



# icam print 04

international confederation of architectural museums

an organisation of architectural museums,  
centres and collections



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## editorial

In 2009 **icam** celebrated 30 years since its founding. Although there were only a modest number of early members, membership has increased dramatically since then, showing that the subject of architecture has become a fixture on the cultural establishment's agenda. Almost all architecture museums were founded in the 20th century and based on modern or postmodern concepts that stemmed from a period which has itself become museum material. The 21st century requires a re-evaluation of the role of architecture institutions, not only because of the financial crisis but because the framework and conditions of production for architecture are fundamentally different now, they have become more heterogeneous.

In his contribution 'In transition. Three notes on the situation for architectural practice in Europe', Karl Otto Ellefsen addresses these changes in architecture production. At the same time, the political context has altered, too. In Holland, for instance, the decades' old Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment has been abolished and fused with the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management to form a new Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, while public housing has moved to the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The fusing of architecture museums with, for example, design institutions, or their incorporation into larger structures, has been an everyday occurrence in recent years, especially in Scandinavia. The ushering-in of a new approach to the subject of architecture and design is signalled by the interviews with Lena Rahoult (Stockholm), Juulia Kauste (Helsinki) and Nina Berre (Oslo), all museum directors who are increasingly engaged in the reinterpretation of their tasks. The previous century was based on the notions of growth and development towards an audience- and public-centred museum bound to the market and neoliberalism. The *Art Newspaper* annual visitor statistics for blockbuster exhibitions published in April feed the desire for ever-expanding audiences. Top of the list of the Top 10 in Architecture and Design for the past two years have been the MoMA with its exhibition on Ron Arad held in 2009 (347,995 visitors), and Bauhaus 1919–33 held in 2010 (397,101 visitors). The interview with Jean Dethier, the first architecture curator at the Centre Pompidou, is to be read in this context – taking us back to the early days of the blockbuster exhibition.

The idea of providing an architecture platform for almost all strata of the population is to be found in almost every member of **icam**'s mission statement. Making the numbers of visitors the sole criterion for quality in a context of the question of the future of architecture museums seems wholly inadequate. One ought instead to concentrate on the questions of the socially relevant roles that can be played by architecture institutions in the broader public realm and how the direction of the content can accommodate the new situation. Two architecture institutions provide innovative examples in this context: the CCA, Canadian Center of Architecture and the NAI, Netherlands Architecture Institute. The founding of **icamAustralasia** is to be welcomed, and we look forward to the new input. The flagships under the art institutions like the Tate are already reacting to the new situation with a new approach based on becoming more "open, diverse, global, entrepreneurial and sustainable". A key issue will be the question of how local expertise can acquire new significance in the face of globalisation.

In conclusion, I should like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of the contributing authors as well as to the **icamprint** editorial board.

*Monika Platzer, editor*

# letter from the president

When in August 2009 *icam* held its 30th jubilee in Helsinki with a look back and a look forward at prospects for the future, the current worldwide economic crisis was still restricted to a property crisis and peculiar financial products. In the meantime almost all of the institutions in *icam* have either undergone dramatic cuts to their budgets or had their budgets frozen. So we are all challenged to respond to the new situation with a reflective cultural programme. However many of the contributions in this issue of *icamprint* show that the current programmes on offer by architecture institutions had already begun to change independently from and before the crisis. Many elucidate on their departure from the monographic marketing exhibitions by star architects that had been standard fare in the past (Zardini, Bouman, Dethier). What is happening is a return to thematic exhibitions that connect with the reality of people's lives or that explore the production and impact of architecture itself.

The background to and reasons for this are manifested in a development in architecture that has been apparent for about ten years now. The global inflation of individualistic egomaniacal designs has already led to an extensive loss of authorship – accelerated by ever-improving rendering programmes – and is, in the meantime, increasingly also beleaguering truly high quality architecture in buildings and projects. So the air has been slowly but steadily seeping from this 'iconic bubble'. This was articulated in two events held in 2010 that could be described as manifestos for a paradigmatic shift in architecture. The first was the architecture biennial in Venice by Kazuo Sejima, who did not organise the usual parade of stars for the first time in the Biennale's history and evoked the atmospheric content of architecture instead. This was followed a few weeks later at the MoMA by the exhibition *Small Scale, Big Change – New Architectures of Social Engagement*, whose subject matter was blazoned in the title. And when key marketplaces for contemporary architecture like the architecture biennial in Venice and the MoMA show such similar programmatic exhibitions in terms of content in the same year, then one would certainly be justified in talking about the start of a new architecture debate.

It is now a key challenge for the institutions of *icam* to take-up and to develop accordingly with the content of their programmes, to engage with this new status quo. After the big party of interchangeable icons, it is simply a matter of being aware of the original purpose of architecture museums. The substance and power of the archives and collections lies in their capacity to activate the memory of architecture as the yardstick for quality. So that an identity for the culture of building can be created beyond racy lifestyle sensations, one which has to be communicated to a broad public. With an easy mind, we can concur with the last sentence in 'Jonathan Glancey's passport to the planet', the author's final article after 15 years as architecture critic for the British newspaper *The Guardian*: "It's time to aim for a world of intelligent, crafted architecture – one that projects a sense of true worth – and to leave the era of limitless aspiration behind." With its exciting programme developed by our German hosts, the upcoming *icam13* conference is providing an opportunity to reflect on the core functions of our 'architectural memory bank' and a lively exchange at this new beginning of architecture.

*Dietmar Steiner, president*



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*asBUILT* covers, 2010–11, editors Karl Otto Ellefsen, Jan Olav Jensen, Mari Lending and Børre Skodvin, Pax Publishing House, Oslo

## in transition

**Karl Otto Ellefsen**

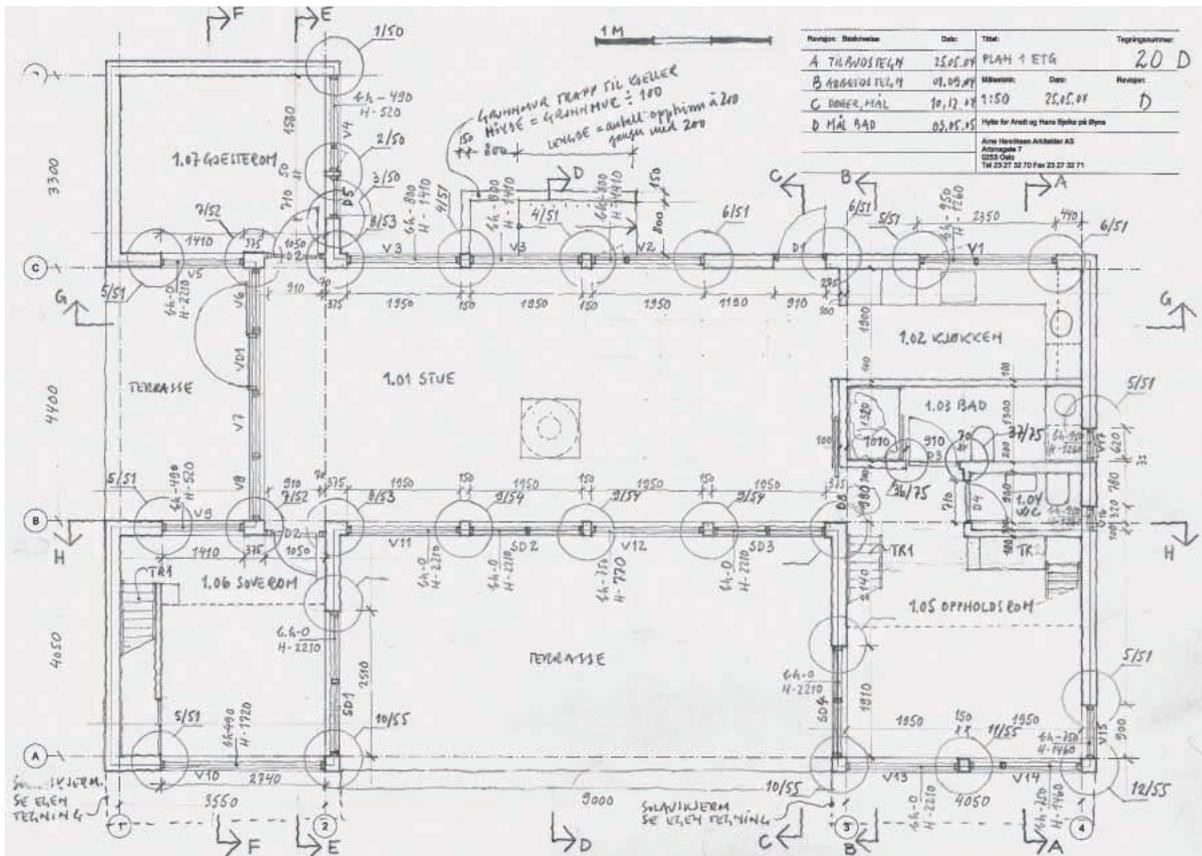
Three notes on the situation for architectural practice in Europe

### The Material

The *asBUILT* series<sup>1</sup> contains compilations of documents where the architect establishes the details for the production of his work – the architectural drawings. Each book in the series, published from 2010 onwards, presents one building complete with working drawings, technical specifications and a discursive essay. Contemporary building practices represent a slowly developing cultural competence, with systems, methods and techniques that rely on dissemination in order to function well. Architecture is compared to gastronomy in the introduction to the series: “In the world of gastronomy, one generously shares recipes. Highlighting the very translation from concept to physical object and from drawings to completed buildings. *asBUILT* establishes a space for similarly exchanging built experience, hoping in this way to fuel the metabolism of architecture.”<sup>2</sup>

This series of publications highlights the principal changes in the material and methods used to establish the production of architectural objects. The typical architectural project was a unique structure, a “one off” designed for a particular builder for a specific purpose. The role of the architect was to interpret the programme and, via discussions with the builder, to arrive at a good architectural solution. There was a convention for architectural drawings – which were to be made and how they were to be made. For the building authorities, the drawings defined what was included in the permission to build; for the craftsmen and the contractors, the architectural drawings (along with the text by the tender) were an indication of how work was to be carried out on a contractual basis. At the same time the drawings complied with the architect’s working method for developing and defining the structure via the use of plans, façades and diagrams.

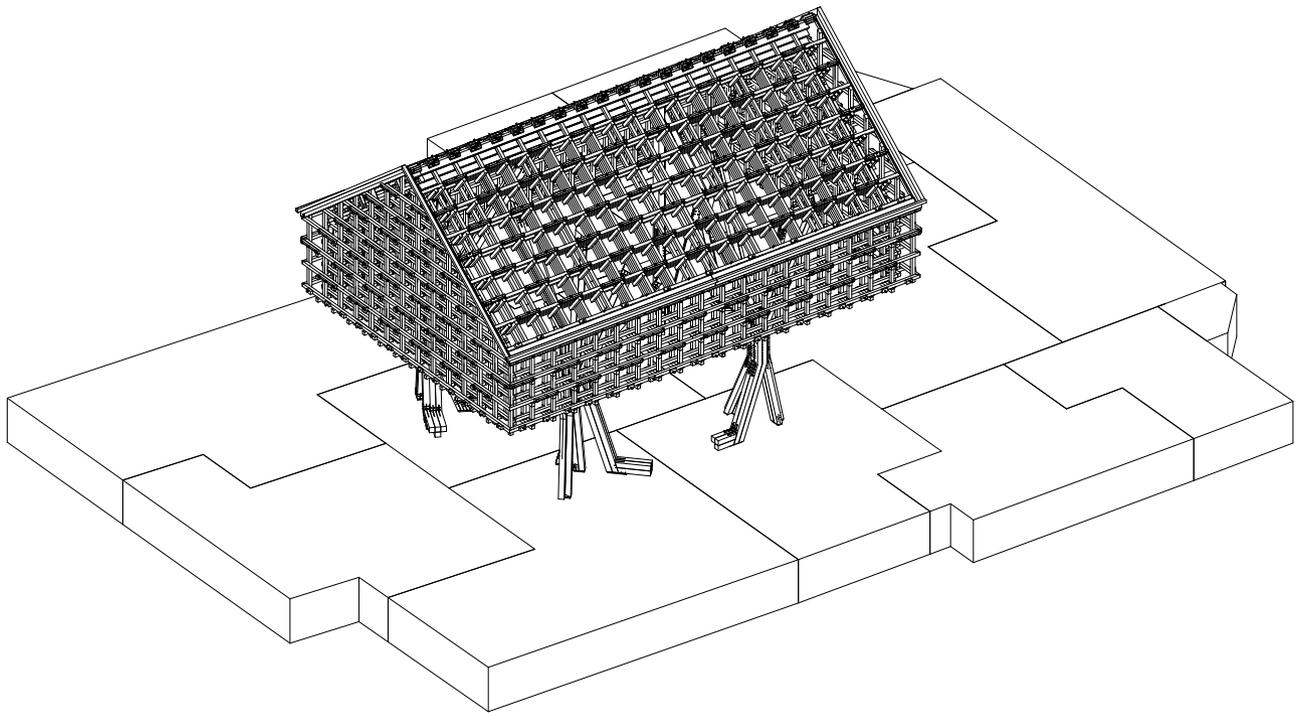
This traditional way of working still exists within the architectural profession in terms



Arne Henriksen, summer house hand drawing, 2004

- 1 The series is published by Pax, Oslo, Norway. Six volumes have been published to date.
- 2 Quoted from the general printed text following each volume in the series.
- 3 Ellefsen, Jensen, Lending, Skodvin (Eds.), 'Two Summer Houses, Arne Henriksen Arkitekter' (*asBUILT* 6, Oslo 2011, Pax)

of both the role of the architect within the entire planning and construction process, and the nature and scope of the drawings and descriptions that underlie the process. The *asBUILT* series even documents contemporary projects<sup>3</sup> where the main production instructions are free-hand drawings made in close contact with craftsmen as a creative activity interwoven with the building process. The architect's drawings also covered construction and most of the technical infrastructure – not dependent on computer technology, but cost-efficient nevertheless. "The architect draws his way forward", as Christian Norberg-Schultz aptly put it so many times. Drawings are used to develop and convey ideas so they can be realised. In other words, drawing is used in various ways throughout the time-line for the production process. A drawing expresses conceptual ideas, it is a communication tool for the parties involved, and it functions as a means to develop and specify in detail – and also happens to be legally required documentation in the approval procedure. The process leads to working drawings that make use of a precise, detailed symbolic language and that, via contracts, become legally binding documents with clearly defined practical and financial ramifications. Architects used to spend so much time doing the actual drawing work that it led to the establishment of a profession in its own right, that of the draughtsman. Computer technology, the logics of property development in and alterations to the technical production apparatus for building are significantly changing architectural practice. The complete portfolio for a building project does not contain a predefined exhaustive pile of drawings but a series of different digital layers that can be combined – also in three dimensions – and can be printed out in different ways. All the various professions download their information into the shared digital space in the form of their own layers, and the builder and authorities should ideally be able to



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Atelier Oslo/AWP, digital axonometric drawing with layers, Lanternen Pavillon, Sandnes, Norway, 2006

combine the digital data and extract material to use when evaluating a given project. They have been developing digital tools for the architect's profession since the 1980s, and new standards are continuing to be set for the mediation of information regarding building projects, including for the project's technical and geometrical details.

The new digital tools represent a shift or a transition in architectural production and for the production of the portfolio of architectural documentation, but also leads to a situation where buildings are no longer fixed in rectangular geometry. For a long time architectural museums, institutions skilled in the collection and conservation of drawings and physical models, have had to discuss how to deal with heritage when digitized. But digitization also represents a potential for higher efficiency and productivity, and in the end probably also leads to a situation where access to the essential knowledge needed for much architectural production is less exclusive. Architecture is a branch where historical structures for the organisation and practice have been largely maintained intact, especially within the field of building production. Ultimately, digitization puts this structure under stress.

### **The Market and the Structure of Architectural Production**

Today's Norwegian newspapers (8 January 2012) tell me that the general unemployment rate in the EU is 10.3%, with the highest rate in Spain, at 22.9%. Youth employment (under 25s) in Spain and Greece is nearly 50%, and close to 30% in Italy and Portugal. There is a significant difference between the South and the North of Europe. Registered unemployment in Germany is at the historic low of 5.5%, down by 5% since 2005, and half a million new jobs were created in 2011. It is rumoured that architectural production in The Netherlands fell by over 50% at



General Architecture, Skellefteå Kraft headquarters, Skellefteå, Sweden, 2006–09  
// photo Mikael Olsson, Arkitekturmuseet

4 ACE, 'Snapshot Survey of the Impact of Economic Crises', June 2011 (ACE homepage)

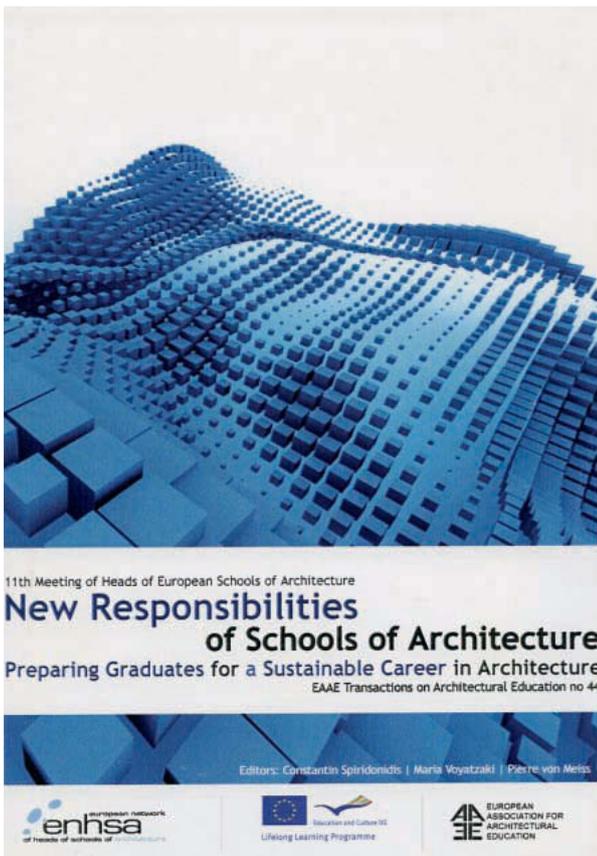
5 Figures for 2011 were not yet available at the time of writing.

6 ACE, 'Mirza and Nacey Research. The Architectural profession in Europe in 2010', (ACE homepage)

the beginning of the crisis, and that the actual rate of unemployment among Irish architects is at almost 70%.

The Architect's Council of Europe (ACE) regularly publishes international polls asking architectural practices for their appraisal of their business situation.<sup>4</sup> In June 2011, 64.5 % considered their situations to be bad or very bad, 7.9% considered their situations to be good, and 22.4% found their situations satisfactory. In general, there are significant swings in expectation about prospective workloads in different work areas. The architectural market within the EU fell by an estimated 22% between 2007/8 and 2009/10, from 22 billion Euros in 2008 to 17 billion Euros in 2010. The largest falls in construction output are to be found in Ireland, Spain and Denmark.<sup>5</sup>

The actual overall situation for architectural practices is difficult to ascertain. Interesting statistics show that the estimated number of architectural practices has increased from 130,000 in 2008 to 155,000 in 2010, as a result of more small practices' being established by newly redundant architects. "Sole principals" run 39% of the architectural practices with no employees. The total number of architects in Europe is currently estimated at 524,000. The highest percentage of these is to be found in Italy (2.4 in 1000 people), however this a reflection of the fact that in Italy architecture is often considered a more general cultural and academic field of studies rather than a practical education. Germany, Denmark and Portugal, each boasting that 1.2 out of a 1000 people have been trained as architects, are probably the countries where competence in the field is easiest to find. Generally speaking, architects situated outside the countries of the commissions themselves handle only 8% of the building volume. In a comparison within the EU, the countries where architecture holds the highest reputation as a profession are Denmark and Sweden.<sup>6</sup>



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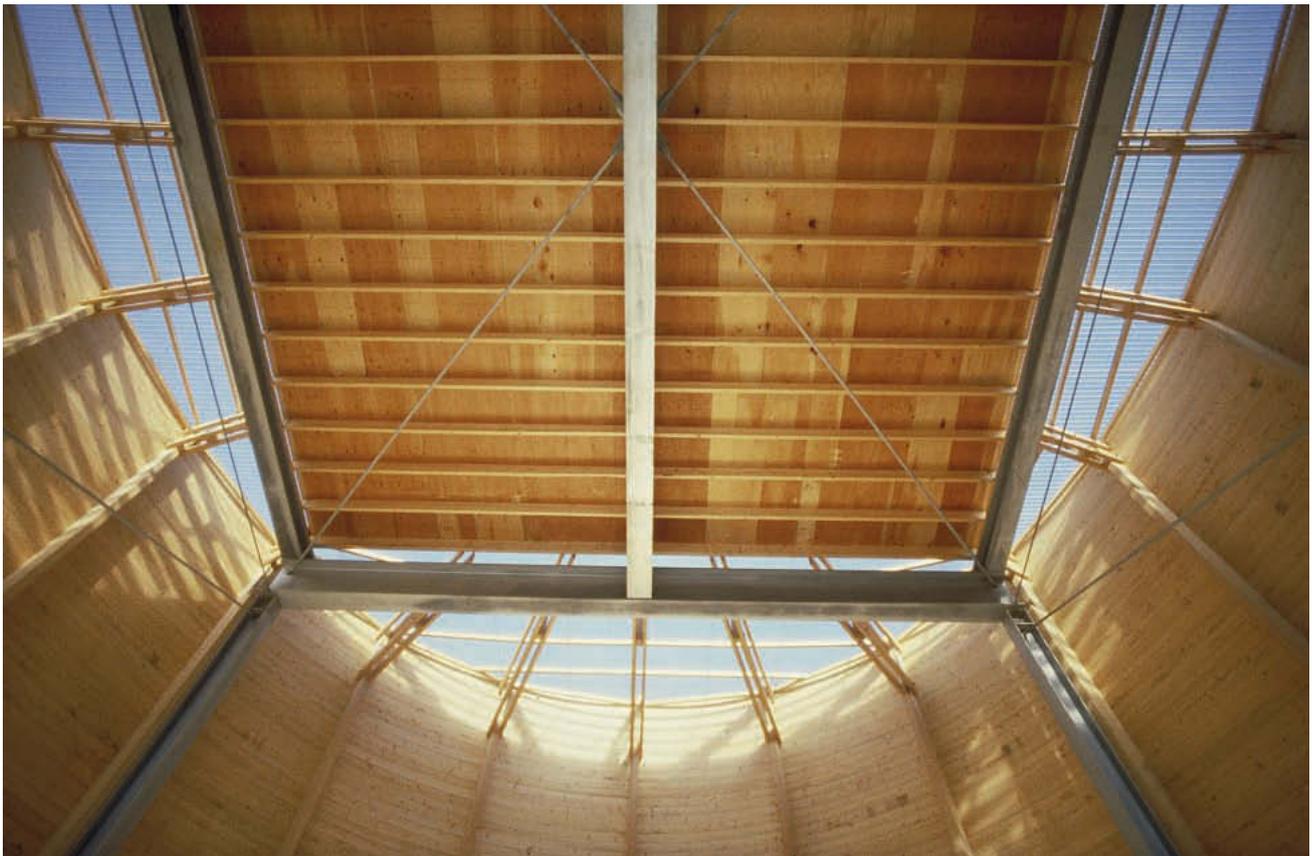
*New Responsibilities of Schools of Architecture, Greece, 2009*

(1) Part of the current crises in Europe appears to be the surplus production of buildings, primarily housing. This was primarily caused by property developers and private investors who were too insistent on the possibilities for making a profit in real estate.

(2) At the same time, the European fertility rate is very low and “shrinking cities” are the norm. The potential for urban growth due to centralisation in the different countries does not exist anymore, and population growth can only happen through controlled immigration. This has brought about a situation which might be seen as more or less permanent where the European need for new buildings remains at a reduced level, and the capacity of architects has to be invested to an even larger extent in the rebuilding and transformation of existing buildings.

(3) During the period of deindustrialisation the belief was widespread that Europe could be developed and sustained as a “hub” for knowledge industries providing services for the rest of the world, predominately the Chinese and other East Asian building sectors. However the figures, show that architectural exports from Europe to China do not amount to much, and anybody observing the qualitative improvement of Chinese architecture and, not least, of Chinese architectural training, would now consider the European export potential to be quite small. One should not pretend to be able to predict the future of the European financial crises, or eventual potential for new growth in Europe. But the current volatile situation is probably affecting the structure of architectural practice, which might be comprehended as fragile and perhaps also as a little old-fashioned.

(4) As a cultural phenomenon, architecture is attracting more interest than ever both as a result of city branding and high-profile sites, and for its immediate relevance to discussions on cultural expression, aesthetic quality and heritage. An



Jensen & Skodvin, truck garage, Rolfsoy, Norway, 1989 // photo Jiri Havran

elite division of high-profile architects and architectural companies producing signature architecture are receiving abundant media interest. It is important to note that these companies have been awarded commissions of a prestige character, which few European governments and cities are capable of financing for the time being. It is also important to note that these “lucky” architects are few in number. Switzerland might be able to provide ten to twelve names in this elite division, who are invited to submit to competitions internationally. Norway has three, at most.

(5) Beyond this privileged situation, architects are finding that increasing numbers of projects in the building sector are being developed without the involvement of architects, while engineering consultants are taking on more of the production work within the normal building process.

(6) And we also see what it is that many architects experience as a threat to the existing structure within consulting: multi-professional companies for consulting are buying up architectural firms and establishing architecture as one of many fields of engineering consultancy, and the architects are no longer responsible for the overall project.

### **The Role of the Architect – Strategies**

Educational facilities offering training for architects have been attracting increasing numbers of students, while the number of such schools has also increased.

Directives issued by the EU are aimed at quality control and compatibility in architecture training, but my impression from regular EAAE meetings (European Association for Architectural Education) is that the schools are specialising rather than standardising, ambitiously trying to define and refine their own profiles. This might be seen in the light of competition between suppliers of education, but also

as attempts to adjust to the needs of practice and to open up new fields for architectural practice. A study done by the EAAE a few years ago looked into what fields of knowledge were sought in young architects seeking practical experience: traditional professional skills were rated lower than expected; creativity, conceptual thinking, skills in communication, teamwork and an understanding of other disciplines and fields of knowledge were extraordinarily highly appreciated.

For a long time the Nordic countries witnessed a concurrence between architectural practice and the general needs of society. Shaping the environment of the welfare states was regarded as a public responsibility, and architects had a role in politics and production that allowed them to perform their task with authority. Equally key: some programmes were exempt from the straightjacket of building restrictions; buildings such as churches, museums and city halls were often reserved for architectural experimentation and development. A private market for the rich and/or sophisticated also presented an opportunity for the cultivation of quality and refinement.

In all Scandinavian countries architects have been responsible for the design of most built form, but the structure of architectural offices varies much across the borders. Sweden has developed a thoroughly rational and professionalised building industry best served by a few large architectural offices. In Denmark higher aspirations for quality in standard buildings has led to a proliferation of small and large practices. In Finland, and particularly in Norway, the industry has not been subject to any significant rationalisation, and in these countries the structure of architectural practice remains finely grained.

Norway is still a “Privileged Paradise Island” in terms of its national economy. In Norway the level of employment in architectural practice also varies with the volume of building, but somehow the building boom from the early years of the new millennium continues together with population growth and urbanisation. In Norway, too, the structure of architectural practice is undergoing the same transition as in the rest of Europe. There is an increase in the number of offices, mostly handled by young professionals. But an interesting difference is that these offices are not normally established out of need by redundant architects, but emerge from the creative ambitions of young architects who could certainly also have been sustained by the established offices. Of course the affluence of the oil-driven economy has provided a fertile seedbed for privately funded projects in uncommon numbers, some of which are driven by the desire for quality. Nevertheless, in terms of the future of architecture these new practices share certain interesting characteristics. Firstly, they expand the realm of commissions and go for the architectural potential inherent in the setting of everyday life, and operate creatively within the confines of simple functionality and limited funding. They establish quality with the commissions where “the extraordinary would normally be unexpected”.<sup>7</sup> Society offers countless such assignments. Secondly, these offices expand the responsibilities of their architectural practices into fields normally covered by engineers, project leaders and even property developers. This exemplifies a role for architects that might hold something for the future. Essentially, we are talking about expanding a market by bringing architects into the process of (again) producing “the ordinary” with high quality. And we support a “conservative” tendency to bring architects back into their former all-responsible roles.

These somehow unexpected tendencies in Norwegian architecture are also inspired and supported by government policies.<sup>8</sup> Architectural policies, i.e. comprehensive political policy supported by central government, normally have relatively loose agendas. Generally speaking, well-functioning North European governments define defence/security, health and welfare policy, regional policy, higher education and research policy, and energy and national infrastructure as centralised fields for government. Architecture is relevant for many of these fields. Architecture in the sense of artwork, discipline, activity/industry and physical environment has effects,

consequences and provides tools for taking action in different areas of political policy. The Netherlands was a pioneering nation in developing a policy for architecture back in the early 1990s. Governmental funding in the sector helped institutions like the NAI (Netherlands Architecture institute) that could represent and influence governmental policymaking. The government supplied daring forms of support for the marketing and export of architectural services, and established elaborate systems for recruitment into the flourishing profession. The Dutch were the first to promote possibilities for new and young offices to become established in the marketplace. The motivation behind these first architecture policies seems to have been a twofold one, partly a policy for the development of export industries, partly to promote the skills needed to provide adequate and innovative contributions to local and national processes of transformation.

The crisis in the European economy was probably unexpected in a country that explicitly aims to join the top five “world’s most creative knowledge economies”, as voted for by the Dutch parliament in 2009. The innovative agenda identified sectors and fields of knowledge that were given priority: water, high technology, creative industries, chemical industries, food and flowers. The reformulation of Dutch architectural policy emphasises that architecture will be promoted and developed as one of many creative practices: architecture, product design, digital media, games, fashion and graphic design. Architecture must be combined with research to access greater financing. And importantly: architecture will come to be evaluated and supported less as a cultural expression while being regarded increasingly as a tool for achieving a difference. The new agenda of the NAI is called “Architecture of consequence”, and expresses a firm belief that architecture might be able to provide effective and relevant solutions in 6 different social fields: the alternative production of food, a healthy environment for living, alternative energy, alternative spatial organisation, mobility and time-use, social cohesion contrary to polarisation and, finally, the creation of economic value. The assumption to be tested is that architecture, as an academic discipline and in practice, represents ways of mapping, investigation and conceptualisation that have the potential to redefine social challenges: “Architecture and spatial planning can be instrumental in redefining our attitudes because the design and planning of our living environments touches on so many of these concerns”, writes the NAI in its comments on the redefinition of architectural policy.

A crucial issue, for architectural practices, too, is the way that policies on climate and sustainability are handled, and what “architecture can do” to make real change possible. So far, experimental projects, regulations and higher energy prices have informed the way new buildings are designed and built. However the potential is vast. Somebody has calculated that with the current investment speed, energy renovation of the existing more or less well functioning Scandinavian buildings will take some 200 years. In addition, adaptation to more extreme climatic conditions and increased energy efficiency will necessitate relocation, restructuring and transformation. New policies will be developed. We do not know which directions these policies will take but one of the outcomes will most probably be a huge volume of new buildings and construction. Seen from this perspective, the current crises somehow mark “an end of the line” with potential for an essential regrouping and altering of focus.

*Karl Otto Ellefsen, professor of urbanism and rector at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design*

7 Quoted from a comment made by the jury for the Prize for Norwegian Timber Architecture when awarding this prize to the architects Jensen and Skodvin in 1998

8 Part of the text in this 'note' is translated from Ellefsen/Lundevall 'Arkitektur.nå – en anmeldelse av et ambisiøst statlig dokument', in *Arkitektur N*, Oslo Arkitekturtriennale 2010, Oslo, NAL 2010.



The Swedish Museum of Architecture, Stockholm // photo Åke Eson Lindman, Arkitekturmuseet



National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo // photo Knut Øystein Nerdrum, Nasjonalmuseet

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## changes of leadership in scandinavia

**Mirei Yoshida**

Lena Rahoult, Swedish Museum of Architecture; Juulia Kauste, Museum of Finnish Architecture; Nina Berre, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Nasjonalmuseet, Norway

In 2002 the icamNord published *Nordic and Baltic Museums and Archives of Architecture*, which featured a detailed overview of the most important collections and museums of architecture throughout the Nordic and Baltic regions. Since then the Nordic institutions have undergone through many different changes. This article focuses on the current sense of transition among the Nordic architecture museums by looking more closely at the following three institutions: The Museum of Finnish Architecture, The Swedish Museum of Architecture and The Norwegian Museum of Architecture.

In general the Nordic countries are closely related linguistically, historically and politically. Since the early middle ages these countries have been closely intertwined, on several occasions going so far as entering into unions, the last being the union between Sweden and Norway that ended in 1905. Although the Nordic countries form separate political entities today they still share many common social and political traits. The Nordic Council was established in 1952 as an official proactive inter-parliamentary body that promotes Nordic synergy. The Nordic languages Norwegian, Swedish and Danish are considered mutually intelligible, and even though the Finnish language differs hugely from them most Finns speak Swedish fluently. The Nordic countries have all developed a political model featuring high taxes, an egalitarian redistribution of income and a strong state. This has enabled them to maintain a system of generous government funding aimed at cultural initiatives.

Thus the Nordic countries might appear very similar on the surface but as one delves deeper one realizes how different they often are. The national Museums of Architecture in Finland, Sweden and Norway were established at different times and under quite different circumstances. All three were founded originally by the



Exhibition, *The Decades of Finnish Architecture* // photo Museokuva, Arkkitehtuurimuseo

respective association of architects, and only later became institutionalized. The Museum of Finnish Architecture was established in 1956. It is one of the oldest museums of its kind in the world. The Swedish Museum of Architecture was initiated in 1962. It is the largest such institution in the Nordic countries. The Norwegian Museum of Architecture was founded in 1975. It is the youngest museum of the three, and it became included in the new National Museum of Norway in 2003. Unlike the other Nordic countries, Denmark has no formalized national museum of architecture, but the Danish Centre for Architecture (DAC) performs a similar function. DAC was originally set up as a foundation in 1986, established by the Danish Federation of Architects together with other professional bodies. Today the centre provides a cultural focal point for architecture and urban design, as well as for the building and construction industries.

Since 1962 Finland, Sweden and Norway have shared the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale. This partnership has encouraged the three architecture museums to develop a special affiliation over the last twenty years. During the same period, the architecture museums in Finland, Sweden and Norway have independently undergone significant changes, including the creation of new museum buildings. The Museum of Finnish Architecture held an architectural competition back in 1987 for an extension that would have connected it with the Design Museum. Since none of the proposals were realized, the Museum of Finnish Architecture and the Design Museum have set up a joint project called Sandwich. This is a collaboration project that alludes to their long-term goal of creating a new building between the existing museums. In 1998 the Swedish Architecture Museum moved into the museum complex on Skeppsholmen, designed by Rafael Moneo, which they share with Moderna Museet. In 2008, the Museum of Norwegian



Nina Berre // photo Andreas Harvik, Nasjonalmuseet



Juulia Kauste // photo Patrik Rastenberger, Arkkitehtuurimuseo

Architecture moved to a newly refurbished and extended building by Sverre Fehn. The original building was built in 1830 as the first Bank of Norway, which Christian H. Grosch designed.

More recent evidence of transition within these three museums has been the appointment of new directors. They all happen to be women and they all had quite varied backgrounds prior to assuming their current positions. Juulia Kauste of the Museum of Finnish Architecture completed her studies in art history in Helsinki before moving to the USA, where she spent the following twenty years. In America she studied urban sociology and urban studies. She then worked as the director at the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York. While there she became the project director for Eero Saarinen: *Shaping the Future*, an extensive research, exhibition and publication project realized as an international collaboration. She returned to Helsinki to assume the directorship in 2010. Lena Rahoult at the Museum of Swedish Architecture comes from a wide experience of design and the arts as a set designer and producer of exhibitions. She was project manager for the Stockholm European Cultural Capital 1998, among other national and international projects, and head of the national design archives before assuming the directorship in 2009. Nina Berre of the Norwegian Museum of Architecture is a qualified Architect and has earned a master's degree and PhD in Norwegian architectural history from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim. In 2001 she started to work at Norsk Form, the Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway, where she became the director in 2007. In 2010 she assumed the directorship of the Norwegian Museum of Architecture.

The following interviews were conducted to investigate the current situation of their institutions and their strategies for engaging with the forthcoming transitions.



Lena Rahoult // photo Emma Fredriksson, Arkitekturmuseet

*Since your appointment as the director of your institution, what do you consider to be the major challenge? And how do you feel that your current vision relates to the museum's original mission?*

**Julia Kauste** I see myself as an integral part of the transition that the museum has been going through in the last few years. I am originally an art historian. This distance from the profession gives me a degree of independence to respond to new challenges within the institution. Our museum was established around a double mission. The first has been to preserve the Finnish architectural heritage, and the other to be a platform for an ongoing debate on contemporary architectural issues. We will continue to pursue the original mission but we will also provide a suitable framework in today's context. In my opinion, the respect for the role of architecture in Finnish society today is not what it used to be in the glorious times of the 1950s. So our museum should be proactive in providing a framework for putting architecture back on the agenda. We are also currently working on the Alvar Aalto Medal, an international architecture prize established in 1967. It is an award that is regularly given out every three years. In the future we hope to expand our activities beyond the museum building, and to strengthen collaborative relationships with other educational institutions as well as the Finnish Association of Architects.

**Lena Rahoult** As director of The Swedish Museum of Architecture, I am responding to the need for strong visions and leadership in an evolving and expanding institution, which is a fantastic challenge; a complex and very inspiring and stimulating task that involves all of us at the museum as a team. With extended government directives of 2009 the key objective for the museum has been to illustrate and offer an active platform for architecture, design, and sustainable urban development, as well as conserving and expanding the architecture collections



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Exhibition, *00-tal*, 2010 // photo Matti Östlich, Arkitekturmuseet

entrusted to the museum. In response to the extended mission, our permanent exhibition was moved and compacted to 600 square meters, leaving space for a meeting place area and a large surface for temporary exhibitions – which is the public's first encounter with the Swedish Museum of Architecture. Playing the roles of both a meeting place at the intersection of public, professional, political, cultural, educational and social interests, as well as that of an approachable platform for debates and activities, is a strong incentive for the museum, especially in the light of the new mission to bridge architecture, design and planning.

**Nina Berre** In 2003 The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design was established as the result of a political decision to merge the five major national museums. The entire structure of the National Museum was again reorganized in 2010, establishing four departments: Design and Decorative Arts, Old Masters and Modern Art, and Contemporary Art and Architecture. Since then, I have been working intensively to establish a solid department under the large organization. Our ambitions are high and we are eager to develop a more research-based method for our work. Our most recent exhibition *The City and Blindern* illustrates one way of working in this manner. The exhibition was based on extensive collaboration with the University of Oslo, and we have developed new techniques for combining our own collection and on-loan materials with newly produced architectural models. The Architecture Museum is the smallest department of all in the National Museum, but my team consist of highly confident individuals with specialized expertise, and we benefit from the well-structured supporting team of the National Museum. Furthermore, we have developed strong collaborative networks with other academic institutions outside of the museum that have enabled us to carry out joint research projects and to produce exhibitions and publications.



Exhibition, *Spor. Contemporary Norwegian Architecture. Vol 7, 2011* // photo Anne Hansteen Jarre, Nasjonalmuseet

*Communicating with a wider audience has become a universal mission for all public museums today. This has had a direct impact upon the way exhibitions are made and the way that themes are established. Is there any particular strategy that has developed in relation to this current trend?*

**J.K.** We are exploring ways to create dynamic and exciting exhibitions that deal with contemporary architectural issues in a way that engages wider audiences as well as professionals. We maintain strong collaborative relationships with the Finnish architecture schools, and we continue to work with the new generation of Finnish architects. We will continue to host lectures and to invite emerging innovative architects from abroad. In the future we would like to create a permanent exhibition of Finnish architectural history.

**L.R.** We are developing a method whereby an exhibition, for example, may be read in parallel tracks. Newcomers or beginners will visit the subject area accompanied by an easy-to-follow narrative, whereas experts will find an in-depth track that challenges his or her advanced level of prior knowledge. As a museum of architecture, what we have on our hands – our collections – is really the work process in an architectural project, the trail of thoughts. It is possible, for example, to follow the creative process, to trace changes and follow a project through all stages of the process. In this cultural context, where there is a steadily increasing interest in the study of creative processes, we are one of the most complete and central resources in this field of research.

**N.B.** We are looking into the possibility of creating a permanent exhibition in parts on Norwegian architectural history. We are developing a new concept for how to “make the historical contemporary”. We are exploring ideas around a “flexible structure” whereby an exhibition could provide individually tailored levels of



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*At work with* in the Nordic Pavillon, Venice Biennial, Italy, 2010 // photo Economy, Testbedstudio

information to the audience. In such a structure, we will be able to adjust and upgrade the exponents and information in relation to the contemporary context.

*How does the physical space of the museum influence the way the museum functions today?*

**J.K.** Our long quest for additional space has resulted in some interesting strategies for negotiating the spatial constraints. The original building was designed for the Learned Societies in 1899, and the classical layout of the building does not allow us to accommodate the public very well. What is missing is room for the public to interact. When we need such facilities today we look for alternative venues elsewhere in the city. We have also started to utilise the old wooden villa in Puistokatu – the original building in which the Museum of Finnish Architecture was first founded in the 1950s. In May 2012 Helsinki will be hosting the World Design Capital. In conjunction with this festival, the Museum of Finnish Architecture together with the Finnish Design Museum will erect a temporary pavilion. We hope that we can test the idea of using temporary structures to create new social and interactive spaces with this project.

**L.R.** Today the spacious location has enabled the Swedish Museum of Architecture to meet the audience in a new way. A vast array of activities can be held both inside and outside the museum: debates, topical analyses, excursions, city walks and workshops for a younger audience. The beautiful library space has become a popular study place and reading room. The creation of generous studio spaces and the accompanying accessibility allows activities for children and young students. Climatized and adequate storage rooms facilitate the handling of the collections. In 2012 together with its growing audience, the Swedish Museum of Architecture

engaged collaborators and associates in celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. We will continue to take on the spatial and didactic challenges of the exhibition as a medium, while reflecting on ways we can create an adaptive and responsive space that keep a lot of possibilities open – and inspire our visitors into a whole new mindset where our subject areas are concerned.

**N.B.** We now have a beautiful and intimate museum space where the audience can enjoy the architecture designed by two notable Norwegian architects. The new glass pavilion by Fehn has a powerful architectural quality, but it is challenging to use this space for exhibitions with original materials. Light-sensitive materials are especially difficult to exhibit there, but we are exploring new techniques and innovative solutions to enable us to use the space without transforming the pavilion into a black-box. Our long-term plan is to dedicate the pavilion to temporary exhibitions, and to use the long gallery in the main building for the new permanent exhibition. Here we hope to exhibit many original materials, especially physical models. Last year, the scheme for the new National Museum at Vestbanen, designed by Kleihues and Schuwerk Gesellschaft architects, was unveiled. Even though the architecture department will not be moving into this new building, we will have the opportunity to hold large exhibitions there.

*How would you describe the collaboration between the Nordic countries at the Venice Biennale? Is your museum currently planning to participate at any other international expositions or festivals?*

**J.K.** Besides taking part in the Venice Architecture Biennale, which is of course one of the most important of these events, we have decided to participate in the 2011 Shenzhen & Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism and Architecture. Asia is geologically close to Finland, and China is rapidly becoming an interesting market for Finnish architects. In this context we think that our participation in the Shenzhen Biennale might have significant potential for the Finnish architectural profession. Our recent production: *NEWLY DRAWN – Emerging Finnish Architects* will be exhibited there, introducing the next generation of Finnish architects, their latest projects, visions and ways of working to an international audience. Our intention with this participation is not only to showcase contemporary Finnish architecture, but also to create a platform for productive dialogue.

**L.R.** At the Venice Biennale the main commissioner's responsibility rotates between our institutions, and the role of the museums in this context is to present a contemporary Nordic architectural agenda. The questions in focus could be found in both practical – sometimes with an emphasis on certain designers – or cultural phenomena in the Nordic societies, or indeed the natural or other specific conditions in which the architecture operates. We want to use the international context to share our local perspective and knowledge, and place it in the global arena.

**N.B.** The most important mandate for us is to enlarge our collection, preserve the objects already in our holdings, to develop research projects to correct and expand the history of Norwegian Architecture and to present these materials and research findings to the Norwegian and international public. Our exhibition *Spor. Contemporary Norwegian Architecture. Vol 7*, shown in Oslo last summer, will be exhibited at the 9th São Paulo International Architecture Biennial this autumn. The São Paulo Biennial is an up and coming venue, although the Venice Biennale will probably remain the most important one. It is also important for us, as the architecture museum in Oslo, to be an active partner in developing the Oslo Architecture Triennale as an international event.

*Mirei Yoshida, founding partner of Lyn Atelier, and program director of ROM for Kunst og Arkitektur, Oslo*



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Reopening, the NAI team // photo NAI

## why the new nai?

**Ole Bouman**

Most affiliates of *icam* know the Netherlands Architecture institute. They may think of it as a robust temple for the worship of architecture. They know it for its unique combination of archives, museum and conference centre. Perhaps they hail it as the most monumental expression of a highly ambitious government architecture policy. All true. But is this the only truth? And will it be a lasting truth? Certainly not without a sustained effort.

For a cultural institution that fondly propagates the power of architecture, it is pivotal to keep a close watch on what architecture means to society. Architects need to be highly aware of the changes architecture is undergoing today, and what still makes architecture worth promoting. The definition of what architecture is and what it should do is a dynamic one. And so is its own reputation, which needs to be supported by social acknowledgment through institutionalization. Where a profession ushers in a new era of its history, its discourse does the same.

These simple observations have profound consequences for the programming and communication of the NAI. Preserving the best from the past needs a new confident approach to the capacity to identify excellence. Appealing to the general public requires a deep understanding of the ideas and desires among this public. Exploring the future of architecture requires a strong radar for future potential. And all this should be recalibrated to create a new balance.

What follows is a brief visual story of the way we have engaged with this challenge.



The Dream: from the magazine *Bouwwereld*, 1912 // image NAI



The Bastion: the NAI building before refurbishment  
// photo Maarten Laupmann

### The Dream

Creating an architecture museum was a dream cherished in the Netherlands for over 75 years. Finally, in 1987, the Dutch government founded the Netherlands Architecture Institute, also called the NAI. The professional community had persevered, motivated by their desire for the institute, and focused on creating one. Architects preserved their professional integrity by sticking to the almost medieval principles of master craftsmanship and in bearing responsibility for the past as well as for future generations. This stubborn defence of the pride of architecture was matched by the political momentum of a government that had invented architecture policy as the perfect vehicle to compensate for its own retreat as public developer.

### The Bastion

The competition for the NAI building was won by Jo Coenen with a design that wholeheartedly celebrated the emancipation of architecture as embraced by the state. It monumentalized architecture's importance, it exposed its language, it organized its ambitions. Three building volumes represented the three pillars of the institute: to preserve, to display and to explore. Archives, museum and platform came together in architecture's own bastion. It opened in 1992.



The Substance: the collection // photo NAI

### **The Substance**

A bastion is supposed to protect. And protect it did! 18 kilometres of shelves filled with the finefleur of Dutch architecture await exploration by future generations of researchers and curators. The special thing about this collection is that this is not just a matter of storing the precious exceptions to the rule of mediocrity. Here we have an archive that represents spatial creativity throughout the course of Dutch civilisation. All of the major social achievements of the last 150 years can be retrieved here by way of their architectural articulation: the emancipation of civic movements, the democratization of justice, the revolution in personal hygiene, the modernization of transport systems, the idealism of a universal educational system, the battle against the water, the development of decent homes for everyone, and of course, last but not least, the adventure of the architectural imagination.

### **The Display**

For 20 years now the NAI has experimented with the display of architecture. It has struggled with the eternal given that showing the art of architecture can never be done by showing the art itself – and many directors and curators have gone to great lengths to reinvent architectural representation. Some of them chose the austerity of model and drawing; some didn't stop until they had realized spectacular installations; some started to circumvent architecture with other attractions and marvels to make it more accessible. And finally, some began to animate exhibitions with the input from the people themselves – the people that the architecture was meant for in the first place.



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The Substance: the collection // photo Carel van Hees

The Display: models collection // photo Carel van Hees





Exhibitions: installation, *Daniel Libeskind – Beyond The Wall*, 1997 // photo NAI



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Exhibitions: the representation of architecture, *Plan the Impossible: The World of Architect*  
*Hendrik Wijdeveld (1885–1987)*, 2006 // photo NAI

### **Exhibitions**

The NAI has a main exhibition space of 10,000 square ft. One day an historian will discover how much critical acumen and creativity has been put into this space to show the appeal of architecture. The series of exhibitions in the main hall and in the other spaces can be regarded as the product of combined intelligence, to make people think about architecture.

### **The New NAI**

The New NAI is new in many ways. After a year of closure it has reopened, not as a bastion but as a civic environment. It aims to present a public domain, and to avoid presenting an enclosed world. It has revamped its activities to cater to a variety of audiences and not just to design professionals. It has reframed its message to be one of architecture as a medium of life, rather than as a goal in itself. It has celebrated its close ties with many other institutions from the worlds of the arts and the sciences, governmental bodies and social movements. It has opened its discourse to the voices of many, and reshaped its narrative from sending messages to telling stories. It has transformed its definition of architecture from being an object or an image to being about performance and impact. It has put architecture in the middle of our turbulent times and removed it from its comfort zone, where it has become increasingly ignored by the people.



The new NAI: multisensory, *Dutchville*, exhibition  
// photo Mike Bink



The new NAI: dialogue, debate // photo Carel van Hees



The new NAI: the canonical *Treasury* // photo Carel van Hees



The new NAI: the hands-on deck workshop area // photo NAI

The new NAI: the reopening on 30 June 2011 // photo NAI





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Reflexive: study center, library // photo NAI

### **Reflexive**

Let's face it, architecture is no longer entitled to define its own destiny, nor even to decide it. Rarely has the pressure on the discipline been so intense and the stakes so high. Decisive questions regarding its legitimacy are asked on an almost routine basis. Why does shelter still need architectural articulation? What does it mean to be someplace? Is a room still the medium of human encounter? Do we need to rely on a supreme figure to lead the building process? Architecture's credentials are no longer self-evident. So, architecture has never before been in such need of our reflexive and speculative powers.

### **Abroad**

The NAI works under the aegis of one principle: to reconnect the architectural imagination with the needs of society. This challenge is pursued in the way we position our heritage, by constantly showing how architecture has made a difference. But we also pursue this in our international contacts. The NAI should not be a promotion machine for obsolete messages. There is no 'super' in being Dutch. Instead, we are embarking on a new role for the institute: to match the best we have with the most urgency we can muster. This is our new international agenda.



Abroad: Venice Biennial // photo Rob't Hart

Abroad: Shenzhen Biennale // photo Roberto Caputo





Augmented Reality // image NAI

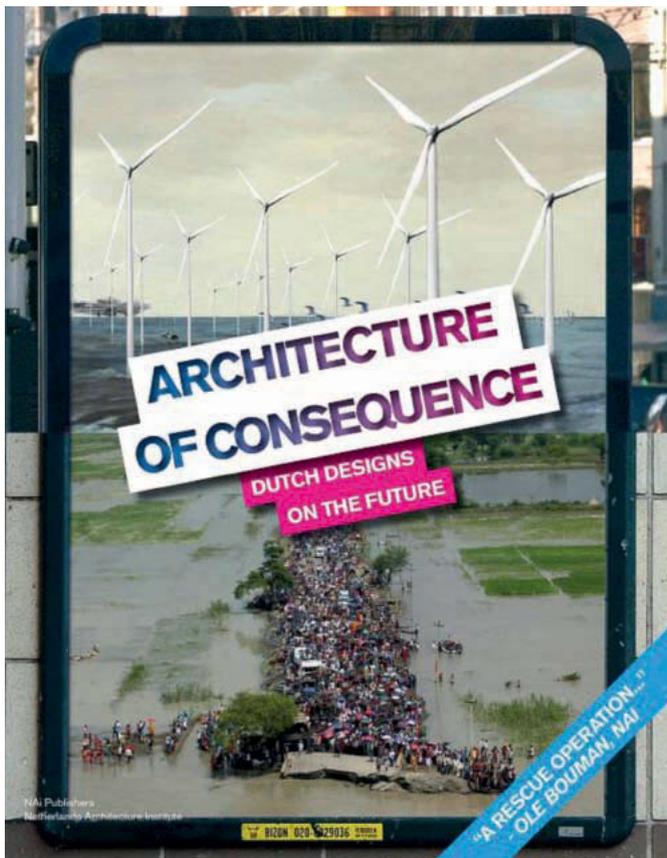
### **Augmented Reality**

For a long time the NAI itself was all we could offer in Rotterdam, or facilitate from Rotterdam. Today a new institutional practice is growing: the smart application that helps to make the NAI mobile has landed in purses and pockets. With UAR on your smartphone, you now can access NAI's archives while on the move. You can enjoy presentations projected anywhere in the city. You can comment on what you see while roaming the streets. Augmented reality helps us to transcend the boundaries of the physical museum – by miniaturizing heritage and exhibitions, and placing a platform for debate into your pocket. It also helps us to transcend the limits of time by allowing you to compare past, present, future and alternative realities on one single level of perception.

### **Architecture of Consequence**

This is a time of crises. Not one, but many. No one is really innocent anymore: architecture has to choose to remain part of the problem or to become part of the solution. Architecture has a tradition on both sides, but these days its intelligence is much needed for the good. In the current global mobilization of brain trusts, resources and audacity, architecture has a unique opportunity to resurface as a powerful discipline of pragmatism and dreams alike. It can now show its resolve. And, equally, it can now redefine its ideals.

*Ole Bouman, director, Netherlands Architecture Institute NAI, Rotterdam*



Architecture of Consequence: book cover // photo NAI

Architecture of Consequence: meeting, concept, dialogue... // photo NAI





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Vaults at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal // photo CCA, Montréal

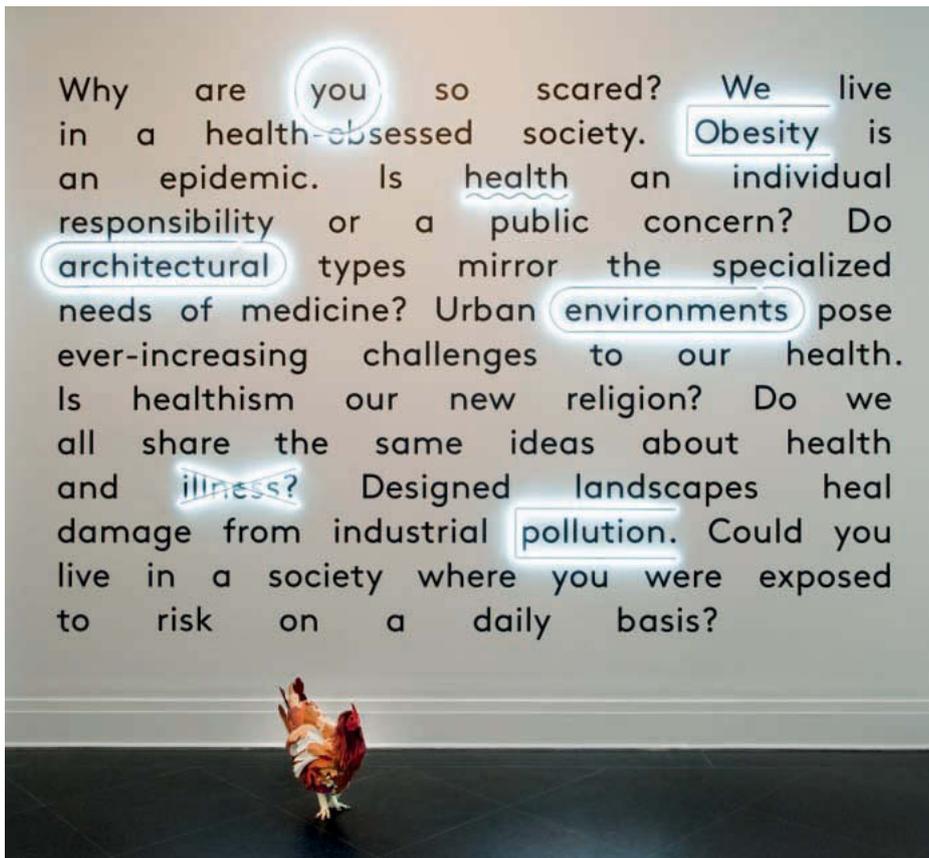
## a project for two buildings

*Mirko Zardini*

The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) opened to the public in 1989, after more than 10 years of studying, planning, and developing projects. The institution is based on a fundamental premise: architecture is a public concern. The CCA was initially conceived as an organization meant to fulfill several functions: collect (as a museum and research library); archive and document; support research (study centre); and conceptualize and broadcast knowledge (exhibitions). It was part of a new generation of specialized institutions – like the DAM in Frankfurt (1979), the NAI in the Netherlands (1988), or the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles (1984) – that emerged in the 1980s and testified to a renewed larger interest in the discipline of architecture. The original multifaceted model some of them presented, specially the CCA and NAI, was very different from typical existing national architecture museums, architecture departments as part of larger museums, or specific architecture archives. In addition, and contrary to most of these traditional models, the CCA's original mandate was, and is, an international one.

The CCA was also created in a particular postmodern context, which is reflected in the character of its building and garden, and their recognition as fundamental “aspects of its program”. During this period, from the 1970s to the 1990s, architectural history played a crucial role in defining the architectural discourse. At the same time, architectural theory emerged as a new specialized discipline in American and British universities. Moreover, archival material was no longer seen, following Michel Foucault's reading, as a passive collection of the past but as an active and controlling system of enunciations.

But the “cultural climate” is ever changing, and today it is completely different than thirty years ago. History no longer plays the role it once did in the education, discourse and practice of architecture. Similarly, architectural theory, gratified by its



Exhibition, *Imperfect Health: the Medicalization of Architecture*, 2011 // photo CCA, Montréal

academic recognition as a specific discipline, is becoming increasingly self-referential. The eroding interest in these past approaches is giving way to a neo-functional and technocratic ideal emerging strictly from practice.

### **A New Platform**

The world is changing in a dramatic way as well. The financial and economic crisis which started in 2008 made this change visible by bursting the iconic bubble in which architecture had been confined as a voluntary prisoner for the last twenty years. But how should we deal with the problems posed by these various crises, from the environmental to the social, which beset the contemporary world? These situations offer unexpected possibilities for intervention, suggest new roles and responsibilities, compel new reflections, and require building a different platform for contemporary architecture to work on. A centre for architecture is undoubtedly one of the places where this discourse should take place.

In recent years, and in response to these new conditions, the CCA has set out to question and relook at the assumptions on which architects operate today. We have embarked on the study and revision of an undeclared territory of false assumptions, preconceptions, and attitudes in an attempt to evidence hidden agendas. We seek to investigate and explore this “grey zone” of contemporary culture, contemporary society, and contemporary architecture to critically expose its contradictions.

This exploration has been largely conducted through the tool of the exhibitions. *Sense of the City* (2005) challenged the prevalence of the visual in our definition and perception of the environment at the expense of other forms of experience. *Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow* (2006) re-centered our attention on the landscape around the ideas of climate and biodiversity; *1973: Sorry, Out of Gas* (2007)



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Exhibition, *Actions: What You Can Do With the City*, 2008 // photo CCA, Montréal

was a reinterpretation of the first oil crisis, considered as a symbolic end to the modern century and a critique of a technocratic approach towards energy issues. *Some Ideas on Living in London and Tokyo* (2008) compared the lifestyles and ways of thinking about private, semipublic, and public space in Japanese and English culture, questioning the assumption of a completely homogeneous world; *Actions: What You Can Do With the City* (2008) proposed sweeping changes in the urban environment, launched from the bottom up by a myriad of mini-actions that could be combined so as to attain critical mass; *Speed Limits* (2009) revisited the myths of speed and efficiency that pervaded the entire 20th century and still constitute basic requirements of our lifestyles today; *Other Space Odysseys* (2010) reexamined our uncritical fascination with technology and space; *Journeys: How travelling fruit, ideas and buildings rearrange our environment* (2010) explored the transformative effect of the migration of people, things, and thoughts; *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War* (2011) documented and questioned the ethical, technological, and professional role of the extensive contribution of architecture to the war; and *Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture* (2011) exposed the excessive optimism in the therapeutic role of architecture. All of these projects attempt to frame specific issues in a more critical way. They are not an effort in finding or offering possible solutions, but in revealing diverse directions and potentials. At the same time, they are a critique of our present conditions and a suggestion for alternative paths.

The transformation of exhibitions into a medium for the exploration of themes and emerging problems, and the abandonment of solely monographic shows, is one of the CCA's many responses to our current circumstances. We are shifting our attention from exhibitions "of architecture" to exhibitions "for/about/on architecture."

This approach not only liberates the energy of the materials presented, but also exposes them to new problems, contaminates them with a new discourse, and puts them in a different perspective.

It is now a cliché that exhibitions of architecture have to cope with a limitation; that of the absence of the work. A public art by definition, architecture is always somewhere else, in the city or the landscape, but never in the exhibition. In fact, the objective of an exhibition is not to document the absent work, but to propose, recount, and comment on the ideas of architecture, their relationship to the world that surrounds them, and the shaping of a thought through a project. Drawings and models, letters and plane tickets, videos and photos, books and magazines are not pale substitutes for something that is elsewhere, but the materials utilized, along with the display, to present an idea. The system of display, in this framework, is not just a work of architecture, but one of the principal documents; one that incorporates all the others and guides us in their interpretation. Taken as a whole, the work and material presented should offer new venues of thought.

The succession of so many exhibitions at the CCA has provided the possibility of showing a wide variety of materials and, above all, has suggested different worlds and possible kinds of architecture. They persistently try to critique unquestioned assumptions, and offer alternative approaches that, it is hoped, can be given concrete form elsewhere, outside the rooms of a building, in a more lasting manner.

### **A New Curatorial Practice**

Until now, exhibitions have been the most strategic way to mediate between institutions – represented by the voice of curators – and the different publics. But curatorial practice as it emerged during the 20th century is being extensively recast. The tremendous change in the status of the object, culture, the various disciplines, and information and education implies an inevitable transformation of the curator's role and competencies.

Curatorial practice goes beyond amassing and organizing cultural objects in a collection, or producing exhibitions. An architecture museum or center is not only a place for the collection, classification, conservation, and presentation of objects and documents; it is also a place of the production and generation of activities. It is concerned not only with the construction of knowledge but also, and above all, with making this knowledge productive.

In particular, curatorial practice should now engage with, and take advantage of, the new environment created by a digital and online world. This new environment is introducing a new culture, a new system of social relationships, and new opportunities. Current curatorial practice must encompass all of a museum's multifarious activities, old and new, from education to publishing, to online presence. In fact, contemporary curatorial practice increasingly involves editorial components, public publishing, education, broadcasting, and discussion.

The traditional exhibition and its catalogue are already part of a multimedia project that aspires to leave a more lasting record of the work performed in selecting and interpreting the objects, and to reach a broader public that is not dependent on geographical and temporal restrictions. Online environments are also offering us the possibility of expanding the idea of publications from paper to digital, and introducing the idea of broadcasting (using the various media available, from video to podcast). But this is not enough. Broadcasting, in fact, implies the traditional model of the diffusion of a single voice; the institution's voice. In contrast, online presence is offering us an incredible opportunity to shift from the idea of communication and education to the idea of conversation with, and among, different publics which are not physically related to the institution. To fully explore its potential, it is crucial that this new system of relations be allowed to permeate from the digital into the physical reality of the museum, and to question the traditional institution itself.

## What You Have and What You Do

The digital realm has substantially altered the concept of what a collection is. Until now, museum collections have consisted of physical objects or archives displayed in exhibitions or held in storage reserves. Today, digital technologies permit this material to be conceived as a vast network that can be accessed anywhere at any time, allowing different relationships to be established between them and, at the same time, forcing museums to initiate new forms of inter-institutional cooperation. Already, different forms of collections have emerged; alongside the traditional, it is now common to find parallel online collections, generally consisting of images and information about the physical objects.

The web provides an apt and accessible format for presenting both physical digitized and digital born material. It subjects the object to a transformative process that at times produces additional qualities and potential, and at others subtracts some of the original ones. To further explore this condition, CCA's exhibition *404 ERROR: The object is not online* (2010) brought together questionably digitized materials with undoubtedly digital systems to explore the translation of objects into online representations. Yet, all of these objects and collections refer to (and are made up of) what a museum has in its care.

But the digital world offers the possibility of creating and making accessible a collection that also includes what a museum does: its activities. Through podcasts, online publications, and videos, a museum's activities now constitute a prominent part of its collection. While recordings of these activities have always been described in collection and library catalogues, online accessibility makes them something different, giving them the status of new cultural objects. The web also introduces the possibility for a new kind of process of collecting and cataloguing, one that transcends the walls of the museum to involve a larger community. The CCA exhibition *Actions: What You Can Do With the City* (2008) presented 99 actions in the CCA galleries. The accompanying publication presented further investigations of some of the issues raised. The website ([www.cca-actions.org](http://www.cca-actions.org)) offered the possibility for a larger community to build a permanent, growing archive of actions that began with the original 99. These submissions created a new, larger collection of tools, offering more options for real actions in the urban realm. The exhibition and the website became the 100th action, which was created in turn to provoke new actions while building a truly collective work.

## New Eyes

During the last ten years, the CCA has increased the number of researchers through the distribution of grants—in all its different level programs—and diversified the research produced thanks to a more interdisciplinary approach during the selection process. Nevertheless, current transformations of the cultural, social, economical, technological, and political landscapes require new eyes: new ways and tools for understanding which imply new ways of investigating and researching. In order to address contemporary problems and themes, it is necessary to adopt a multi or trans-disciplinary approach, and to simultaneously combine different cultures, practices, and points of view which emerge from architectural practice, curatorial practice and traditional academic investigation.

In addition, we should look at new, digitally-based models of scholarship—such as the Digital Humanities—to find novel ways of working; the emerging result should be collaborative, trans-disciplinary, and computational, and the research produced should establish new venues for investigation. This way of working would create networks of multiple communities of researchers and institutions and address a much larger public. It would also imply a more diffused and collaborative model of research, based on the creation of teams and communities, and able to blur the boundary between research and education to capture a more diffused type of knowledge.

## Two Buildings

Recent models of operation introduced by digital technologies allow a much stronger collaborative strategy among different institutions. The new circumstances demand not only the sharing of collections online but redefining the institution itself: a museum or architecture centre characterized no longer as an independent, self-sustaining organization, but as a structural element of a much larger combination of institutions and communities. These conditions also question the model of a multifaceted, multifunction organization. It is necessary to ask how many of the original functions are best served by any particular institution, and to what extent this institution can be part of a collaborative project.

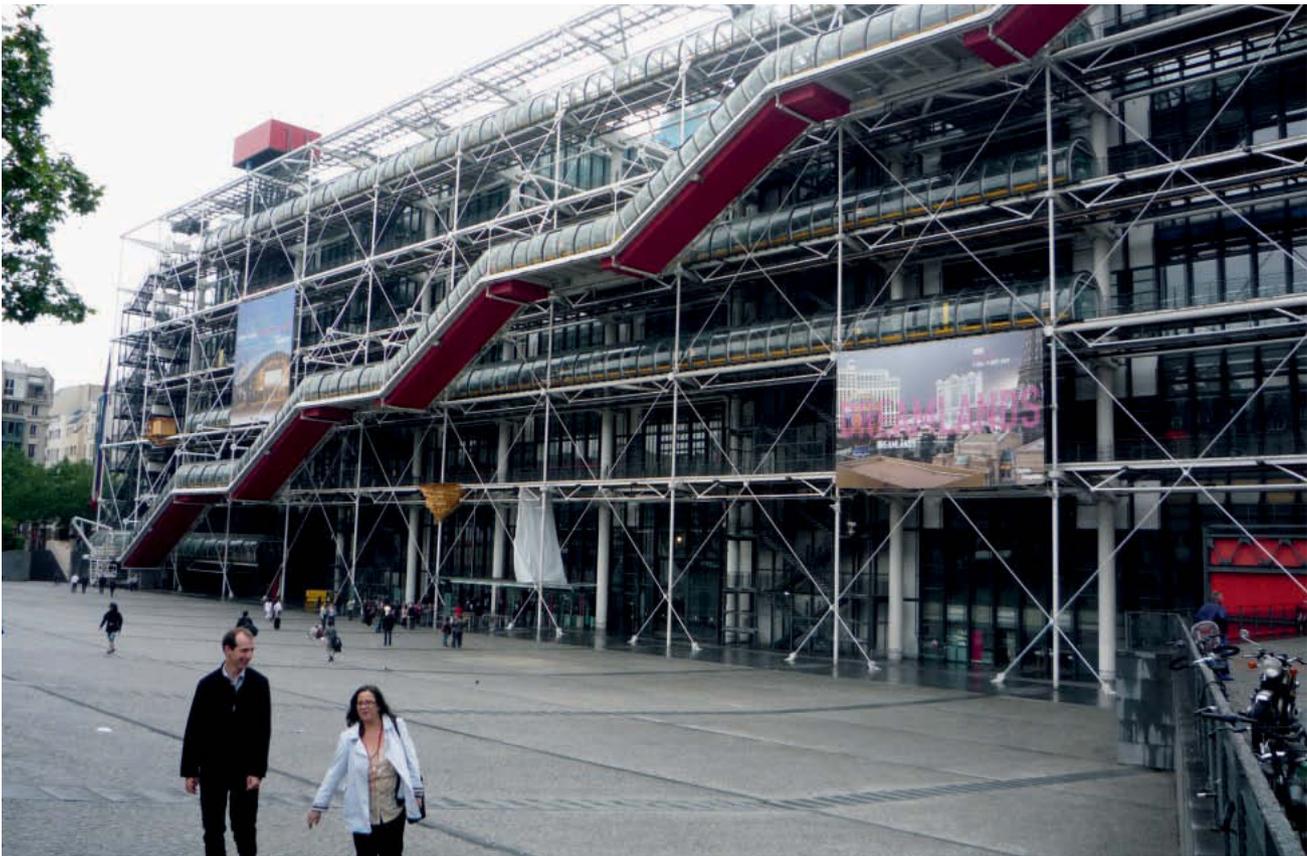
The digital context is also forcing museums, libraries, archives, and universities to confront their traditional missions, organizations, and ways of working. It is forcing education and research environments to redefine previous boundaries, strategies, and objectives as new models (Web 2.0 museum, Internet Archive, Jstor, Artstor) and disciplines (Digital Humanities) emerge.

The fact that museums are increasingly providers of high-quality digital content questions the very fundamental assumption on which museums were created; the collection and care of significant artifacts in a specific location. Today, their public is no longer geographically determined. On the contrary, it is more and more constituted by a network of dispersed groups; a cloud of online relations and individuals.

For this reason, institutions will have to imagine themselves as having, or constructing, two buildings: the physical one, anchored to a specific place, and the digital, accessed online from anyplace at anytime. Both should be conceived as different kinds of laboratories that address very diverse publics. In this sense, traditional websites are only a first step. They have to become part of a much larger online strategy based on the idea of a conversation and dialogue rather than the sole concept of broadcasting. They no longer need to be conceived as a way of attracting public to the physical building, but as a new building in itself, with its own collection, activities, program, research, and audience.

Furthermore, this second building should not simulate or reproduce the existing museum concept by literally transferring it to a digital dimension; it is evidently another type of space, media, and "institution" for research and discussion. While both share the same mandate as the original museum, each one should articulate it in a very different way. More importantly, benefiting from their different potentials and qualities and diverse publics and interests, the two buildings, or the two institutions, should be able to influence one another and generate a productive dialectic situation animated by the constant flux of critique.

*Mirko Zardini, director, Canadian Center for Architecture, CCA, Montréal*



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Centre Pompidou // photo Ulf Grønvoid

# architecture at the pompidou

**Ulf Grønvoid**

Interview with Jean Dethier

For obvious reasons the Centre Pompidou in Paris has a special place in the hearts and minds of most of us. It is an epochal building and an ambitious cultural institution with a program that the world had not seen before. And it should be added: it is a place that has created some of the most innovative – and popular – architectural exhibitions to be seen anywhere. The Belgian architect Jean Dethier was the first to act as author, curator & stage-designer of 20 of these architectural exhibitions produced at the Pompidou by the CCI department – during three decades, from 1975 to 2005.\* From the French government he received the highest professional award, the prestigious Grand Prix National d'Architecture, for his many contributions to renew, enlarge and promote, among a very large international audience, a "vivid architectural culture". Currently he is writing the book: *Living with Earth. Traditions, modernity and future of architecture & cities built with raw earth: a world & trans-historic panorama*, hopefully to be published in 2013. Dethier, a persevering and focused man – very often dressed in Bordeaux red – has researched earth architecture worldwide for over 40 years, and sees this encyclopaedia as his *Manifesto* for an ecological and sustainable domestic architecture.

*How did the story of the Centre Pompidou start as a new and ambitious cultural project where architecture exhibitions would become a major goal and a pioneering international achievement?*

It all started in the wake of *May 1968*, a political, social and cultural revolution initiated in Paris by students – and later by workers all over the country – against the conservative politics of President Charles de Gaulle. Faced with a huge national wave of frustration and fury he had to resign. In 1969 Georges Pompidou was



Jean Dethier // photo Eloise D.E.

\* **1975** [150 sqm] *Architectures alternatives aux USA* (Alternative Architecture in USA) 4 years in 15 cities (in France, Europe & Canada).  
 Publ.: 32 pages. Approx. 250,000 visitors  
**1977** [300 sqm] *Cafés, Bistrot & Compagnie* (French cafés as a place of high popular culture). 2 years in 8 cities in France, Belgium & Holland.  
 Publ.: 64 pages. Approx. 220,000 visitors  
**1978** [1,500 sqm] *Le Temps des Gares ; architectures ferroviaires de 1830 à 1975* (All stations. A Journey through 150 Years of Railway History and Architecture) 4 years in 6 cities in France & Europe.  
 Publ.: 200 pages. Approx. 1 million visitors  
**1979** [1,000 sqm] *Grands Prix d'Architecture* (critical approach to awarded French architects' production). Approx. 80,000 visitors  
**1980** [350 sqm] *Architectures de Colombie ; alternatives aux modèles internationaux.* (Contemporary Architecture in Colombia; an alternative to the International style)  
 Publ.: 240 pages. 3 years in 7 cities in France & Europe. Approx. 45,000 visitors.  
 Co-curators: Anne Berty & Franck Renevier

elected to lead the country. He was the first president of France to have a political profile including a background and motivation in the fields of arts and culture. He is the author of one of the most popular anthologies of French poetry. Privately, he was also a passionate collector of contemporary art. Due to his culturally oriented sensibility, Pompidou understood that the May 1968 movement also included a demand from the young generation for a new and liberated approach to culture as well as a radical change of its way of life, and that those two quests were converging. He had the conviction that culture was a key tool for social change. So, one of his first political decisions was to initiate a very innovative and ambitious cultural state institution exploring all new facets of contemporary arts and culture. Initially called Centre Beaubourg – after the name of the district of Paris where it was located, in the very heart of the capital – this institution was later named Centre Pompidou (CP) in memory of its passionate creator, who died three years before its inauguration in 1977.

*Was that project managed by Pompidou himself? Did he personally shape its program?*

Yes, indeed. This project is his most memorable brainchild. He personally initiated and controlled all the essential options and decisions for 5 years, since his first intentions were announced as soon as he had been elected in 1969. It was his *Grand Projet*. Culture has always been an important facet of politics for all French governments but as a pioneering case, the birth of this mega-project was decided on by the President himself. The concept and program of the future CP was not initiated at once. It followed a quite a pragmatic and evolutionary process. His first idea was to promote a new Museum of Modern and Contemporary Arts (MNAM)

to replace the tiny old-fashioned one operating at the Palais de Tokyo since 1937. Then he added a very large encyclopaedic Public Library (BPI). The project of a Music Research Center (IRCAM) dedicated to the avant-garde soon emerged. This basic three-part scheme was later enlarged to include theatre, dance & cinema. The final step of this creative process was the integration of a department (CCI) devoted to Architecture, Civic Design and the Built Environment. These many ingredients were combined in a multi-disciplinary strategy to develop new creative synergies between all possible facets of arts and cultures. All of these activities would be located under one and the same roof in a new emblematic building clearly designed to promote a process of the democratization of culture. This large “culture refinery” (as initially nicknamed by the media due to its architectural structure) would be totally financed by the State – the Ministry of Culture – and managed by a staff of about 1,200 people.

*Why were Piano & Rodgers commissioned to build the Centre Pompidou?*

This is another facet of this amazing epic. As President of the Republic, Pompidou could have chosen the architect by himself. Wisely, he preferred to launch an international open and anonymous competition. In 1970 it was a world première for such a huge cultural institution. He also decided not to be part of the jury, which on his request should be composed of 12 top professionals, many of whom were selected from abroad to guarantee a non-nationalist and a non politically-oriented cultural choice. Among them were the architects Philip Johnson (USA) and Niemeyer (Brazil). To act as president of this totally independent jury, Pompidou appointed the most respected, creative and exigent French architectural designer: Jean Prouvé. From the 681 projects submitted (including by architects who were world famous at the time), the jury selected the most innovative, seductive and provocative entry. It was designed by two very young unknown architects from Italy and Great Britain; at that time Piano and Rodgers had only built small and confidential projects. So the risky jury’s choice proved to be a highly memorable one: it gave life to an instant worldwide success-story and to an iconic architecture that is now considered a major 20th century reference. This High-Tech building – developing 60,000 square metres on seven levels – was initially conceived for about 4,000 to 7,000 visitors per day. But the reality of the public reaction was very different: during the first decade that average was around 30,000 admissions per day (17,000 in 2006). Such an overwhelming figure was a unique socio-cultural phenomenon in the world of museums. It remains an eloquent statement about the exceptional success of the Centre Pompidou, having totalled significantly over 200 million visitors since its opening.

*How were you selected to act as director of architectural exhibitions in such an innovative institution? What kind of professional background did you have at that time?*

After my studies of architecture and urban planning in Brussels – I am Belgian – I initiated a one year study trip in North Africa in 1965 to explore vernacular and colonial architecture. Fascinated by the culture, I decided to stay four more years in Morocco, working for the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism. There I was involved in different pilot-programs with UNESCO and United Nations agencies. Among them, the rehabilitation of the magnificent vernacular earth-built village of Tissergate in the Draa valley (8 km north of Zagora) as well as the conception of a large multimedia show for the 1st Pan-African Cultural Festival (Algiers, 1969) about Traditional and Modern Raw Earth Architecture all over Africa. This was the origin of what would become one of my professional passions. After one year in 1970 at Princeton University – to finalize and publish my research about the History of Modern Architecture and Urbanism in Morocco – I settled in Paris. I spent three

**1980** [1,000 sqm] *A la recherche de l'Urbanité* (In Quest of Urbanity)

Publ.: 176 pages. Co-curators: Jean Nouvel & François Barré. Approx. 70,000 visitors

**1981** [1,000 sqm] *Des architectures de terre; ou l'avenir d'une tradition millénaire. Europe, Tiers-Monde & USA* (Down to Earth; Past, Present and Future of Raw Earth

Architecture). 16 years in 26 cities (13 in Europe + 13 in America, Africa, Middle-East & Asia). Publ.: 220 pages. Approx. 3 million visitors. National competition + construction of the Domaine de la Terre (The Earth Estate) inaugurated in 1985 in the new town of L'Isle d'Abeau (30 km south of Lyon, France): 62 social housing units, all built (by CRATerre) using modern raw earth technology

**1982** [150 sqm] *L'architecture est un jeu magnifique* (Architecture as a Game Built with Lego)

Publ.: 64 pages. 6 years in 14 cities in Europe. Approx. 150,000 visitors

Co-curator: Kunst-Stichting (Rotterdam)

**1983** [150 sqm] *Critiques satiriques de l'architecture* (Satirical Cartoons about Architecture)

**1984** [1,500 sqm] *Images et imaginaires d'architecture en Europe; 1830-1980* (Images and magic of architecture – visual representations in Europe, 1830-1980)

Publ.: 436 pages. Approx. 190,000 visitors

**1985** [1,000 sqm] *Nouveaux Plaisirs d'Architecture : le pluralisme de la création en Europe et aux USA depuis 1968* (Post-Modernism in Europe and America Since 1968)

Publ.: 176 pages. Approx. 140,000 visitors

**1988** [1,000 sqm]. *Châteaux Bordeaux : les architectures de la civilisation du vin* (Wine Architecture in the Bordeaux Region)

Publ.: 260 pages. 4 years in 7 cities in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Approx. 400,000 visitors  
European competition + construction of the new wine estate (winery) of Château Pichon-Longueville inaugurated in 1990 in Pauillac, Medoc (near Bordeaux); architects: Jean de Gastines & Patrick Dillon

**1994** [2,800 sqm] *La ville : art et architecture en Europe ; 1870-1993* (The City: Visions by Architects and Artists in Europe, 1870-1993) Paris + Barcelona (CCCB). Publ.: 468 pages. Approx. 400,000 visitors. Co-cur. Alain Guiheux

years as an advisor for a large private company involved in housing construction.

My main job was to organize a 3-day cultural study-trip each trimester in a different European city to introduce the chairman and his 25 top directors to the best examples of housing and urban design. After Algiers, it was my second experience in “cultural communication”. At that time, in Paris, I often visited the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, where I appreciated their provocative exhibitions about art and the very first architectural exhibitions shown in France. They were mainly devoted to pioneer-architects like Gaudi, Horta etc. I found these monographic shows useful but rather academically conceived, and “flat” in their conventional 2D mural layout. So, during my free time at home I initiated some research to develop an alternative approach to architecture exhibitions through a thematic scenario and a 3D scenography. I asked to meet the directors – Mathey & Barré – to present them with the vast iconography I had collected to promote an idealistic concept that was growing in my mind: a hypothetical show focused on the evolution, from 1830 to 1975, of Railway Architecture closely related to the many facets of the so-called Railway Revolution.

### *How did you argue in favour of adopting such a specific approach?*

I argued that this Railway Revolution and its strong impact in many fields of modern society had been – and still was – so powerful, influential and diverse worldwide for 150 years that it was highly appropriate to explore and show – in that context – the pioneering design process of Railway Architecture and Engineering. My idea was to approach and explain this specific creativity through explicit referencing of a large panorama of complementary and contextual realms: technology, economy, politics, town planning, industry, military strategy, sociology, art and so on. The key idea was to investigate and exhibit, for the first time in a museum, a full typology of architecture – in this case the Railway Station and all related concepts – as a multifaceted reflection of modern society, illustrating an innovative multi-disciplinary spectrum of interactions.

### *What was the result of this plea?*

Barré and Mathey's reaction came as a real surprise to me: after further interviews, they offered me a job at the Centre Pompidou, then still under construction and scheduled to open two years later. So, in 1975, I was headhunted to act there as a full-time “advisor for architecture”, to initiate a global strategy, to curate and design exhibitions in this field. I was then 36 years old. This would be my task for the next three decades, until 2005. I am still extremely grateful to them for the confidence they invested in my appointment. This option radically changed my life, and for 30 years it gave me an amazing opportunity to invent – with total freedom and independence – new approaches and proactive concepts. Furthermore, the CP was then the first centre of modern art in Europe to incorporate a large department devoted to architecture and civic design: a unique, powerful and influential place to promote these areas of creativity.

### *How did you initially define your strategy for architecture exhibitions?*

First, I enthusiastically adopted the pioneering ideas initiated by François Barré, who founded the CCI in 1969. One of his political aims was to develop architecture and urbanism as a new cultural field of investigation, information and enjoyment for a very large public. The basic idea was to consider that in a progressive democracy all citizens should know and understand the specific nature and the key challenges of our built environment. So, ideally, they should be able to take part – critically, civically and (even possibly) creatively – in a new participative process for the design of their cities, daily environment and habitat. To achieve this strategic ambition, the exhibitions covering those fields had to be conceived to attract, seduce – a key word for me in that context – and convince a broad public. So



Jourda & Perrandin, social housing, *Domaine de la Terre*, earth estate, 1980–85 // photo J. Dethier

basically the priority was to captivate a large audience through stimulating explorations of architectural and urban issues. If this aim is appropriately achieved – without paternalism, elitism, obscurantism, propaganda or technocracy – it can also stimulate the interest of all concerned professionals. It was clear that these architecture exhibitions were not designed merely to attract the restricted milieu of architects who, at that time, still represented a ghetto isolated from society.

*What kind of ideas did you personally add to develop your own strategy?*

One of them was inspired by a seven-word quotation from Winston Churchill: “society shapes architecture and architecture shapes society”. His statement confirms that our built environment is the physical manifestation of an invisible dual relationship, a system of influences on our daily way of life. So, we should all be aware of the specific dangers or opportunities involved. I am still convinced that the best way to stimulate the curiosity of the public about architecture is to present it in such a critical context. To explore what the main external powers that a society develops to shape architecture are in each specific case and, when finally built, how it affects our environment and social behaviour. To provide citizens with useful keys to capture the full meaning of architecture, this option presupposes the adoption of a broad and critical contextual analysis. And not only – as is too often the case – one restricted only to aesthetic or technical considerations. In short, a contextual approach to architecture is essential to making it really understandable, meaningful and even exciting for the public. Just the opposite attitude to Koolhaas’ ideological statement “Fuck the Context”. When most citizens are not yet concerned about or interested in architecture the best way to stimulate them is to capture their initial interest through a vivid approach related to its contextual components: politics,

economy, society, technology, ecology etc. My quest for a dynamic multi-disciplinary approach led me to choose thematic subjects, and never a monographic one – as too closely related to the glorification of the ego of a single person. I am also still convinced that these contextual and critical ingredients are the most appropriate to developing a captivating scenario that will guarantee an architecture exhibition is socially efficient and memorable.

*Could you illustrate this concept with an example?*

When I had to choose the theme for my next exhibition in 1979, I referred to the most obvious problem society was facing worldwide during the 1970s: the first major Energy Crisis linked to political and economical oil speculation. I underlined the fact – quite obvious but never mentioned before – that modern architecture was heavily and dangerously dependent on fossil energy because all main building materials used (cement, concrete, steel, aluminium, synthetic materials etc.) consumed high levels of energy for their industrial processing. Cement itself is still responsible for 6% to 8% of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> production today. I used that contextual environmental evidence to campaign – to militate – in favour of a universal raw & natural building material that does not require any fossil energy to be transformed and used. So, my exhibition *Down to Earth* was devoted to architecture and housing built with Raw Earth. It was articulated in 3 parts. The first was a world survey of our ancient and vernacular heritage. The second consisted of eloquent – but then ignored – examples of best practice from Cointeraux (French 18th & 19th century architect), Le Corbusier or Wright (both during the 1940s) up to recent pioneers in the USA during the 1970s. The third was an activist plea to regenerate and develop a contemporary ecological architecture using that basic and cheap raw material, both in developing countries and in our western world.

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*So, for your most successful and famous exhibition, you initiated an approach focused on a very hot contemporary socio-economic issue to question a forgotten cultural heritage and to argue ecologically in favour of a new sustainable earthen architecture. Is that correct? And what about your broader approach to architectural history?*

Yes, indeed. Another aspect of my criteria has often been a quest for a trans-historic approach to architecture. Most of my thematic exhibitions provided an opportunity to organically link the past, the present and a prospective future to an inspiring saga. The idea was not to focus on history as such – it would have been inappropriate in a Museum of Modern Art – but to question the past with a critical, modern approach, and so to understand more vividly the present evolution; and finally to extrapolate potential options which could be usefully regenerated during the decades to come. This synergy between history and a prospective future seemed to me essential due to the fact that the ideology of Modernity in architecture and urbanism was coupled for so long during the 20th century with voluntary ignorance and amnesia or a dogmatic rejection of the lessons we can learn from the past and from traditions. Paradoxically, critical history is a new key – among others – for the future, if we can creatively extrapolate its meaning, and carefully avoid the poison of nostalgia. This clearly needs a contextual approach to boost dynamic architecture exhibitions and make them usefully provocative, socially stimulating and efficient in acting as progressive inspiration.

*Concerning the 20 exhibitions you have personally curated and designed – which were among the most successful at the Centre Pompidou, with a cumulated international frequentation as high as 6 million visitors – what is the one you would most like to be remembered as your best socio-cultural achievement?*



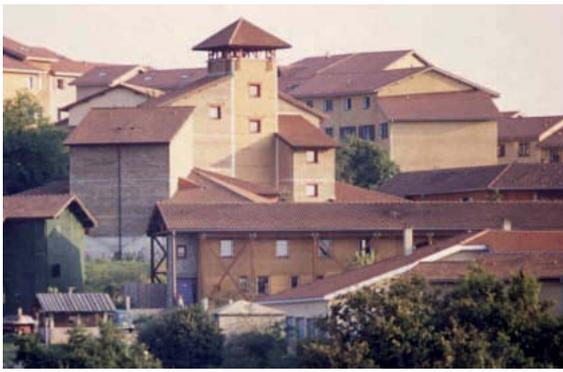
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Exhibition, *All Stations*, 1978 // photo CCI-CGP, Paris

I fluctuate between two of them. I could choose *All Stations [Le Temps des Gares]* because in 1978 it was my first extra-large multi-disciplinary architecture exhibition (1,500 square metres) located on the top floor of the CP, in the Grande Galerie. It is still the most prestigious place in Paris to exhibit major projects focused on modern art & culture, but also the one where the prerequisite condition for its use is the certainty that it will attract at least 150,000 visitors in 75 days. It was the very first time architecture was shown there and so it was really risky to target such a large frequentation. For the very first time for an architectural show, the public response was overwhelming with about 220,000 visitors: an average of 2,900 per day, which was similar to the attendance at the major exhibitions devoted to top modern artists like Magritte or others. After their presentation in Paris the Railway Stations were shown in six European capitals, where they attracted over a million visitors in three years. Finally, due to the impact of the exhibition on the media and decision-makers, the French National Railways (SNCF) seriously improved their strategy regarding historical and new railway stations. Some of them were soon built according to cutting-edge designs: a real progress in terms of civic architecture, urbanism and public service.

But, to answer to your question, my final preference would be for *Down to Earth [Architectures de terre]*, inaugurated in 1981. Because it is my most eco-militant exhibition and the one that gained the most international recognition and exerted the most influence, partly through its extra-long circulation of 16 years on four continents, where it cumulated 3 million visitors.

*What creative options did you adopt regarding the so-called “by-products” related to your architecture exhibitions?*



*Domaine de la terre*, 64 housing units designed by 10 different architects, 1980–85  
 // photo CRATerre, Grenoble



Exhibition, *Down to Earth*, 1981 // photo CCI-CGP, Paris

“By-products” progressively became an important strategic complement to any exhibition: to enlarge their impact socially and geographically. or to keep it alive for a longer period than the relatively short lifetime of a show. Since 1980 I have been convinced that any architecture exhibition that has a militant ambition to change something in our built environment should be closely linked to a full-size permanent demonstration of its purpose. The idea is to simultaneously materialize an architectural program specifically built to demonstrate the feasibility of the ideas promoted in the exhibition. I call this activist process a “passage à l’acte”, a term referring to a shift from theory to practice, demonstrating in full-scale the realism and the efficiency of your ideas. Indeed, I believe it is too easy – and even irresponsible – for an exhibition director to publicly promote architectural or urban strategies without offering clear proof of their effectiveness ... just as any scientist would do.

*How did this ambition manifest itself? How many times did you apply that specific strategy?*

I did it three times. For the first time in 1980, to complement my exhibition *Down to Earth* I initiated the construction of a social housing program of 62 houses and apartment blocks (up to five floors) conceived as an urban eco-district (in the New Town of L’Isle d’Abeau, near Lyon) promoting the use of raw earth as an alternative ecological and natural construction material. The *Domaine de la Terre* [*The Earth Estate*] was inaugurated in 1985 as the first European experience of the modernization of a vernacular building tradition and its adaptation, in a realistic way, to contemporary technological, economic, social and urban needs. The result of this strategy was an award in 1987 from the United Nations (through its Habitat agency)

for a “pilot experimental eco-housing project of major international significance”. The second project was linked in 1988 to my exhibition *Châteaux Bordeaux*. Its aim was twofold: [A] To reveal the amazing architectural heritage of the prestigious wine business which, as such, was nearly unknown or forgotten even in this region. [B] To severely criticize the lack of architectural responsibility and creativity of most owners of these great wine estates since the 1950s, and to initiate a radical process to modernize an ancestral tradition that for centuries had successfully manifested quality dual-management articulating *Great Wine & Great Architecture*. To stimulate such a contemporary renaissance I initiated three European architectural competitions locally and a strategic cultural agreement with one prestigious estate to build a cutting-edge new wine “château” there: Pichon-Longueville, inaugurated in 1989 in Pauillac, Médoc. It was designed by Jean de Gastines (co-author with Shigeru Ban of the new regional Centre Pompidou opened in Metz 2009) and Patrick Dillon. This pilot project would later be recognized for its pioneering impact: it kick-started a new creative wine architecture boom in the Bordeaux region with new wineries built since 2000 by Porzemparc, Nouvel, Botta & others; as well as in Spain – where the exhibition was also presented – with spectacular new buildings, mainly in the Rioja wine region, recently designed by Gehry, Calatrava, Hadid etc.

*Did you devote a similar strategy to the promotion of militant ideas about urban design?*

Yes, indeed. That was one of my goals. My third attempt was linked to the exhibition *Living Bridges* when it was initially staged in 1996 at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Its concept was, once again, based on a double thematic approach: [A] The first “act” was to trace, for the first time, the long international history – from the middle-age up to now – of specific urban bridges and their rich (but then unknown) typology. They combine three functions in a unique and spectacular civic symbiosis: Engineering (by transversing an obstacle), Architecture (housing, retail or other services built, on two to five stories, on both lateral sides of the bridge) and Urbanism (connecting closely and organically two parts of a city previously divided by a major obstacle: a river, urban highway or railway tracks). The most famous archetypes of ancient Living Bridges are still the Ponte Rialto in Venice and the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. [B] Secondly, to extrapolate creatively from this ancestral European and forgotten tradition. What were the lessons to learn from that former multi-functional “Collage” concept to avoid over-consumption of urban land and other disasters related to the contemporary technocratic urban segregation of functions? To me, this heritage could promote an ecological alternative based on three cumulative values: Urban Density, Intensity and Compacity. To find a physical manifestation of the idea promoted by the exhibition I met the British Minister of the Environment (Sir John Gummer) to choose with him the most appropriate site in Central London – on the Thames river – as the location for a new ambitious and spectacular Living Bridge. Its design would be the result of an international competition I proposed to launch with my British partners on the basis of my two previous similar experiences in France.

*What exactly happened then?*

Among the 7 architects invited to submit a realistic project were Libeskind, Krier, Zaha Hadid and Antoine Grumbach. The jury was unable to choose the winner between the two last architects. So, as a tribute to British democracy, I suggested asking the visitors to an exhibition where all the large models were shown to make the final choice. Among those 122,000 visitors (more than 1,300 each day) – the Royal Academy claimed it was the highest frequentation for any architectural exhibition ever held in Britain – 84,000 participated in this vote, and gave 82% of their support to the French project submitted by Grumbach. He became a star in

England overnight. The press was amazingly enthusiastic about the exhibition as well as the future Living Bridge to be built parallel to Waterloo Bridge, at the very core of London. The public's enthusiastic fervour was a stunning endorsement of my opting to combine an exhibition with a competition to materialize the civic design idea promoted by the show in full-size. A property developer paid Grumbach's honorarium during three years (until 2000) to complete the updated and detailed plans to build this very ambitious bridge (50m wide, 300m long and developing 44,000 square metres of built surface). But sadly it never came to fruition because the two boroughs located on each side of the Thames proclaimed irreconcilable politically motivated demands regarding the social nature of the buildings to be built on top of the bridge: one wanted social housing and the other a luxury hotel development. Churchill was right when he said that "society shapes architecture", but he should have added that politicians can also block that process.

*Could you name – with some key words – the very nature and ambition of your ethical engagement to conceive and manage your exhibitions and related projects?*

It would be a subtle balance between Eco-Activism and Civic Seduction, four key words to outline my main convictions. Eco, because an ecological strategy is now essential to save, regenerate or invent our environment. Activism means here a form of militancy to promote ideas and practices able to stimulate the understanding, criticism and improvement of architecture & urbanism. Civic, because the priority of architectural and urban excellence must benefit the collectivity first while promoting Civic Design. And finally, in this specific context Seduction refers to the social ability and power an exhibition must have – intellectually, emotionally and visually – to catch the public's attention and arouse media interest, to formalize progressive ideas promoting civic debate, and ultimately to convince people and decision-makers to adopt them to improve our built environment.

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*Cultural exhibitions have become a large and specific new field for cultural & media communication, as well as an architectural field of creativity in its own right. And they can now capture huge audiences. How do you explain this evolution?*

Indeed, I was lucky to be in the first generation of authors and designers involved in this new creative process. But the many ideas, strategies, design projects, experiences – and their real social impact – cumulated during the last three decades have not yet been analyzed and published as a critical synthesis. Let's hope that a new generation of historians concerned about contemporary culture, media and architecture soon starts to investigate this specific creativity. I transferred all my professional documents to the Centre Pompidou Archives to facilitate such research. I hope – with the help of icam – we will all soon see the development of innovative research in this specific field, and the publication of a stimulating and useful History of (Architectural) Exhibitions as a contribution to avoiding cultural amnesia in this under-explored domain.

*Ulf Grønvd, senior curator, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo*



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Pamphlet for the 6th Australian Architectural Convention, Adelaide, 1956 // image RAIA  
Collection Architecture Museum, UniSA

## icam australasia

*Christine Garnaut*

Connecting Architectural and Design  
Collections in Australia and New  
Zealand

icam has spread its influence to Australasia following the formation of the regional network, icamAustralasia, which brings together institutions and organisations in Australia and New Zealand holding architectural and design collections. Members involved in the network include representatives of collections held in universities, state libraries and state archives and associated with the professional body, the Australian Institute of Architects. This article provides a brief introduction to the network's establishment, its membership, meetings and exhibitions.

### **Adelaide 2010: establishing an icam regional network in Australasia**

Although architecture museums and archives like those established in the northern hemisphere are rare in Australia and New Zealand, for different periods of time a number of Australasian institutions have been building up collections of architectural, design and allied records.<sup>1</sup> Until October 2010 representatives associated with these collections had not gathered formally. To redress that situation and to introduce the idea of forming a regional network of icam, in October 2010 the Architecture Museum in the School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia (UniSA), Adelaide, South Australia, organised and hosted the Australian architectural records seminar. Representatives of nine institutions and organizations attended; others expressed interest but were unable to attend on the day. Attendees exchanged information about their collections, policies, activities and other matters of concern. They gave short presentations addressing topics that included:

- . their setting (state library, government or professional organization, university)
- . key client groups and how clients use the collection
- . annual enquiry and visitor numbers
- . source(s) of funding

membership



Perspective view, National War Memorial and Dominion Museum and Art Gallery, 1930  
 // image University of Auckland Library

1 For an overview of the situation regarding collections in Australasia, see Christine Garnaut: *Responding to Circumstance: challenges, opportunities and directions in architectural archives collection policy in (South) Australia* (2010). Available online at:

[http://www.icam-web.org/data/media/cms\\_binary/original/1284051109.pdf](http://www.icam-web.org/data/media/cms_binary/original/1284051109.pdf)

2 For reports, see University of Newcastle Archives: <http://uoncc.wordpress.com/2011/11/04/icam-australasia-meeting-melbourne-2011-report/>; Architecture Museum, UniSA:

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/artarchitecturedesign/architecturemuseum/default.asp>

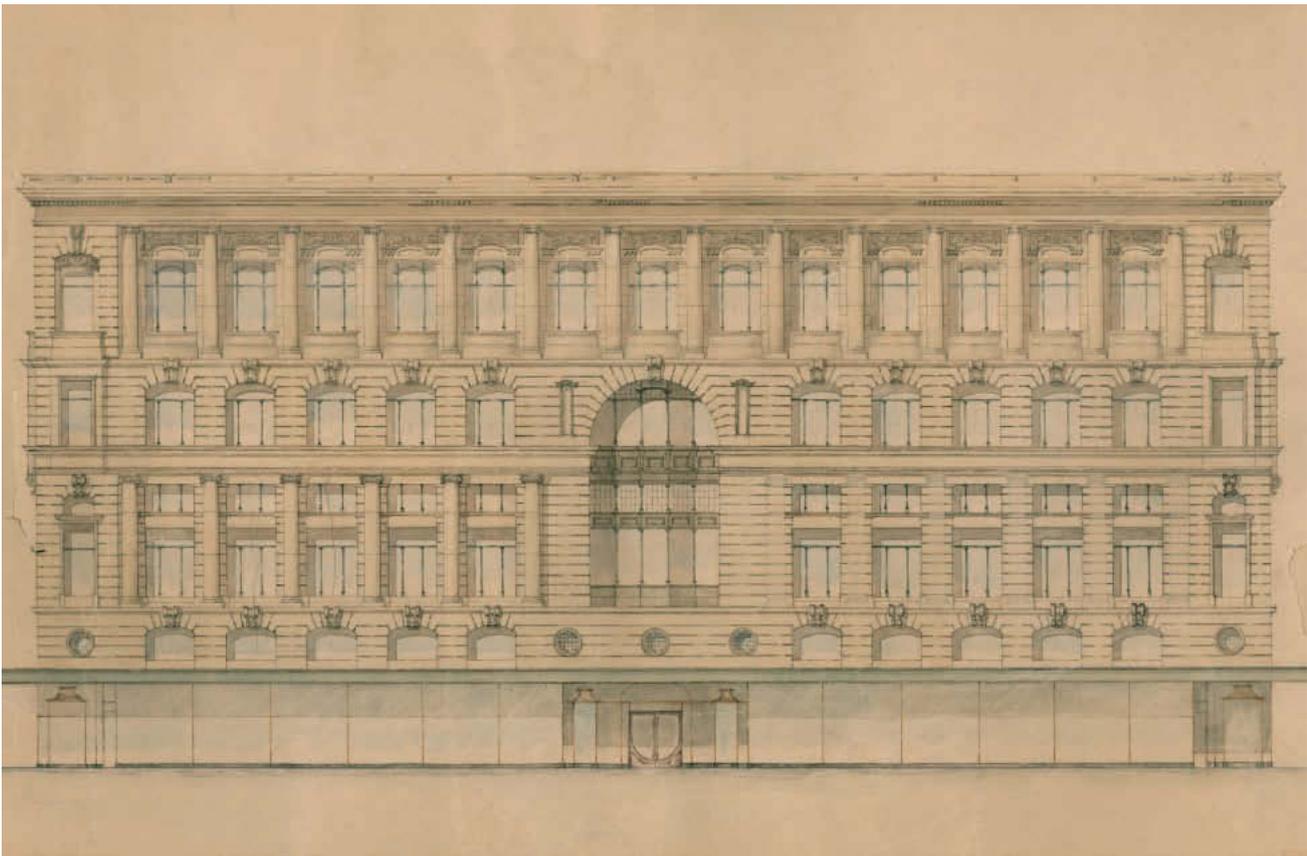
- . collection foci and limits, and how these are determined
- . main issues and matters of concern
- . current initiatives, for example, collecting strategies, digitization projects
- . proposed or potential future collection directions.

Information was also presented about **icam** and its aims, objectives and activities. The participants were keen to continue meeting on an annual basis, and to establish a regional network under the auspices of **icam**. The network was formalised subsequently as **icamAustralasia**.

### **Melbourne 2011: icamAustralasia reconvenes**

**icamAustralasia** reconvened in Melbourne in October 2011 at a seminar co-hosted by RMIT University, the State Library of Victoria and the University of Melbourne Archives.<sup>2</sup> Representatives of six of the institutions and organizations represented at the Adelaide meeting attended, along with an additional four from other institutions. The one-day program was split into two parts and venues – RMIT University and State Library Victoria – giving participants the opportunity to view items from the collections at both locations. The discussions at the 2011 meeting focused on topics related to the question: What do we want to achieve and what are we able to achieve as a group, bearing in mind the **icam** charter? The following objectives from the **icam** charter were used as conversation starters:

- . Preserve the architectural record
- . Raise the quality and protection of the built environment
- . Foster the study of architectural history in the interest of future practice
- . Stimulate the public appreciation of architecture
- . Promote the exchange of information and professional expertise.



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Alternative elevation, L. Gooden, Charles Moore & Co. building, Victoria Square, Adelaide, 1913  
// photo Collection, State Library of South Australia

Two invited presentations focused on specific ways in which *icamAustralasia* could support the first and last of these goals – preserving the architectural record, and promoting information exchange and professional expertise. One presentation, by Professor Miles Lewis, Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, outlined a ‘Proposal for a short course for curators: collecting and interpreting architectural drawings’. The other, by Mr Peter Johnson, architect and heritage consultant, and a member of the Australian Institute of Architects National Heritage Taskforce, suggested a ‘Proposal to establish a process for Institute [Australian Institute of Architects] State and Territory Chapters to more effectively assist cultural institutions to collect and archive documents of notable Australian architects’. Both presentations provoked considerable discussion, with the short course for curators considered suitable in conjunction with a future *icamAustralasia* meeting.<sup>3</sup>

### **Architectural and Design Exhibitions**

Exhibitions have been discussed at both meetings of *icamAustralasia*. Members of the network recognise that they are an important medium for promoting the appreciation of architecture and design and for interpretation, including of styles, trends, themes and the works of individuals and practices. Additionally, they are a means of publicising the scope and focus of collections and of engaging audiences of various ages through different media. The physical and financial resources of *icamAustralasia* members are such that most have neither a dedicated gallery to present exhibitions nor funding directed specifically towards a regular exhibition program.<sup>4</sup> Despite these constraints, one point of discussion at the 2011 meeting was the fact that the formation of *icamAustralasia* creates opportunities for the

future for members to develop exhibitions that could draw on each other's collections, as well as collaborative exhibitions that could be presented either in traditional formats or designed for the online environment.

To date, members of *icam*Australasia have organised and contributed to exhibitions in different ways. Some partner with galleries, and either curate exhibitions themselves in those spaces or engage independent curators. In 2011 the Architecture Museum at UniSA joined with the South Australian practice Russell & Yelland Architects and the Kerry Packer Civic Gallery at UniSA to present *Designing for Communities: the Civic Architecture of Russell & Yelland Architects*. Curated by professional historian and Architecture Museum affiliate Alison McDougall, the exhibition drew on the Museum's extensive Russell & Yelland collection. It explored, in part, the ways in which the practice worked with local people in metropolitan and regional South Australia, as well as interstate, to design buildings that met community needs and budgets during and after World War 2. A monograph on Russell & Yelland authored by McDougall and produced by the Museum was published earlier in the year.

In 2011–2012 the Public Record Office Victoria presented *Missing the Mark: The Melbourne Landmark Ideas Competition 1978* in a dedicated exhibition space in the Old Treasury Building, Melbourne. The competition solicited designs for the Jolimont railway yards on the banks of Melbourne's Yarra River where Federation square now stands, and the exhibition drew on the diverse range of international competition entries received for this state government sponsored project.

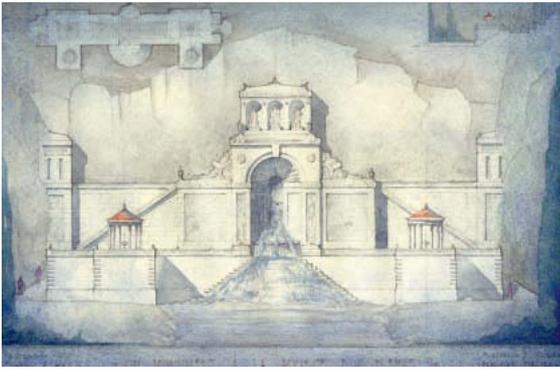
Harriet Edquist, Director, RMIT Design Archives at RMIT University, and Tansy Curtin, Senior Curator, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo in regional Victoria, co-curated *The Lost Modernist: Michael O'Connell* at the Bendigo Art Gallery in 2011–12.

A book on McConnell by Edquist was published concurrently. The exhibition drew on several collections, including the RMIT Design Archives, in examining the work of British/Australian textile artist Michael O'Connell. Born in Cumbria, England in 1898, after seventeen years in Australia (1920–37), O'Connell returned to the UK where he was a key figure in contemporary textile design and worked with renowned textile manufacturer Heals. He was commissioned in 1951 to produce the celebrated Festival of Britain wall hangings. A previous RMIT Design Archives collaboration was with the Melbourne Museum for the *Zmood: Designing Holdens* exhibition (July–August 2010). Curated by Ian Wong of the RMIT Industrial Design program, the exhibition displayed the works of GM Holden's first Australian Head of Design, Phillip Zmood; items were selected from his collection held by the Design Archives. Some *icam*Australasia members contribute collection items to permanent or semi-permanent displays within their institutions. For example, the State Library of Victoria (SLV) has architectural and landscape architecture drawings in the Dome Galleries exhibition, *The Changing Face of Victoria*. Architectural drawings and photographs of the renowned 19th century Block Arcade are featured as well as an architectural drawing of the proposed façade of the State Library of Victoria (Joseph Reed, 1854), and various designs by prominent Australian garden designer Edna Walling (1895–1973). The State Library of South Australia includes architectural material on its SA Memory website and in its *Treasures Wall* exhibition highlighting historical and contemporary 'treasures' across the collections. Amongst its special architectural items are drawings by local practices Woods Bagot (now Woodhead) for the locally admired St Peter's Anglican cathedral, and by Jackman Gooden (now JPE) for a range of buildings in and around Adelaide.

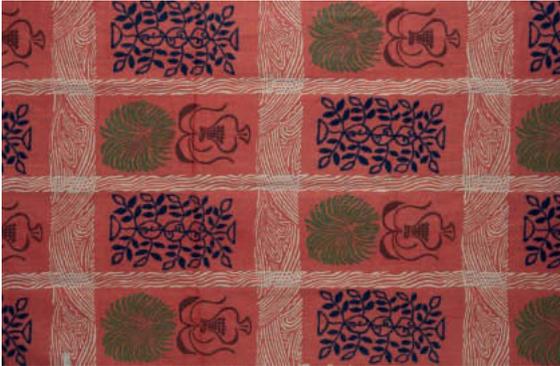
The Fryer Library, University of Queensland, features online exhibitions showcasing its holdings. One, *Brisbane between the Wars: History by Design*, tells the city's history through architectural drawings of houses of the interwar period. The Coal River Working Party associated with the University of Newcastle Archives actively digitizes and exhibits via its website maps, photographs and other items related to

3 Several presentations from the meetings held in Adelaide and in Melbourne are available on the website of the Architecture Museum, UniSA: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/artarchitecturedesign/architecturemuseum/default.asp>

4 This situation will change in the near future for one member, the RMIT Design Archives, which is moving into a purpose-designed building complete with gallery within the RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne.



Elevation, *Un Monument à la Source d'un Fleuve*, 1932  
 // image Architecture Museum, UniSA



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Fabric, Michael O'Connell for Heal's, *Chrysanthemum*, 1950s  
 // photo Margund Sallowsky, courtesy of DACS

historical aspects of the Newcastle and Hunter Valley regions of New South Wales. Several icamAustralasia network members loan items from their collections for exhibitions. Sometimes these are curated for the institution's own gallery or for other city, regional or interstate galleries; sometimes they are travelling exhibitions. They may be associated with events like the launch of a book. The photographic exhibition *As Modern as Tomorrow* (2011–12) at the SLV included photographs by Wolfgang Sievers and Mark Strizic of buildings by Victorian modernist architectural firm Grounds Romberg & Boyd. The Library's 2009–10 exhibition, *'til you drop: shopping – a Melbourne history*, displayed a 'Design proposal for the Royal Arcade' (Charles Webb, 1869) and architectural drawings of shops in several Melbourne suburbs. *Australian Modern: The architecture of Stephenson & Turner* (2004) featured drawings of the modernist firm Stephenson & Turner and was held in conjunction with the launch of a book by the same title.

The Architecture Archive, Architecture & Planning Library, University of Auckland (UoA), provided the majority of items for the exhibition *Long live the modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904–1984* curated by School of Architecture & Planning academics Julia Gatley and Bill MacKay and first shown in 2008 at the Gus Fisher Gallery, UoA. The exhibition coincided with the launch of a book edited by Gatley; it toured to four other galleries in New Zealand. Drawings in the exhibition *Group Architects: towards a New Zealand Architecture* (October–November 2010), curated by Gatley who published a book by the same title, were sourced predominantly from the Architecture Archive's holdings. Similarly, University of Canterbury (NZ) academic Ian Lochhead drew on items from the Archive for his 2009 exhibition *New Zealand Architecture in Perspective*. Both exhibitions showed at the Gus Fisher Gallery, UoA.



W. D. Wilson, the Mallite house (1953–54), Milford, Auckland, 1955 // photo UoA Library

icamAustralasia formed as a result of the encouragement and support of the icam Board, and particularly its secretary Mariet Willenge. On behalf of my Australasian colleagues I would like to express our appreciation to Mariet and the icam Board for sowing the seed of an idea which, as this article suggests, has flowered into a fruitful network.

The author thanks icamAustralasia colleagues for their assistance with information about exhibitions, and for supplying the images that accompany this article.

*Christine Garnaut, convenor, icamAustralasia*

Several exhibitions are in preparation by icamAustralasia members. They include one by the SLV for 2013 to celebrate the centenary of its internationally acclaimed Domed Reading Room. The exhibition, curated by RMIT Design Archives Director Harriet Edquist, will focus on the architectural development of the library from its foundation in 1854 to the completion of the reading room in 1913. The Architecture Archive, UoA, has several drawings earmarked for the forthcoming *Cottage to Cutting Edge—Kiwi Prefab* exhibition at Puke Ariki Museum, New Plymouth, in association with Victoria University, Wellington. With the assistance of state government funding, the Architecture Museum at UniSA has commissioned seven local and interstate contemporary artists to use the Museum's collections as inspiration for new works to be shown in the *build me a city* 2012 exhibition at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide during 'A Season of Architecture' to be hosted by the Australian Institute of Architects (SA Chapter).

### **Future Prospects**

Although in its infancy, icamAustralasia is proving to be an important network. Members have identified, met and established modes of communication with others involved in conserving and promoting collections of architectural and design records, and have access to colleagues who share their professional, academic and community-based interests. Like their endeavours associated with the collections for which they are responsible, they are engaged in building a network for the future, one that is positioning itself to support and advocate for an area that is under-represented in the cultural collections sector in Australasia.



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icam15 participants // photo Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine

## icam 15

Paris, June 2010

It was with a great sense of anticipation that the delegates for icam15 gathered for the first time in the Palais de Chaillot in the centre of Paris, looking over the Seine to the Eiffel Tower. Anticipation at the prospect of being introduced to the new Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine by those who created it, as well as looking ahead to absorbing and debating a stimulating programme with friends and colleagues, old and new. Beautifully organised by Corinne Bélier, Hélène Perrel, David Peyceré and their team at La Cité, the conference was preceded by the customary tour, this time to the exceptional Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier and to Alvar Aalto's eminently habitable Maison Carré. The first full visits of the programme made a stimulating start with Le Corbusier's Maison La Roche and its disconcerting ramp, and, on quite a different scale, with Breuer, Nervi and Zehrfuss's newly renovated UNESCO headquarters. Easily living up to the

glamorous standards of previous conferences, the formal opening event at La Cité was an elegant affair, providing delegates with an evening of envious exploration of the many new galleries and displays created by our colleagues. A strong series of formal presentations and discussions was begun by icam President Dietmar Steiner, chairing a session tackling the highly topical issue of merging museums, with examples of where architectural institutions have come together to form new institutions in London, Calgary and Rome. Next up was a session on the 'icon and the star', chaired by Ulf Grønvoold, which examined the impact of the museum as an architectural icon, with examples including the Getty Research Institute and the new Acropolis Museum. Invited speaker and former Mayor Jacques Godfrain brought engineering structures into the debate with a lively presentation on France's Millau motorway viaduct. Moving on to the issues surrounding

collecting architectural archives, Sofie De Caligny chaired a stimulating series of short presentations and debate with speakers from Europe, North America and Australia. Next up, Irena Murray oversaw papers on the role of the book as an object and the issues surrounding its presentation. Invited speaker Joe Rohde, Senior Vice President of Walt Disney Imagineering, shook up proceedings, giving an alternative perspective on 'creating narrative space', and making us all wish we too could have the title of 'imagineer'! The final session, chaired by Marc Treib in the wonderful setting of the Musée d'Orsay, examined the role of written texts in exhibitions. A lively, even slightly heated, discussion ensued on the respective values and roles of the voice of the curator and the voice of the public in a time of rapidly changing new media experiences.

Delegates were also enlightened on the richness of French architectural collections by a history presented by Corinne Béliet, an introduction to the FRAC Centre collections by Marie-Ange Brayer, and a visit to the Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XX siècle, home to David Peyceré. In addition, Anne Ruelland led the Education Group on an exploration of the issues and opportunities of exhibition-based learning programmes.

Like the sessions, the programme of visits was strong and strove to work with, rather than against, the challenges of the Paris traffic. Aply led by architectural historians and guides Mary Vaughan-Johnson and Andrew Ayers, the tours took in both recent urban development and historical architectural icons.

The Masséna district gave us a rich variety of contemporary urban development, all executed since 1993 as part of the 'Seine Rive Gauche'. The Menier Chocolate factory in Noisiel, built by Jules Saulnier in 1871–72 and renovated by Reichen and Robert in the late 1980s, was architecturally fascinating, but disappointingly lacking in actual chocolate! The Church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Consolation in La

Raincy, designed by Auguste and Gustave Perret in 1922–23, was a highlight with its outstanding construction and space. After the Saint-Geneviève Library by Henri Labrouste in 1839–51, two more major highlights remained.

The visit to the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts provided insight into both the collections and the building where so many great architects took their first tentative steps in design. Our final stop, forming a magnificent if slightly intimidating venue for the General Assembly, was Oscar Niemeyer's headquarters for the French Communist Party from 1968. We have seen our icam Board seated on many impressive and distinctive stages, but this one was an image not easily forgotten! Our final dinner could not have been more Parisian as we glided down the Seine on a bateau-mouche, admiring the unique perspective on the architecture we had been enjoying all week foregrounded by large groups of riverbank sunbathers relaxing with their vin rouge.

For a fortunate few, the next day saw us whisked through bright sunshine and calm countryside on the TGV for the post-conference tour of Lyon, and Le Corbusier's masterpieces of Firminy and La Tourette Convent. Stops on the way took in the World Heritage Site of Ledoux's Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans, and the 16th century high gothic of the Royal Monastery of Brou in Bourge-en-Bresse where, in a first for icam, we got caught up in an art heist, but were sent on our way after a police search of our bus found nothing!

*Rebecca Bailey, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh*



icam Board, Rotterdam // photo Monika Platzer

## secretary general's report

Board meetings in Frankfurt and North Rhine-Westphalia in February, and Rotterdam in September, 2011

icam Board had two meetings after the very successful conference in Paris in June 2010. Elsewhere in this issue of *icamprint* a report is given of the conference. The first meeting was, as usual, in Frankfurt and Gelsenkirchen, Germany, the venues of the next conference. The second was at the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, to discuss the future of *icam*.

It was in the new setting, with new board members, that we went to Frankfurt, to the Deutsches Architektur Museum DAM that will be, together with the M:AI, the host for our conference in 2012. Of course we made interesting trips to possible places to visit during the conference. So we were able to see the impressive new European Central Bank building, still under construction, and the old market halls in restoration to become part of the ECB complex. We visited several other buildings and sites, such as the IG

Farben building, now part of the university, and the Ernst May House. It is difficult to make a choice from all these places of such significant historical, political and architectural interest. In the North Rhine-Westphalia region, the second venue for next conference, our hosts from the M:AI also showed us the possibilities that this area can offer our members. We visited the world famous Zollverein, the cultural hotspot made out of the mine industry buildings and sites, and also Insel Hombroich, a most impressive place for art and architecture.

M:AI, the Museum of Architecture and Engineering Art, is an institute without a collection or an exhibition space but with an extensive programme. With a concept of mobility, they keep moving to where art and engineering art can be experienced and discussed. We saw their exhibition about the development of cities along the river Rhine in a former building of the Reichsbahn-

direktion in Cologne. We all can learn from the way this institute works! Both venues promise a great deal for our conference.

Besides the tours, serious business had our attention. We discussed the themes for the conference sessions. As always, we try to find subjects related to the places where we are. In Germany, for example, it will be 'reconstruction' in the broadest sense of the word.

An ever recurrent topic is that of the finances. Our sponsor of previous years, Zumtobel, will end its sponsorship at the end of 2011. It is a pity because thanks to this support we now have a sound financial basis, but to keep this we need to find new sponsors. The board is, of course, doing the utmost to find one/some.

Thanks to many reminders, fortunately most of the members paid their fees. But another point, also related to the finances, is the official status of **icam**. Increasing numbers of members need a fiscal number to be able to pay the yearly fee. As **icam** has no fixed address – like other cultural institutions, such as ICOM or ICOMOS (where the secretariat and its finances are based with the Secretary General and the Treasurer of the moment) – this presents some challenges, but a solution is underway. This is important because we would sorely miss the income.

Again, **icam** has attracted interest from different places in the world. New members keep on attracting our attention. So, with joy, the board has accepted ten new members (see appendix). We hope and expect that the six individual members will be able to change the membership into an institutional one. This, because **icam** is a body for institutions, more than for individuals.

The board is happy with the activities of our members, and limited funds are available to support **icam** members' activities in the future.

There is an active education group that held a successful meeting in Rome in September. The MAXXI museum was the host. The programme was dense

but important. We will hear more of this group during the conference.

Thanks to the Architecture Museum of South Australia, a new group was formed, the **icam**Australasia. And new members are the result. As Australia is far away, and finding possibilities to come over to conferences is not always easy, it is important that **icam** has a good foothold in this part of the world with this active member, which organizes meetings to discuss the subjects that preoccupy all institutions.

### **Strategic Discussion**

In September 2011 the Board came together in Rotterdam at the NAI for a strategic discussion about the future of **icam**. At regular board meetings we don't have time or an opportunity to go farther than the normal business, so with the new board we found the time to step back a bit and look forward to what our aims for the years to come could be.

Thinking about **icam** and what **icam** can do for its members, we realized that we can't prescribe what members should do, nor can we influence the policy of the members' institutions. Our aim and ambition is to be the opinion leader in our field and to address all major topics.

To achieve this, we have several tools: **icam** website, **icam**print, Conferences, Regional and thematic groups. The function of these tools, and how the members can profit from these tools were the subject of 36 hours of heavy but inspiring discussions. The board will inform members of the outcome of our discussions.

It was a happy coincidence that the NAI, which opened this autumn after a major renovation, organized an expert meeting with the title 'Rethinking the Institute'. After our meeting where we were 'rethinking **icam**' and also 're-thinking the function of an architectural museum' it was stimulating to discuss our thoughts with other experts. During a Diner parlant such as the use, value and function of architectural drawings in (permanent) exhibitions came up. On

the always difficult issue of acquisition policy, the NAI adopts a special position with the idea of not collecting individual architects' work but concentrating on themes. A method to think about and to discuss for all of our members. It is also new for institutes to be providing a platform by functioning as venues, which can increase opportunities to attract an audience.

These discussions were very useful in further sharpening our ideas about the future of **icam**.

*Mariet Willinge, secretary general, icam*



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Exhibition, *Martin Elsaesser*, DAM, Frankfurt, 2009 // photo Uwe Dettmar, Frankfurt

## icam 16

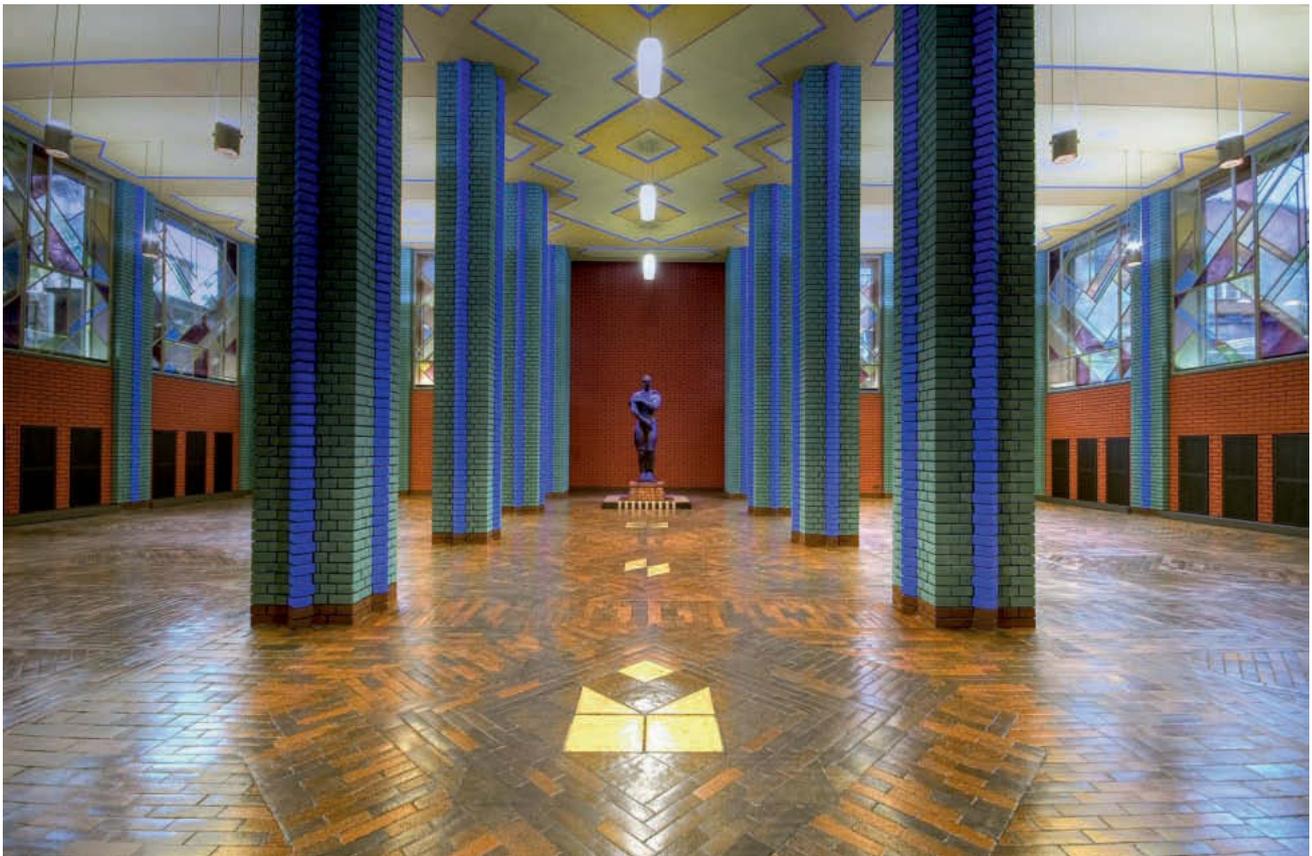
Frankfurt / Rhine-Ruhr Metropolis 2012

icam 16 in September 2012 will have no less than three hosts. DAM Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt, M:AI Museum für Architektur und Ingenieurkunst NRW in Gelsenkirchen, and the Department of Architecture of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, are hoping for a large turnout at the first icam conference in Germany. It kicks-off on 1 September 2012 in Frankfurt with the pre-tour and initial sessions on the following days. On 5 September it continues in Cologne and the cities of Essen and Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr region. The post-conference from 7 to 11 September takes participants to the capital city, Berlin, and surroundings.

### **icam in Frankfurt**

The first venue for all those attending will be the DAM Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt. The institute, which was founded in 1979, has an international focus and primarily addresses contemporary architecture.

The museum building, a neoclassical villa dating from 1912, was converted in the early 1980s according to a design by Oswald Mathias Ungers. Formerly a residential building, it was completely gutted and, featuring the “Haus im Haus” (building within a building) in the middle, was transformed into a building that serves to communicate architecture by means of programmes. The first exhibition was held in DAM in 1984, and marked the beginning of the development of the Frankfurter Museumsufer, the string of museums lining the banks of the River Main, with which the banking and commercial center was able to set new cultural accents. Today, DAM is still a municipal museum of the City of Frankfurt. It is primarily seen as a lively venue for changing exhibitions, series of lectures, and symposiums, but from the outset it has also attempted to build up a collection. This has now grown to more than 200,000 plans and drawings and



Peter Behrens, Farbwerke Hoechst administration building, Frankfurt-Hoechst, 1920–25  
 // photo Infraserv GmbH & Co. Höchst KG

around 1,250 models, and includes 50 more or less complete archives, among them those of Gottfried Böhm, the only German architect to date to have been awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize. Only a few months after the official founding of DAM in January 1979, its director at the time, Heinrich Klotz, attended the first *icam* conference in Helsinki. As such, 33 years of DAM also stand for 33 years of *icam* and membership of *icam*.

### The Sessions

Out of the total of five sessions envisaged for the conference agenda, three will be held in Frankfurt. Parallel to the exhibition *The Architectural Model—Tool, Fetish, Small Utopia* being held in DAM, what could be more appropriate than offering a meeting on models? The session *Conserving Models* (Chairs: Barry Bergdoll, Corinne Belier) aims at dialog between curators, conservators and historians. Collections of modern

architecture models are faced with a whole set of new conservation issues. They present material challenges akin to those of modern sculpture. The session seeks to focus specifically on issues of model conservation seen from any combination of historical, material and philosophical approaches. The second session is dedicated to *Reconstruction* (Chair: Wilfried Nerdinger). It was only with the emergence of modern architecture and the preservation of historical monuments around 1900 that reconstruction became a sensitive issue. The session questions the framework laid down in the 1964 Venice Charter for dealing with historical building fabric, which to a large extent made reconstruction a taboo, calling for a distinct difference between old and new. The session also aims to reflect on Modernist ideas as reflected in the interpretation and significance of reconstruction in other cultures.

The third session will be conceived as a roundtable discussion, and engages with *Strategies* (Chairs: Dietmar Steiner, Mirko Zardini). The character of a typical architecture museum is difficult, if not impossible, to identify and define. With the advent of Modernism and the birth of the architecture exhibition, what began with the collection of architecture documents and models in the 18th and 19th centuries became a public statement promoting new lifestyles. However the 1980s testified to a renewed larger interest in the discipline, history, and theory of architecture, and instigated the emergence of innovative, multifaceted architecture museums and institutions with a more comprehensive strategy for social and cultural communication. Today, global ecological and financial crises, in addition to increasingly digital environments, have made it necessary to rethink the architecture museum as an institution. The session will center on



Building site at the former wholesale fruit and vegetable market by M. Elsaesser, 1926–28, for the ECB headquarters by Coop Himmelb(l)au, Frankfurt // photo Monika Platzer

understanding these new conditions, and reflect on the current cultural position and the strategies needed for the architecture museum to maintain an effective critical role.

### **Frankfurt and Surrounding Region**

The sight-seeing program in and around Frankfurt starts with the pre-tour to the Taunus hills nearby, to the Rheingau region. One main stop will be the former Farbwerke Hoechst administration building, an outstanding example of expressionist architecture. After that it takes us to the villas in Kronberg and Königstein, villages discovered by the privileged few back in the 19th century. The German Empress Victoria, a daughter of Queen Victoria of England, chose Kronberg to live in when she was widowed, and had Friedrichshof Castle built in neo-Gothic style according to a design by the architect Eberhard von Ihne (1889–1894). The 1901 Art Nouveau villa by the

architect Joseph Maria Olbrich, Gans House (1929–31) by Peter Behrens, who created a classical Modernist residential building, and Rang House (1960–64) by Richard Neutra, in which the original client still lives today and which can be seen as a virtually unadulterated example of a US-style residence, are all in the vicinity.

For the Sunday, the day **icam16** officially opens, the focus is on the New Frankfurt. Between 1925 and 1930 the city completed an ambitious housing project. Under the supervision of Ernst May, in just a few years 12,000 apartments were built that were intended not only to satisfy basic needs but to ensure higher living standards. Standardization was established to enable low-cost construction. The itinerary includes the district of Praunheim and the Römerstadt development with the Ernst May House, which boasts the original Frankfurter Küche by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky.



Hans Pölzig, IG Farben headquarters, Frankfurt, 1928–29 // photo DAM, Frankfurt

The former wholesale fruit and vegetable market Grossmarkthalle, was part of the plans for the New Frankfurt. It was built in 1928 in a period of just 24 weeks according to a design by Martin Elsaesser. Today it is one of Frankfurt's biggest building sites. Integrating the old market hall, by 2013 the headquarters of the European Central Bank will be housed here. The Austrian architects Coop Himmelb(l)au are responsible for the design. In the evening, the official reception to mark the opening of icam16 will be held in the "Kaisersaal" of the "Römer". The space has served as the Frankfurt City Hall for over 600 years, for a long time it was also where the German Kaiser was elected, and as such has to be the building with the richest history in the city.

For the next day there are plans for guided tours of the architecture model exhibition in DAM, a visit to the archives, and an excursion to the surrounding district. The Museumsufer

on the banks of the River Main boasts a whole host of outstanding collections and architectural highlights, including the Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Richard Meier, 1982–85) and the Städel, where a new underground extension (Schneider + Schumacher) is due to open in early 2012. The church St. Bonifatius (1926–32), a reinforced concrete structure with clinker cladding, is not far away. Though he was a pioneering church architect, Martin Weber is not particularly well known. Like his teacher Dominikus Böhm he created monumental, highly dramatic church buildings. Weber's estate is on display in the DAM archive, where plans and photographs of the construction stage create a better impression of the church.

The third and final conference day in Frankfurt sees sessions and sight-seeing moved to Campus Westend at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University and to the central banking district with

its high-rises. The first construction stage between 2001 and 2008 saw the emergence of the new campus around the former IG Farben headquarters (Hans Poelzig, 1928–31), and featuring a lecture theater center (Ferdinand Heide), the House of Finance (Kleihues + Kleihues) and other faculty buildings. After 1945 Poelzig's buildings, which were left unscathed in the War, served as the headquarters for the US armed forces in Europe. Following their departure, and after refurbishment work and the dismantling of the military installations (Dissing + Weiting, 1998–2001), the university was able to move into the nine-storey building – which is basically a steel frame construction elaborately clad with travertine.

The Frankfurt cityscape is dominated by the central banking district and its high-rises. The tallest, the Commerzbank Tower (Foster and Partners, 1994–97), soars 300 meters towards the sky. It



Zollverein World Heritage Site, Essen // photo Thomas Willemsen

was not just the enormous height that caused a sensation, but also the winter gardens on every 9th floor. The final session will hopefully be held in the high-rise, where Frankfurt will bid farewell to the icam members above the roofs of the city.

### **icam in North Rhine-Westphalia**

On the fourth day, the M:AI Museum für Architektur und Ingenieurkunst will extend a warm welcome to North Rhine-Westphalia. Germany's most densely-populated federal state is dominated by extremely varying countryside and structures: prospering big cities along the Rhine in the west, agricultural regions in the east, and the Ruhr region in the middle, once Europe's biggest coal and steel producing center. For thirty years now this area in particular, whose appearance was especially influenced by the economic trend, has been experiencing profound structural

changes. Over 50 cities and municipalities are attempting to realign themselves, to grow together as a metropolitan region and, mindful of their own history, create a new identity. By visiting extremely different places the M:AI intends to present North Rhine-Westphalia's diverse faces to the conference delegates.

The M:AI was founded in 2005 as a mobile forum for presenting and reflecting on architecture and engineering. It does not have a permanent exhibition building, but makes guest appearances in different places instead. Since 2007 its work has focused on exhibitions showcasing architecture, engineering, urban development and landscape planning. The M:AI is financed by the Ministry of Economics, Energy, Construction, Living and Transport of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.



Raimund Abraham, House for Musicians, Hombroich, 2006–10 // photo M:AI Museum für Architektur und Ingenieurkunst NRW

### Cologne and the Hombroich Museum Island near Düsseldorf

Cologne will be the first stop in North Rhine-Westphalia. In March 2009, the building housing the city's Historical Archive collapsed as a result of improperly conducted work on the extension of the subway system. 90% of the archive's contents were buried and sodden – 65,000 documents dating as far back as the year 922, 26 km of shelf space full of files, 104,000 maps and plans, as well as 818 estates and collections. A rescue operation began the likes of which had never been seen before, and by August 2011 most of the lightly to badly damaged documents had been recovered and transferred to 19 temporary repositories. Initial cleaning was carried out on site during the salvage work, after which the exhibits were taken for freeze-drying before being thawed again in a vacuum for the restoration work. Work on the collection will take decades. A state-of-

the-art restoration center has been set up in a former furniture warehouse, where the conference delegates can form their own opinion of the setting, and discuss the unusual situation with the archivists and restorers. This makes Cologne a suitable place for the fourth session of the *icam* conference, the theme of which is *Archives in Transition* (Chair: Laura Tatum). The archives of architecture museums are currently realigning themselves. Some institutions are taking advantage of the economic moment to build their collections. Other institutions are focusing on breaking down the boundaries between archives and their public, between historical moments and the current one, between paper and digital materials. Many repositories are rebuilding, re-framing and re-branding their collections: de-accessioning materials to redefine a collection's focus; networking with like-minded institutions to create larger, collaborative resources; making

collections more accessible online by crowd-sourcing knowledge. After Cologne, the next stop is the Museumsinsel Hombroich with the neighboring former NATO missile base. An idiosyncratic concept by the art collector Karl-Heinz Müller has brought together art, architecture and nature in a dialog with one another. The extensive island setting features exhibition buildings, large sculptures, and studios. Internationally famous artists and experts live and work on the former missile base. It was Karl-Heinz Müller's aim to give architects an opportunity here to create edifices that reflected their very own understanding of what architecture is – small manifestos of contemporary architecture. To date, Tadao Ando's art and exhibition building for the Langen Foundation has emerged. Katsuhito Nishikawa has created a walk-in sculpture similar to an amphitheater, Per Kirkeby the *3 Kapellen* (2002). In 2009 Alvaro Siza



Foyer of the Musiktheater by Werner Ruhnau, with a relief by Yves Klein, Gelsenkirchen // photo Monika Platzer



Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff, Sanssouci, Potsdam, 1745–47



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Kazuyo Semi, Ryue Nishizawa, SANAA building, Folkwang University of the Arts, 2006 // photo Thomas Mayer



Reitermann & Sassenroth, Chapel of Reconciliation, Berlin, 1990–2000

completed his *Forum for Spatial Thinking*, while Raimund Abraham has designed the *House for Musicians*, the shell of which has been finished.

### The Ruhr Region

The second conference day in North Rhine-Westphalia takes delegates to the MIR, the Musiktheater im Revier in Gelsenkirchen. This musical theater opened in 1959 and is one of the most significant postwar theater buildings. According to the architect Werner Ruhnau (who was born in 1922), “an open society needs open forms of theater”. Ruhnau created the theater as a total work of art in a creative dialog between architecture, art, and technology. In the late 1950s, numerous artists, among them Norbert Kricke, Jean Tinguely and Robert Adams worked on the construction in the spirit of a medieval cooperative. Yves Klein (1928–62) created his perhaps greatest work in the form of the design of the

wall in the foyer: a monochrome blue relief measuring 7 x 20 meters. Theater lives off its audience, and as such the small MIR building is a suitable location for the fifth session (Chair: Rebecca Bailey), which – taking as its motto *Is there anybody out there?* – addresses the topic of visitors to architecture exhibitions. Architectural museums and institutions all have a remit to communicate and engage with audiences, most commonly through programs of events, educational activities, websites and exhibitions. Our audiences are, or at least should be, the reason we do what we do. But what do we know about them? How do we develop them? And, most importantly, are we doing what they want? From Gelsenkirchen, the trip continues to the former heart of coal mining, the Zollverein World Heritage Site in Essen. Once a metaphor for state-of-the-art, efficient and highly automated coal production, and then a symbol of the

industrial decline of the Ruhr as a coal and steel producing region, following its original closure in 1986 the Zollverein has become representative of the opportunities for structural change in the region.

Following their decommissioning, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia acquired the colliery buildings, and put a conservation order on the ensemble. This ensured the preservation of a powerful constructional symbol of how the region perceived itself, and a feature that the people could identify with. Nowadays the colliery is a vibrant center for culture and creativity.

Numerous architects have left their marks here: In 2001–02, Rem Koolhaas produced a master plan for the site. SANAA-Architekten designed a new building (2006), the Zollverein School (University of Essen/Duisburg). In 2010 the Ruhmuseum moved into the former coal-washing building, which had been converted by Floris Alkemade/OMA and Böll Architekten (2003–06). The Design Zentrum NRW presents product design in the former boiler house, which was converted according to plans by Foster and Partners. *Palast der Projekte*, a walk-in installation by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, was integrated in a hall in the coking plant.

In 2001 the Zollverein Coal Mine became a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 2010, when the city of Essen acted as the European Capital of Culture on behalf of the entire region, Zollverein was a major venue for the motto of the Ruhr region, which is still valid: Culture through change, change through culture.

### **Post-Conference Tour of Berlin and Brandenburg**

The five-day post-conference tour begins on Friday 7 September with a train journey from Essen to the main station in Berlin, a new glass building designed by the architects von Gerkan, Marg und Partner. After checking in, the tour proceeds to the government district with its new buildings by Foster, Schultes, Braunfels, and many others. Over the past 22 years, Berlin has

mutated into a unified city, a development that was accompanied by dynamic euphoria. When the Wall came down in 1989, urban development decisions were made under enormous time-pressure, and the damage left behind in the city by the war, the postwar years, and the building of the Wall, had to be taken care of. Since 1990 some 450 constructional and urban development competitions have been held that resulted in the commissioning of designs for implementation in the new capital, not to mention innumerable new buildings initiated by private investors from all over the world.

The second day of the post-conference tour takes in Potsdam, with its parks and the Sanssouci, Landgut Bornstedt, and Erich Mendelsohn's Einstein Tower. On the third and fourth days we will be devoting ourselves to the city's architectural highlights. Stretching along the River Spree in east Berlin, Museum Island boasts 19th century buildings by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Friedrich August Stüler, and Ernst von Ihne, and is a World Heritage Site. The urban expansion of the early 20th century was dominated by the construction of housing estates and Classical Modernism. Architects such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Hans Poelzig, Hans Scharoun, Otto Bartning, Emil Fahrenkamp, Hugo Häring, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Paul Mebes, not to mention the brothers Bruno and Max Taut and Hans and Wassili Luckhardt, played a major role in the development of modern architectural history. The legacy of the 1930s has all but disappeared from the Berlin cityscape. The former Reichssportfeld, on which the Olympic Stadium stands, has been put to modern use.

The Second World War left behind an enormous amount of destruction in Berlin. In the divided city, two forms of architecture emerged that could scarcely have been more different, represented by the Hansaviertel in the west and Stalinallee in the east. Even

though it is difficult to trace the course the Wall took in the city nowadays, the buildings by architects such as Hans Scharoun, Werner Düttmann, Paul Baumgarten, or Egon Eiermann in what was West Berlin and by the architects Hermann Henselmann, Richard Paulick, Kurt Liebknecht, Heinz Graffunder, and Josef Kaiser in the former East Berlin still convey the ruling political ideologies of the time.

The Brecht-Weigel building will provide us with an exclusive insight into Berthold Brecht's archives, and the Bauhaus Archive will open its collections exclusively for us. The final day will also be devoted to monuments in the center of Berlin, such as the Dutch Embassy designed by Rem Koolhaas, and Pariser Platz, with buildings by, among others, Frank O. Gehry and Günter Behnisch. The post-conference tour will come to an end with a view of Brandenburg Gate from the balcony of the Akademie der Künste.

*Inge Wolf, DAM Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt*  
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[but] order in  
spirit.” *Sigfried Giedion*