From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

A Personal Approach From A Japanese Perspective

Abstract

In this anthropocene world built by humans we architects play a big role in shaping its architecture unlike nature. If we try to zoom in we can see that architects are designing not just in their home countries but also all around the world i.e. globally. One of the examples of this influence of regional architecture in the context of Switzerland is from Japan.

This paper will base its focus in Biel in the context of Switzerland by elaborating on the idea of critical regionalism advocated by Kenneth Frampton. Critical regionalism is not simply regionalism in the sense of vernacular architecture. It is a progressive approach to design that seeks to mediate between the global and the local languages of architecture. So, this paper will zoom into and analyze how concepts of Japanese architecture, history, culture and identity are reflected in contemporary architecture and mainly in the city of Biel. In the process it also tries to find a balance between essence of Japanese architecture(global) and foreign culture(local). It will try to revitalize the identity of people, place and architecture.

This research uses the methodology of case studies of contemporary buildings by Japanese architects in Europe and uses a dialectic approach to interpret the influence of Japanese architectural essence, qualities, concepts,... and develop its relationship with the context of Biel thus clarifying the use of these characters and regionality in architectural design.

All this theorectical research is further illustrated into the diagrams for better understanding and simplifying the design concept to propose a new housing project that is mixed with all the above mentioned characteristic and regionality of Biel thus giving the proposal a new spatial identity, spatial connectivity and realtionship.

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From Critical Regionalism to Globalism:

A Personal Approach from a Japanese Perspective

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1   Introduction

Today, around the globe many buildings possess indigenous and regional characteristics depending on the climate, culture, and history of the country. But, architecture today has advanced so much so that its difficult to define where its belonging to a particular place. It sometimes beats the climatic, cultural and historic norms of a place, country or region and so we characterized them as contemporary. This lack of identity caused beyond the concepts of regionality with constant advancements in the field of architecture brings us to the questions like; What is the region-ality? What is identity? What is contemporary? What is regionality and identity of contemporary architecture in the present times?

Incorporation of regional characteristics is what gave architecture a strong identity which today is lost somewhere in this quest of being global. While we debate about contemporary, global and regional architecture we have something that falls into the category of 'International style' and we see that a lot of them were born in Europe, and so, the concepts of design are almost homogenized. Sometimes it almost seems like all these buildings are factory manufactured, packed, sealed and placed in the city like a readymade product. I want to question where have we lost this sense of belongingness of architecture in present times? Can the build-ings speak for themselves? Where is this regionality? Why do we have lack of identity? or example, when we look at nature it also its own concepts and essence of architecture. Even though a tree belongs to a same species, each one of them grow and develop their own unique identity and architecture. The grow on the norms of regionalism and they belong to a place.
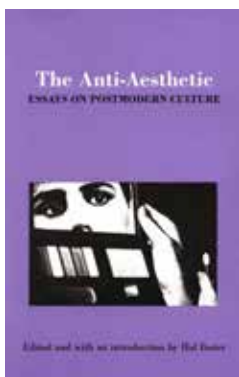

Fig. 1. "The Anti-Aesthetic"

With these questionings and research, my paper would dive into the concepts of critical regionalism whilst regionalism since the concern lies in the lack of identity of contemporary architecture. While finding answers to these the research will further try to grasp the essence of Japanese architecture (global) and find its qualities in the contemporary architecture of Biel (local). Chapter 1 would elaborate the ideas of critical regionalism by Kenneth Frampton refering to text"*Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*" in the book "*The Anti-Aesthetic,*" published in 1983(Fig. 1.)

Today, we see 'n' number of contemporary architecture by various architects in this expanding dimension of globalism. The architects and

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WHAT IS A IDENTITY FOR

CITY ?

ADDRESS ?

HABITANT ?

LIFE ?

ARCHITECTURE ?

Fig. 2. Collage of personal questions about architecture

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the architecture are speedily adapting to this visual aroma of globalism and are trying to innovate the recipe of contemporary architectural styles accordingly. Well, the same goes for Japanese architecture and the students learning in the field in present times, we all are globalizing. Now that many architects have started to contribute their design skills overseas based on their concepts and knowledge from their homeland, the balance of regionality in country of design lacks a strong identity and relationship to the place. Being on the other side of the globe, designing in a completely new context, how can we balance this lack of regionalism in contemporary architecture? I am not saying that we should stop being global but we should in a way try to find a way to be 'glocal[*1]'. How can global architects address this lack of identity and regionality through their design in a diverse context? This paper is trying to find a mediator between global and local in the context of Biel and thus introduces a new term of 'Critical Globalism' and justify what the new critical regionalism is.

Biel is a small bilingual city and to the Northwest of Switzerland on Canton of Bern. It is also in a way a global city with all the diversities present in its context. Zooming into this small city we locate ourselves at this famous office of Swatch and Omega *(see fig.3)*, next to this magnificent architecture of Shigeru Ban (an architect from Japan) lies our site for a new proposal for housing. Biel houses many immigrants thus adding to its varied cultural and lingual essence. The City center has a typical European townscape with residential areas surrounding the site. Considering all these aspects the proposal tries to answer the question of how can architecture of 'Critical Globalism' be a part of this city? and how it can be global and local at the same time.

*1. Glocal, an adjective, by definition, is "reflecting or characterized by both local and global considerations."

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1.1 Critical Regionalism

In this chapter we will take a peek into the Critical Regionalism from perspective of Kenneth Frampton and try to interpret the idea of his philosophical beliefs to mould it into the new era of Critical Globalism which is by far the purpose of this research. Just before we will take a glance at the woman architect who first coined this term and paved the way towards Critical Regionalism. Expressive, unapologetic, and ahead of her time in ecological and participative design, the Sri Lankan architect Minnette De Silva is considered a pioneer of what she called Modern Regionalism in 1950 – later to be known as Critical Regionalism. It was once also known as Tropical Modernism. Since, the main focus of this paper is Frampton we may not go into details of Minnette De Silva.

Frampton achieved fame and influence in architectural education via his essay "Towards a Critical Regionalism " (1983) — though the term had already been coined by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre. In his text, he criticizes the impacts of globalisation and mass consumer culture on architecture. For him, this represents a particularly remarkable issue within the modern movement, as it has pushed architecture towards mediocrity, sameness and limited urban form which lacks any kind of cultural celebration or diversity.

"The fundamental strategy of Critical Regionalism is to mediate the impact of universal civilization with elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place. (...) Critical Regionalism is contingent upon a process of double mediation. In the first place, it has to "deconstruct" the overall spectrum of world culture which it inevitably inherits; in the second place, it has to achieve, through synthetic contradiction, a manifest critique of universal civilization." 1
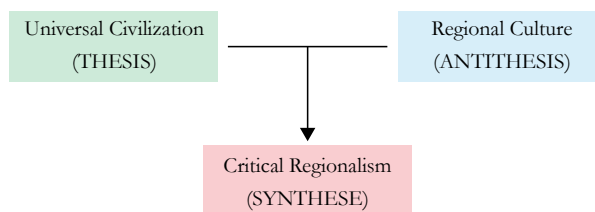
Fig. 4. Diagram of dialectical expressions in critical regionalism

Fig. 5. Säynätsalo Town Hall
(1952-66) built by Alvar
Aalto of Finland

Fig. 6. Bagsværd Kirche
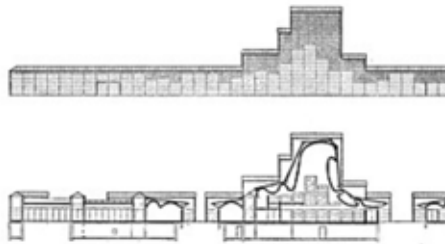(1973-76) built by Jorn
Utzon of Denmark

Here, he remedies and defines the fundamental strategy arguing that the adoption of a more critical regionalist approach is required in architecture, one that takes into account specific considerations to place, topography, climate, and culture. He thus justifies that critical regionalism is an approach that seeks to overcome the absence and lack of identity of place in modern architecture by using the geographical context of the building. In "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism" and also in "Theorizing a new agenda for Architecture an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995", he described the relationship between the elements of universal civilization* and the elements of individual spatiality.

Fig. 7. Elevation and cross section of Bagsværd Kirche

"Critical regionalism is a dialectical expression. It self-consciously seeks to deconstruct universal modernism in terms of values and images which are locally cultivated, while at the same time adulterating these autochthonous elements with paradigms drawn from alien sources." 2

By amalgamating these two elements of universal civilization and regional characteristics in a dialectic way, architecture of critical regionalism is born. When universal civilization* wins over local culture, postmodernism is born, when local culture wins over universal civilization, vernacular architecture is born. In order to create such a critical regionalist architecture, it is necessary to consider the balance between these architectural elements meticulously to tame the beliefs of modern architecture (see

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fig.4).

Frampton specifically, chose the examples of Säynätsalo Town Hall Finland by Alvar Aalto(1952-66), and Bagsværd Kirche , Denmark by Jorn Utzon (1973-76) (see fig. 5,6,7) to justify his arguments of critical regionalism. He states that the architectural composition of Bagsværd Kirke combines repetitive concrete blocks of grid with normative rationality and a peculiar form of the irrationality of the vaulted frame showing a sacred space that looks like an oriental style.3

While he states some examples, he also describes Swiss architecture to possess strong regionalistic characteristics;

"Switzerland, with its intricate linguistic and cultural boundaries and its tradition of cosmopolitanism, has always displayed strong regionalistic tendencies, ones which have often assumed a critical nature. The subtle cantonal combination of admission and exclusion has always favored the cultivation of extremely dense forms of expression in quite limited areas, and yet, while the cantonal system serves to sustain local culture, the Helvetic Federation facilitates the penetration and assimilation of foreign ideas." 4

Since, this paper focuses on city of Biel in Switzerland, his arguments and emphasis on Swiss regionality makes the justifications for this paper even more concrete. Swiss architecture on the other hand have flexibility to accept architectural elements from different countries and styles thus permitting various Swiss architects to create more critical regionalist architecture.

1   Kenneth Frampton (1983) p.21

2   Kenneth Frampton (1996) p.472

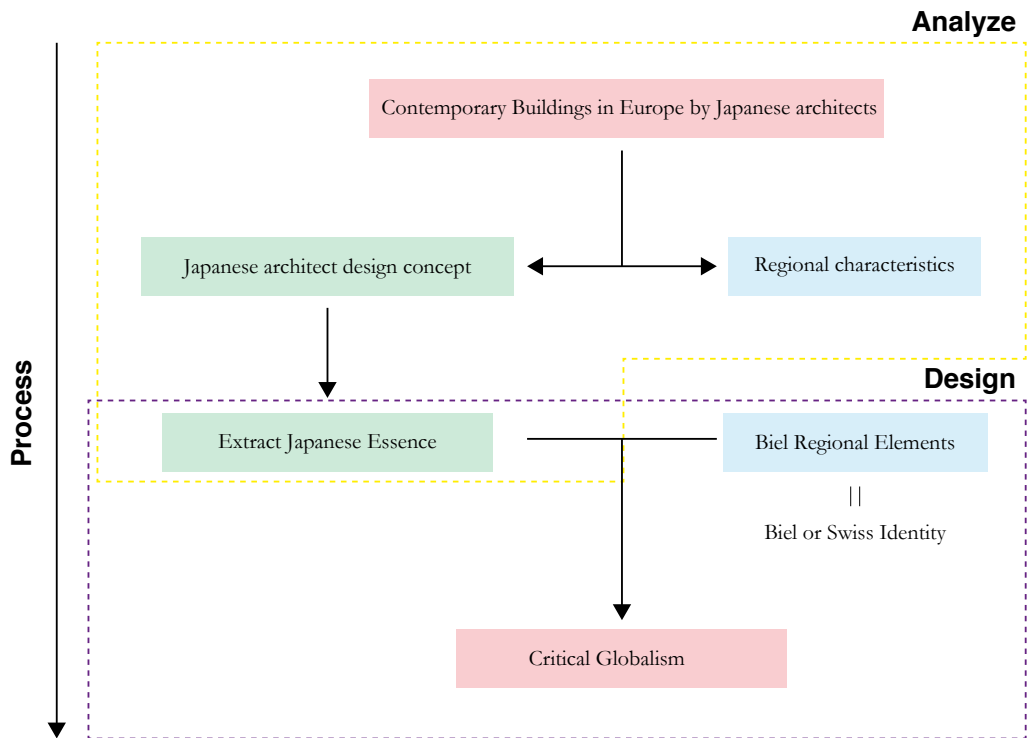3   Kenneth Frampton (1983) p.23

4   Kenneth Frampton (1996) p.477

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1.2   Research Methodology

Process

Contemporary Buildings in Europe by Japanese architects

Japanese architect design concept

Regional characteristics

Design

Extract Japanese Essence

Biel Regional Elements

||

Biel or Swiss Identity

Critical Globalism

Fig. 8. Design process towards Critical Globalism

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Early civilizations of the world were divided and isolated by geographical locations and boundaries, however, the astounding impact of echnological advancement primarily, coupled with society's atmosphere indeed are contributory factors for the world to become a "global village" and in this global village and vast diversity of architecture, amidst them we can also spot works of Japanese architects.

Globally speaking this paper will particularly place focus on the continent of Europe, analyze contemporary buildings by Japanese architects in Europe, identify Japanese concepts of design with regional charactericts of the place and extract the essences of Japanese design to build the era od Critical Globalism. If you ask why we are looking at Japanese architecture in Europe? it is because Japanese architects have a favorable amount of projects in Europe and when we look at them they give off a vibe of an alien architecture unable to adapt the European environment. It's exactly like no matter how much spicy food you eat, your body can never get used to it. Even though this architecture would survive for years it might never be European but Japanese because we also address it Japanese architecture and not just an architecture. Europe is a place where regional characteristics of building construction and design are retained while innovating the architectural styles. Whereas, when an overseas architect like for example Japanese steps in possessing no idea and emotionality of the European context has a completely different perspective. Of course, they try to understand the history and regional importance, they try to make a balance between the quintessence for architectural spatiality in their project in overseas but it is still a trial and error. We like it in because we look at it from Japanese perspective (a building from Japan) like an exhibit and not a building belonging to the place.
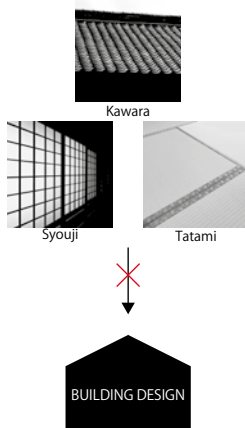
Thus, via examples of Japanese architecture this analysis will pave its way and read in between the lines of architectural regionality, which is the elements formed from specific regional characteristics, and the conceptualization of Japanese architecture while clarifying how Japanese architects balance the specific regional characters and Japanese essence in European vibrant regional character in correspondence to the context of projectin each site. This is also an improvisation towards design proposal of this

Kawara

Syouji   Tatami

Fig. 9. Global reginalism is not a direct use of Japanese building materials

BUILDING DESIGN

paper, which harmonizes the definition of Japanese essence and regional character of Biel to give birth to architecture of 'Critical Globalism' in Biel(Fig. 8).

While proceeding here are some things to be keep in mind. In this paper, when we justify Japanese essences does not direct to the arguement that we need Japanese regional materials overseas that are used in traditional architecture, such as' Tatami,' 'Kawara,' and 'Shoji screen'(see fig.9. Therefore, when Frampton points out that critical regionalist architecture complements the normative visual experience by addressing the tactile range of human perception in recognizing the building.[5]
If the architect uses Japanese material for building design, people will visually and spatially feel it 'Japanese-like' and there is a danger that the architecture will become kitsch. Thus, Japanese essence is not and element but a thought and idea put forth for this a methodology.

5   Kenneth Frampton (1983) p.29

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2 　What is Japanese Essence?

What is essence? by definition it is "the intrinsic nature or indispensable quality of something, especially something abstract, which determines its character." And, as explained the in the previous chapter here, we will elaborate on the characteristics of this word in Japanese architecture.

Today, as many Japanese architects are building contemporary architecture in Europe, scaling from small pavillions to large public buildings, the point of view here is to experience first-hand growing interest in the aesthetics and technical aspects of Japanese architecture in Europe. Naturally, we can see a great deal of variation among the work and style of these architects and from these variation, we will extract the relevant Japanese essences within a few chosen buildings for the purpose of detailed case study and also to make clear what I mean by Japanese essence. This research has thus identified around 70 projects in 11 countries around Europe, including Switzerland, by some of Japan's leading architects(see fig.10). The types of projects vary considerably between private commissions, to awarded public competition projects; some tucked into a rich urban fabric, while others are situated alone amidst open landscape. Among these database of buildings we will zoom in into few prominent examples for critical globalism and harmonize Japanese essence with specific regional characteristics of Europe. In the process of analysis of these examples this paper identified few similar characteristics which were further categorized into 3 main essences: Transparency, Continuity, and Non-monumentality. Since, Japanese architecture has a completely different architectural and construction style it has a huge influence on architecture all around the world because in many European countries masonry structures using bricks and stones, have been mainstream since early stages of civilization but in Japan the construction system is framework structure combined with wooden columns and beams in a three-dimensional lattice. Thus, this construction style that continued from the olden days depicts the three identified essences.

List of Building in Europa by Japanese Architect

Name of Japanese Architect	Building name	Place	Country	Year	Function
Andou, Tadao	Conference Pavilion (Vitra)	Weil am Rhein	Germany	1993	Pavilion
	Novartis Lab	Basel	Switzerland	2010	Office
	Unesco Meditation Space	Paris	France	1941	Meditation space
	Stone Sculpture Museum	Bad Munster am Stein	Germany	2010	Museum
	Langen Foundation	Neuss	Germany	2004	Museum
	Armani Teatro	Milan	Italy	2000	Theater
	Punta Della Dogana	Venice	Italy	2009	Museum
Atelier Bow-Wow	Canal Swimmer's Club	Bruges	Belgium	2015	Pavilion
Tukamoto, Yoshiharu Kaijima, Momoyo	Logements Sociaux Rue Rebiere	Paris	France	2012	Apartment house
	Four Boxes Gallery	Skive	Denmark	2009	Gallery
	Antiparos Ring	Antiparos	Greece	2012	House
Fujimori, Terunobu	Storkhouse	Raiding,	Austria	2010	Guesthouse
Fujimoto, Sousuke	learning centre for the University of St Gallen	St Gallen	Switzerland	-2022	Educational facility
	Serpentine Pavilion 2013	London	United Kingdom	2013	Pavilion
	L'Arbre Blanc	Montpellier	France	2019	Apartment house
Isigami, Junya	Serpentine Pavilion 2019	London	United Kingdom	2019	Pavilion
	Vijversburg Visitor Center	Swarteweisein	Netherlands	2017	Visitor Center
Isozaki, Arata	Palau Sant Jordi, Summer Olympics 92	Barcelona	Spain	1990	Stadium
	Palafolls Sports Complex	Barcelona	Spain	2005	Stadium
	Caixa Forum	Barcelona	Spain	2002	Museum
	Isozaki Atea	Bilbao	Spain	2008	Apartment house
	City Life Tower	Milan	Italy	2015	Apartment house
	Palasport Olimpico	Turin	Italy	2005	Stadium
Ito, Toyo	Hospital Cognacq-Jay	Paris	France	2006	Hospital
	Suites Avenue Aparthotel (facade reno)	Barcelona	Spain	2008	Façade
	Porta Fira Towers in Plaza Europa	Barcelona	Spain	2010	Hotel
	Public Kindergarten in Eckenheim	Frankfurt	Germany	1993	Kindergarten
	Mahler 4 Block 5	Amsterdam	Netherlands	2005	Apartment house and office
	Aluminium Brick Housing	Gronigen	Netherlands	2005	House
	Serpentine Pavilion 2002	London	United Kingdom	2002	Pavilion
	Hermès Pavilion	Basel	Switzerland	2011	Pavilion
	Brugge Pavilion	Brugge	Belgium	2000	Pavilion
	EXPO 2000 Hannover, "Health Futures" Pavilion	Hannover	Germany	1998	Pavilion (Installation)
Kuma, Kengo	Under One Roof / EPFL	Lausanne	Switzerland	2016	Educational facility
	Résidence étudiante du Grand Morillon	Geneva	Switzerland	2017	Student housing
	Suspended Forest	Lausanne / Montricher	Switzerland	2018	Hotel
	Besancon Art Center & Cite de la Musique	Besancon	France	2012	Art center
	Conservatory of Music	Aix en Provence	France	2013	School
	FRAC Marseille	Marseilles,	France	2012	Museum
	KENZO HOUSE	Paris	France	2019	solitary house
	NIWA	Vanves	France	2019	Apartment house
	WOOD / PILE	Krun	Germany	2018	Meditation space
	V&A Dundee	Dundee	Scotland United Kingdom	2018	Museum
	Lodi Veterinary University	Milan	Italy	2018	University
	Hikari	Lyon	France	2015	Urban design
	Entrepot Macdonald	Paris	France	2014	sport center
	FRAC Marseille	Marseille	France	2012	Museum
	Sysla – Mademoiselle BIO headquarters	Paris	France	2010	Office
	Sake no Hana	London	United Kingdom	2007	Restaurant
Maki, Fumihiko	Novartis square 3	Basel	Switzerland	2009	Office
	Maki Solitair	Dusseldorf,	Germany	2001	Office
	Isar Office Park	Munich	Germany	1995	Park
	Floating Pavilion	Gronigen	Netherlands	1996	Pavilion
	Chateaucreux District Development	Chateaucreux	France	2011	Redevelopment plan
SANAA	Novartis building WSJ-158	Basel	Switzerland	2006	Office
Sejima, Kazuyo + Nishizawa, Ryue	The Rolex Learning Center / EPFL	Lausanne	Switzerland	2010	Educational facility
	Factory Building Vitra Campus	Weil am Rhein	Germany	2012	Storage
	Louvre Lens	Lens	France	2012	Museum
	Zollverein School of Design	Essen	Germany	2006	School
	Serpentine Pavilion 2002	London	United Kingdom	2002	Pavilion
	De Kunstlinie	Almere	Netherlands	2006	
Sigeru, Ban	Tamedia center	Zurich	Switzerland	2013	Office
	SWATCH OMEGA	Biel	Switzerland	2019	Office
	Centre Pompidou-Metz	Metz	France	2008	Museum
	La Seine Musicale	Paris	France	2017	Hall
	REVERBERATION	Venice	Italy	2015	Pavilion
	PAPER CONCERT HALL	L'aquila	Italy	2011	Hall
Taniguti, Yoshio	Novartis WSJ-155 laboratory	Basel	Switzerland	2010	Office
Yamamoto, Riken	The Circle	Zurich	Switzerland	2012-	Composite facilities
	Amsterdam Gershwin block 2b	Amsterdam	Netherlands	2007	Apartment house

Fig. 10 List of Building in Europa by Japanese Architect

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Transparency:

Transparency in an evident essence that can be found in typical Japanese architecture. Compared to European construction, Japanese timber frame construction is almost devoid of walls thus freeing the facade of the building and providing more flexibility inside to outside. Traditional Japanese construction can use the sliding doors, glass doors, and other moving-type doors on the facade due to this feature of flexibility. The construction is almost like a forest, where the forest can contain living things and also provide openness at the same time, we can say Japanese construction is facsimile. From the inside and the outside, people can feel surrounded by the environment and/or nature because of this very essence of transparency(fig.11).

 Continuity:

Following the first essence of transparency and comparison to forest it is natural that it can also gift us freedom of penetrable continuity. While the structural possibilty of this construction sytem induces this essence—there is a drastic difference in the planning when compared to European construction system. In European masonry construction the room are segregated by rigid walls thus adding on to the elements of windows and doors which provide restricted continuity. On the other hand, Japanese architecture eliminates the element of wall and introduces free mobile partitions (fusuma, shoji) to create a planar continuity from room to room and to the outside. Thus we see a flexible and relationship with each space and to the outside(fig. 12).

Non-monumentality:

Monument is a statement in architecture which you generally would find in old European style of architecture; thick, grounded and an extremely long shelf life for it to portray immortal monumentality. Whereas, Japanese traditional building are less durable duse to the use of wood in construction and do not stay last forever. To place it differently, Japanese architecture has unique and delicate essence to it with its light wooden construction. It is almost like dots and lines, very minimallistic yet calm

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EUROPE

JAPAN

Fig. 11. Sketch of the difference in transparency between Europe and Japan
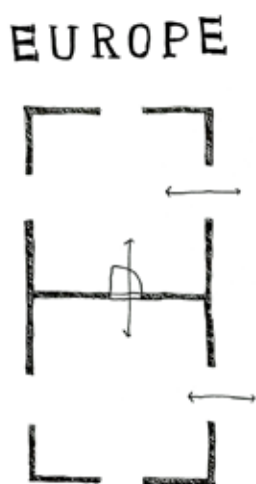
EUROPE

JAPAN

Fig. 12. Sketch of the difference in continuity between Europe and Japan
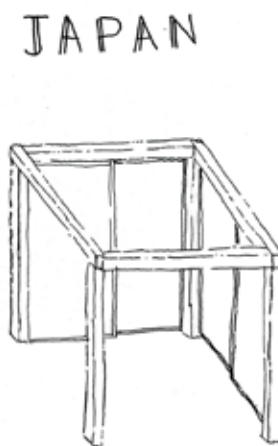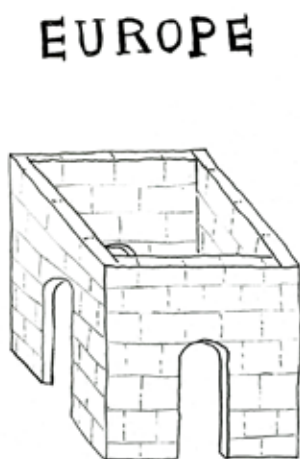
EUROPE

JAPAN

Fig. 13. Sketch of the spatial differences between Europe and Japan

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Genealogy of Japanese essence

-18C, HISTORICISM

1893: World's Columbian Exposition
Japan Pavilion "Houoden"

1908: The Robie House on the
University of Chicago campus byFrank
Lloyd Wright

1920,1930- MODERNISM

1925: The Bauhaus building in Dessau
by Walter Gropius

1980.1990- POSTMODERNISM   REGIONALISM

CRITICAL REGIONALISM

1966: Säynätsalo Town Hallbuilt in
Finland by Alvar Aalto

2000- GLOBALIZATION
OF
JAPANESE ARCHITECTS

1976: Bagsværd Kirche in Denmark by
Jorn Utzon

MODERNISM

2020- CRITICAL GLOBALISM

2020: Manifesto in Biel

Fig. 14. Genealogy of Japanese essence

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sublime. While various contemporary architectures are visualized and contructed to be landmarks in/of the city, these architectures are changing to be perceived as an icon with a robust monumental character. However, architecture has to be planned for townscapes and the people who live in the area and this quest for designing for city and people leads the architecture in direction of being kitschy. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that non-monumentality of the site rather than iconic architecture (seefig.13).

Historically, Japanese architectural essences has its impact in architectures around the world, following the timeline of genealogy of Japanese essences from historicism to modernism to contemporary buildings. At first, in the World's Columbian Exposition fair held in 1893 in Chicago, the Japanese Pavillion influenced Frank Lloyd Wright where his focus was mainly on the continuity of the space in the building and moving further in the timeline it was Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe in Europe by influenced by Wright's work. This influence later established into modernism spreading its roots through the Bauhaus in 1926, the modern movement reached Japan and established Japanese modernism.[6] To summarize, the traditional architecture style of Japan was made public to the world by American architect FLW, it influenced new architecture style of Europe: Bauhaus and then, the Japanese essence came back to Japan via modernism from overseas(see fig.14).

These three essences thus hold relevance when we think about design with overseas regional characters, the relationship with the city and the environment of the context.

This paper focuses on the contemporary building by a Japanese architect around Europe since the beginning of the 20s. . The Japanese architect's works have become globalized in Europe since the time. So, how can these three essences (Transparency, Continuity, Non-monumentality) influence contemporary architecture in Europe in the 2000s. We will shed light on to th emost relevant examples for the analysis of each essence: (i) Aluminum Brick Housing by Toyo Itou and Tamedia center by Shigeru Ban for Transparency (ii) The Fair of Barcelona Gran Via Venue by Toyo Itou and De Kunstlinie in Almera, and ROLEX Learning Center by SANAA for Continuity and (iii) Vijversburg Visitor Center by Junya Ishigami and L'Arbre Blanc So Fujimoto for Non-monumentality (see fig. 15) Furthermore, it will clarify how concepts of these projects are extracted in the contemporary world to maintain balance with European

6   Terunobu Fujimori (2018) p.13-14

countries and their egional context. As a method, each chapter 2.1, 2.2, and 2,3 represents the three essences and how theybalance these essences and regional characteristics in a contemporary building of Europe built since 2000, proving it through drawings, photos, and diagrams.

-Transparency-

-Continuity-

-Non-monumentality-

Fig. 15. Buildings by Japanese architect in Europe showing the above 3 essence

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2.1 Transparency

Since in the previous chapter we just took a glimpse at this characteristics of transparency in Japanese traditional architecture, here we will elaborate on it while looking into how this essence of transparency builds a relationship with the European cities and the massive buildings of Europe via analysis and comparison with Japanese buildings.

Firstly, transparency in traditional Japanese architecture is just use of glass, it is the use of opaque materials such as Shoji screens which provide privacy, intimacy but also at the same time flexibility, openness & connection to the outside. True transparency lies in achieving how much of the outside environment can be felt from inside the building. For example, glass connects us to the outside visually but opaque Shoji screens allow light from the outside to penetrate to the inside, thus revealing a new perspective to the outside environment(see fig.16). The beauty of this opaque transparency allows us to see the weather on the outside, like the pay of light and shadows created by the environment throughout the day, the dripping rain, the swaying of the tree leaves with breeze, and the scenery. These Shoji screens create a really romantic game of hide and seek between nature and humans. However, all this play caused by the screens cannot be seen in the massive European closed-type construction through the poke holes of windows and doors. Maybe
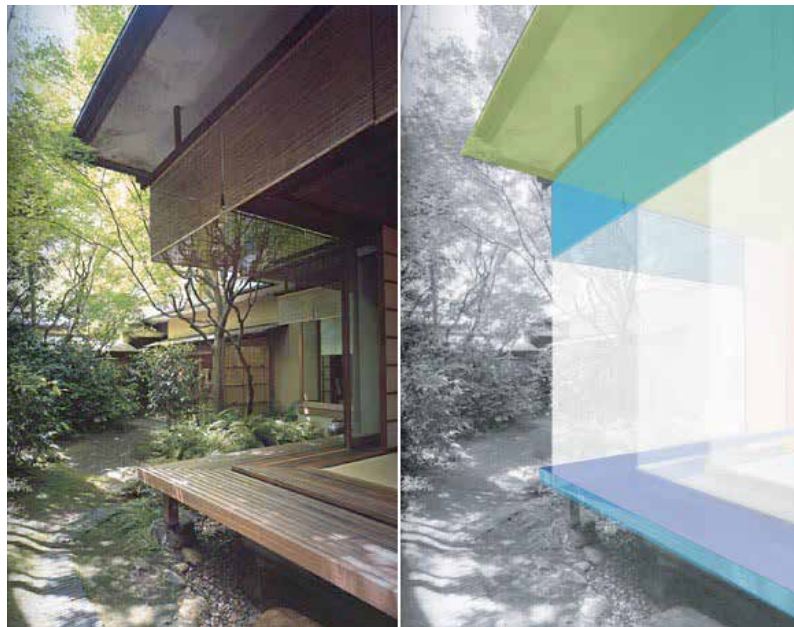
Fig. 16. The difference in visual transparency embodies the difference in spatial composition - literal and phenomenal transparency.

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Fig. 17 Aluminum Brick Housing facade connected to existing buildings around

Fig.18. Brick building visible from between Aluminum Brick

it was also the result of the question of desperacy of privacy in European culture? In contemporary buildings, that transparency not only takes in the surrounding environment also provides a visual, which is relationships of activity from outside. How do Japanese architects respond to this essence in their contemporary creations?

Let's look into the Aluminum Brick Housing designed by architect Toyo Ito(see fig.17). This building was planned as housing in conjunction with the "Blue Moon Project" held in 2001, Groningen, the Netherlands. It serves a guesthouse for a university now with. In terms of scale, the building is three storey high with a floor area of only 150 m² and is a super master plan by Toyo at the time aimed to strengthen the relationship between Groningen and its new expansion. Toyo describes his design as follows:

"The site faces the back alley of the university and is adjacent to a building that used to be a library in the old age. A hole drilled to connect the two with stairs to create a space that crosses the old and new buildings on each floor. The facade of the new building is made of aluminum blocks to maintain continuity with the massive historical library or surrounding environment. However, it will give off a new light and transparent presence." [7]

He tried to find a balance between Groningen's historic profound streets. and his concepts. The site faces a narrow alley surrounded on all sides by brick building making you feel the weight of history of the place. The new facade has a double skin construction of glass and aluminum bricklayers (see fig.18) with a modern arrangement of traditional Dutch stone "patterns," that allow light to penetrate through to the interior space and give the interior occupants a visual connection to the exterior, thereby reducing the visual narrowness of the interior. Since, it is not very easy to make a large opening in a historic brick building he chose to eliminate the openings. The entire facade of the building was converted into a window-like positioning by making brick blocks out of aluminum frames and we can see that Europe does not have this Japanese essence of

OPAQUE   TRANSPARENT
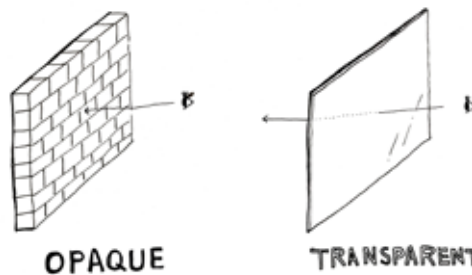
Fig. 19. Sketch of differences in material transparency

7   Okuya Megumi / Gen (2004) p.124

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Fig. 20. The Tamedia center in Zürich

Fig. 21. Timber frame structure

Fig. 22. Large opening for feel the outside on the façade

spatial expression (see fig.18). On the other hand, to maintain a sense of unity with the city, it is a good example of trying to balance with the existing cityscape by replacing masonry with new materials and abstracting.

Similarly, the Tamedia center, by Shigeru Ban in 2013, is a building with combination of transparency and regional characteristics. It is an office building of a media company publishing newspaper and magazines with one of the largest German departments in Zurich, Switzerland(see fig. 20). Shigeru Ban describes his design approach as follows:

"Three requests from the owner side. The cost of creating an environment where employees can work in their living room as if they are relaxing is not much higher than that of an equivalent office building, and it is transparent as a mass media company. It was easy to understand that it was a certain architecture. Therefore, I thought of an office where curtain walls made of wooden like chalets in Switzerland were wrapped up, but in Zurich, there is a committee called Baukollegium to protect the cityscape. Check the facade design.The committee is so distressed that it was cleared by using horizontal blinds and vertical Marion that house the exterior blinds and pulling the facade pattern of the next architectural style up to the next."[8]

This building replaced traditional Swiss architectural space with modern wooden structures using a glass curtain wall. Ban made the building transparent and designed it to open up the area. In the floor plan, you can
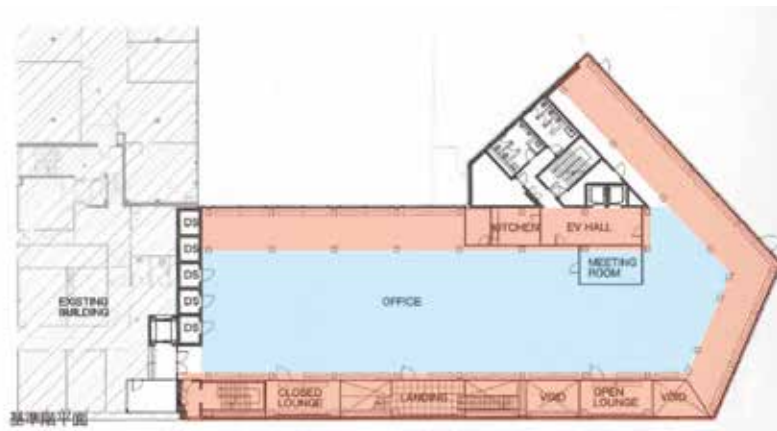
Fig. 23. Analysis of office room plan of Tamedia Centre, Zurich

From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

see a small frame space with a 3.2 m span is provided on the outer periphery of the main office(see fig. 21,22) with a glass shutter provided on each floor as an intermediate area between the outside and inside. By

Fig. 24. Sketch that blurs the
relationship between
indoor and outdoor
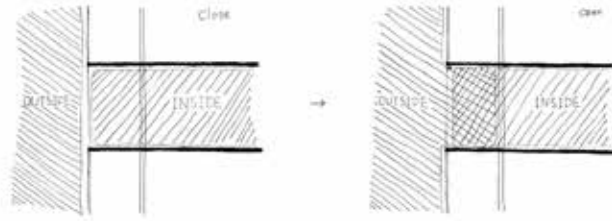
opening it, it faces the road and makes the small lounge semi-external thus opening up the possibility to feel outdoor environment while staying indoors (see fig. 23,24). This essence can also be said to be similar to the essence in the timber framework construction of Japan.

Thus, the Tamedia center was designed with the influence of the traditional Swiss space but a combo of Japanese essence of transparency, the expression is japanese but matched to the European context thus innovating the same old concept forms a new facade language to fit into European context.

8   Ban Shigeru (2013) p.48

2.2 Continuity

Following transparency lets dive into the details of continuity. Here we will consider the continuity of the space from via configuration of plan of Katsurarikyu. The elements of this plan can be categorized into three: pillars, corridors and rooms. The size of each room changes depending on the span of the pillar and at the same time are separated by fusuma and shoji. Therefore, it can be seen from the drawing that there is freedom of movement in all directions(see fig. 25,26) creating this continuity and fluidity for the person inhabiting the space.

For example, the base of Toyo Ito's spatial composition is "absolute horizontal space." He dislikes walls and doors as compartments and sets up internal and external relationships that allow him to move in and out naturally.[9]
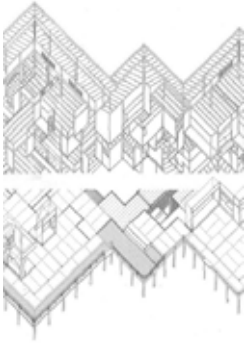
Fig. 25. An axonometric drawing of the Katsurarikyu drawn by Japanese architect Kai Suzuki
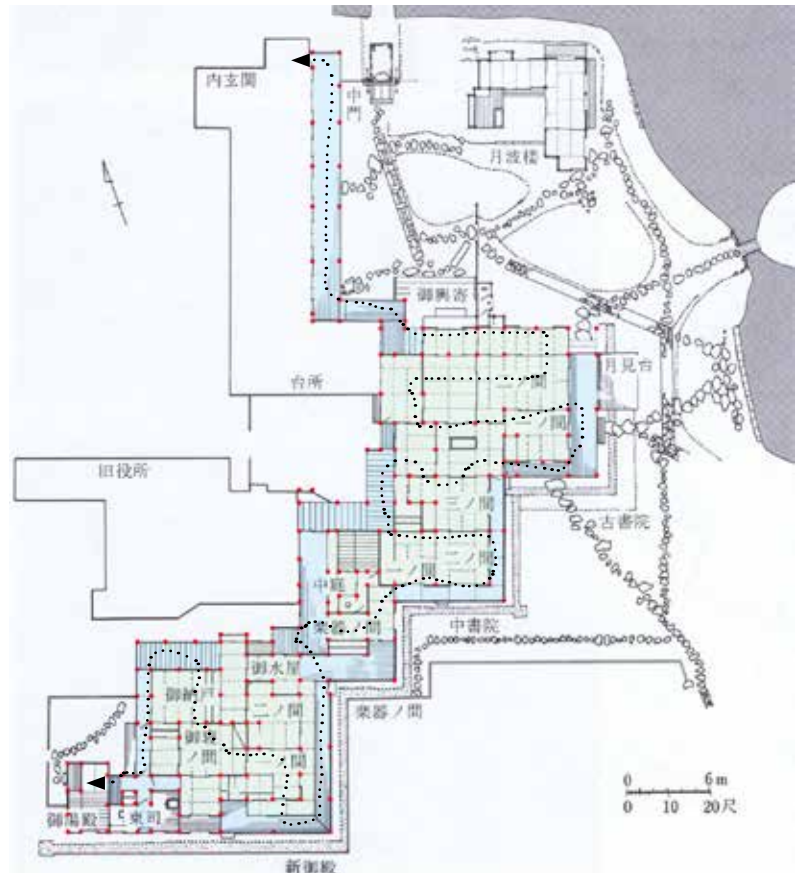
Fig. 26. A plan view of Katsurarikyu composed of pillars, corridors and rooms

9   Terunobu Fujimori (2018) p.14

Fig. 27. The Extention for The Fair of Barcelona Gran Via Venue in Barcelona

Fig. 28. Continuous space and out space
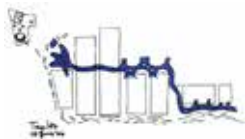
Fig. 29. Sketch By Toyo Ito

In fact, such Japanese continuity is utilized not only in spacial design but also in urban design. Toyo designed the extention for the Fair of Barcelona Gran Via Venue with a continuous urban space in mind (see fig. 27). This is an extension for "The Fair of Barcelona Gran Via Venue" had the site on the west side of the hill of Montjuic, located in between the airport and the city area, where the context conditions shifts from the urban to seaside. Thus, Toyo states:

"*The theme in this project was based on the concept of "fluidity", and what it can produce within an urban environment. The proposed pavilions are rectangle-shaped box spaces with various functionalities, and there is the transferring, space called'central axis' that The swaying and winding 'central axis' provides human scale locations by allowing visitors to come out to the terrace spaces distributed along with the axis, providing visual accessibility to the surrounding exterior sceneries. (...)We tried to bring in flavors and joys by creating "fluid spaces" within the urban space produced for functionalities. Modernism movement tried to apply the layer of homogeneity to abstract the human actions and behaviors, but we tried to fulfill the unpredictable, latent desire of human beings by the notion of "fluidity." That is the attempt of discovering "new abstraction" based on our five senses.*" [9]

As we can see from Toyo's sketch and floor plan, in order to create continuity in the urban space, the connection from the newly built and existing exhibition rooms was established by an introdusction of a new
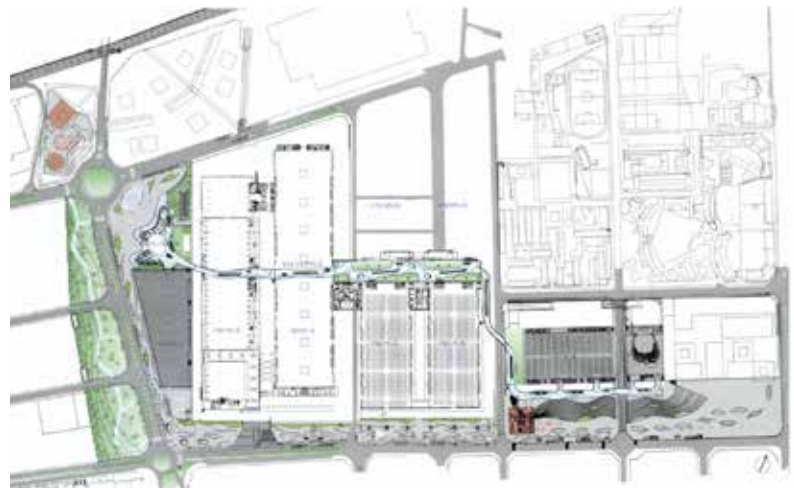
Fig. 30. Plan

9   Toyo Ito (2016) p.152

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Fig. 31. De Kunstlinie in Almera

Fig. 32. View the cortyard form

music room

Fig. 33. Sketch by SANAA

fluid passageway(see fig. 28, 29, 30). This space allowed the users to for new experience in architecture. It is an example of how a new architectural essence can add to the conditions of the existing building. On the other hand, there is also continuity as an architectural space but just connection. For example, SANAA's architectures in Europe always have the concept of continuity in mind which acn be seen in De Kunstlinie, Almera (2006) in the Netherlands and ROLEX Learning Center (2010), Lausanne in Switzerland. De Kunstlinie is located in the city of Almera, about 50 km east of Amsterdam(see fig. 31)with a population of about 110,000 people in the western part of artificial blood called Flevoland; it is the most rapidly developing city in the Netherlands in recent years. The design requested a complex facility of a cultural center for children and adults consisting of large and small theaters and classrooms for music, painting, sculpture, dance, computers. Under these conditions, they described it as:

"*Rooms of all sizes, from large halls to small music classrooms, should be equally open to the public, regardless of size. It was envisioned that the theater and the cultural center would be used in conjunction with each other. We decided to place all public programs on one floor, and treat the connecting flow spaces as if they were rooms so that the entire room was created by a series of rooms of various sizes.*" [10]

Thus, the building was designed that not only for the spatial continuity but also for the functional continuity. It can be said that this breaks down of the conventional concept of connecting corridors to rooms and emphasizes the continuity between rooms.(see fig. 32, 33, 34)

Fig. 34. Plan

10 Kazuyo Sejima, Ryuep Nishizawa. (2008) p.95

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Fig. 35. The ROLEX Learning
Center as seen from the
south

Fig. 36. Space under the shell

Fig. 37. View the library from
the cafe

The ROLEX Learning Center is a study center planned on the campus of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (see fig. 35). It has various programs such as a library, multi-purpose hall, office, cafe, and restaurant designed within the facility of this university. SANAA designed the building as one large one-room space so that it can be easily accessed from the surrounding facilities. In so with this in mind, they designed the building as follows:

"*By arranging landscape-like terrains such as valleys, hills, and ridges, or arranging multiple light gardens of various sizes, spaces with various personalities are created in the one-room space. The large hill-like space has a good view and is used for study spaces and restaurants. The space of the valley where small light gardens gather creates a human-scale quiet environment for the office. Each space is divided softly, but it continues at the same time, connecting smoothly not only indoors but also to the outside campus. In this way, we aimed for a building open to people.*"[11]

This created the continuity of not only the internal space but also the continuity of external space at the same time by lifting a further one-room space from the ground like a landscape. The entire architecture is like a landscape with continuity between the architectural space and the surrounding environment. So, it can say that the building is connected with the site by unfolding different possibility of continuity(fig. 36, 37, 38).

Fig. 38. Plan

11   Kazuyo Sejima, Ryuep Nishizawa. (2010) p.70

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What we see from these two architecture projects is, by defining the architectural situation as one large space, we can create continuity. At the same time, the space containing various elements arranged in a plane, makes the size of the space ambiguous. The hierarchical abstraction between different spaces, the functions and use(see fig. 39).

Fig. 39. Sketch of hierarchy equalization in different spaces

Therefore, continuity blurs the boundaries between different spaces and also induces fluidity with the outside environment, landscape and the interior thus explicitly connecting them(see fig. 40).
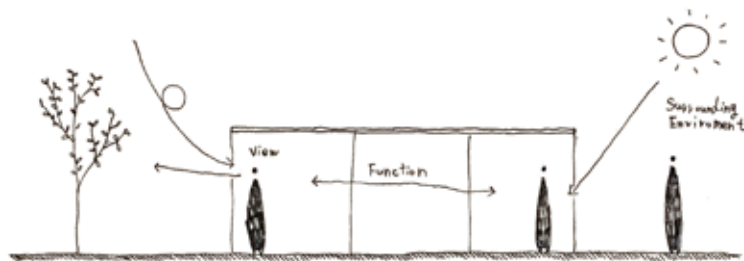
Fig. 40. Sketch of Continuous environment

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2.3　Non-monumentality

What is monumentality? By definition, monumentality is (i)the fact of being like a monument, especially in large size, endurance, or importance. (ii)the fact of being, relating to, or resembling a monument. Replacing this meaning with architecture, monumental architecture is impressively large, sturdy, and durable. What is Non-monumentality? Based on an essay by German architect Gunter Nitschke, Frampton interprets non-monumentality as follows:

"Nitschke argues that building/binding as a cyclical activity takes priority over religion in the archaic creation of order out of chaos, citing by way of evidence the etymological origin of the word religion in the Latin verb ligare, to bind. In contrast to the Western monumental tradition with its dependence on the relative permanence of stereotomic mass, the archaic Japanese world was symbolically structured through ephemeral tectonic material, knotted grasses or rice straw ropes known as shime-nawa, literally "bound ropes," or more elaborately through bound pillars of bamboo and reed called hashira."[12]

Thus, there is a contrast between European and Japanese architecture where they represent monumentality and non- monumentality respectively. According to the definition of non- monumentality we can say that Japanese architecture is an expression of delicacy, and fragileness. Frampton cites Ise Jingu as an example of typical non-monumental architecture in Japan(see fig. 41). The entire Ise Shrine is demolished and rebuilt exactly the same every 20 years just for the reason of matching the construction techniques, and furnishings to that of present times and also to moreover maintain a new and ever-changing appearance.[13]
Simply speaking, it is a traditional wooden construction with a short life span, it is difficult to preserve its existence timelessly due to the deterioration of timber by change of climatic conditions, and hence the reconstruction helps to preserve this delicate construction techniques.

Fig. 41. Ise Jingu.

Based on these, this sketch focus on the pillars of Japan and Europe for

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12   Kenneth Frampton (1995) p.14

13   Ise Jingu. (n.d.)

　　　　From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

comparison. Historically, in Western architecture, stones were used to build massive pillars/columns with sturdy appearance and we see them still standing in the present times, even after years and centuries with least deterioration. But, the size of Japanese wooden posts were limited by the thickness of the tree's trunk, thus limiting the possibility of thick ness in this material. Therefore, wooden posts were thin and delicate compared to a stone columns, they change color over time, get scratched, and sometimes even crack due to drying(see fig. 42).

EUROPE   JAPAN

Passing
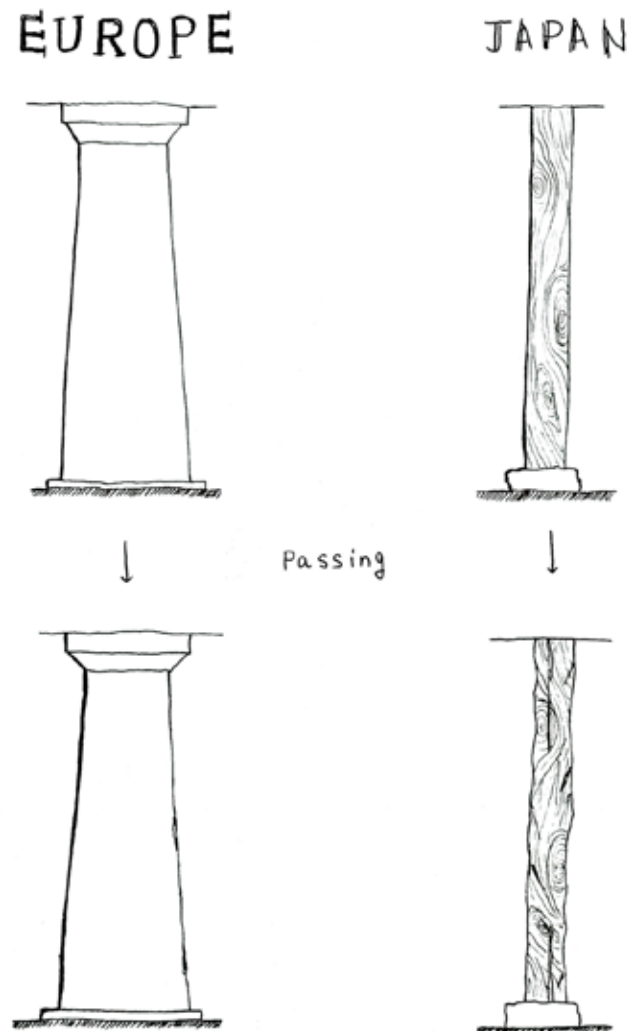
Fig. 42. A sketch of the monumental pillars differences between European and Japanese

A Personal Approach from a Japanese Perspective

Based on these arguements, where does non-monumentality appear in contemporary architecture built by the Japanese architects in European context?

Well if we look at some examples, Vijversburg Visitor Center , Friesland in the north of the Netherlands built by Junya Ishigami is one of the examples which is very delicate in (see fig. 43).
The site is in a park called Vijversburg with summer house stands in a park from 19th century. This project aims to renovate the summer house accompanyied with new architecture concepts. As a design condition, this park was a subject to be preserved as one of the historically important cultural properties, it was not allowed to change the shape of ponds, roads and even can not cut the trees or move green areas.
Under these difficult contextual and cliental conditions, Junya read the site's environmental conditions that spread in the park and focused on the boundaries where the elements switch and design the architectural form(fig. 44) thus eliminating the monumentality of its architecture to its utmost limits. This architecture consists of only large curved glass and beams with no columns the size of space cannot be recognized due to the structure of the building and also the structure of glass of facade and beams due to technological advancements is extremely delicate. At the same time, it has no architectural presence. For this project Junya described:

"On the site where the existing environment is promised to be preserved from the past to the future, consider that the surrounding environment itself will be the largest element that forms the architectural space. Grasping the landscape as architecture, or launching the landscape as architecture, is a very deep thought of us."[14]

Such delicate thought processes, and concepts creates designs of typical Japanese non-monumental architecture. On the other hand, because it is non-monumental, it is possible to flexibly consider the balance with the surrounding environmental conditions(see fig. 45).

14   Junya Ishigami (2017) p.78

Fig. 43. The Vijversburg Visitor Center

Fig. 44. Plan

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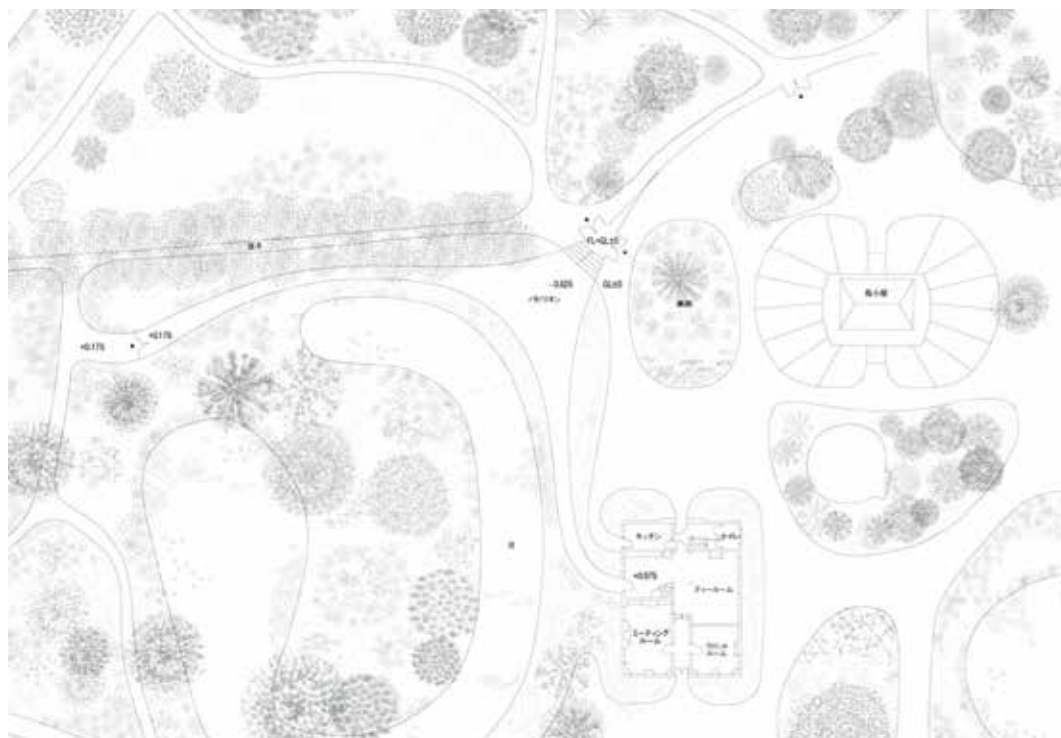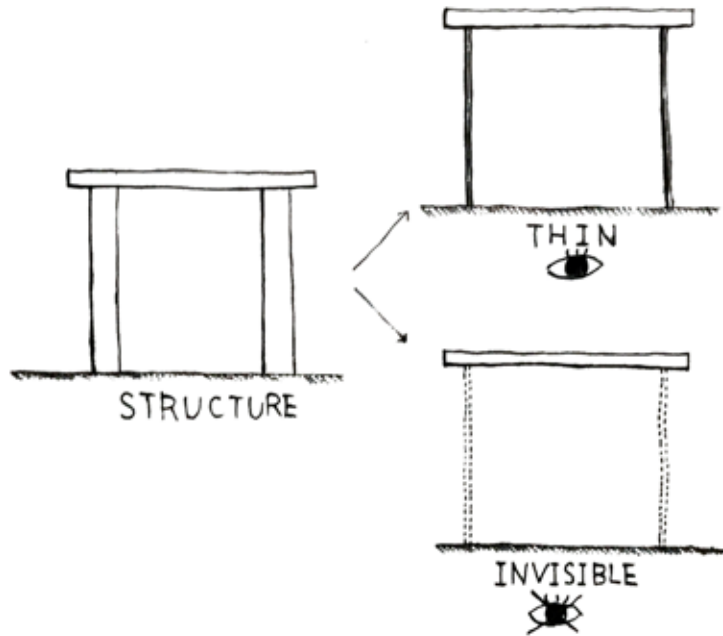
Fig. 45. Sketch of architectural structure abstraction

Sou Fujimoto's L'Arbre Blanc apartment building in Montpellier, France (see fig. 46) at first glance, appears to be a monumental architecture, but it is a delicate non-monumental architecture. It is an architecture created by subtlety. Sou explains it as follows:

"Listening" in this architecture, which was my first project in France. I think it was significant. I listened carefully to the rich climate of the South of France and the lifestyle of living in outer space. Acceptance is fundamental to the myriad of balconies of this large cantilever that are overhanging. Several ideas were born, which by "listening" to the view from the greenbelt along the river and the Bofill housing complexes from the north side. The idea was born that the Boomerang style deformed plane. When it met the many balcony and pergolas, the base of architecture has emerged as a simple yet organic and essential entity. Here, the whole of the architecture is surrounded by various "living" situations. In this way, the city is transformed into a collection of

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Fig. 46. View L'Arbre Blanc form the river

countless lives that are woven together beyond the object, which transforms into a multiple set of lives interwoven there." [15]

This architecture competition was a call for a new landmark in Montpellier. However, Sou did not only want an urban scale appearance but also to create a new relationship between the neighborhood and the ground. And so, he carefully incorporated the context and local culture of Montpellier into the design. As we can see, the cantilevered balconies are floating and structurally very delicate, each house has a different balcony and a different relationship with its neighbors, maintaining a sense of intimacy and moderation. By this methodology of design, he defined a "true landmark"(fig. 47). He also described:

"We, who live in today, will try to ask that what do those want to be, which is not only the materials, even the various unconditioned and traditions associated with the project. We are Listening carefully to countless voices and countless directions and carefully discerning the chords hidden in them. Looks to find a multiple common pointing, these pieces come together unexpectedly. The architecture built to solve like a labyrinth."[16]

Fig. 47. Residence and balcony

plan

15   So Fujimoto (2019) p.106

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Thus, this delicate process of design could create a new kind of architecture while respecting the landscape, environment, and culture of the location. It creates a new identity not only just for the architect but also human life. Through all the mentioned sensitive approaches, I would like propose a critically global landmark within the city of Beil for the locals and inhabitants. I want to redefine iconic architecture and create a non-monumental landmark by harmonizing the idea of non-monumentality of Japanese essence with the local characteristics of the site(fig. 48).
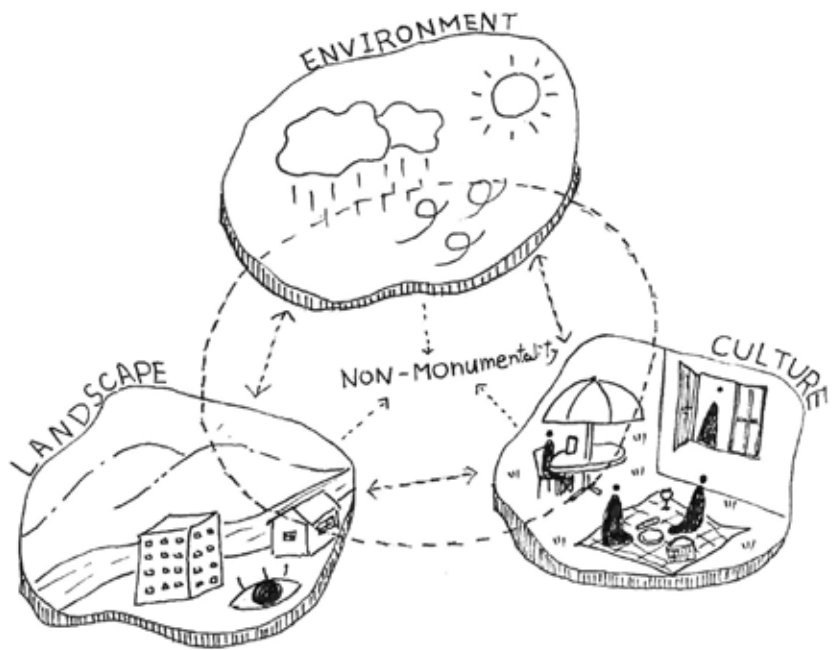
Fig. 48. Sketch of Non-monumental relationship with environment, landscape, cultural

16   So Fujimoto (2019) p.106

2.4   Summary

In this era of globalization, this research focuses of architectural designs of Japanese architects in the context of European continent. Each of these contemporary architecture is based on different site conditions, surroundings, size, functions, programs and the architect's approach. However, the analysis of this research confirms the similarities in each project i.e. of transparency, continuity, and non-monumentality. In short, these three essences are of utmost relevance and of identity for contemporary Japanese architects. It can be said and also proven to be versatile and flexible.

The reason how these essences were born and from where was the uniqueness in architectural structures of Japan that differs from that of buildings overseas. Therefore, the architectural style with Japanese essence is portrayed in overseas architecture when designed with consideration of regional characteristics. It is therefore expressed as a new form of 'critical globalism' with the combo of surrounding environment and lifestyle.

This research is a help to show architects and people of the present times of how to express the identity of the city and design architecture with regional characteristics. Furthermore, in the future, the idea of critical globalism can be regarded as a manifesto more relevant than ever. As a result, it will help to give birth to new architecture.

From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

3   Project
Design

While the above research analyzed and studied to extract the three essences of, "transparency," "continuity," and "non-monumentality," it paved the way to redefine traditional Japanese essence to contemporary global architecture thus attempting to start a new age of architecture via this basic manifesto of 'Critical Globalism'. This approach will further be implemented in the design project, thus justifying the amalgamation of these essences and Biel's regional elements in dialectical terms. In this global village of contemporary architecture, it will create a perception of a valuable tool for expressing the balance between the my personal approach from Japanese perspective and the regionality of the city of Beil in Switzerland.

3.1   Design Task

While brainstorming all the theoretical ideas for creating a manifesto of 'Crtical Globalism' I found myself into an academical cliental environment of where we were assigned the task of proposing a housing project in at the site of former stadium of the city of Beil, for the master thesis. This task is an outcome of an urban development concept. As a result, it attempts to create a residential development of high urban and architectural quality.(see fig. 49).

The main focus of proposal is a housing, but it also integrates public space for the surrounding area. In the future, the concept of urban development will require new buildings with multipurpose functions that focus not only on housing but also on public functions such as stores, offices and restaurants, and semi-public spaces such as co-working spaces, atelier, and studio. Special attention should also be payed to the connection with the existing surrounding environment and the interaction of the external space.

Fig. 49. Biel city map. The red part is the project site

From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

3.2   Design Concept

Fig. 50. Vue de Bienne, circa 1885.

Biel is a global town situated in the canton of Bern with the site of the design project located in Gurzelen development area, and there is the venue for a comprehensive redesign. The site was a home to the Gurzelen football stadium with the new Omega Swatch office by Shigeru Ban in immediate context. On the other hand, there is also a residential area around the site. In the 17th and 18th centuries the road leading to the present city center was connectedas a diagonal main road (today's Murtenstrasse) to Nidau, an extension of the Nidaugasse, even before the city was planned.[17] Later, in the 19th century between 1866-78, roads with grid-city network was proposed for the future development of city. This plan was one of the few examples of Switzerland that opted for a system of gris streets running at right angles, enclosing individual blocks very closely and leaving little green space. In addition to the common central axis, individual streets are given more space, for example, Dufour-Strasse.[18] From there, the area around Biel developed in concentric circles

in the first half of the 20th century.[19] These plans combined the old
diagonal town overlapping with a grid paths determined by the city plan,
and the city center of Biel had a large plaza in the center and a radial path
around that location. Thus the city center are formed by the elements
such as squares, radial and diagonal streets, and irregular architectural
counties(see fig. 50).

Biel was introduced and industrialized by the watch industry, at the same
time, housing shortage became apparent due to indurstrialization. In this
situation, the town was influenced by the idea of Garden city by Ebenezer
Howard for an industrial city.[20] Residential development led to the
construction of a typical settlement of small houses and row houses
between 1910-40; after 1940, the agglomeration progressed in the
direction of houses, mainly row houses, and later skyscrapers.[21] The
residential area around the design project is also lined typical small
houses built between 1910 -70, as can be seen in the diagram of spatial
growth of cities from 1850 to 1980 in Biel(see fig. 51, 52, 53).

These conditions make Biel a global city. However, due to a variety of
influences, the structure of the city center and residential neighborhoods
have changed drastically. Therefore, the design project based on these
two different characteristics of Biel, constitute the whole process of the
architectural design.

17   Germann, Georg / Stutz, Werner (1982) p.43

18   Peter Meyer. (1987) p.125

19   Peter Meyer. (1987) p.174

20   Peter Meyer. (1987) p.173

21   Peter Meyer. (1987) p.125

	Um 1850 bestehende Altstadtkerne
	Um 1850 bestehende Vorstädte, lockere Bebauungen und Dorfkerne
	Zuwachs von 1850 – 1880
	Zuwachs von 1880 – 1910
	Zuwachs von 1910 – 1940
	Zuwachs von 1940 – 1970
	Zuwachs von 1970 – 1980
	Wald
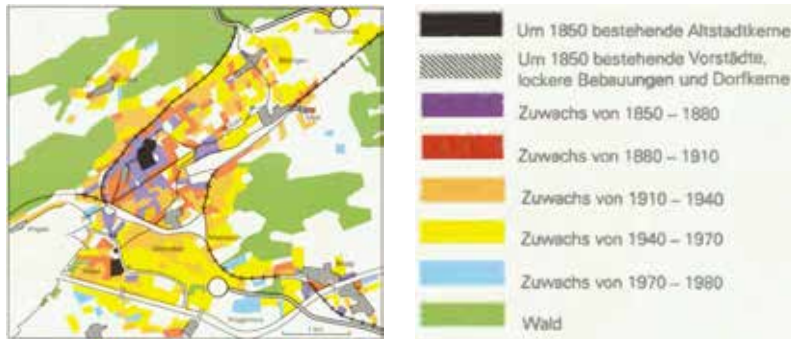
Fig. 51. The spatial growth of the cities from 1850 to 1980 in Bile

Fig. 52. Houses around the site

Fig. 53. Houses built along the road around the site

A Personal Approach from a Japanese Perspective

As mentioned in the design task of the housing complex it is important to develop a relationship with the neighborhood and the planning of public space on the ground floor.
So, we drop Biel's distinctive city components into the form of an apartment complex with a typical ground floor and commercial facilities. In addition, the general housing complex has been designed with elements separated from the public floor and the residential part of the ground floor. So, we will analyze the City Structur of Biel.

The urban planning of grid path connects the city center and the project site i.e. the city has an essence of linearity. Therefore, the public space on the ground floor incorporates elements of the city, creating a space that can be accessed from multiple directions by the residents of the neighborhood. In contrast, the residential part on the upper floor is planned in small units around the site to create a small scale residential units. As an element that connects the two levels, this project inserts a linear space that serves as a pathway. By placing semi-public functions in this space, it aims to blur the boundaries between private and public space, the residents and neighboring inhabitants, and to create a continuity in the composition of the entire building(see fig. 56, 57, 58).
Specifically, to show the people's activities, the void for light to the ground floor, and the structure of the building creates continuity throughout the building.

The design focuses on the forest space when considering the three categorized essences of transparency, continuity, and non-monumentality. My point of view is, the trees found in the forest/nature are of different types and sizes in the forest, which creates a variety of spaces via the density of trees, branches, and foliages.
For example, branches and foliages change the transparency of the space even though the space is naturally continuous between the trees. The forest's presence is largely due to the trees' density, but the forest does not become an iconic presence; it is non-monumental.

Therefore this proposal attempts to create a new architecture in Biel by harmonizing Japan's essence, personal perspective, and regionalism characteristic.

From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

Fig. 54. Bile map extracting only houses

Fig. 55. Bile map extracting street and rivers

A Personal Approach from a Japanese Perspective

Fig. 56. Comparison of Biel city center and residential area around the site

From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:
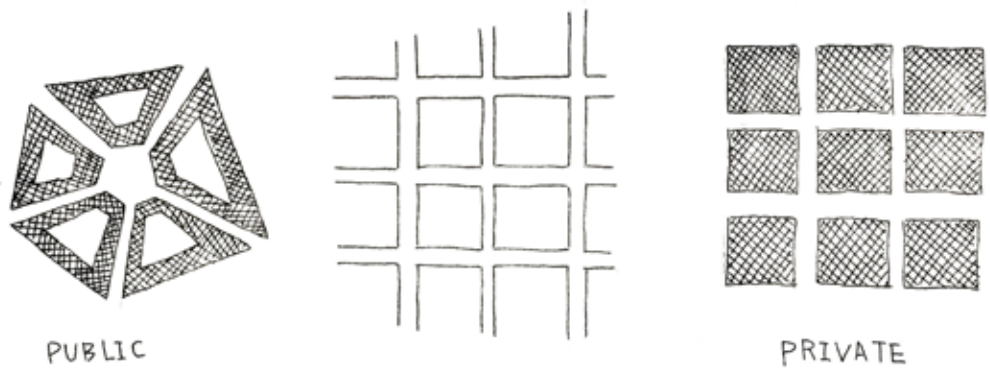
PUBLIC   PRIVATE

Fig. 57. Sketches of public and private spaces in Biel

← Residence
← Semi – Public
← Public
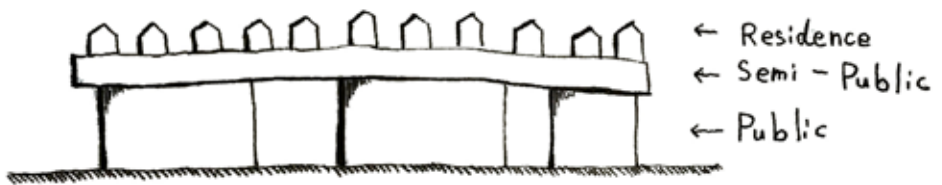
Fig. 58. Building concept sketch

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Fig. 59. Architectural space concept collage

From Critical Regionalism to Critical Globalism:

A Personal Approach from a Japanese Perspective

3.3 Structurality
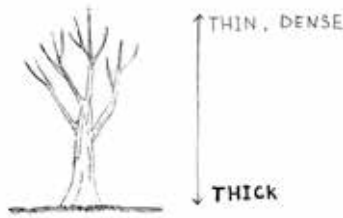
Fig. 60. As the tree goes up, the branches become thinner and denser.

The columns in architecture exist to support the building structurally; the space created by the structure is fixed by the placement and span of the columns. For example, the placement of the columns on the ground floor is maintained to the upper floors. However, this design project places public functions on the ground floor and stacks the residences on the upper floors thus creating a suitable size of space for each use in this project. Public space requires a large open space, which leads to flexibility. On the other hand, the living space requires considerations of human scale, and the space created by the structure becomes dense. Therefore, this project focuses on the spatiality projected by the forest. The forest has trees with thick trunks growing out of the ground and countless thin branches growing from the trunks towards the sky. As a result, the forest has a sparse space on the ground due to thick trunks, and denser as it moves upward(see fig. 60, 61).

This configuration is adapted into the structure of this design project to form a flexible structural system for space.

Fig. 61. A panoramic photo showing the spatiality of the forest

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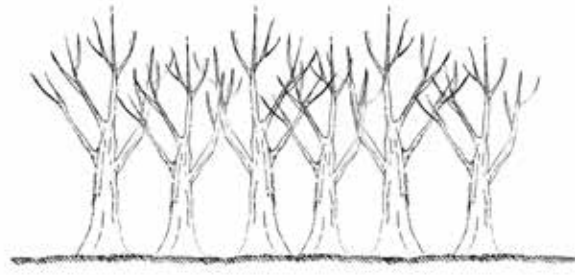
Fig. 62. Trees become forests when they become dense, and their individual presence fades.

In architectural structure thick columns increase the monumentality of the building by its sturdy presence in the space. It is a similar feeling to when a person becomes aware of the existence of a single tree. However, when we are in the forest we do not acknowledge the existence of a single tree but the forest as a whole space. When a trees are densely packed, the presence of a single tree fades away, and its existence is abstracted as a large mass called a forest. This thought causes the monumentality of a single tree to be lost and changed to a non-monumentality(see fig. 62). The same phenomenon occurs when this idea is put into architecture. Placed in countless numbers and abstracted by the density, and the structure's presence is reduced.

In this way, the structural system of this design project can abstract the column spans and structures for each use by using a forest-like configuration.

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Fig. 63. Elevation of a versatile
tree structure
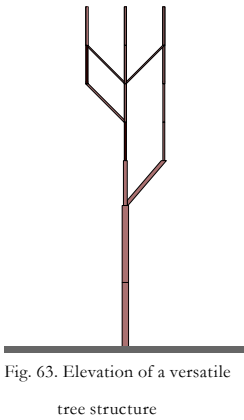
Three types of trees will be used in the structural system for this design project, just as trees in the forest are shrubs, medium trees, and tall trees(see fig. 65) and place these tree structure according to the height of the building. The most versatile column are those that branch out and have an increasing number of spread out columns at each level, just as the branches of a tree increase towards the upward direction. Also, the column is not a symmetrical object (see fig. 63). Moreover, by turning the columns 90 degrees on the plane, the configuration of the plane changes depending on the structure. It creates diversity of spaces and is defined by columns without walls thus inducing continuity in each space (see fig. 64). Moreover, this tree structure system eliminates the need for walls, with naked columns and beams.

Therefore, the design of the building skin is more flexible, and it is easier to maintain the transparency of the façade. The thickest tree structure houses the elevators and stairs for the vertical circulation and connect the

Turn 90°
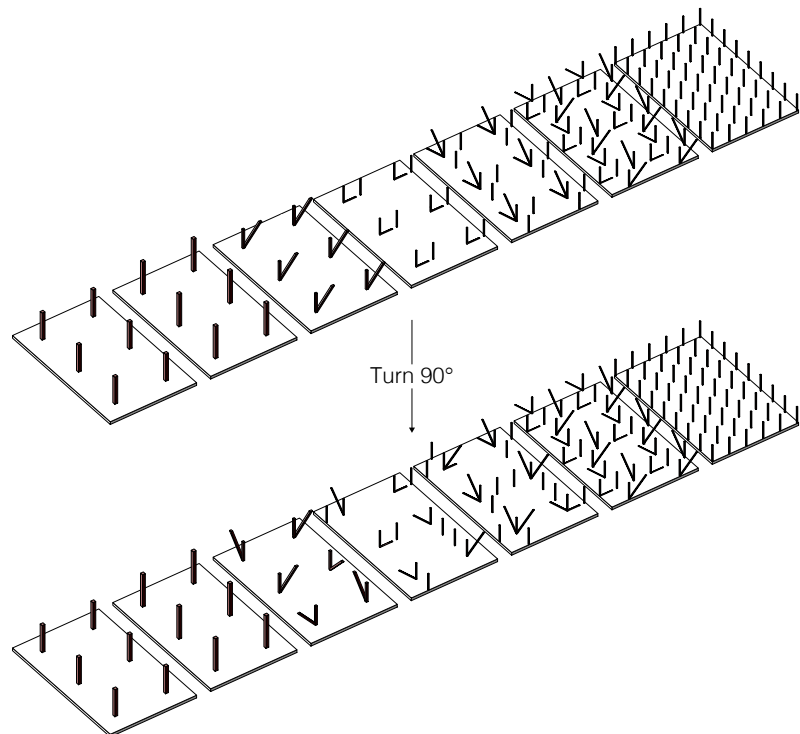
Fig. 64. Axonometric drawing which spatiality changes by rotating the column 90 degrees

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upper floor to the ground. It can be hidden by the surrounding columns thus reducing its presence.

The composition of the tree structure, which vertically extends the columns obliquely in 45-degree angle, allows the space to be free yet controlled and broken yet weaved together by it. Also, the change in the density of the columns abstracts their existence as a single structure and makes them light.
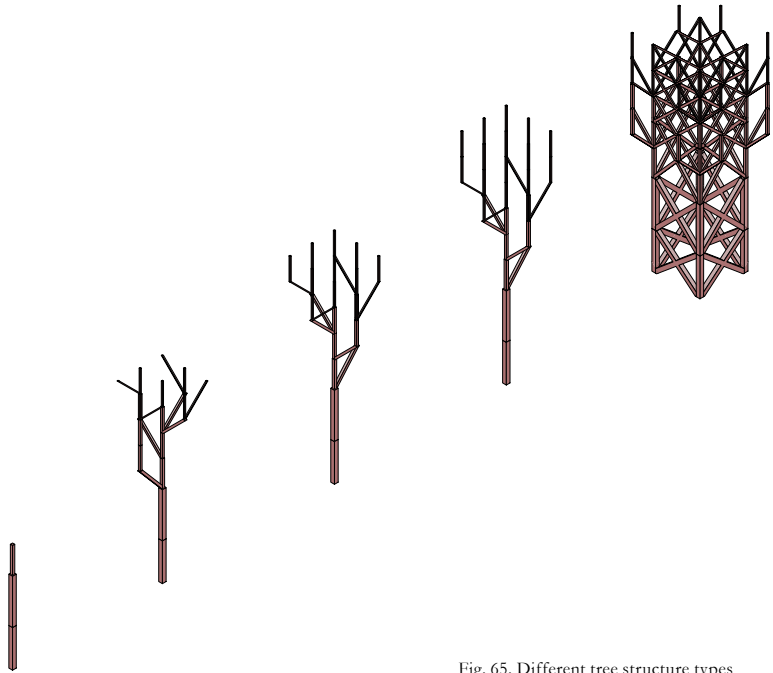
Fig. 65. Different tree structure types

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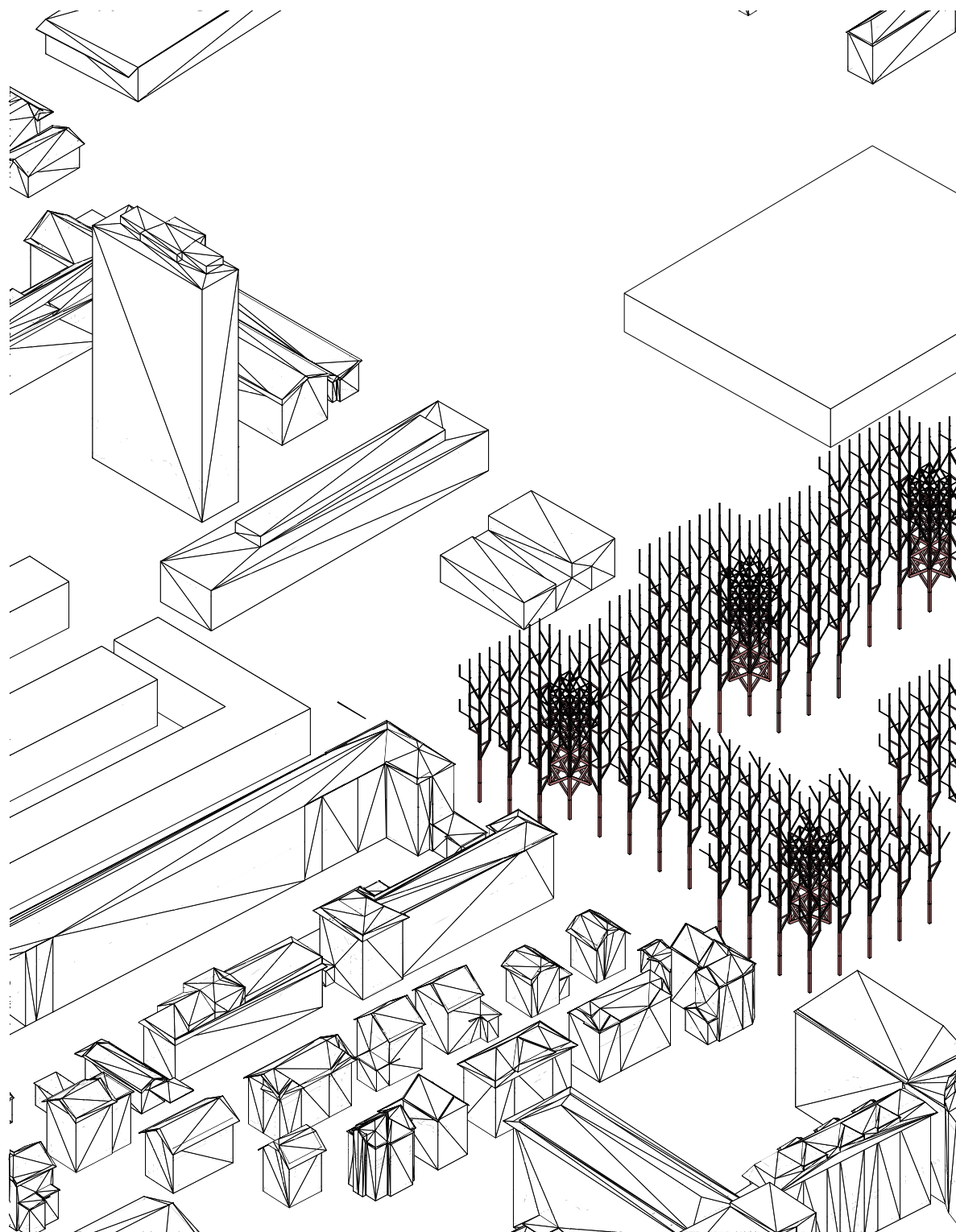
Fig. 66. The tree structure on the site looks like a forest.

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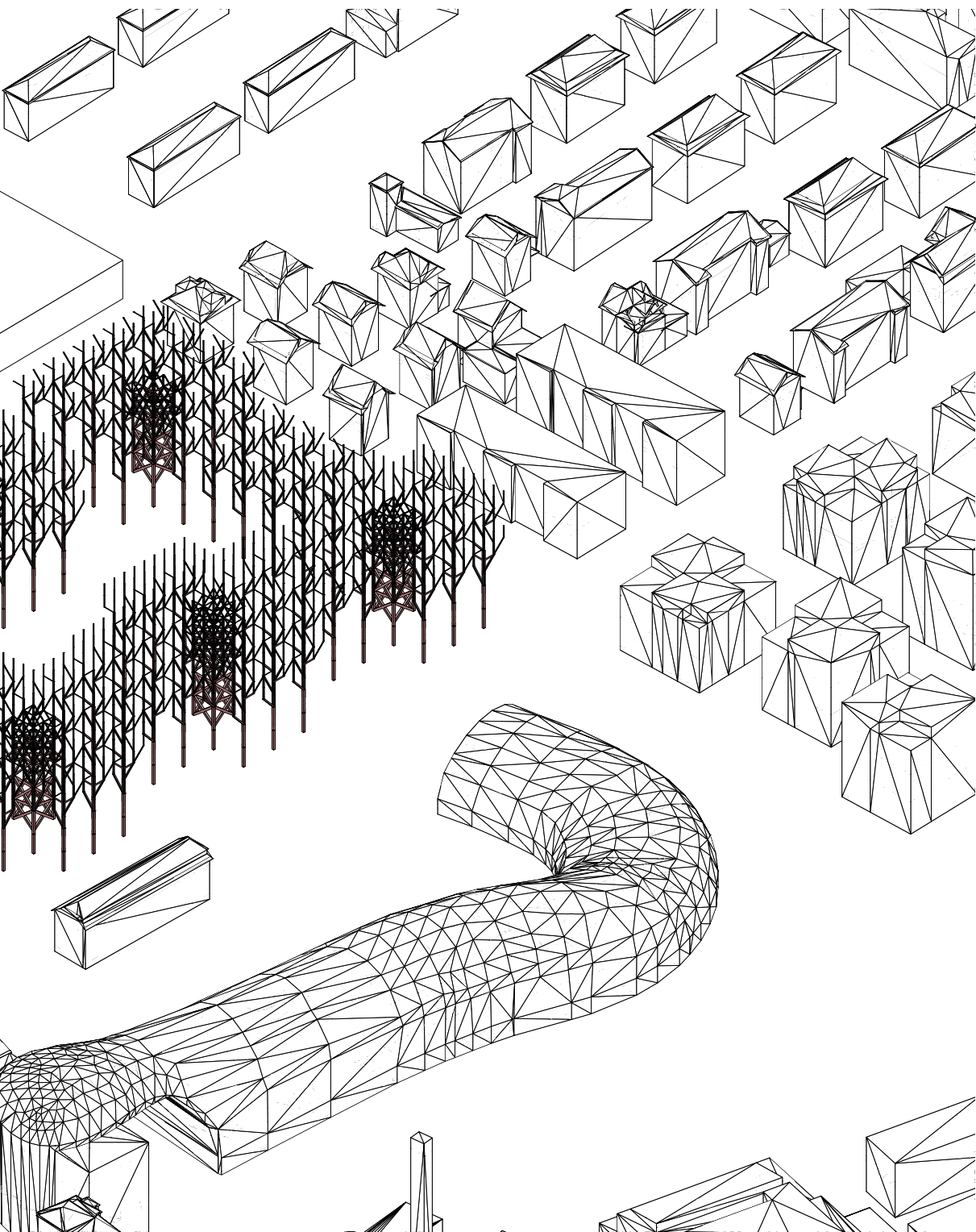
3.4   Spatiality

An essential point of the space in this design project is continuity, there is a variety of continuities: is the continuity of the city, the continuity of the space, and continuity of its uses.

On the ground floor, the main focus is on continuity with the city, and the character of Biel's city structure is enticing for the planning of the ground floor. The old diagonal street and the grid street urban planning are the main elements used as hints for the planning of the layout.
Besides, each path reaffirms and defines the concept of structural system, which is the path in the forest, creating a hierarchy of paths that continue from the city.
There are four types of roads:
1, Wide main roads with clear visibility.
2, Shrubby roads on both sides.
3, Tree-covered roads.
4. Roads with trees on one side of the road that looks like a wall of trees.

Fig. 67. Different types of roads in the forest

As can be seen from these four classifications, the forest path varies with the way the trees grow(see fig. 67).
The parameters mentioned above were adapted into design considerations and a hierarchy created on the road continuous to the city—also, the layout of each volume creates the sequence.
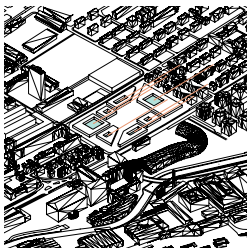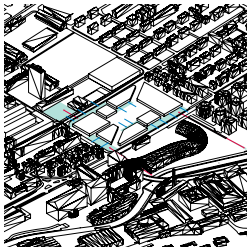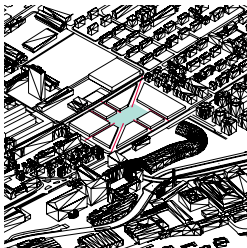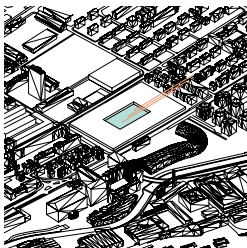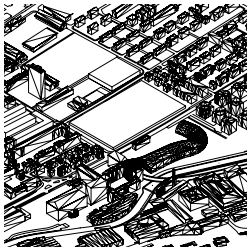
Fig. 68. Ground floor process

Additionally, this project creates a large courtyard in the center with not a perfect rectangle, but it is dividing the size of the courtyard and changing the material of the landscape's pavement, which alleviates the centrality. Thus, the strong hierarchy of centrality reduces, and the relationship that is developed between each public space and the courtyard is possesses equality.

Fig. 69. Ground floor plan

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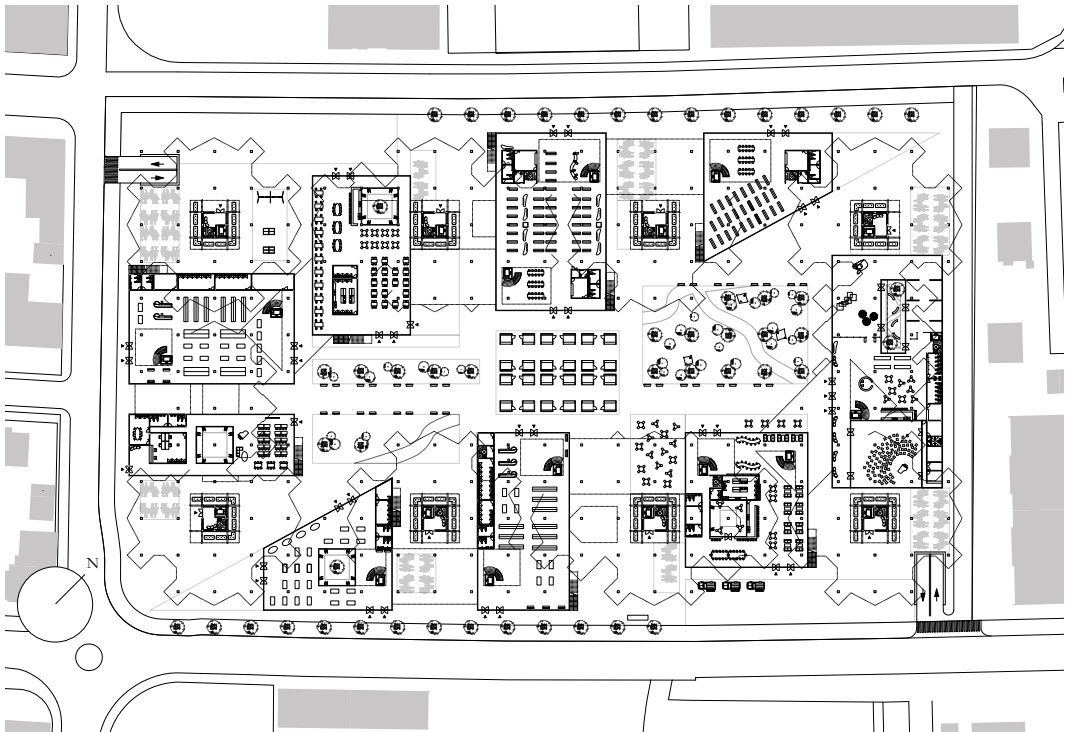
Fig. 70. The view seen from the road on the northwest side. Flow lines are connected in various directions.

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How to develop connection between the inhabitants and the neighboring context? This is a very important aspect to be addressed here and so, the public function are placed at the ground level such as, shops, restaurants, cafes, daycares, libraries, galleries, and an auditorium. These functions are shared for inhabitants of the projects, the neighborhood, workers around the site, and students from nearby schools thus creating continuity and relationship between the building and community around. For example, locating the library close to the nearby school on the site creates a flow of people from the surrounding environment when students use the library. In this way, the project is not just for the site alone but an architecture for the city, involving the city. Planning architecture as part of the city thus emphasizes the concept of continuity in the building. This proposal not just blurs the boundaries of the site but is also a parasitic change in the city. The first-floor holds a semi-public space i.e. co-working space, atelier, free workspace, gym space, meeting space, and share kitchen that corresponds to the ground floor functions connecting the vertical floors.

Fig. 71. Works of artists working in Biel

The volumes on the first floor are horizontally connected like a bridge to create continuity at the same level. For example, the gallery and the Auditorium above are studios for artists from the surrounding areas— moreover, a co-working space placed above the cafe. The semi-public space is then connected space horizontally to the first level. Thus, the activities of artists from the surrounding, and is a kind of regional resource in this area(see fig. 71). These activities are integrated into the planning and retained for the program in this area. In this way, the relationship between the worker in the co-working space will continue horizontally and become a place where they can collaborate on art projects. The transparency of these spaces also makes it possible to connect the ouside to the inside visually, which will make the activities of the building more visible to the surroundings and, at the same time, make it easier to attract people and the community to the building(see fig. 72).

Therefore, the semi-public spaceincorporates the activities around the site and the lifestyle into the design program to create a new regional resource and character. The underground level will be primarily used as parking for residents but a part of the space is placed as a backyard space in a pubic space. It allows the volumes distributed on the ground floor to

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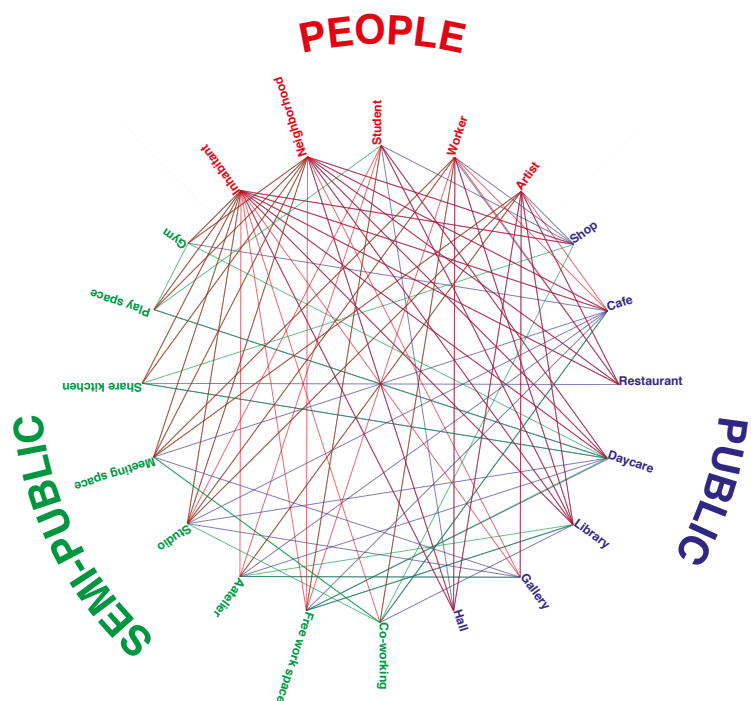
Fig. 72. Diagram of relationships between people, public and semi-public

Fig. 73. First floor plan

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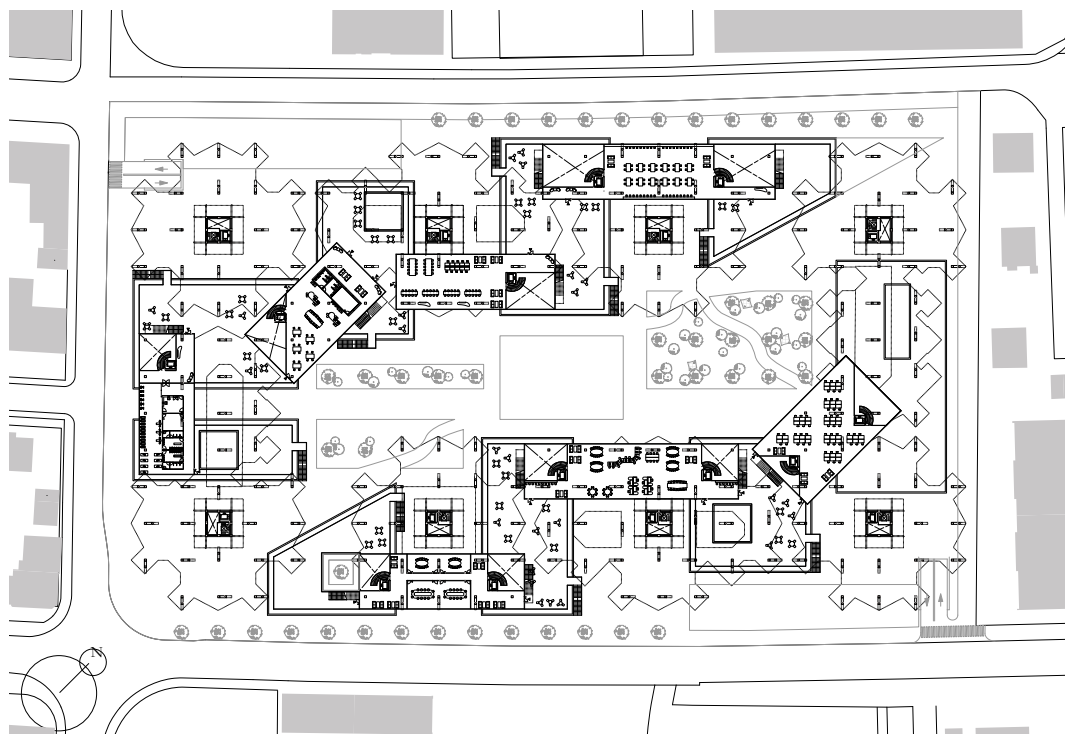
connect to the basement. It looks like a tree with roots, the tree not only branches out on the above but it also, it expanded under the ground by root.

In this way, this design project incorporates regional elements and the surrounding environment into the planning and programming, by considering the continuity in both vertical and horizontal directions, the architecture is not a huge single mass but is like a forest that becomes part of the city, for the city and blends into it.
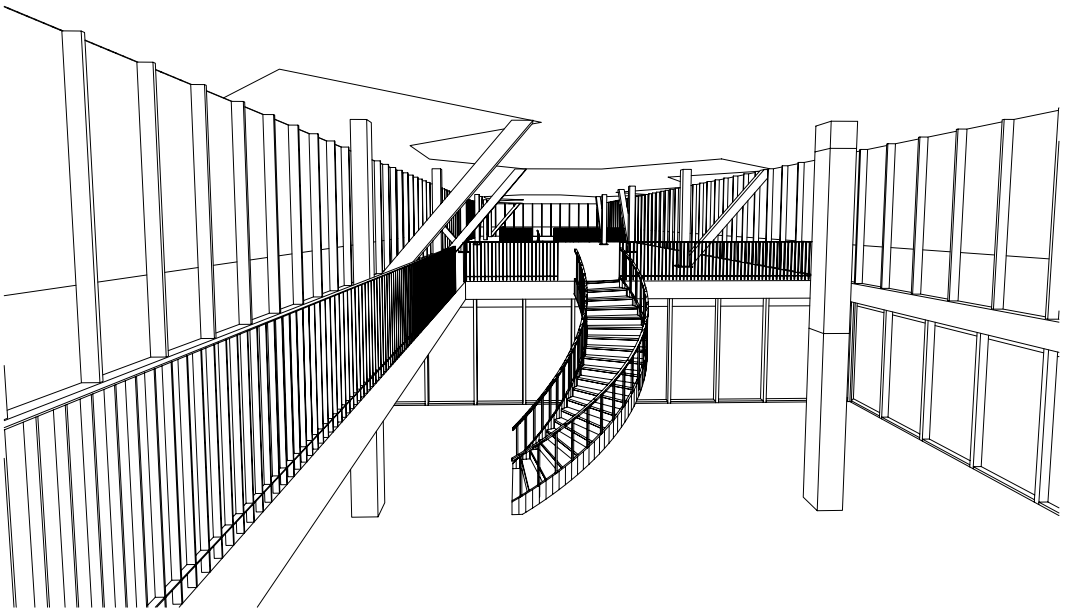
Fig. 74. Perspective for continuous space in public space and semi-public space

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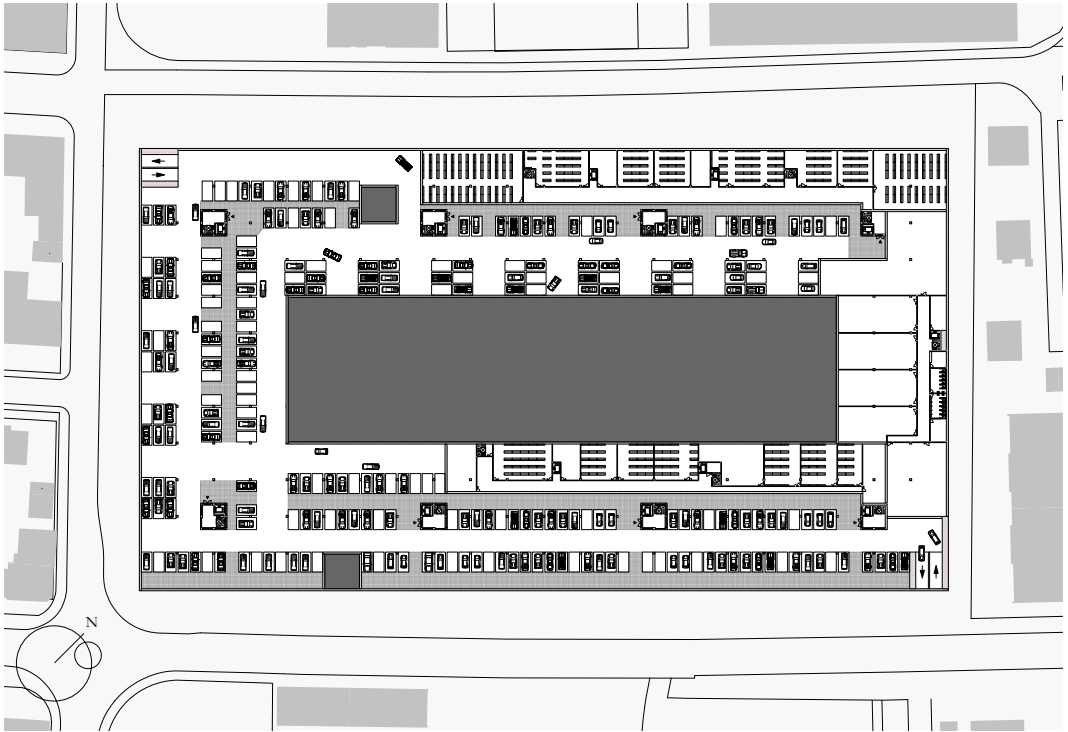
Fig. 75. Underground plan

Fig. 76. Long section

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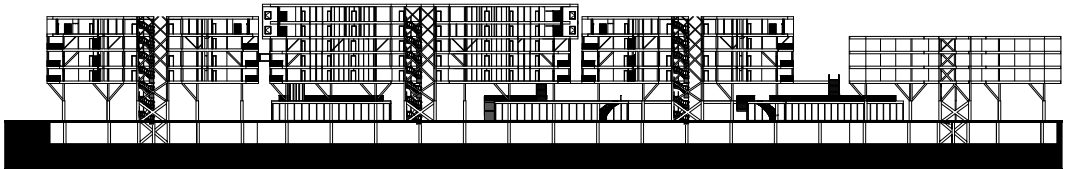
Fig. 77. Axonometric drawing of the project
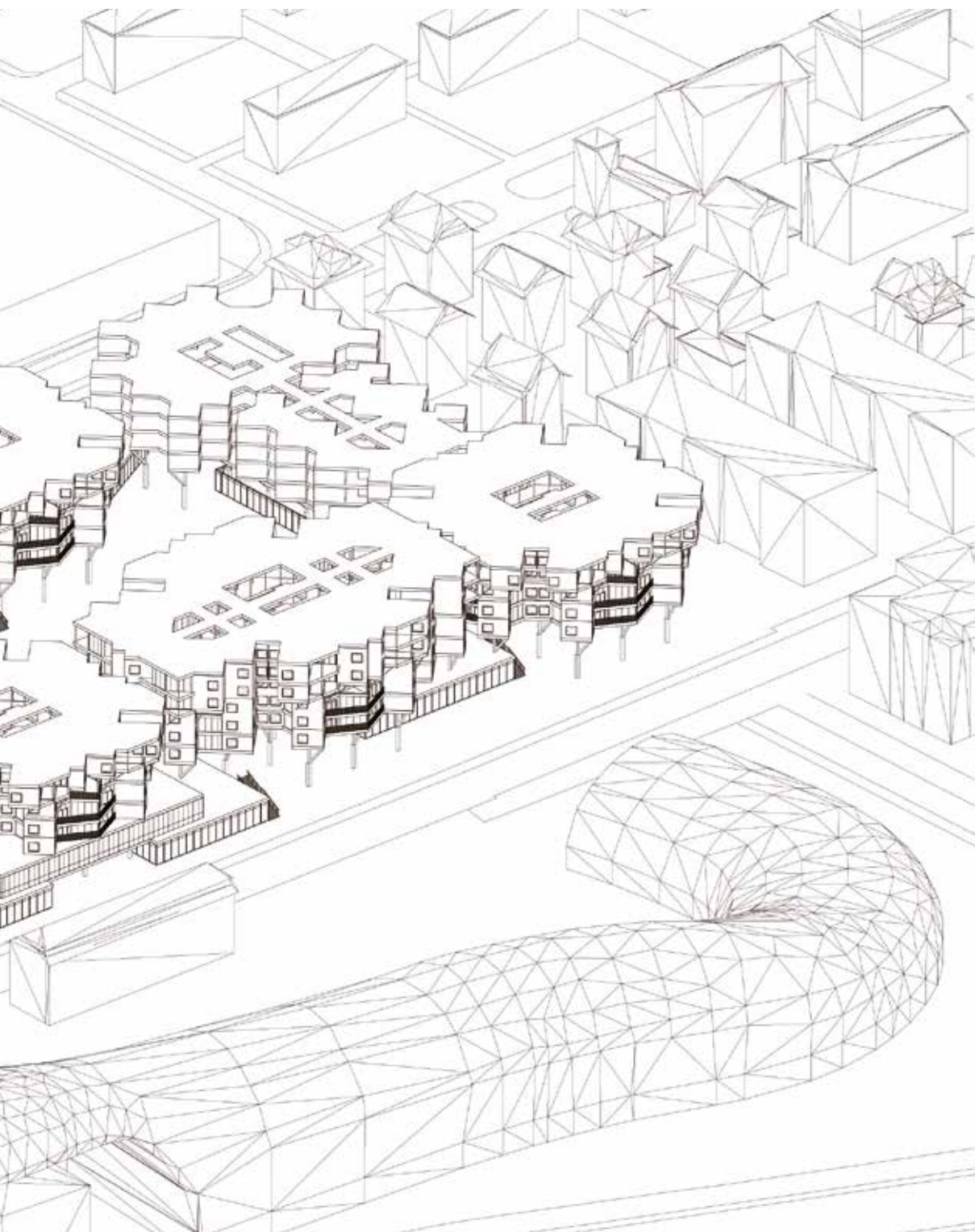
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3.5   Typology

The site of the design project is surrounded by residential areas. The housing around the site is box- shaped houses laid out on a grid due to urban planning influence. A fence or hedge encloses each house against which is connecting the road and with an attached garden. Square windows are arranged on the façade constituting the whole wall.

Fig. 79. aerial photograph of site and residential area

From my perspective, these housing blocks gave and impression of very private structuresand, at the same time, closed to the city (see fig. 78, 79). Incorporating this element into the design as an element of regionality, this design project mixes the elements of this residential housing with the essence of transparency to design houses that are private yet transparent when compared to the surrounding housing typology. Taking into account the surrounding environment and daylighting, it creates a visual continuity for people and always connects the relationship between private and public.

In this way, this project proposes a new typology of housing by combining the architectural elements of and around the site with the essence of transparency. This residence creates three modular groups that changes in scale ocatering to the needs of various of family sizes. It will induce a diversity of residents in the place. These modular groups each create a semi-public garden for the residents on the roof-top of semi-public space.

Fig. 80. Housing plan

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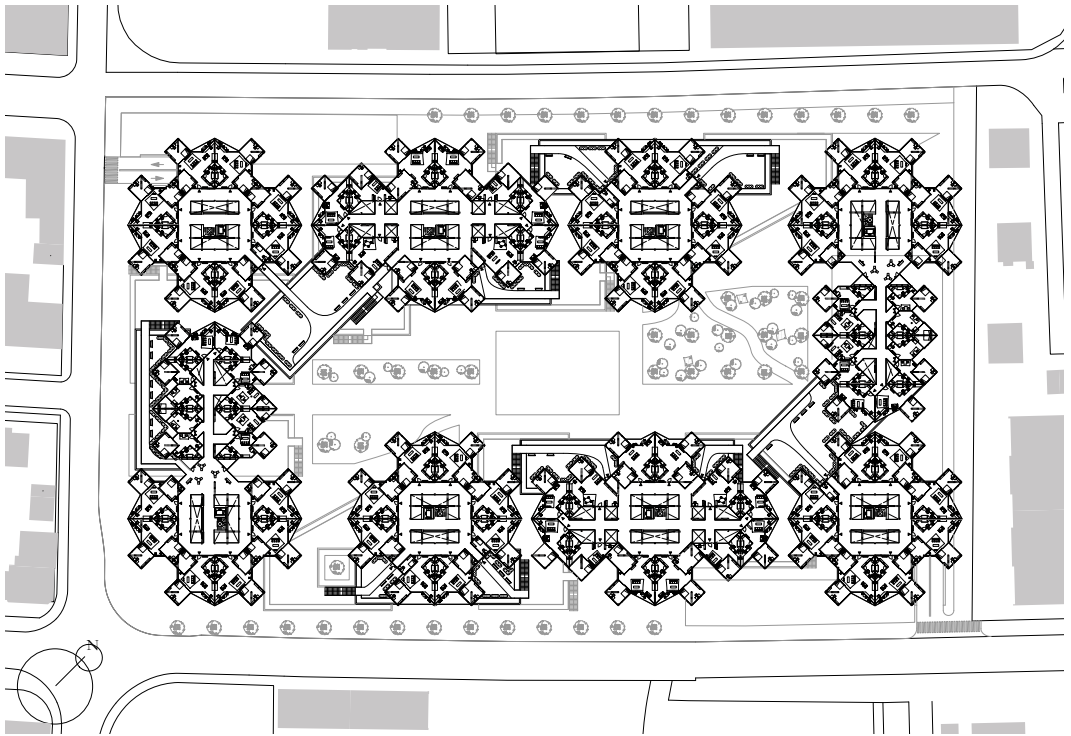
It allows access from the ground floor to the private part of the building without the main vertical routes. Moreover, it blurs the boundary between private and public spaces. Designing a new living space while referencing the surrounding houses as a way of creating a residential typology (see fig. 81) these houses are divided into living rooms by
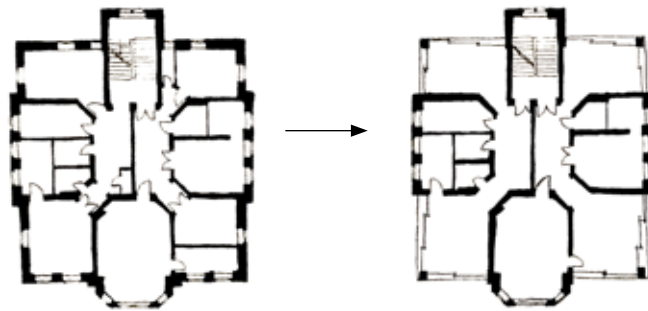
Fig. 81. Converting a project's residential typology from elements of a typical residential typology

building walls in a flat configuration on a square; at the same time, the living room is separated by a door. Therefore, each living room regards as a box and removes the doors that exist on a flat. Moreover, removed part of the box changes the character of the planar space due to the density between the boxes. It ensures the private spaces(bedroom, bathroom) and public spaces (living room, kitchen) within the typology. The public spaces of the house, such as the kitchen, dining room, and living room are continuous one room. By changing the shape of the living room, which is at the center, residents/families are always sharing the same space.

Besides, the use of glass to separate the public space from the outside it increases the transparency and lightness of the house, it ensures that residents are aware of the outside environment while providing them privacy.

Also, each box is rotated at a 45 degree angle to take into account its position with the direction of the sun. On the other hand, the vertical and diagonal columns of tree structures also intervene in the typology. The spaces separated by boxes are further sub-divided to create spaces of

various size, without use of wall. Thus, the boxes angled at 45 degrees, the vertical and diagonal columns allows play for a variety of typologies. At the same time, the private and public definition can be clarified by adding transparency to the housing typology.

Fig. 82. Residential typology for 2 to 3 people

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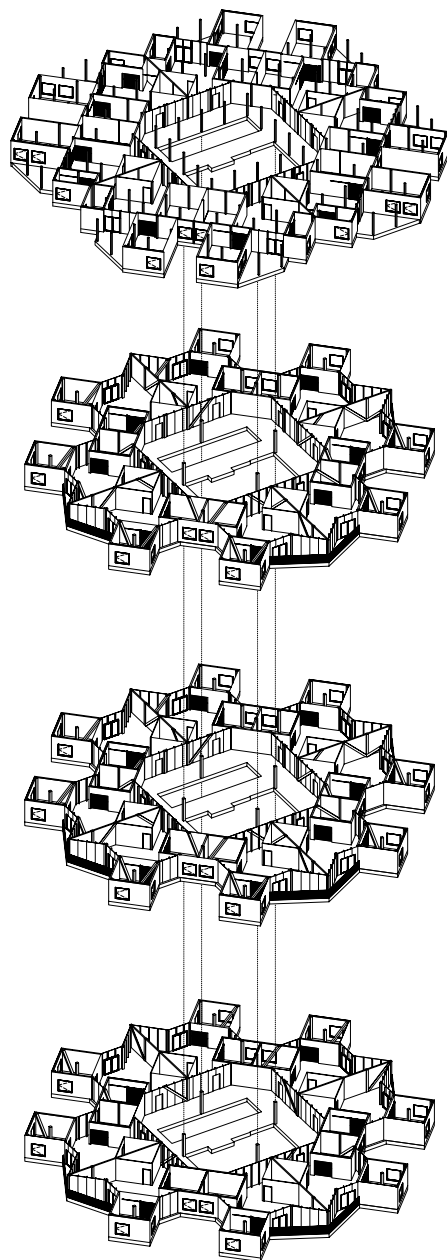
Fig. 83. Housing Group: Type A

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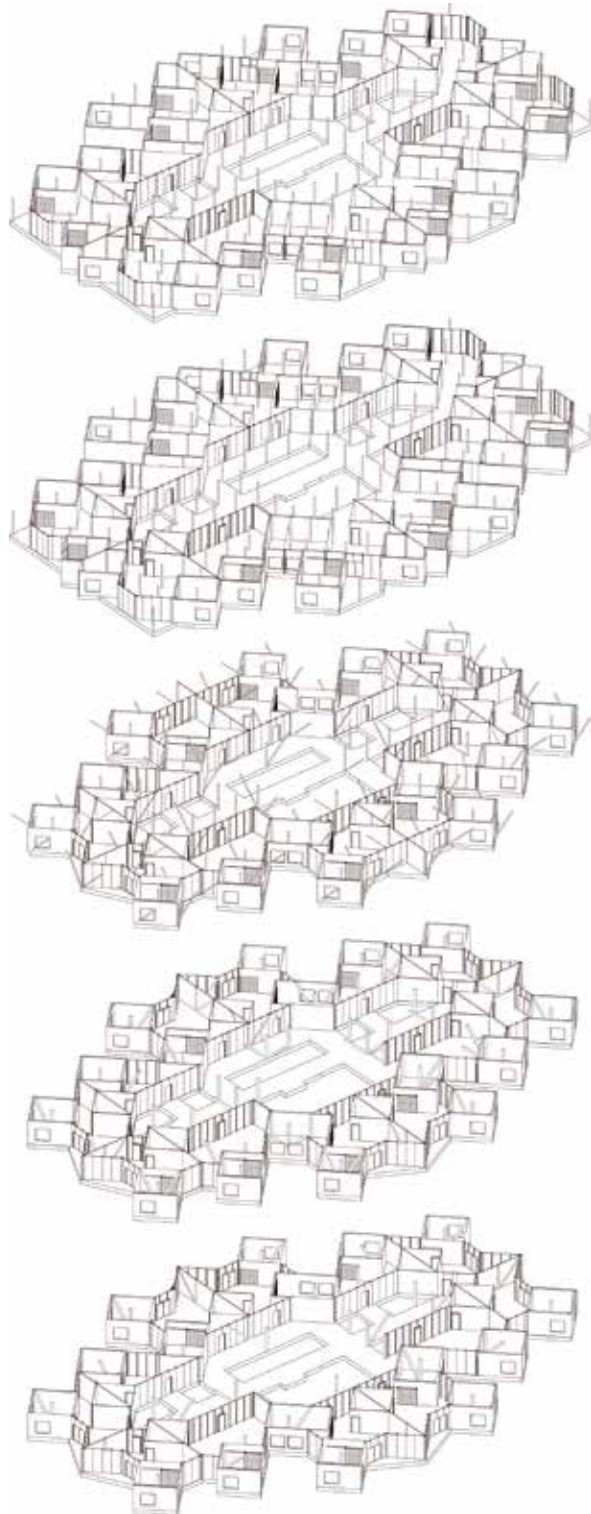
Fig. 84. Housing Group: Type B

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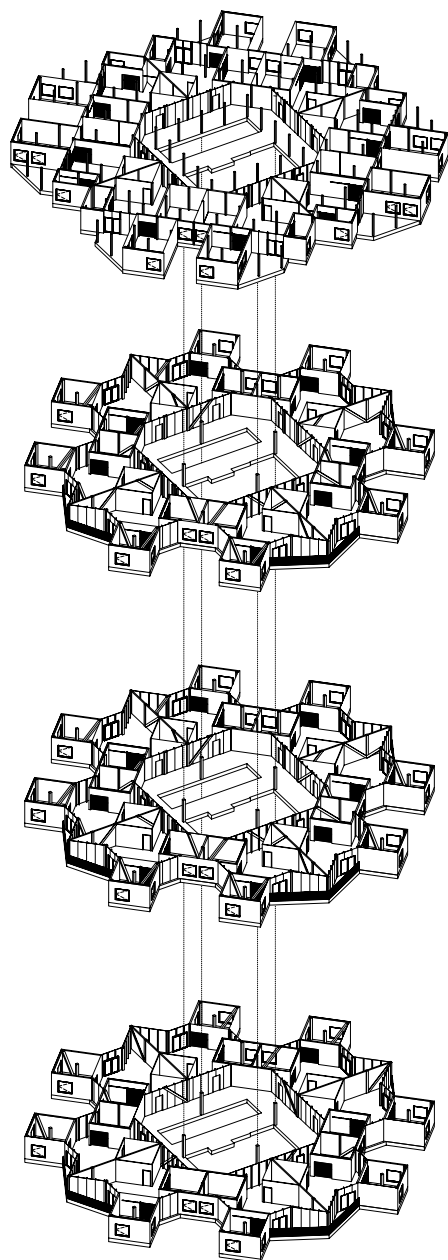
Fig. 85. Housing Group: Type C

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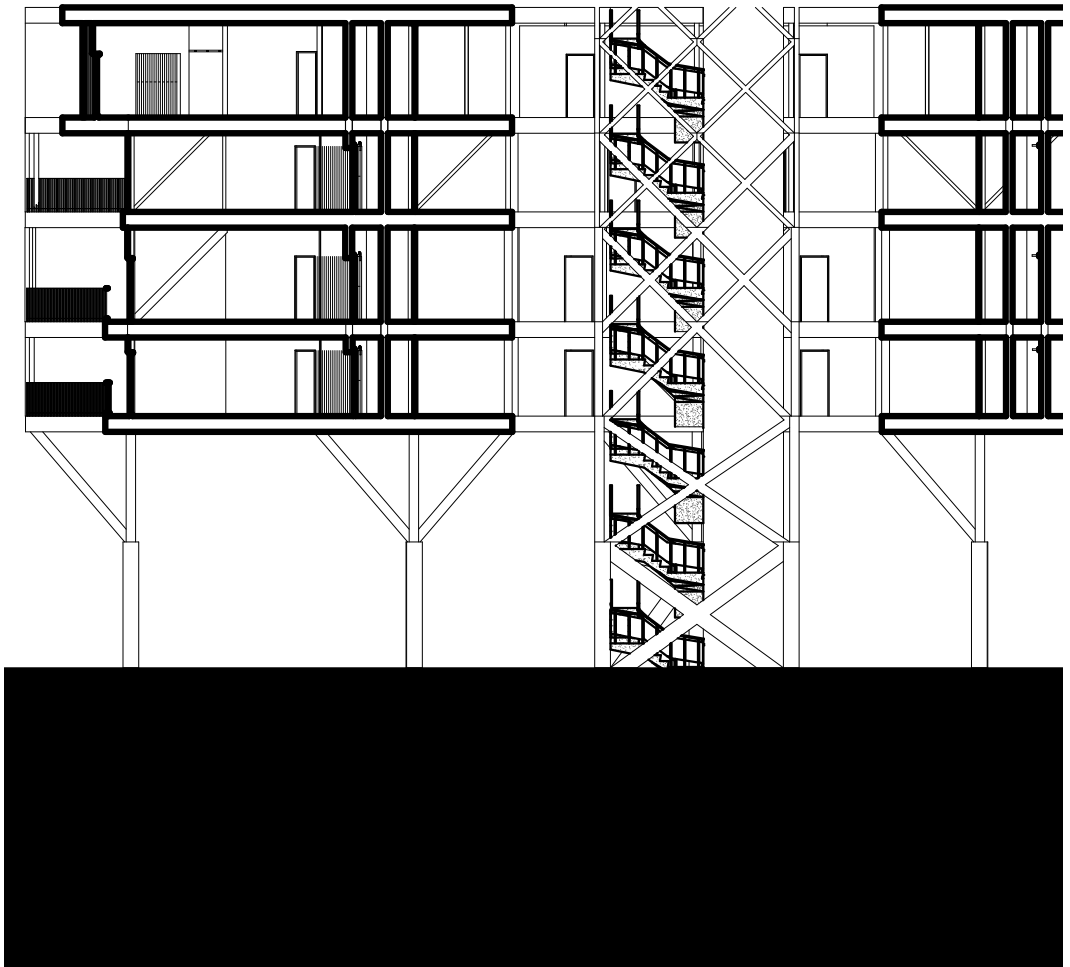
Fig. 86. Part of the section

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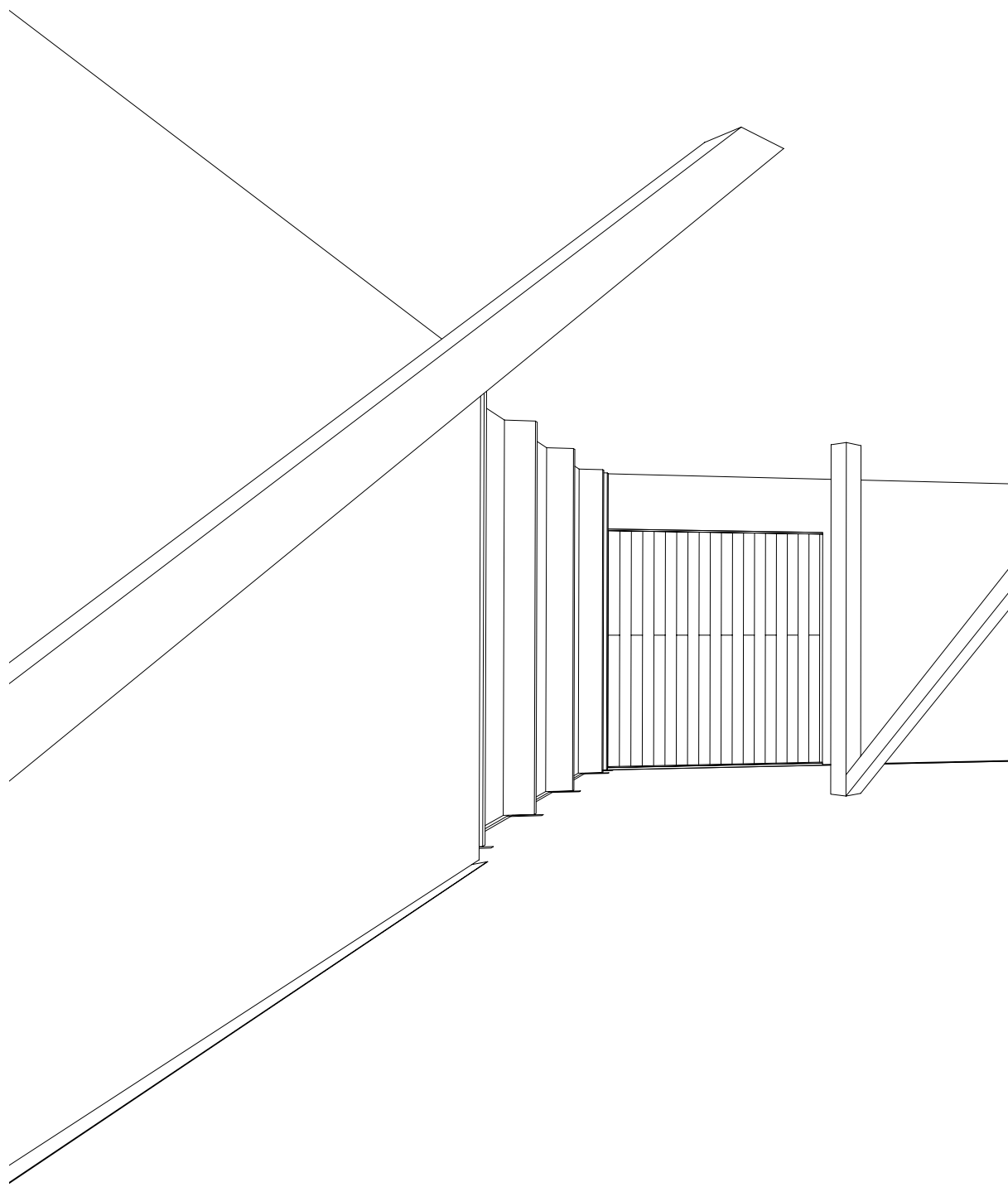
Fig. 87. Residential perspective

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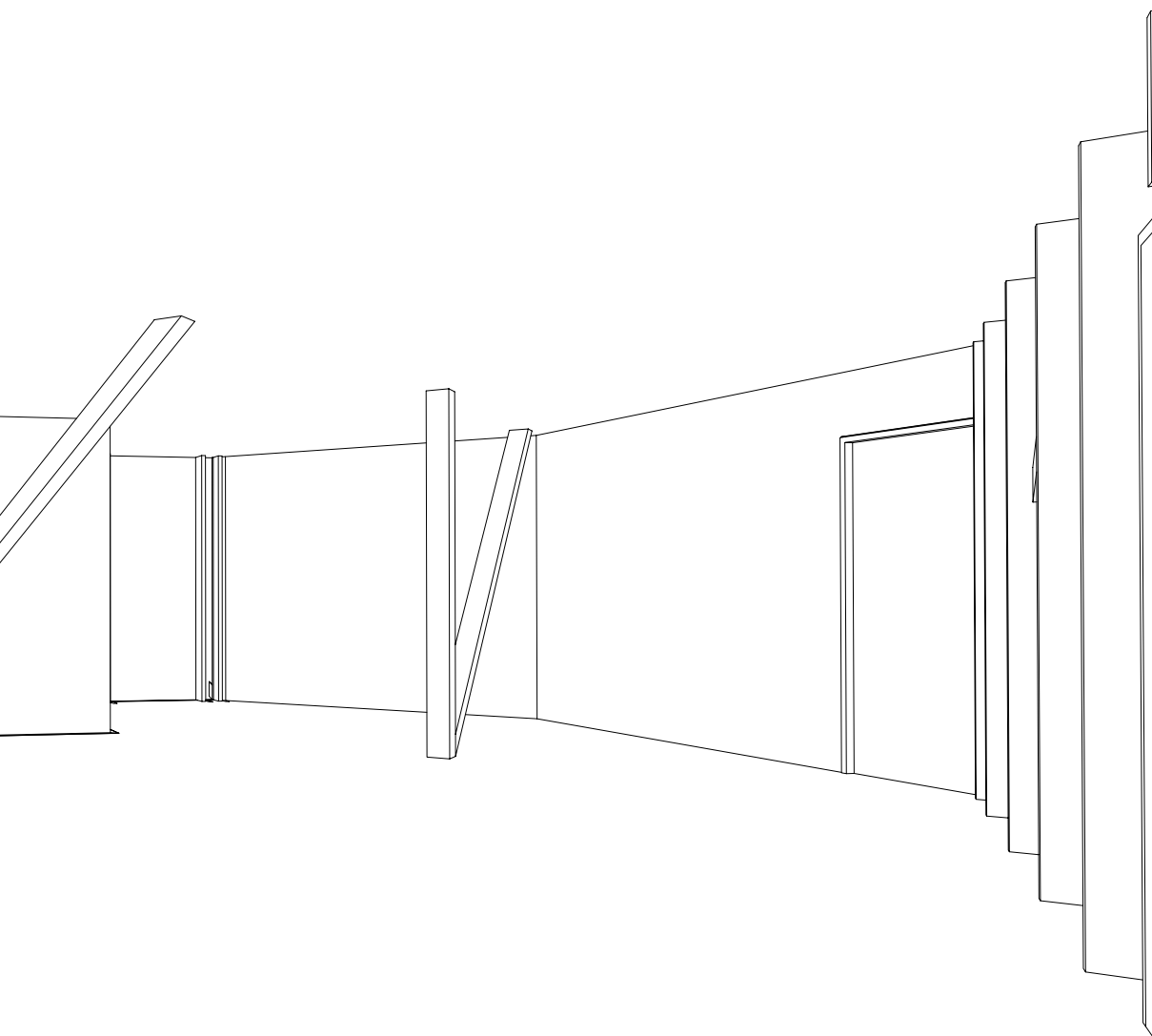
3.6   Materiality

The main material used for the facade is glass and this transparent façade makes it possible for people to visually connect to the ground floor. It is also possible to partially see the tree structure when looking at this architecture from the outside. It makes people realize that the structure is continuous from the ground to the residential part like a man-made tree. The activities inside and lives of the people are also made visible.

While the private part of the house has a partial wall on the façade, showing the presence of each unit and giving identity to the inhabitants, the housing façade also makes and breaks the rhythm by glass and walls, and the shadows created by unevenness, thus creating a random impression.

The overall impression of the building is lightness, but by partially closing off the façade, it like a distant view of a dense forest (see fig. 88). It has strong presence, but the language is not iconic. Thus it will be a new forest of architecture.

Fig. 88. The presence of the forest from a distance

Fig. 89. Elevation

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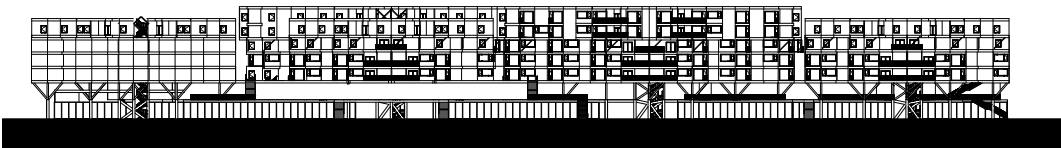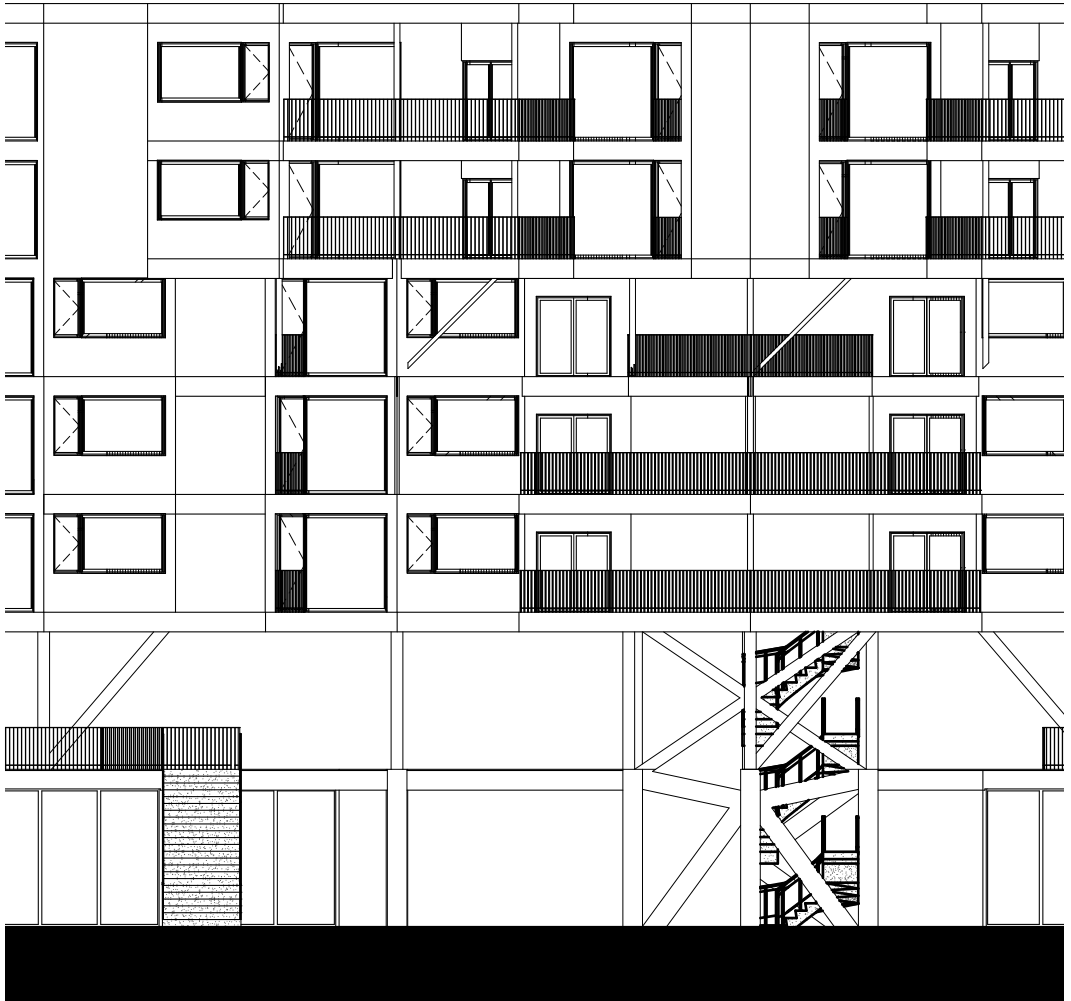
Fig. 90. Partial elevation

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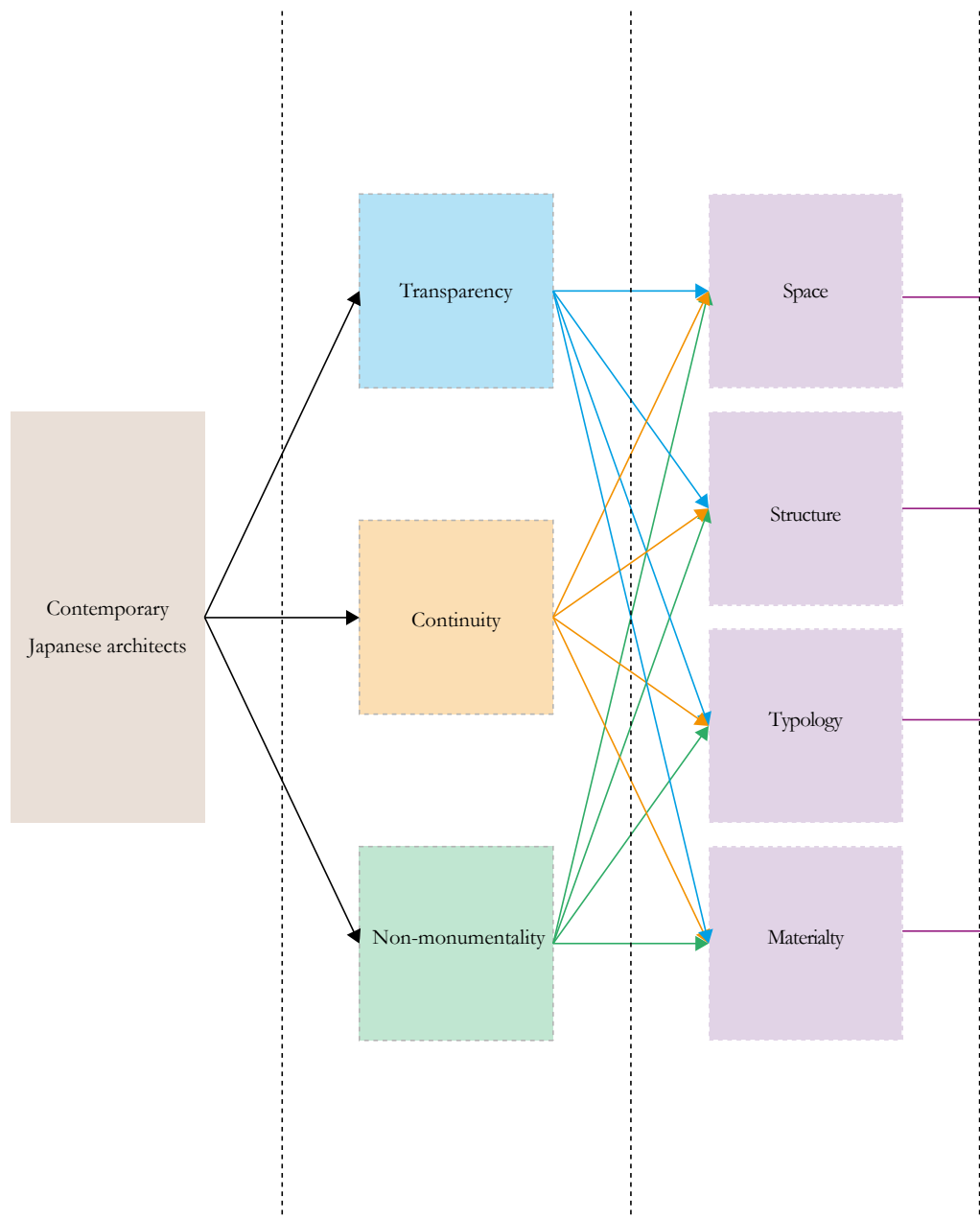
Fig. 91. Critical Globalism design process

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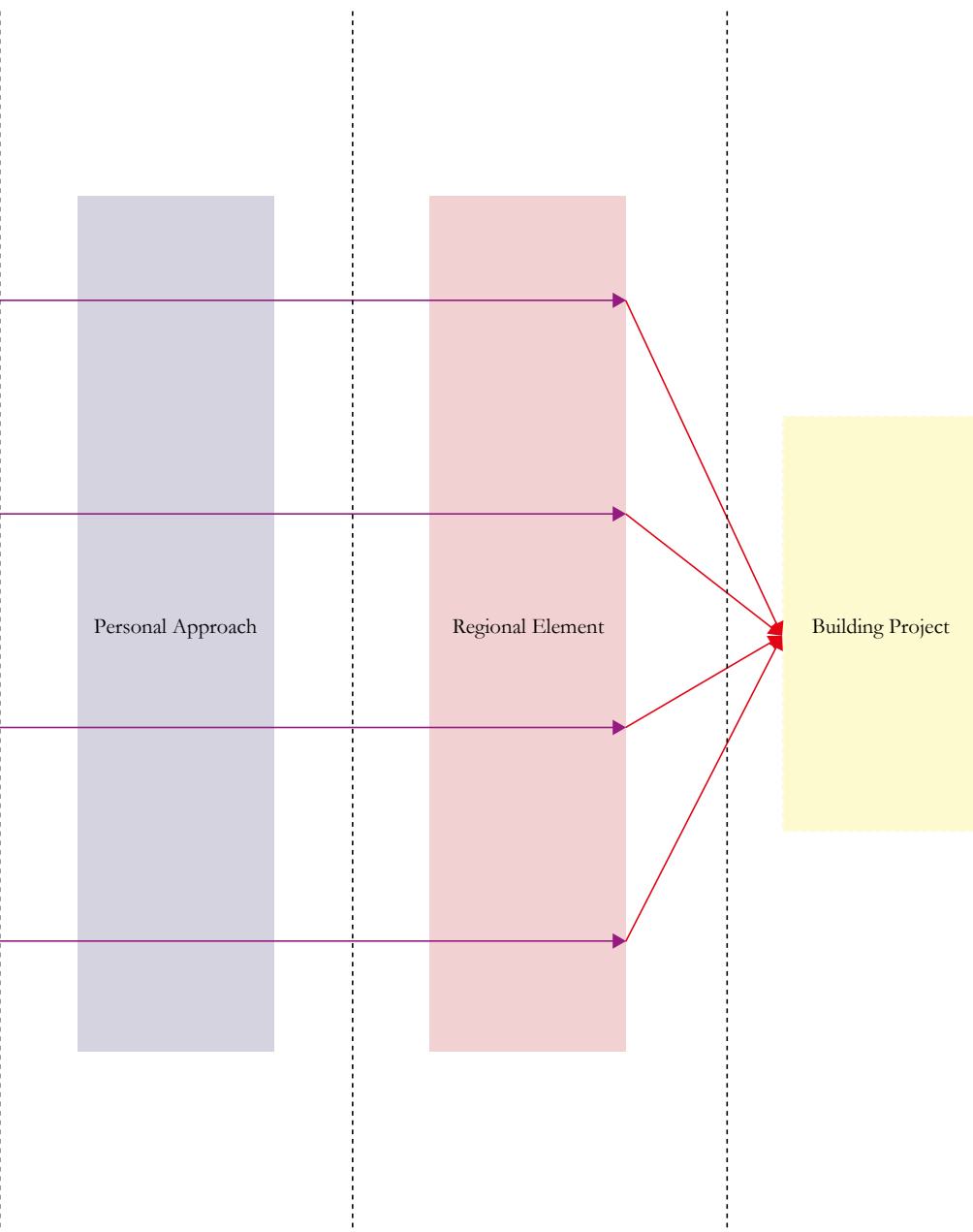
4   Conclusion

While paper focuses on the globalized contemporary architecture by Japanese architects today and how can they be used to create architecture of Japanese essence from Frampton's critical regionalism philosophy; the project aims to clarify how it can retain its identity and also harmonizes with the context at the same time. This analysis has defined these contemporary buildings by new Japanese architects in Europe as critically global architecture designed with consideration of specific countries, regional characteristics, environments, and lifestyles. However, the three essences of transparency, continuity, and non-monumentality are common in all of them, although design conditions were different. We can recognize the building as having been built by a Japanese architects with these three relevant essences combined together to make the building versatile and flexible, but not kitschy when combined with local elements. The design project combines the essences with Biel's regionality, environmental chracteristica, lifestyle, and architectural perspectives throughout the process to weave a new architecture.

Since, architecture is essential for people and has a significant influence on the city, it is easy to improve or destroy a city by architecture. The proposal placed here may give birth to an innovative architecture that has never been seen before with an intrinsic architectural language such that is it not superior because of its newness. The position of the architecture within the city and how it behaves for the people who use it is crucial in determining the factor of how it will behave, if an architect makes a error in designing a new building; it will be a deadly weapon against the cityand also the people. That is why it is essential to carefully understand the local characteristics and incorporate them into the design.
Architecture in a way is the same as cooking. While, the chef prepares ingredients following a particular recipe but when we location of cooking changes, the ingredient also change, the taste changes and so does the looks of it. Why?? Because the chef adapts to the surrounding and to the taste of people to innovate his recipe. This is the power of regionality. Hence, the process of the my thesis is the innovating of existing recipes,

and into a regionally adapted dish.

This project is a only particular to that of the context of Biel, and it cannot be copy pasted elsewhere. However, the design process for this project has the versatility to be used in a more globalized world in the near future.

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Declaration of Originality

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The Undersigned

Takahiko Kameoka
Luzern, 12.06.2020

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