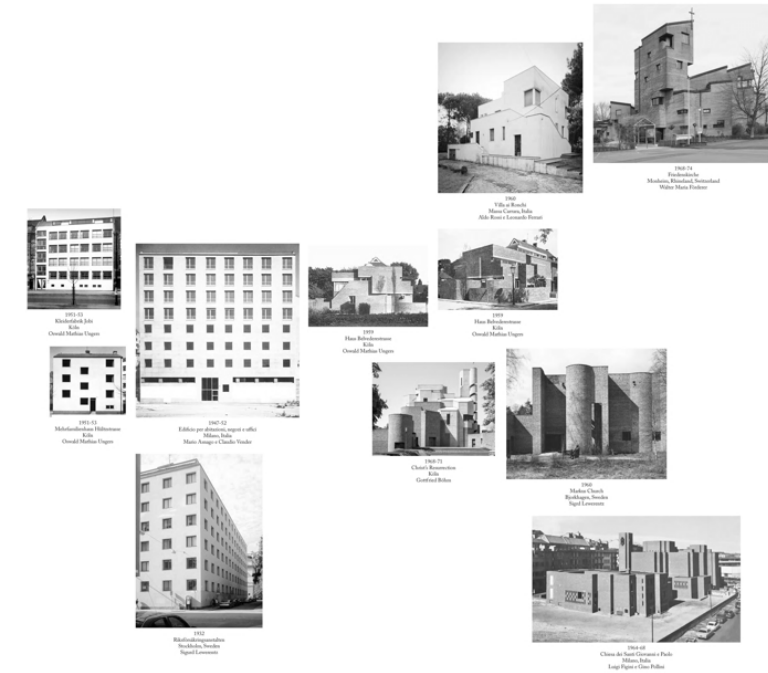
Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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Communities of Practice: Formal Resonances from Köln To Milano, via Switzerland, London and Stockholm.

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Communities of Practice: Formal Resonances from Köln to Milano, via Switzerland, London and Stockholm



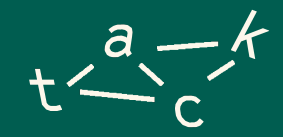
The present panel focusses on some visual and formal **affinities** that can be retraced with the **international** scene in the post 1945 period.

Specific **resonances** can be identified with architectural cultures in Southern and Northern Europe, which acquired a prominent position in the disciplinary discourses of the late 1960s and onwards.

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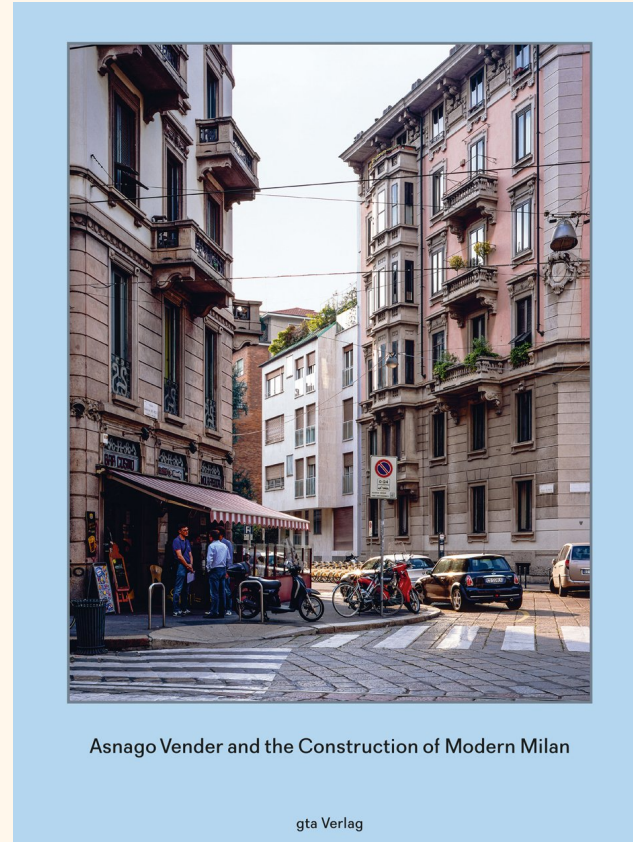
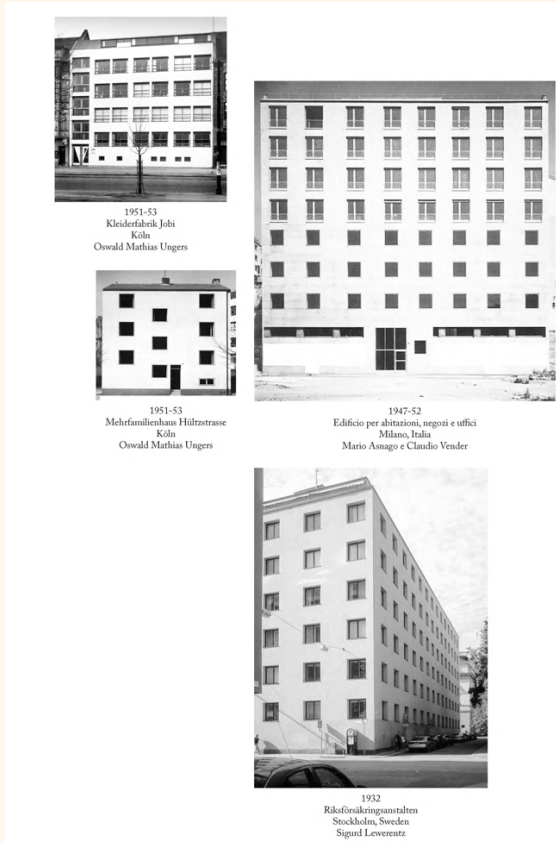


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Communities of Practice: Formal Resonances from Köln To Milano, via Switzerland, London and Stockholm.



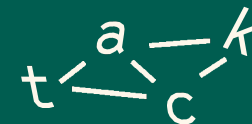
In particular, the post-war architecture of Cologne presents a set of meaningful **correspondences** with the contemporary building production of the **Italian**, and more specifically **Milanese**, architectural context, with some additional references from the north, from **Switzerland, United Kingdom** and **Sweden**.

(Adam Caruso, Helen Thomas, eds., Asnago Vender and the Construction of Modern Milano, gat Verlag, 2016)

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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
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Communities of Practice: Formal Resonances from Köln To Milano, via Switzerland, London and Stockholm.



1960
Villa ai Ronchi
Massa Carrara, Italia
Aldo Rossi e Leonardo Ferrari



1959
Haus Belvederestrasse
Köln
Oswald Mathias Ungers



1959
Haus Belvederestrasse
Köln
Oswald Mathias Ungers

The formal affinities that can be identified between these architectures are related to a series of main **common themes**, which are deeply interwoven and connected with each other.

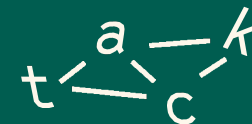
First of all, tendencies towards an **abstract** geometric and **sculptural** research seem to coexist in these projects with an equally relevant **figurative** meditation on the main archetypical topoi.

The superimposition of the two attitudes produces complex **hybrid** figures, which appear, at the same time, **absolute** and **contextual**.

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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
Architecture and its Ways of Knowing

Communities of Practice: Formal Resonances from Köln To Milano, via Switzerland, London and Stockholm.



1948-60
Scuola a Vercenate
Milano, Italia
L. Caccia Dominioni, L. e P. G. Castiglioni



1951-57
Stabilimento e uffici Loro Pirelli
Milano, Italia
Luigi Caccia Dominioni



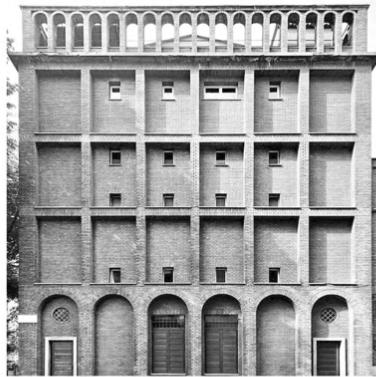
1961-62
Haus Stengel
Hennof
Oswald Mathias Ungers



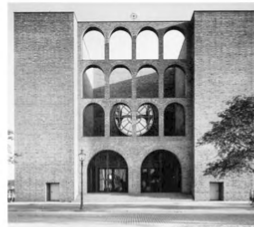
1965-66
Casa Manzoni
Udine, Italia
Gino Valle



1963-66
Casa Chiesa
Udine, Italia
Gino Valle



1939-42
Angelicum
Milano, Italia
Giovanni Muzio



1929-31
Saint Joseph Church
Zabrze (Hindenburg)
Dominikus Böhm



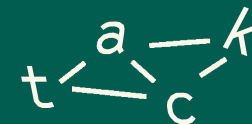
1966
Haus Nagel
Köln
Heinz Bielefeld

A common aspect of these architectures is that they are the outcomes of silent **professional** cultures that does not correspond to any explicit principle nor theoretical statement. The authors of these architectures are in general established professionals who are deeply grounded in the **local communities** and usually absent from the international and academic debates.

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Communities of Tacit Knowledge
Architecture and its Ways of Knowing

Assignment

Task 1: **Identify** a visual or formal theme embedded in one or more cultural contexts and architectural communities of practice.

Task 2: Through a thorough bibliographic inquiry, **collect** a wide series of visual materials.

Task 3: **Assemble** the previous materials in thematic panels according to visual affinities and analogies.

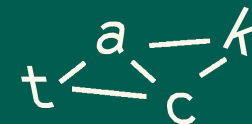
Task 4: On the basis of the previous correspondences, further **investigate** the related possible connections within the wider disciplinary landscape.

Task 5: **Write** down a brief textual summary with the results obtained through the visual research process.

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