

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Art of Building Reception: Aris Konstantinidis behind the Global Published Life of his Weekend House in Anavyssos (1962–2014)

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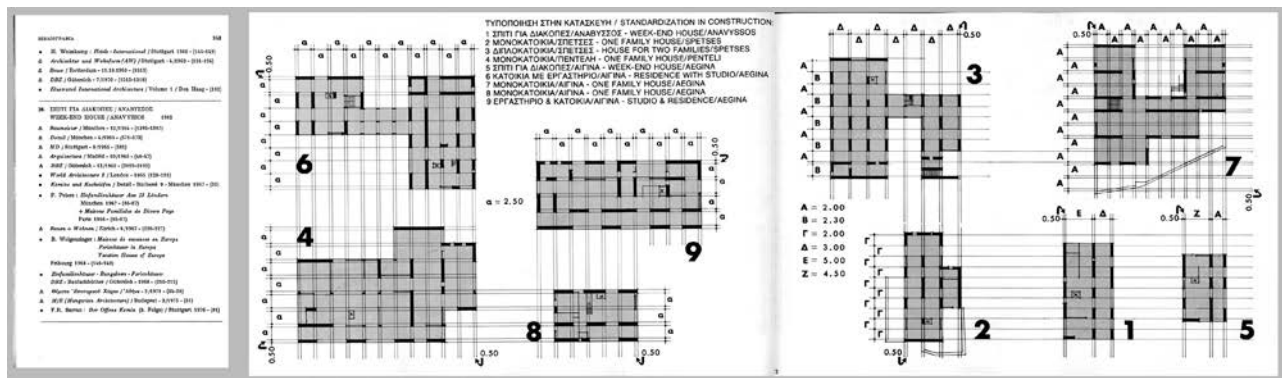
Aris Konstantinidis's Weekend House in Anavyssos (1962–1964) holds an emblematic place within his oeuvre. This article uncovers the architect's own role in building the global reception of this project through a tripartite account of its global published life from the printed page to the digital website over the last five decades (1962–2014). Konstantinidis created a uniquely hermetic zone around his work by adopting a publishing practice that combines his own photographs as narrative and his accompanying text as an architectural manifesto of his regional modernism. Highlighting turning points in the published life of this building, the article relates the original gaze of the architect to the gaze adopted by each subsequent researcher of his work. The conclusion recalibrates the gaze of the contemporary architectural historian towards an architectural work that has effectively been doubly built to be received as canonical, as well as an architectural persona that is often easily romanticised in its dominant interpretations.

## Introduction

If Beatriz Colomina (1994) was right to imply that the history of the Modern Movement and its eventual reception is inextricably linked with the way in which its canonical figures made use of photography and mass media, then contemporary architectural historians cannot help but wonder whether this has also been the case for alternative regional modernisms that have historically developed around the world. Conversely, they may also wonder whether the historical development of various regional modernisms around the globe implies a different relationship of their canonical figures with architectural publications, photography, and mass media. The further exploration of such questions seems likely to help architectural historians eventually arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the historical mechanics behind both the global dissemination of modernism and the subsequent proliferation of its regional variants. In this article, I explore those broader questions by focusing on the work of the Greek architect Aris Konstantinidis (1913–1993). His case is perhaps unique, especially when one considers the ways in which he managed to create a hermetic zone around his work through his publications. The Weekend House in Anavyssos (1962–1964), usually regarded as a landmark work in his oeuvre, serves here as a vehicle for exploring Konstantinidis's use of architectural media in building the reception, by the global community of his fellow architects, of his own work.

By closely following the published life of this building over the course of five decades, I retrace the strong hold Konstantinidis's gaze still retains over its actual historical reception. The word 'gaze' is used here to imply a certain *Weltanschauung*; in other words, the eye of an architect that both looks and sees. In Konstantinidis's publications, the combination of the printed word with the built work – photographed by the architect himself to feature on the pages of the architectural publication – shapes an understanding of the building as an embodiment of architectural theory, 'reiff[ing] an individual and specific set of assumptions and from that point of view mak[ing] clear what architecture is, and should be' (Higgott 2007: 7–8). Konstantinidis's concerted publishing strategy succeeded in endowing the Weekend House with a timeless, transcendental aura. Barely inhabited by its original owner and his successors, the building nonetheless enjoyed a much richer life of its own in architectural publications. This article, organised around a tripartite periodisation of these publications (from the original ones, designed and edited by the architect himself, to the secondary literature of architectural history and theory that followed, and from there on to the contemporary era of digital reproduction), the article defines key moments in this history of Konstantinidis's modes of building reception. In the last section, I revisit Colomina's work in order to explore the tensions inherent in the Konstantinidis-Corbusier dialectics, by focusing on questions concerning the relation of their work with nature and landscape, as well as their peculiar interplay with 'high' and 'low' culture. The article then concludes with an attempt to remove the distorting veil of the published life from both the House and its architect, 'the doyen of contemporary

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**Fig. 1:** Selected pages from Aris Konstantinidis's publications (1981; 1984), presenting the Weekend House in Anavyssos as an initial generator of the architect's standardisation model (right), as well as including the first list of its publications provided by Konstantinidis (left). Reproduced with permission of Agra Publications and Dimitris Konstantinidis.

Greek architecture' (Tzonis and Lefaivre 1985: 17). It does so by offering a historically informed recalibration of the gaze of the contemporary architectural historian towards an architectural work that has effectively been doubly built to be received as canonical, as well as an architectural persona that is often easily romanticised in its dominant interpretations.

**1962–1983: A life published by Aris Konstantinidis**

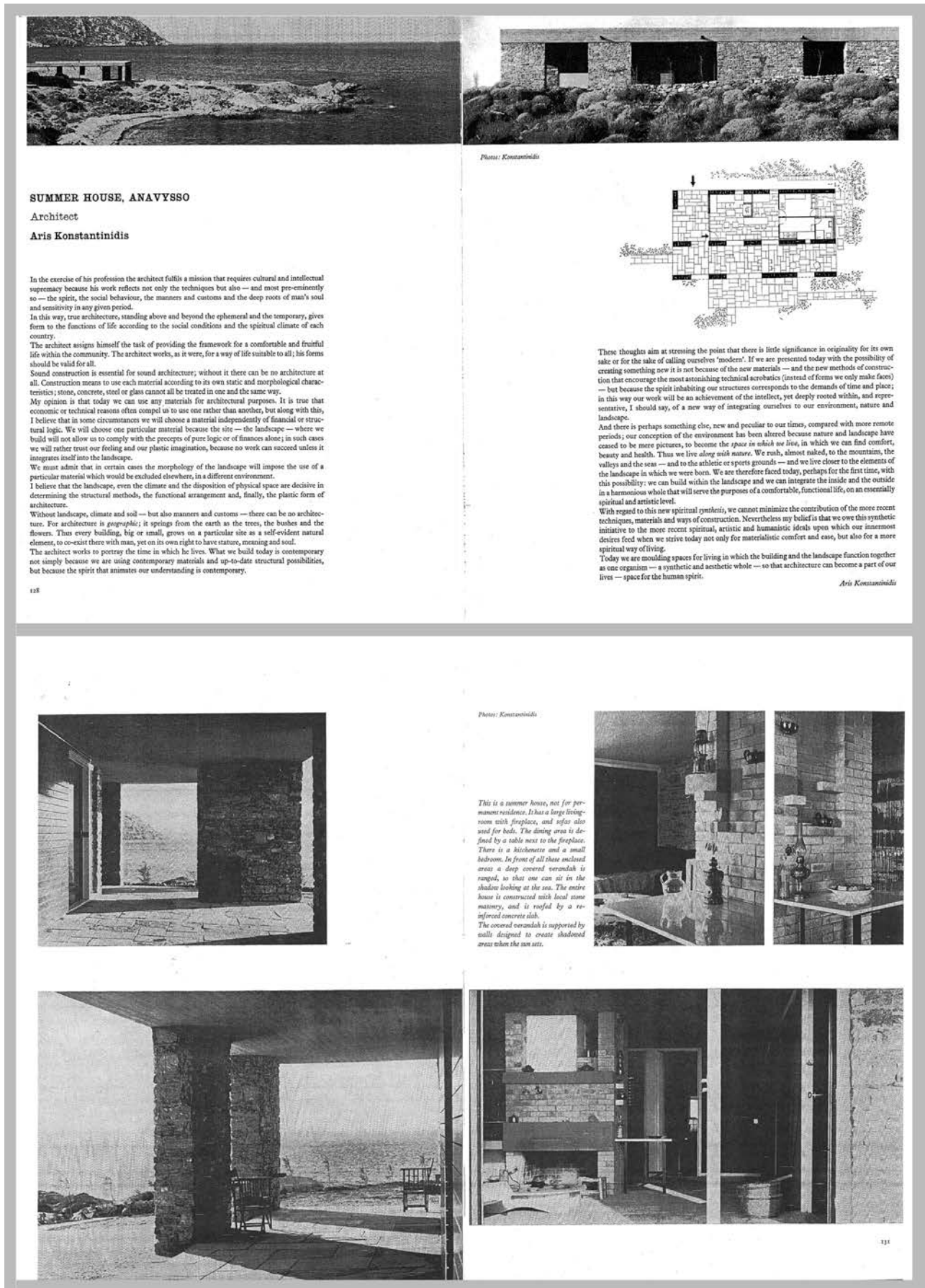
The list of publications about the Weekend House in Anavyssos, as published by the architect himself (Konstantinidis 1984: 343), provides an obvious springboard for some initial remarks. For instance, it is significant to note that the obviously rich published life already enjoyed by the Weekend House, both in Greece and abroad, in 1984 was in fact cautiously orchestrated by its own architect. Indeed, this is the house that he chose to publish more than any other of his residential works – and it is one of his most published buildings in general.<sup>1</sup> This fact alone implies that Konstantinidis himself not only regarded the Weekend House as a rather important piece in his oeuvre, but he had already been at work for more than two decades (as I will argue later) in building its reception, too. That is to say, he clearly intended to establish its importance by presenting it as such. In the summative monograph of his work, published in 1981, edited by himself, the Weekend House holds the prestigious first place in the diagram explaining his own system for standardising construction (Fig. 1).

The architect thus suggests that this house is in fact the generator of the basic residential typology he adopted, with slight variations,<sup>2</sup> throughout his whole career. This suggestion is implicitly reinforced by the fact that there is always a place for some of the most characteristic images and photographs of the Weekend House in almost every publication by the architect. He never fails to include it even in his largely unrelated publications – where it is still featured in inside covers (for instance, Konstantinidis 1984; 1992a). Indeed, the Weekend House is never absent from any major moment in the life of its architect.<sup>3</sup> In a posthumously published interview (Themelis 2000), originally conducted on 12 April 1991, Konstantinidis

characteristically refers to this 'small house'<sup>4</sup> in Anavyssos as holding a special place in his heart.

A simple review of the architect's own 1984 list of publications helps uncover yet another significant fact: the Weekend House was first published on German soil. In other words, an architecture that its architect constantly promoted as 'geographical' (that is, organically connected with its Greek native landscape and climate) was originally published abroad. Practical or coincidental issues aside, the most important of which might be the relative scarcity of specialised periodicals and journals of architecture in Greece of the early 1960s,<sup>5</sup> the act of publishing this architecture abroad first may also accurately reflect one of Konstantinidis's deepest convictions: namely, that the reach of his own vision of architecture and dwelling is in fact ecumenical.<sup>6</sup> His envisioned 'true architecture' can therefore be applied anywhere – but not as an international style or, in his own words, a universal 'winebox' (Konstantinidis 1978: 46–47). His 'timeless type' of construction is imbued with local modifications. Thus, he promotes an architecture that is always situated, as if sprouting as naturally as a tree from a specific living habitat in a certain region (see Konstantinidis 1978: 10; 1992c: 192, 226–227, 311–312). It is generalisable as an exportable 'type' only inasmuch as different places share similar conditions (see Konstantinidis 1978: 26–27; 29–30). This is the core of Konstantinidis's regional modernism, which attempts to bring together ecumenically 'true' principles with regional specificities.

Perhaps the most important of Konstantinidis's initial attempts to communicate his work to a global audience is the first English-language publication of the Weekend House in *World Architecture* 2 (Donat 1965: 128–131)<sup>7</sup> (Fig. 2). According to its main editor, John Donat, the *World Architecture* series 'aims and objects [...] to bridge the gap between architects and people and to provide a platform for the confrontation of ideas between a new generation and the established masters.' It therefore intends to operate as 'a forum for ideas': '*World Architecture* is more concerned with why we build and what we build than with how we build it. [...] [T]he real issues are philosophical, not technological; not how to build but what to build' (Donat 1965: 8–9). As promised by the title of the series, the



**Fig. 2:** The Weekend House in Anavyssos illustrates Aris Konstantinidis's architectural manifesto, here published in *World Architecture* 2, by Donat (1965: 128–131). Reproduced with permission of Dimitris Konstantinidis.



architecture of the world is contained in volumes of 210 pages that are more or less equally shared by the eighteen hosted countries, as represented by their specific contributing editors. It is on the pages of such a publication, then, that Konstantinidis attempts his major breakthrough to a potentially global audience; and it is his photographs of the Weekend House in Anavyssos that illustrate his first foray into this global forum, with his manifesto on dwelling. Notably, his main text does not contain a single line on the house that is supposedly presented on the same pages; nor is there any direct link or comment on the illustrations.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore the first time that this house is projected as an emblematic image within his oeuvre. It represents his built manifesto<sup>9</sup> on the primordial essence of architecture: minimal dwelling in an unadulterated native landscape. As a model for his overarching vision, the Weekend House lends its material support to his main theoretical arguments. It is his already materialised reply to the main question posed by the editor, 'Why do we build?' The combination of the photographs of the Weekend House with this general text allows them to become iconic in a way 'close to the religious sense: not merely a picture of architecture, but architecture itself. [...] They are heroic: a world-view polemic offered in a single frame' (Rattenbury 2002: 57, 59).

Only three years earlier, in 1962, Konstantinidis had employed a similar publishing strategy for the first monographic presentation of his work to appear in a Greek journal of architecture (*Zυγός*). This was also the year he began working on his Weekend House in Anavyssos project. In this Greek journal, Konstantinidis introduces his work by sharing his reflections on architecture in general. He doesn't need to refer to any of his buildings in particular, since 'every work of architecture reflects, along with the specific economic and technical life of a certain age, man himself out of place and time' (Konstantinidis 1962: 27). Thus his introductory text has a lot in common with his text for the publication of the Weekend House in Anavyssos in *World Architecture 2* three years later. In the final instance, these two very different publications essentially share the same text; they are nothing more than slight variations on the same theme, alternative articulations of the same fundamental propositions. By effectively rendering one (essentially the same) text relevant both to the general sum of his work and to a particular building of his, Konstantinidis ascribes the role of quintessential embodiment of his architecture to the Weekend House in Anavyssos.

In his 1962 text, the architect mentions that 'this publication does not include [u]nrealised works and studies, nor projects that are currently under construction but have not yet been completed' (Konstantinidis 1962: 27). In other words, and for the purposes of the Greek monographic presentation, the Weekend House in Anavyssos *does not exist* in 1962. That is to say, it does not exist before being photographed by its own architect. It will come to exist only according to the will of its *auteur*, and only through his own photographic lens. This is clearly a subsequent building process that takes its own time.

Notably, the Weekend House is still missing from the 1964 monographic presentation of Aris Konstantinidis's work in *Architectural Design*, a whole two years later.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the actual moment of birth of the building is not the final moment of its construction process, but the moment of its first photo-shoot. Konstantinidis could have presented drawings of the building at its final stage of construction – even if it was not finished at the time of printing – but he chose not to do so. Under this light, the characteristic motto he repeated tirelessly ('I find the solution *in situ*'), along with his denial of the existence of any in-progress drawings of an ongoing design process (since the solution is single – the one that has already been found during a visit to the site and not on the drawing board)<sup>11</sup> acquire a very special meaning. By, quite literally, 'building' the photograph of his work on the site, Konstantinidis offers a retrospective validation of his own words. He is in absolute control of the game of publication, since its rules are only set, defined, and defied by himself at his own will.

Never does he expose the mechanisms that generate his buildings in the sites he visits. Remaining consistent with his words, his buildings are instead presented as 'growing from' the ground through his photographs. Since there is no room for the drawing board in his publications, Konstantinidis could even assert that these photographs are exact replicas of the images that sprang to his mind, indeed, as he was sitting from 'this to that stone' in the site, attempting to find the solution. And, paradoxically, he would not be lying. It is precisely those published photographs that play the role of 'first sketches'. That is to say, his photos are constructed in a way that best demonstrates the architectural qualities that primarily concern him. These qualities include the atmosphere of a space; the kind of dwelling encouraged by those spaces; the attempt to link indoor and outdoor space as a single 'organic entity' (Konstantinidis 1964: 212); the clear articulation of the building structure; the rhythmic steps of the grid in his façades; etc. His writings on design are rife with repetitions of the assertion that the façade is 'automatically' generated by the actual development of the plan and the section drawings (see, for instance, Konstantinidis 1992c: 116). Although he almost never published plan and section drawings, in the rare occasions he has to do so (as in Wolgensinger and Debaigts 1968: 146–9<sup>12</sup>), there is no way his section drawing can straightforwardly and unambiguously lead to a single final form of a façade. Thus his usual publication practices end up obscuring an important stage of the design process and surround his actual design craft with an aura of mystery (that special halo usually reserved for the rare genius). By referring only to data provided in his own publications, it is possible to infer that, even when he worked on a two-dimensional plan drawing, Konstantinidis was in fact designing in three dimensions, by simultaneously processing the section drawing. His vehicle for doing that was his proposed grid for the standardisation of construction – which was indeed crystallised at that very moment in his drawings for the Weekend House in Anavyssos. Thus, his design process was actually driven by three-dimensional objects: he

could 'see' the walls rising and creating their own rhythms in space at the exact moment he worked on the plan drawing. If that is indeed the case, then it is not only the façade but also the section drawing that he drew simultaneously alongside the plan drawing; and all of the above in turn take place within a holistic conception of the building through its constitutive three-dimensional orthogonal grid.

As already noted, the architect rarely commented on his specific works in publications. On the few occasions he did so, his account is minimal, almost downright descriptive. Maybe that is because he knew that his words could not follow his buildings exclusively forever. If that is indeed the case, then this is also why he instead reformulated his general manifesto, each and every time he published his work (covering such themes as what is architecture, how we should be building and living both today and tomorrow, etc.). The primary function of his texts is not to present his specific buildings but rather to shape a framework for interpreting his images in the way he intended, without ever referring directly to them. In an era that still considers the photograph an indisputable document that 'captures' the real, Konstantinidis used photography precisely to eradicate the real through his own mediation. By insisting on photographing his own buildings himself, he actually initiated a process of total control that has imposed a dominant gaze on his work – his own gaze. This was mainly attained through his photographic monopoly of a privileged moment in time (that can never be retrieved by the future historian in another form). The architect's own testimony of the embryonic stage of the building is both historically unique and irrevocably exclusive.

It is shocking to realise that Konstantinidis's visual monopoly of his work lasted as long as it has; it would be twenty more years before the building was finally photographed in another way. This time, the eye behind the camera belonged to Dimitris Philippidis. The first ever photographs of the Weekend House in Anavyssos, shot from different angles, thus offering different views, by a different photographer, are published on the pages of what still remains the most comprehensive history of architecture in modern Greece (Philippidis 1984: 370–1 and 424). Indeed, one of the main reasons why Philippidis's *Νεοελληνική Αρχιτεκτονική* of 1984 stands apart from similar or more limited historical endeavours (apart from its significance for boldly accepting the challenge of covering an immense bibliographical gap in modern Greek architectural literature), is the author's own insistence on visiting – and, whenever possible, photographing again – more than half of the buildings presented on its pages.

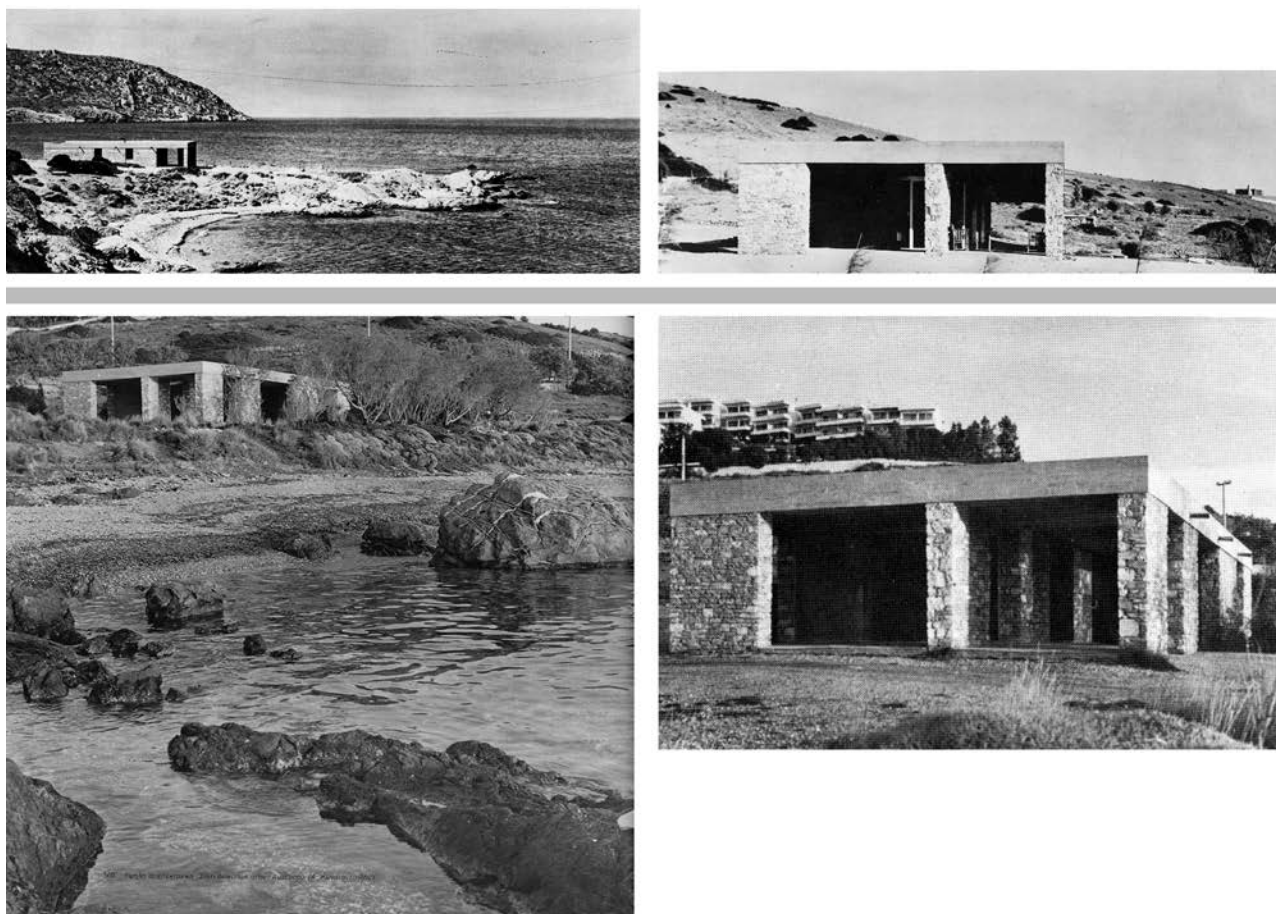
### **1984–2001: A published life in the shadow of Aris Konstantinidis**

Not coincidentally, a few years later, in 1997, Philippidis also attempted an overview of the way in which Konstantinidis photographed his own buildings for his publications. Beginning by remarking that we know Konstantinidis's work 'only through his own eyes' (Philippidis 1997: 57), Philippidis observes that the architect's photographs are

almost always frontal (indeed, they echo façade drawings); and even on the rare occasions they are not, they are only one-point perspectives.<sup>13</sup> Philippidis also traces the fundamental constituents of Konstantinidis's architectural gaze by reflecting on various aspects of his photographic practices, from his preferred viewing angles and framings to the details he chooses to isolate inside or outside his buildings. Philippidis shows that in Konstantinidis's photographs of indoor spaces, the architect pursued 'richness in oppositional elements', in terms of both lightness and texture or volume, to produce a 'replete' image. He finds the architect to be unexpectedly 'sensitive' and 'earthly', a 'luscious organiser of space' (Philippidis 1997: 58).

Philippidis's choice to photograph the building anew for his 1984 publication therefore appears to be deliberate, indeed; it is an exercise in reception. In the early 1980s, perhaps unconsciously, Philippidis moves away from some of the features he later went on to systematise as constitutive elements of a Konstantinidean gaze. Indeed, the photos he publishes are two-point perspectives,<sup>14</sup> offering two entirely different framings of the same side of the building. They can therefore be read in a dialectical relation with Konstantinidis's own original photos (Fig. 3). Aside from revealing their apparent distance in time, Philippidis's photos also offer new aspects of the same building. The view of the Weekend House from the seaside clearly stands out, since it reveals the 'back side' of its most published photo. While Konstantinidis's original photograph accentuates the way in which the Weekend House is 'macroscopically' inscribed to the landscape (as viewed from Athinon-Souniou Avenue), Philippidis presents the 'microscopic' version of the same theme, revealing the minutiae of the building's relation to its immediate environment. Philippidis's second photograph in turn echoes Konstantinidis's original framing of the side view of the building, from a viewing angle that stresses its harmonic relation with the defining outline of the natural landscape. In Philippidis's photograph, the theme seems to be defined by its background. During the two decades between the two publications, a large part of the hill was eventually covered with two-storey houses whose architecture is clearly not in line with Konstantinidis's own conception of dwelling. The original shot in the early 1980s thus becomes almost a testimony of the architect's polemical isolation from the majority of contemporaneous production of the built environment in a rapidly modernising Greece. For it was precisely in the early 1980s when a retired and increasingly disappointed Konstantinidis began to believe that his vision for a 'true' architecture that sustains authentic dwelling was perhaps unattainable, bound to remain in the realm of the ideal – or, indeed, only hinted at through his idyllic photographs.

In addition to Philippidis's general reflections about Konstantinidis's photographs, I note that Konstantinidis never photographed the same space twice. Slight modifications in the arrangement of furniture and quotidian objects that travel from one photograph of the Weekend House to the next, from one niche to another shelf on the stone walls, reveal his deliberate flexibility in the use of



**Fig. 3:** Dimitris Philippidis's 1984 photographs (bottom) in their dialectical relation with Aris Konstantinidis's 1964 originals (top). Reproduced with permission of Dimitris Konstantinidis and Dimitris Philippidis.

such details. His photographs trace or narrate acts of a Konstantinidean dwelling — and these are the photos that are printed, large scale, right after his short manifesto of this dwelling in *World Architecture 2* (Donat 1965: 130–131) (**Fig. 2**). His photographs are therefore prescriptive: not limited to depicting, their actual emphasis is on making something happen. It is as if the textual is immediately followed by a visual architectural manifesto. It is significant to note that the readers never see any other indoor space of the Weekend House, aside from the living room. Whatever lies behind the fireplace, as well as the fourth façade, presumably rest in the limbo of architectural publication. There is a very strong possibility that the darker private sleeping zone, that forms the enclosed core of the Weekend House in Anavyssos, has never been photographed; and that is because this house is intended to narrate another kind of story. Despite its oft-used name (and probably against the wishes of Panayotis Papapanayotou, the original owner of the house, and his own aspirations), in Konstantinidis's mind this house is not intended to host idle vacationers and lavish dinner parties. In the somewhat sparse and minimal descriptive accounts of the Weekend House in his publications (Donat 1965: 131; Wolgensinger and Debaigts 1968: 146; Konstantinidis 1971: 34), Konstantinidis is quite clear about his vision of the ideal life. The Weekend House attempts to discourage a quietist or escapist proposal of mere sleeping and

relaxing indoors: 'The interior furnishings were reduced to a minimum as life is primarily directed towards the sea' (Wolgensinger and Debaigts 1968: 146). Indeed, the architect seems to suggest that sleeping should probably take place in the living room, especially since its 'sliding doors [can open] onto the veranda' and the 'sofas [can] also [be] used for beds' (Donat 1965: 131). Precisely because the Weekend House is designed to organise the landscape 'not as an image, but as a living space', 'as an architectural space [...] integrating the exterior and interior into one space' (Konstantinidis 1964: 212), his emphasis is always on the 'semi-open living area'. '[P]rotect[ing] the interior from the afternoon sun' (Konstantinidis 1971: 34), Konstantinidis envisioned his architecture as enabling man to live with nature even in 'an arid and harsh landscape on the Athens to Sounion road' (Wolgensinger and Debaigts 1968: 146). The primary function of the Weekend House is therefore the celebration of dwelling under a roof that remains in integrated harmony with the natural landscape during the course of the day.<sup>15</sup>

Konstantinidis's photographs are usually published in grayscale.<sup>16</sup> While this is one of the most common tricks of the trade in the profession — many architects often resort to the power of grayscale tones to reconcile existing antinomies of colour between their buildings and their immediate surroundings — Konstantinidis's work does not need it. The enhanced impression usually created through



grayscale photographs feels almost like an unnecessary luxury; his Weekend House in Anavyssos establishes its own harmonic integration in the landscape in full colour. Seemingly aware of this, Konstantinidis republished this photograph in full colour in his 1981 publication, *Projects and Buildings*, and spread it over two pages in the catalogue accompanying the monographic exhibition of his work in the Greek National Gallery in 1989.<sup>17</sup> Whenever he published the plan of the Weekend House, the drawing is intended as a mental map for navigating the building through its photographs. Yet again, the photos show that the arrangement of furniture and other mobile objects in the house proposed in the drawing is not identical with that in the photos. The insistence on photographing the building aims to prove it is alive; that this kind of architecture is not yet another 'cardboard castle' (Godoli 1986: 110–112). If it is the Konstantinidean way of life that must be the primary feature in the photos, then there is no need to 'stage' the Weekend House in exactly the same way it is 'staged' in the plan drawing. Even if it is clear there is enough space for a big table under the roof, there is no need for it to be there in the photographs, as well: two chairs are just enough for one to 'sit in the shadow looking at the sea' (Donat 1965: 131).

However, in the final instance, the Weekend House is nothing more than a one to one scale model that is now rooted in its natural landscape – because no one ever adopted the model of dwelling it was designed, let alone photographed, to project.<sup>18</sup> 'Two years after it was completed [the Weekend House] was sold to the scion of a family of ship owners and art collectors. It was downgraded to become a tool deposit for the large and ungainly villa that was built next to it and that now towers over it' (Cofano 2011: 121). In terms of importance, the photographs clearly prevail over the building and its originally intended function as a physical structure. Virtually inaccessible, the actual house is reduced to functioning as a distant, idealised model of a certain practice to architectural pilgrimage visitors. By emancipating the image from any possible external reference, the recent 'postmodern' debate on photography emphasises its possibility to simply refer to other images, or even exclusively to itself (see Stavridis 2006). Thus, the most published image of the Weekend House blending with the landscape is an image type, a sort of logo for the Konstantinidean architecture of minimal dwelling within the unadulterated Greek landscape. However, the side function of this image is also the condensation and simultaneous refutation of the actual tempo of human behaviour. It is this very image that renders Konstantinidis's architecture and his proposed mode of dwelling timeless. The photograph lends its perceived reality to an ideal of dwelling that never existed in practice. Thus Konstantinidis's deliberate avoidance of any dramatic photographs of the house, such as from bold or unusual viewing angles, reinforces the impression that his main intention was to retain the highest possible pictorial fidelity with the spatial reality before him.

That Konstantinidis loved photography is no secret. He is therefore in a position to know what is actually at stake

in his photographic practice. By freezing the 'privileged' moment, his photographs ensure the perpetuation of the architect's vision. Future researchers might only be able to photograph his buildings as ruins (for example, Papaoikonomou 2013); they might also use those photographs to develop their architectural vision of their own present – in much the same way Konstantinidis himself actually did during his numerous photographic expeditions around Greece (see Konstantinidis 1975; 1992b). Resorting to photography in order to capture what he will later go on to perceive as the essence of selected vernacular constructions and ruins from the architectural past of his home country, Konstantinidis subsequently evokes many of these photographs as the foundations for 'vertically erecting' his own architectural thesis. The crucial difference here is the fact that his own vision, both for architecture in general and for his works in particular, will have also survived through his own photographs, thus 'contaminating' any future gaze directed towards the ruin of his architecture. That is why it is essential to understand that his theoretical texts on photography do not comprise general or neutral remarks, as their reader might initially think, but form an additional layer of mediation – an additional mechanism of building reception. They suggest the intended interpretation of the architect's own photographs. In other words, the gaze of the architect is being emphatically re-imposed upon a photograph that embodies, and has already recorded, his own gaze towards his building.<sup>19</sup>

In his 1955 text titled 'The Art of Photography' (later included in Konstantinidis 1984<sup>20</sup>), Konstantinidis understands photography as an artistic composition. It is the outcome produced by a peculiar vision that is able to see and distinguish certain qualities within the visual field. He concludes his text by stressing the fact that 'the photographic lens [...] represents and records on pure film [...] the objective image of the world, the true form of things' (Konstantinidis 1984: 112). In other words, it is the vision of the photographer Aris Konstantinidis that speaks the truth – and not everyman's eyes, which might look, but certainly don't see. By rendering himself an authority in a visual field that can potentially be photographed in his own way, he simultaneously imposes his own gaze as objective, *par excellence*. While his photographs are clearly his own 'designs with light', they also manage to reveal the 'true' essence of his architecture. Just like his photographs, his ideas are constantly reproduced and reiterated. In one of his later texts (also republished in Konstantinidis 1984<sup>21</sup>), he stresses the primacy of the individual subject behind the photographic lens that cannot but be 'objective in recording reality'. The creative combination of these two factors leads through 'qualitative abstractions' to an 'objectivity elevated to the status of art and a photographic image that is rich in spiritual and artistic content' (Konstantinidis 1984: 299–300). Several years later, he writes that whenever he photographs his own buildings, he avoids any kind of 'beautification', in order to present them 'as they really stood on the real landscape'. However, at the same time he also acknowledges that his

photo-shoot is a kind of 'rebuilding' that makes the building his own again (Konstantinidis 1992c: 341–342).

Taken all together, these theoretical texts on photography by the architect reveal an unavoidable tension between the objectivity of the lens and the subjectivity of the gaze behind it. However, Konstantinidis always resolves this tension in a way that leads to the true image of 'one world' in its 'true essence'. In the photograph taken by the architect himself, therefore, his built work is inextricably imbued with his own theory. And that is why the text that accompanies the publication doesn't really need to directly refer to the building presented. This – only apparently missing – text is the photograph itself. It is clear that the standard publications of the Weekend House gain their strength by their focus on Konstantinidis's photographs. This dual focus on the photograph-as-narrative, along with the text-as-an-architectural manifesto, defines the Weekend House in Anavyssos as an emblematic presence within Konstantinidis's work. The global reception of the Weekend House and the way in which it has since appeared in a wide array of architectural literature<sup>22</sup> indicates the nomadic emancipation of an image-symbol that Konstantinidis himself built as an architect of his own publications; that is to say, as an architect of his own reception.

One recent study stands out in the pool of global reception of the Weekend House. David Leatherbarrow (2000) devotes twenty-five pages of text and photographs to this house – far more pages than the architect himself ever devoted to it. Hence, Leatherbarrow's is the most comprehensive published account of the building so far. Of special interest in his own gaze towards the building is a discernible tension. As a philosophically predisposed architect, but also as an exterior and distant observer of architecture in modern Greece, he attempts to position himself within the Konstantinidean viewpoint, albeit only partially – that is, without going as far as eradicating this distance altogether.

In Leatherbarrow's book, Konstantinidis's original photographs alternate with more recent ones by Marina Lathouri, offering a clear reflection of the fragile balance Leatherbarrow's 'third man' gaze intends to strike (**Fig. 4**). The degree of disengagement he can retain paves the way for a stochastic navigation of the building that discerns certain, seemingly already anticipated, phenomenological qualities. Is this balance really attained? Can it be verified? Let us consider Leatherbarrow's focus on the fireplace, for instance: 'the fireplace stands in the middle of the house's public spaces, dividing the kitchen from the living room, also anchoring the dining table' (Leatherbarrow 2000: 213). By regarding it as the main point of articulation of all the conflicting forces, the node of fundamental discontinuities – private-public, inside-outside, light-shadow, nature-artifice, etc. – he elevates it to the role of an absolutely central spot of the Weekend House, a condenser of its total meaning. Even with this seemingly original insight, though, Leatherbarrow does not break completely free from Konstantinidis's gaze. To start with, the fireplace had already been widely published by the architect himself – even in isolation from the rest of the building (as in

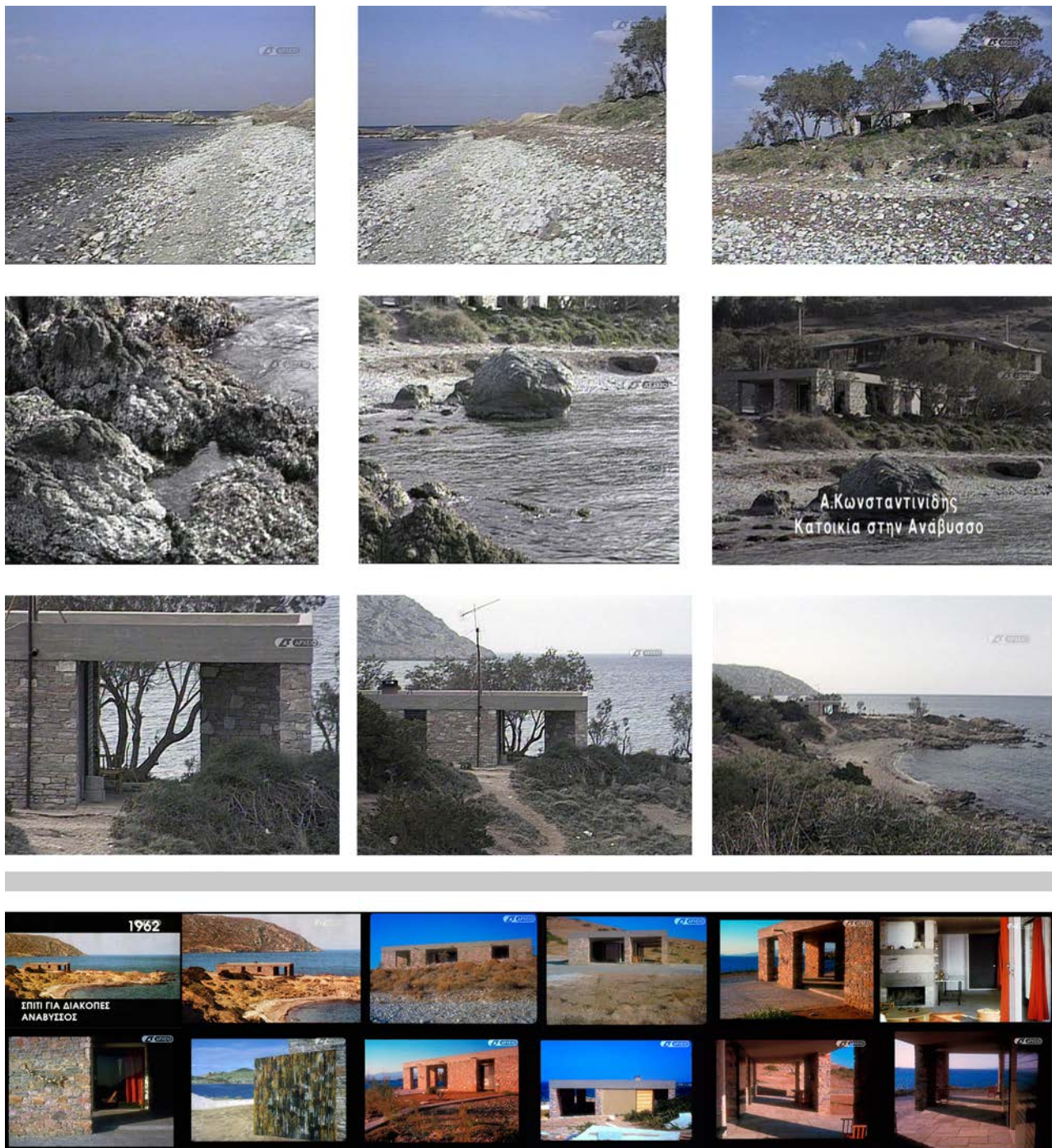
Wanetschek, Meier-Menzel and Hierl 1967: 52, and Barran 1976: 81). In addition, Leatherbarrow's main argument rests upon his observations of Konstantinidis's own photograph of the living room (Leatherbarrow 2000: 226) – noting, for instance, that the surface panel of the dining table is aligned with the lowermost and longest mark of the mantelpiece (which in turn coincides with the height of the kitchen worktable). Meanwhile, Marina Lathouri's photographs are merely present, included but never commented upon, in the main text. Equally revealing is the position of the Weekend House within Leatherbarrow's wider study of 'uncommon ground' (Leatherbarrow 2000: 203–227). Konstantinidis's Weekend House serves as a vehicle of transition between the two concluding themes of the book: the role of spatial discontinuity in the formation of the interior and exterior of architecture and the subsequent significance of the function of the point of articulation – i.e., whether the building serves as an interiority that stems from its exterior (Leatherbarrow 2000: 196; Leatherbarrow uses an excerpt from Konstantinidis (1975)) or as an updating of the topographical (that is, both spatial and temporal) discontinuous horizon of the site. In light of these remarks, one is left wondering whether the last word of the book actually belongs to Konstantinidis, rather than Leatherbarrow. However far away from Konstantinidis's original questions Leatherbarrow may have strayed by following his own phenomenological trail of thinking,<sup>23</sup> he still selects from an extensive body of work the Weekend House in Anavyssos as his main reference. His is yet another instance that documents the extent to which the Weekend House is received almost unquestionably as an emblematic presence within Konstantinidis's architectural oeuvre.

Repeated publications of the same photographs thus end up defining the gaze of the external observer, too. The eye of this observer acquires a vision that almost abandons perception in favour of the architect's original conception. This is particularly evident in the series of documentary films about architecture in modern Greece that were produced and broadcast on Hellenic Public Television in 1990. In the short clips from the Weekend House in Anavyssos, none of these video recordings attempt to produce a different experience of the building. This is particularly striking when one considers the potential for the video-camera to recreate, for instance, the experience of navigating the house in real time. Instead, all the clips of the Weekend House follow the logic of the static framing of an already published photograph. The video-camera remains stable and the only sense of movement allowed is the one provided by the mechanics of zooming in and zooming out. The framing is essentially photographic, rather than cinematic, the movement artificial, implicitly guided by views in photographs already published by other architects (**Fig. 5**, top). What the viewer ends up watching is the reduction of the cinematic scene to its photographic background – a return to its generating mechanism. The camera is indeed recording the double return of Konstantinidis's photographs. The video footage produced is nothing more than a photograph squared. It is as if the Weekend House stands there to be filmed in





**Fig. 4:** The Weekend House in Anavyssos as it appears in Leatherbarrow (2000), through the lenses of Aris Konstantinidis and Marina Lathouri. Reproduced with permission of MIT Press, Dimitris Konstantinidis, and Marina Lathouri.



**Fig. 5:** Footage from the Hellenic Public Television documentary (Anastasopoulos and Papakonstantinou 1990b) demonstrates the cinematic reproduction of already published photographs of the Weekend House (top). The subsequent documentary (Karakasis 2001) may not include new video recordings, but it does reveal previously unpublished photographs of the house from Konstantinidis's photo archive (bottom). Frames reproduced with permission of the Hellenic Public and Radio Television Archives for academic purpose: ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΙΚΟΙ ΔΡΟΜΟΙ - Επεισόδιο: 003 | ΜΝΗΜΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΧΡΟΝΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΗΣ ΠΙΚΙΩΝΗΣ, ΑΡΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΙΔΗΣ <http://www.hpvt-archives.gr/V3/public/main/page-assetview.aspx?tid=7919&autostart=0> and ΠΑΡΑΣΚΗΝΙΟ - ΜΕ ΕΡΓΟΔΟΤΗ ΤΗ ΖΩΗ, ΑΡΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΙΔΗΣ <http://www.hpvt-archives.gr/V3/public/main/page-assetview.aspx?tid=6595&autostart=0>.

the same way it has already been photographed. Perhaps it is not irrelevant to note that one of the two directors, Georgios Papakonstantinou, is also an architect. The subsequent documentary film from 2001 by the Hellenic Public Television about Konstantinidis is a landmark moment (Karakasis 2001). With this film, the circle

of people close to the architect have begun to speak in their own voices, although they still try to maintain their connection with his original intentions. This circle of people now seems ready to start revealing the cards Konstantinidis had always held close to his chest. For instance, even though the film does not provide any new



video footage from the Weekend House, it does show some of the photographs the architect never published, from the personal archive he actively and systematically built, alongside his line of publications. These include views of the missing fourth façade of the building, as well as some collages that offer a depiction of the building in the manner of artistic drawing practices (Fig. 5, bottom). Instead of reciting from Konstantinidis's own texts, the slideshow of these images is accompanied by different voices whose views on the building do not necessarily correspond with that of the architect. Hence, this film historically initiates a new process of separating Konstantinidis's words from his photographs. It might well mark the advent of a broader attempt to secure a distance from his dominant gaze and produce novel interpretations, or at least register digressing instances of his buildings' historical reception. It definitively marks a threshold moment in time. In this 2001 film, both the architect's sister, Elli, and the hotel owner of Xenia Mykonos guide viewers through Konstantinidis's buildings, followed by a camera that has finally left behind the logic of a static photographic framing, which is a reproduction of the master's vision behind it, for good. Perhaps it is not irrelevant to note that this time the film director, Apostolos Karakasis, is not an architect.

### 2001–2014: A life published without Aris Konstantinidis

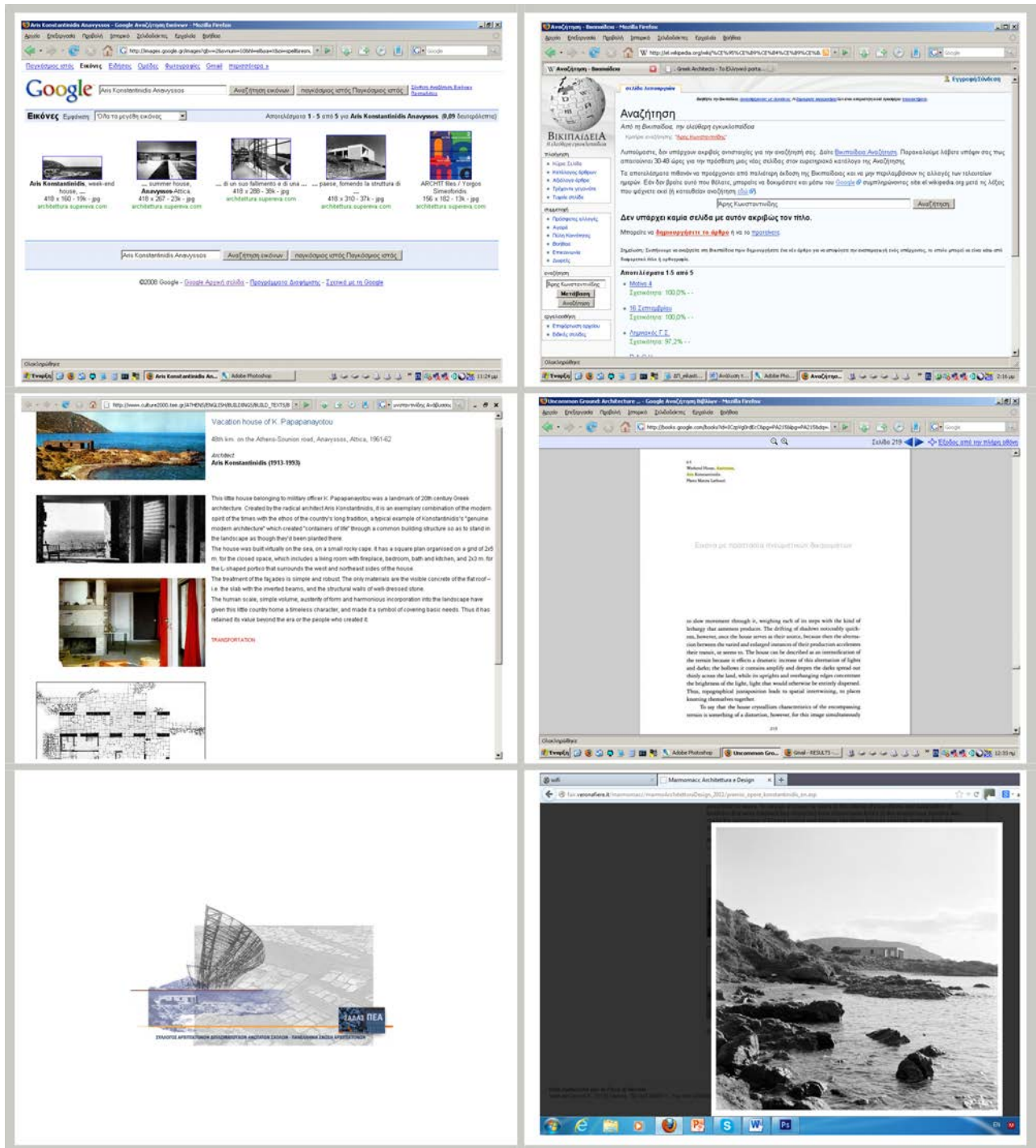
At the end of this trajectory, the digital presence of the Weekend House in Anavyssos under the gaze of its architect already has its own history. Back in 2008, a Google search for the Weekend House in Anavyssos would return the right results, along with the photographs that have been repeatedly reproduced by the architect himself (Fig. 6). And only six years ago, when the digital service of Google Books was still active on a much larger scale, it was possible to browse, for free, the pages of Leatherbarrow's *Uncommon Ground*, for instance. Quite ironically, though, the complications of image copyright meant that the only new photographs of the Weekend House included in the hard copy of the book were not digitally available. That in turn meant that Konstantinidis's gaze toward his own architectural work would remain dominant even in the age of digital reproduction and global distribution of images a whole fifteen years after his death. Rather astonishingly, this was all happening in a medium that was definitely out of his historical league, and over which he could scarcely have exerted any control. The fact that the choices he made about publishing his work are reflected even in their contemporary presence in the digital world is further indication of Konstantinidis's indisputable success in building his own reception. Unlike Dimitris Pikionis, Konstantinidis was never followed by a broad circle of family members, friends, former students, and colleagues who might foster the posthumous publication and further dissemination of his own work.<sup>24</sup> He was therefore solely responsible for the survival of his own myth. This is naturally reflected in the history of the digital presence of the two architects' works on the internet. For instance, Konstantinidis's entry in Wikipedia was non-existent until 2009, while Pikionis's had been there already for at least three years. Things are

different in 2014. A Google search for the Weekend House in Anavyssos not only returns the right results, but also some photographs from Konstantinidis's archive that had never appeared in print,<sup>25</sup> as well as some of the subsequent photographs by Dimitris Philippidis and Marina Lathouri (even though the photo credits are not always accurate). In 2008, the image that welcomed visitors to the website of the Association of Greek Architects was a combination of the works of three major Greek architects: the Weekend House in Anavyssos by Aris Konstantinidis, Dimitris Pikionis's work on the hills of Acropolis and Philopappou and Takis Zenetos's open-air theatre in Lycabettus. The three together could well be read as a logo of architecture in modern Greece, since it more or less summarises an established view of these architects and their works.

The fact that the dwelling captured in the photographs of the Weekend House was for a life that was never actually lived by anyone has not stopped the house from retaining its emblematic place within Konstantinidis's oeuvre. As an architect who adopted a strongly polemical stance throughout his lifetime, Konstantinidis could only aim at the proselyte inhabitant of his architecture. In that sense, he is deeply modernist; he is leading the way towards a 'true' architecture. The problem is that very few seem to follow. Unlike Le Corbusier, Konstantinidis never worked with clients whose 'goals [...] were thoroughly entwined with [his] theories', willing to identify 'their own unconventional lives with architecture that was avant-garde' and actually 'enjoy[ing] the role of modern occupants in an ideal environment' (Friedman 2006: 16, 24, 116). On the contrary, for Konstantinidis, clients 'often became the main personification of the forces opposing him [...] He describes how he struggled for the survival and realisation of his ideas, despite the obstacles and traps that his clients set for him' (Magouliotis 2012: 158). That does not necessarily mean that Le Corbusier was never at odds even with some of his most ideal clients, of course. 'When he published his work, he preferred to show the rooms completely empty or as settings for evocative, dreamlike tableaux suggesting absence rather than the presence of real-life occupants with their own tastes and preferences' (Friedman 2006: 119). Konstantinidis's similar publishing strategy is just another aspect of his persona as a quintessentially modernist architect; nevertheless, his modernism is still regional.

Konstantinidis never built a project outside Greece, so his proposed regional modernism never encountered circumstances that might have provided a more nuanced understanding of it. As he allegedly asserted, in line with the fundamental principles of his regional modernist credo, his being Greek was enough to prevent him from building in Zurich. Yet it was not enough to prevent him from teaching there for three consecutive academic years (1967–1970). Since the specific degree to which the architect should remain sensitive to local specificities, from materials to climatic conditions, is not clearly defined in his texts, Konstantinidis's Swiss students' projects, which were also included in his private archive (still inaccessible to the public), acquire an increased significance for





**Fig. 6:** Instances from a published life in the era of digital reproduction (2001–2012): Results from Google searches of Aris Konstantinidis, and the House in Anavyssos in February 2008 (top and middle left); Aris Konstantinidis lacking a Wikipedia page until 2009 (top right); Marina Lathouri’s photographs not accessible due to copyright restrictions in Google Books, 2008 (middle right); the Association of Greek Architects logo, including Konstantinidis’s House in Anavyssos, acts as an emblem of modern Greek architecture (bottom left); previously unpublished photographs from Aris Konstantinidis’s personal archive appear on the Internet in 2012 (bottom right). Reproduced with permission of Dimitris Konstantinidis.

contemporary architectural historians. They might well offer the clearest practical insights into the specific features – and limits – of his regional modernism. Only after examining them could one further understand whether Konstantinidis himself, regardless of his writings, and especially in his post-1960s residential projects, has gradually built his own version of a modernist *passe-partout*

‘winebox’ – replicated, with minimum variation, all over Greece (see Konstantinidis 1989: 68–9); in other words, a version of what he otherwise loved to loath in the work of Le Corbusier (who apparently had the audacity to propose building twenty replicas of Villa Savoye in Argentina). However, even if one would agree that Konstantinidis, like an involuntary alter-ego of Le Corbusier, was also building

'wineboxes' all over Greece, the two architects' conceptions of place and nature are fundamentally different. Colomina argues, beginning with 'the modern function of the window' – to offer the frame for a view to nature – that in the works of Le Corbusier, nature becomes an artifice to be viewed by the eye of the house, which is actually the eye of a camera, a classifying mechanism. In this case, dwelling is in fact the domestication of a picture of nature; and the modernist architect challenges the traditional notion of place (Colomina 1994: 301–326). In Konstantinidis's case, dwelling is the domestication of nature itself. Where, according to Colomina, Le Corbusier builds in order to mediate nature, Konstantinidis builds so that nature itself can become an unmediated space for living; here, the concept of place retains its much more conventional sense.

Konstantinidis often criticises the work of other architects – including such prominent figures of the modernist canon as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. He would probably agree with James M. Richards's insight that '[m]odernist architecture however correct, however appropriate it may have been, becomes an imposition [...] if it is not related to people's own sympathies and passions. Only by making a relationship to existing systems of belief can it hope to become part of a legitimate tradition' (Higgott 2007: 54). Around the same time that Richards was publishing and writing his *Castles on the Ground* in 1946, Konstantinidis was surveying the vernacular, anonymous architecture of 'old' Athens and Mykonos, 'argu[ing] that only if an architect becomes "one" with "the people"/ *laòs* might he understand the "truth" about building' (Theocharopoulou 2010: 121).<sup>26</sup> That is clearly his regional side; but it is directly followed by his modernist side of the perceptive architect who has to lead the way: 'you have to become *laòs* yourself first before you can show others what is valuable from your own people' (Konstantinidis 1950: 26). This reveals probably the most significant tension within Konstantinidis's own work. His contact with rural folklore might be symptomatic of his attempt to bridge his didactic modernism with the already legitimate regional tradition of living in the Greek landscape. This might well be his only way of staying in touch with the people's own sympathies and passions. Although he is often perceived as offering the most 'ascetic' or 'purist' version of modernism in Greece (Tsakopoulos 2014: 120, 185), Konstantinidis's architectural practice might have eventually failed to be more pervasive, precisely because he was never absolutely modern himself. That is to say, his constant return to folklore as a founding and legitimising force for his proposed model of almost primitive life in the pristine Greek environment might well have meant that he was not the modern man of the immediate present, keeping up with a society that was gradually undergoing a significant process of modernised change. That is why the interplay between high and low culture in the work of Konstantinidis is so different from the one found in Colomina's Le Corbusier. The latter enthusiastically embraced mass culture as a source of architectural inspiration, for 'this contemporary style was to be found precisely in the everyday object and the industrial product,

that is, in the unconscious anonymous design [...] For Le Corbusier, concerned with the everyday, the new style is everywhere and precisely for that reason difficult to discern' (Colomina 1994: 202). Konstantinidis's quest for the everyday was of a radically different sort. Although still difficult to discern, the long-forgotten authentic way of life in the Greek landscape was certainly not to be found through the same Corbusian 'full engagement' with mass media and the culture industry (Colomina 1994: 107); it had to be retrieved from essentially traditional forms of life – and then of course, be realigned with the modern, but also timeless (and rather crucially so), 'spirit of construction' (Konstantinidis 1964: 212). The perceived archetypal timelessness of this spirit allows Konstantinidis to combine both his modernist and his regional concerns in a single unified gaze. By combining these concerns, however, Konstantinidis found himself in the peculiar and isolating position of having to fight simultaneously on all fronts, since his work was actually threatened on all sides (both from contemporaneous forward-looking 'international-style' modernists and the backward-looking regional 'traditionalists'). It is perhaps this ambivalent hostility – and the aggressively defensive stance that had to go with it – that renders Konstantinidis's case unique in creating a zone of non-intervention around his work through his absolutely total control of his publishing practices.<sup>27</sup> Toward the end of his days, though, what he used to call 'elements for self-knowledge' (i.e., his own architectural lessons from the native vernacular) appear as increasingly meaningful only to himself (see Konstantinidis 1992c: 116, 171, 234).<sup>28</sup> In an ironic turn of events, his cherished 'vessels of life' end up becoming sites of architectural pilgrimage visits. Thus Konstantinidis unexpectedly ends up full circle meeting Colomina's Le Corbusier again. The crucial difference is that with Le Corbusier, resorting to the visitor is a deliberate act in an orchestrated attempt to displace the humanist subject (Colomina 1994: 326–327).<sup>29</sup>

But, of course, if his 'vessels of life' have now turned into sites of architectural pilgrimage visits, then Konstantinidis was definitely not talking only to himself. As the documented global reception of his Weekend House in Anavyssos shows, the architectural community was indeed listening. If Garry Stevens is right to assert that the voluminous *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, which includes an entry on Konstantinidis (Placzek 1982: 578), 'serves quite well to define the canon of the [global architectural] field as the field saw itself in the late 1970s' (Stevens 1998: 127), then Konstantinidis was already an established member of the global architectural canon around the moment of his retirement. His regional modernism will not need to be 'rediscovered' in the future by someone like Pierluigi Serraino, who asserts that it is only the photographs and their repeated publication that ensure a building its place in architectural discourse and history (Serraino 2000: 6).<sup>30</sup> 'When architects try to bring their work to the attention of the large-scale community,' Serraino continues, 'their chances of leaving a permanent mark on the mind of the reader depend on: 1) Architectural Photographers; 2) Editorial Policy; 3) Mass-media Coverage' (Serraino 2000: 7). He was an avid

photographer, and he was also a frequent editor of his own published works, so Konstantinidis only fell short in the category of mass-media coverage, which may well be an additional reason why his vision was not as pervasive outside expert architectural circles. Within those circles, however, the contemporary problem is precisely the opposite.

### 2014 and beyond: Aris Konstantinidis's architectural persona behind the veil of its published life

The contemporary problem concerning Konstantinidis and his current historical reception within architectural circles is his nearly ubiquitous presence; the echoing sound of a lonely and polemic voice that cannot easily accommodate novel interpretations of his work. His own gaze attempted to collect and control the sum of possible interpretations – as well as predefine the terms under which they could be considered valid or not.<sup>31</sup> In a world he increasingly perceived as hostile, his last resort was to ensure at least the purity of his crystallised architectural vision (see Magouliotis 2012: 160). Thus a critical survey of the published life of his work could only hope to reveal the gaps that would in turn form the entry points for a new kind of reception. This seems to be the major task of contemporary architectural historians who wish to revisit Konstantinidis's works.

This task is even more significant when one understands that, behind his imposing presence, the architect himself remains an open-ended riddle. A crucial question that is often overlooked follows from the fact that from the moment that Konstantinidis decisively enters the sphere of architectural publicity, he consistently presents himself as already possessing a certain persona. He always keeps his cards close to his chest, careful not to provide hints that might lead his readers to the processes behind the development of his work or himself. In that sense, it might well be that Konstantinidis's recurring portrayal as a recluse idealist with a 'severely judgemental and often aggressive' (Magouliotis 2012: 157) attitude to his fellow citizens' way of life is another manifestation of his enduring stronghold and tacit control over the imagination of contemporary architectural historians. This increasingly dominant portrayal is mainly inferred from his late writings, the majority of which were indeed written, edited, and published over the last fifteen years of his life. Architecturally inactive and retired by then, Konstantinidis seems to have become even more self-absorbed and disappointed with the prevailing tendencies of a world he gradually felt he could no longer belong to (see Konstantinidis 1992c). However, while this may be true, by no means must it also signal the end of the story. Why do architectural historians have to pay blind obedience to his retrospective accounts and the distortions those might well entail? Magouliotis rightly notes that 'most of what [Konstantinidis] was hired to design was in fact commissioned by the state or a state-run agency' (Magouliotis 2012: 158). This twenty-five-year period of intense architectural practice that coincides with a publishing gap between his early and late substantial writings needs, therefore, to be reconsidered. His

standard portrayal as a stubborn and aggressive polemicist who refused to compromise and collaborate, on the one hand, is hardly consistent with, on the other hand, his numerous public commissions for large-scale projects – not to mention his successive roles as head of the Research Department of the State Housing Agency (1955–1957), head and special advisor of the National Tourism Organisation (1958–1967; 1975–1978). He could never have commanded such authority in his contemporaneous Greek cultural life if he was only a lonely polemicist. Hence, the crystallised persona of his late writings needs to be opened up, too. It needs to be contextualised, and interpreted in the historically grounded terms of its own gradual formation. Konstantinidis's life needs to be closely followed, from the German architectural education he shared with a select few of his contemporaries (see Theocharopoulou 2010) to the strong contacts he retained with a European network of fellow architects and institutions (also including the Ford Institute), contacts that provided him not only professional recourse for his deliberate 'self-exile' (Antoniades 1979: 71) during the first difficult years of the military junta in Greece (see Konstantinidis 1989: 70; Cofano 2011: 122), but also funding for his self-published *Elements for Self-Knowledge* in 1975 (Konstantinidis 1992c: 194–195). Architectural historians also need to remove the distorting veil of a persona created by increasingly fierce polemical manifestos, and follow the historical thread that leads from his work in the National Tourism Organisation, which gradually granted him access to international architectural publications, back to the native social circle that helped him gain access to those state posts in the first place. It is necessary to understand and contextualise Konstantinidis not only in terms of a grand international history of architectural ideas and influences (as in Tsakopoulos (2014: 136) and Terzoglou (2014)), but also in terms of the quotidian complications and obstacles arising from the most banal architectural practices and their institutional contexts that oblige the architect to play different roles, attempt alliances and collaborations, and adopt tactics of survival of his vision<sup>32</sup> (Fig. 7). Such an approach might enable the emergence of a much more nuanced and multifarious persona. No longer romanticised in terms of a solitary architect – and his somewhat quixotic aspirations – against the world *in abstracto*, Konstantinidis might therefore appear as primarily oppositional to a privileged social circle, from which he nonetheless also rose to key posts of influence and power. Working within it, Konstantinidis's polemic is much more significant *in concreto*, precisely in his concerted attempt to oppose this status quo through his architectural practice and the increasingly orchestrated propagation of his vision.

This approach might provide a way for contemporary architectural historians to escape from Konstantinidis's almost irresistible stronghold on the reception of his work. Adopting broader historical and sociological methodologies, in combination with new archival research – including an increased accessibility to the personal archive the architect meticulously organised and supplemented during his retirement years (see Cofano 2010)



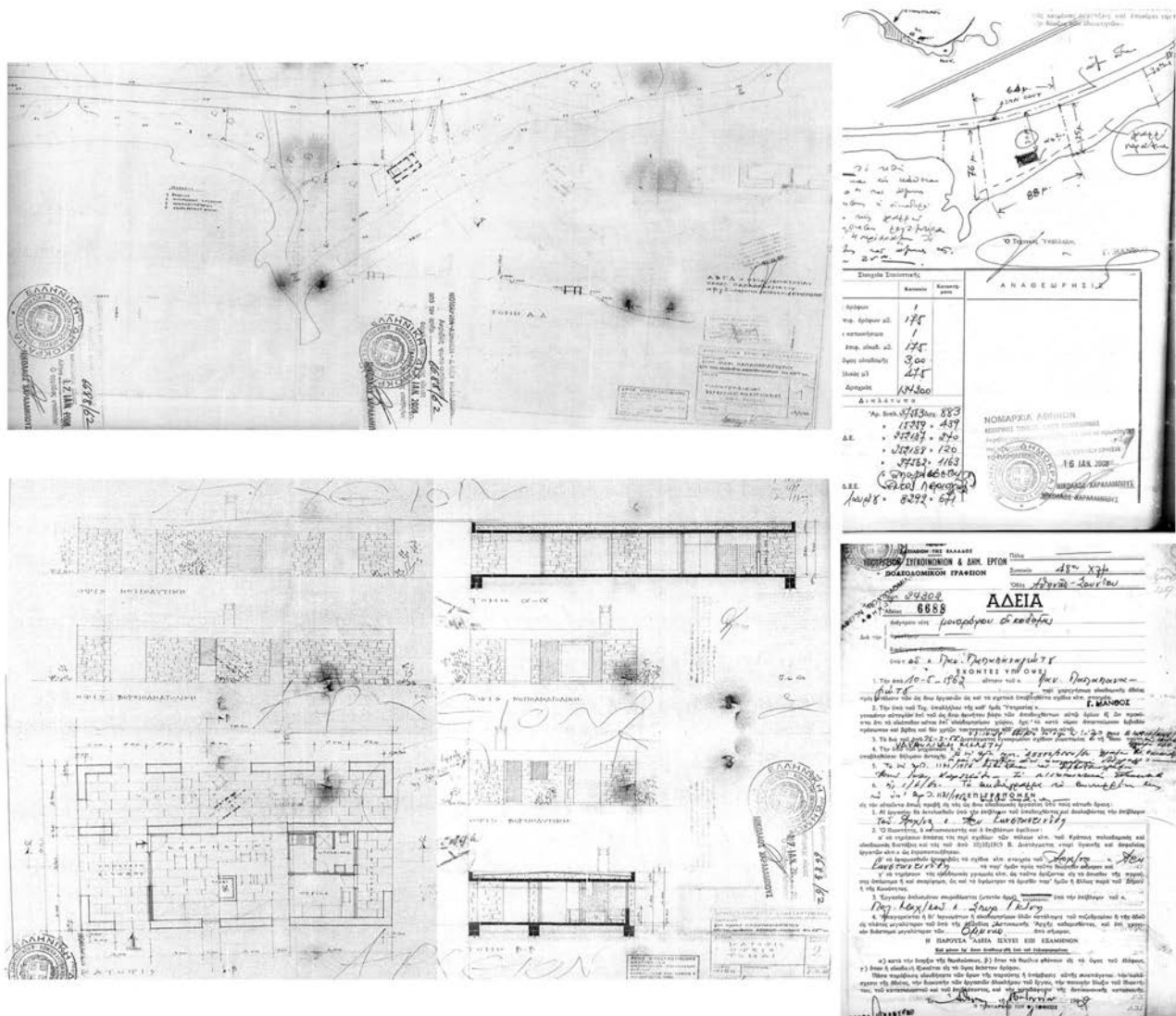


Fig. 7: Removing the veil of a published life: Material from the building permit folder of the Weekend House in Anavassos, retrieved from the Prefecture of Attica’s Urban Planning Agency Archives.

– architectural historians may start building their own informed reception of his works, separate from his self-imposed mythologisation. Comparative studies of similar developments of regional modernisms and the vernacular in the European South (Scarano 2006; Sabatino 2010; Agarez 2013) might also provide fertile ground for a fruitful wider recontextualisation of Konstantinidis’s works, too. To make these questions more explicit is perhaps the task of the contemporary architectural historian. By focusing on the published life of an emblematic Konstantinidis project, this article sought to enable a modest opening in that direction. It can only come to an end at this moment of reconfiguring the gaze of the architectural historian, the moment when someone else can finally begin speaking in the bold voice of a novel interpretation.

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and his means of expression, I dedicate this article to both of my former tutors, as a sign of gratitude for their years of teaching and mentoring that have indubitably shaped me as an architectural historian. I would also like to thank the editors, Maarten Delbeke and Panayiota Pyla, as well as the two anonymous reviewers of the journal, for their thoroughly constructive comments that have considerably reinforced this article’s relevance to an international audience. I am also grateful to Wesley Aelbrecht for his expert advice on architectural photography literature, as well as Peg Rawes and Lenore Hietkamp for their close reading of the final draft. Since an earlier version of this article was presented at the ‘Still Architecture: Photography, Vision and Cultural Transmission conference’ at the University of Cambridge (3–5 May 2012), I would also like to thank the participants for their fruitful suggestions. Last but by no means least, I am indebted to Dimitris Konstantinidis, Dimitris Philippidis, Marina Lathouri, Pamela L Quick, Stavros Petsopoulos, Dimitra Pipili, Dionysia S. Daskalou, Andreas Loukakis, Paola Cofano, Sofia Tsiraki, Yorgos Tzirtzilakis, and Aliki-Myrto Perysinaki. Without them, I would not have been able to retrieve crucial material and

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Only a handful of his Xenia hotels can really compete with, or marginally surpass, the Weekend House in Anavyssos in terms of publication numbers. For this primacy of Xenia hotels in publications of Greek architecture abroad, see Danezis (1995).
- <sup>2</sup> The main concerns of these experimental variations are the specific dimensions of the 'steps' of his grids and the exact thickness of the load-bearing stone walls.
- <sup>3</sup> Rather significantly, the Weekend House is one of the nine buildings featured in the posthumous exhibition of Konstantinidis's work in the United States in 1998. See Fessa-Emmanuil (1998).
- <sup>4</sup> Konstantinidis uses the word 'σπιτάκι' instead of 'σπίτι' in the original. In Greek, the use of a diminutive term like this implies a certain kind of affection. (All translations from the Greek are by the author.)
- <sup>5</sup> The specialised Greek architectural press of the period comprises just two periodicals: *Zygós* (1955–1983, published in Athens by Fratzis K. Frantziskakis), and *Αρχιτεκτονική* (1957–1970, published in Athens by Antonis Kitsikis). In 1962, both publications devoted pages – and even whole monographs – to Konstantinidis's work (*Αρχιτεκτονική* 11–12: 72–82 and *Zygós* 82–83: 27–50).
- <sup>6</sup> Maria-Luisa Danezis (1995) observes the lack of a critical approach to Greek architecture by the global press. She also confirms Konstantinidis's dominance in the media, with eleven covers and more than thirty publications in international journals and newspapers devoted to his work.
- <sup>7</sup> This is the second time in the series that Konstantinidis has one of his works published, under the aegis of Greek contributing editor, Orestis Doumanis. However, this second publication is even more important for him, since it is actually the first time he is responsible for writing the text that will introduce his own work. The previous publication in the series included single images from his Xenia hotel on Mykonos and a house in Athens, as well as a two-page presentation of his Xenia Motel in Kalambaka (Donat 1964: 119, 122–123).
- <sup>8</sup> Indeed, the only instance in Konstantinidis's rather extensive body of publications and texts where he directly comments on, or drives the attention of the reader to, specific accompanying photographs is in the 'Notes' section of his self-published *Elements for Self-Knowledge: Towards a True Architecture* (1975: 298–325).
- <sup>9</sup> Several years later, in the second volume of his quasi-autobiographical book, Konstantinidis gladly mentions that a 'Viennese architectural historian described [the house in Anavyssos] as "a built worldview"' (Konstantinidis 1992a: 30).
- <sup>10</sup> It first appeared later in 1964 in *Baumeister* (12: 1395–1397). The 1964 feature in *Architectural Design* is indeed an English-language adaptation of the 1962 feature in *Zygós*.
- <sup>11</sup> In a Hellenic Public Television documentary directed by T. Anastasopoulos and G. Papakonstantinou (1990a), Konstantinidis condenses his architectural design thesis (see 06: 16–07: 35): 'Every time I had to build something, the first thing that came to mind was visiting the site – if that was possible, of course. Sitting there I found the solution *in situ*. That's why I would like to say that – unlike other architects – I never have a first or a second draft sketch, an initial idea and its subsequent development... by design! I never went to the drawing board without having already found the solution on the building site first. The ground and the sky were my own drawing board; the landscape within which I was trying to imagine the house. Sometimes I even did this: I was going to see the site from different angles, a little further, a little closer, and then I returned to the site and, sitting on this or that stone again, I found the solution in the end. I cannot imagine me building something without seeing the site' (translated by the author from the original Greek).
- <sup>12</sup> It is obvious that the editors requested a consistent overarching strategy of presenting the anthologised buildings through a short introductory text (printed in three languages), a characteristic plan and a section drawing, as well as selected photographs.
- <sup>13</sup> Peter Blundell Jones recently offered an appraisal of this type of architectural photography in his comments on '[t]he classic Miesian photos' of the Barcelona pavilion. Such photos 'echo the frame with the geometry of the building, gaining a compelling one-point perspective that produces a good illusion of depth, perhaps the best available in a medium that denies the perceptual advantages of binocular vision, movement of the head, and the muscular experience of differential focus' (Blundell Jones 2012: 49).
- <sup>14</sup> As Blundell Jones asserts, 'The two-point perspectives work so well because everything is orthogonal: the geometry is graspable via the image' (2012: 50).
- <sup>15</sup> He wrote, 'In front of all these enclosed areas a deep covered verandah is ranged, so one can sit in the shadow looking at the sea. [...] The covered verandah is supported by walls designed to create shadowed areas when the sun sets' (Donat 1965: 131).
- <sup>16</sup> The only exception is Konstantinidis (1992b), where his impressive photographs are published in full colour – without any relevant accompanying text by the architect, though. On the other hand, Patrick Keiller refers to the writings of architectural photographer Eric De Maré to note that 'the illusion of depth in photographs of architecture is often most convincing in fine grain, high contrast, deep focus, monochrome pictures' (2002: 40). Their end result is one of 'vertiginous three-dimensionality' (2002: 41).

- <sup>17</sup> This is another quite characteristic publishing practice of Konstantinidis. The inclusion of 16 colour photographs after the initial 166 grayscale ones in Konstantinidis (1975: 314–317) serves only to facilitate a discussion of colour in architecture. The appearance of colour photographs in his publications usually signals a similar discussion, as in Konstantinidis (1981; 1989).
- <sup>18</sup> A clearly bitter account of this fact is provided by Konstantinidis himself in the second volume of his quasi-autobiographical book (Konstantinidis 1992a: 29–30).
- <sup>19</sup> Philippidis contends that Konstantinidis recruits photography in his struggle ‘for the prevalence of the unique truth, the main motto of Konstantinidis’s polemics’ (Philippidis 1997: 60).
- <sup>20</sup> The text was first published in *Ελληνική Φωτογραφία* 3 (March 1955).
- <sup>21</sup> ‘Και λίγα λόγια’ was first published in *Άρης Κωνσταντινίδης: Φωτογραφίες, Αίθουσα τέχνης ΔΕΣΜΟΣ* exhibition catalogue (Athens: 1976).
- <sup>22</sup> For instance, in *Analysing Architecture*, the Weekend House was chosen for analysis as a model for architectural composition (Unwin 1997: 145). It is also the only example of modern Greek architecture included in the book. The Weekend House has also appeared in rather unexpected places, such as Shoaf Turner’s *Dictionary of Art and Architecture* (1996). The latter is also available on-line: Alexander Koutamanis. Konstantinidis, Aris. *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T047329> (accessed 26 February 2014).
- <sup>23</sup> Leatherbarrow’s approach to Konstantinidis’s work had already been critiqued by Eleni Fessa-Emmanuil before the publication of the book: ‘Despite the very interesting remarks and correlations attempted by the speaker, the fact remains that his starting hypothesis does not express the essence of Konstantinidis’s architecture; what concerned him was not originality, but the question of type or the “rule” of construction’ (Fessa-Emmanuil 1998: 22).
- <sup>24</sup> Konstantinidis seemed to have only a handful of good friends, such as Nicolaos Th. Holevas (1998), who publicly praised his all too human side, in an attempt to defend him from accusations of snobbery.
- <sup>25</sup> The webpage devoted to Konstantinidis’s ‘Ad Memoriam’ prize of the International Award for Architecture in Stone 2011 for his houses built between 1962 and 1978 resorts once again to his emblematic Weekend House in Anavyssos. See [http://fair.veronafiore.it/marmomacc/marmoArchitetturaDesign\\_2011/premio\\_opere\\_konstantinidis\\_en.asp](http://fair.veronafiore.it/marmomacc/marmoArchitetturaDesign_2011/premio_opere_konstantinidis_en.asp) (accessed 24 February 2014).
- <sup>26</sup> Theocharopoulou (2010) explores similar tensions in Konstantinidis’s thinking in her dual contextualisation of his vernacular investigations, which are associated both with the established research practices of laographical (i.e. folk) studies in modern Greece and his German architectural education. Since she also briefly explores the Konstantinidis-Loos dialectics, I have opted to turn my attention to the Konstantinidis-Corbusier dialectics, without challenging Colomina’s interpretation of the latter. Last but not least, Theocharopoulou’s work suggests the relation of Konstantinidis’s work on the Greek anonymous vernacular to that of his contemporaneous masters and colleagues, Dimitris Pikionis and Constantinos A. Doxiadis.
- <sup>27</sup> See his furious 1972 ‘open letter’ to publisher Orestis Doumanis for daring to modify the original form of the material he had submitted (reprinted in Konstantinidis 1984: 246–264). The incident marked the end of his collaboration with Doumanis’s periodicals. Almost a decade later, when a recently retired Konstantinidis wanted to publish his monograph, he turned to Stavros Petsopoulos, whose award-winning small publishing house remains well known for their attention to detail in book design (having most recently won the Primo Premio Maggiore in the Italian Ministry of Culture National Awards for Foreign Publishers 2014, as well as the 1983 Leipzig Book Fair Prize for the aesthetics of their pocket-book series). According to Petsopoulos, ‘Konstantinidis provided the precise design of his books (including covers). For his *Buildings and Projects* he had especially prepared an amazing hand-made collage of blown-up and condensed photographs, and then submitted those independently laid-out pages to be photographed. [...] It is also true that we had never allowed anybody else to design their books like this before. Later we allowed a few more exceptions [...] for people like Emmanouil Kasdaglis, Dimitris Kalokyris, Alexis Kyritsopoulos who had a long established relation with, or belonged to a long tradition of, typography and books; and some photographers, as well’ (e-mail correspondence with the author, 14 February 2014).
- <sup>28</sup> Magouliotis contends that ‘The architect at this point [...] wants to erect his visions and see them undisturbed for a moment before “the world [tears] them down”. So he reaches the point of confessing that his works only give him pleasure in the brief period stretching from their completion to the moment their inhabitation begins. The period before the design and construction phases is an oppressive sequence of compromises and fights filled with agonising attempts to keep the work free of the client’s vices, while the period after is marked by the client’s interventions, which alienate the architect from his own work’ (2012: 160).
- <sup>29</sup> Blundell Jones makes a similar point when he notes that ‘[t]he much admired *promenade architecturale* is simply that, perfectly geared to impress the first time visitor’ (2012: 49–50).
- <sup>30</sup> Rattenbury agrees: ‘Pevsner said Lincoln cathedral was architecture and a bicycle shed was a building. You could easily argue that, if he’d only put the bicycle shed in one of his books, it would have become architecture’ (2002: xxii).
- <sup>31</sup> In the case of Dimitris Pikionis, the problem is exactly the opposite. He needs to be discovered behind a multitude of references, testimonies, personal confessions



and second-hand evaluations of his work from those that rebuild it in his name – since he remains ever-silent.

- <sup>32</sup> A similar, quotidian and all too human interpretative approach has recently been followed by Antonakakis (2013) for the case of Pikionis. Konstantinidis's own writings can also provide encouraging hints to such an approach (1992c: 165). See also Antoniadis (1979: 68–9)

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