

# Maki Fumihiko and Collective Form: A singular Japanese architecture lesson?

Corinne Tiry-Ono East Asian Civilisations Research Centre (CRCAO, Paris)

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Though contemporary Japanese architecture is widely published in the West today, translations of Japanese architects' theoretical writings remain scarce.<sup>①</sup> However, from the mid-1950s onward, with the postwar national reconstruction officially considered to have been achieved, contemporary Japanese architecture raised interest abroad at a level that was proportional to the frantic pace of construction the nation was facing again. Numerous monographs in English and other European languages, as well as special issues of foreign architecture magazines, highlighted emerging Japanese architecture of that time.<sup>②</sup> Dissemination of this profuse architecture production was also undertaken by the Japanese media; for example, from 1956 onward, the monthly architecture magazine *Shinkenchiku* 新建築 systematically edited an English version of each issue, titled *The Japan Architect. International Edition of Shinkenchiku*.

Until that time, the approaches of architectural historians or critics — or even architects — to this “peripheral” area focused mainly on the relationships between tradition and modernity, or the reciprocal stylistic influence between East and West. Such approaches were rapidly called into question by the context of industrial, urban, and demographic growth of a society confronted with an emerging “economic miracle.” Progressively, Japan was moving into the position of an unbridled epicenter of modernity and, like a mirror effect, began to capture the attention of Westerners in a different way. The most visible stigma of this “new” emerging society came from the transformations of its living environments, and from the ways in which people physically move through them. If the northeastern coast of the United States from Boston to Washington had been defined as a “Megalopolis” by the French geographer Jean Gottmann (1915–1994)<sup>③</sup>, the Tōkaidō Megalopolis 東海道メガロポリス, from Tokyo to Osaka through Nagoya, was already ranked highly in 1955, with its 13 million inhabitants... From the 1960s onward, highways, high-speed trains and high-rise buildings were being superimposed on the traditional fabric of the aggregated cities. This context

① For example, the French translation of a selection of essays in NUSSAUME, Yann, (ed.), *Anthologie critique de la théorie architecturale japonaise. Le regard du milieu*, Brussels, Ousia, 2004.

② For example, KULTERMANN, Udo, *Neues Bauen in Japan / Architecture nouvelle au Japon / New architecture in Japan* (Germany / France / United Kingdom, 1960 / 1960 / 1967), RICHARDS, James Maud, *An Architectural Journey in Japan* (United Kingdom, 1963), BOYD, Robin, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture* (United States, 1968), TEMPEL, Egon, *New Japanese Architecture* (United States, 1969); *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui, "Japon"* (France, special issues in 1961 and 1966), *Architectural Design, "The Metabolists in Japan"* (United Kingdom, 1964).

③ GOTTMANN, Jean, *Megalopolis. The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States*, New York, The 20th Century Fund, 1961.

of accelerated growth at all levels caused a radical change in the scale of Japanese architects' thinking, from architectural objects to urban structures. Several of them took up the (big) city as a laboratory in which to experiment with "flexible" architecture that responded to the rapid changes of society.

## A delayed recognition

But looking at the whole theoretical contributions made by Japanese architects at that time, few of them were presented or translated in English, whether by choice or by chance. Of course, those that were translated would receive more international attention. Among the publications easily accessible in the Western world, the Metabolist manifesto (*Metabolism / 1960. The Proposals for New Urbanism*, 1960) and the essays by Maki Fumihiko 槇文彦 (born in 1928) and his colleagues on the topic of "collective form" (*Investigations in Collective Form*, 1964), sometimes misinterpreted as twinned statements, seem to be the best known (Figs. 1, 2).

Apparently more didactic than prospective, Maki's book obviously never gained the attention that the manifesto immediately received. A few English-language architecture magazines helped to provide some exposure for the book (*Architectural Design* in 1964, *The Japan Architect* in 1970 and again in 1994), and the art theorist György Kepes (1906–2001) added it to a published series of multidisciplinary writings dedicated to the aesthetics of structures, alongside those of Pier Luigi Nervi and the Smithsons.<sup>4</sup> Twelve years after it was published, Maki's book acquired a retrospective reputation for its section on megastructures thanks to the British critic Reyner Banham (1922–1988). In his *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past*, he credits Maki as the pioneer of the correct definition of megastructure,<sup>5</sup> and even as the inventor of the term.<sup>6</sup> Though Banham also describes — if briefly — the three other paradigms from Maki's "collective forms" trilogy, his book's misleading effect will be to link the name of Maki Fumihiko to those of the Japanese

<sup>4</sup> KEPES, György, *Structure in Art and Science*, New York, George Braziller, 1965 (among other books, such as like *The Education of Vision* and, *The Nature of Art and Motion*, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> BANHAM, Reyner, *Megastructure. Urban Futures of the Recent Past*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1976, p.8 and 70. Banham included an appendix (pp.217–218) containing the entire section of the "Collective Form" essay focused on megastructures.

<sup>6</sup> According to French architect and historian Dominique Rouillard, the term had already appeared in 1962, in Peter Smithson's description of Tange Kenzō's "A Plan for Tokyo, 1960" in *Architectural Design* magazine. See ROUILLARD, Dominique, *Superarchitecture. Le futur de l'architecture 1950–1970*, Paris, Éditions de la Villette, 2004, p.14.

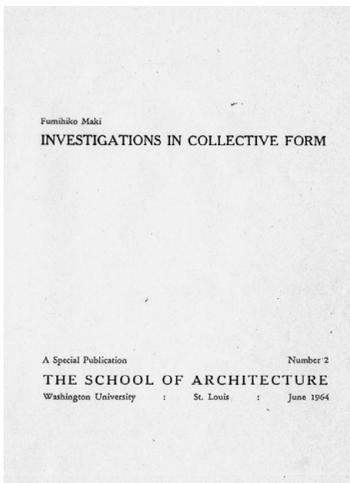


Fig. 1: Original cover of Maki Fumihiko's 1964 book, *Investigations in Collective Form*.

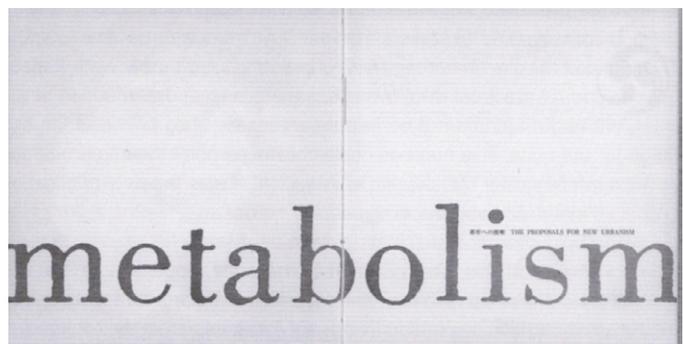


Fig. 2: Original cover of *Metabolism / 1960. The Proposals for New Urbanism / Toshi e no teian*, edited by Kawazoe Noboru.

7 HUET, Bernard, “Les mégastructures en ligne”, *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui*, no. 183, January-February 1976, p.31. Translated from French by the author.

8 “Singapore Songlines: Portrait of a Potemkin Metropolis... or Thirty Years of Tabula Rasa,” in OMA, KOOLHAAS, Rem and MAU, Bruce, *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large*, Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 1995, pp. 1008–1089.

9 KOOLHAAS, Rem and OBRIST, Hans Ulrich, *Project Japan. Metabolism Talks...*, Cologne, Taschen, 2011.

virtuosi of megastructures: “At that time, the ‘metabolist’ projects of Kikutake, Maki and Tange were responding to the urban structures of Bakema and Woods.”<sup>7</sup>

In fact, Maki’s contribution to the Metabolism manifesto had already caused confusion... Much later, in his book *S, M, L, XL*, Rem Koolhaas (1944–) quotes large parts of Maki’s book within his long essay about mass urbanism in Singapore.<sup>8</sup> Categorized in the “Extra-Large”-related section of the book, they are used by Koolhaas as historical flashbacks to illustrate his portrait of typical Asian metropolitan conditions, such as large populations and congestion—a topic in which the Western world has only recently become interested. In 2011, the curator and critic Hans Ulrich Obrist (1968–) and the same Rem Koolhaas coedited a lavish book dedicated to the Metabolist movement.<sup>9</sup> In a special interview for that occasion, Maki Fumihiko confirmed his intellectual distance from the other members of the group.

## Research from East to West

*Investigations in Collective Form* is written in English. Comprising essays and projects, it was published in June 1964 by the Washington University School of Architecture in Saint Louis (Missouri), where Maki had started his teaching career a few years before. Symbolically, this publication as a “young” Tokyo architect—he was 36 years old at that time—closes a decade of academic and professional training in North America.<sup>10</sup> The middle of the 1960s in fact marked the end of his “training years,” in his own words, and a definitive return to Tokyo where he established his own architecture office and pursued his teaching activities. Intellectually, this publication crystallized the numerous inputs and experiences he had encountered up until that point. The education he received firstly in Japan (Tange Lab) and then for a longer period in the United States (Sert’s urban design program) provided him with a double approach toward architecture. Under Tange Kenzō 丹下健三 (1913–2005), whose teaching studio was also a research laboratory, design education had been deeply nourished. Maki therefore acquired there an open attitude toward architecture design. Under Josep Lluís Sert (1902–1983), who paid attention to the embedded values of site and the physical experience of city space—among other dimensions—Maki learned urban design in a way that was radically different from the Charte d’Athènes.<sup>11</sup> His encounters with some members of Team X, who had been invited to Washington University while he was teaching there, strengthened his anthropological approach toward urban space, and at the same time opened the doors to Europe for him.<sup>12</sup> If today Maki Fumihiko’s reputation derives more from his prestigious buildings (including universities, museums, and so on) across the world, he remains marked by this generation of architects from Europe, with whom he shared an interest in the hidden meanings or orders of the city. All of them are or were looking for virtuous

10 Born in Tokyo, Maki Fumihiko graduated from the University of Tokyo in 1952. From the following year, he continued his education in the United States both academically (Cranbrook Academy of Art, Harvard University) and professionally (he worked at SOM and then at Josep Lluís Sert’s office). He taught at Washington University in the late 1950s and then from 1960 to 1962, and at Harvard University from 1962 to 1965.

11 Josep Lluís Sert organized the first Urban Design Conference in 1956 at Harvard University. He was Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design from 1953 to 1969.

12 The guests were Aldo van Eyck, Jacob Bakema, and Shadrach Woods. Later, he was invited by the Smithsons to join the Team X meeting in Bagnols-sur-Cèze (France, 1960). A summary of the first part of his book was shortly afterward published in Europe, in the Autumn 1964 issue of *Architectural Design* magazine.

systems wherein architectural devices, urban forms, and landscape structures arose from the materialization of usages and no longer from functions. *Investigations in Collective Form* is the expression of this commitment. Indeed we must here grasp his use of the adjective “collective” as a willingness to eliminate any separation or hierarchy between scales (architectural / urban) or status (public / private), and consequently as a way to affirm the fundamental interdependence of architecture and the city. For Maki, as well as so many other architects of that time, the issue is complex but primary. If the increase in mobility and its technical systems have dismantled local communities and urban fabrics, they nevertheless paved the way toward the potential for new architectural languages.

<sup>13</sup> Free access on <https://library.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/maki-entire.pdf> (accessed 2020.03.22). See also a summarized presentation of the three types by the French architect and theoretician Jacques Lucan in his book *Composition, non-composition. Architecture et théories, XIXe–XXe siècles*, Lausanne, PPUR, 2009, pp.476–477 (translated in English as *Composition, Non-Composition. Architecture and Theory in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, EPFL Press & Routledge, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> After graduating from the University of Tokyo in 1949, Ōtaka Masato worked at Maekawa Kunio’s office until 1961 before opening his own architecture office in Tokyo. Ōtaka is famous for the “artificial ground” principle that he implemented in Sakaide City between 1963 and 1968.

<sup>15</sup> “It is likely that in any final form of design, these three concepts will appear either combined or mixed.” *Ibid.*, p.23.

### A type of architecture lesson

Maki’s book contains theoretical as well as didactic texts, followed by a series of projects that demonstrate his stated principles, offering a synthesis of the architect’s nurture and multipolar questions. The first essay: “Collective Form: Three Paradigm[s]”<sup>13</sup> is signed by Maki Fumihiko and his friend and fellow Japanese architect Ōtaka Masato 大高正人 (1923–2010).<sup>14</sup> It defines a typology of urban form design methods according to three distinct structural principles—however, as the authors conclude, these are not mutually exclusive (Fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> Those principles are analyzed through two major criteria: their capacity to integrate the phenomena of growth, and to respond to a rapidly changing society. The first principle corresponds to the masterplan, designated here as “Compositional Form” to better highlight its non-structural regime. This principle is described as a hierarchical, permanent and bi-dimensional composition of isolated buildings, wherein the non-built space is only a consequence of the volumetric manifestation, therefore creating a disconnect between functions and circulation routes. Without a direct critical stance, the authors nonetheless quickly relegate this principle to the “historical” category. The second principle defines the “megastructure” or “megaform”—also called “Mega-Structure Form”—that

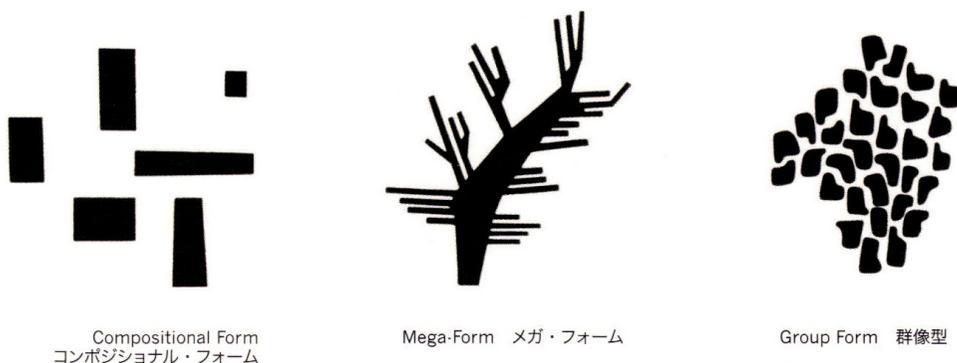


Fig. 3: Schemes of the collective form typology: “Compositional Form,” “Mega-Form,” “Group Form.”

uses a large-scale material structure to organize function and circulation. In most cases, structures and networks are in alignment. The permanence of this type of structure enables the changeability of its interior elements, regardless of their nature or purpose. Nothing can stop its growth, especially because it is—necessarily—three-dimensional. In the view of the authors, megastructure is suitable for the dual criteria mentioned above, but its rigidity is problematic, as is its consequent obsolescence. Moreover, it maintains a hierarchical organization that the authors regard as counterproductive in terms of flexibility. Finally, they endorse the third principle, which they call “Group Form.” This consists of an association of small-scale structuring elements—whether architectural or landscape—in a repetitive and aggregative manner, which are themselves generators of the resulting overall form. Directly shaped by their usages, these elements produce a system of social and spatial relationships that is fundamental and complex enough to persist and transform over time without altering the whole. Built forms and circulation spaces therefore have interdependent morphologies.

The second essay, “Linkage in Collective Form,” is signed by Maki Fumihiko and the American architect Jerry Goldberg (1934–2019), who was then a research student at Washington University.<sup>16</sup> The authors here extend their research on the element that acts as a generator, namely “linkage”. The origin of this research lies in their diagnosis of the disconnection between the development of mobility infrastructures and the design of urban forms. Megastructures are a solution in which urban structures and communication networks together give birth to a unique city framework: Tange’s “A Plan for Tokyo, 1960” (1961) remains an unequalled demonstration of this concept (Fig. 4). On the contrary, Maki and Goldberg consider networks as complete spatial systems, in that they are simultaneously structuring (physically or materially) and significant. They considered Louis I. Kahn’s (1901–1974) “Gateway Interchanges” (1953–1957)—a parking tower project for Philadelphia—to be an appropriate illustration of this approach in the case of urban nodes: it provides symbolic and urbanscape values to a highway interchange that lacks them (Fig. 5). But learning from historical or vernacular examples is no less fruitful. Like an architecture lesson, the authors present a series of examples that illustrate, at different scales, a wide variety of similar processes. Their resulting forms may be linear (a medieval European town wall, an elevated railway line running through a city, a shopping arcade roof), reticular (a network of canals), or punctual (the repetition of an architectural type that fits the topography, and so on). From their own culture, the authors choose the example of a Japanese traditional village stretched along a main road (Fig. 6).

At the end of the book, several projects for Japanese cities, designed by Maki and some partners using these principles, are introduced: the redevelopment of the Shinjuku station 新宿駅 area, and of Tokyo’s working-class Kōtō district 江東区, of the Dōjima 堂島 neighborhood in the center of Osaka City, some urban

<sup>16</sup> In the foreword of MAKI, Fumihiko, *Nurturing Dreams. Collective Essays on Architecture and the City*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2008.



Fig. 4: Tange Kenzō, “Plan for Tokyo, 1960”, model, 1961.

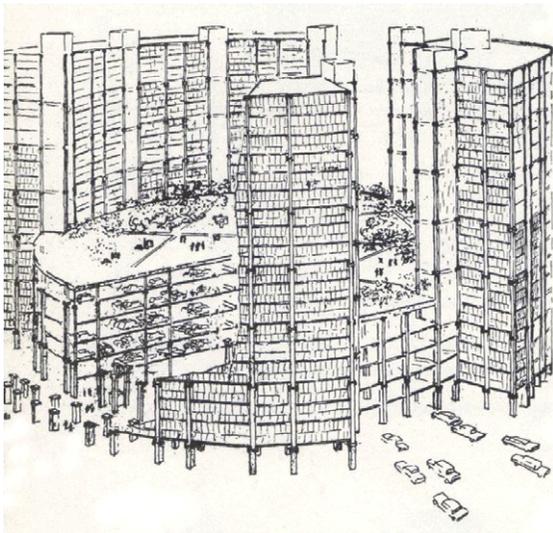


Fig. 5: Louis I. Kahn “Gateway Interchanges” project in Philadelphia (1953–1957), drawing.



Fig. 6: Japanese traditional village as a historical example of “group form.”

design studies for streets and shopping areas, and individual or collective housing projects — some being prototypes without real locations.

The whole book has a demonstrative and syncretic character. The authors use heterogeneous materials (analyses, quotations, references, schemes, photos, etc.) that are either historical or contemporary. This abundance, almost like a collage, supports the authors’ agenda, simultaneously showing epistemological and prospective dimensions. Yet, alongside some classical or archaic references mobilized by the authors, the research also draws upon another, more self-taught educational experience. It was indeed while back in Japan, after two trips from East to West, that Maki started to write the first essay. Like a half-time intermission during his North-American sojourn, in 1959 and then in 1960, these investigations throughout Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and Europe, served to enrich the essays with references to urban or rural vernacular forms that were used as structural models by the urban design discipline followers (Figs. 7, 8, 9).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See their “celebration” through the MOMA exhibition and Bernard Rudofsky’s book, *Architecture without Architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, New York, Doubleday, 1964.



Fig. 7, 8, 9: Photos from Bernard Rudofsky's book, *Architecture Without Architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, 1964: Anticoli Corrado town on the Sabine Mountains near Roma (p.36), Vathia, a fortified village in the Peloponnese region (p.62), and a town in Yemen (p.62).

## Projects with multiple aims

In fact, “Collective Form—Three Paradigms” is the development of a previous essay also cowritten with Ōtaka. The original text focused only on “group form”—illustrated by the Shinjuku project—and was published under the title “Toward Group Form / *Gunzōkei e* 群造形へ”<sup>18</sup> in the unique collective book of the so-called “Metabolist architects.”<sup>19</sup> We must recall that this collective statement had been expressly prepared for the World Design Conference held in Tokyo in 1960. For this group of architects, specifically formed for that occasion, it had the value of a manifesto. *Metabolism / 1960. The proposals for new urbanism / Toshi e no teian*. 都市への提案。メタボリズム<sup>20</sup> marks for its protagonists, as well as for contemporary architecture historians, the birth of the Metabolism movement. The main members of this group included an architecture critic, Kawazoe Noboru 川添登 (1926–2015),<sup>21</sup> and a few young architects who were mostly Tange Lab students at the University of Tokyo: Kikutake Kiyonori 菊竹清訓 (1928–2011), Ōtaka Masato, Maki Fumihiko, Kurokawa Noriaki 黒川紀章 (1934–2007).<sup>22</sup>

During this conference, the metamorphosis of large cities was the dominant topic for the Japanese participants. The themes of “growth” and “change” had already been placed on the agenda at the Dubrovnik CIAM in 1956, but they were the leitmotifs for this group of Japanese architects. The Metabolists responded to these issues through the design of a sophisticated formal environment rife with biological metaphors: “The reason why we use such a biological word, the metabolism, is that, we believe, design and technology should be a denotation of human vitality.”<sup>23</sup> Their deep interest in communication systems and the flows they engender, whether material or immaterial, led them to become immersed in research on dynamic forms that were often disconnected from their local environments. Amid this ballet of attitudes and drawings that were more futuristic than structuralist, Maki and Ōtaka looked—and still look today—like outsiders. Both were standing apart from the Metabolist aesthetic and use of technology “with a kind of compulsion”<sup>24</sup> shared by others. One of the reasons why both joined the group might be their shared approach to the city as a dynamic organism, always changing, with late-1950s Tokyo being an ideal experimental ground.

Most of the projects introduced in the manifesto had no clients. First of all, their aim was to launch “innovative” urban concepts on the international scene, but they were nevertheless linked to contemporaneous large projects for the Tokyo metropolitan area. The late 1950s was a rich period with major planning issues at various scales, handled by the public authorities to alleviate congestion and modernize this capital city with a population of nine million—still hardly remodeled at that time due to numerous difficulties in the reconstruction efforts. The most important official directions were: the designation of eleven satellite cities planned beyond the tentative greenbelt (first Regional Plan for the Capital, published in 1958); discussion on the creation of a new business center in the

<sup>18</sup> Literally: “Form of the group structure,” also written: 群像型.

<sup>19</sup> This point is recalled by Maki himself in his introduction to the book.

<sup>20</sup> KAWAZOE Noboru, et al, *Metabolism / 1960. The Proposals for New Urbanism / Toshi e no teian. Metabolism*, Tokyo, Bijutsu shuppansha, 1960.

<sup>21</sup> Kawazoe Noboru had been chief editor of *Shinkenchiku* magazine.

<sup>22</sup> Kurokawa Noriaki / Kishō graduated from Kyoto University in 1957, and then from the University of Tokyo (Tange Lab) in 1964.

<sup>23</sup> Collectively written foreword of the manifesto, *op. cit.*, 1960, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Unless otherwise specified, quotations are from the original 1964 book.

Shinjuku area in order to relieve congestion in the central business district (this option was selected by the Ministry of Construction in May 1960), and the development of specific sites and rapid infrastructures for the Olympic Games (in May 1959, the Olympic International Committee chose Tokyo for the 1964 event).

Although they do not make any explicit references to official planning processes, the members of the Metabolist group designed counterprojects for those programs: on the one hand, at an urban scale with the redevelopment of the Shinjuku area by Maki and Ōtaka; on the other hand, at a very large scale with projects such as Ocean City (*Kaijyō toshi* 海上都市) by Kikutake, and Space City (*Kūkan toshi* 空間都市) by Kurokawa. The Shinjuku project was the only one that offered a realistic perspective, and it was established on a real and limited site. Meanwhile, Kurokawa introduced his proposal for an agricultural city (*Nōson toshikeikaku* 農村都市計画) near Nagoya: a rural megastructure that resonated with the greenbelt concept for Tokyo (Fig. 10). And in 1961, Tange presented his first urban plan for Tokyo (*Tōkyō keikaku* 東京計画): a linear megastructure as a counterproposal for the satellite city issues that he considered to be regressive. In contrast to most of the Metabolist architects or their followers, Maki did not design any very large-scale projects at that time. Instead, he was (and is still) concerned with “groups of buildings and quasi-buildings — the segments of our cities.”

### The Shinjuku project: prefiguring a fourth paradigm?

In the 1960 manifesto as well as in the 1964 book, the project for the Shinjuku area in Tokyo is described by its designers as an emblematic “group form.” Located at the limits of the central area of the metropolis, Shinjuku is one

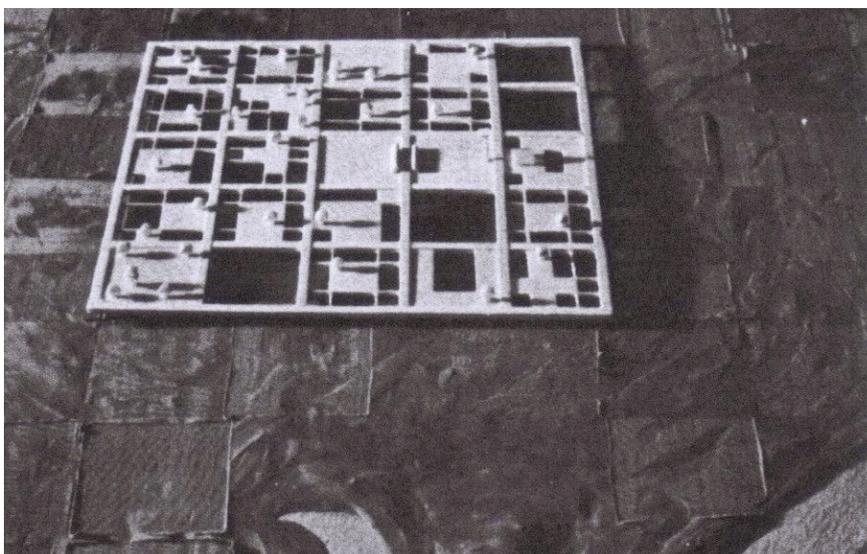


Fig. 10: Kurokawa Noriaki project for an agricultural city near Nagoya, model, 1960.

of those large railway hubs that had become increasingly widespread since prior to the Second World War, but without following any planning guidelines. The flows between the center and the periphery are tremendous, with daily congestion appearing in a heterogeneous urbanscape. The nearby new business center planned by the authorities followed a rational, typical “compositional form” masterplan: a grid comprising a series of similar lots, each one intended to contain an office tower or a large hotel.

With the aim of articulating flows and activities, Maki and Ōtaka inserted their counterproposal directly at the transportation node site level, and optimized their project using an urban center program. They conceived here what they called a “master form” that is able to develop over time due to the aggregation of new elements. It consists of a collection of “group forms”—each of them having a single program, revealing paradoxically some functionalist attitude—which thereby partly covers the selected site (Fig. 11). No large-scale structure or hierarchy is imposed, in line with their paradigm. The railway infrastructure remains the permanent

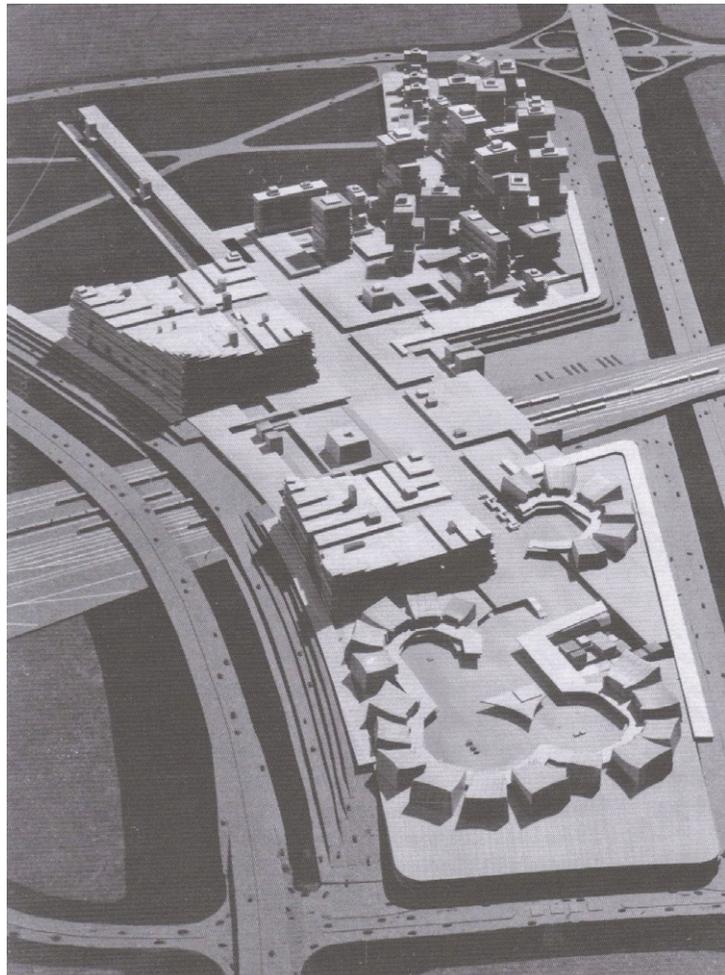


Fig. 11: Maki Fumihiko and Ōtaka Masato, project for the Shinjuku area in Tokyo, model (view from the east), 1960.

element whereas the planned buildings are defined as elements that are transitory without being “temporary,” as they wrote. Each new group of elements is an urban fragment that is generated by the repetition of the same architectural type; each of them has its own architectural language and distinct extension procedures: a forest of office towers with various heights, two compact blocks for large shopping centers with flexible free interior space, a series of cultural facilities shaped like theaters, laid out so as to define linked open spaces for gathering (Fig. 12). A few fragments of the existing “old city” have been integrated.

To Maki and Ōtaka, the search for some “elasticity and flexibility” in the city is related to the idea of an open and “dynamic” urban design, the drawn expression of which shows only a moment in the process or, to quote the authors, a temporary “state of equilibrium.” The artificial ground is the only stable and finite element; it links the various fragments and guarantees the present and future unity of the whole. Opposed to the proliferating and isotropic topological structures of many megastructuralist projects (Fig. 13), the ground is here an architectonic material

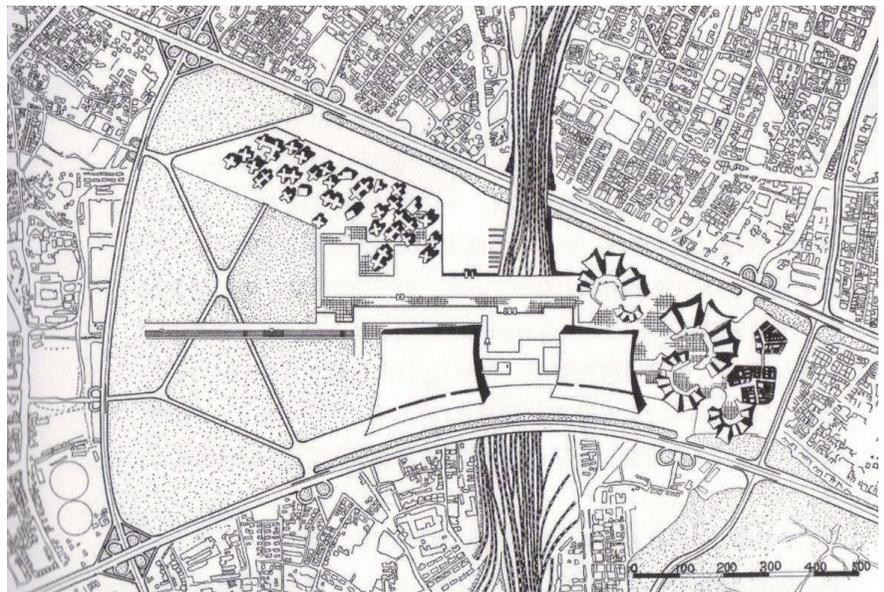


Fig. 12: Maki Fumihiko and Ōtaka Masato, project for the Shinjuku area in Tokyo, drawing, 1960.

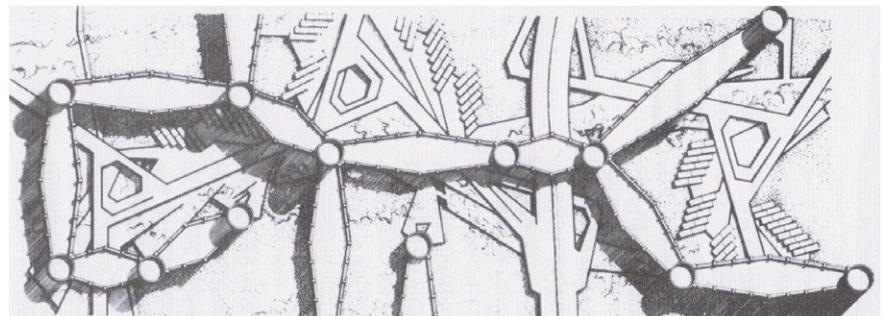


Fig. 13: Isozaki Arata, proposal for Shinjuku, drawing, 1960.



**Fig. 14: Cover of *The Japan Architect* magazine, n°78, Summer 2010, questioning the “Generative Collective Forms” in contemporaneous Japanese architecture projects.**

full of various usages. It is a platform sculpted by the variety of activities and the programmed movements. It installs a new topography of places due to anthropological parameters. The British architectural historian and critic Kenneth Frampton (1930–) frequently mentions the Maki and Ōtaka Shinjuku project in his writings about the contemporary city. In his opinion, its urban platform has a “megaform” value according to the landscape dimension—that is to say, anthropo-geographic—which he recognizes as a paradigm he renamed “landform” and later “landform building.” In this sense, it is possible to recognize an implicit continuity of this concept in several recent large facility projects wherein the building and the infrastructure are merged. Among the representative recent “landform buildings,”<sup>25</sup> the Yokohama International Port Terminal designed by Foreign Office Architects (FOA) in 1995 is a relevant example. Its ground-roof platform, which has a morphology that is direct result of the different routes taken

by the various users (travelers, visitors, automobile drivers, pedestrians), is an expression of another form of collective value.

### Updated or traditional process?

Looking at very recent Japanese architecture, the lineage of *Investigations in Collective Form* is not obvious, nor homogenous (Fig. 14). However, two noteworthy directions, which resonate with Maki’s principles, may be pointed out. On the one hand, though it happens in various ways, observing the most ordinary local urban situations—as opposed to the Metabolists’ search for complete innovation—has an important value in the agenda of several contemporary Japanese architects. On the other hand, today’s revival of a kind of Japanese tradition dealing with architectural systems that are assembled from distinct entities, gives rise to types of projects that clearly reject monumental, monolithic compositions.<sup>26</sup>

Today in Europe, the French architect and theoretician Jacques Lucan (1947–) takes an enlarged view of Maki and Ōtaka’s “group form” through his “composition, non-composition” analysis of architecture, questioning their concept at the architectural scale. His demonstration is based on analyses of a few public facilities designed by Itō Toyoo 伊東豊雄 (1941–) and SANAA during the 1990s. From his point of view, the disappearance of hierarchy within spatial devices that are willfully open is a response to the variable nature of usages in the megalopolitan continuum.<sup>27</sup> More recently, in the work of Fujimoto Sōsuke 藤本壮介 (1971–), we can see agglomerations of simple or even ordinary architectural types coming

<sup>25</sup> See for example FRAMPTON, Kenneth, “Megaform as Urban Landscape”, in CARTER, Brian (ed.), 1999 *Raoul Wallenberg Lecture*, New York, The University of Michigan, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> *The Japan Architect*, “Redefining Collectivity / *Shūgō no tsukuri dasu katachi*” (Literally: “Generative Collective Forms”), n°78, Summer 2010, introduces a series of buildings designed through an aggregation of simple volumes. This issue contains an interview with Maki Fumihiko.

<sup>27</sup> LUCAN, Jacques, *op. cit.*, 2009, in the chapter “Opérations contre composition – Forme unitaire et interdépendance des éléments” ; see especially the Sendai Mediatheque (Toyo Ito & Associates, Architects, 1995–2001) and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (SANAA, 1999–2004).



Fig. 15: Original cover of Fujimoto Sou's book *Primitive Future* (Tokyo, Inax, 2008), the image of which seems inspired by Maki's scheme for group form.

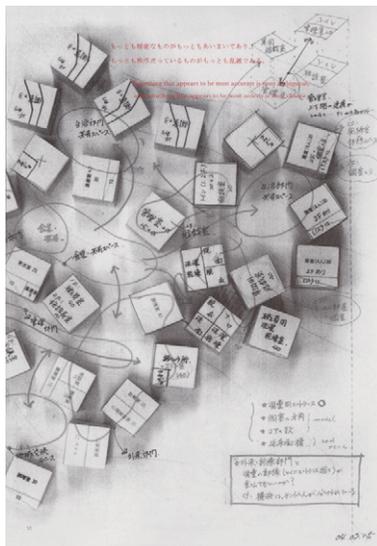


Fig. 16: Fujimoto Sou, Children's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation project in Hokkaidō (2004–2006), sketch-model (from his book, p.52).



Fig. 17: Fujimoto Sou, Tokyo Apartment (2006–2009), model (from his book, p.111).

from his generation's vernacular suburban environment (boxes, detached houses). In a way, he is also updating the “group form” lesson (Figs. 15, 16). But if Maki was looking for structural models of relationships in vernacular architecture, Fujimoto captures urban situations *a priori* without qualities (Fig. 17).<sup>28</sup>

The middle generation Japanese architects were born when the urbanscape had already been largely transformed by the upheavals of the high growth period. They had a real-time experience of another wave of deep urban transformations and mutations during the 1980s excesses of the land-asset bubble. For some of those architects, analyses of the morphological accidents produced by these mutations has been a way to accept this constrained legacy as the substantial materials of the contemporary city with which they must deal. Clashes of forms, scales, and programs were documented by the architects of Atelier Bow-Wow soon after the bubble collapsed, and the results of those investigations continue to feed their architecture design process.<sup>29</sup> Whether through collective forms or blended fragments, architecture never ceases to renew itself from the city.

## References:

- Fumihiko Maki, *Investigations in Collective Form*, St. Louis, The School of Architecture, Washington University, June 1964, 87 pp.
- 1<sup>st</sup> essay: “Collective Form—Three Paradigms” written with Ōtaka Masato, pp.3–23, including photos and schemes;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> essay: “Linkage in Collective Form” written with Jerry Goldberg, pp.27–51, including photos, drawings, maps and schemes;
- Appendix (projects): “Shinjuku Redevelopment Project,” “Prototype investigation of urban shopping and housing elements,” “Dojima Redevelopment Project,” “K-Project,” pp.53–85, including photos, drawings and schemes.

<sup>28</sup> See in particular his Children's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation in Hokkaidō (2004–2006) and the emblematic Tokyo Apartment (2006–2009).

<sup>29</sup> See for instance: KAIJIMA, Momoyo, KURODA, Junzō, and TSUKAMOTO, Yoshiharu, *Made in Tokyo*, Tokyo, Kajima, 2001.