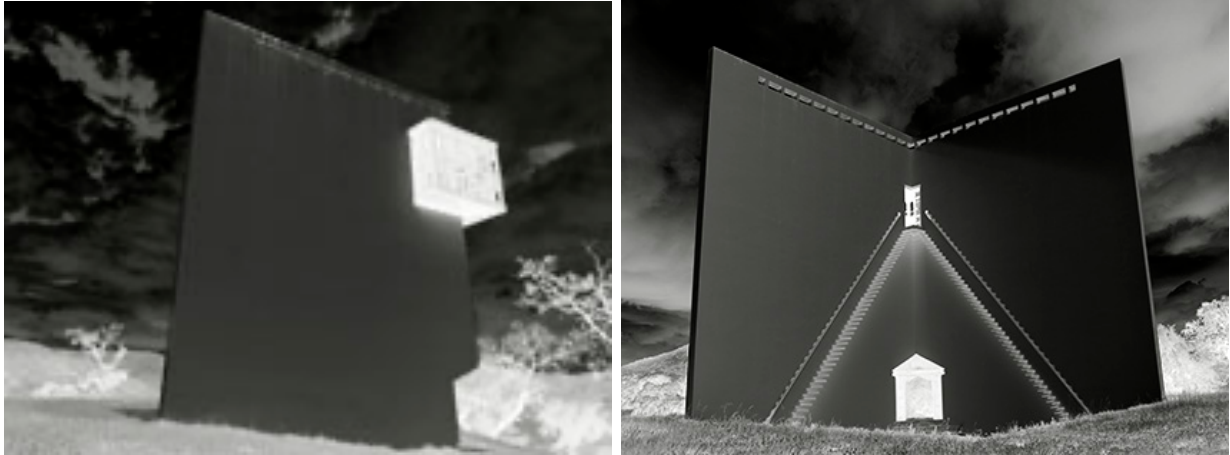


OLA KOLEHMAINEN



Ola Kolehmainen,

House of Spiritual Retreat III & IV (2016), Archival ink jet print, framed, 43 × 47 cm

Courtesy of the MOMENTUM Collection

ARTIST STATEMENT:

House of Spiritual Retreat (Casa de Retiro Espiritual)

Emilio Ambasz originally designed the House of Spiritual Retreat in 1979 for an imaginary site near Cordoba, Spain. It was constructed only in the year 2005, on a hilly, arid landscape outside of Seville. Featuring two white walls situated at a ninety-degree angle and a long stairway descending into a sunken patio, the house reformulates the vernacular Andalusian courtyard house into a surrealistic reverie, a mythic, phantasmagorical dwelling. The living quarters, which surround the patio on the other two sides, are recessed below the ground, using the earth's covering to insulate them from the strong southern sun.

The balcony - positioned in the right angle where two tall, rough stuccoed, white walls meet – is another feature reminiscent of Andalusian architecture. It is a remarkable example of regional craftsmanship composed of over 3,000 pieces, it provides a stirring view of the lake and the surrounding landscape.

The ensemble of the house and its balcony, although not by conscious intention, recall the once ever-present Andalusian observation towers (atalaya) used to observe the movements of Moorish troops and pirates. To accede to the balcony, two cantilevered metal stairways are provided, so designed that one invites to ascend, the other favors the descent. Water cascades within the

handrails excavated, as deep grooves, on the high walls. The water, rushing down, generates at the bottom of the stairs and at the central semi-circular fountain that collects it, a great amount of sound. As the visitor ascends to the balcony, where the water originates, the sound becomes quieter until it seems to become liquid silence.

The house 'Casa de Retiro Espiritual' is a contemporary reformulation of the traditional Andalusian house, centered around a patio, onto which all rooms open. To keep the house cool in the hot-dry climate of Southern Spain, the living area is insulated by earth. Two tall, rough stuccoed, white walls meet at a right angle, creating an envelope for the house and defining its entrance. From this entrance, steps of increasingly greater length lead down to an open air patio which the house opens up onto. An ambulatory defines the patio's other two sides, and serves as a transition between the house and the patio. From the patio, two stairs leads us to the 'mirador'. The house consists, simply, of a large continuous space, contained by sinuous walls, with different areas defined by smooth cavities excavated into the floor and echoed by the ceiling above.

- Ola Kolehmainen

ARTIST BIO: <https://makasiinicontemporary.com/artists/51-ola-kolehmainen/biography/>

OLA KOLEHMAINEN (born 1964 in Helsinki Finland. Lives and works in Finland and Berlin, Germany.)

Kolehmainen is known for his large-scale minimalist abstract close-ups of architectural details such as geometric surface structures or reflective window facades. In his early series of works he deals with modern 20th and 21st century buildings by architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Alvar Aalto. In later works, his focus shifts to sacred spaces and archives. Kolehmainen's conceptual practice highlights the architectural details of materials and forms, making the viewer question the way the building is perceived, pushing both architecture and photography to new dimensions. In 2015 he was made an honorary member of the Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA.

Ola Kolehmainen is one of the leading figures in Finnish photography. Kolehmainen has graduated from the University of Art and Design Helsinki and also studied at the University of Helsinki. He has accomplished over 60 solo exhibitions, published five monographs, and participated in numerous group exhibitions around the world. His works have been shown in major institutions, including: the Helsinki Art Museum, Alvar Aalto Museum in Jyväskylä, the Finnish National Gallery, the National Museum of Sweden in Stockholm, the National Museum of Norway in Oslo, the State Art Library in Berlin, EMMA - Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, The New Art Gallery Walsall, 17th Biennale of Sydney, 1st Kyiv Biennale, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany, Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Whitechapel Gallery, London, Kuntzi Museum of Modern Art, Vaasa, Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, Kunsthalle, Helsinki, Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma, Palma de Majorca, Spain and Kulturhaus Obere Stufe, Stein am Rhein,

Switzerland. He has participated in international Biennales, including: the 1st Kyiv International Biennale of Contemporary Art (2012), Arsénale, Kiev, Ukraine; the 17th Biennale of Sydney (2010), Australia.

Kolehmainen's works are included in collections such as the Anita and Poju Zabłudowicz Collection, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, the European Central Bank, Helsinki Art Museum, the Finnish National Gallery, the National Museum of Norway and Société Générale in France, Carnegie Museum of Art, Borusan Contemporary and Elgiz Museum, Istanbul, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, the Saastamoinen Collection, the Miettinen Collection, Jerry I. Speyer Collection, New York and DZ Bank, Germany.