

JUHLASEMINAARI  
25.8.2023  
DIPOLI



**REIMA  
PIETILÄ  
100**



*Chairperson, Assoc. Prof. Dr.Phil.,  
architect Panu Savolainen*

### Morning 10.00-12.15 (ENG)

Opening, Avaussanat	Prof. Pirjo Sanaksenaho
Greetings from the Finnish Association of Architects / Suomen arkkitehtiliiton tervehdys	President of SAFA Asko Takala
Pietilä, My Master: Memories of working with Reima Pietilä	Prof. Roger Connah
Modernism in Formation: Reima Pietilä's early career, PTAH and Le Carré Bleu	Dr.Phil. Petteri Kummala
Pietilä in the Circle of Team Ten	Prof., Dr. Sc., architect Aino Niskanen
Dipoli, The Oxymoron	Prof., Dr.Sc., architect Moises Royo

### Lunch 12.15-13.30

#### Dipoli Tour (ENG) 12.45-13.30

Architect Toni Laurila, ALA  
Architects (max. 20 persons)

*Puheenjohtaja, arkkitehti  
Sirikka-Liisa Jetsonen*

### Iltopäivä 13.30-15.30 (FI)

Visionääristä arkkitehtuuria: Reima Pietilän luontoarkkitehtuuri ja "shamanistinen" suunnittelumetodi	Prof., TKT, arkkitehti Kaisa Broner-Bauer
Suomen kieli ja suomalaisuus Reima Pietilän suunnittelutyössä. Filosofista tarkastelua	FT, arkkitehti Pekka Passinmäki
"Suunnitelkaa paikkoja, ei rakennuksia!" – Pietilän ajatusten ajankohtaisuudesta	TkT, FM, arkkitehti Lauri Louekari
Dipolin unelmiksi jääneet seuraajat – Pietilän toteutumattomia suunnitelmia 1960-luvulta	Arkkitehti Kristo Vesikansa

### Kahvitauko / Coffee Break 15.30-16.00

*Paneelin juontaja  
Aino Niskanen*

### Paneeli 16.00-17.45 (FI)

Pietilä vaikuttajana: näkymiä Pietilän merkitykseen kirjoittajana ja keskustelijana	Arkkitehti Jorma Mukala
Pietilän merkityksestä ja asemasta suomalaisen modernin arkkitehtuurin historiassa	Keskustelijoina Kaisa Broner-Bauer, Vilhelm Helander, Olli-Paavo Koponen, Jorma Mukala
Yleisön kysymyksiä ja kommentteja	

#### Dipoli-kierros (FI) 17.45-18.30

Arkkitehti Toni Laurila, ALA  
Arkkitehdit (max. 20 hlö)

### Viinitarjoilua / Wine 17.45-19.15

Roger Connah  
**PROFESSOR**



After finishing a decade (2010-2020) as Professor in Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada) and since Covid, he is now occupied in bringing together the many residual texts on Reima Pietilä written for various events/requests over thirty years, many unpublished. One of these works will be the recorded journals kept during private discussions in 1989 with Reima Pietilä brought together into a forthcoming book called (after Saarikoski) *Bear's Sleep is Bear's Work*. Further forthcoming publications include *My Mother as Samuel Beckett* (a mémoire) 2023; *Who's Afraid of Fashion* (A Notebook on Azzedine Alaïa) 2023; *In Which Corner of Cafe Hawelka did He Sit* (Critical Fictions on Gunther Domenig) 2024; *Merton Our Contemporary* three essays on The Trappist monk Thomas Merton (2024). He currently lives out his retreat between Wales and India; in The Hotel Architecture (Ruthin, North Wales) and as Academic Board Member at Avani Institute of Design, Thamaraserry, Kerala).

## Pietilä, My Master

Memories of working with Reima Pietilä



*Reima Pietilä 1982*

### What's Wrong with This Picture?

The picture of architecture Pietilä created as a practice and the picture interpreted by professionals or the public often found little consensus or agreement.

In literary terms, Pietilä was constantly self-reflexive. *Self-reflexive* implies being marked by or making reference to artificiality or contrivance.

He lived in a meta-world before this world was saturated by Postmodern/ Post-Structuralist thinking and Facebook. He would search Mario Pei's *Glossary of Linguistic Terminology* for an architectural trace.

Unusual for a Finnish architect, he wrote Intensely, using text as contest and exploration.

He used the space between both word and image.

Architecture could be artificial and contrived. But he knew what he meant by this. He was fond of the word ‘fiction.’

He was also fond of speaking of himself in the *third person*. In our conversations he would often slip in and out of himself as ‘Pietilä’. This third-person world was a relief from unacceptable familiarity and convention. ‘Pietilä’ was of course the name of a joint practice along with his wife Raili.

But Pietilä would also be the name on an envelope or a Jencks’ mapping. It was the name on an account or the name on a large, detailed drawing

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Charles Jencks started those drawings called the *Evolutionary Tree* in 1971. Pietilä would reproduce them on the copy machine. With scissors I remember him cutting and removing the name Pietilä. He would re-insert his own name in different places on the diagram.

He would take a copy of his name and point to it on the page and say: *there’s Pietilä!* He would then immediately re-situate himself amongst the world architects. Whether Jencks put him next to the architect Hugo Haring or Erich Mendelsohn, he would insist on moving himself and de-stabilizing this picture.

He was irresistible, and architecture unsettling. He was an intermediate Modernist. He would move his name to see if he fitted ‘better’ next to Archigram, or Johansson (Mummer’s Theatre). If he saw the names of Robert Venturi or Charles Moore, Emilio Ambasz or James Wines’ SITE, he would tempt the connections by placing his name next to these.

This game was neither as ridiculous nor as irrelevant as it may have seemed to a stranger.

It was never only a game.

*Where does Pietilä fit? What’s wrong with this picture?*

To those who knew only the picture of the man not the work, they saw the charm. They saw a low-voiced mysticism turn poetic. They witnessed his own wanderings into architecture. For those who knew him personally, they would see his energy later lessen.

It had to.

He would grow tired, but you had to know him to see it.

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A mischief however remained up until the end.

Pietilä was too good an architect, and too much prowling the borders of architecture and philosophy not to know that nature, landscape and language were but alibis for the architectural sequence, for its artificiality and contrivance.

Any method was always against method. His alertness to mythology and metaphor, anthropology and analogy, made him reassuringly playful before someone else could get there.

Yet, in a way so far unrevealed, Pietilä may never have felt this aspect of his work, his originality, had been truly recognized. He didn't need to say this directly. He would pause, linger just at that moment of thinking of correcting something.

Then he would place his name next to St Elia or Kurt Schwitters:

*There's Pietilä!*

*Lightness, laughter and generosity.*

—

Roger Connah

May 2023

## Petteri Kummala Dr. Phil.



Petteri Kummala (b. 1976) has worked at the Museum of Finnish Architecture as Deputy Head of Information Services and Research since October 2020, having previously served as a Head of Archives. The unit he heads is responsible for the museum's collections, library, research and publications.

Kummala has twenty years of experience in museum and research work. From 2003–2017, he worked in the museum's archives and library and as researcher. From 2009–2011 and in 2015, Kummala worked on his PhD research at the University of Helsinki and from 2017–2019 at the Helsinki City Museum as a researcher on the Cultural Environment Team.

Kummala completed his PhD in 2016. He has worked as a part-time teacher at the University of Helsinki, Helsinki Open University and Aalto University. He has also written for and edited several projects, most recently Museum of Finnish Architecture publications on Wivi Lönn and Juha Leiviskä (2022) and in *Murrosten vuosikymmen* (*Decade of Fractures*, 2023), which focuses on the 1970s.

## Modernism in Formation

Reima Pietilä's early career, PTAH and *Le Carré Bleu*

The subject of my talk is Reima Pietilä's early career in the 1950s and turn of the 1960s. After graduating as an architect in 1953, Pietilä participated quite actively in architectural competitions. His first success was in 1956, when he won the competition for the Finnish Pavilion for the 1958 World Exhibition in Brussels. Soon after the Brussels pavilion, Pietilä abandoned the rectangular formal language canonised by mainstream modernism, and with his next competition wins – Kaleva Church (1959) and Dipoli (1961) – “set out on his own path” to chart the landscape of free-form architecture.

On my talk, I suggest that the turn Pietilä's career took in the late 1950s was much more significant than simply a shift from mainstream modernism to free-form architecture. Towards the end of that decade, Pietilä's personal views on architecture begins to mature, and his relationship with architectural modernism crystallised. The process was holistic and complex, and I will attempt to explain it from a few perspectives.

As I see it, the driving force behind the turn Pietilä's work took in the 1950s stemmed from his theoretical examination of morphology, the theory of form, and the insights derived from that. A central platform for reflection was provided by the Finnish CIAM group PTAH (Progrès Technique Architecture Helsinki), founded in 1953, and the magazine *Le Carré Bleu*, published in Finland from 1958–1961. Towards the end of the decade, Pietilä became preoccupied with the wider issue of the relationship of his design work to architectural modernism.

My talk is not so much about individual plans, buildings or the typical qualities of Pietilä's architecture. Instead, I try to shed light on his idea of architecture and the thinking that defined his distinctive approach to architecture.

Aino Niskanen  
**PROFESSOR, DR. SC.,  
ARCHITECT**



Aino Niskanen graduated as MA Architect from Helsinki University of Technology and she was Professor of History of Architecture 2007–2018 at HUT/Aalto University, Helsinki. Her licentiate theses was on public interior spaces of late 19th century in Munich, her doctoral theses on the life work and networks of Finnish architect Väinö Vähäkallio. She has written on co-operative architecture in Finland, Reima and Raili Pietilä, Alvar Aalto, concrete in the 1950s, the 1960s Finnish architecture and preservation of interiors. She has taken part in suburb investigations and is now involved in an international study of affordable housing between the world wars. She has organized international conferences at Aalto University and has been involved in international academic teaching projects. She was member of board of the Finnish National Council of Architecture and Design 2013–2016, of Alvar Aalto Foundation 2008–2016 and on the board of Association Alvar Aalto en France 2013–2018.

## Pietilä in the Circle of Team 10

Team 10 was formally established within CIAM 1959 in Otterloo and was in a way a reaction to the consequences of the Second World War. Its core group of decided to distance itself from the rigid Functionalism characteristic of the Charter of Athens. The debate conducted between 1956 and 1981 on the meaning of images, the use of words and aesthetic expressions, and the invention and development of words, ideas and architectural forms is generally considered as the most important contribution of Team 10.

Pietilä had joined early PTAH, the Helsinki branch of CIAM, which was active between 1953 and 1956. Both professor Aulis Blomstedt and Pietilä attended the CIAM meeting in Dubrovnik in August 1956. Pietilä took part several Team 10 meetings and he seemed to be close to its inner circle in the 1970s. In fact, there were plans for a Team 10 to meeting in Dipoli, but the last meeting of Team10 then took place in southern France 1977. The Team 10 group disbanded but the contact network did not disappear: Pietilä remained friends with Aldo van Eyck, Georges Candilis and Balkrishna Doshi and maintained contacts with De Carlo and the Smithsons.

The members of Team 10 saw the problem of housing not only as quantitative but also as qualitative. New concepts such as 'neighbourhood', 'identity', 'user-orientation', 'mobility' and 'aesthetics of adaptability' were devised. Gradually 'place and time' and 'contextuality' were adopted as standard terms. The network provided a platform for developing urban planning ideas. Even though the participants had at times conflicting views, they were all united in their adherence to experimentalism. In my talk I will present some of the town planning ideas by Pietilä.

There was growing interest in the 1960s among the members of Team 10 in traditional historical cities, in the density and richness of meanings of both European and Islamic cities. Georges Candilis and Sharden Woods studied the dwellings and building practices in Chad and Casablanca, and Giancarlo De Carlo was “reading” historical Italian cities while the Smithsons analysed working-class districts of London. Both the Pietiläs and the Smithsonss were able to examine the local master plan of Kuwait in 1968-70 and sought to find out how nature, the climate and the culture had shaped local living. Two of Pietilä’s projects reflect the Team 10 discussion on urbanism: in Kuwait Sief Palace Area (competition 1968, realization 1978-82) and the project for Dubai Deira (competition 1974).

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Aino Niskanen

*Pietilä in the Circle of Team 10*

2023



Moises Royo  
**PROFESSOR, DR. SC.**



Moisés Royo (1981) graduated from Madrid School of Architecture in 2007. Moisés was awarded a grant to pursue post-grad studies, where he undertook research work at Columbia University in New York and completed a Master's Degree in Advanced Architecture Design (2006). He obtained his PhD on Dipoli in 2014 and became Associate Professor from 2015 to 2021. He was also TA at Barnard College in NYC in 2005, guest lecturer in Canada, Italy, Portugal and other cities in Spain. Moisés founded mukaarquitectura in 2008 to explore on his architectural research. From its creation, the office has obtained national and international recognitions, as one of the Young Architects of Spain "JAE" (2011) selected by the Spanish Ministry of Housing, European Switzerland (2011), FAD Awards (2014), WA Awards (2015), Tokyo (2016), Riga (2017), Vienna (2018), Hispalyt Awards (Spain) and Brick Awards (London) in the same year and 2022, Pipa Awards (London) 2023.

## Dipoli, The Oxymoron

What is Dipoli? The answer is very clear: it's a building. That is the right noun. But Dipoli can also be described with several adjectives and their opposites whose importance varies depending on where we direct our attention.

Yes, it is a building, but it's also a sketch materialized.

Dipoli was built during a very specific period in Finnish architectural history, yet it is a timeless architectural piece. Dipoli is a declaration of visual merge together with the vegetation that surrounds, yet it presents a very defined and strong floor plan character.

It is deeply rooted in Finnish culture, yet the lessons we can learn from it are universal. It is a hybrid building in functional terms but precise in its spatial and internal definition. As a singular building, it is large in scale but small in relation to a no-boundaries context.

It is brutalist or rough in the way materials have been used, yet very sensitive to the surrounding trees, the approaching leaves, the swaying branches, the caresses of the wind and the snow that settles upon it.

Concrete is used with the material character of wood. Concrete is also heavy, but through the cantilevers of this building's roof, it acquires a lightness sense. Artificial light sometimes blends with the natural. The building's roof provides shelter, yet at the same time, here you feel like you are really under the firmament.

Dipoli has a single main entrance, yet there are many ways you can enter and exit the building. It has a flat roof, yet the final form is truly a topography. Designed to accommodate thousands of students, it is nevertheless aware of the unique individual experience a person has when moving through it. It is subordinate to its rational geometry in the servant spaces, yet formally free in the served ones.

Seemingly contradictory, it in fact is presented to us with a very logical reason for being. Dipoli is as contradictory and full of energy as a university student. Dipoli not only belongs to university students, it was born of their soul.

The beauty of this project lies, therefore, in its ability to unify these contradictory adjectives into a single form. As in masterpiece art, our personal interpretation is as relevant as the building itself.

Dipoli interacts with us.

In summary, Dipoli must be considered as a balanced response to the sum of all the tensions between contradictory concepts that surrounds a project: materiality, scale, position, context, cultural aspects, programme, circulation, character and users.

If Dipoli were a piece of poetry, we might perceive of it as an oxymoron device.

Its complex identity is an extraordinary tool for architects to learn from when working on a project.

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Moises Royo

*Dipoli, the Oxymoron*

2023



Kaisa Broner-Bauer  
**PROFESSOR, DR. SC.,  
ARCHITECT**



Kaisa Broner-Bauer is an architect and professor emerita of architecture (1986–2010, University of Oulu) in the field of history and theory of architecture and historic preservation. She has a doctorate (Dr. Sc.) from Helsinki University of Technology (now Aalto University), as well as a doctorate in urban studies EHESS in Paris, and a master's degree from Columbia University (GSAPP) in New York. Alongside her teaching and research work, she was actively involved in developing a national doctoral program in architecture in Finland in 1995–2002. A co-founder of the multi-disciplinary Japanese Studies Program at the University of Oulu, she also served as director of the program at the Department of Architecture in 1997–2010. She was a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo from 1995–1997 and at the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2008. She has held several positions of trust, including at the Academy of Finland, the National Commission for Architecture, and the Board of the European Association of Architectural Education. Broner-Bauer has written extensively on architecture and urban studies, most recently a book on the lifework of Reima Pietilä (2019).

## Visionary architecture

Reima Pietilä's nature architecture and "shamanistic" design method

My talk discusses the architecture and architectural thinking of Reima Pietilä (1923–1993) in relation to his design method or process. Pietilä was a creative artistic personality who early on in his career set out to develop the form language and theory of modern architecture into the direction of organic expressionism. Finnish nature mysticism was a source of inspiration for him, and phenomenological "nature architecture" one of this key concepts.

Although Pietilä actively kept abreast of international developments in architecture, his greatest affinity was for the connection between Finnish nature and culture, and he kept himself within the tradition of "Finn-Ugric shamanism". Pietilä had a metaphysical conception of reality. He had the perceptiveness and sensitive intuition of a "seer", which enabled him to move around within his imagination, unhindered in time and space, so as to "see" inside phenomena to the core of their essence.

What was particularly distinctive about Pietilä was his personal and multidimensional design method, in which he utilized intuition as well as the verbal and visual "power of imagination" – though instead of a method, his approach could just as well be described as a process. The sketching process, with its various phases, played a key role for him. For Pietilä, each new building implied a "construction" of theory in both words and images, as well as an exploration and artistic experimentation of a new morphological expression.

The most far-reaching legacy of Pietilä's life's work is his formulation – in words, images and buildings – of an architectural theory based on a relationship with nature as well as the cultural "objectification" of "nature architecture". He formulated a contemporary philosophy of architecture, in which the classical theory of mimesis acquires a new interpretation based on a cultural conception of nature. This is a romantic reinterpretation of "imitation of nature" with an emphasis on local identity.

Pekka Passinmäki  
**PhD, ARCHITECT**



Pekka Passinmäki is a Doctor of Philosophy, an architect, and a university lecturer at Tampere University, School of Architecture where his subjects are the theory and philosophy of architecture and the foundations of architectural research. He is the author of *A New Poetics of Architecture: A Phenomenological Study of the Possibility of Overcoming Technology in Contemporary Architecture* (2011) and co-editor of *Understanding and Designing Place – Considerations on Architecture and Philosophy* (2019) with Klaske Havik.

# **Finnish language and Finnishness in Reima Pietilä's work**

A philosophical appraisal

The presentation examines Finnish academician and architect Reima Pietilä's relationship with the Finnish language and Finnishness, in particular the approach he called a multi-media process, in which the architectural starting points of a building were outlined using both linguistic and visual means. In a multi-media process, drawing and Pietilä's original linguistic expression that is here termed design speech support each other mutually. The main component of the talk consists of a description of the characteristics of the design speech, which includes idiosyncratic neologisms and grammatical forms.

The approach is philosophical, based on the ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger, philosophers to whom Pietilä himself repeatedly refers. The tension-filled relationship between these two radically different thinkers opened up a middle ground in which the multi-media process took place. A key aspect of Pietilä's work is polar opposition, such as linguistic and non-linguistic or rational and irrational. The goal was to create Finnish buildings adapted to the characteristics of the place.

The materials of the talk consist of Pietilä's own texts and a few commentaries. The philosophical underpinnings of his work are outlined on the basis of Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's early major works. Pietilä was a highly original architect with international renown. No actual school ever developed around him, however, although he did briefly hold a professorship. The talk concludes by highlighting a perspective from which Pietilä's design principles might fruitfully be approached in the current architectural situation.

Lauri Louekari  
**PhD, MPhil, ARCHITECT**



Let me start with the present:

I am a literary researcher and an architect. My area of research in literature is literary space. The term refers to the spatial world we readers create when we read a work of literature. To do that, we use the same ability for spatial imagination as architects use to design spaces.

My recent work as architect has been in restoration design. I am revisiting the early years of our office in the 1980s, when we launched our practice in the countryside in the field of log house renovation.

Since then, I have worked as a builder with a qualification in log construction. I have also taught at the architecture department at the University of Oulu, most recently as a temporary professor.

I earned a doctorate (Dr. Sc) in architecture in 2006 on the topic of analogous spatial structures in nature and architecture. The title of my thesis was *The Architecture of the Forest*. In it, I discuss analogies of nature in the architecture of Reima Pietilä, as well as others.

## **“Design places, not buildings”**

– on the topicality of Pietilä’s ideas

In the following, I discuss the analogies of nature in Dipoli and the significance of the building as an interpretation of the spatial structure of the forest. While Dipoli is indeed a “translation” of the natural features of its site into the language of architecture, it is on some level also an interpretation of the essence of the Finnish forest. In interpreting the spatial structure of the taiga forest through architecture, Pietilä creates new cultural imagery with far-reaching ramifications in both time and space. A new possible world has been constructed in our minds since Dipoli: an artefactual model of our natural environment in the north. The significance of Dipoli can be likened to the potential of painting or literature to create cultural and collective ways of seeing the everyday reality around us. Cultural interpretation opens up new avenues for seeing and appreciation: after beholding Dipoli, we look differently at both the forest and architecture.

For an architect, the concrete means by which Pietilä creates his interpretation of the forest are fascinating. In my talk, I discuss in greater detail the spatial, formal and material methods with which the architect establishes a connection with natural elements. Although we can say something about the subject on a methodological level, the final analysis always remains incomplete. Ultimately, what is at stake is a piece of creative work by an architect and artist, the background and essence of which we cannot ever fully grasp.

As a teacher, Pietilä was inspiring in a very special way. It often seemed that while he was analysing examples of architecture, he was already moving towards new ideas, entering a mode of creative reflection in which one observation leads to the next and the result is new, surprising and exhilarating, including for the lecturer himself.

All in all, Pietilä's teaching seemed fresh to us: architecture was an area of great potential and cultural meaning, through which new worlds with new content could be created. Architecture had a "cultural purpose". The content of studies expanded into unexplored areas, too: not only did architecture have important emotional functions – familiarity and protection – it also possessed an artistic dimension free from prejudice: no one had the right to say what was desirable and possible; you just had to find it out yourself. The Oulu school we discovered did not accord with Pietilä's architectural model. But it was very much the product of his ethos as teacher: born of independent reflection.

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Lauri Louekari

*"Design places, not buildings" – on the topicality of Pietilä's ideas*

2023



Kristo Vesikansa  
**ARCHITECT**



Kristo Vesikansa is an architect and the Editor-In-Chief of the *Finnish Architectural Review*.

Previously Vesikansa has worked as a lecturer in the history of architecture at Aalto University and in several building conservation projects. His research topics include postwar architecture, in particular the works of Raili and Reima Pietilä and standardised timber houses. Vesikansa has also authored and co-authored building history surveys of Dipoli (2015), Himmeli Retirement Home (2021), Taikurinhattu Daycare Centre (2022) and Mäntyniemi (2023).

## Dipoli's Followers That Remained Dreams

Pietiläs' Unrealised Designs from the 1960s

Dipoli Student Centre, completed in 1966, has often been considered the culmination of Raili and Reima Pietiläs' creativity and experimentalism. At the same time, it was destined to remain the end point of one development line, as the couple did not receive any major commissions until the mid-1970s. By then, their approach as well as the technical, economic and cultural premises of architecture had already changed significantly.

By studying Pietiläs' competition entries and unrealised designs from the 1960s we can speculate what kind of followers Dipoli would have had if the circumstances had been different. In these intriguing designs, Pietiläs applied the architectural concepts developed for Dipoli to different scales and rationalised construction methods, while still trying to preserve their expressive potential.

In these endeavours, Pietiläs were able to utilise their experience with Dipoli's laborious implementation, which included, for example, the construction of free-form roof using both in-situ concrete and precast components. Similarly, the complex wood paneling of the interior was created with only four different cladding boards.

I will discuss the evolution of Pietiläs' architecture in the 1960s through four concepts: topological roof, cave-like interior, transformable space and irregular structure. An illustrative example of the first concept is Hauke Home (1962–63), the second Malmi Church (1967), the third Monte Carlo Multipurpose Centre (1969) and the fourth University of Zurich (1966). Many projects also combine these concepts.

It is also interesting, how these projects reflect current international phenomena in architecture, such as structural expressionism, brutalism, structuralism and high-tech, while still being rooted in Pietiläs' own way of thinking and aesthetics.

Jorma Mukala  
**ARCHITECT**



Jorma Mukala (b.1954) is an architect. He has also worked with artists such as sculptor Villu Jaanisoo to co-create a monument in Tallinn (1996) in memory of the Estonia shipwreck. Writing about architecture has been part of his practice since his student days. The overarching theme of his numerous articles is Finnish contemporary architecture and its development. Mukala worked as an architecture critic for the Tampere-based *Aamulehti* newspaper from 2000–2008 and as editor-in-chief of *Arkkitehti* magazine from 2009–2017. He has published two books on Tampere architecture (1999, 2021), edited a volume of Kirmo Mikkola’s writings (2009) and served on the editorial board of Timo Penttilä’s book on the theory of architecture (2013), to which he contributed an extensive article on Penttilä’s architecture.

Mukala was awarded the Pietilä Prize for Architecture in 1992.

## Pietilä's Influence

– on Pietilä's work as writer and social debater

Reima Pietilä made his mark on the development of Finnish architecture through his writings too. He wrote actively from the 1950s to the 1990s, analysing, commenting and criticising trends in modern architecture. He also formulated ideas about new architecture through his writings. I divide Pietilä's writings into two stacks: A – texts in which he develops new ideas for architectural form, and B – polemic articles, of which there are many.

### A – new ideas for architectural form

Meaning in these texts is created equally by images and words. The purpose of images is not to illustrate but to communicate aspects of the substance. The articles could perhaps be better described as “image–writing” rather than “writing”. The text itself is usually concise and sometimes hard to follow. One of the first of these texts was “Haudatut koirat” (Buried Dogs, *Arkkitehti* 4/1957), which, alongside text, features photographs of compositions created with battens and wood blocks, the principles of which are explained in the text among other general reflections.

Images and words merged in fascinating ways, especially in texts that were article versions of Pietilä's exhibitions. These included “Kaavan kaava” [The Formula of Formula] (*Arkkitehti* 4–5/1960); “Morfologia Urbanismi” [Morphology and Urbanism], based on the eponymous exhibition; “Vyöhyke” [Zone] (*Arkkitehti* 1/1968); and “Tilatarha” [Space Garden] (1971), which was published as an article in the *Arkkitehtipäivät 1983* [*Architecture Days 1983*] publication. The booklet *Käsité–kuva–oivallus* [*Notion–image–idea*] (TKY Otapaino 1975), with its idiosyncratic account of the principles of architecture, was also a published form of an exhibition. “Modernin arkkitehtuurin muodostot” [Form Realms in Modern Architecture] (*Polyart Happening* 24.8.1985; *Arkkitehti* 2/1987) was one of the last of these creative “image–writings”.

## **B – polemic texts**

Pietilä authored a huge number of polemic texts, which reveal his character as a writer. His aim was not to lecture but to discuss, which placed great emphasis on dialogue as form. He was not mean-spirited or sarcastic, instead seeking to understand. There was frequently humour in the texts. A recurring idea was that there is not one but many architectures. The future remained open to him – one might always influence the direction of architectural development.

One of Pietilä’s first polemical texts was “Miksi arkkitehdit eivät mielellään kirjoita” [Why Architects Don’t Like to Write] (*Arkkitehti* 4–5/1961). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Pietilä’s criticism focused especially on rationalism as an ideology. His critique of “rabbit-hutch architecture”, boosted by the publicity of his Metso Library competition win (1978), spilled into mainstream media. In the 1980s, Pietilä wrote about aspects of modernism, postmodernism, criticism, theory... A dialogue with Timo Penttilä on the relationship between theory and construction (*Arkkitehti uutiset* 17, 20/1985 and 1, 5/1986) revealed Pietilä’s conciliatory, forward-looking attitude as he defended the importance of theory. Although no common path ever emerged, the dialogue brought the differences of vision into sharper relief.

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Jorma Mukala

*Pietilä’s Influence: on Pietilä’s work as writer and social debater*

2023





# A”

Aalto-yliopisto  
Taiteiden ja suunnittelun  
korkeakoulu

 Tampereen yliopisto  
Tampere University



BRYGGMAN

# SAFA

# ATL

ARKKITEHTI-  
TOIMISTOJEN  
LIITTO



the world's largest pipe. The pipe is made of steel and is 108 inches in diameter. It is 1,000 feet long and weighs 150 tons. The pipe is used to transport water from the Colorado River to the city of Los Angeles. The pipe is the largest of its kind in the world and is a major engineering achievement. The pipe was installed in 1971 and has been in service ever since. It is a testament to the ingenuity and skill of the engineers who designed and built it.