

**ABOUT  
A  
PROJECT  
IN  
TURKU**

TRANSPARENT DREAMS AND OTHER ISSUES

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1993 the International Turku Environmental Art Project was initiated by the city of Turku. The aim of the project has been to acquire public environmental art works of high quality by well-known artists to enliven the cityscape of Turku. Despite the doubts that were uttered in the beginning, the project has advanced steadily. With material, financial, and know how contributions (also from the private sector), numerous art works have been realized. The significance of the Turku Environmental Art Project has been recognized; in 1996 the Foundation for Environmental Art in Finland honored the project with a national award.

The eighth' realized work of the project, the "Transparent Dream" by the Dutch artist Ger C. Bout, was inaugurated in the autumn of 1996. This work created during its planning stage, perhaps the most extensive public discussion in Turku so far, concerning any single work of the project. Local artists and art organizations, local inhabitant associations, city officials as well as private persons participated in the lively exchange of opinions on various forums. The main subject that run through this discussion like a thread was the relationship between a public artwork and its environment, and in connection with this, the relationship between architecture and environmental art in general.

Consequently it can be noted that the "Transparent Dream" by Ger C. Bout meets one central requirement of a successful environmental artwork: not only has it succeeded in arousing people' s interest in the artwork itself, but it also brought up questions and activated discussion concerning the cityscape as a whole. As far as the further development of the cityscape of Turku and the contentment of the inhabitants with their residential environment is concerned, this kind of activeness is of crucial importance. An indication of such an interest is also this book, written by representatives of the cultural and academic life of Turku.

On behalf of the city of Turku I express my gratitude to the artist Ger C. Bout. I also wish to thank Pintos Oy., Aurajoki Oy., and the Turku Vocational Institute of Technology, who undertook the realization of the "Transparent Dream" in practice.

Armas Lahoniitty, Mayor of the City of Turku.



## PREFACE

Some time ago I graduated from the Technical University in Delft in the Netherlands. I studied urban planning and especially the ideas behind this kind of design. Norms and standards for housing design were my next field of interest and after that local planning policies and public participation in several countries.

Years later I finally worked as an architect. I did not like it. I felt that my work was completely controlled by others and all kind of mechanisms that were unclear to me and I guess to many others. I had nothing to say about what I was doing and I disliked the outcomes of my work.

At the same time I have been deeply interested in art, modern dance, theater and music, as well. I realized installations, participated in architectural competitions and worked with dancers and other artists.

My interest shifted from architecture to building. I started making models to express my ideas. I realized that architecture as a profession was too limited for me because of all its excuses: norms, standards and procedures etc. And so I do feel that "I am not an architect but a real artist".

In the summer of 1992 I made my first model of a transparent house. I had in mind to make a house that would look like a house, had the shape of a house but was not a house. I did not make it by computer. I made it from thin galvanized iron nets. The little Apple Classic computer I had, at that time, was used to write letters and store them but the screen of that classic little thing was too small for drawing or lay-out. I knew how to write letters on that machine but that was all I could do with it.

In that year I made my "Table Number One", consisting of many pieces of wood in many colors, and I did several installations. At that time I also made a model for a "House of Frozen Water". And I worked hard on the preparation of my installation for the Pori Art Museum in Pori, Finland, (realized in 1993) where I intended to take a

house apart and put its parts together in a different way.

It seems that houses were the kind of thing that kept me busy at that time. I worked with them, played with them, took them apart and changed them. But they were not meant for living: they were more or less not architecture anymore, but architectural items that needed attention and that fascinated me. And besides that my projects were about changing them: the "House of Frozen Water" would melt away, the "Transparent House" would rust away and in the "Pori Project" a house would be taken apart and assembled again in a different order.

I had some ideas in mind for possible projects when I got involved with the Pro Cultura Foundation. I knew Turku quite well, I knew the backgrounds of the project and the atmosphere of the city and my proposal for a "Transparent House" project was well received. I remember that I visited three possible locations and also that I drove around in the city. A transparent house in Turku seemed a good idea although I do not remember why I proposed this idea and not others.

The possible location in the Portsa area in Turku was the most interesting. I knew the history of the area very well (and also of similar wooden housing areas in Finland and other countries), especially the struggle that took place to keep the area as was and to prevent its demolition. So I guess that almost automatically I thought of a transparent house modelled according to a traditional wooden Finnish house and also made the connection with a well known wooden housing area.

In close cooperation with the staff of the Pro Cultura Foundation it was decided to get in touch with the inhabitants in the Portsa area and to find out how they would react to a proposal for a project like this. From the moment we showed pictures, the stories flowed about their experiences with this kind of houses: about grandmothers, memories, cooking, eating, playing etc. flowed. All of us had an inspiring meeting. The inhabitants of the Portsa area liked the idea for the project very much and supported it wherever they could.

Unfortunately the whole idea was never realized. And I still do not why. I heard lots

of stories but one way or the other the real story seems to remain hidden. A building permit was impossible and fortunately somebody (I still do not know who) put a little sign on the place with the text "Transparent House" and gave the project in Portsa somehow a not too unhappy ending.

I liked the Portsa area very much and would have enjoyed to realize the project there. But the actual situation was not that good. The street level was much higher than the location for the house and it would have been difficult to realize a convincing transparent house. Near the street was impossible, and further away not good (about 1.5 meter lower).

Almost directly after the request for the building permit was turned down, other locations became available. The best one was at the Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum yard. I changed the project completely. Instead of a house it became a dream, a "Transparent Dream"; instead of temporary it became permanent (the galvanizing made it rustproof) and instead of a "house" between other houses, it became an object in a museum.

But also it became a very visible open house on top of many invisible houses. I say so because the area around the museum and under the museum is full of parts of old Turku. And for me this combination was challenging. Many houses and remnants under ground (dark, inaccessible, non existent), and on the ground, on one of the highest available places a shiny dream of a house, completely transparent, accessible but useless as a house.

It is not the same project as the "Transparent House" but a different one. I would have been happy with the first, but I'm not unhappy with the last.

Ger C. Bout



## THE TURKU PROJECT

Ger C. Bout' s "Transparent Dream" is an artwork and part of the Turku Environmental Art Project. Inaugurated in the autumn of 1996, it is the eighth work realized within the project. The project itself was initiated in the early nineties by the City of Turku and the Pro Cultura Foundation.

The idea was, and still is, to create environmental art works planned specifically for diverse locations found in the city, in contrast to installing preexisting pieces of sculpture. In the early stages the project was called "Turku - European Sculpture City" to emphasize the role that Turku played as a town with hundreds of years of cultural history, and currently is playing as a port through which European influences most easily reach Finland.

As the project evolved and found its character during the years the name was changed to Turku Environmental Art Project. A change which also disposed of the word "sculpture", which had been a cause of misapprehensions in the past. To create more artistic freedom for the realization of the project during the economic depression (that also hit the City of Turku), an independent foundation, called the Pro Cultura Foundation, acted as a fund raiser for the art works. This foundation cooperated with private sponsors and institutions in the practical matters of making the project happen. In this way the economical and artistic administration of the project were handled by different authorities, the Pro Cultura Foundation and the Arts Department of the City of Turku, respectively.

The first artistic curator of the project was Dr. Amnon Barzel, while Päivi Kiiski, director of the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum, (who is now the curator of the project), was the first executive manager of the Pro Cultura Foundation.

It seems that seeking funding from the private sector has been the right move. Some of the artworks have proven to be controversial. At times there has been a heated debate about their status. Moreover, the location of the works has provided grounds

for a lively discussion, not at least in the case of the "Transparent Dream", as this book also shows.

Wide public discussion is indeed one of the most important achievements of the project in general, and of the "Transparent Dream" in particular.

Several internationally known sculptors from all over the world were invited to make proposals for environmental art works, in the early stages of the project.

The working procedure was as follows: the artists first visited Turku, where they were shown possible sites. They also had however the possibility to look for suitable locations themselves. After finding one, the artists could develop and present their first ideas. Such a process could take quite a long time, as several stages of bureaucracy were involved, and as renovation and construction projects by the city itself advanced and changed the environment.

During the reshaping of the city's shore areas several interesting and challenging locations for art works came available, for example, as a forlorn industrial area was turned into a center for both business and the art schools of Turku. This rebuilding work connected well with the guiding motivations behind the project, which was to give new meanings to displeasing or bland features in the cityscape, and to create new landmarks, places with identity.

The first work of the project, Mario Merz' "Fibonacci Sequence 1-55", which was inaugurated in 1993, fitted well in the range of the project. The work consisted of a sequence of red neon-light numbers, each about two meters high, and has been installed on a 100-meter high chimney of a local power station. Now that the shipyards have disappeared from the western bank of the river Aura this chimney would be out of context, without Merz' "Arte Povera" intervention. It gives the whole area a new character.

The transformation of the remnants of another era was at issue in Outi Sarjakoski's work "Network". It was a spider-web-like structure on the entrance of an abandoned

granite mine. Playfulness and joy, enriching the environment, were also important goals for the project, as exemplified by Mariella Bettineschi's "Carro Ce leste".

It was a surrealistically flavored huge blue "Wagon", seemingly running down a slope towards the river near the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art. This work included a practical aspect too, functioning as a giant outdoor table.

Even more practically minded were the power transmission columns designed by Studio Nurmesniemi, with their birdlike beads that actually carried the transmission lines above the ground on the Hirvensalo island.

1996 was the busiest year for the project, so far. In July two works by the German sculptor Achim Kühn, "Harmonia" and "Schmiedeklänge", were inaugurated on the same day. The work "Harmonia" is standing in the river Aura on an old pillar base. It reminds one of a whale's tail, with its steel scales colored in lively blue and green and the water sprinkling down from the edges of the tail.

Professor Micha Ullman's work "North" was inaugurated nearby on the Varvintori square. Ullman's work consists of thirteen granite stones, partially lying underground and arranged in the shape of a sunken ship, its bow pointing northwards. In this work there is a clear allusion to the shipbuilding history of the city and the Varvintori area.

The works by Merz, Ullman and Kühn were located within shouting distance from each other and as each of them uses very different modes of expression they formed a powerful and attractive triangle of tension.

The inauguration of Ger C. Bout's "Transparent Dream" took place, two months after the inauguration of Ullman's "North". In the process of writing the contribution for this publication, one more work, Kimmo Ojaniemi's "Pyramid of Knowledge", has become part of the project, and further plans are well on the way.

Tere Vadén



## THE BEAUTIFUL ART OF COMPROMISE

On the 6th of November 1996 the inauguration of Ger C. Bout's reduced dream of the house, that is not a house took place. The house in which tradition, functionalism and computer graphics meet in a construction, that, especially in the dark, appears like a Fata Morgana on its final site on the backyard of the Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova museum.

The final site indeed. Ger C. Bout's house, with one foot in architecture, and the other one in art, had been the subject of a turmoil of argumentation and feelings in its "home-town" Turku. It was meant for a deserted area in a part of the town called Port Arthur. Opinions pro and contra, municipal bureaucracy and a final municipal refusal to the original idea at the original site complicated and prolonged the building process.

Ger C. Bout, though, does not give up easily. Not before every possibility is tried. In this actual case, his willingness and capability to compromise was tried - the new place did allow but a pale shade of the original, a reconstruction in iron net of the deserted parcel. A principal idea was that, little by little, flora and fauna would take over the rusting constructions. The little house now realized will not let time work on it - the iron is galvanized, the ground is an asphalt yard on which hardly anything sprouts nor grows.

Not everybody would accept such a change of terms and of concept. Compromise is for many a kind of opportunism. It brings into mind that awful sentence "losers try to sell what they do, winners try to do what they can sell". There might seem to be a "winner" in Ger C. Bout, however I don't think this is the case. I would rather talk about a rare enthusiasm and "Finnish Sisu" combined with humbleness in facing realities.

Ger C. Bout's art history began in the field of architecture. He left a successful career, frustrated after having realized how marginal the impact of the architect himself

is with regard to housing architecture - the planning of the buildings follows norms based on old assumptions that stipulated the average of human housing needs. The democratization a couple of decades ago also turned housing-architecture into a matter for "everybody" - including people and authorities.

His way out of architecture was diverse: waste material, building, toys, furniture, installations, happenings etc. A house deconstructed and reconstructed according to totally different concepts. Toys that become toys only when played with. A restaurant for one night, complete with menu, furniture and entertainment. A suite of rooms where the crowd contrasts and rhythms with the empty space, all created by art students whom Ger C. Bout told to forget all they had learned about making art and follow their own impulses.

In Ger C. Bout's projects usually lots of people are involved. He has the gift to enthuse; he leads without steering or dominating. The leading principle is to free art from the straight jacket of standardized forms and norms, to let it grow freely towards something where the different aspects of light and space, movement, contrasts, time and transitoriness are the central elements. The borders between the arts vanish, isolation is replaced by synergy. Art that grows naturally from the depths of the human consciousness can also - if successfully realized - touch this same depth.

The idea of the "Transparent House" emanated from a wish to give "the concept of architecture", as it is manifested in the Finnish wooden house, a physical "body". Thanks to his Finnish-born wife Riitta and his enthusiastic eyes he has become familiar with the culture and the "soul" of this people. Being somewhat like a sponge of ideas, assimilating other ideas and possibilities, Ger C. Bout makes his work spring from the place, the people and the dreams connected to them.

Undeniably the little hut looks a bit lost, where it stands now, with its little veranda turning away from the visitors. It is easy to draw the hypothetical conclusion that Ger C. Bout turns his back to the rejecting instance by placing the hut this way as if to say "here you are, now you see what your refusal got you. Here I am, but in the wrong place". This conclusion, though, may be a step toward ontology, and that'

s something to be careful with, so I have been told. And besides that, Ger C. Bout himself does not complain.

The "Transparent House" was reduced to a "Transparent Dream"; the time dimension was lost. What was not intended to be an invulnerable monument was made one, a monument hard to anchor in its surroundings. But maybe this can give life to other thoughts. We can always try.....

Bianca Gräsbeck



## **OPEN: ALWAYS**

The night was long  
and dark,  
the birds understood to  
remain silent.  
Unfortunately  
I was wrong.  
I was open: always.  
Transparent.  
Finnish fish pasty: seldom.  
Anyhow, I feel fine,  
I can see this density,  
and through it.  
Going in,  
staying out.  
And there - dare I  
say? - I met the essential  
like I' d been caressing  
the good old animal' s fur:  
a need to energy - baptizing  
openness.  
The moon rises  
opening an image in the dark.  
Mummy' s sensitive gaze.  
The thought is deceitful:  
to open out, to hold together:  
to vanish in the image of the sky.  
just like I' d been rising.  
All in one composition:  
the intercourse of the dragonflies  
on my palm.  
To shrink and swell,  
flash from strange MECHANIZATION.  
Could I' ve been able  
to influence on  
what I was reminding?  
I was  
n ' t trying to get anywhere,  
the process is unbroken.  
I express my sympathy.



## FROM GHOST HOUSE TO IDEAL HOUSE

Can a house be a sculpture? Can a building be a drawing in the air? Can a "Transparent Dream" be made of galvanized steel? The "Transparent House" and the "Transparent Dream" projects by Ger C. Bout demonstrate that the old canons and distinctions of architecture are but empty expectations. The story of Ger C. Bout's two "Transparent Dreams" was initiated by a wish that is typical for architects: the wish to build a house.

This time the architect's desk did not see new, creative building forms but rather the outlines of a traditional Finnish dwelling as if being modeled by a computer. First there was the image of an empty site in an area of wooden houses in Turku, occupied by a ghost of a house, thoroughly overtaken by vegetation.

Through various stages the image was turned into a disciplined structure of steel on the yard of a stone-built palace that once belonged to a patrician family. The image turned into an ideal building. The final outcome of the dream combines the form of an old building with the steel structure of modern housing and computer age spaciousness.

The "Transparent Dream" mixes everyday architectural perspectives in an uninhibited way. The roots of Ger C. Bout's dream go all the way back to Plato's doctrine of ideas that does not seek for the observable and the material, but for the pure idea that lies behind the world gathered through the senses. It does not seek for the house itself, but for the idea of building, not for the historical time, but for the continuum of dwelling in the history of building. Through this work Bout makes ironic and playful references to the state of architecture of these days, both to the idealism of romanticism and to the political spheres related to building in general.

Long after World War II, the Finnish economy was still based on agriculture. In the 19th century only 5 % of the population lived in urban areas and until the twenties the number had risen just barely to 16%. Only through World War II and its after-

effects began a period of thorough industrialization and social change that reshaped the whole Finnish life style. However, in the fifties only one third of the population lived in urban centers, and the majority of city people had just moved from the country in search of work.

In the beginning they lived in wooden houses in the vicinity of industrial areas. High-rise buildings became common only in the sixties, when building with reinforced concrete began. Nevertheless, the rural saddle-roofed wooden one-family house remained the archetypical house in everyone's minds.

Ger C. Bout hit right into the collective memory and nostalgia of the Finns with his house that reminded of a disappearing or already lost world. The draft of the "Transparent House" represented the model house from a period of national rupture. It was a representation of the new urban dwelling of one room and a kitchen with oven, in which the country-people moved from their cabins. Some remnants of this type of housing can still be seen in some preserved areas such as the Port Arthur district in Turku, which the residents call Portsa.

Ger C. Bout's original idea was to install a house of two rooms and a porch as a gigantic sculpture on an empty site in that district. This work, the "Transparent House" was to be made of steel that would have rusted and disappeared in time.

Vegetation was to grow in and through it. In this way material used in modern building and a computer age graphic shape would have formed a dialogue with the old buildings of the district. In the end, this work never materialized.

Nevertheless, the artist did not want to abandon his formative idea. After some negotiations the work found its place on the yard of a museum that displays archeological specimens and modern art.

In this process the work got smaller and the name was changed into "Transparent Dream". In its new context the work also gained new meanings. The palace-like environment demanded that the "Grandma's Hut" be dressed up. The "Transparent

Dream" got galvanized, it became shimmering and everlasting. The draft version of Ger C. Bout' s "Transparent Dream" bears some resemblance to the idealism of romanticism. In this work the uncontrollable growth of nature is juxtaposed with the achievements of culture.

At the same time those two are also paradoxically merged, too. The ghost of a popular dwelling was supposed to melt gradually into the environment, transformed by grass and willows. It was supposed to be overtaken by vegetation, just like the castle where Sleeping Beauty lived, and to rust slowly into a nostalgic relic, like the ruins that romanticism fancied. This idea may seem too romantic, but there are also connections to modern day politics.

The work can be interpreted in the light of the European "Green" movement. It can be seen as an architectonic praise to the idea of circle of life in nature. The overtake by vegetation would have symbolized death and corruption of matter, the process that is the foundation of the continuation of life and the habitability of the earth.

Ger C. Bout' s "Transparent House" offered a balancing dose of green idealism to a world that is driven by technology and market economies.

This undoubtedly was also the reason why the draft was so popular among the residents. Its popularity was ensured by the fact that the artwork would have occupied the site and thus prevented unsuited modern constructions from arising there. The "Transparent House" as well as the "Transparent Dream" can be connected also to the historicism evident in romanticism. Ger C. Bout' s houses let us gaze back in time. As memorials for the idyllic wooden house period in history they pay heed to the past. The nostalgic soul of the Finns does, after all, live in a small wooden house.

Even though the roots of Ger C. Bout' s houses can be traced back to romanticism, they are undoubtedly a result of our own times. The working habits of artists have been under heavy pressure in recent times. The advancement of technology and various social changes demand more and more flexibility and resourcefulness from the artist.

Making art is no more a creative struggle for aesthetic goals, it is rather starting to become a vocation of negotiating and organizing. This means that the creative side is in danger of being buried under the social pressures of the environment.

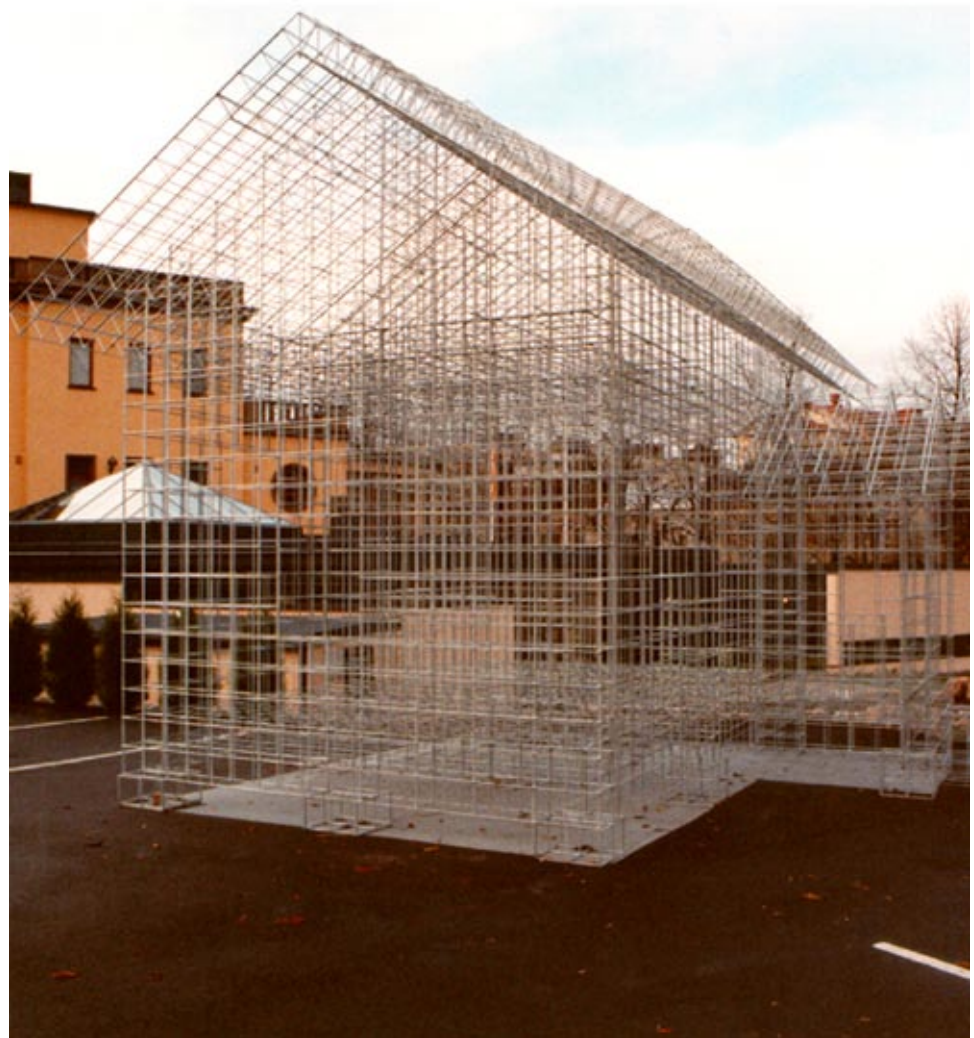
Despite the risks, it is interesting to interpret the road from the "Transparent House" to the "Transparent Dream" as a social process, as well as a process of artistic creation.

In a post modern spirit the process itself, like the finished "Dream", may be taken as a work of art, created by Bout. In this process Ger C. Bout was faced with economic boundaries and boundaries imposed by the Finnish bureaucracy. The first draft was overruled by the Construction Board, the raising of funds was a story in itself and the final site, that differed drastically from the original one, ordered changes in the original idea.

Transparency is an analogy and a metaphor. It is a dream through which one may see the real world. It reflects a time long gone, and a house in which one can not live. It is a romantic idea that connects the ghost of history, modern technology and the balance of nature all together. It sings praise to progress through the electric contours on the screen; an immaterial but permanently galvanized cage, in which one can step in.

It melts opposites together and acts as a prism to show different realities. While the "Transparent Dream" is connected to the architectural history of Finland, it also reflects our technologist and fragmented age. It is an artistic dream, not a nightmare, even if it casts a critical, almost self-ironic shadow on the asphalt of the palace yard.

Riitta Kormano



## **A TRANSCRIPTION OF THE "TRANSPARENT DREAM"**

During one of his visits to the city of Turku, the Dutch artist Ger C. Bout saw an empty lot in a district of wooden houses called Port Arthur (Portsa), and decided to mark the history of the place by designing a "Transparent House", in the form of a wooden cabin, in Finnish called 'Mummonmökki', "Grandma's Hut".

The house was supposed to be made of steel-wire, presenting only the outlines of the house. The local people in Port Arthur seemed to like, even love, the idea, the sponsors were there, the artist was up and running, the city's Art Council backed the proposal, but it was never realized. The board governing construction works in the city promptly prohibited the installation, on very spurious grounds. There was desperation, disappointment and heated arguments in the air and the press, but eventually another place for the house was found.

So the "Transparent House" became the "Transparent Dream". The dimensions changed somewhat and it was located in the courtyard of the Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova museum in Turku. The "House" was not realized, but the "Dream" was. The idea of the "Transparent House" produced many associations, both overt and covert. One of the first connotations is, of course, the ghost of a house rising to haunt a place where once a wooden house had stood. This connotation was made more poignant by the fact that the city had been eager to run down the area of wooden houses in Port Arthur and the empty spot to be occupied by the "Transparent House" was one result of this policy. This might have been one motor behind the initial reactions. There were even more subversive and subterranean connections, however.

The shape of the "Transparent House - Dream" is or at least closely resembles, that of a house. The shape is familiar, there can be no mistake. This resemblance immediately raises the question, who lives in that house? Or, better yet, who is at home in the house? Because of its transparency - not only do light and the sun get through the house, but also cold and rain, plants and animals - it is equally clear that it was not intended to be a shelter from the climate.

What, then, is the purpose of this house, what is its mission?

The outlines of the "Transparent House - Dream" transfigure a very particular "Gestalt", the "Mummonmökki". This kind of houses can be found all over Finland and Scandinavia. Now this house or dream of steel-wire in outline, transsubstantiates a wooden "Mummonmökki" - supposedly a very homely house - into a metallic transparency. It seems that the "Transparent House" was somehow to stand in the place of something that is not so transparent. The house, so to speak, presents a "Gestalt" of something that is no longer or not yet present. If so, the mission of the "Transparent House - Dream" is transmission.

This, in a way, is also what its name suggests: the house is transparent, it stands as a parent to something that it will guide or watch over or help to raise, though its parental status may be only transitory. One might want to say that the "Transparent House - Dream" somehow transports something of the idea or feeling of being a house. It takes something from the past in order to carry it to the future. It takes the place of a house, carrying the place through a house less periodic. In this respect its purpose is transportative. It was even supposed to be "Trans-Port-Arthur-ative".

As such, this trans-portion is neutral, like all shipping agencies are prone to admit. But the parental role of the house gets a sinister overtone by the very transparency. One who would live in that house would always be visible, always under surveillance. If the house was not so obviously playful and unassuming, even deserted and void in its appearance and if it had doors and window-bars, it would make for a perfect prison.

A prison where the guard, outside, would be able to observe every move the inmate makes inside; there would be no escape from the piercing eyes. The location of the "Transparent Dream" in the courtyard inside the walls of the Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova museum add to this claustrophobic element. Fortunately, the "Transparent Dream" is transgressive of this role, and only hints at the possibility.

The transgression of a limiting or guarding role is no coincidence. If there is transmis-

sion and transportation at work here, there is also transformation. The "Gestalt" of a house, of a "Mummonmökki", is transformed by the "Transparent Dream", not at least because the "Gestalt" is made visible by the apparent transparency.

To make visible by being transparent: it is obvious that the house lives in and through a paradox. The first element of the paradox might be this: in this transportative role of the "house-ness" that the "Transparent Dream" makes manifest we may see a tendency to transmit or preserve identities, especially the identity of a house, or a way of living.

This tendency, let us call it the conservative trait, is fixed through the immediate recognition and association that the house as a "Gestalt" produces. Indeed, here we encounter just the outline, the form of a house. The "house-ness" revealed is transparent; the figure seems, in a platonic vein, to evoke an ideal model. Even more than a wooden house, the "Transparent House - Dream" makes manifest the idea of what it is to be a house. It might be seen as a subject of guidance, of ideality, of dwelling in the mind. It reproduces and preserves the image of a mummonmökki.

However, this conservative trait of ideal "house-ness" is immediately betrayed by the "Transparent Dream" itself. The "Transparent Dream" is not a house since it does not fulfill any of the functions conventionally ascribed to a house (shelter from the weather, from the animals, from the passers-by, etc).

The "Transparent Dream" is in these respects the very negation of a house: simply, one can not live in it, certainly not in this climate. It annihilates the normal functions of a house into a numinous and spacious nothingness. The "Transparent Dream" gives lodging to this nothingness, it houses the nihilation of normal "house-ness". Since houses are built to preserve and produce life, this nothingness seems to hint to the immense zero that lurks behind all human activity.

The "Transparent House - Dream" may even be seen as a mockery. Those, who are used to dealing with houses, and who is not, might experience here the unsafety of the missing floors, the temptation that the house gives to dangerous play like climb-

ing, and the utter waste and fun made at the expense of "house-ness". The playfulness and resoluteness in servitude of the "Transparent House - Dream" stand in contrast to the conservative, parental role. The "House - Dream" is a parody of a house.

It deconstructs and dissolutes the meaning or identity of a house: call this its radical trait, which forms the second element of the paradox. This nihilation of "house-ness" might after all have been what irritated the Construction Board's men (for men they were) to the extent of having to prohibit the installation of the "Transparent House" in Port Arthur. Would they have done it if the work in question was, say, a transparent kangaroo?

If we follow the radical, deconstruct trait, we may notice that in its skeletal appearance and because of its surroundings, the "Transparent Dream" perhaps brings to mind from Kalevala the house that the (anti-) hero Kullervo set on fire or the house from the skeletal ashes of which he as a newborn was discovered. Untamo's people burned down the house of Kullervo's father, Kalervo, and found Kullervo from the ruins and adopted or, rather, enslaved him. Later on, Kullervo returned the favor by burning down Untamo's house.

The "Transparent Dream" might also remind us of the homeless wanderings and longing for a place to be, which Kullervo experienced to an exceeding degree, and which largely determined his existence. This pagan, savage longing may well be a mythical counterpart of the affection that the Finns feel to the idea and Gestalt of a mummonmökki. In the arctic climate and the arctic mind a house has special powers of social and existential meaning. The house is essential to the preservation of life.

For Kullervo, a house always represented his lost parents, family and home. For him the picture of his parents and their house was even more vivid because he had lost them as a baby without ever coming into contact with them. His inability to settle down or to stop destroying everything and all that crossed his way stems from his homelessness and placelessness.

It might be said, that Kullervo always carried a double household in his head, Kalervo's house, the house of his family, and the house of its destroyers, Untamo's house.

The hatred between these two houses and the fact that Kullervo was raised by his enemies in Untamo's house, constructed a destructive double-image Kalervo-Untamo, that engaged Kullervo for the rest of his life. The house in his head was imaginary, a dream, in fact, but very real and effective, reducing all of Kullervo's attempts to a destructive nought.

A house, be it transparent or not, imaginary or concrete, has a lot to do with how we locate and find our place in the world. For Kullervo, the non-existence of his parents and their house was something that constructed and deconstructed his identity again and again. Having no parents, no house and no place did not mean that he had no identity or subjectivity.

On the contrary, it meant that his subjectivity was cemented through the hate he felt towards the undoers of his house, Kalervo's house, and through the displacement of this hate and growing up in Untamo's house meant. Kullervo seeks for a place, but finds it in the end only from the tip of his sword.

Thus we might find a radical trait stemming from the "Transparent Dream": Parent-Kullervo-Place. The "Transparent House" reminds us of the location or dislocation, locality or dislocality of a house or a home, the fact that there is or is not a place for a house and that through a house one may find a place in the world, become "housed". The wanderings of the "Transparent House - Dream" and its changing identity and form pay evidence to this fact.

This is the trait that as a mission speaks rather of transformation and transgression than of transportation. The "Gestalt" of a house is transformed in the open-ended quest for a place to be. Kullervo certainly was addicted to a "Gestalt" of a house, but it was this very addiction that led to the eventual destruction of identities, and eventually of wooden houses, as well.

There might have been more complicated deconstructive strategies, but Kullervo's was a straightforward and violent character. The place and abode that the "Transparent Dream" gives to the annihilation of traditional, identitarian and preservative "house-ness", the fact that the "Transparent Dream" makes manifest this "house-ness" through negating it, is then, somewhat akin to Kullervo's deconstructive strategies.

It may be less tragic and more festively playful and subtle, but it too seeks for an escape, for freedom from the western legacy of "house-ness" that spellbinds us. The "Transparent Dream", too, is haunted by an image - a tradition - that seemingly fixes its identity and it, too, sets out to deconstruct this identity by attacking the image. The "Transparent Dream" thus also asks for a place and after "housedness". Likewise, the "Transparent House" was dislocated to another place, and consequently became the "Transparent Dream".

In a sense, then, the Construction Board (like Untamo) was one of the active authors bringing about the "Transparent Dream", despite their and the artist's will. It seems that this does not indicate so much a death of the author as a jubilant - subconscious, involuntary and even somewhat nauseating - multiplication of 'the' author and the subject. By their inadvertent decision the members of the Construction Board became authors of the "Transparent Dream" - at least the part that makes it a dream and not a house.

Because of this it is at the same time ironic and just that in its new place inside the confines of a museum's wall the "Transparent Dream" presents even more pointed criticism of the way houses, whether practical or impractical, are treated in Turku as well as in other places. The ironic escape of the "Transparent House" through the "Transparent Dream" hints to the presence of Kullervo-like energy: as in a dream, the dream ends only to be replaced by another.

Tere Vadén



## **DREAM DREAM DREAM - ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS DREAM.....**

It's this song that I have in my head. The song which somewhat contrastingly merrily and melancholically goes like dream dream dream repeated ad nauseam and so forth that keeps ringing in my ear. I think I heard it the other day in a commercial of some sort, I forgot which one, where I saw it, or did I like it. But this naive voice and this naive line, this generally too happy "the future is open for us all" oriented vision that keeps repeating dream dream dream that I can't get away from. And, come to think of it, I don't really know if I want to get rid of it. Eventually, I mean, and I just simply ask, what's so wrong with dreams or dreaming anyhow?

A swift switch to another dimension, to a house, an installation. It's history, the hardship and trouble it has confronted are well known or at least should be well known, since the incident does tell and reflect some major matters about the current climate in this town called Turku. This town embodied in a country called Finland which has had a hard time in coping with the vast changes of the nineties. These changes that demand a thorough rewriting and re-imagining of our carefully built frame of references, in short, of our views of the world and our place in it.

Considering the fate of the installation, we have heard this ugly story of censorship and/or restrictions before, too many times. Ironically this time the City's bureaucrats responsible for building and landscape were against it, against the art and the idea, while the local inhabitants did favor the original idea and site of Ger C. Bout's important installation.

The original site, the installation inside a living environment beside real life houses and their inhabitants, would have been in any comparison or scale of center periphery north east south and west something extraordinary, something quite special.

It would have, I'm definitely sure of it, reminded people, the people that live beside it, that go pass by and the ones who would flock there to view it, of the vanishing

nature of our existence. Oh yes, it would. A house that you can see through in a place where you can't see through the other houses does have this effect.

More particularly it would have reminded them and us of the existence of the buildings in the area, in the city and basically anywhere. It would have reminded how us of and why buildings exist and of the cultural value or disvalue that they carry within them. It would have been so great, so magnificent, so different, but it was not. The "Transparent House" never materialized.

The original house is not there, nor is it anywhere. But at the same time r, the house does exist. It is here, and we carry and pass it around in our consciousness. We know what happened.

On another level, it is also here, even if it is its cousin. And this relative house to the original one is, as we are also aware, in the yard of the Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum. And that is in itself a good thing. A new place, a new setting and therefore a totally new installation.

It seems to me to be essential that with the move and the new place, Ger C. Bout decided to change the name of the work. The "Transparent House" disappeared and it was replaced by the "Transparent Dream".

It is the word dream that keeps resurfacing. Again and again. The interesting point is that the dream appears now together with the new situation that can be all in all described as a large scale compromise. It is my strong believe that in the correlation and combination, in ä this "Zusammenspiel" between dreams and compromises lies something very important. Something that underlines very accurately something essential about what is and what it means to be a human being no more, no less. Actually, the new site and the new size need not to be viewed as a watered down mistake. This changed situation, this compromise can also be turned around, flipped on its head.

I would claim that it is possible to turn this compromise, what it is and what it repre-

sents to something constructive and positive instead of something negative and disappointing. And yes, I certainly believe that Mr. Bout would have absolutely nothing against it. He would, I assume, be strongly for it.

But it begs the question like "what"? What is so positive about compromises "an Sich"? And what is or can be so damned positive about the compromise in this particular case?

Let us take a couple of Å steps back. "Däng, däng, däng". Compromises are actually the very core of our being. Say again? Compromises are actually the very core of our being. and believe it or not, "that" s the triple truth, Ruth". And it is funny that it is so because so many of us hate and detest compromises. Compromises are maddingly hard to achieve and to accept. They are also so bloody boring, so vague and "oh so" social democratic.

It makes a wonderful subject to be played with in ones mind. Like if we do indeed detest some things that (i.e. compromises) are essential parts of our being, it seems to mean that we detest a large part of ourselves, of that, what we are. Please continue the train of thought.....

However, back to the installation, and to the compromises connected to it. The clear fact is that our everyday muddling through of every tender lonely days banalities is fulfilled with compromises.

Compromises, compromises, compromises.

Compromises with our work, with our family life, compromises in what type of yogurt is available in your local store, compromises where you park your car or your hat and compromises who gets to turn the light off before traveling to the dreamlands.

See, this is what I started with and what I have referred to all the time, it is these dreams again.

The bottom line is and stays: we live together with many people, and there are always conflicting and contrasting wants, desires, interests and fears. And for us to be able to live together more or less peacefully in the same place at the same time, we need thousands of compromises, some big, some small and most of them in-between in order to survive, in order to live and to go about with our lives.

It is about trying to live or learn to live together in a complex world. You can picture those wonderful slogans of global and, hell why not vocal, how they go shopping together, but it does not change the task - which is the hardest there exists. Coexistence, compromises with whatever is in question or in the agenda.

I would love to see Mr. Bout's installation as a symbol that shows that compromises can turn out to be positive, something we should learn not only to live with but learn to like and love. Therefore the installation strikes two, no, "let me count again", three things with the same, "uh huh", well, with the same, "uh huh huh" - something. It serves as a symbol, a permanent installation for the meanest task in our existence.

I mean, one of the most important things that Mr. Bout has shown to all taking part or watching beside his project is how to make people work together across different interests and viewpoints. His installation is also a flesh and blood example of how hard it is to get things done when so many different people are part of it and when you need so many people to be part of it. It certainly demonstrates how frustrating cooperation is, but also, like in every nice fairy tale, how fulfilling it also can be in the end.

If we dare to face it, there are no ways around cooperation and compromises. I do know that all of us wish there were situations when at least once in our lives everything would go as we wanted and as we have planned, but somehow, the reality so to speak always fucks us up. Without options and without a shadow of a doubt. (Sorry for the language, I do not want to be rude, but when reality is so rude, I think I am also entitled to use some rude remarks.)

So if we realize, and if in this view see the installation as a perfect motivation lifter,

that cooperation and compromises are here to stay, we should turn off our negativity towards them, turn it simply around, and start to view them as possibilities. That is, obviously, a mighty hard task. But it is a task worth pursuing, and when in doubt, do not lean on me, just recall that there are other constructive alternatives.

I am aware that the attitude change that I am proposing is very difficult and might go astray very fast. The idea is not to be mixed with some kind of fatal attitude that accepts everything as it comes. Nor should it be mixed with any new age feel goodism. It is about back to the beat basics of what is human life and how to live it.

And certainly, we should not accept that bureaucrats make our lives more miserable than they already are. We should fight against them, and strive for a more human, a more decent community, in which bureaucrats and politicians have to be responsible, and their responsibility should also be demanded. However, in the first and foremost instance we should be able, or at least try, to learn to be able to cope with a new situation, and with the compromises, and while co-operating, seek to make the best of them.

With his striking installation, I claim, what Mr. Bout has actually done, is that he has concretely shown us that some things happen and some things can be done. And if anything, this is to provide us with the hope that sometimes some things could also be changed.

Mika Hannula



## THE REAL HOUSE

The "Transparent House". The house that was not, is and was not, like when dreaming. Later, quite appropriately, its name was changed to a "Transparent Dream". In the beginning the house was meant to stand as a ghost image of the demolished houses in the Port Arthur quarter, among the remaining wooden houses.

In that respect there really stands an invisible house on the desert lot where the city of Turku maybe and maybe not is going to build a service house, quite in accordance with the sign somebody put up: "Transparent House". A "Transparent House", a house where the walls are made of air. The first time I see it is in a picture, a photograph of a model of a house which is not a house but a net of thin steel rods, a net which renders the drawing of a house: a three-dimensional drawing, fully recognizable, it signifies its object.

Like the images seen in dreams: possible to interpret as elements in a language, standing for something else, and at the same time completely self-sufficient, loaded with significance which the interpretation at best can enrich, never exhaust. Why are they there? What do they stand for? What are they trying to tell us? I think: transparent. Invisible? An eye that sees, but does not see itself. We are the transparent ones, to ourselves invisible. To others observable, to ourselves enigmatic.

A "Transparent House", it has the signification of something enigmatic, sad; We do not know ourselves. Who is the master of this house? Who lives in this body? I remember how I used to be drawn to explore demolished houses, the fascination in seeing the skeletons of the houses uncovered: half the house gone, the remaining floors opened like a dollhouse, you may walk up the stairs but should tread carefully on floors where the girders have lost their bearing points.

As emblems of lived lives, these kitchens with chimney-pieces and water-tap and worn linoleum carpets, these rooms with severed electric wires straining out of the walls, with \_heaps of rubbish in the corners - In the front door of one of those houses

the door-lock is still intact, with a key on the outside and a spool-shaped handle on the inside, worn to shininess through greenish paint, the mechanism oiled by wear and time to a smoothly clicking clockwork, I dream of coming back with a screw-driver, but the next time I pass, heaps of lumber and rubbish are all that remain.

Like people animate the house they live in, the soul inhabits the house of the body, explores its hidden chambers, its secret passages and trapdoors in the floor.

When I was small I imagined the soul, scarcely thumb-sized, wandering in and out of the openings of the body. The house of the soul is not transparent, but doubtless enigmatic. We are in our bodies as we once were in our mothers' bodies: fluttering fishes, fumble-fingered, laboriously straining out of the dusk, out toward the transparent. What a contrast to this obscurely developing, obscurely perceived carnal kingdom is formed by the "Transparent House", its rectilinearly clean structure..... but maybe it stands for our compensating conception of the imaginary unity and stability of the self and the world?

Here is, mirrored by its opposite the vulnerability of the body, our horror of chaos, of dissolution and the unknown. In the imagination everything is interchangeable, in the imagination nothing is finite, in the imagination everything can be abolished and begun again anew. Who lives in this house, do you think? Whose lamp burned in the dusk? What do you think what happened then?

The house in fantasy, in fairy-tales. How many tales do not contain houses where the proprietor is unknown: a fire burns in the hearth, a table stands set to welcome the tired wanderer, the brave but trembling hero or heroine who sits down to eat with relish, yet with tense attention: will the master of the house turn out to be a giant (to be assumed if the house and its movables are clearly oversized), a monster (perhaps a benevolent beast, even an enchanted prince), or a wizard just waiting to turn the heedless into stone?

In the same way it is possible to surmise something about who shares my house, my obscure counterpart, my shadow, my "real" face under the persona of the imaginary

self. Are there forbidden rooms in the house, rooms where one's sisters lie dismembered in vats filled with blood? Are the walls of the house made out of ginger-bread, joined together with spun sugar? Can the house per chance fly?

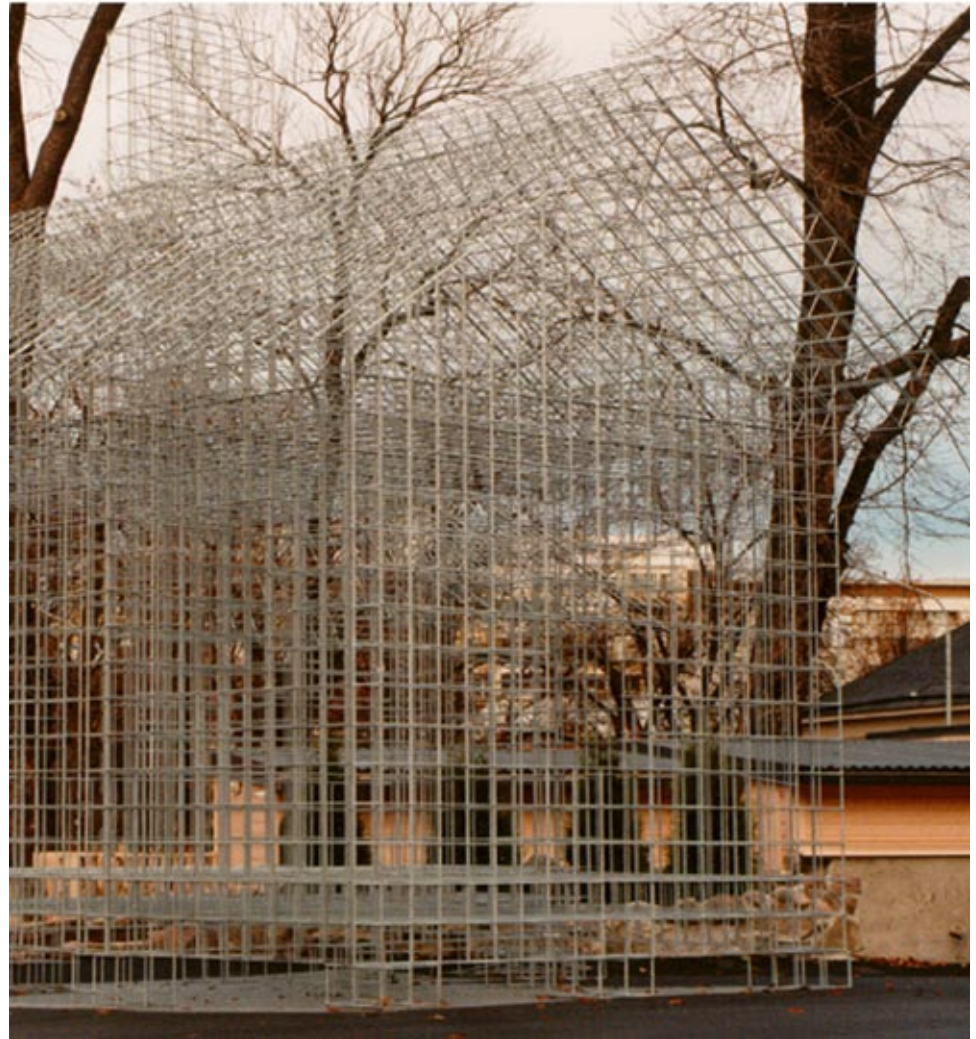
The house is, of course, also protection, the connecting function of the conscious self: when the wolf blows on it, it may be scattered like straw or fall apart like the house made out of sticks, or remain standing like the sensible and prudent pig's brick bungalow.

How I as a child loathed the capability of Brother Doughty which still somehow seemed inimical to life, compared to the optimistic straw structures of the sadly devoured pig brothers. Perhaps unjustly, it also stood out as a lack of solidarity, like the triumph of the industrious and spiteful ant over the playing grasshopper? To be a house for another! to be refuge, to be one's own room, to be residence, to be cradle and tomb. In reality, we build house onto house.

The outcome is us, an onion composed of many onion-scales. If you split the stem you will see all the layers of past identifications. In that respect, there were two "Transparent Houses", the organic house (which was not) and the inorganic. And the original thought was that the house would decay! Like the living body, its folds and protuberances sagging, the ordered slopes even steeper in towards chaos, the rust takes over, the vegetation takes over.

The "Transparent House" would have room for its own temporal limitation, be transparent towards corruption. The house has its base in death. Even the galvanized steel corrodes, rusts. Death is the existing, the real. The dream is incorruptible, reality rusts. That is how it is, that is the real house, that is no more.

Bodil Lindfors



## A DUTCHMAN AND HIS DREAM

Once upon a time there was a Dutchman and a "Transparent House". The place was Turku and the year was 1996. So far, so good. It was a dream of the Dutch artist Ger C. Bout to sometimes plan, realize and build a house, a "Transparent House" of steel-wire.

The house would be a reworking of a traditional Finnish wooden house, such as could be seen if one took a car and drove into the countryside. A house painted red with white window frames and a tight and nice pile of wood near the outhouse. In the kitchen a woman and a man beside a puffing coffeepot on the stove.

The Dutchman began to form the dream in his head, the "Transparent House". Slowly, the dream started to take a more concrete form. It appeared in several versions on paper. The dream got ever more sharp outlines each day. The Dutchman gave a name to his dream house: The "Transparent House".

When the Dutch artist started to plan the "Transparent House", he had a definite place in mind, a place where the house would be placed after it had been planned and constructed. The place was a forsaken and mistreated area on the corner of Anankatu and Puutarhakatu in the Port Arthur district in the city of Turku. There on that place should have been, in fact, a beautiful wooden house. But because nobody showed any signs to beautify the place, the artist wanted to check the opportunities with his artwork.

He had visited the place, and even made himself familiar with the atmosphere and the inhabitants that lived in the houses that had been preserved. It appeared that everyone was of the same meaning. The empty ground in the area of wooden houses would be a good place for the house of steel-wire. A real wooden house, painted red and with white window frames, would, in fact, have suited itself in the place very well. The steel-wire house would now stand as a shadow of the wooden house that actually could have been on that place.

However, not everybody did like the artist's vision as much. The question of the placement of the house seemed to be unexpectedly sensitive. A section of the city's decision makers opposed themselves to the "Transparent Dream". The empty ground should even in future live with neither house nor dream.

The Construction Board's surprising decision led to long and winding discussions about art and the public area in the media. An uncomfortably placed artwork that tended to point out visible defects in the environment became red-hot news material. Several kilometers of newspaper articles were written on the subject. Most of the articles corresponded to the Dutch artist's dream.

Today the place still remains empty and deserted. It cries, it longs to be built on. After a long period of consideration, it was decided that a new place should be found for the "Transparent House". At the same time it became clear that the house should be smaller. An empty place of the same size could not be found in the city center.

So the artist was forced to sit at his table and dream once more. This time in diminished scale and with a sore heart. The house shrunk on the drawing board. Shortly, a new place appeared. A place inside walls and with guarding through day and night. But the public could nevertheless visit the house without paying an entrance fee. That was still something.

The diminished dream could not bear its former name and the artist renamed it the "Transparent Dream". The house that had already been transformed from a dream to reality became a dream once again, also by its name.

When I afterwards met the Dutch artist and asked how it felt to give up a dream, shrink it, and give it a new name, he said that as a professional artist it does not hurt him and that he thinks that the new place inside the walls is OK. However, for some odd reason I never really believed him.

In any case, the original dream was situated on paper on a very special place, in the heart of Port Arthur. There the "Transparent House" would have stood on empty

ground and would have shouted out a message about the value of the past and about the unbelievable power of art.

Nowadays I walk almost every day past the house that stands concealed behind a wall. While standing on the street, one can see only a part of the steel-wire roof. One doesn't any longer see through the "Transparent Dream".

Sanna Tahvanainen



## THE BUILDER

I phoned here and there to find a builder - not a construction worker, but one, who  
could build a real house.

It was hard to find one, because real houses have not been built for some time.  
I finally got hold of one and arranged a meeting: he said he had built log-houses and  
shingle roofs.

To my surprise the man lived in a three-room apartment in a high-rise block in the  
city center.

He had lived there for 30 years and felt at home.

I tried to put my questions in a way that would force him to admit, that he longed  
back to his wooden home.

I tried to suggest things, and talked about the lack of air circulation, of asbestos and  
of mold.

I also tried to evoke the benefits of a log-house (although I have never lived in  
one).

None of this d helped, the old man was happy in his apartment.

We talked for five hours and I heard a lot about building and demolishing houses  
(working for the city the man had taken down houses, too).

Every once in a while I tried to tempt him to admit, that he had at least thought about  
building a house of logs for himself.

He hadn' t.

He wanted to buy a condo from the Canaries.

Kristian Simolin



## LOOKING THROUGH THE MUSEUM CONTEXT

Modernism believed in a pure visuality. It was based on Kantian aesthetics, which were founded on the idea of disinterested seeing. Ideas of benefit were not allowed to disturb the purely aesthetical seeing: the "museal" seeing. The Modernist narrative is a story of a process directed towards aesthetical autonomy of the art object, of focussing on the material surface of the work. This Formalist quest was guided by hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse.

The so-called "white cube" effect was born. The art works were to be installed in a space which, in Smithsonian terms, could be called a non-space, a virgin like space outside of any social context, a sacred ~ space for aesthetic meditation.

Participative art has in many ways tried to break this Greenbergian narrative stressing the autonomy of the medium. On a larger scale the modernistic myth of pure visuality has been deconstructed by post modern and post structuralist theories.

Art is no longer defined through inborn characteristics but in a context and as part of the meaning systems of a culture. A work of art has besides its aesthetical aspects also -and foremost- political, social and cultural meanings. The work "A Transparent Dream" by Ger C. Bout is located in this breaking zone of social consciousness and the museal scene. Because the other articles in this essay collection handle the matters of how this work was born and where it was situated , it is not necessary to do that again here.

I try here after to concentrate on some changes in the process of looking when the "Transparent House" was changed into the "Transparent Dream" and when the location of the work was changed from the original workers wooden housing area into the museum yard. Through the aesthetic "ghettoization" the work transferred from the intended social centre to the margin. The transfer means that the work which first commented on the social reality changes into an object that needs primarily aesthetical contemplation.

Robert Smithson and other Land artists, artists like Marcel Broodthaerts and Daniel Buren, and also many artists operating from feministic starting points, have expressed their concern on how the artwork transforms when its communicative connections to the original context are broken when transferred to the magical territory of the white cube.

The appealing social commentary of Ger C. Bout thus loses many intended reading possibilities -and gains at the same time new meanings. Somewhat surprisingly it can be seen as a commentary on the tradition of minimalism. We see behind it the cubes of Sol Lewitt and Donald Judd. The difference is that the former can be considered "empty" works without content in opposition to Bout's work, in which also a figurative dimension has been (re)installed.

The museum context seduces the viewer to read the meaning of the artwork as a comment to the most pure icon of modernism, to the grid. Rosalind Krauss defines the grid as a geometrical order, a non mimetic and anti natural gesture. The grid is the most significant gesture of high modernism and according to Krauss "what art looks like when it turns its back on nature". The grid forbids an "image", a literary content, a narrative, a discourse. The grid was the wall, which saved the fortress of pure visuality against attacks of language.

The logical conditions of the current situation cannot anymore be called modernistic. We see now a site-specific artwork, cut loose from its original context. The house of Ger C. Bout was meant to be originally something totally different from a "sculpture object". Except for the overall form of the work, also the "concrete-steel-grid", which forms its construction, points at architecture - but also at what normally is hidden inside architecture.

The connotative meaning of the skeleton formed by the steel grid is the modernistic concrete construction. Normally the work of "steel builders" is hidden in the mould in which it is buried forever in concrete. Now the welders and galvanisers of the steel grid were proud about the fact that their work remained visible this time.

But the skeleton of a concrete house is used here to point at the structures and volumes of a wooden house - and it is not just any house, but some kind of archetype wooden house, it is the prototype for the dream for a wooden house. The result is an interesting paradox in which past and present, reality and dream meet each other almost like in a Freudian dream concentration.

The intention was that the steel would not be protected. The slow corrosion process would have added the dimension of time to the now galvanised permanent presence of the work. Growing vegetation would have conquered the work rapidly. Grass and trees growing through the work would have reminded us of how time and life go on. And from their own point of view they would have added to the work a dreamlike dimension of travelling in time, where the lost origins and the binding shapes of present meet.

The work would have been a proud symbol for Finnish housing culture, for a house which disappeared but still exists in the minds of the people and also at the same time as a symbol for the quick and often brutal change of the city. It is also possible to consider the construction of Ger C. Bout starting from the concept of the "house", in its psychophysical, psychoanalytical and phenomenological meanings. I will just mention some of the interesting paradoxes of the art work: an open shelter, home and prison (a paradox of the cozy form and the bars), the paradox of the conceptual warmth and concrete coldness, the paradox of a view blocking screen and being on stage.

Ger C. Bout was originally educated as an architect. In his art he is widely operating with the archetypical ideas of houses. As an architect he was seeking for the possibilities of a social communicative architecture as intensively as he is now looking for it in his art work.

Social architecture is finally the metaphor on which his work is founded. The house can be transparent, it can be a dream, it can be of ice: Ger C. Bout is on this moment working on an idea of an house which is made of frozen water, which functions as a "symbol of light and nature", and which will last only for one winter.

Ger C. Bout tries to create in his art visible symbols for dreams and wishes. In a certain way it is of course a pity that the "Transparent House" was realised as the "Transparent Dream". But the fact that it was realised can teach us other things as well. Ger C. Bout has a great ability to build social networks, which help him to operate in the art world. Bout has shown us how to build networks, where artists, city clerks, building contractors, and professional builders participate. All of them have participated in the welding of the steel nets of a transparent dream. The connections are less tight and the nets are less precise than in the "Transparent Dream" but the project is standing anyhow. We Finns can learn much of this remarkable ability to build social networks, which Ger C. Bout showed us.

Lars Saari



## ABOUT HOUSES AND MOVIES

"The house is not that big, he thought. Darkness, symmetry, mirrors, age, strangeness, and emptiness make it look bigger than it really is."

In his famous portrait the 17th century Japanese master swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (who is reputed to have defeated by the age of thirty, more than sixty opponents in duels) is depicted standing in a calm, relaxed posture, hands loosely on his sides, each hand holding a sword.

This stance has the Japanese name "happo biraki" (= open to all eight sides), and supposedly there was no possible opening for an attack on Musashi when he was in "happo biraki"; when needed, he was able to take action and kill his enemy almost in a split-second.

The Finnish naive painter Martti Innanen has in many of his paintings dealt with the archetypical Finns of the mythical past. Innanen's caricature figures with their homespun dresses and birch-bark knapsacks and shoes have an ironical intertextual relationship with Finnish mythology and history that ranges from Kalevala to The Seven Brothers by Aleksis Kivi. Especially those paintings where nearly the whole canvas is filled with one or more faces that stare at the viewer straight in his eyes: the snub-nosed, blue-eyed round faces, often with their lower jaws open and noses running, the totally expressionless dull gaze that has no sign of intelligence or consciousness whatsoever.

These enigmatic faces simply don't communicate anything, they just are there, dismissing and mocking any attempt at interpretation. Yet, at the same time they are in dialogue with a vast quantity of historical and recent paintings, stories, books, and movies. From Gallen-Kallela to Kaurismäki, asking the fundamental questions of Finnish existence; "Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?"

Martti Innanen here having the role of a poor (or post modern) man's Gauguin.

In a sense, Ger C. Bout's "Transparent Dream" activates similar kinds of connotations as do Musashi and Innanen: when one looks at the "Dream", one sees straight through its skeletal form, it has no secrets hidden inside, no message to convey. It is as if we are witnessing a process of either a house mysteriously growing out of the ground, not yet fully formed, or a house falling into decay and dying away,

In both cases something very private and intimate and perhaps carnal and obscene is taking place, and there is the feeling that we should in fact look away.

Ger C. Bout's combination of material (steel) and form (a traditional Finnish wooden cottage or "mummonmökki") gives the "Dream" additional rhetorical power: the material and the form do not "fit", the work is at the same time familiar and strange, there is a slightly disturbing and alienating element that calls for an explanation, interpretation and rationalization.

And furthermore, the "Transparent Dream" has a "Doppelgänger", an invisible (or literally transparent) brother a "Transparent House". Like Elvis Presley, who never got over the death of his twin brother, the "Transparent Dream" is always destined to have a "Transparent House" as its shadow companion and being referred to as "the one of the Transparent Brothers that made it".

Like Musashi, the "Transparent Dream" stands empty and still, and is simultaneously open to all eight sides, having the capability of rapid movement or transformation; emptiness carries in itself all possible fulfillments.

Like Martti Innanen's paintings, "The "Dream" gives us back a blank gaze, and yet puts myriads of questions to us concerning our past, present, and future as Finns, a people that has just stepped out of "Mummonmökki". With concepts like "transparency", "dream", and "house" - or "house-ness" (as in Roland Barthes' "Italianity", i.e. "the condensed essence of everything that could be Italian"), one is easily led to think of movies for at least five reasons:

First, the filmic, or visual, mode of representation that the movies use, is (or appears

to be) a transparent form of communication, in this respect opposed to spoken or written language.

Second, the experience of sitting comfortably in the darkness of a movie theater and passively taking in the flow of cinematic substance oozing from the large screen has often been metaphorically referred to as a sort of dreaming.

Third, as Walter Benjamin tells us, architecture and movies are closely related in the sense that they both are art forms that are consumed in a collective and absent-minded fashion.

Fourth, movies are usually seen inside houses technically equipped for this purpose.

Fifth, they do show houses in movies, too.....

So we are now confronted with the question of "house-ness" in the movies. "House-ness" is, of course, most apparently visible in the names of movies; "The Fall of the House of Usher", "The Empty House", "The House of Frankenstein", "The House of Bamboo", "The House of Wax", "The House of Lies" and so on.

Thinking one step further, houses play a part in the filmic narrative itself. Who could ever forget the silhouette of the dark, sinister house on the hill in Hitchcock's "Psycho"; Borrowing in his mise en scene a little from the iconography of the Transylvanian noblesse, Hitchcock hints, by just showing us the Bates' house, that nothing good will ever come out of its front or back door, which indeed turns out to be the case.

Another classic example of "house-ness" is Chaplin's "Gold Rush", where the little wooden shack of two gold diggers is swinging dangerously back and forth on a cliff with two men in it, creating a tension that, despite the danger, or just because of it, has a comical effect.

Shifting from moving houses to flying ones, a simple Kansas farm house can turn out

to be a suitable vehicle for traveling from boring reality to "The Munchkinland", as is done in Victor Fleming's "The Wizard of Oz" by Dorothy and her dog Toto. In fact, "house-ness" has such visual metaphorical power, (combined with the wide range of choices concerning camera lens distortion, focus, depth of field, color contrasts, camera movement, lightning, background music etc.) that the director has at his or her disposal, that one actually cannot find a "serious" psychological drama film or a highbrow arty film without at least some "house-ness" in it.

Just think of Hitchcock's "Rear Window", which concentrates on one particular house and its inhabitants (and a crime amongst them, since it is a Hitchcock film), or Andrei Tarkovsky's "Mirror" with its long, slow tracking shots through empty rooms and corridors.

Or the culmination point of Tarkovsky's "Stalker", where the mysterious room where one's wishes come true is finally reached by the three men. Or Stanley Kubrick's "Shining", where weird and frightening things are happening in a haunted old hotel building.

We can take a quick look at two different manifestations of "house-ness" in two films, Jari Halonen's "Joulubileet" (= Christmas Party) and Roman Polanski's "Tenant". Jari Halonen's "Joulubileet" was released in 1996.

Halonen belongs to the younger Finnish generation of film directors and has his background in theater. In his three earlier films, "Lipton Cockton", "Lipton Cockton in the Shadows of Sodoma-(sic!)" and "Back to the USSR - Takaisin Ryssiin" Halonen has shown his liking of the grotesque and his somewhat bizarre sense of humor.

The plot in "Joulubileet" goes something like this: a man is released from prison. His brother and some of his old (criminal) acquaintances decide to organize a Christmas party for him in a small apartment, although it is the middle of summer, since a good traditional Finnish Christmas party is what the man has missed in prison. The party is organized along the traditional script; a bath in a sauna, a traditional Christmas dinner, Santa Claus bringing gifts etc.

Along the way Halonen ridicules these deeply-rooted Finnish customs. Despite the technical and artistic weaknesses of this low-budget film, the clumsy camera work, the excessive dialogue or some too obvious quotations (Aleksis Kivi, Quentin Tarantino), Halonen has lots of energy and "a voice of his own", and actually has the makings of a real writer.

In the film we are shown some of the stereotypical neighbor characters who live in the same house and who observe carefully each other. An aggressive militant man, a couple occupied mainly with sex, an elderly lonely woman. Near the end of the film, one of the criminals, dressed up as Santa Claus, is locked in the small water closet of the apartment.

Since the man suffers from claustrophobia, he starts to shout for help through the sewer, and succeeds to contact the attentive neighbors. As the man has had a religious conversion in prison, and as he has gathered a large audience, he starts to recite the Bible through the sewer. People are touched by the recital, and soon there is a large crowd standing under the window, everyone holding palm leaves and chanting happily. The film ends with Santa Claus transforming into an angel and vanishing out of the window.

Roman Polanski's "The Tenant" is about a man who rents an apartment in a big old building in Paris. The former tenant, a young woman, has committed suicide by jumping out of the window. The film deals with a familiar theme from many other films by Polanski, a person slowly cracking up. With masterful sense of timing and visual rhythm, Polanski shows us how the man gradually is drawn further and further away from reality. In the end he, too, jumps from the window, dressed in woman's clothes.

In creating the surreal, Kafkaesque atmosphere of the film, Polanski's camera skillfully uses the halls, rooms and interiors of the building. The neighbors, a collection of characters straight out of Kafka or Gogol, add to the overall dream- or nightmare-like atmosphere. Everyone in the building is suspicious of everyone else, and when the protagonist has jumped out of the window, one neighbor comments: "I knew there

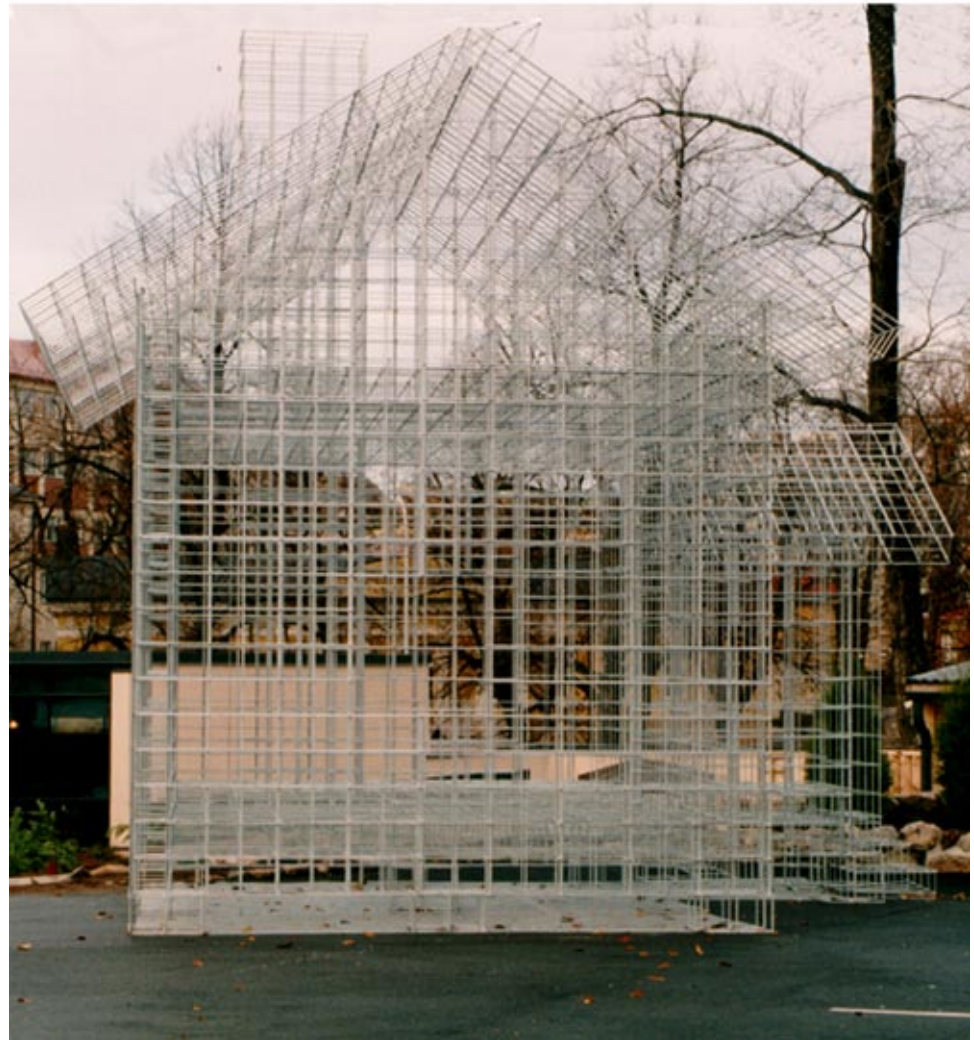
was something wrong with him the first time I saw him."

The houses in these two films have opposing functions, Halonen's house is exhaling, in the end, bringing the atomized urban people together in a blissful "Gemeinschaft" as in a Coca Cola advertising spot; Polanski's house is inhaling, swallowing a person and his personality, transforming and finally destroying him.

"House-ness" in these films has a range of possible metaphorical dimensions, from an agent of biblical, nostalgic reunion and togetherness to a Musashi-like silent danger and deadly effectiveness; a house can be either the sheltering mother or the destroying mother. Which brings us back to the "Transparent Dream": it is just this tension between these two extremes that give The Dream its expressive power as far as "house-ness" is concerned. Ger C. Bout's simple, economic means of expression hits laconically the mark.

Jarmo Ikonen

Kalevala, the Finnish national epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot in the 19th century and based on traditional folk poems, gives Kullervo's tale as one of its most intense, unique and perplexing stories. There is some reason to believe that this tale describes in a mythical setting the historical situation of the Finns, torn between the East and the West, the age-old forests and the European civilisation.



## ABOUT TRANSPARENT DREAMS AND OTHER ISSUES

The "Transparent House" and the "Transparent Dream" belong to a series of projects that includes a.o. the "House Project" in Pori, Finland in 1993 and the plans for a "House of Frozen Water", in Rovaniemi, Finland, in 1998-1999. There are more concepts related to this series, for example to make a "house" of charcoal and a "house" of fire-crackers.

The projects deal with the "concepts" of "houses". They look like houses, but are not meant to live in. In fact it is even not possible to do so. Besides that their character is temporary.

The "houses" represent ideas that deal with the "image", "shape", "form", "Gestalt" etc. of houses in general. The ideas for all these projects started when I tried to find out what was essential for the design of a house and what was not.

I made models that represented my ideas in different ways. I left as much as possible out of the design of these "model-houses". More and more the "houses" became 3-dimensional images, a kind of sculptures that looked like houses and were recognised as such. But at the same time there was no way somebody could live there. My next step was to look for possible locations and situations where it would be possible to build these "houses". The "Transparent House" for the Port Arthur Area was the second project in this group. The first one was realised some years ago in Pori, Finland and the next one will, hopefully be realised in Rovaniemi, Finland.

In all these "houses" there is not much "design": each is made of one kind of "material", used in a rather straightforward manner. Furthermore the form is derived from the shape of a well known type of house and for many easy to recognise.

The location of the projects is important: preferably a place where many people can see them, somewhere in the city centre of somewhere near that centre.

The "houses" are temporary. Nature and climate play important roles. People passing by will notice these changes everyday.

The projects resemble somehow performances, that do not exist without an audi-

ence, but in this case can do without performers.

The "House Project", in Pori, involved the modification of a wooden house: it was taken apart and all parts were assembled again in a different order. The house was still a house (no parts were missing) but it was not possible anymore to recognise it as a house.

The "House of Frozen Water" involves the construction of a house-like shape of frozen water. Windows are interconnected from one facade to another, piercing the massive block of frozen water. The house has no interior space. The construction is quite complicated: A mould that is big enough is built in summer. As soon as the weather changes, the mould is filled with water.

Due to the climate the water will freeze. When (after several months) the water is frozen, the mould is taken away. The block of frozen water must be as clear as glass and work like a prism, breaking the light of the sun.

When spring comes again, the warmth of the sun will melt the "House of Frozen Water". The water will disappear: just as the house.

Another project involves a house, built of blocks of charcoal. It is like a "Savusauna" (= a smoke sauna), but not warm: completely black and like a big block of charcoal pencils. It will leave its marks wherever you touch it: this project is under preparation.

The last one intends to build a "house" of fire-crackers. At the inauguration, when the building is finished, the first fire-cracker is lighted. The rest follows soon and after a while the house disappears in a cloud of smoke and a lot of noise. What is left is a lot of paper (from the firecrackers), smoke and memories.

Two "houses" have been realised so far. Hopefully more will follow soon.

Ger C. Bout



## **PRESS NEWSPAPERS**

Turun Sanomat  
"Lisää ympäristötaidetta Turkuun"

Jyrki Vuori  
Turku, Finland, 7 February 1997

Turun Päivälehti  
"Se onnistui sittenkin"

Antti Vuorenrinne  
Turku, Finland, 16 January 1997

Hufvudstadsbladet  
"Huset som blev en dröm"

Bianca Gräsbeck  
Helsinki, Finland, 9 December 1996

Helsingin Sanomat  
"Turun uusin ympäristöteos on läpinäkyvä mummonmökki"

Nils-Eric Backman  
Helsinki, Finland, 7 November 1996

Hyvinkään Sanomat  
"Läpinäkyvä mummonmökki Turun uusin ympäristöteos "

Hyvinkää, Finland, 7 November 1996  
Iltalehti

"Läpinäkyvä talo ei puhuttele parkkipaikalla"  
Markku Haapio

Helsinki, Finland, 7 November 1996  
Itä-Savo

"Läpinäkyvä mummonmökki Turun uusin ympäristöteos "  
Sovonlinna, Finland, 7 November 1996

Kansan Uutiset  
"Varsinais-Suomi"

Pekka Helminen  
Helsinki, Finland, 7 November 1996

Keski-Uusimaa  
"Läpinäkyvä mummonmökki Turun uusin ympäristöteos "  
Kerava, Finland, 7 November 1996  
Länsi-Suomi  
"Läpinäkyvä mummonmökki Turun uusin ympäristöteos"  
Rauma, Finland, 7 November 1996  
Åbo Underrättelser  
"Drömhuser på plats"  
"En sann dröm trots allt"  
Anja Kuusisto  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996  
Turun Päivälehti  
"Taiteilija selvisi naarmuitta ulos talostaan"  
"Lautakunnan pelkäämä taideteos on nyt täällä"  
Teija Uitto  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
"Unelma näkyy talon läpi"  
"Läpi näkyy eikä lämpimääkään pidä"  
Jyrki Vuori  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
Seminar in Turku  
Turku, Finland, 5 october 1996  
Helsingin Sanomat  
"Kaupunkilaiset kommentoivat"  
Anu Uimonen  
Helsinki, 25 september 1996  
Åbo Underrättelser  
"Mot norr med Ullman"  
Sonja Hellsten  
Turku, Finland, 14 August 1996  
Turun Sanomat

"Mökki palatsin pihalle"  
Riitta Kormano  
Turku, Finland, 25 August 1996  
Kymen Sanomat  
"Turkuun lisää ympäristötaideteoksia / läpinäkyvä talo syksyllä"  
STT  
17 August 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
"Tehdään kaupunki kauniimmaksi"  
Riitta Kormano  
Turku, Finland, 16 August 1996  
Åbo Underrättelser  
"Drömmen i staltrad söker husets form"  
Sanna Tahvanainen  
Turku, Finland, 14 August 1996  
Helsingin Sanomat  
"Nelitonnin veistos nousee Aurajokeen.  
Turun veistoskaupunki kasvaa neljällä teoksella"  
Helsinki, Finland, 2 August 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
"Turun uudet teokset nimettiin vuoden ympäristötaidekohteeksi"  
Ilona Luoma  
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Salon Seudun Sanomat  
"Kuvataiteilijoiden kaupunkiutopiat esillä Turussa"  
STT  
Salo, Finland, 3 August 1996  
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"Olen kuullut: on kaupunki tuolla"  
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Aamulehti  
"Turku hankki taidetta"  
STT  
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STT  
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Nykyposti  
"Näkymätön Talo"

Aulis Haapala  
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Ju 1ne 1996  
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announcement building permit  
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"Monenlaisia hylkäämisperusteita eli  
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"Jo riittää Turun pilaaminen"  
Aila Halonen  
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Åbo Underrättelser  
"Genomskinliga huset hittar hem"  
Gösta Berg  
Turku, Finland, 19 June 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
"Häkkyrätalolle haetaan nyt rakennuslupaa  
Ars Nova museon pihalta"  
Irmeli Haapanen  
Turku, Finland, 29 May 1996  
"Lehtonen vastaa Kukkulalle Läpinäkyvästä talosta"  
Kari Lehtonen, rakennuslautakunnan puheenjohtaja  
Turku, Finland, 29 May 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
"Menneisyyden möhläyksiä"  
K.U. Kukkula Pro Cultura-säätiön hallituksen jäsen  
Turku, Finland, 26 May 1996

Åbo Underrättelser  
"Stopp för konst på den här tomten"  
"E väldi Rgt stopp upprör i Port Arthus"  
Siv Skogman  
Turku, Finland, 24 May 1996  
Turun Sanomat  
"Läpinäkyvä talo tyrmättiin taas Turussa"  
Turku, Finland, 16 May 1996  
Portsan Sanomat  
"Läpinäkyvän talon onneton loppu?"  
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Turku, Finland, May 1996, no 1  
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"Tässä on Turun läpinäkyvä talo"  
Veikko Suni  
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"Portsa - hakemus uusiksi - tarjolla myös uusi paikka"  
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"Talo, joka ei ole talo"  
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"Taloa ei tullut"  
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"Miksi läpinäkyvä talo ei saanut rakennuslupaa ?

Anneli Tukia

Helsinki, 14 April 1996

Turun Päivälehti

"Läpinäkyvä talo edelleen suunnitelmassa"

Turku, Finland, 12 April 1996

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"Läpinäkyvä talo ei saanut sijoituslupaa"

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"Rakennuslupa voi hellitä jos turvallisuus varmistetaan"

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Portsa Ry, Matti Simola

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Raili Pajula

Turku, Finland, December 1995

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Turku, Finland, 14 December 1995  
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Turku, Finland, 12 December 1995  
Åbo Underrättelser  
"Pro Cultura saktar farten"  
"Rabaldret gjorde gott."  
Siv Skogman  
Turku, Finland, 24 November 1995

## **PRESS RADIO AND TV**

Turun TV  
Essi Pohjola  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996, 10 min.

Turun TV  
Essi Pohjola  
Turku, Finland, 2 November 1996, 10 min.

Turun Radio  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996, 10 min;  
Auran Aallot  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996, 10 min.

Villa Åboland  
Gunilla Hanson  
Turku, Finland, 6 November 1996, 10 min

Kulttuuriohjelmät YLE  
"Turun Taiteiden Yö - Valopilkut"  
thursday 21.30 - 22.30, 60 min.

Radio 93.4  
Tuesday 11.45, with interviews of the school

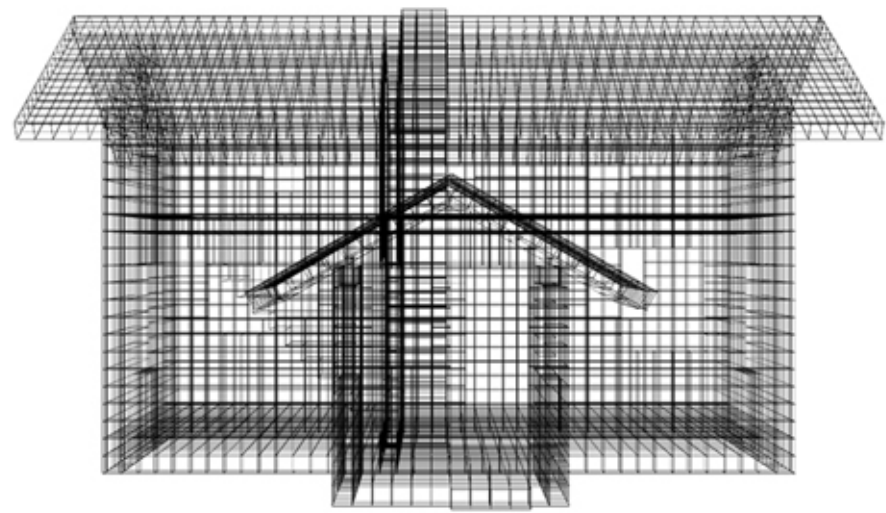
Morgonshiftet  
Hedwig Lönnbacka  
14 June, 1996, 10 min.

Radio 22 May 1996  
Turun Radio  
Turku, Finland, 19 April 1996, 10 min;

Radio Razzia  
Turku, Finland, 16 April 1996, 10 min;

Villa Åboland  
Gunilla Hanson  
Turku, Finland, Feb Eruary, 1996

Radio Razzia



A "TRANSPARENT HOUSE"

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This book has been made by Ger C. Bout, Jarmo Ikonen and Tere Vadén, in close cooperation with the writers and others. They were asked to contribute to this book and were free to write what they wanted. The texts were written before and after the inauguration of the "Transparent Dream".

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