Postmodernism, Neoliberalism and the Holy Spirit

Catharina Gabrielsson

This paper explores the singular case of Järna, an intentional community near Stockholm whose particular aesthetics evolve out of its spiritual core of mystic belief. Manifesting a desire to return to ‘another’ and ‘more human’ modernism, building activities in Järna peaked in the 70’s and 80’s – a period that coincided with the first emergence of what was to become the dismantling of the welfare state. Despite its apparent marginality, the ethos and aesthetics of Järna had a significant influence on the Swedish configuration of postmodern architecture. In tracing the connections to a larger context of socio-political transformations, Järna points to an understanding of postmodernism as a deeply ideological phenomenon with intimate ties to the neoliberal project. It also discloses the inner contradictions and tensions within this project, one that essentially involves a changing of sensibilities for which architecture is key.

Biography:

Catharina Gabrielsson (catharina.gabrielsson@arch.kth.se) is an architect and researcher. Her work addresses the complex entanglements between architecture and philosophy, politics and economics. She is co-editor for Deleuze and the City (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming), an editorial member of Architecture and Culture and Research Fellow at The Swedish Research Institute of Istanbul.