A REPORT BY JOHN OUTRAM CONCERNING THE PROJECT FOR PLATEA ELEFTHERIAS.

AS PRESENTED AT THE

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ARCHITECTURE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

If asked how to proceed with a 'monumental' project today I would advise: "Do not".

The present economic collapse is, from the viewpoint of the human lifespace, an almost unmixed blessing. It is a blessing, in particular, at the very top of the lifespace industry tree - that of prestige, 'iconic', monumental and 'signature' projects. Every one of these that is abandoned today, will, almost certainly, prevent humanity from being burdened with yet another reminder that its lifespace-design culture has reached levels of illiteracy never yet plumbed in all of the 9,000 years that our species has designed and artificially built its lifespace.

The proof is all around us. Humanity's new cities, all over the globe, are an unplanned chaos of choked roads and mere 'building plots'. The few, so called 'signature projects', which 'flower' upon this ugly and shambolic jungle, come under the stylistic rubric of 'Deconstruction'. They appear to the eye to be badly-built, hard to use and impossible to name as to their 'parts'.

Is this some sort of oversight, some accident? Both Yes and No. For the seeming muddle is deliberate. Deconstructive designs are the product of much care, agonised labour and extreme 'judgment'. The generation of their forms entails a rite of increasingly elaborate destruction of anything 'recognisable'. More chaotic than chaos itself their ultimate ambition is to be, as Edith Piaf sang, wiith the sound of tearing paper: "Rien de rien".

DECONSTRUCTION.

'Signature' projects, that is projects whose main, or at least major, function is symbolic are today desginated 'iconic' yet the ambition of their designers is that their works shall be 'aniconic'. These structures thrust themselves upon our attention while, at the same time, deliberately avoiding any gross compositional form which might allow us to recognise their major parts. What is the roof, where is the entrance, and so on? Contemporary Deconstruction does not play the subtle games projected by such as Corbusier. He enlivened the lifeless body of 'Stile Pompier' Classicism into which the Parisian Beaux Arts had fallen by collaging its forms in the manner of the techniques of Cubist painting that had been taught him, at the age of forty, by the mechanical engineer Amedee Ozenfant. Corbusier, for the forty years of his life before his re-birth as 'corbu', was a Swiss Decorative Artist of mediocre talent called Jeanneret.

One may learn everything of Architectural culture from Corbusier, providing that one never copies the way in which he obliged himself to traduce every sane and rational principle of lifespace design. Why did he pursue these curious contortions? One may accurately surmise that it was, in the words of a one-armed, one eyed Dutch Fascist, who after repairing his wounds, returned to the Eastern front to die: "So as to avoid mediocrity". Today, even the 'avoidance of mediocrity' is denied the Architectural Clients of the present day. Compared to the great Architects of the early and mid 20C, the leading Deconstructivists are profoundly mediocre. They reflect no knowledge whatever of their medium. They can therefore project no skill in its manipulation - even at a formal level, let alone one of iconic literacy.

A red slash across an image denotes prohibition. This is

For their techniques are merely graphic. They project no reference to Architecture whatever. Daniel Liebeskind's buildings are fractured in their forms. But this is very common. No one composes symmetrically and axially today. To do so would be lose all credibility! Liebeskind's speciality is to cover his surfaces in diagonal slashes and cuts. These recall the icon of a red circle around an image - such as that of a smoking cigarette that is then 'prohibited' by a diagonal red line, or even two.

The Roman temple of Faustina has a railing of 'crossing-out' cancelli.

THE 'DIAGONAL OF DENIAL'.

In my November 2006 lecture to DoCoMoMo, a society devoted to the preservation of Modernity, and its primary Architectural monuments, I coined the term "the Diagonal of Denial", for this iconic tactic.

The reduction of a building to the compass of a coin forces the engraver to reduce Architecture to an image of extreme clarity. It is, therefore an instructive medium to anyone interested in the long-lost iconographies of this ancient medium. So, Many years back, I took up my Architectura Numismatica by Donaldson, to examine the part known as the railing or balustrade. I did this because I had heard that the balustrade, with its plump little 'balustradettes', was an invention of the Italian Renaisance, and absent from the buildings of Ancient Rome and Greece. This is generally, but not entirely, true. the Ancient railing was usually a criss-crossed lattice - sometimes of spears.

The temple of Adonis at Byblos shows its conical aerolith surrounded by a railing of 'crossing-out' cancelli.

These railings went, in Latin, by the name of 'cancelli'. But this was also the word used to describe the actions of Roman attorneys when they wanted to erase a word. Not having either erasers or 'Tipp-ex', the Roman scribe placed a series of 'xxxx' across his work. Hence to 'cancel a cheque' still means, to this day, that one must positively cross-out its words. A very clear identification was therefore possible between an architectural element, its function, which was to bar access, and its icon, which was of 'cancellation'.

THE 'CROSS OF CANCELLATION

From this discovery I coined the term the 'Cross of Cancellation' to describe the doubling-up of the diagonal slashes on the façade of Liebeskind's Berlin Holocaust Museum.

The surfaces of the Berlin Holocaust Museum are inscribed with iconic 'Diagonals of Denial' and 'Crosses of Cancellation'.

But while to ornament a building with signs of negation and erasure might seem appropriate for a monument to a genocide, one may reasonably ask why this decoration is appropriate to a Student Social building on the Holloway Road, or the Opera House for Dublin? Are both Fraternity and Song to be made more delightful by their prohibition?
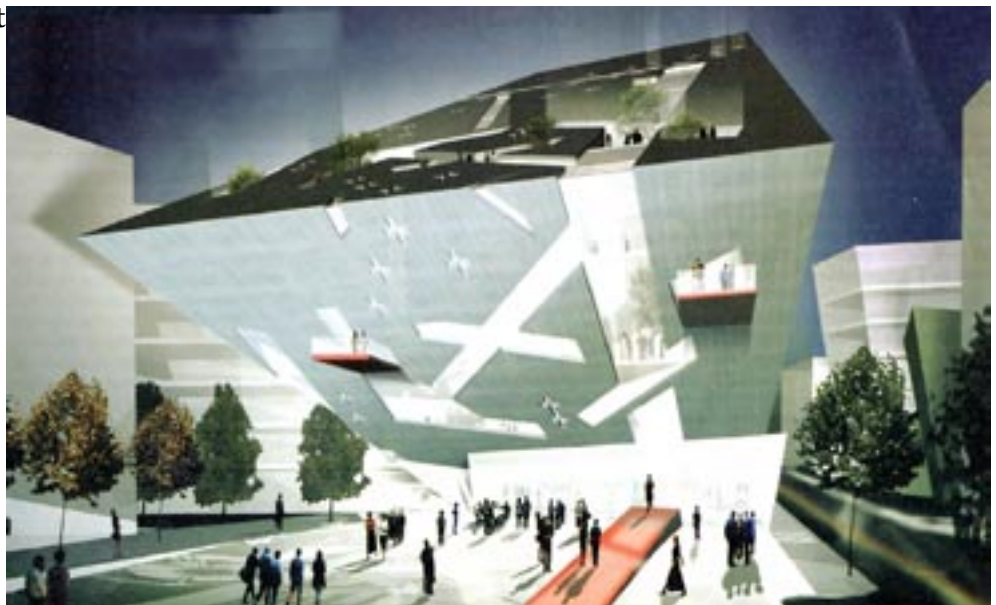
Why should the Opera House of Dublin be covered in Diagonals of Denial and Crosses of Cancellation. Is the enjoyment of music to be heightened by its prohibition?

Liebeskind's ornamental iconography is dedicated to one purpose only, a proclamation of the impossibility of the public part of the human lifespace to be furnished with any signs and symbols beyond the banalities of Fire Exits, Toilets and, very occasionally, certain veneers of dumb building materials such as wood or shiny metal.

But Liebeskind's is not the only graphical decoration which aims to inscribe this doleful message upon our world.

'PIXEL BLUR'.

One is familiar with the way that the faces of persons who must not be recognised are shown in this digital age. They are blurred-out by the 'pixelation' of the digital image. The technique is known as 'pixel blur'. But then what can it mean when it is, today, used everywhere on new buildings?

Fooling-around with big sheets of glass and patterns of thin metal cladding is a less expensive way of preventing the eye from 'reading' the outside of a building, than scribbling all over it with deep grooves.

The 'cancelled' ceiling of the student Social building for the North London University on the Holloway Road.

I took, for my exmaple, the innocent face of a Continental Mayor - a public figure with no need to be 'negated'.


Rainscreen aluminium cladding in Oviedo, Spain is "dithered" to erase any hope of a 'cognive' act of recognition. .

*The 'Novartis' campus in Basel by Architects Diener & Diener. The street is the social space of the city. Streets are made by building-facades. A facade is the 'front' a building 'gives' to the street. Diener's building is **the same all round**. Not only is this expensive, meaning every face must be 'cheap' but it means it is a mere 'box' in space. It is urbnistically illiterate.*

This makes it more widely used. The rational box can be made vaguely exciting by dithering its image in exactly the same way as a digitised image can be turned into a 'mosaic'. Except that, in the case of a building, the whole process is so gratuitously silly that it raises only a sense of despair at the mpoverished iconic culture of the many Architects who use this graphical 'spicing' of their architecturally, and especially urbanistically, illiterate compositions.
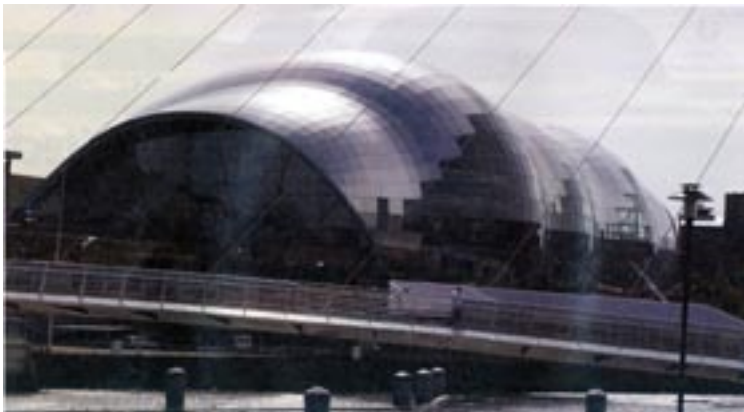
Lord Foster's Gateshead Concert Halls design buries its three halls under a glass skin whose form has encouraged the citizens of Newcastle to christen it "the Grub". But it will never hatch into anything more 'evolved'.
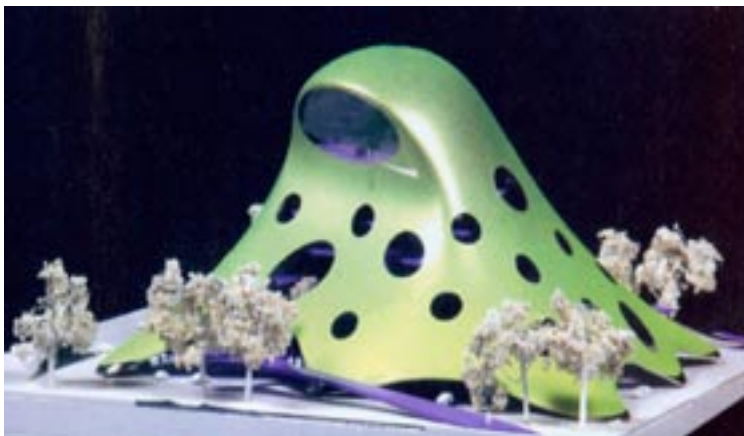
The competition for a Czech National Library was won by Future Systems. It has polarised opinion between those who hate it and vice versa.

'NIP AND TUCK'.

Another way of saying nothing very loudly is to smooth out the surface of a building so that it signifies nothing except something extremely primordial - either a giant amoeba or some notion of the blob of primal green slime from which all life birthed.

These are buildings which are ambitious to usher in 'the Future' as a time which has freed itself from everything that has gone before. But their primary quality is that they say mainly nothing - nothing about either the Past or the Future. Nor are they designed to age'. They will never 'grow old gracefully'. They look brand, shiny, new and will always have to be kept that way by constant washing and polishing.

In essence they represent a desire for a state of eternal youth that proposes a state of arrested, infantile, innocence quite free of that knowledge which one supposes a Library ought to harbour.

Edmund Burke the late 18C Radical who became a Conservative after the terror of the French revolution wrote, in his essay "On Beauty", that we seem to be attracted to objects which were both round and shiny. He put this down to the twin urges of sexuality and maternity, both of whom are triggered, visually, by the sight of bodies which are smooth and firmly rounded. While this may sound plausible. it must be among the more Hobbitishly unambitous foundations for an aesthetic of something as vast, difficult, costly, public and heroic as a building - let alone of the monumental status as these new National Libraries, Concert Halls and symbols of Science.

The spherical mirrored dome over the IMAX cinema in the 'Science Park' of La Villette in Paris.Designed by the Architect Fainsilber it disguises itself as the 'image of everything'. His 'work' becomes, at the moment an iconic 'Nothing'. Like all mirrors it cloaks itself in everything that it is not.

It is for this reason that I give this iconography the name of the 'Face-Lift', even diminshing it to the properly comic colloqualism of 'Nip-and-Tuck'. The final ambition of this technique of erasure is to become everything that is not, eternally refreshed by this denial to be born, to come into existence and to record any of the beautiful marks of maturity and experience. It it exhibits the nightmarish signs of an eternal present, a time that never moves and never records that history which is to be alive.

There are other such self-mutilating, 'blurring' and 'deep-frozen' aniconic strategies in use today. I will labour no more of them for I believe that these three: The Diagonal of Denial or Cross of Cancellation, the 'Pixel Blur' and the 'Nip-and-Tuck' serve to make the point that all degrade Architecture to a point at which it bears no connection to the cultures of its 9,000-year history. Decon celebrates the death of the Medium.

We live in an age, for the present, of a level of Architectural and city-design illiteracy that is effectively total. Architecture, as it is understood by most people, is simply no longer studied as a 'live subject'. It is considered a 'dead' language. One is fortunate, today, if even if 'history' is learned. The newly-qualified Architect looks around him and sees only the evidence of a 'dead' City-Planning and Architectural culture which he longs to demolish and sweep entirely away. We are back in the 1960's, only with more violence and less conviction.

The effect of this intellectual collapse is to have split the Architectural Profession into two parts. There is the far larger part, which ignores history completely, and there is the smaller part, which ignores Modernity completely. This latter is sometimes called the Heritage Industry. It has developed an expertise in dealing with pre-20C buildings. It will build in a way, with more or less skill, that is stylistically 'pre-Modern. When a building owner wishes to enlarge, or alter, a pre-20C building of consequence he will very often retain both sorts of Architect. However hard the Critics may seek to puff and gloss the final work, the reality is that they will work entirely separately.

The reason for this is that they no longer share any common discourse. The 'Modernist' will know none of the names of the 'Parts of Architecture', such as Entablature, Architrave, Freize, Geison, Exedra, Aetos, and so on - let alone any inkling of their 'meaning'. The traditionalist will scorn any knowledge of the great Architects and other Artists of the 20C. They may have heard of Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, but will kow nothing of Mart Stam, or the Brothers Rausch, of 1920's Germany, or Jaques Ely Kahn, the best Art Deco Architect of 1930's New York, or Giovanni Muzio of 1930's Milan or Ignazio Gardella, Belgioso, Perressuti and Rogers of 1950's Milan.

I defended Demetrios Porphyrios against my tutor, Peter Smithson, at Demetrios' first lecture in London. Porphyrios is one of the more expert members of the 'Heritage' lobby. He has written that Architecture is a medium that achieved final perfection in the remote past, when it was cut with chisels in stone. Heritagists and Futurists are united by their contempt and dislike of each other and by their several and complete inability to bring the ancient medium to a state where it can perform its proper function of building the Home of Man.

A 'METHOD'. THE 'EXPERT' COMMITTEE.

In this terrible condition the serious promoter of any project is left with only one course of action. It is to avoid all such things as 'International Competitions' under the auspices of the Royal Institute, the EU or any other official body. Entirely eliminate from power any functionary who depends upon earning his way towards his pension. This includes all Architectural Professors. Use them as advisers, but give them no votes. The only people who can be relied-on to exercise any power at the present time, are those who 'own' the project.

Here my own experience is that such people should have built. It does not matter at what scale. Commissioning a house of their own is sufficient. They must have been through the trauma of having built something - and preferably something that they cared about. Only such people know how to steer a building project through its vicissitudes to a successful conclusion.

My own experiences, both happy and unhappy, are that these people are generally wealthy. It is not that they have the habit of spending a lot of money, or even of rescuing a project when, as sometimes happens, it hits financial stormy weather. Perhaps it is that they have developed a confidence when faced with decisions, founded upon intuitions descending from 'taste', involving large sums of money.

This 'Committee of Taste', as it was called when rebuilding the fire-damaged Windor Castle, should consist of no more than twelve persons. Their chairperson should, ideally, be a lady of means and some experience of power. However the Committee itself is best constituted mainly of men. No Architects should be on it. However it would be well if an Architect were attached to it, for mainly technical advice, and prefereably through a trusted friendship with the Chairperson.

CHOOSING AN ARCHITECT.

One should avoid any Competition by Designs. Such competitions have, because of the technicalities of their detail, to be initially judged by Architects. It has become customary for these Architectural judges to be drawn from the ranks of

the most prominent and fashionable practitioners. These are, today, by definition, Deconstructivists. So we cume full circle to the contemporary architectural culture of Negation and Architectural illiteracy which it must be the purpose of any serious person to escape. A suitable architect can, however, be both chosen and directed to a successful conclusion if the following method be followed.

THE SEARCH.

The Committee, under the leadership of the chairperson, and aided by a modest administration, should conduct an initial 'Search' of its own. The Committee must produce a document, which should be illustrated with photographs, and or photocopies of drawings from books, of the sort of result, drawn without regard as to either time or place, that the Committee believes is suitable. This document may or may not be published to the Architects that the Committee chooses to compete. Its main purpose is to focus the opinions of the Committee and give them some definite shape and permanence.

While this is being done, a parallel search should be conducted for Architects working at the present time whose buildings seem to be of the sort looked-for. A list of names should be collected and books or magazine articles or photographs of their work collated. Ideally, their more promising buildings should be actually seen by some member of the Committee.

The purpose of this work, on the part of the Committee, is to place themselves, or at least their Chairperson and a smaller, 'Search' Sub-committee, into the state of knowledge that will give them the confidence to remain in at least the overall, broad-brush, control of the Project. It will need both time and, because buildings do not move, some travel. At least, due to aeroplanes, this is no longer very time-consuming.

THE COMPETITION

Having chosen a list of no more than, let us say six - or up to the most, eight Architects the Committee should contact them and ask if they are interested to compete. The competition should be in two parts. The first part, which must be written before the interview, is a short essay, describing.

1. Why the Architect would wish to obtain the commission.

2. How he/she would approach its design and execution.

3. What he/she considers would set his work apart from any other Practitioner.

4. Four referees, whether Clients, Critics, Architects, or his Mother, who would speak on his behalf, if required to, over the telephone.

The interview should expressly prohibit the submission of any design. It should consist of a showing, by the Architect, of his previous work, built or un-built. This should be followed by some questions about his attitude to the Project, his works, his testimonials, and his essay. These questions should be wide-ranging and be put by as many members of the Committee as possible. The Committe is choosing their Architect. They will expect their Architect to please them by taking notice of the Committee's own 'taste' and the knowledge that it is founded upon.

HOW TO BRING A PROJECT TO AN EXCITING 'FINISH'.

Projects go through a very similar process. The Committee will find itself capable of controlling most of these. The final stage, that of controlling the decorative surfaces, colours, materials and so on, is where the 'iconic illiteracy' of both Architect and Committee usually becomes glaring and sadly evident.

This can, again be solved, if my method is followed. The first phase of the design of the surfaces of any project must be literary. The Architect will be required to write a more-or-less extended essay describing how the finished buildng will be. This essay should not be afraid of using every literary device capable of making the building 'come alive' to the imagination. Its spaces, forms and materials should be described with graphical and poetical gusto. Its functions should be brought to life in a similar manner. This is not schedule of materials or of prices. Nor is it a contract of sale. It should be more like a film script.

The Architect must then sieve his words for their visual metaphors. Having isolated these, he must choose around ten to a dozen of them and turn their drift into short 'comic strips'. He should use a cartoonists ability to reduce a picture to its most economically delineated images. Both the 20C Le Corbusier, and the 15C Leon Battista Alberti were brilliant 'cartoonists'. No 'Architectural idea can be more powerfully, and magically, expressed than in a small drawing - like the Cinqucento woodcuts in the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili. From the panes of these 'strips' he must then choose around six to eight single 'illustrations'. He must then enlarge these, elaborating them and putting in whatever details come to his fancy. He should then caption these pictures with a fiction, a fable, of not more than fifteen lines, that tells of what is happening in his, by now certainly fictive, and hopefully somewhat fantastic, scenes.

The Architect should then write an extended fiction, a 'story' (istoria) which may bear little relation to his original building, and its uses, but which will 'make sense' of the 'scenes' that he has created in his eight 'mythoi'. The Architect will find that as he passes the material body of his building-design first into words and then into 'cartooned' images, and then back into words, and so on and so forth, that he will become possessed of a peculiarly 'general' and profound 'understanding' not only of his particular project, but of his medium in general. He will find that this 'understanding' will allow him, after a good sleep (for 'surface-scripting' is not the everyday medium of technical and spatial design) to wake in a fit state to design the symbolic surfaces of his project. He will be found to have a new ability to talk of the meanings of his colours and perhaps even patterns. This will allow him to stand up to the better-trained chromatic instincts of the ladies on the Committee. He will be able to organise their harmonies, and their clashes (both of which are needed), around a tougher literary backbone than mere 'taste' - however well-practised.

It will be clearer, now, why I advised that the first impression of the competing Architects should be given by their essays - in whatever language they worked. It is essential, in the final, 'symbolically decorative', part of any project, that the Architect writes well. The Committee has to find this person, wherever he or she exists. However, it must be admitted that, just as there are literate Architects who are poor designers, there are very good architects who are practically dyslectic. The first sort, however verbally charming, can not be used. An architect must be able to design in the gross physical and spatial dimension. But dyslectics can be used. They must learn

to work, when it comes to the detailed design of surfaces, with interior designers who understand the iconography of surfaces, shapes, patterns and colours.

All of this takes time. Time is money. But the process is not as expensive as choosing an Architect through designs. Designs take thousands of man-hours. If competitions are paid for properly, they are expensive. Of course, usually the competitors are not adequately rewarded. The Architect is expected to speculate. But why should he? No one likes being exploited. It starts the Client-Architect relation in the wrong way - like paying a piece-worker. It is even more foolish - from the Client's point of view. The Client-Committee will be forced, by the competitive route, to accept a finished design. This design must become, by the rules of such competitions, part of the contract. Yet the Committee will not have been able to have any direct influence at all upon the design! It is complete madness - especially today - under the collapsed design-culture of Deconstruction..

In the case of the Platea Eleftherias, an International Competition has already been held, an Architect chosen, and a design produced. Following my advised procedure would involve scrapping everything that has so far been achieved. So I will now turn to see how to understand the present project.

PLATEA METAXAS - 1962.

It so happens that I know this Platea from old, having begun my practical career in the Architectural bureau of the late Stavros Economou. I was there from the winter of 1962, when it briefly snowed, through the blinding heat of the summer, when our second child was born, up to the autumn of 1962. I worked on the second floor of the so-called Bank of Cyprus building at the head of Ledra Street.

It was also, by chance, the scene of my first government commission. I was asked by the Honourable Mr. Papadopoulos, Minister for Transport to the first administration of independent Cyprus, to advise him where to locate parking meters inside the walled city. My helpers and I surveyed every parked vehicle in the Old City. At that time one could walk down every street and into every backyard. I wrote the Minister a very long paper on transport policy. I explained the different cultures of capital accumulation represented by public and private transport. I explained the industrial status, and political power, of the automobile industry and how it could be disrgarded by an economy like that of Cyprus. I advised him to treat the whole old city as a single zone and allow access to it through gates for which a charge would be levied depending on the time of day - but highest during the mornng rush hour. He upraided me for wasting his time and not giving me a detailed map of where to put parking meters. Even today Cyprus, a state with no auto industry and no fuel reserves, is burdened with a hopeless transport system, a system now built-into the Cypriot lifespace by the extreme lack of suitable city-planning since independence. But I will return to this subject.

PLATEA ELEFTHERIAS - 2008

The first time I was able to inform myself as to what was now proposed for what was then, in 1962, called the Platea Metaxas, was at the new, and very beautiful, Cyprus High Commission in St. Jame's Square. An address like this is a real coup and the Republic is to be congratulated. Such a house encourages people to take one seriously. It shows 'commitment'. It was on the evening of Thursday 27th November.

Ms. Hadid was introduced very pleasantly by the High Commisisoner and the Mayor of Nicosia. The Architect's discourse that followed was suprising. To be blunt: it was embarrasing. Her speech wandered all over the place. She spent an appreciable amount of time rambling on about how hard she treated the Cypriots, "both Greek and Turk", in her office, and as Architectural Students, when she taught them at the Architecural Association. She was also, and not infrequently, offensive. When asked if the endless acreages of raw grey cement floors. ceilings and walls, wee to be finished with other materials. She murmered that "colour would be nice", and then enlarged upon this inspiration by asking her audience if they would like her to give them a "Red Square".

It became painfully obvious that Ms. Hadid was unable to say anything coherent about her design for the simple reason that she had never troubled to visit the site, let alone Nicosia or the island. She knew nothing 'real' about what was presented by her bureau. Perhaps, as an Iraqi, Ms. Hadid imagined that she knows the climate and therefore the Cypriot culture and way of living. When pressed, she replied "But if I did visit I might want to change the design". To which I wish that someone more Cypriot than I had replied "then please visit Cyprus as soon as possible"!

Replying to a question from the floor as to whether, in the heat of the summer there would be cafes to sit-at in the shade and refresh oneself with drinks, Ms. Hadid replied, somewhat grudgingly, as if the questioner did not really appreciate the

The illustration given to the audience at the Cyprus High Commission. The proposed Platea is in front of the D'Avila bastion. It was proposed that its form was a 'bridge' that would unify 'New' and 'Old'.

extraordinary beauty of her wildly writhing composition, that she supposed that she could provide some benches - always provided that she was paid for their design. Ms. Hadid is well known for providing some of her Clients with her particular brand of furniture. These are both expensive to manufacture and expensive, in fees, to commission. Ms. Hadid did not refuse outright the idea of cafe's. But neither did she welcome them, or observe, quite properly, that she would like to supervise, or otherwise be involved, in their design.

But enough of the Architect. We should not be surprised at the intellectual incoherence. There is not the smallest inkling of a plausible theoretical structure to Architectural Composition today. Nearly all of today's Architectural writing is

either trade gossip or special pleading designed to promote the Deconstructive 'star system'. The Senate of the University of Cambridge will pay Dons to lecture young architects on History and Social Theory and Environmental Physics. But they are so disenchanted by the intellectual status of contemporary Architectural Theory that Cambridge refuses to pay anyone to teach Architectural Design, as such.

A view of the proposed Platea seen from the West. A row of palm trees, shown on the night view to the right, has been omitted. It would, in any case, throw no shade. The insistent curvatures remind one of vehicular geometries. They are not those of walkers. They will encourage skate-boarders.

The Cambridge Faculty, with some of the brightest young minds in Architecture, is now relegated to merely receiving unpaid, or commercially-funded, visits from the young bloods of Architectural Practice. These impart, one assumes with a similarly incoherent level of discourse as Ms. Hadid, the latest formal 'fashions'. Alison Richards, with whom I have some slight acquaintance, when new to the Vice-Chancellorship of Cambridge, proposed, in the winter of '04-'05, to close the Faculty of Architecture. The Senate, taking this initiative further, agreed to let it live providing it give up part of its accommodation - a grave defeat in the academic turf wars, and receive no University funds for the teaching of 'design'. The Senate's final weapon, which lies ever to-hand, is that Architectural Design, having no teachable theory, must be classed as a 'vocational' subject, like plumbing, and be intellectually unrewarding to a University of the intellectual ambitions of Cambridge. Who can say that they are wrong - at the present time?

THE 'BRIDGE OF UNITY'.

One clear idea that emerged on Thursday was that the Platea was intended, it seems

by everyone up on the platform, as the means by which 'the New (City) should be united with the Old (City), and the Future with the Past'. The means to this unity was that the Platea had been designed as a 'bridge'. However, true to her Deconstructivism and her desire to 'avoid mediocrity', the bridge was formed so as to be as unlike as possible to anyone's received, or conventional, image of a bridge.

'Bridges' span declivities. Spans must generally be straight-sided. This is because the beams that support them must be straight-sided. Of late, as those in the game know, the emphasis has been on bridges, often only foot-bridges, with curved sides. But these must have recourse to tensioned arch structures to support the eccentric loads. The game today is to turn bridges into 'works of art', like the 1950's sculptures of Naum Gabo. Mercifully, nothing of this sort is proposed by Ms. Hadid. But the platea is really too wide to read as a bridge. This follows from its primary function, which is to act as the 'Trafalgar Square' of Nicosia, a city of some 350,000 persons.

The 'bridge's' undercroft is open on both sides, so that persons may walk from one moat-garden, sunken below street-level, to the other. But, seen from below, the construction loses all sense of 'bridging'. In the first place its width is nearly the size of its length. Secondly, its edges curve hugely. Those to the West even flower outwards into an extension that comes abruptly to a halt, like a balcony or a modest traffic feeder road left uncompleted, hanging up in the air. The other extension falls to the floor of the moat (that is being bridged) as a wide and gentle garden access ramp. Then a wide flight of stairs falls through the deck of the 'bridge' itelf, to land on the surface that is being bridged. Seen from below, the idea that all this curving concrete might be 'bridging' something really never comes to mind!

Thirdly, its supports are not those of a bridge. they do not emphasize that the ceiling that they contact is a 'bridge-deck' that they help span from one bank to another. These unusually-formed 'supports' seem distributed at random. Their shape is not that of vertical columns. This is because vertical columns are formally taboo within Deconstructive aesthetics. Vertical columns could recall a dim and distant memory of

A view of the proposed Platea at night. The disco-lighting scheme is shown. People will be up-lit like ghouls. Why are their no lamp standards with flattering pools of lamp-light falling from above? How do the cafés and newspaper kiosks fit in? The Platea and the ramp down to the park will be a skate-boarder's slalom, with walkers as their obstacles.

the forbidden 'old' Architecture. No, the proposed columns are bifurcated - like the letter 'V'. Sometimes they are even formed into a tripod with the foot inverted onto the floor. Thick, in order to resolve the gravitationally-irrational forces imposed upon a support of such a shape, their cement-coated form is smoothed like the grey haunches of some partially-buried saurian. The 'old' Architecure is successfully kept at bay!

There was some discussion, at the presentation, of installing cafes and shops into this undercroft-space. Such installatioins are clearly not intended in Ms Hadid's design. Not only does she fail to depict them, but her columns all lean over diagonally. Walls can do this as well. But the shops and cafes will not all have leaning walls - or perhaps they will. Ms. Hadid creates places that, in German, are called 'unheimlich' - in English 'unhomely'. It is another reflection of the Architectural illiteracy of our lifespace-design culture when the only alternatives on offer are 'homely' and 'un-homely'. Architecural culture is now so degraded as to offer only a dull box or, alternatively, a dully 'bent-about and twisted-around' box. Nothing remains even of the West's semi-literate Architectural traditions - let alone an 'improvement' and 'Modernisation' of them that could dervie from the excellent investigative scholarship of both the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries.

The preferred view, in the publicity for the project, seems to be a view of it at night. This shows the entire platea covered in upward-pointing lamps, set into its floor. It is not a flattering way to light people. It will make their legs brighter than their faces. The face, the most expressive and interesting part of our anatomy, will be thrown into darkness unless one leans forward and looks like a up-lit ghoul at Halloween! One can not but compare this proposal to the floor of a disco and believe it to be merely the invention of some young person.

One may also surmise that this lighting scheme is the product of the Architect's unwillingness to countenance, and one may say inability to imagine, a clutch of over-head lighting lamp posts that would not reduce her design to the banality of being just a plaza with nice lamps to decorate it and shed a decent illumination - instead of this space-age landing strip.

THE GEOMETRY OF THE 'PLAN'.

Only the Architects, who gaze down upon buildings like gods from above, will know what governs the seemingly-random placement of these bulky grey-cement support-haunches. For their geometrical government is given by a huge 'wallflower' pattern that this design has imposed upon the entire territory - both moat-gardens and the 'bridge' itself. The columns sit within the interstices of this inscription.

It was explained by the Project Architect, Mr. Christos Passas, that the Designers had laboured long over this giant site-floor pattern. True to the Deconstructive taboo upon legibility, the formal components of the pattern are vague. Neither circles, ellipses, octagons, squares, rectangles or anything recognisable - they can be effectively named as 'blobs'. Shapes of this sort, when placed next to each other, create triangular interstices with in-curving sides and long, stretched-out points. They are all similar. Yet none are the same. The effect is that no larger rhythms emerge. There is no hierachy of larger wholes and smaller parts in such a pattern.

The designers explained that in order to create more interest they had ordered their computer to stretch the pattern, as if made of rubber, and also to invert, between one moat-park and its neighbour beyond the Bridge', the proportion of round-cornered blob to pointy-cornered interstitial triangle.

In the two park areas this pattern had then been 'realised' by making the pointy triangles into planting beds and the areas of blob into raw cement concrete paving. The expanses of grey were, it seemed, to be further divided with a few grooves like expansion joints in warehouse flooors. These would make it clear that the original identity of the geometrical elements were shapeless blobs. If, armed with this intelligence, one were to walk from one moat garden to another, and notice that the planting beds of the one were larger in the other, then one would know that Ms. Hadid's enormously powerful IT equipment had digitally and computationlly stretched the pattern to this effect. But as no one will know this, and as the shapes very successfully communicate nothing recognisble, the contribution of this design-geometry to any measurable cerebral activity will be a resounding zero.

THE DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF CYPRUS.

Which brings me to my analysis of the role of this design in the culture of Cyprus. I will put aside, for the moment, the fact that Ms. Hadid has never been to the island. People buy things made elsewhere, import them, and are very happy with them. This applies to most of the moveable goods people use in Cyprus. Her self-induced 'foreign-ness' should not be held against the Architect as a matter of principle. However, it does bring to mind the peculiar circumstances of the place - Cyprus.

Now, as from 1960. an independent Republic, Cyprus had a difficult birth. Damaged at her gestation by Britain, and then the USA, Cyprus can be seen, in the words of my wife's late uncle, the painter George Pol Georghiou, as "too big to be an island and too small to be a state". No longer an island, as her North is now de-facto (though not and hopefully never, de jure) part of Turkey, she has not, in my opinion, yet achieved an internal sense of State-hood.

This unhappy history may serve to acentuate an attitude to 'History' in-the-large which is arguably shared by some of the states born of the mid-20C retreat of the European Colonial Empires. It is a desire to 'start again' and build a world that owes very little, or nothing, to the history which saw them always occupied by alien governments. In the case of the little island of Cyprus, her history has seen her as part of every empire of consequence in the Eastern Mediterranean. When was Cyprus ever truly 'independent' in the normal sense of the word - before 1960?

Yet what strong nation, even, is ever entirely free from constraints? Everyone must live within complexes of alliances and protective pacts. The British military, for example, owed a debt to the USA over the Falklands - a debt that is being paid in Iraq and Afganistan. Indeed the troubles of Cyprus can be seen to stem almost entirely from the fears of the USA that Britain could not hold Cyprus within the Empire and that the island might become a Mediterranean Cuba. The Allies had to intervene in Greece to keep her out of the Communist sphere, as had been agreed with Russia at Yalta. It is clear that sharing the Orthodox version of Christianity is a bond that allows, today, Cypriot entrepreneurs to work in the former Soviet Empire. But encouraging, or at least allowing, a Turkish invasion, was an unnecessarily heavy-handed form of proxy 'Americanisation'. Cyprus today, lacks weighty

protectors. She has learnt that 'freedom' is at best an illusion, at worst a misleading mirage. The reality is that there are only complexes of power - some of which allow one to prosper, and others which spell doom.

It is a commonplace that states are born of violence. War has been their constant accompaniment. Today, for purely technological reasons, states do their best to avoid major conflicts. The arts of peace, which were never unimportant to 'state-hood', have come to the fore. Language, religion and race have been of use to the arts of peace. They have also been of use, and mis-use, for wars. Fortifications had their uses for war. But buildings have been of little military use since the invention of the cannon, and especially the rifled gun, to speak nothing of aircraft and missiles. Buildings do, however, play a major part in the cultivation of statehood through the arts of peace.

It is characteristic of the State to reify (a useful, but little-used English verb meaning 'realise' or 'make real') itself in the buildings which house its major institutions - such as its Legislature, the Ministries of its Executive and the Courts of its Justiciary. Then there is its Military and Police, its University and Hospitals. Some of these will be devolved to its cities and towns. But all are, in fact, agents of the state in its modern form. All receive State funds.

The State, as an entity, a 'personality' and a 'being' - over and above the people and their city, or cities, was never effectively reified by the Ancient Hellenes. Even the Latins, when they had assembled, by conquest, their huge empire, could find no better legal 'personality' for what they termed the 'res publica' than that of a gigantically bureaucratised domestic household (located on the Palatine Hill) with the Emperor as the (deified) paterfamilias holding the power of life or death over his thousasnds of 'familial' dependents.

The State is an entity which emerged in the West. The only cultures which could resist the West were those which already had some version of State-hood, such ss China. The 20C also saw the rise of the totalitarian state. This recent history has led to an attitude of extreme caution towards the amount of power that one may entrust to the institutions, functionaries, agents and officers of 'the State'.

ORIGINS OF THE WESTERN STATE

The Western state began its contemporary existence in the small city-states of Renaissance Italy. The Latins were as tired of being conquered by the Franks and the Germans as they were of the feudal political system, and the Christian taboos, that seemed to always direct the Germanic tribes towards going to war every summer. Feudalism seemed incapable of turning Europe towards the arts of peace. The Italians proposed that a Prince should rule over a state with a unitary boundary, however small, rather than a patch here and another patch there, as in the quarterings, and even sixteenings or thirtysecondings of the gigantic and highly decorative shields that proclaimed ownership of fiefs by blood descent. The Cincquecento state imagined itself as being on a river that led to the sea. Ships could trade out of it to the Mediterranean - and even further. Trade requires credit and so banking was re-invented. Banks require protection from marauders, so a military were required. The Italian states, however, would often hire their protectors. One of the most notable of these 'condottiere' was Englishman John Hawkwood. He would cheerfully change sides when his contract ended and the fee of the 'enemy' more attractive. The feudal oath of loyalty become open to tender. But this avoided the development of a military

aristocracy who might distract, and therefore endanger, the essentially commercial ambitions of this new, Italian, Mediterranean, Renaissance, version of statehood.

Someone was required to organise this increasingly rational machine. Machiavelli termed him Il Principe (the Prince): meaning only Number One, the First Person. He expressly excuded blood descent as a pre-requisite for power, placing political competence higher. These cities, and their 'Principes', wee obliged to support a Court. This was more than the merely social mechanism found in tribal or nomadic communities. For it is evident that these courts competed, sometimes very hard, to attract the leaders of the Letters, Sciences and the Arts. This was so that the general level of intellectual life should be s high as possible. The purpose of this was many-sided. It trained the minds of those who governed the Princely bureacracy of the state. It increased the knowledge and skill of its scientists, military men and diplomats. It increased the levels of taste, judgment and skill 'built-into' to the goods that the Court of the City-State both consumed as well as exported to promote their commerce.

Behind all of this, was the need to escape not only from Feudalism, but also from the rule of the Christian Church. To promote trade, and manufactures, if even mainly of luxuries, it was necessary to create credit and charge interest on loans.

It was for this reason, in particular, that the new City-states chose to 'put on the clothes' of the Ancient Romans. Not that this was an 'archaeological' enterprise in the sense that we understand that word today. Classicism was adopted as the 'style' of these new States because it was proposed to be the style of the Golden Age - the age before the Fall of Man. This was a time prior, even, to the advent of Christianity. Classicism was set in a mythical, extra-historical time denoted as 'Antiquity'. Its appearances might have been copied from Italy's Roman ruins, but its spirit was truer to the myths of pre-Christian Hellas. Such was the fluid power of this dreamt-up 'city-state-culture' that it could be shaped to suit any need. It lasted 500 years - from the 15C up to WWII and the mid- 20C.

I retail this reason behind the adoption of Classicism at the birth of the Western State because it is not without relevance to Cyprus, a newly-born state that has an authentic Hellenic heritage and is now, officially, after joining the EU, part of the 'West'.

But Hellenes, in particular, are almost certainly bound to misunderstand this history. They may think, because they are Greek, that the Renaissance in the West represented a 'return' to the proper guise of the Polis. Nothing could be more incorrect. The Classical Hellenic world had become the Eastern (Roman) Empire. This represented, by the time of the Latin Renaisance, more than 1000 years of being 'reified' in a Post-Antique Orthodox Christian style!

THE ABBE SUGER.

The French church, in 1150, had deliberately invented a new style partly inspired by what they found in the East, on the Crusades. Called *opus Francigenum* at the time, it was only called 'Gothic' by Vasari as a term of Italian Renaissance abuse. Its inventor, the Abbot Suger, had a theory that *lux* was the mundane light of the day, *lumen* was the light that passed a stained glass window and *illumination* was the light of sacred inspiration after it had entered the believer. Suger's ambition, and his inituition, was to bewitch his Frankish worshippers with glass walls that played the two ends of the spectrum, red and blue, against each other. The Frankish cathedral aimed, and

ultimately almost succeeded, in becoming a building of glass painted to seem like jewels. Suger's ambition was to intoxicate his flock with coloured lights. Las Vegas, today, exploits, on the scale of a whole city, the same optical synapses.

I mean to say, by this, that, in the 1450's, no living person had, for some forty generations, any direct experience of how the Ancient Hellenes even talked, let alone dressed and built their buildings. The Latin Renaissance was a brilliant fiction, created to serve the needs of the new states, and all without any proper archaeoloogical 'proofs by texts'. Where are the manuals of the Ancient Hellenic wardrobe, precise notations of their dances, or their particular cuisine? It was scattered all over the scraps of literature that had survived, and those mostly by the hands of copyists, Mohametans, or clerkly, that is Christian, commentators.

Classicism, the style 'All' Antica', was adopted **because** it *was* distant, unknown and lacking in practical traditions and taboos. It was so 'old' that no authoritative voice from its remote past could interfere with the practical needs of the New States.

THE 'STATE STYLE' OF BRITAIN.

I can bring this subject of the 'style of a state-hood' more up-to-date, and within my own experience. My firm and I were commissioned to design two of the large summer exhibitions held in Kensington's Victoria and Albert Museum. The first was called "Pugin: A Gothic Passion". It described the life and works of Augustus Welby Pugin, the Architect of the Palace of Westminster (commonly known as the Houses of Parliament). The second was called "Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain". I discovered, while working on the first, that when the the old parliament was destroyed by fire in 1837, everyone expected the new to be re-built in the classical style that had ruled British Architecture for 200 years - since the time of Charles I, in the early 1600's. The decision to use Gothic was part of the political strategy of the Austrian Chancellor Metternich in which Post-Napoleonic Europe was to ensure that every country was to be provided with a Monarch. The history of Greece, after her freedom from the Ottoman's, is a typical example of this policy.

Disraeli promoted a political grouping called "New Britain", which felt that Roman and Greek clssicism was tainted by its association with the State Style of Napoleon's Empire and the French Revolution from which it had been born. They promoted the idea that the state style of Britain should be 'Gothic'. But what was 'Gothic'? Up to that point it had been an eighteenth century 'party' style adopted for horror novels, country cottages and crazy castles that collapsed in the night, like those of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill. It was not for serious entities like the primary place of government of a leading European State!. The design-competition was won by Charles Barry: an Architect of skill and taste. He had no capability in the Gothic style. But he, like some of the other contestants, had had the foresight to hire the young Pugin to apply a covering of Gothic details upon his wholly 'classical' composition. Having won the contest, Barry paid-off the young Pugin. However, when the time came for the fine detail, no one could be found who could invent a plausible 'Gothicisation' except Augustus Welby. So he was put under contract again. Pugin, whose father was a French Huguenot refugee from Catholic persecution, would journey to France and buy-up pieces of ruin. He loved sailing and lived in a seaside house with a smuggler's passage. Sailing them back, he would demonstrate thirteenth century French Gothic (which was his preference), to the mid-nineteenth century stone carvers of Westminster, who, like Pugin himself were not even remotely 'Gothic' in their culture!

Fascinated by this incredible history of the imposition of a stylistic 'fiction', I wanted to illustrate it in the exhibition. I was prevented. The same taboo was imposed on the larger, and much more important exhibition of the reign of Victoria, which opened during the (New Britannia!) Blair period, in 2000. This explained the huge changes in British Culture, such as the emancipation of women and the origins of universal education, as role-playing and 'gaming' the changes that were being required by industrialisation. But to reveal that the completely outdated and 'unknown' Gothic style had been chosen, in the early 19C, so as to politically reinforce the institution of Monarchy, and that this had become, over the succeeding years, the style of the Establishment of State, was felt to undermine the 'ancient' British political order.

I was gently persuaded, in a very English way, that this was not a subject that needed to be aired. Classicism was all right for banks, and 'Modern' if one was too poor to afford ornament, But Monarchies, Churches and Institutions of learning and philanthropy were still best clothed in Gothic! One may imagine that such sentiments are long dead and gone. They are not. They are merely suppressed, waiting to re-emerge.

Personal proof of the truth of this extraordinary fact was again vouchsafed to me when I was chosen to be one of the five Architects competing to re-build the fire-damaged rooms at Windsor Castle. An interesting fact here is that the painted wooden panelling was blistered and charred by the heat. The parts that had been gilded, even with the thinnest gold leaf, were perfectly unburnt. Gold leaf is an effective fire protection! We were asked to design the Banqquting hall, an immense room which, before the fire, had suits of armour and trophies down the wall facing the tall windows. The ceiling was wooden, panelled, and covered in the hundreds of knightly coats of armour. I found the whole aesthetically distasteful. It reminded me of the railway dining hallls at which our school train would stop as it took us from Delhi up to Rawalpindi before bussing us up to Sirinagar, and out WWII Prep School. But, after our two exhibitions at the V&A JOA had been typed as 'experts in the Gothic style'. My office had merely done a good professional job. Sometimes one does a better job if the subject is distasteful. One keeps a cool head.

It was made rather clear, at the Competition briefing, that something 'Gothicky' and Castley' was expected. Our scheme was judged "the most original". This is always the kiss of death from the English Establishment. I had read that the coronation ceremony descended from that of the Persian Kings. So I gently explored the Oriental origins of Gothic. The winning Architect was more direct. He proposed, and built, spreading Gothic arches in solid 'English Oak'. How could he lose?

CYPRUS

So, after this demonstration how entirely artificial is the invention and assumption of a 'state style', what could be the proper and useful 'fictive style' of the new Republic of Cyprus?

Certainly it could not be manifested, like the style of Saddam Hussein, by triumphal arches of gigantic scimitars. Saddam's style was violent, and militaristic, calling down tragedy upon the Iraquis. Even so, any neighbour of Turkey will know of the endless and native militarism of that culture - and no one more than the Greeks. Only a few weeks back one of their politicians intoned that "Every Turk is born a soldier".

It has been argued that the Turkish invasion of 1974 could have been repulsed. It was a somewhat amateurish attack, which came ashore in boats rather than proper front-loading landing craft. The Turks were never intended, by NATO, to carry-out amphibious landings. The weapons to repel it were easily purchaseable, on the open market, by any sovereign state, as Cyprus was. Three-man teams of Egyptian hand-held-rocket troops stopped an Israeli tank attack in the open, coverless, Negev desert. Similar missiles shoot down any helicopter and keep aircraft so high (3000 metres) that their bombs become inaccurate. The only dangerous arm is the oldest one, artillery. One can not shoot down a shell. But Makarios was not a military man. But then neither am I. So it probably best to cut such arguments short.

But one can not help feeling that the proper model for Cyprus, surrounded by Islamic states who have still not grown out of their Mediaeval religion, should be small countries like Switzerland and Israel. These are fully militarised democracies. Every person of military age keeps, or used to keep, their weapons at home. Perhaps, Greek politics being what it is, this was a model that could not be followed!

So the Cypriot Republic has no option other than a statehood manifested not by the weapons of war but by the arts of peace. In this ambition, of course, Cyprus joins all of the other states of Europe. All of the EU have been at war during the 20C. All seek to achieve a 'statehood' that does not rely, as it has for millenia, upon their ability to mount military machines.

So Cyprus, amongst the newest entrants, has the chance to raise its status by its cultivation of such a 'statehood'. The principal 'art' here is undoubtedly Architecture, and beyond that, City-planning. I have already discussed Architecture. To this I have nothing to add. The contemporary culture of Deconstruction is so decayed that almost any rejection of it could succeed. Certainly it is not a question of money. It is a question of culture, organisation, method and a certain amount of luck. In this field one could say that Cyprus has almost nothing to lose - its reputation for 20C, Modern, Architecure is zero. Cyprus has everything to gain.

CITY-PLANNING

I turn, therefore to city-planning - a category nearer to this project for the Platea Eleftherias.

The island has, in this category, an unusual problem. Britain had three 'colonies' in the Mediterranean: Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus. The Empire, being maritime, and having, 100 years ago, more battleships than all of the other navies of the world combined, liked collecting islands. Gibraltar is a mere rock. Malta is not much larger. But Cyprus is a proper land, a territory. It has fields, pastures, orchards, forests, mountains and plains. The Cypriots lived on these in villages and towns. today they live in cities.

The French Imperial Colonists left well-planned towns and cities. So did the Italians, the Dutch, the Germans and the Russians. The English left a shambles of overgrown 'villages'. Even the famous Lutyens Plan for New Delhi is a sort of celestial village in which all the princely bungalows circle, in planetary rings, around the sun of Government House:- the Viceroys giant bungalow. This plan, the finest flower of Britain's Imperial architectural culture, has proved completely useless as the organising backbone of a proper, modern, city of commerce, manufactures and

democratic politics. Its original central crossroads sported four Museums - the characteristically Imperial view of 'Kultur' as dead media fit only for 'recreation'. No fresh food market is anywhere to be seen. It has been reduced to a shopping arcade, Connaught Circus, which is removed from the main plan structure altogether. The Llegislature, as one might expect of Imperial India, is also removed from any rational plan position and made into a self-contained 'planet'. Its endless circular collonnade allows the Parliamentarians a futile perambulation that never comes to 'address' the city and nation. Conversely, Lutyens's politically illiterate plan never revealed the Legislature as a component of either the civic or the national structure. It is merely another inexplicability in the Lewis Carroll 'istoria' of 'landscape'.

Britain's native cities are the same. The only one's of them that were 'planned' were those dedicated to domestic luxury and social leisure - such as Bath, Brighton Edinburgh and the West End of London. Few of them were ever planned, or have ever been re-planned, as they were on the Continent, to function as politically-orgnised engines of exchange, manufacture and trade.

Even fewer were planned, as they began to be on the Continent, via the French Beaux Arts, during the end of the 19C and beginning of the 20C, to serve as the built expression of the politico-Economic Constitution of their city-state. To live in such a city is to know how your city works by seeing its political economy, and even its ethic, built before your eyes and under your feet. No better lesson in 'civics' can ever be 'taught'. For the knowledge enters 'by experience' and is therefore easy to clarify, by notation and explanation.

Thessaloniki, after the 1917 fire, was one of these latter. It was comprehensively re-planned, with a modernised 'cardo' and 'decumanus', after an international competition which Thomas Maw, the British city-planner lost to Ernest Hebrard. Hebrard was a French city-planner serving on the Balkan front. He was found, and commissioned by Venizelos, to create a plan that is almost perfect in its suitability to the Mediterranean life. He placed the fresh-food market at the city's centre. It still serves a desnely-packed population of some 80,000 persons, all of whom can reach it by foot and auto-bus. Nor are then any supermarkets in the centre. Maw planned a city of carriage-drives, like a verdant cemetery. He went on to dis-urbanise Canada.

Cyprus, on Independence Day, back in 1960, should have cut its ties with English town planning and begun, immediately, to research the techniques used by her 'Mediterranean' neighbours. The new constructions of this arid zone, from Bombay to Sao Paulo are, one readily admits, uniformly ugly. Like Thessaloniki, these ancient cultures, the places in which all the Architectures of the ancient world orginally arose, no longer understand the media of Architecture and City-Design. But at least their way of life, like that of Cyprus, remains inherently urban, and capable of easy reconstruction into an urbane culture. The landscapes of the temperate zones of Northern Europe, whose recent buildings are equally, if not more, ugly, can hide their disfigured lifespace behind 30M-high trees and bushy hedges. The 'Mediterranean' aridity of Cyprus lays late-20C illiteracy bare for all to see under a sun like a theatre spotlight. Cyprus now has the worst of all worlds - a dis-urbanised lifestyle whose illiterate architecture lacks the verdure to obscure it. Anything would have been better than the abysmal spatial chaos constructed, under the influence of English 'picturesque', anti-urbane, ideas, during the first half century of independence. No more time should be wasted here.

I come, then, finally, and in the light of all that I have described, to the Hadid scheme for Eleftherias.

MY ADVICE.

I conclude the following.

1. the Undercroft is useless as a 'public space of 'sociability'. Anyone who can remember the musical 'West Side Story' may remember the gang fight scene. It took place under a motorway bridge. It was set in such a place because the underneath of a bridge has no social identity. It has no social name which would prescribe its social 'scene'. It is 'nameless'. It is not a threshold to a house. It is not the pavement of a street. It is not the space of a square. No houses overlook it, to police it. These are the famous "eyes on the street" of the late and much admired Jane Jacobs, the American author of the "Rise and Fall of the Great American City". The under-neaths of bridges are what are known, in city-planning circles, as 'indefensible space". They encourage delinquency and require policing. The 'undercroft' should be enclosed. Its space can be occupied by storage, cafes, car parking or other functions provided that they can only be accessed directly, like a cave, from the moat gardens.

2. The proposed Platea is far too small to serve a city of 350,000 persons as a place of assembly and a popular 'tribune' from which speakers can address a demonstration. Why keep it where it is, crammed up against the D'Avila Bastion? It should be built, over the moat, to stretch all the way between the D'avila and the Tripoli bastions. The function of this space is to act as the Tribune of the People. It is not a traffic route. It can have trees, big trees, but it is not a park. Parks are what the English build when they can think of nothing better. An example of that will be the 2012 Olympic site in East London. Britain was expected, by all those who applauded her 'victory' in winning the Olympic bid, to show how the dominant Anglo (American) culture would build an exemplary piece of 21C city. What did the British do? They built a park. Like the Millenium dome, it will be a shambles. The British have, today, no urbanistic ideas at all.

2.1. Pulling the main Platea away from the D'Avila would free-up any archaeological conflicts between the new and old constructions. The present roadway may even be left as it is. That will suit the traffic-engineers.

2.2. Placing it mid-way between the two bastions would give more room to build cafe's on each side. These should be formed as four two-storey rectangular pavilions of large scale. One should be at each corner. The cafe's and shops should face each other across a narrow covered-market route, but with a high ceiling. The corners of a powerful space must always be built-up. It is question of 'scale'. The scale must be large. But cafe's are best if small. It is possible, if the right architecture is used, to combine them both. But a sophistication is needed that is largely lacking in the contemporary profession.

2.3. Entrances to Solomos and what should now be called Eleftheria Street, up against the D'Avila bastion, would be down the narrow, but monumental, covered passages. This would make a pleasant way of walking from the buses in Solomos down to the head of Ledra Street. At the moment there is only the pavement down Regina Street - which is, as with much of the old city, around one metre wide on each side! This amiable formality would make of the Platea a 'serious' place. Trafalgar Square is

'serious', It has no cafes, but it is beautiful and young people still bathe, when slightly intoxicated, in the fountains.

2.4. Monumental shade arcades, interspersed with trees, both of large scale, like those fronting St. Peter's in Rome, should stretch between the pavilions on the old city side. But the side to Leoforos Omiros should be open. It could have some trees, and maybe even some arcade, at each end. But the centre must be open to Omiros.

2.5. The paving of the Square should stretch across the tarmac of this busy road. Drivers should feel, by this physical change of surface, such as bands of stone cobbles, that they are driving acorss Eleftheria Square. They should feel this important 'social space' has, for the moment 'conceptually dominated' them, without physically impeding their private progress. The design-principle here, which I have often used, is to give the impressioin that the project was either much 'grander' in the past, or will be much grander in the future. It is either the memory of an ancient ruin or the foreshadowing of a future splendour. To merely work within the constrants of the present, especially within the collapsed city-design culture of 'Decon', is foolish at best and cowardly at worst. I call this technique 'Shadowing'.

2.6. Bollards should allow two entrances from this road. Two entrances will be better than one because, as in the Beaux-Arts system of design, the central axis should never be a traffic-route. Mobile refreshment-sellers and 'buskers' could be licensed, by the Municipality, to 'camp' under the generous arcades.

3. The 'square' should be a definite rectangle, not an un-nameable shape. The present design is is silly - a mere scribble of soft nihility. Cyprus has nothing to be ashamed-of. She is more sinned against than sinned. Cyprus has no need to cultivate the broken-down 'humility' of Deconstruction so popular in Germany. Cyprus has a licence to be strong and straightforward in a way that the broken cultures of Europe, with their history of war and genocide, remain embarrased to follow. The Cypriot Tribune Square should have strongly-acentuated corners. It should have a central stage, backing on to the old walls and looking out to the new city, on which speakers, musicians and other 'performers', could be seen. The general ambition should be 'symbolic'. It would be good if the speaker mounted a monument, as they do in Trafalgar Square.

4. The present scheme should be cancelled, and the Architect paid-off. Unreasonable demands for fees should be resisted, even in court. Ms. Hadid, in not even visiting the island, has hardly made a good case for her design. A mere showing of the videotape will illustrate her incoherent performance, and her frequent, and deliberate, disregard of her Client's feelings. It will be argued that this is the personality of a Great Artist. A Prima Donna. But the display alone should persuade any Judge that Ms. Hadid has no serious personal interest in the project.

4.1. Ms. Hadid circulated briefly amongst her illustrious audience before the presentation. But It was notable that she remained steadfastly seated on the stage for the whole hour after it while her audience continued to take the excellent refreshments and talk amongst themselves. Not even for one second did she leave the security of her dais and come down to discuss things with the Cypriot artistic and political Establishment - some of whom had flown thousands of miles to be there, see the project and meet the Architect. It was yet another example of her rudeness. But what was she going to say? She gave a persuasive impression of knowing nothing of Cypriot culture, ancient or modern, and caring to know even less. One could expect only further

incoherences, which she wisely chose to forego.

4.2. It can reasonably be argued that this design is not by Zaha Hadid herself. It is by one by her trusted and senior assistants - Mr. Christos Passas. Hadid has approximately 80 Architects in her bureau, with projects, some enormous and all very 'prestigous' - scattered all over the globe. Her latest appointment is, along with the ubiquitous Lord Foster, to re-plan Mecca. She was careful to remind us of her eminence in the promotional literature placed on every seat. The impression that she gave was that there were many demands upon her huge and unique talent and that it was up to others, such as the Cypriots in her staff, to attract her attention to the project of Eleftheria Square. One could be allowed to imagine that this Architect might feel the loss of this project as much as she has felt its acquisition - hardly at all.

As to Cyprus, the Republic should pursue this project of a Tribune for the People of Nicosia, and through them, the whole state, with more seriousness. Projects of this sort are the best way for the Republic to earn the respect it so badly needs in the EU. Which is not to say that the result need not be beautiful, colourful and gay. Never forget one of the best kept secrets of Classicism. This is that the Parthenon, as with all Hellenic Temples, was stained and polished with beautful transparent colours, and even decorative patterns, until it shone in the sun like a new automobile. One has only to read the latest book on Pompeii, by Professor Mary Beard. A house there was recently excavated in which all the equipment of the Hellenic decorative artists was found. Professor Beard devotes thirty pages to it, and to Classical decoration in general. The truth has taken too long to surface, for it was known in 1760 - when Pompeii was excavated! But the Establishment can not accept that their beloved Parthenon was coloured-up. So, being unable to accept this they have remained in deliberate ignorance of the fact that decoration, and especially colour, is the 'textual' dimension of Architecture, and the symbolic dimension of the human lifespace.

Everyone is to blame for this, and not least the Professors who, because there is no theory, have lost their authority and must earn their living by entertaining ignorant adolescents.

The bleached-white bones of All' Antica is a Latin 'fiction' invented by the Renaissance. It is not the truth!. That lies in the past and in the future, but not in the present.

John Outram.   3rd December 2008.

NOTE.

The opinions expressed in this report are entirely my own and arrived at without any other knowledge of the project, or the competition, etc. beyond what was provided at the Cyprus High Commission on Thursday 27th November 2008. They are provided solely at the request of Mrs. Edmee Leventis. I have no other interest in this project beyond the provision of this advice, which is freely given.