

*OASE 47* presents the cladding of a building as the essence of architecture. Its underlying axiom, which takes its cue from Semper's nineteenth-century *Prinzip der Bekleidung* (The Principle of Cladding), is that rather than the architectural structure it is the architectural manifestation – its soft furnishings, shell and decoration – that communicates and provides meaning. The article by Dirk van den Heuvel takes a literal approach to the architecture of cladding, by naming architectural elements in the drapes of Petra Blaisse. The architecture of the drape is used to define the relation between the temporary and the permanent in the architecture, but a critical assessment is also made of the way in which inside and outside, architecture and interior, and structure and ornament interact.

*OASE 47* offers a theoretical antidote to the moral principle of modernism and functionalism. Closely linked with Delft University of Technology, it presupposes that the essence of architecture is its structure. In the 1990s however, and especially in Mark Wigley's *White Walls, Designer Dresses*, modernist and functionalist architecture was 'unmasked': gone are the pure tectonic structure and constructive 'integrity'. The façade and interior are effectively ornaments governing the experience of the building, or 'directing the gaze' as it is sometimes called.

Following this critique a number of positions crystallised that focused attention on cladding. Hans Kollhoff believes that despite today's lack of constructive 'integrity', the façade must nonetheless represent the building's tectonics. He focuses on the *architectural readability* of the cladding. The position taken by Petra Blaisse and others focuses attention on the *sensory readability* of the cladding. The architecture of the drape is not considered as a material, but as an effect, focussed on movement and light. In this way this architecture questions the permanence, coherence and order of the space.

In retrospect, Dirk van den Heuvel's article can be seen to illuminate the work of Inside-Outside as well as that of OMA.

It describes the quest for an architecture that designs spatial rather than structural elements as autonomous phenomena. It views space not as a specific site, but as an architectural situation, a moment bringing together conditions of time, space and light.

Like Bijlsma  
Member of the editorial board  
from *OASE 45* to *70*

*Translated by Laura Vroomen*