ALA’s first project was a performing arts center in Norway.

**KILDEN PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE**

Kilden, a theater and concert hall in Kristiansand, Norway, has brought together all the region’s performing arts institutions. The project was executed according to original design within the given time frame and budget. ALA completed the expansion of the venue in 2014.

**TYPE:** Competition, 2005, 1st prize
**STATUS:** Built, open since January 2012
**PROGRAM:** Concert hall with 1,200 seats, theater/opera hall with 700 seats, multi-purpose hall with 200 seats, small theater hall with 60 seats, offices, workshops, rehearsal spaces, parking garage for 400 cars, total 26,300 m²
**CONSTRUCTION BUDGET:** 1,685,000,000 NOK
**LOCATION:** Kristiansand, Norway
**CLIENT:** Teater og Konserthus for Sørlandet IKS
**TEAM AT ALA:** Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston with Niklas Mahlberg (project architect in construction phase), Pekka Sivula, Paulina Rose, Jukka Herttula, Paulina Syrjätie, Jari Kivola, Aivo Lindroos, Kalle Matti Mäntynen, Erkka Saxén, Toni Henttinen, Harri Ahokas and Anniina Koskela
**EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS:** Birger Grönholm (theater expertise), Julia Osaken (lighting concept), Klaus Stolt (scale models)
**COLLABORATORS:** SMS Arkitekter (local architect partner), WSP Multiconsult AS (structural engineering), Arup Acoustics (concert hall acoustics), Brekke Strand (mechanical engineering), Sweco Grøner (mechanical engineering), Cowi (electrical engineering), Theatre Projects Consultants (theater technical engineering)
**AWARDS:** Nordic Architect Award, Jurys Prize, Theater & Performing Arts Centre (USA), IWA Architecture Prize Award (2005), Finnish Steel Construction Prize (2011), Norwegian Concrete Element Award (2011)

**Stages:**
- Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra has a 1,200-seat concert hall.
- Agder Regional Theatre is performing in a 700-seat theater, which can be transformed to accommodate opera performances by the local ensemble Opera Sør.
- In addition, there is a stage for experimental theater and a multi-purpose hall with a level floor.

Kilden produces experiences. The way the concert, theater, and multi-purpose halls are serviced efficiently and without interference forms the core of its architecture. The monumental abstract form of the wall made of local oak separates reality from fantasy. Passing through, the audience will move from a natural landscape to the realm of performing arts. This wall made of wedged CNC milled solid oak planks is not only a disguised theatrical effect but also a tactile artifact, which improves the acoustics of the foyer. The infinite blackness of the other three facades emphasizes the spectacle of the foyer.

©IwanBaan
So far we have built 10 different performing art halls.

KUOPIO CITY THEATRE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION

The renovated Kuopio City Theatre is a 1960’s modernist building by architects Helmer Stenros and Risto-Veikko Luukkonen. The expansion includes a new 200-seat studio stage with flexible seating and stage mechanics. New spaces have also been provided for loading and logistics, costume manufacturing and storage, as well as the support functions of the new stage.

The only visible alteration when approaching the theater from the city center is the four meter elevation of the theater tower. The tower was raised to fit the completely updated stage technology of the main stage. The add-on forms a glowing glass lantern, leaving the distinctive shape of the old tower recognizable.

The expansion is a simple rectangular volume located perpendicularly to the original. It is a solid, contemporary addition which continues and complements the old structure with equal quality and permanence. The public foyer is extended between the old and new volumes as a bridge-like angled space, which floats above the new outdoor auditorium created between the two volumes. The original main entrance serves both halls.

The old building has a beautiful and timeless material palette consisting of white concrete panels, terracotta tiles and glass. The expansion is clad in white concrete panels with a wrinkled, varying surface form, which indicates a similar acoustically optimized cladding inside the new hall. Also the new interior spaces follow the original color scheme.

**TYPE:** Commission, 2010

**STATUS:** Built, theater re-opened in September 2014

**PROGRAM:** Renovation 8,000 m², expansion with new studio stage 3,500 m²

**CONSTRUCTION BUDGET:** 28,000,000 €

**LOCATION:** Kuopio, Finland

**CLIENT:** City of Kuopio

**TEAM AT ALA:** Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston with Heikki Riitahuhta, Toni Laurila, Pekka Suikku, Antti Miettinen, Ilkka Torkko, Martti Ahtisaari, Petri Grossu, Gerard Gutierrez and Vladimir Ilic

**COLLABORATORS:** Tanskanen Engineers Ltd. (structure and statics), Granlund Kuopio Ltd. (HVAC), Tauno Nissinen Engineers Ltd. (electrical engineering), Blue Node GmbH (theatre technics), NCC Construction Ltd. (construction)

**ORIGINAL DESIGN:** Risto-Veikko Luukkonen & Helmer Stenros, 1963

**AWARDS:** City of Kuopio Architecture Award (2015)

**SUSTAINABILITY:** Building materials’ emission class M1, air-handling components’ cleanliness class M1
We really love doing theaters and other complex buildings.
We have completed two metro stations and are working on three more.

AALTO UNIVERSITY METRO STATION

The first phase of the western extension of the Helsinki metro line connects Rautatieasema, Helsinki and Matinkylä, Espoo. Upon completion in 2016, the West Metro will service over 60,000 passengers per day. The objective set for the architecture of the station has been to create distinctive identities for each of them.

The Aalto University metro station, in the middle of the Otaniemi campus area is the second one on the Espoo-side of the metro line; extension. The station's main entrance opens straight towards the former university main building designed by Alvar Aalto. This station distinguishes itself from the other stations along the metro route through a rich material palette. The palette has been picked to avoid gloss, and to emphasize natural materiality. The lowered ceiling is made of Cor-ten steel panels. It visually connects all the public areas of the station, and relates to the surrounding red brick environment with its color. The faceted ceiling flows through the main entrance, to the platform level, and up to the secondary entrance on Tietotie street.

Aged dark copper sheet cladding, grey granite and Cor-ten sheets form the basis of the material palette for the above ground parts of the entrance buildings. Visible structures are reduced in the entrance space with an engineered, light form reminiscent of origami. Natural light is brought down to the platform level via an escalator shaft that terminates with a view towards the lime alley leading to the old Otaniemi Mansion.

In addition to the station in Otaniemi, ALA has also designed the Keilaniemi station, and is working on three more stations along the second leg of the western extension of Helsinki Metro.

TYPE: Commission, 2009
STATUS: Built, metro traffic started in November 2017
PROGRAM: 15,500 m² underground station with two entrances
LOCATION: Espoo, Finland
CONSTRUCTION BUDGET: Approx. 40,000,000 €
CLIENT: Länsimetro
TEAM AT ALA: Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston with Anniina Koskela, Olli Parviainen, Pekka Sivula and Niklas Mahlberg
COLLABORATORS: Esa Piironen Architects (architect partner), Sweco PM (Project consultant), CKN Kehitysliitot (coordinator), Ramboll (geotechnical and hydro-technical, railway and bridge engineering), Transarctica (structural, HVAC), Pöyry Building Services, Insinööritoimisto Olaf Grannfelt andeurs van best Phòng kính và Trầm Văn hóa Nisninen-Rekateos (HVAC)

© Tuomas Uusheimo
The new central library in the heart of Helsinki consists almost entirely of public spaces and offers a wide selection of services. The building is a highly functional addition to local urban life. It offers a technically and spatially flexible framework for cutting-edge, adaptable library operations, and acts as the citizens’ common living room and work space.

The key concept of the design is the interplay between the building's three floors. The public plaza in front of the building continues inside, merging with the public spaces of the ground floor. This busy, constantly updated floor with a multipurpose hall, a restaurant and a cinema, is suitable for quick visits and walkthroughs. The traditional serene library atmosphere can be found on the top floor – a calm area floating above the busy city center, offering unobstructed views to the surrounding cityscape.

These two floors, perfectly complementing each other, are created by the building’s arching wooden volume. The spaces inside the volume are more intimate, offering opportunities for learning-by-doing. This middle floor is an environment optimized for contemporary media and latest tools, containing workshop spaces for music and multimedia.

HELSINKI CENTRAL LIBRARY Oodi

The new central library opened in the beginning of December 2018.

TYPE: Open international competition, 2013, 1st prize
STATUS: Built, the library opened in December 2018
PROGRAM: Library facilities, multipurpose hall, movie theater, exhibition space, info booths, café, restaurant, workshop spaces, meeting rooms, recording studios, photography studio, editing rooms, maker space, living lab, daycare facilities, 17,000 m² total
BUDGET: 98,000,000 €
LOCATION: Helsinki, Finland
CLIENT: City of Helsinki
COLLABORATORS: Ramboll CM (project manager), Ramboll Finland/UK/Denmark (structural engineering, HVAC), Sipti Infra (geo-planning), Rejlers Finland (electrical engineering), Insinööritoimisto Markku Kauriala (fire safety), Gravicon (BIM coordination), VIZarch (renderings), Arup (energy technical specialist), mechanical engineering, structural engineering and facade engineering in competition phase, Klaus Stolt (scale models)
SUSTAINABILITY: nZEB, Building materials’ emission class C1, air-handling components’ cleanliness class M1, energy consumption class A
AWARDS: Finnish Steel Construction Prize (2018), AZ Award (2019)
The new Courtyard by Marriott Hotel will open in early 2020,

The new Courtyard by Marriott hotel will become a high-quality addition to the Tampere cityscape. The hotel and its next door neighbor, the Tampere Hall Concert and Congress Centre, comprise a formal yet natural architectural entity. The hotel will also strengthen the connection between Tampere Hall and the main building of the University of Tampere.

The hotel tower will be located in the corner of Kalevantie and Yliopistonkatu streets, at a respectful distance from the Congress Centre’s main entrance and its foyer opening towards the Sonapuisto park. The new building will redefine the entrance square as a lively urban plaza lined by the public functions of the ground floor. The hotel will connect to Tampere Hall with an indoor passageway.

Functionally the hotel building is clear and simple. The reception, a service counter, a multi-functional restaurant space and a gym will be located by the entrance. The hotel rooms will contain all the essential features that business travelers need. The spa-like bathrooms will be light and airy. The floor-to-ceiling windows will provide the rooms with enticing views of the surrounding cityscape. The guests staying in the upper-most floors will even be able to take in views of the wider urban area.

Textured white concrete of varying depths will be used in the facades to visually link the hotel with Tampere Hall. The selected surface material also acts as a reference to the narrow, vertical white concrete façade elements of the university’s main building.

The commission is based on ALA, together with SRV and Marriott International, winning 1st prize in the invited competition organized by the City of Tampere and Tampere Hall in 2013-2014.

**TYPE:** Invited design-build competition, 2013-2014, 1st prize  
**STATUS:** Under construction  
**PROGRAM:** Hotel functions and lobby areas, 9,000 m² total  
**LOCATION:** Tampere, Finland  
**CLIENT:** City of Tampere & Tampere Hall  
**TEAM AT ALA:** Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston with Sampo Honkala, Stephanie Polochowitz, Heikki Ruoho, Saana Koivusalo, Alina Moise and Tora Hay Walseng  
**COLLABORATORS:** SRV (main contractor), Marriott International (hotel operator), Ramboll (engineering), VIZarch (renderings), Seppo Karppinen (traffic planning consultancy in competition phase)
the construction of the expansion of Helsinki Airport started in the beginning of 2019.

HELSINKI AIRPORT DEPARTURES AND ARRIVALS BUILDING

The terminal expansion comprises two building volumes. The first one houses the departure and arrival halls, and the second the security control and baggage claim areas. The existing departure and arrival areas of the terminal will be transformed into gate areas. This solution provides both passengers and services with plenty of additional space and simplifies the airport structure. The new departure and arrivals building, projecting from the overall volume, will become the new face of the terminal, whereas he security control and baggage claim building, even if further back, will be recognisable due to its blue facade coloring.

The imposing new departure hall is a continuous space decked by an undulating wooden ceiling. The new plaza in front of the expansion is like a counterpart to its ceiling. The three-dimensional surface hides the deck-like structure of the plaza and the drop-off ramp. Runoff is collected to a pond on the plaza that changes shape and size with the seasons. The steps outside the main entrance offer the passengers an optional route from one level to the other while also functioning as seating. The lower level is used by arriving passengers, as well as by those coming to the terminal by bus, taxi, bike or foot and those coming from the parking facilities. The large openings on the upper departure hall level visually link the two spaces.

In addition to the terminal expansion, the airport area will also include plenty of other new construction. The new plaza in front of the expansion and a new square by the secondary entrance of the train station, as well as taller buildings, pocket parks and bridges will function as orientation points. These together with optional routes result in an urban and walkable overall design.

TYPE: Invited competition, 2017, 1st prize
STATUS: In progress, construction began in January 2019. 1st phase of the project to be completed by 2021
PROGRAM: 35,000 m² of new construction, 45,000 m² of renovations and modifications
LOCATION: Vantaa, Finland
CLIENT: Finavia
TEAM AT ALA: Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki and Samuli Woolston with Pauliina Rossi, Lotta Kindberg, David Gallo, Niina Rinkinen, Mikael Rupponen, Harri Ahokas, Samuel Albert, Raúl Llanes, Svein, Miriam Allive, Roberto, Kirsti Paloheimo, Ole Forsell, Peita Svein, Tom Stevens and Pekka Tainio
COLLABORATORS: HKP Architects (architect partner), Ramboll Finland (structural and services engineering, traffic planning), VIZarch (renderings), Mir (renderings), SUSTAINABLY: Aims for BREEAM Excellent
and the construction of the new library in Lyon is slated to start at the end of the year.
Dipoli, the iconic, experimental student union building of Helsinki University of Technology designed by Raili and Reima Pietilä and completed in 1966 has undergone a complete renovation and will now get a new life as the main building of Aalto University. It will become a meeting place for the university administration, the academic community, the students and other stake holders. All of these parties were activated in the spatial re-design process that has turned the building into a sustainable, flexible workspace of the future. In addition to housing the administration, Dipoli will also continue to function as a prime location for important lecture events, as well as university festivities, and also act as a display platform for the university’s research and design projects. It will be a test lab for flexible working methods and mobile work. ALA’s aim was to re-radicalize the building by creating a fresh, open and dynamic user experience, not forgetting the original designers’ vision. The project also included the design of a mobile application for facility management and meeting room booking.

The building, located on the edge of the Alvar Aalto designed Otaniemi campus, is the result of an architectural competition organized in 1961, where the Pietilä’s entry was awarded shared 2nd prize. The renovation was part of the larger campus reorganization project linked to the former Helsinki University of Technology campus becoming the main campus of Aalto University. Born out of the merger of the University of Technology, University of Art and Design Helsinki, and the Helsinki School of Economics.

**TYPE:** Commission, 2014  
**STATUS:** Renovation completed in March 2017  
**PROGRAM:** Offices, restaurants, cafes, bar, auditorium, conference rooms, meeting rooms, open spaces, etc., 12,400 m² total  
**LOCATION:** Espoo, Finland  
**CONSTRUCTION BUDGET:** Approx. 34,068,000 €  
**CLIENT:** Aalto University Properties  
**TEAM AT ALA:** Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston with Toni Laurila, Pekka Savia, Simo Nurmi, Lotta Embilki, Tiina Liss Jussi, Pirjo Smarand and Eri Heikura  
**COLLABORATORS:** Workspace (interior design), Creadesign (service design), Kristo Mennonen (conservation), Projectus Team (HVAC), Markku Kauriala Ltd. (fire safety)  
**ORIGINAL DESIGN:** Raili and Reima Pietilä Architects, 1966

We also do *renovations* and expansions of modernist buildings.
Reima and Raili Pietilä won the competition for the Finnish Embassy to be located in the diplomatic enclave in Chanakyapuri in 1963 with a beautiful and powerful competition entry called "Snow speaks on the mountains". The project was commissioned and redesigned based on the original concept in 1980, and the building was finally opened in 1986 with the large single expanse of roof broken up into the six lateral separate buildings standing on the embassy compound today.

The interiors were designed by Antti Nurmesniemi in collaboration with the Pietiläs and the landscaping on the compound is by Maj-Lisa Rosenroth and the Pietiläs. The large ceramic bas-relief in the Ambassador's residence is by Rut Bryk.

The building's most significant architectural feature, its roofs, resemble the forms of the snappy Lake Kitkajärvi near Kuusamo, Northern Finland. The facades are made of locally manufactured natural sandstone tiles, white plastered bricks and white painted concrete with wooden parts of oiled teak.

The renovation of this mythical masterpiece of Finnish modernism has brought this ingenious building complex back to its original glory. The project consisted of a complete overhaul of technical systems, some functional updates and changes to the buildings, new entrance gates to the compound, as well as the architectural restoration focusing on restoring the original spirit of the design and repairing misguided maintenance efforts both indoors and outdoors.

**TYPE:** Commission, 2013
**STATUS:** Completed, the embassy reopened in November 2018
**PROGRAM:** Chancery, ambassador’s residence, staff residences, consular office, technical building, courtyard and new post house and guest house, total 4,400 m²
**LOCATION:** New Delhi, India
**CONSTRUCTION BUDGET:** Approx. 10,000,000 €

**CLIENT:** Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

**TEAM AT ALA:** Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston with Simo Nuojua, Lotta Kindberg and Mirja Sillanpää

**COLLABORATORS:** Wise Group Finland (Engineering), ISS Proko (Project Management), Annukka Pietilä (Pietilä architecture specialist), C. F. Karkola Architects (local partner)

**ORIGINAL DESIGN:** Raili and Reima Pietilä Architects, 1986

**SUSTAINABILITY:** Aims for LEED Gold
The office is today led by three of its four founding partners Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki and Samuli Woolston. They collaborate on all the firm’s projects to create an ideological, conceptual and practical design scheme. They supervise, instruct and participate in the development of these schemes and concepts into fully functional and executable design documentation.

All ALA partners have approximately 20 years of professional experience, mostly in designing large public buildings both in Finland and abroad. They are seasoned designers with experience in leading world class projects from start to completion.

In addition to the daily office work, the partners have also taught advanced studios in public building design in Finland, as well as at two North American universities; Columbia University and Washington University in St. Louis.

They have received numerous prizes and awards, including the Pietilä Award for Young Architects in 2008 and the Finnish State Prize for Architecture in 2012.

JUHO GRÖNHOLM (Finland, b. 1975) Architect M.Sc. SAFA, Co-Founder, Partner
Juho Grönholm holds a master’s degree in architecture from Helsinki University of Technology. He has 21 years of professional experience in designing large public buildings in Finland and abroad. Juho is both an experienced team leader and a visionary artist promoting rich, memorable architecture independent of any set styles.

ANTTI NOUSJOKI (Finland, b. 1974) Architect M.Sc. SAFA, Co-Founder, Partner, CEO
Antti Nousjoki has 19 years of professional experience in working with leading practices worldwide on projects ranging from public buildings to master plans. He enjoys both the political and the technical struggles of architecture, but is first and foremost a creative, ideas-to-execution designer. Antti has a particular interest in library design. He was a member of the board of The Association of Finnish Architects’ Offices until the end of 2017.

SAMULI WOOLSTON (Finland/UK, b. 1975) Architect M.Sc. SAFA, Co-Founder, Partner
Samuli Woolston is known for his considerate and artistic design approach. Samuli has 21 years of professional experience, and a strong interest in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural design and planning projects. Samuli is a graduate of the Department of Architecture of Helsinki University of Technology. He was a member of the editorial board of AAR, The Finnish Architectural Review, for a period of 10 years.

From left, our design principals, Samuli Woolston, Juho Grönholm and Antti Nousjoki.
ALA uses contemporary design tools such as building information modeling, 3D printing, and parametric design software combined with the more traditional model building and materials research.

The ALA partners are directly involved with all aspects of the office’s design work, and take a very hands-on approach at the critical stages of each project. All team members are also expected to contribute to the creative process. The office also relies on its network of highly competent international collaborators and specialists to stimulate the exchange of up-to-date knowledge.

Every project starts with an analysis aspiring to get to the heart of the given task, to understand the framework based on the environmental constraints and the point of view of the client. After this begins the design phase that aims to, in a creative and open-minded manner, produce the best solution to the question at hand.

SOFTWARE:
- Autodesk Design Suite Premium 2018
- Solibri Model Checker 9.6
- Enscape 3D
- Chaos Group V-Ray
- Adobe Creative Suite CC 2019
- Adobe Acrobat XI Pro
- Microsoft Office 2013

WORKING METHODS

The firm was founded in 2005 and employs 52 architects and interior designers.
ALA Architects specializes in demanding public and cultural buildings, unique renovation projects, station design and master planning. The awarded Helsinki-based firm was founded in 2005 by four partners: Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta and Samuli Woolston. Their collaboration started in 2004 through success in architectural competitions. The 1st prize in the open international competition for the new theater and concert hall, Kilden Performing Arts Centre, in Kristiansand, Norway, a year later granted them their first commission.

ALA’s most recent completed projects are Helsinki Central Library Oodi, the renovations of Finnish embassies in New Delhi, India and Cairo, Egypt, the Aalto University and Keilaniemi metro stations, as well as the renovation of Dipoli Student Centre and its repurposing as Aalto University’s main building, all in Espoo, Finland. Our current projects include three more subway stations along the western extension of the Helsinki metro line, a terraced parking garage in Helsinki, a hotel in Tampere, the expansion of Helsinki Airport, and a university library in Lyon.

Today, ALA is today run by three of the original four partners: Grönholm, Nousjoki and Woolston, and in addition to them employs a team of 49 architects, interior designers, students and staff members, representing 8 nationalities.

ALA is committed to seeking fresh angles, flowing forms and surprising solutions on all levels of architecture. We challenge ourselves to provide alternatives, develop prototypes and look for innovations. We trust in beauty achieved by combining the intuitive with the analytic, the practical with the extravagant, and the rational with the irrational.

**FOUNDED:** 2005
**REGISTERED IN:** Finland, Norway
**MEMBER OF:** Association of Finnish Architects’ Offices ATL, Arkitektbedriftene i Norge
**TURNOVER IN 2018:** Approx. 4,636,000 €
**STAFF:** 3 partners, 30 architects M.Sc./M.Arch., 2 graduated junior designers M.Sc./M.Arch, 7 architecture students, 3 interior architects, 4 technical assistants, 3 administrative employees

**WORKING LANGUAGES:** Finnish, English, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish, Turkish.