Introduction

This issue contains ten papers presented at the 2008 EAAE/ARCC International Conference held in Denmark. The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, in Copenhagen graciously and superbly hosted the EAAE/ARCC 2008 conference entitled “Changes of Paradigms in the Basic Understanding of Architectural Research. Architectural Research and the Digital World.” The papers that follow were selected from over fifty presented at the conference. The moderators of each paper session and members of the conference organizing committee selected these papers for special recognition. These papers were then blind peer-reviewed and two papers were selected to receive the designation as ‘Best Paper’, one represents the ARCC and one represents the EAAE.

Excerpts from the 2008 Conference Introduction

by Professor Ebbe Harder

“Today it is clear that digitalisation has opened a path leading to new forms of representation and new opportunities with regard to developing and handling highly complex spatial and surface forms. But digitalisation has also made new interactive forms of communication possible which could give the architect a new role and a new social position – thereby supporting the claim that architecture and architects are now facing a revolution which is as radical as the Renaissance. The question is whether we who are involved in architectural research have managed to understand these new conditions and help the potential revolution on its way – and this is the main topic of this research conference. Another aspect of digitalisation is the revolution in communication forms and control systems with global effects to which it has led. We have created a form of global simultaneity: we can control financial transactions in new ways, and we can control globally divided production processes in ways which have meant that some phenomena and processes apparently only exist in the virtual world, and that both financial issues and culture are released from the geographical spaces with which we normally associate them in our understanding of the world. This constitutes a radical change in the contextual frameworks in which we normally place architecture and architectural production. Even though this will probably be challenged by some people, it is nonetheless still possible to claim that architecture only exists in an analogue world – that architecture as space and materiality in relation to human senses and bodies does not take shape as architecture until it has been completed. This makes the question of the relationship between the digital and the analogue worlds a central issue for architectural research. This is not an obscure and overlooked field: many of the theorists of globalisation have stressed that the processes of globalisation and the digital world do not acquire real meaning until they ‘touch the ground’ – that the necessary infrastructure belongs to the analogue world, and that the messages transmitted in the digital networks are

produced in the analogue world. In other words, the digital world and the analogue world are closely interwoven. However, some of the theorists of globalisation and digitalisation have pointed out that understanding and awareness of this interwoven relationship constitute one of the major problems facing researchers. There is a tendency among both researchers and commentators to place themselves either in the digital world or in the analogue world – but rarely do they focus on the vital meeting between these two worlds, regarding the way in which the two worlds interact and determine/deform each other's logic. The other key question at the conference focused on the massive challenges within the profession posed by the almost explosive growth of population and cities and the related issues on how to develop models for sustainable urban development. “

The conference took place from the 25th to 28th June 2008 was attended by 140 participants the conference including paper authors, 36 from the USA and Canada, the rest from all over Europe: Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Turkey. Five keynote speeches and 51 papers were presented at the conference. The keynote speakers included Saskia Sassen, Marvin Malecha, Jesper Teilgaard Jens Kvorning and Volker Buschers.

Excerpts from the observations of Per Olaf Fjeld

Past President, European Association for Architectural Education

Changes of paradigms in the basic understanding of architectural research

“... The connection between a physical visual order and the digital order is not fully understood, but at the same time the situation indicates many things can no longer be coded in the same manner as earlier. Architecture is evolving into far more of an infrastructure capable of taking on a variety of spatial and functional programs, than the actual physical edifice. In this light, critical thinking becomes an essential instrument in a research based architectural education. Is it this rather diverse identity that must be understood as architectural complexity?

These rather difficult concerns and questions were raised throughout several of the lectures, but perhaps approached or discussed in different ways. As always, Dean and professor of architecture from North Carolina State University, Marvin Malecha was very clear and straight forward: “traditional structure does not work any longer... and in a recent survey 86% of the clients ask for research based design”. He went on by saying that 97% believe that clients will find value in research-based design. If these numbers are somewhat accurate, then schools of architecture need to sharpen their content towards a stronger focus related to research by design. We have to be clearer in our comprehension of research; on what we do and the way we do it, such that the content also has the ability to strengthen the core within the built architecture, that is architecture itself. Over and over lectures emphasized

the need for schools to actively navigate towards future change, to strengthen reflective and inventive capacity. ...”

Excerpts from the observations of Michel Mounayar

President, Architectural Research Center Consortium

Design knowledge

“... Architectural design must be supported by innovative and informed databanks that substantiate the art of special creation, the complexity of human habitation, the wonder of materiality, the deviance of climate, and the functional mitigation of the program. The variables are infinite and require the consorted efforts of all, both in academia and in industry. Some questions seem to linger still unanswered, including: How can designers practice in the present complex world without the support of reliable evidence? What is the role of research in the process continuum of design and architecture? What subject matters are important to our profession? Who should fund architectural research?

The keynote address by Saskia Sassen alerted the gathering to recent global dynamics and their influences on new media-rich environments that defy traditional definitions of the vibrancy of urban centers resulting in the unlikely supremacy of emerging new information hubs. Dean Marvin Malecha, president-elect of the American Institute of Architects and the initiator of our joint ARCC and EAAE international conferences also in his keynote address argued the importance of realizing the inherent existence and the need for a clear and growing architectural knowledge-base. His keynote message also implied, optimistically, the need for structural review of architectural education as it holds the core potential integration of practice and research. ...”

We hope that you enjoy the issue, for copies of the full proceedings contact the ARCC at arccweb.org.

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2008 EAAE/ARCC International Conference, Organizing Committee