

Research Summary 2013-2014:

In 1969, Reima and Raili Pietilä were invited to participate in an architecture competition for the improvement of Kuwait's Old Town area. In 1969/70 the architects spent four weeks in Kuwait to become acquainted with Kuwait's urban situation; in 1970 they drafted a report entitled "City of Kuwait: A Future Concept." The Pietiläs were assigned the development of the downtown shore area next to the Sief Palace and to conceive three ministerial buildings: an extension of the Sief Palace, the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs..

I reevaluate the Pietiläs' Kuwait project thirty years after its completion. I show that the Ministry buildings themselves have undergone significant transformations cancelling Pietilä's subtle planning ideas determined by the specifically transcultural approach he had selected. The local environment of Kuwait did not understand the transcultural character of the Sief Palace Area buildings and favored either culturally "neutral" modern architecture or more simple reinstatements of local architecture.

The problematical reception of Pietilä's Sief Palace Area indicates the limits of critical regionalism. When the *critical side* of regionalism is not supported by a consensus of the local community but is abandoned in favor of literal regionalism, critical regionalism is impossible.

Photos are on my website <http://botzbornstein.com> (Kuwait Before After)