

STOKOLMEN OMELETEN IN THREE ACTS

About Wabi House in Stockholm by Rune, Claesson and Koivisto

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Descartes proposed that revolutionary "Je pense donc je suis". The thought, the idea, is essential to create. Knowing the what and the how is as necessary to make architecture as it is to make a French omelet. With two eggs, a deep plate and a fork, and a little bit of oil and a frying pan and fire and a pinch of salt, you can make a French omelette. But first you have to know what and how. If any of the above-mentioned elements is missing, it cannot be made. If, having all the ingredients, one did not know what or how to do it, it would be useless either. If we were to put a monkey in front of it all, we would never arrive at the French omelette, because it does not think and cannot think, and cannot have ideas. Not even the French omelette.

Architecture is as simple and precise as that. It is only necessary to know the what and the how, and to have the necessary elements to build it. Well, with that precision, which is wisdom, and knowing how to combine only the essential number of elements to build it, which is skill, and with that something else that is able to move us, which is art, some young Swedish architects, splendid architects, have created this house out of series. The WABI House in the center of Stockholm.

ACT TWO. LESS IS MUCH MORE

Mies Van der Rohe launched that controversial cry of "More with less". [And he materialized it in an exemplary way in the Farnsworth House. And although Venturi later said that it was boring, he was not right. Ingenuity has always envied intelligence, which it has always, brilliantly, attacked. But truth always prevails. And, with it, Goodness and Beauty.

Doesn't it seem a curious coincidence that this stupendous house of Rune, Claesson and Koivisto has so much to do with that of Mies Van der Rohe? Or with the simple house of Le Corbusier for his mother on the edge of Lake Geneva? It is not for nothing that this great little house of the Swedes enjoys the same precise wisdom of the former and the wise naturalness of the latter. This "less" of the Wabi House is "much more".

ACT THREE. THINK, SAY, DO

Greta Garbo used to say: "You men think one thing, say something else and do something else". The diva hurled this reproach at her male opponent in a well-known film by Ingmar Bergman. Think, say, do, anything!

Artistic creation, and architectural creation to a greater degree, is all the more accurate the more coherence there is between thinking, saying and doing. To think, to generate an idea. To say, to draw to transmit it with dimensions, that idea. To do, to build to materialize it, that idea. And, in addition, that this matter, put on its feet, has that "something more" that, moving our feelings, awakens us to Beauty.

Well, that certainty, that coherence between thinking, saying and doing, is evident in the work of Rune, Claesson and Koivisto, and it also appears in it, radiant, Beauty. And Beauty appears in it, radiant, and does that of *adecuatio rei et intelecto* ring a bell? The scholastic proposal so often wielded by Mies Van der Rohe is here embodied with astonishing clarity. The undeniable beauty of the WABI House of Swedish architects is rooted in the truth of their radical approaches.

EPILOGUE

Last summer in Jyväskylä, at the Alvar Aalto Symposium, after my lecture I was assaulted by three Swedish architects asking me about architecture. We talked at length. In the avalanche of their ideas still so overflowing and in the conviction of mine already so refined, we found endless coincidences. We debated with the enthusiasm of those who sense that Architecture, the most sublime and powerful of the Fine Arts, is possible. And with the conviction of those who know, because I have touched it, that Architecture is something real: Beauty made matter.

They took me to my Casa Gaspar and I accompanied them to my admiration for Souto de Moura, my interest in Chipperfield, my discovery of Stephan Beel or my devotion to Utzon.

We passionately discuss concepts such as sobriety, austerity or freedom of spirit in architectural spaces. We agreed on how Time and Duration, and Light and Gravity, are palpable in Architecture. And we extended talking about dimension and proportion and scale and so many things that are, more than reflected, made real in this Wabi House in Stockholm: A refuge for Beauty within the reach of all men.