

Reviving Ungers' Visions: Catalyst for Architectural Innovation at IBA 87 among Postmodern Architects

Architectural Theory, Urbanism, O.M. Ungers, IBA 87, Postmodernism

/Abstract

This contribution explores the impact of architect Oswald Mathias Ungers and his innovative urban concepts on contemporary city planning. Ungers, whose career began in the 1960s, played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between modernism and postmodernism while fostering a rich exchange of ideas between American and European architectural circles. He developed significant urban experiments, including *The Urban Villa*, *Urban Garden*, *Grossform*, *Archipel City*, and *City within the City*. These projects often used Berlin as a testing ground, transforming the city into a laboratory for his visionary ideas. Ungers' influence extended beyond conventional architectural practice; this position granted him influence within a network of urban theorists who shaped the urban discourse of the late 20th century. A defining moment occurred in the 1980s with the IBA 87 exhibition in Berlin. This event provided a platform for Ungers' ideas to permeate the architectural community. Architects like Aldo Rossi, Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, and Rem Koolhaas, who were working on adjacent projects, diverged from the rules of the competition and proposed innovative systems, fed by Ungers concepts. The architectural visions and methodologies that Ungers pioneered remain highly relevant today as cities grapple with a multitude of challenges. By revisiting Ungers' groundbreaking concepts and approaches, contemporary urban planners and architects can find valuable insights and inspiration to address the pressing issues facing our cities in the 21st century.

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Introduction

The classification of architects and their architectural contributions in the postmodern era presents a multifaceted and subjective challenge. This complexity is particularly pronounced when examining the work of architect Oswald Mathias Ungers, a pivotal figure whose career spanned the transition between two architectural epochs. He occupies an ambiguous yet profoundly influential position in the architectural landscape, which can be traced back to his radical vision of the contemporary city and the development of concepts that nourished the theoretical debates of the 1970s. Ungers' architectural and theoretical contributions defy easy categorization, exemplified by the intricate debates surrounding his influence on contemporaries like Rem Koolhaas, as articulated by Lara Schrijver¹.

In the midst of a complex political environment, Ungers selected Berlin as his primary experimental ground. After the World War II, the city evolved into a crucible of urban experimentation, reaching its peak with the International Bauausstellung in 1987 (IBA 87). This landmark exhibition, directed by the architect Josef Paul Kleihues, aimed to reimagine social housing in West Berlin under the concept of "Critical Reconstruction" – a return to the pre-World War II city composed of places and streets through architectural constructions. This widespread competition attracted a cohort of architects eager to explore new urban paradigms. Among them, notable architects such as Aldo Rossi, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, and John Hejduk converged in the vicinity of Checkpoint Charlie, deliberately defying competition guidelines to develop experimental projects.

This research focuses on elucidating the connections Ungers had with these architects before IBA 87, disseminating theories about the metropolis that bridged European and American contexts. Furthermore, by reassessing Charles Jencks' *Evolutionary Tree to the Year 2000* [Fig. 1] which accentuates the differences between each architect, this article seeks to establish the influence exerted by Ungers on the IBA 87 design projects of the four architects. While sharing a resonance of theoretical concepts, they exhibit diverse formal styles, challenging the "Critical Reconstruction" concept set by Kleihues.

Oswald Mathias Ungers emerges as a foundational figure², whose urban visions challenge established paradigms with an innovative analysis of the interplays of infrastructure, landscape, and the city.

1 Lara Schrijver, "OMA as tribute to OMA: exploring resonances in the work of Koolhaas and Ungers", *The Journal of Architecture* 13, no. 3 (July 2008): 235.

2 "Nevertheless, his presence at Team 10 meetings (and as organizer of the 1965 Team 10 meeting in Berlin and a seminar at Cornell in 1971-1972) as well as the Charlottesville meetings organized by Peter Eisenman, testifies to his wide-ranging influence and his transatlantic significance." in Lara Schrijver, *Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas, Recalibrating architecture in the 1970s* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2021), 12.

Ungers' Visions

The search of a theoretical framework guiding architectural project is an invariant in Ungers' methodology. This research, mainly focused on interactions between architecture and its urban context, is illustrated by several influential concepts he developed and implemented. In 1963, following a period of designing residential houses, Ungers participated in the Grünzug Süd competition (Cologne), a significant project signaling his intention to integrate city planning with theoretical research. Through a linear sequence of various city fragments (high-rises, courtyard blocks, row houses), he formulated a robust morphological approach aimed at creating a harmonious complexity of architectural forms³. Despite not winning the competition, he established a process of "research by design," replicated in numerous urban design projects. Operating at various scales, he derived forms to achieve a multi-layered composition, meant to be autonomous from functionality, later theorized in *"The City as a Work of Art"*⁴.

Continuing his research with an analysis of Berlin, a city he described as a chaotic accumulation of objects contributing to its unique character, Ungers retained the principle of Grünzug Süd for creating a complex, densified city but introduced a more generic approach in a 1966 essay. In this significant year for urban theories⁵ he introduced the concept of *Grossform*⁶, a global theory of the concept he developed in Cologne. In 1973, Ungers designed the Landwehrkanal-Tiergarten District project in Berlin, proposing a sequence of monumental architectural interventions along the canal with various typologies punctuating the context. Starting with architectural elements, Ungers crafted complex environments, conceiving the city as a direct consequence of architecture⁷. Ungers' urban visions reached a radical pinnacle in 1977 when he collaborated with his assistant, Rem Koolhaas, to publish their seminal work, *"The City Within the City, Berlin, a Green Archipelago"*. Departing from the notion of a unified city, Ungers viewed Berlin as an enclosed and shrinking city, inspiring a re-evaluation of the city as an archipelago, a city within the city. Koolhaas later described the archipelago as one of the most powerful notions in urban thinking, a blueprint for the New European metropolis⁸.

This concept introduced the idea of city islands, each delineating blocks with a distinct identity, while the abstract metropolitan area would be transformed into a sea of vegetation. This vision advocates for strategic densification, reshaping

3 Oswald Mathias Ungers, "Grünzug Süd Competition, Cologne Zollstock 1962-1965", in *Team 10, 1953-81: In Search of a Utopia of the Present*, ed. Dirk Van Den Heuvel (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005), 154-155.

4 Oswald Mathias Ungers, "The City as a Work of Art" (1963), in *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A documentary Anthology*, eds. Edward Eigen and Joan Oakman (New-York: Columbia Books of Architecture, Rizzoli, 1993), 361-364.

5 The same year, Aldo Rossi published *The Architecture and the City* and Robert Venturi published *Complexity and Contradiction in architecture*.

6 Oswald Mathias Ungers, "Grossformenim Wohnungsbau", *Veröffentlichungen zur Architektur*, no. 5 (December 1966).

7 Neyran Turan, "Against Gross", *Think Space Pamphlets*, no. 1, Past forward, (2013).

8 Rem Koolhaas, "Imagining Nothingness", in *S,M,L,XL*, eds. Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau (New York: Monacelli, 1995), 198-203.

Fig. 1

Charles Jencks, diagram: 'Evolutionary tree 2000' (highlighting by the author).

the relationship between public spaces and buildings to create both collective and individual spaces. By establishing a framework that accommodates diverse enhanced identities, the City Within the City serves as an experimental endeavor aimed at implementing the concept of collectivity within a plural and individualized society.

Berlin, the Dialectic City

In the 1970s, Berlin is gearing up for an international architecture exhibition, positioning itself as a hub of architectural and urban innovation within the European context. To comprehensively grasp the dynamics of IBA 87, it is essential to analyze Berlin from different perspectives, considering its roles as a city, a capital and a laboratory.

The decision of Berlin to host an international architecture competition stems from its recognition as a city, with its districts, its population and its local politics. The early 1980s marked a transformative phase for West Berlin, characterized by population shifts away from the Wall's proximity and the lingering impact of World War II's bombings on the city's buildings⁹. Housing shortage in Berlin led to social policies for IBA 87, while the city's political influence vanished in comparison to East Berlin, accentuating its isolation within the Western bloc. As a capital, regaining political prominence in the Europe was a central challenge for the exhibition. The city's 750th anniversary was seen as the perfect opportunity to make a significant impact on the European political and cultural scene¹⁰. This unique confluence of cultural, political, social and economic issues, coupled with ten years of massive communication about a potential major competition to redefine Berlin's identity, resulted in a fertile ground for innovation, a laboratory and an international showcase for the architects of the time.

Amidst the emergence of new visions of the city in Europe and America, this paradigm shift found embodiment in Berlin through the distinct visions of two influential architects in Germany, Joseph Paul Kleihues and Oswald Mathias Ungers. Both architects, with singular perspectives on the city, played pivotal roles in shaping the architectural discourse in Berlin during this period. Josef Paul Kleihues, a successful West German architect and professor at the TU Dortmund, established himself as a key figure through articles questioning the city's urban policies¹¹, writing in the daily Berlin Morgenpost articles entitled "Models of a city"¹² and inviting specialists on various urban issues. With provocative titles such as "The brutality of buildings has disfigured Berlin", he placed the urban issues of the city at the center of architectural, public and

9 Ilaria Maria Zedda, "Beyond Façades: The Berlin block and the housing issue at IBA 87", *Studii de istoria si teoria arhitecturii* (2021).

10 Wallis Miller, "IBA's Models for a City: Housing and the Image of Cold-War Berlin", *Journal of Architectural Education* 46, no. 4, (May 1993): 202.

11 Walter Grunwald, "Berlin, Modelle für eine Stadt", *Berlin Morgenpost* (January 1977).

12 Josef Paul Kleihues, "Berlin, Programmvorschlage für eine internationale Bauausstellung zur Wiederbelebung des alten", *Berlin Morgenpost* (January 1977).

political debate. Moreover, he directly promoted the idea of an international exhibition as early as 1977, in order to “act as a catalyst to transform Berlin’s image”. His media presence facilitated international collaborations, enabling him to spearhead the Neubau section of IBA 87. With this section, concerning the new constructions of the exhibition¹³, he developed the theory of “Critical Reconstruction”. This strategy aimed to preserve the pre-war urban layout of Berlin’s historic city center, emphasizing the conservation and rebuilding of nineteenth-century urban fabric. By choosing the block as the unit of intervention, he also ensures that the impact of a single architect is reduced, thereby increasing the quantity and diversity of projects. As for the guidelines for intervention, he adopts a conservative approach that “follows the historic traces of the city, aligns with the heights of the old fabric and preserves the existing buildings”¹⁴.

In contrast, Ungers vehemently stood up against Kleihues and his vision of the city. As he was firstly invited to lead the IBA with Heinrich Klotz and Kleihues, the latter booted him out, only to invite him years afterward as a participant, when Ungers wanted to re-establish himself as a practitioner. The divergence in their visions and Ungers’ exclusion fueled his public criticism against his rival’s theory. In his eleven-point manifesto of *The City within the City*, published in 1977, Ungers challenged Berlin’s urban policy, specifically those advocated by Kleihues, proposing an alternative model for a city in decline that diverged from the prevailing planning theories.

The pluralistic project for a city within the city is in this respect in antithesis to the current planning theory which stems from a definition of the city as a single whole.¹⁵

At the core of the architectural and urban debates of the 1970s, Berlin became a major case study and a focal point for diverse opinion - a dialectical laboratory where multiple voices emerged. The IBA 87 provided a platform for a generation of architects to experiment with new theories on architecture and the city.

A Transatlantic Bridge

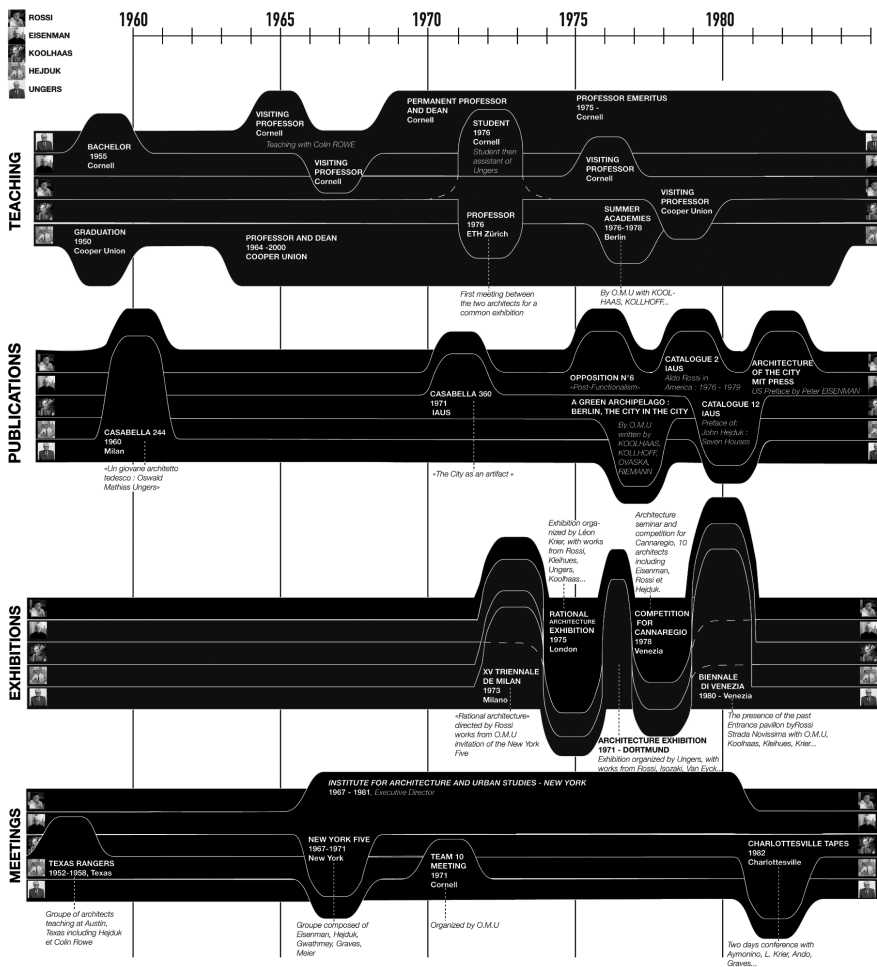
The concept of the metropolis as an intricate mosaic of fragments emerges as a prevailing theme in the architectural discourse of the latter half of the 20th century. Ungers’ colleague at Cornell Colin Rowe published *Collage City* in 1978, while Rossi, Hejduk, Koolhaas and Eisenman engaged in research on new ways of understanding the city and its architecture. Aldo Rossi’s seminal book, *L’architettura della Città* in 1966, and his conceptualization of the *Città Analoga* in the 1970s, showcased at the Venice Biennale in 1976, laid the groundwork for

13 The Altbau section, directed by Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, being about refurbishing the existing buildings.

14 Josef Paul Kleihues, „Zielsetzungen für Südliche Friedrichstadt“, in *Städtebaulicher Rahmenplan, Südliche Friedrichstadt Berlin-Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Bauausstellung Berlin GmbH, 1984) 18.

15 Ungers, Oswald Mathias, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Riemann, Hans Kollhoff, and Arthur Ovaska (eds.) / Hertweck, Florian and Sebastian Marot. *Die Stadt in der Stadt Berlin: Ein grünes Archipel*, Ithaca, N.Y. and Cologne: Arnold Printing Corp. and Studioverlag für Architektur (Zürich: Lars Müller Verlag, 2013).

his contributions to IBA 87. Rossi's work, with themes such as the interaction between nature and architecture in reference to Garden Cities¹⁶, gained international recognition through numerous translations and expanded contacts beyond Italy.



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Koolhaas' early work - with Elia Zenghelis, Madelon Vriesendorp and Zoe Zenghelis - also, as the Exodus project on the Berlin Wall, reveals the exploration of architectural form and its meaning. His time in New York with Ungers and encounters with Peter Eisenman resulted in his influential work *Delirious New-York*¹⁷, an original city analysis. Later on, in the 1990s, reinterpreted even more literally Ungers' Grossform essay with his text *Bigness*. In 1967, the professor Peter Eisenman founded the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS), creating the journal *Oppositions* and contributing significantly to architectural debates in New York and bridges with Europe.

The 1970s marked a period of intellectual ferment and critical success for architects such as Rossi, Koolhaas, Hejduk, and Eisenman. During this era, encounters and exchanges of ideas were facilitated, particularly in New York,

Fig. 2

Document by the author. Chronological map of interactions between Uters, Rossi, Eisenman, Koolhaas, Hejduk.

16 Rossi Aldo, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984), 100-105.

17 Koolhaas Rem, *Delirious New-York, a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan* (Oxford: The Oxford Press, 1978).

where Ungers and these architects converged through lectures, teaching roles, publications, exhibitions, and debates at Cornell, the Cooper Union or Eisenman's IAUS. A chronological map [Fig. 2], illustrates connections among these architects across four channels: education, writings, exhibitions, and discussions. This period of intellectual interchange, as noted by Peter Eisenman, facilitates cross-continental bridges and exerted lasting influence, particularly between Italy and the United States, with implications lasting for many years¹⁸.

Eisenman and Hejduk both studied in New York and later taught at Cornell and the Cooper Union, respectively. Rem Koolhaas, in 1972, spent a year studying at Cornell to join Ungers, while Aldo Rossi was a professor at Cornell in 1976 and at the Cooper Union in 1979¹⁹. Beyond their architectural practice, they all contributed as writers, and their publications reveal numerous links between them. Then the editor of the Italian magazine *Casabella Continuità* with Vittorio Gregotti and Giorgio Grassi, encountered Ungers and published an article titled "Un giovane architetto tedesco" recognizing Ungers' work²⁰. In New-York, Eisenman's journal *Oppositions* operated numerous links with the same magazine and with Rossi²¹. Eisenman also maintained a relationship with John Hejduk, leading to their collaboration as members of the New York Five.

Finally, while these architects began to achieve critical success in the 1960s through various individual publications, they experienced greater exposure between the 1970s and the 1980s, leading to encounters among them. The resonance of architectural exhibitions in both Europe and America during this period served as perhaps the most significant vector of influence among these architects. Between 1974 and 1980, at least seven exhibitions were held, bringing together at least two architects from the corpus²², with some of them being founding events of architectural movements and provided opportunities for initial encounters²³.

Upon observing these exchanges, we can identify the ubiquitous presence of Ungers to many debates and exhibitions. In his influential role as a teacher and a practitioner, Ungers served as a conduit for the transfer of ideas between modern and postmodern ideologies, bridging the gap between American and European architectural perspectives. This role is underscored by Ungers himself, as he vehemently answers Léon Krier during the Charlottesville Tapes event organized by Jaquelin Robertson - which gathered architects such as

18 Peter Eisenman, "John Quentin Hejduk (1929 - 2000)", *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 330 (Septembre 2000).

19 Peter Eisenman, *Aldo Rossi in America, 1976-1979* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1980).

20 Aldo Rossi, "Un giovane architetto tedesco", *Casabella Continuità*, no. 244 (October 1960): 22-25.

21 The American edition of Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*, for which Eisenman wrote the preface, is a case in point. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 3-12.

22 Drawings by Rossi and Hejduk, ETH Zürich, 1973. XV Milan Triennale, 1973. Leon Krier's Rational Architecture Exhibition, London, 1975. Architecture Exhibition, Dortmund, 1976. SIAC Compostela, 1978. Competition for Cannaregio, Venice, 1978. First Venice Biennale, directed by Paolo Portoghesi, 1980.

23 This was the case at ETH Zurich in 1973, where Aldo Rossi, then a teacher, met John Hejduk at a joint exhibition of their drawings. According to Peter Eisenman himself: "[...] it was his meeting with Aldo Rossi at ETH Zurich in 1973 that paved the way for exchanges between Italians and Americans throughout the 1970s." Eisenman, "John Quentin Hejduk (1929 - 2000)", *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 330 (Septembre 2000).

Rem Koolhaas, Tadao Ando, Carlo Aymonino, and many others²⁴ :

Why should we not get involved in doing a building that has 45-square-meter rooms to show products? Should I say, 'No, I am artist, I don't want to get my fingers dirty?' I spent ten years theorizing, and many people profited from that work. You know it perfectly well. You came as a little boy to my office and you profited too. You admitted it. But you know what? I decided to go back to practice, get my fingers dirty, and work with those big developers²⁵.

The Formal Influence of Oswald Mathias Ungers

Ungers' aspiration to reengage with practice materialized through his involvement in the IBA 87, securing a commission within Block 1, one of the 158 urban blocks under consideration. His proposal consisted of a nine-by-nine square grid building enveloping a verdant collective space, embodying key tenets of his theoretical framework and a rational aesthetic. If Critical Reconstruction dictated conservative interventions, this event provided architects an opportunity to assert their visions for the city's future, resonating with Ungers' method. Notably, in the Südliche Friedrichstadt district, Aldo Rossi, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, and John Hejduk designed singular urban block projects coupled with theoretical radicalism²⁶. They seized the opportunity to articulate their distinct urban visions, yielding innovative and radical projects. An examination of these endeavors reveals several elements bearing the imprint of Ungers' influence.

For instance, analyzing Rossi's project reveals affinities between him and Ungers, encompassing conceptual and formal realms. In their respective IBA projects, they proffered distinct scales yet interconnected approaches, both centered on enclosing urban blocks with a rational facade, intensifying the urban fabric while offering internal gardens [Fig. 5]. Rossi proposed an architecture as a wall, completing the perimeter of the block to create unity, establishing a threshold between the city, a mineral and hectic exterior space, and the heart of the block, a calm, planted space — a sequence from public to private space. This thematic aligns directly with Ungers' Urban Garden theme explored during the 1978 summer academy, which unfolded in the Südliche Friedrichstadt district²⁷. Rossi conceived an urban block as an autonomous island, evoking the concept of an archipelago, as a means to structure the city. He declared that "The edges of

24 The participants included Tadao Ando, Carlo Aymonino, Henry Cobb, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, Hans Hollein, Arata Isozaki, Toyo Ito, Philip Johnson, Rem Koolhaas, Léon Krier, Richard Meier, Rafael Moneo, Cesar Pelli, Jaquelin Robertson, Kevin Roche, Paul Rudolph, Robert Siegel, Robert A.M. Stern, Stanley Tigerman, and O. M. Ungers. Jacquelin Roberston, *The Charlottesville Tapes* (New-York: Rizzoli, 1985).

25 Oswald Mathias Ungers toward Léon Krier at the Charlottesville Tapes, 1982.

26 Bauausstellung Berlin GmbH, *Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987. Exhibition Areas. Extract from the list of projects*. Berlin, 1987.

27 Oswald Mathias Ungers, *The Urban Garden: Student Projects for the Südliche Friedrichstadt* (Cologne: Studio Verlag für Architektur, 1978).

the block seem more important than the architecture”²⁸, sharing with Ungers a common vision of the city as a work of art²⁹.

Rem Koolhaas’ project shares notable parallels with Ungers’ concept of *Grossform*. He perceives the urban context as a complex repository of architectural heritage, proposing to organize this historical core through a range of typologies disseminated across the four blocks [Fig. 3], ranging from high-rises to Urban Villas - a theme previously developed in collaboration with Ungers during the 1977 summer academy³⁰. Koolhaas adopts a dual-scale strategy: urban morphologies to precisely define urban blocks or islands, fostering communal spaces for the district as an archipelago, while diverse architectural typologies provide a multitude of individual spaces.

Similarly, John Hejduk’s project exhibits multiple connections to Ungers. Both architects, owing to their esteemed academic careers, delved into formal exercises that intersected, exemplified by Hejduk’s nine-square grid and the diamond house³¹, that Ungers discovered with Colin Rowe³², inspiring the expansion of his Quadratherstrasse residence library³³. In Berlin, Hejduk initiates his Berlin Masques series, emerging two years after Ungers introduced the Archipel City manifesto. Drawing inspiration from Carnival rituals, he conceives buildings and imparts upon them individual roles, as if they were theatrical characters, each endowed with a unique form and demeanor [Fig. 6]. It results in sixty-seven individual masks, which Berliners would assemble as they wished. He frees himself completely from the rules of the exhibition, and creates strong formal architecture, as markers of the city³⁴. These structures operate autonomously yet engage in mutual interaction, at every scale, even in the housing plans³⁵, embodying Hejduk’s vision of a city, “as the accumulation of dynamic individuals”³⁶. Ungers’ 1976 summer academy, titled “Cornell Summer Session The Urban Block and Gotham City Metaphors and Metamorphosis: Two Concurrent Projects”, resonates with similar ideas—acknowledging architecture’s cultural significance in society as a means for individuals to find meaning within their intricate environments. Both Ungers and Hejduk emphasize the paramount

28 Aldo Rossi, “Premise: The Architecture of Berlin and the Project”, *Details of entries for the competition for Kochstrasse/Friedrichstrasse*, CCA, 1981.

29 Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 34; Jasper Cepl, Sam Jacoby and Valerio Massaro, “Oswald Mathias Ungers and the “City as a Work of Art”: The “Neue Stadt” in Cologne, 1961–64”, in *The Renewal of Dwelling: European Housing Construction 1945–1975*, eds. Elli Mosayebi and Michael Kraus (Zurich: Triest Verlag, 2023), 158-167.

30 Oswald Mathias Ungers, *The Urban Villa: a multi-family dwelling type* (Cornell: Summer academy, 1977).

31 Alexander Caragone, *The Texas Rangers: Notes from an Architectural Underground* (Cambridge-MA: MIT Press, 1995).

32 Colin Rowe and John Hejduk are previous members of the Texas Rangers.

33 Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Quadratische Häuser* (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje, 1986) based on Bruno Munari, *Discovery of the Square* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1962).

34 “And those towers... there are some early sketches I did of the «Cannaregio» that look like those towers. Of course, Kahn and I both were in Italy, right? I mean, we both looked at San Gimignano”. John Hejduk, *John Hejduk. Works, 1950-1983* (Zürich: ETH, 1983).

35 “The house for the inhabitant who refused to participate is a programmatic statement of an architecture of pessimism. Each function has its separate room. Human needs have been reduced to the minimal. There is a dining room and a chair. They have their own room.” John Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa* (New-York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989), 63.

36 Mark Lee, “Two deserted islands”, *San Rocco*, no. 1, (Winter 2011).

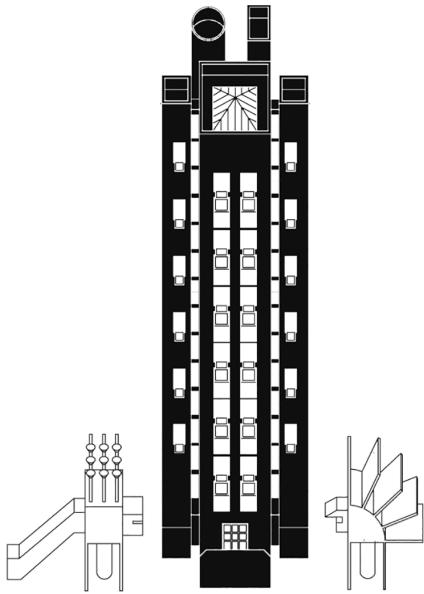
importance of architectural form in providing a language that informs the structure of our cities³⁷.

Finally, Eisenman and Ungers shared a lot of mutual interests in the search of a formal logic of architecture. In Berlin, Eisenman's project engages with abstract notions, such as the city's memory, the Wall's boundary, or the historical stratification pointed out by postmodern ideas, translating them into formal constructs [Fig. 4]. He aims to create a monument rather than a simple housing building for IBA. He uses an international image, the Mercator grid, which he adapts formally by comparing it with the Berlin grid. The form is thus derived from the image, and the architecture of the building expresses a Berlin base with a global reach. He combines grids, corridors, blocks and voids to create a complex whole, a variety in unity reminiscent of Ungers' *Grossform*. Within the boundaries of an urban block, Eisenman's endeavor echoes the influence of Ungers' *City within the City*, densifying within a defined perimeter, executed through a methodical process based on the repetitive variation of a model. It generates interactions that he interprets as spaces of contradiction conducive to the project, bringing a degree of complexity specific to the city, and conferring a distinct identity of monumentality upon the site³⁸.

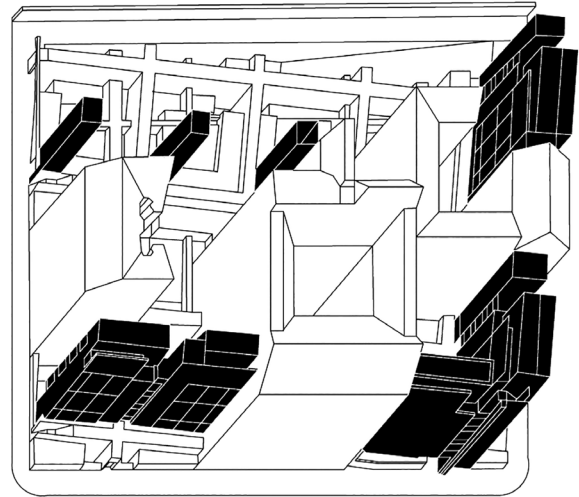
The participation of various architects in a shared competition within the same geographical context led to significant theoretical exchanges. Moreover, Oswald Mathias Ungers held a prominent position, as his influence extended not only through the connections he established decades prior but also in the architectural endeavors of his contemporaries for the IBA 87. The experimental field present at the time in Berlin, coupled with the emergence of new visions about the city, represented by the critics of Ungers toward IBA 87's policy, result in series of radical projects, fed by Ungers' concepts rather than the Critical Reconstruction motto.

37 Schrijver, "Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas", 99.

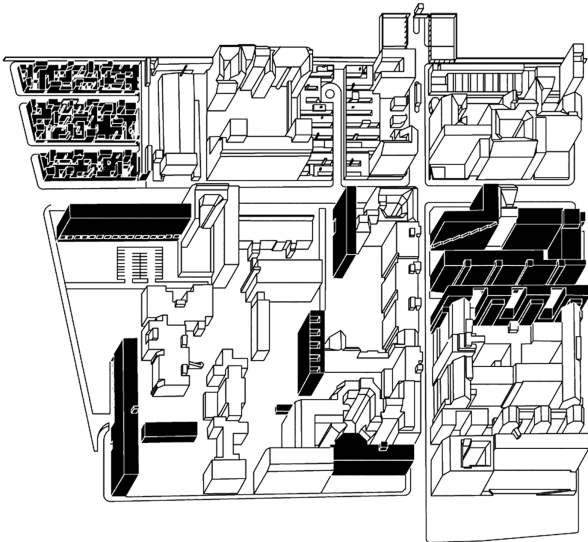
38 He precises: "The act of memory obscures the reality of the present in order to restore something of the past. Anti-memory makes a place that derives its order by obscuring its past. Memory and anti-memory work oppositely but in collusion to produce a suspended object, a frozen fragment of no past and no future, a place." Peter Eisenman, «IBA social housing», *Eisenman Architects*, 1981.



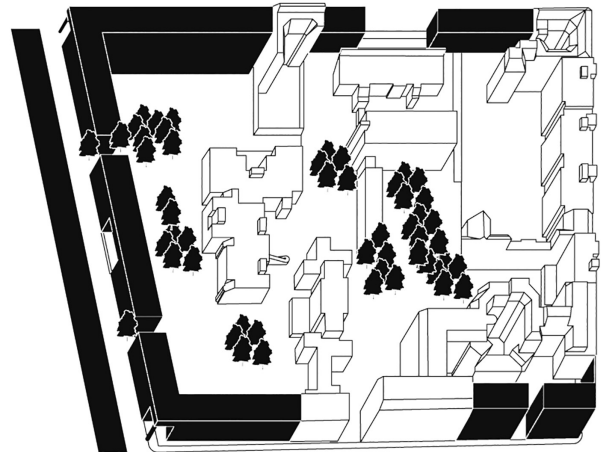
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4



5



6

Fig. 3,4,5,6

Documents by the author.
 From upper left to lower
 right, axonometries of IBA
 87 projects by Koolhaas,
 Eisenman, Rossi and Hejduk.

Conclusion

In the course of his career, Oswald Mathias Ungers developed several concepts shaping analysis and perception of the city and its architecture. His concepts of the city as an archipelago, the Urban Garden, the complexity generating the *Grossform* emerged through a process of theoretical exploration within architectural and urban projects. Historically, he serves as a bridge between prewar and postwar generations of architects, wielding influence accentuated by transatlantic connections forged through his teaching role.

As the postwar period witnessed a critique of Modernism, The IBA 87 projects of Rossi, Hejduk, Koolhaas and Eisenman become pivotal in understanding the criticism directed at a conservative vision of the city, anchored in the historicization of past images represented by Kleihues' Critical Reconstruction motto. Conversely, Berlin appears as a complex city, serving as a laboratory for architects eager to design with the city "as found," avoiding the replication of past images.

This article unveils the dense network of influences during the 1970s. However, a comparison with Charles Jencks' family tree, mapping architectural currents and their protagonists, reveals that all architects in the corpus are present, attesting to their significant impact on the architectural scene. Yet, their dispersion on the map also underscores their distinctiveness. This contrast prompts a critical consideration: What criteria should be considered when classifying architectural currents or their protagonists?

Jencks's cartography predominantly considers the architectural language of buildings constructed during a specific period, aligning with our observation of formal architectural diversity. However, the research presented here suggests the need for a new classification for so-called postmodern architects, considering shared considerations about the city, personal interactions, and the development of theoretical themes underlying architectural projects.

Amid contemporary urban planning challenges, Ungers' innovative ideas from the 1960s offer a compelling framework. When viewed alongside current urban crises, Ungers' themes seem less unconventional and more relevant. Beyond his formal experiments, his vision provides a profound understanding of the city in the globalization era, emphasizing strategies like densification, well-defined boundaries, stable frameworks, and the integration of urban gardens.

This study underscores the evolution of theoretical thinking and formal experimentation within society. While conceptual work endures and undergoes reinterpretation over decades, architects play a crucial role in designing spaces deeply rooted in their contemporary societal context. By bridging the gap between visionary concepts and practical applications, architects continue to draw inspiration from enduring principles and innovative strategies proposed by pioneers like Oswald Mathias Ungers.

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