

**Juhani Pallasmaa**, *The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture* (Chichester: Wiley & Sons Publishers, 2011).

Three of Pallasmaa's books: *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (1996), *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture* (2009), and *The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture* (2012), published by John Wiley & Sons in London, can be seen as a distinct entity, a study of the role of perception, embodiment, and existential meaning in creative thinking and work, as well as in our sense of self. This three-part survey was not pre-conceived. It simply came about. One serendipitous idea led to the next one. The third book arose from his interest in mental imagery as the ground of language, as well as artistic and architectural expressions. All images have to be embodied and internalized in order to obtain their poetic magic; the poetic image must become part of ourselves. Emotions, thoughts, and experiences are hiding as images in words, forms, pictures, and spaces. Images are not only perceived. They are felt, lived, and identified with. This is suggested in the brilliant title *Image in Form*, a collection of essays by the British painter and art essayist Adrian Stokes.

Pallasmaa's interest in the senses, the multiple capacities and tasks of the hand, and the role of bodily mimesis, internalization, and silent wisdom, has emerged gradually through his design work as much as through reading and writing. After the three books, his curiosity has continued to atmospheres, the role of peripheral and unfocused perceptions, and vagueness in the processes of thought. To believe that we should always aim at precision might have been lousy advice. In creative work, we also need vagueness, mist, and the skill to tolerate and suspend uncertainty. A notable neural discovery that of the mirror neurons has also awakened his interest, as these specialized neurons suggest ways of understanding why art, and especially non-representational art, like architecture, can have such evocative power on our senses and feelings.

Pallasmaa believes in understanding architecture which takes us beyond the boundaries of current thinking. These interests are leading away from the fixation with pure form and rationality, which have been characteristic of modern artistic and architectural thinking. Pallasmaa defends the view that we are the result of millions of years of evolutionary and biological adaptation. These acquired qualities and characteristics still prevail in our biological nature, our true human nature. The embodied, mental and intellectual capacities are an inseparable part of the way we exist, function, and act in the world. We need to acknowledge and respect the indivisibility of the human being, which includes our aesthetic and ethical capacities, emotions, intuitions, and imaginations. It is likely that our greatest quality, and at the same time, our most humane capacity, is the gift of imagination. Without imagination, the capacity to imagine the consequences of our alternative choices, we would not even have ethical judgment.