

Exposition and Conference on November 19, 2018 at the Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland.

Around Thorsten Botz-Bornstein's book *Transcultural Architecture* (Routledge).

14.00 Opening of the seminar

14.15 Science fiction on the Gulf – The Pietiläs' concept plan for Kuwait – Architect Kristo Vesikansa

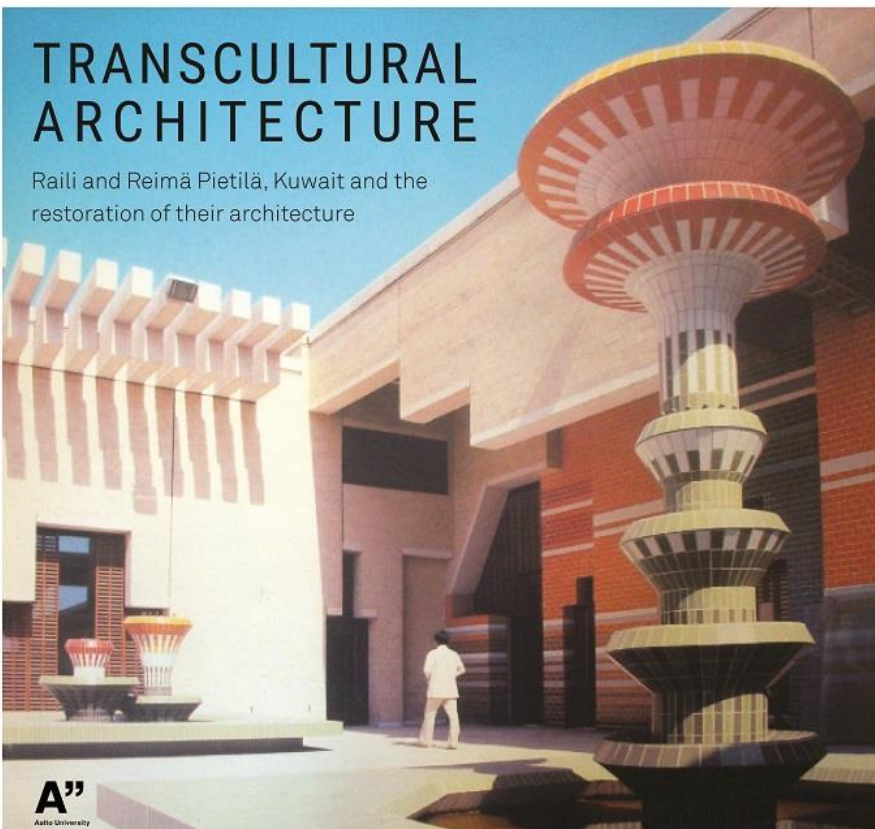
14.45 Transcultural architecture: Finland in Kuwait – Professor Thorsten Botz-Bornstein

15.30 The Pietiläs and the Deira Sea Corniche in Dubai – Professor emerita Aino Niskanen

16.00 Restoring the architecture of Railii and Reimä Pietilä – Architect Samuli Woolston

16.30 Discussion

17.00 Opening of the photo exhibition: Transcultural Architecture: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait, by Railii and Reima Pietilä, 1985-2018



Half-day seminar: 21 November, 2018 at 14:00-17:00

Venue: Aalto University, Lecture Hall U6, Otakaari 1, Otaniemi, Espoo

Programme:

14.00 Opening of the seminar

14.05 Introduction: Railii and Reima Pietilä in Kuwait

Aino Niskanen

14.30 Science fiction on the Gulf – Pietilä's concept plan for Kuwait

Kristo Vesikansa

15.00 Transcultural architecture: Finland in Kuwait

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein

16.00 Restoring the architecture of Railii and Reima Pietilä –

Samuli Woolston

16.30 Discussion

17.00 Opening of the photo exhibition: Transcultural Architecture: The fate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait, by Railii and Reima Pietilä, 1985-2018, Otakaari 1, 2nd floor lobby

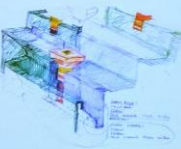






TRANSCULTURAL ARCHITECTURE

RAILI AND REIMA PIETILÄ IN KUWAIT



Pictures: Pietilä sketch and drawing for a fountain on the west facade of the Council of Ministers, Kuwait, 1982.

In 1969 Finnish architects Raili and Reima Pietilä were invited to participate in an architecture competition for the improvement of Kuwait's Old Town area. In 1970, after spending time in Kuwait in order to become acquainted with its urban structure, they drafted a report titled "City of Kuwait: A Future Concept". Afterwards, the Pietiläs were commissioned to plan the development of the downtown shore area next to the Sief Palace and to design three ministerial buildings: an extension to the Sief Palace, the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The buildings were completed in 1982. At the outset, the architects had been told that the new buildings should demonstrate "new Islamic architecture, that is, have a character tailored for the local identity."

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein has followed the development of the Pietilä Kuwait project thirty years after its completion, recording the changes in snapshots of the building. He shows that the Ministry buildings themselves have undergone significant transformations, cancelling the Pietiläs' subtle planning ideas that had been determined by the specifically transcultural approach the Finnish architects had selected. In making changes to the buildings, the local planners and builders of Kuwait did not understand the transcultural character of the Sief Palace Area buildings and favoured either culturally "neutral" modern architecture or more simple reinstatements of local vernacular architecture. The problematical reception of the Pietiläs' Sief Palace Area indicates the limits of so-called critical regionalism. When the critical side of regionalism is not supported by a consensus of the local community but is abandoned in favour of literal regionalism, critical regionalism becomes impossible.

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein's story of the fate of the Pietiläs' project in Kuwait is discussed in detail in his book "Transcultural Architecture: The Limits and Opportunities of Critical Regionalism" (London: Routledge, 2015)

