CHARLOTTE ASHBY AND SHONA KALLESTRUP

Introduction[1]

> On her long thin legs she wore a pair of long stockings, one brown and the other black, and she had on a pair of black shoes that were exactly twice as long as her feet. These shoes her father had bought for her in South America so that Pippi would have something to grow into, and she never wanted to wear any others.
>
> – Astrid Lindgren, 1945

> The moominpappa carried the wireless set out into the garden and tuned in to dance music from America, and in no time the Valley was filled with dancing, jumping, stamping, twisting, and turning.
>
> – Tove Jansson, 1948

Pippi Longstocking had a pet monkey and wore South American shoes. The Moomins listened to American dance music. Both these series of children's stories have been translated into many different languages and subject to multiple adaptations, with the characters and worlds they portray touching children around the world for over half a century. Contributing to the image of their respective nations abroad, their international success has been based on multiple processes of translation and adaptation.

First written in the 1940s, the stories were conceived in the shadow of war and reflect the realities of small towns or rural communities undeniably touched by the outside world. Yet South American boots and American dance music do not disrupt these worlds: Pippi does not love the boots because they are South American, but because they are a gift from her father, while the Moomins don't love American dance music because it is

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American, but because it fulfils their urge to dance with typical Moomin abandon. These are instances of cultural translation. They reflect the interconnectedness of the globe in the mid-twentieth century, facilitated by the circulation of objects and the ease of communication that created myriad points of connection between distant places. They also reflect the invisibility of this kind of exchange, which became increasingly ubiquitous and banal from the nineteenth century onwards.

In recent decades, the interconnectedness of cultures has been the subject of growing theoretical scrutiny by historians of art, design, and material and visual culture, with a particularly strong focus on the role played by travelling objects. Building on pioneering work in anthropology, literary studies, history and subaltern studies, and stimulated in particular by Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff's categories of the 'social lives' and 'cultural biographies' of objects, the field has seen rich discussion of how 'objects in motion' facilitate translation and transculturation.[2] Such research has demonstrated how the peripatetic lives of objects – frequently rendered invisible by their decontextualization in museums or by art and design narratives that, in the words of Meredith Martin and Daniela Bleichmar, privilege an 'object's origin rather than its biography, its roots rather than its routes' – result in new meanings, uses and understandings.[3] The present volume extends this line of theoretical thinking beyond travelling objects to consider also the mobility of ideas and practices. Its essays focus on ideas about design and architecture as they travelled in and out of the Nordic countries from the late nineteenth century to the present, a period marked by accelerated patterns of global circulation but also by a counter-emphasis on ethnocentric nationalism as a way of interpreting and 'framing' design. In keeping with other books in Peter Lang's series *Internationalism and*

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[2] Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), in particular Igor Kopytoff's chapter 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', 64–91. For an excellent discussion of the value of a transcultural approach, see Meredith Martin and Daniela Bleichmar's introduction to their edited volume *Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 605–19.

[3] Martin and Bleichmar, *Objects in Motion*, 608.

the Arts, this volume seeks to look outside the box of national art histories and across transnational exchanges in networks, systems and practices.[4]

Challenges of the Transnational 'National'

Any examination of the transnational reality running beneath, between and beyond the development of national design cultures in the Nordic countries in the modern period faces two main historical challenges. The first is the primacy of the nation as a conceptual paradigm. The Nordic countries constitute one of many regions in which histories of art and material culture have played an important role in nation-building, and where institutions of design education and the scholarly construction of art and design history were (and in many cases still are) closely bound to this project. But, as Michael Hatt and Margit Thøfner point out in their investigation of the 'connectedness' of Danish art, 'the national is not a stable starting point, but emerges from the interaction of the local and the trans-regional … Nations too are produced by the processes of bricolage, translation and discovery.'[5] The transnational undercoating of national ideas about design is the focus of several chapters in this volume, which examine the 'bricolage' processes of absorption, appropriation, reinvention and reflection that accompany the translation of international models into national iterative frameworks, both within the Nordic countries and in regions as diverse as Catalonia, Germany and Romania. Further chapters engage with the global promotion of Nordic design and how it was transposed into local languages, for example in Australia and the Baltic countries. Since the nineteenth century, the rhetoric of Nordic design has consistently stressed a deep-rooted connection to place and landscape as essential to any understanding of creativity from the region. These myths have an enduring appeal, despite scholarly work to unpick and nuance their currency.[6] The commercial and political value of the brand 'Scandinavian Design', with its easy pan-Nordic equations between people, nature, tradition and democratic ideals, continues to be widely employed, maintaining a cultivated deafness to the paradoxical realities of international cultural exchange. Recognizing that the semiotic signifieds of 'Scandinavian Design' were as much generated by their international reception as by their intrinsic properties, our contributors interrogate how they were received, appropriated and reinterpreted in other local contexts.

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[4] For example, Grace Brockington, et al., *Imagined Cosmopolis: Internationalism and Cultural Exchange, 1870s–1920s* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019). Other works that have considered Nordic design from the perspective of international exchange include: Petra Ceferin, *Constructing a Legend: The International Exhibitions of Finnish Architecture 1957–1967* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2003); Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, *Alvar Aalto: Architecture, Modernity, and Geopolitics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Bobbye Tigerman, ed., 'The Influence of Scandinavian Design', special issue of *Design and Culture* 7/3 (2015); Rachel Gotlieb and Michael John Prokopow, eds, *True Nordic: How Scandinavia Influenced Design in Canada* (London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2016); Bobbye Tigerman and Monica Obniski, eds, *Scandinavian Design and the United States, 1890–1980* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2020); Malene Breunig and Shona Kallestrup, 'Translating *Hygge*: A Danish Design Myth and Its Anglophone Appropriation', *Journal of Design History* 33/2 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epz056>; and Marta Edling and Annika Öhrner, eds, 'Nordic-Baltic Cross Border Connectivity', special issue of Artl@s *Bulletin* 11/2 (2022) <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/>.

The second challenge facing our contributors is the persistent anxiety around 'influence' within discourses of Modernism, where the primacy of the 'original' and the presumed inferiority of the 'derivative' make discussions of exchange fraught with hierarchical inferences. Modernism's vertical histories, in which influence travels in one direction only, privilege some forms of exchange over others and have contributed to the centre–periphery models that have driven the western canon and curated the Nordic countries' at times marginal place within it. Recognition that cultures everywhere are the products of an ongoing circulation of ideas and objects has stimulated new methodological attempts, often collaborative, to disrupt hierarchical models of Modernism, for example, by interrogating the geographies of art, exploring the potential of 'horizontal' or 'entangled' art history, or focusing on circulations, networks and mapping.[7]

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[5] Michael Hatt and Margit Thøfner, 'Thinking through Denmark: Connected Art Histories', *Art History* (April 2020), 251–2.

[6] Most particularly Kjetil Fallan, ed., *Scandinavian Design: Alternative Histories* (London: Berg, 2012); Widar Halén and Kerstin Wickman, eds, *Scandinavian Design Beyond the Myth: Fifty Years of Design from the Nordic Countries* (Stockholm: Arvinius, 2003). See too Charlotte Ashby, *Modernism in Scandinavia: Art, Architecture and Design* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

In line with global art history's wider efforts to challenge canonicity and find more apposite approaches for reframing so-called 'peripheral' spaces in a positive way, our contributors explore a range of circulations and cross-border flows that highlight transcultural exchange, interaction and reciprocity. In particular, they address constructions of identity, myth-making and meaning in design from the late nineteenth century until the present day and explore how these have been affected by translations back and forth across international borders. Engaging with a range of Nordic and Nordic-inspired material objects, techniques, practices and concepts, the chapters assess both the impact they have had on new cultural contexts and the ways they themselves have been fashioned and refashioned in response to the circulation of influences.

Thinking about Translation

The metaphor of 'translation' offers a helpful way of reconceptualizing this exchange. In the design discourse of the modern period, the 'copy' is persistently portrayed as implicitly inferior and its over-use (always a subjective interpretation) as a sign of cultural insecurity and underdevelopment. A 'translation' or an 'adaptation', on the other hand, is not reflexively regarded as inferior to the original in the way that the copy is, though there are politics to translation and infelicities in the parallels to language which we wish to avoid. In this volume, 'translation' is used as a metaphor for understanding the exchange of design ideas outside the model of originator and emulator. It is understood to be not simply a mono-directional influence, but a multi-facetted pattern of modulation.

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[7] See, for example, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Piotr Piotrowski, 'On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History', *Umění/Art* 56/5 (2008), 378–83; Catherine Dossin, Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, eds, *Circulations in the Global History of Art* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, Artl@s project and bulletin <https://artlas.huma-num.fr/fr/>.

Translation creates as much as it replicates. There are always gaps between one iteration and the next and in these gaps new meanings are generated, new positions articulated, and new desires expressed.[8] This has been acknowledged in recent architecture and design scholarship, for example, Esra Akcan's book *Architecture in Translation*:

> circulations and their transformative effects have been so ubiquitous during modern times that one can hardly think of pure 'local' architecture that is produced in a place completely closed to other locations … diverse types of continuous translations have shaped and are still shaping history, perpetually mutating definitions of the local and the foreign.[9]

In a similar fashion, the exchanges explored by our contributors go well beyond simplistic narratives of design transfer. The emphasis is on the continuous circulation of ideas and the agency of individuals in the reworking, appropriating or reconfiguring of sources to suit their local contexts. Importantly, exploring the translational aspects of Nordic design allows the chapters in this volume to break the boxes of national histories and standard positions and instead highlight narratives that do not always communicate via the centre but form their own structural relationships. In addressing the circulation of material objects, as well as concepts and ideas that have travelled abroad, contributors explore what happens to meaning generated in one context and translated/transposed/repossessed by another.

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[8] Tejaswini Niranjana, 'Introduction: History in Translation', in Tejaswini Niranjana, ed., *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992), 9.

[9] Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey and the Modern House* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 3. See, too, Jiat-Hwee Chang and Imran Bin Tajudeen, *Southeast Asia's Modern Architecture: Questions of Translation, Epistemology and Power* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2019).

The intersection of translation and nation that lies at the heart of many of the chapters offers a particular point of reflection. Let us return to our example of the Moomins, today regarded as quintessentially Finnish. The early books were written in Tove Jansson's mother tongue, Fenno-Swedish, in the 1940s, only reaching Finnish-speaking audiences in 1952, a year after the first English-language translation. This is a useful reminder of the unreliability of neat equivalences of language and nation.[10] Many international readers' first exposure to the Moomins came via the English-language comic strip written and drawn by Jansson and translated by her brother, which was syndicated to over forty countries, or via the various animations made in Japan under licence from Jansson and dubbed in multiple languages.[11] For others, their sole contact with the Moomins has been via collectable objects produced by the Arabia ceramics company from the 1990s onwards. Transnationalism has always underpinned the harnessing of the Moomins as a source of Finnish national pride, not least in the branding strategies of the airline industry. Finnair uses Moomin imagery and Moomin objects in the same way as it earlier collaborated with the glass manufacturer Iittala or the textile design company Marimekko (Figure 0.1).[12] Collaborations of this type seek to translate recognition and esteem from one sector to another.[13] In this case, it builds first on the success of Finnish design in the international arena in the 1950s and, later, on the popularity of the Moomins (and subsequently the *Angry Birds* media franchise). Aeroplanes themselves are, of course, mobile objects. The McDonnell Douglas MD-11 used by Finnair is an American tri-jet wide-body airliner launched in 1990. As there have never been any Finnish-manufactured jets, Finnair's national and company identities since its first German-designed Junker planes in the 1920s have been inscribed by means of colour and, later, design collaborations. This is common across the aviation industry, though not all companies have invested to the same degree in these partnerships.

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[10] Tuula Karjalainen, *Tove Jansson: Work and Love* (London: Penguin UK, 2014), 175–82.

[11] Ibid., 185, 247–8.

[12] Rosa te Velde, 'Ultima Thule: "Beyond Known Borders". Exploring the Relationship between Design and Finnish National Identity', *Kunstlicht* 34 (2013), 70–9.

[13] Crispin Thurlow and Giorgia Aiello, 'National Pride, Global Capital: A Social Semiotic Analysis of Transnational Visual Branding in the Airline Industry', *Visual Communication* 6/3 (2007), 305–44.

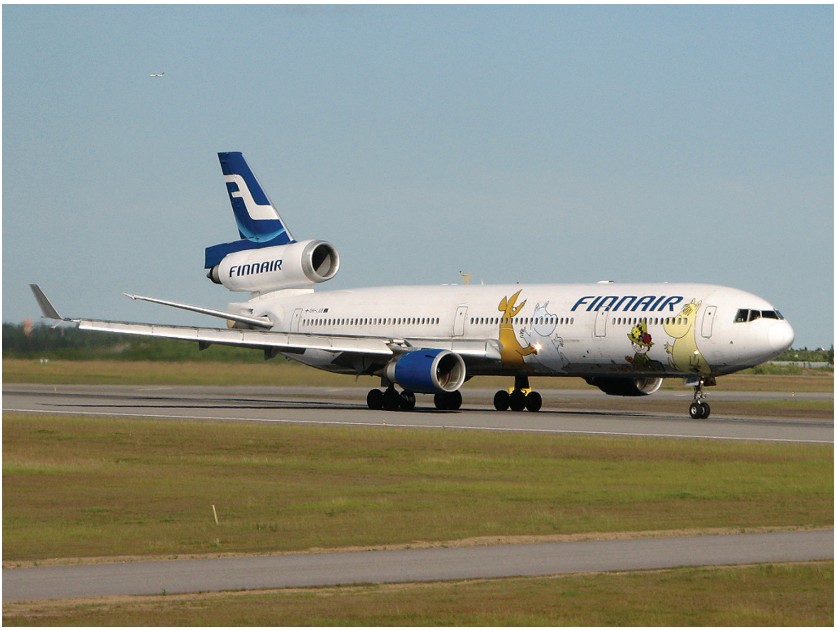

Figure 0.1. Finnair McDonnell Douglas MD-11 (OH-LGB) with Moomin figures, 2006. Photo by Antti Havukainen. CC licence.

This case highlights the mutable relationships between visibility and invisibility in the transnational world of objects in the modern period. The American manufacture of the plane, the international reality of the aviation industry and Finnair's membership of the Oneworld Alliance are not hidden but remain narratively unvoiced in the design. The Finnair aeroplane invites customers to partake in an experience of Finland embodied in a matrix of reproduced imagery (typically lakescapes and snowscapes) and in the objects they directly interact with (place-settings, textiles and toiletry bags) that borrows from and perpetuates a visual discourse established for international consumption in the mid-twentieth century.[14]

Modernism and Nationalism

Modernism was presented as intrinsically translatable from one context to another, from Le Corbusier's city for three million people to MoMA's efforts to introduce the International Style to American consumers. Efforts to promote it, however, frequently emphasized how these international forms could continue to accommodate national meanings. For instance, when Sigfried Giedion introduced Alvar Aalto as an example of flexibility, responsiveness and humanism within the new International Style, he made the famous statement: 'Finland is with Aalto wherever he goes.'[15] Aalto is inextricable from his Finnishness but, at the same time, 'wherever he goes' reflects the reality of his global mobility, the universal relevance of his designs and the enmeshment of the national and the international within the project of the modern movement. Aalto and the 'Scandinavian Design' phenomenon were particularly useful for the West during the Cold War as a welcome nuancing of Modernism's internationalism, one reassuringly cleansed of worrying leftist elements and rooted in safer universalizing concepts of love of nature and home.[16] Behind this equation also lay the appeal to a common civilized whiteness, a bulwark against the racial dimensions of increasing globalization.[17]

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[14] See, for example, Jørn Guldberg, '"Scandinavian Design" as Discourse: The Exhibition *Design in Scandinavia*, 1954–57', *Design Issues* 27/2 (2011), 41–58; Petra Ceferin, *Constructing a Legend: The International Exhibitions of Finnish Architecture 1957–1967* (Helsinki: SKS, 2006); Kevin Davies, '"A Geographical Notion Turned into an Artistic Reality": Promoting Finland and Selling Finnish Design in Post-War Britain c.1953–1965', *Journal of Design History* 15/2 (2002), 101–16.

[15] Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 620.

[16] Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, 'Alvar Aalto and the Geopolitics of Fame', *Perspecta* 37 (2005), 86–97; and *Alvar Aalto: Architecture, Modernity, and Geopolitics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

The mobility of culture is certainly not solely a modern phenomenon, and, despite national narratives of isolation and remoteness, the Nordic countries have always been part of wider cultural and trade networks.[18] From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, new technologies accelerated the pace of exchange and internationalism was celebrated as a key component of modernity. Modernism, as a cultural response, was understood as a concept with global implications, based on the movement of people, ideas, technologies, information and images with universal application, though the reality was the production of multiple modernities, based on selectively shared characteristics.[19] At the same time, the foundations of modern design were based on principles and institutions within which the nation was an abiding concept. In contrast to the anti-nationalism of the international workers' or Esperanto movements, the internationalism of Modernism was in no way antithetical to the continuation of the nation as an organizing principle.[20]

This paradox lies at the heart of the development of modern design in the Nordic countries and underpins the success of its international reception. For this reason, the nation remains highly visible in the essays within this book. Cultural nationalism informed the infrastructure of the new design schools, museums and professional societies that drove design reform at the end of the nineteenth century. It was also implicit in the structures of international cooperation, international exhibitions and the design press. Engineering and architectural journals offered information about new building technologies, materials and design solutions, alongside celebrations of national heritage.[21] The model for such journals was international, even while the intention behind them was the fostering of national design culture.[22] Nation-building, it is clear, could only take place within a context shaped by the forces of global exchange.

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[17] Ben Pitcher, *Consuming Race* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014); Erin Leary, '"The Total Absence of Foreign Subjects": The Racial Politics of US Interwar Exhibitions of Scandinavian Design', *Design and Culture* 7/3 (2015), 283–312.

[18] See, for example, T. A. Heslop, 'Gunhild's Cross: Seeing a Romanesque Masterwork through Denmark', 432–57, and other articles in the special issue edited by Michael Hatt and Margit Thøfner, 'Art Through Denmark', *Art History* 43/2 (2020).

[19] Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization* (Jerusalem: Truman Institute Reprints, 2000).

[20] Hubert F. van den Berg and Lidia Głuchowska, *Transnationality, Internationalism and Nationhood. European Avant-Garde in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013).

The Language of Design

Translation plays a prominent role in this process, as do analogies between design and language. The notion of a 'language of ornament' was widely adopted in the second half of the nineteenth century. But there are important distinctions between Owen Jones's *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), which might be understood as the originating text of this analogue, and later nationalist collections that sought to compile national grammars of ornament.[23] Jones's *Grammar* opened up the world of ornament, functioning as a phrase book which could be accessed entirely according to the taste and volition of the designer. In contrast, national grammars were concerned with securing and authenticating national expression.

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[21] Mari Hvattum and Anne Hultzsch, eds, *The Printed and the Built: Architecture, Print Culture and Public Debate in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).

[22] Anna Ripatti, 'Printing a New Architectural Style in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Sweden', *The Journal of Architecture* 25/7 (2020), 873–900; Ritva Wäre, *Rakennettu Suomalaisuus: Nationalismi viime vuosisadan vaihteen arkkitehtuurissa ja sitä koskevissa kirjoituksissa* (Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1991).

[23] Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day, 1856); Vladimir Stasov, *Russkīĭ Narodnyĭ Ornament = l'Ornement National Russe* (St Peterburg: Typografii͡a tovarishchestva obshchvennai͡a pol'za, 1872); Jószef Huszka, *Magyar ornamentika* (Budapest: Patria, 1891); Petter Theodor Schwindt, *Suomalaisia koristeita: ompelukoristeita ja kuoseja = Finnische Ornamente: Stickornamente und Muster* (Helsinki: Helsingissä Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1894).

Such thinking was based on the analogy between language, culture and nation that lay at the heart of romantic theories of nationhood.[24]

The Nordic design press and expanding arena of design discourse, as they emerged in the late nineteenth century, reflected the co-existence of both national and international paradigms. On the one hand, the fostering of a national design culture in the national language contributed to the creation of the 'imagined community' concerned with the material culture of the nation.[25] On the other, the form and content of the journals closely followed international models, making design from around the world accessible to the nation-bound reader. Word and image worked together to inform readers how to understand new materials and technologies – be they a piles system from the Manchester ship canal or zinc architectural ornaments from Germany – and how they might be translated into local contexts. In the same manner, readers were introduced to 'national' culture in the form of historical or vernacular material, often sourced from particular regions and sometimes even from beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.

This process saw a marked conceptual division between the technical and the aesthetic. New foreign technologies were promoted as being more efficient, safer and cheaper. More slippery was the adoption of aesthetic ideas from abroad. Although journals regularly featured images of buildings and objects from around the world, their accompanying discourse shifted frequently: on the one hand advocating the adaptation of foreign styles as evidence of progress and cosmopolitanism, and on the other decrying it as slavish copyism and trumpery. This tension can be felt in Ragnar Östberg's 1901 pamphlet on the eclectic architecture of Stockholm:

> She moves in the manner of the Berliner, she is steeped in the classics and knowledgeable as a German academic and scholar. She is hot-blooded like a Spaniard, dreamy like an Italian, wise and calm like the English, even dry-witted and wealthy like a

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[24] J. G. Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772) and *Ideas for the Philosophy of a History of Humanity* (1784–91), in F. M. Barner, ed., *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[25] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

> Yankee. One wants to shout at her: 'Maid of Stockholm! give yourself to us, forget your foreign lovers, forget your old dreams. You are beautiful and well-formed, no matter how you dress, you have a grace and an education that allows you everything – but in the end we will never forgive you that you forget yourself. You are Swedish, my girl, and the day is 1900 – then stop embracing the whole world and all times, while that which is your own may alone ask for your favour.'[26]

A similar ambiguity is present in much architectural and design discourse of the period, which widely promoted the principle of fidelity to time and place but also recognized that to be 'of 1900' required an engagement with new practices, expectations and technologies that were transnational. Östberg's fluency in multiple stylistic sources speaks to the long history of Swedish engagement with other cultures. But this influence was not unidirectional: his passage was quoted that same year in the Finnish journal *Rakentaja* (The Builder) in an article about the architecture of Stockholm that focused on new buildings with a clear indication of what Finnish architects could learn from their neighbour.[27]

Östberg's Stockholm City Hall, which was in gestation from the mid-1890s and built over a long period between 1902 and 1923, exemplifies both his injunction to reflect on local tradition and the reality of engagement with design cultures from elsewhere. This large and complex building, which was well-received internationally and was awarded the gold medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1926, transcends temporal and geographic boundaries. It fuses references to local traditions with allusions to its position within the regional context of the Baltic and the wider network of world capitals: from Sweden to Venice and Byzantium. Östberg's English-language guidebook encouraged the foreign visitor to understand the building in the context of Stockholm's historical development as 'a maritime town from the Middle Ages', but also in relation to the wider European tradition of city halls, referring to it as a ' "Town hall" or

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[26] Ragnar Östberg, *Stockholmsarkitekturen och våra moderna arkitekter* (Stockholm: Nilsson & Berglings, 1901), 5.

[27] Vilho Penttilä, 'Tukholman uusimmat rakennukset', *Rakentaja* 5/2 (1902), 65–9; 9/2 (1902), 129–31 (65–6).

"City Hall", "Hôtel de Ville", "Palazzo Municipale", "Rathaus" '.[28] It thus articulated the realities of entangled national, regional, international and transnational practice that ran against the rhetorical binaries of native and foreign.

Going beyond the invention of tradition, the essays in this volume dig into the mechanisms of cultural creation to explore histories of the transnational processes by which design cultures evolve. 'Scandinavian Design' as a myth, a brand and a shorthand for a range of design ideas has proved an enduring and adaptable construct. Its export around the world ensures that it has touched and transformed design cultures worldwide. At the same time, the Nordic design it draws on has been shaped and reshaped by influences from beyond the Nordic countries and by reflection on its own global success. We hope that by addressing ongoing transnational dynamics of cultural exchange in this way, this volume will contribute to the emerging methodological field, allowing encounters between new critical positions and the crystallization of comparative insights.

The collection is structured into two sections. Part I groups together essays chronologically focused on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Here, the nation-building impulse is balanced by the internationalizing forces of modernity, as the mobility of people and technologies accelerated. The first chapter, by Bente Ass Solbakken, explores the routes by which Norwegian architects looked to English Norman architecture for traces of lost Norse heritage that could be reinvented in contemporary Norwegian churches. The mechanisms for this were the transnational circulation of writings on architectural history and theory, as well as the mobility of students of architecture. Solbakken reflects on the anachronic nature of the architecture produced, which transcended time and place in search of Norwegian modernity.

Chapter 2, by Shona Kallestrup, examines how Romanian interest in Nordic exhibition pavilions, folk art research and the dragon style at the turn of the century impacted discussions around a 'national' Romanian language of art and design. It demonstrates how awareness of Nordic models mediated ways in which Romanian art historians and designers wrestled with the centre–periphery problems that accompanied the arrival of western art forms, and inflected efforts to situate folk art at the heart of the national debate.

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[28] Ragnar Östberg, *The Stockholm City Hall: A Guide* (Stockholm: Svenska Bokhandelscentralen, 1926), 5 & 8.

In Chapter 3, Bart Pushaw presents a trans-Indigenous reading of duodji objects and craft practice that reflect exchange between Sámi migrants to Alaska and the local Iñupiat. This exchange was mediated by colonial intervention on the part of the American settler administration, which sought to 'civilize' the Iñupiat by encouraging them to shift from being nomadic caribou hunters to settled reindeer herders. Pushaw shows how duodji made in Alaska are inscribed with nuances of this transnational exchange that are missing in the official settler records.

Chapter 4, by Tonje Haugland Sørensen, considers the Norse revival dragon style of the late nineteenth century, and specifically the role of medieval stave churches as mediated source material. Uncharacteristically both monumental and mobile, stave churches were dismantled and recreated across a variety of sites, allowing for the translation, adaptation and representation of their emblematic Norse character for multiple audiences.

In the final chapter of the first section, Jeremy Howard addresses what he calls the 'designwash' strategies used by Nobel family members in Russia to launder their public image and downplay their destructive activities as arms and oil industrialists. He explores the ways in which the Nobels employed sophisticated design programmes to manage public perceptions, notably by appropriating the sacred Hindu-Zoroastrian Ateshgah fire-worshippers' temple as their trademark.

In Part II, we move further into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to trace how the national forms of Nordic design and culture, established in the nineteenth, were translated by and for international audiences. Mia Åkerfelt explores how the vernacular type of the red-painted rural cottage was mediated in parallel in both Sweden and Finland as a national symbol of home and homeland. Her long comparative history of this process reveals the mutability of the cottage ideal and the mechanisms of texts and images that reified these national symbols and circulated them to both domestic and international audiences.

This is followed by Lucila Mallart's case study of art historical and methodological exchange between Catalonia and the Nordic countries in the interwar period. Focusing on the Modernista architect, art historian and nationalist politician Josep Puig i Cadafalch and his research into the circulation of early Romanesque art, she explores two levels of cultural exchange between the North and the South: the transnational diffusion of Romanesque models in the medieval period and the 'transperipheral' production of art historical knowledge in the 1920s and 30s.

In Chapter 8, Mark Ian Jones takes us further afield to consider the popular adoption and reinvention of Scandinavian – especially Swedish – design in Australian objects for the modern home in the 1940s to 1960s. Examining the reception of Nordic-made design in exhibitions, publications and retail contexts, he explores how this exchange stimulated hybrid translations of Australian-Nordic design within the local furniture industry. He concludes with a critical assessment of the 1968 Australian iteration of the famous *Design in Scandinavia* exhibition that toured North America in 1954–7.

From Australia, discussion moves to the Baltic countries where Karolina Jakaitė and Triin Jerlei explore Estonian and Lithuanian engagement with Nordic and specifically Finnish architecture and design during Soviet rule.[29] In the context of radically diminished access to contemporary design cultures from outside the Eastern Bloc, the limited contact permitted by Soviet authorities with Nordic design was avidly pursued. As Jakaitė and Jerlei demonstrate, the translation of Nordic influences into Estonian and Lithuanian design in the 1950s and 1960s allowed architects and designers to articulate aspirations for national expression and cosmopolitan modernity that could not otherwise be voiced.

The final chapter in Part II, by Malene Breunig, takes us up to the present day through an examination of the translations of Scandinavian design and 'Nordicity' employed by the Noma restaurant in Copenhagen and the 'New Nordic' food culture it promotes.[30] Identifying a 'progressive nostalgia' in Noma's cultivation of locality, artisan skills and reified tropes of Nordic exceptionalism, Breunig argues that the productive myth-making of the gastronomic concept and its visual mediation can be viewed as a new form of critical regionalism. Her exploration of the themes of authenticity, craft and the relationship to nature builds on ideas that have resonated throughout the book and provokes reflection on how forms, materials and their multiple meanings are adapted to meet the psycho-emotional needs of the communities by whom and for whom they have been reimagined. The book concludes with an afterword by Kjetil Fallan who reflects perceptively on how 'meaning can be both lost and found in the process of translation'. By examining the complex realities behind acts of making, and by recognizing overlooked matrices of translational exchange, our contributors unpack 'invented tradition' and complicate essentialist definitions of Nordic design.

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[29] The authors have requested that we highlight that this chapter was submitted before the outbreak of the current hostilities in Ukraine.

[30] This chapter was submitted before January 2023, when Noma announced its plans to close its titular Copenhagen restaurant.