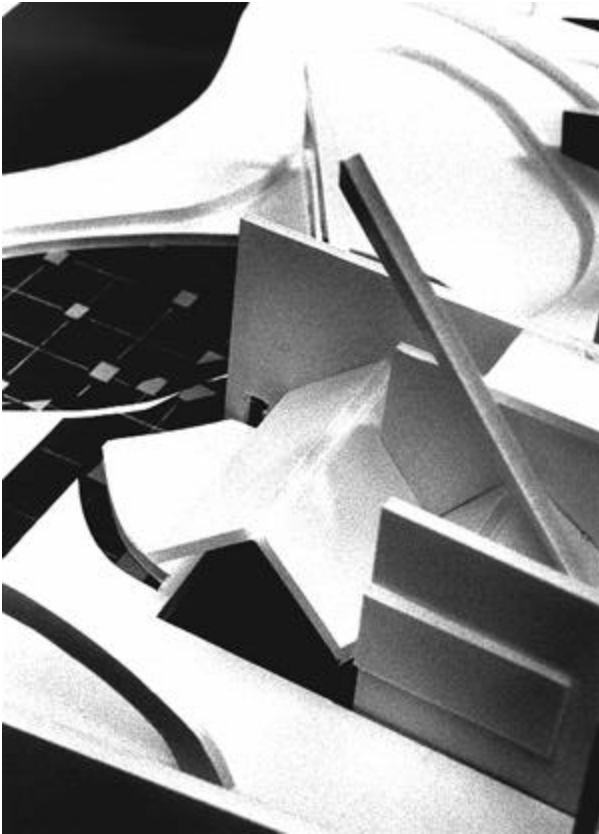


VILLA DRAGON (FOR ADOLF LOOS)



DESIGN PRECIS

In my own studio work the principles of typology and iconology have played primary roles.

In the project Death of the Post-Modern Villa, somber, brooding forms foreshadow the central metaphor of villa as dragon. A thunderbolt pierces the plate-like forms of the casino. Dragon's blood flows into the curvilinear, naturalistic forms of the landscape forming

a pool. At the opposite pole of the enclosed villa, a naïve house is 'reborn' in a small wood. At its foot is a small pool, deeply recessed, that recalls the subhuman qualities of the 'vanquished' dragon.

This libretto is as old as the hills: an ancient or outmoded construct is overcome (struck down) by divine or heroic intervention and a renewal ensues – spiritual, artistic, cultural, psychological or what have you. Wagner (in *Tannhauser*) used it, the Greeks recognized it in their myths and the medieval

world had their St. Michael.

Image (below) - Model - Villa Dragon, struck by a bolt of lightning, bleeds into/creating the landscape (foamcore, museum board, colored paper, prismacolor pencil / 3200-ASA print)



In the iconology of the villa, the doorway out of the casino into the enclosed gardens is in the shape of the elevation of the naïve house – the primitive hut of the neoclassicists. In between the post-modern typology of the casino and the entry sequence and the naturalistic typology of the gardens, the dialectic is expressed. It is in this realm (in the interstitial) that the blending of types occurs and the real poetry emerges.

Picasso saw at the Musée d’Ethnographie du Trocadero in Paris a display of African masks. Hal Foster (in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics*, 1985) sees in *Les Femmes d’Alger* (1907) a bridge between modernist and pre-modernist painting. He sees Picasso as having used the negative spaces of the masks as positive forms in his own work. This inversion creates tectonic linkage. This same idea is expressed in the *Death of the Post-Modern Villa* where the doorway provides the shape of the reborn naïve house – a bracketing that contains the

dialectic.

Image (above) - Model - A second entrance to Villa Dragon embodies mock-portentous forms, engendering (perhaps) a sense of foreboding or impending catharsis (foamcore, museum board, colored paper, balsa wood)

POSTSCRIPT

DURER'S ST. MICHAEL

Perhaps the most impressive (and famous) image of St. Michael battling the dragon is by Albrecht Durer (1471-1528).

Durer's reputed membership in the heretical Brotherhood of the Free Spirit places the iconological aspects of his religious art in a perspective somewhat inconsistent with orthodoxy.



See Raoul Vaneigem's The Movement of the Free Spirit (New York: Zone Books, 1994)