

Landscapes on the Edges—Periphery of the North

Center and periphery forms a strong dipole—a paired notion of increasing contrast.

Even in the Nordic countries, where life has traditionally been balanced between the urban and the rural, large cities attract an increasing amount of people and investment. The remainder of the land is left as a place beyond reach—a mere periphery to what seems to constitute “real life.” An attitude that, unfortunately, leaves us robbed of so much beauty and experience.

I had the great pleasure of traveling with Erieta in some of the remotest places of the North; and I have witnessed how fantastic the interplay between nature and architecture can be, precisely in this periphery.

Words cannot describe silent aurora-nights in northern Sweden, great wilds in Lofoten, Norwegian fjords, breathtaking surveys in Iceland, and lonely islets in the Finnish Archipelago. A real life *Odyssey*—dreamlike and challenging to capture with all five senses, even more so in the case of Erieta’s through the camera, when everything is really too great to be caught. It is a special gift to see and know how to perpetuate everything with artistry—especially where one’s mind is elevated far away from any banality. This is what peripheries can do to you.

To obtain a holistic interplay one must “inhale” the site; transfer it into one’s sensory apparatus as a whole. This is why we must strive to recreate our understanding of peripheries, as well as the architecture lying there.

In the Ancient Greece, the concept of *chora* formed a notion for perceived space. Space was created on an ad hoc basis through vision and touch, by reading the spatial composition perceived successively on site, and thus not defined as a fixed concept. It was derived directly from the place (*topos*). The notion of *chora* enters on every level, where anything may be said to *be*.

When juxtaposed with the setting of Greek temples and amphitheaters, the extreme landscapes of the North become almost cultic in their interplay with new/older architecture. The Nordic light adds yet another dimension, intensifying one’s sensation of the peripheric landscapes distended between heaven and earth. Local variations of climate have created singular environments in the Nordic countries, inspiring unique architecture through time.

It is this fascination that, together with Erieta, we strove to study and communicate in our project: *Landscapes of the Edges – Contemporary Architecture under Nordic Light* 2008–12. Thanks to Dreyers Fond DK, a series of Nordic travels were accomplished, resulting in the collection of a treasure trove of photos, texts, notes, and memories, both from the extraordinary landscapes and from the extraordinary people involved. Peripheries give rise to special people, visions, and initiatives.

I feel delighted that some of these Nordic photos are incorporated in the current publication—and deeply thankful for all the inspiring hours behind them. Nothing compares to experiencing the peripheries of the world.