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| **Utzon, Jørn (1918-2008)** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The Danish architect Jørn Utzon, who grew up by the sea in northern Denmark, studied architecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen (1937-42). Tutors such as Steen Eiler Rasmussen gave Utzon’s early architectural approach a phenomenological angle, yet time spent in Stockholm working for Gunnar Asplund during World War II would also be formative. After the war, extensive travelling facilitated a number of visits to high-profile international architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, and upon return to Copenhagen Utzon set up his own studio. |
| The Danish architect Jørn Utzon, who grew up by the sea in northern Denmark, studied architecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen (1937-42). Tutors such as Steen Eiler Rasmussen gave Utzon’s early architectural approach a phenomenological angle, yet time spent in Stockholm working for Gunnar Asplund during World War II would also be formative. After the war, extensive travelling facilitated a number of visits to high-profile international architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, and upon return to Copenhagen Utzon set up his own studio.  File: Utzon.jpg  Figure 1. Jørn Utzon  Source: <http://www.arc1.uniroma1.it/saggio/raccolta/6utzon/UTZO.jpeg>  The early design for Hellebæk House (1952), the first known open-plan dwelling house in Denmark, saw the minimalism of Mies van der Rohe combined with Danish Modernism’s preference for yellow brick building. Following this, Utzon went on to develop a number of highly influential ‘dense-low’ housing projects such as the Kingo Houses, Elsinore (1956-60) and the Fredensborg Houses, Fredensborg (1962-65), while a concept of ‘Additive Architecture’ resulted in the catalogue housing project Espansiva (1968). During this time, Utzon embarked on the adventurous journey of the Sydney Opera House (1958-73) that would see his greatest contribution to architecture on an international scale take form.  Utzon’s conceptual competition winner, with its dynamically vaulted shell-structures over a podium base, proved challenging despite further detailing by the Danish engineer OVE ARUP. Utzon would eventually abandon the site after irresolvable disputes and local architects brought the building to completion. Included on Unesco’s World Heritage List in 2007, the opera house has, however, become an iconic landmark for Sydney and since 1998 it has been modernised following a manual produced by Utzon. The refurbished reception hall is accordingly renamed the Utzon Room and the architect was awarded the Pritzker Prize for the building in 2003.  Returning to Denmark in 1966, Utzon designed Bagsværd Church (1968-76) for a suburban site north of Copenhagen. The factory-like external appearance of the building with its prefabricated concrete panels and glazed tile cladding contrasts with the undulating, white-painted concrete roofscape within the main church room. The inwardness of the sky-lit interior and the industrial presence of the building’s repetitive structure unfold an ambiguity typical for Utzon’s architecture, the legacy of which lies in the dual approach of an almost poetic Nordic sensibility combined with cutting-edge 20th century engineering. The latter is not least inspired by childhood experiences of shipbuilding and naval architecture. Further to this, a marked concern with site-specificity and context, as seen in the two houses Utzon built for himself on Majorca (1970s/1990s), and a profound interest in nature’s organisational systems have contributed to the unique Modernism of the general oeuvre. List of Works Melli Bank, Teheran, Iran, 1959  Project for Asger Jorn museum, Silkeborg, Denmark, 1963  Can Lis, Majorca, 1971-73  Kuwait National Assembly, Kuwait City, Kuwait, 1972-84  Paustian Furniture House, Copenhagen, Denmark,1985-87  Can Feliz, Majorca, 1991-94  Utzon Center, Ålborg, Denmark, 2008  File: Hellebaek1.jpg  File: Hellebaek2.jpg  Figure 2. Hellebæk House, Hellebæk, 1952  Source: <http://www.utzonphotos.com/utzons-projekter/arkitektens-hus-hellebaek/>  File: Fredensborg1.jpg  File: Fredensborg2.jpg  Figure 3. The Fredensborg Houses, Fredensborg, 1962-65  Source: <http://www.arkitekturbilleder.dk/bygning-Fredensborghusene-307>  File: Sydney1.jpg  File: Sydney2.jpg  File: Sydney3.jpg  File: Sydney4.jpg  Figure 4. Sydney Opera House, Sydney, 1958-73  Source: <http://www.ribapix.com/index.php?a=advanced&s=item&key=  XYToxOntzOjM6IjAwNCI7czo0OiI2MTEyIjt9&pg=1>  File: Church1.jpg  File: Church2.jpg  File: Church3.jpg  Figure 5. Bagsværd Church, Bagsværd, 1968-76  Source: <http://www.arkitekturbilleder.dk/bygning-Bagsværd-Kirke-3>  File: Majorca1.jpg  File: Majorca2.jpg  Figure 6. Can Lis, Majorca, 1971-73  Source: <http://www.utzonphotos.com/utzons-projekter/can-lis/>  File: Kuwait1.jpg  File: Kuwait2.jpg  Figure 7. Kuwait National Assembly, Kuwait City, 1972-84  Source: <http://www.edition-blondal.dk/logbook-iv/> |
| Further reading:  (Drew)  (Møller and Udsen)  (Utzon)  (Weston) |