



## Announcements/Annonces

### Re-integrating Theory and Design in Architectural Education / Réintégration de la Théorie et de la Conception dans l'Enseignement Architectural

19th EAAE CONFERENCE, 23-26 May 2001

### A Comment From Ankara and Gazi University on the Threshold of the 19th EAAE Conference

Dr. Esra Akin Fidanoglu

#### Ankara<sup>1</sup>

As far as it is understood, we are in a synchronicity age where the juxtapositions, the superimpositions, the breaks take place and make the world a web which connects the separate points to each other without a continuity according to Michael Foucault. Isn't it true? Then it is also true that this system is a must for the big number of people who come from different parts of the world to live together in the same city. That is why the heterogeneity in the metropolis is a way of giving people the freedom to live his/her own reality. In the other words, the relationships between the originally powerful places ("heterotopias" in Foucault's words) structure our lives in the flux (G. Deleuze, F. Guattari) of the everyday life (in Henri Lefebvre's words). The heterotopias take their power from the well-defined and persistent structure of the activities taking place. Here the power is to attract the masses and become the reason for a big flux.

The metropolis is a very near future for Ankara having a population of almost four million. There are different cultures, different types of activities, different kinds of social attitudes living next to each other. In this presentation Ankara is seen as a pile of heterotopias. It will be easy to understand Ankara by its several faces.

City people have a Modern kind of living; there is a flux between the work, home and leisure in Henri Lefebvre's words. However, there are several universities which enrich the activities in the city. As one of the biggest universities in Turkey Gazi University is a real heterotopia in Ankara.

#### Gazi University<sup>2</sup>, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture<sup>3</sup>

The faculty's background is based on three polytechnics established in 1966, 1967 and 1968. In 1973 the polytechnics became one academy. Since 1982 it has been within the structure of the Gazi University as the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture. The Faculty has 3700 students and 329 academic staff in seven departments (Electrical-Electronic Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Architecture, City and Urban Planning). The Faculty is placed within the 70.000 m<sup>2</sup> closed area.

The Department of Architecture has a well-established status in Turkey with the fourth highest grade in the central examination system. The languages of education are 70 % Turkish and 30 % English.



Students at Gazi University

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#### Editor/Editrice

Anne Elisabeth Toft  
Editorial Assistance and dtp  
Troels Rugbjerg

The professional tradition of our department is based on strengthening the intellectual dimension of the professional qualifications of the future architects. While some of our students work for the government or the big firms, some of them constitute a big percentage of architects in Turkey who have private firms making their living on the architectural design contests.

Our students publish a magazine including their ideas on architecture and on the academic staff.

#### **Department of Architecture<sup>4</sup>**

The teaching method in our department is based on introducing different design and educational tendencies in architecture. There are four ateliers having not only the full-time academic architects but also the part-time practising architects, except the Basic Design ateliers that have a vertical education system in common; the studies of the fifth-semester students take place in the same atelier and they are influenced by each other in order to increase the multiplicity of the ideas. For the same reason, a student cannot attend to the same atelier in both semesters of the academic year. The Final Project is a structure establishing the relationship between the four ateliers in a forum atmosphere and lets the students design their own projects by taking only three critiques during a semester. The construction lessons gradually become advanced parallel to the design studios. Our aim is to give the student a chance to establish his/her own ideas on architecture, and design a project according to this ideal; in other words to stand on his/her own two feet.

The evaluation system is directed at not only the final product (the project) but also the development of the student during the educational process. The personal tendency of the staff member occurs not only as a satisfactory mark but as a concrete system. 30 % of the student's mark is given in the sketching exam made during the semester.

CAD is included in the teaching as a tool of representation. But the students are not prevented from improving their design methods by CAD.

The academic subjects including the policy of the school is open to be questioned by all members of the department; from the research assistants to the professors. This system constitutes a strong

communication and democratic atmosphere in the department.

Academic and practicing studies are done individually and in groups by personal choice. Our department does not make any demands, but rewards the success of the researches and the designs.

The primary agenda of the faculty in the near future is to accredit the education system to western universities in order to give our students a chance to become international. ■

1. Technical information is available at <http://www.turkiye.com>

2. Technical information is available at <http://gazi.edu.tr>

3. Technical information is available at <http://www.mmf.gazi.edu.tr>

4. Technical information is available at <http://mim.mmf.gazi.edu.tr>

## Re-integrating Theory and Design in Architectural Education / *Réintégration de la Théorie et de la Conception dans l'Enseignement Architectural*

19th EAAE CONFERENCE, 23-26 May 2001

Gazi University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Architecture, Ankara, Turkey



Gazi University, Rector's Building

Academics and professionals involved in the courses as jurors, teachers, instructors, advisors, etc., develop separated approaches to architectural education. This dilemma creates a gap between theoretical discourse of academics and empirical approaches of designers in architectural education. In order to avoid an even wider gap, theory and design should be re-integrated and their unity should be reconstructed in architectural education. Team work and maintained communication between academics and professionals in a design course may provide for re-integration.

In this context, the aim of the conference is to explore the teaching methods and pedagogical strategies that addresses the emerging paradigm of re-integration of theory and design.

### Questions:

- How can we facilitate the communication between academics and designers?
- How can we manage or construct the curriculum of schools of architecture in order to ensure the possibility of re-integration?
- How can we describe and organize a design course which enhances the communication between the instructors with either academic or professional background?

**For further information and details the conference organisers can be contacted at the addresses below.**

**Organizing Committee**

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**Conference Secretariat**

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**Aim**

The conference aims to create a forum of discussion where issues and topics of mutual interest can be debated in relation to architectural education, both on a theoretical and an experimental base, which can bring together scholars, students, professors, administrators, practitioners, etc. from various countries.

**Structure**

The conference will be defined as a working conference with plenary sessions, paper presentations and poster sessions. Emphasis on research findings and interim research results are particularly welcome. The conference will end with a panel discussion. Optional sight-seeing tours and excursions will also be arranged. Programme with details of venue and accessibility, competitively priced accomodation and social events will be sent out by the same time as the calls for papers.

**Language and Proceedings**

All contributions will be presented in English. All accepted abstracts will be printed in a book of abstracts which will be available at the time of registration. Presented full papers will be published in the conference proceedings.

**Fees**

Application fee  
EAAE members: 150 euro  
Non EAAE members: 250 euro  
Application fee students: free  
Although the registration is free for students, they are kindly requested to register.

**The Organizing Committee:**

- Berrin Akgün
- Dr. Adnan Aksu
- Dr. Esin Boyacıoğlu
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nur Çağlar (chairman)
- Dr. Nurçin Çelik
- Ylhan Kesmez
- Gönül Tavman
- Dr. Zeynep Uludag
- Gülsu Ulukavak

**Timetable**

- **January 15, 2001**  
Call for papers
- **February 16, 2001**  
Deadline for abstracts and preregistration of all type of entries
- **March 1-16, 2001**  
Notification of successful abstracts
- **April 20, 2001**  
Deadline for full papers and abstracts of posters
- **May 23-26, 2001**  
Conference

## Editorial

News Sheet Editor - Anne Elisabeth Toft

Dear Reader

This issue of the EAAE News Sheet is first of all publishing information about two EAAE arrangements, one of which is coming soon, whereas the other was held in November 2000.

- **Re-integrating Theory and Design in Architectural Education**

19th EAAE Conference, 23-26 May 2001, Gazi University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Ankara, Turkey

- **Architectural Strategies and Design Methods**

18th EAAE Conference, 1-3 November 2000, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands

The conference in Ankara was previously advertised in the EAAE News Sheet # 58. Since then the magazine has received Dr. Esra Akin Fidanoglu's text; **A Comment from Ankara and Gazi University on the Threshold of the 19th EAAE Conference**, which describes the specialist framework of the conference, and at the same time gives the readers of the magazine insight into study programmes and teaching at Gazi University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture. (see page 1).

Dorian Wiszniewski (United Kingdom) was one of the many participants in the international conference; **Architectural Strategies and Design Methods**. Dorian Wiszniewski is in this issue of the EAAE News Sheet contributing with a critically discussing report from the conference (see page 17).

The conference was held from 1 to 3 November 2000 and was arranged in a cooperation between the EAAE and Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture. The Organising Committee consisted of the following members: Prof. Jürgen Rosemann (chairman), Prof. Dr. Taeke de Jong, Prof. Leen van Duin, Prof. Dr. Arie Graafland, Dr. Herman van Wegen, Dr. Gerard Wigmans (Secretary).

The aim of the conference was to illustrate and discuss the characteristics of **Research by Design**.

Cher lecteur

Ce numéro du Bulletin de l'AEEA vous informe tout d'abord de deux événements: l'un qui aura bientôt lieu, l'autre qui a eu lieu en novembre 2000.

- **Réintégration de la Théorie et de la Conception dans l'Enseignement Architectural**

19ème Conférence de l'AEEA, 23-26 mai, Université de Gazi, Faculté de Construction et de l'Architecture, Ankara, Turquie

- **Stratégies Architecturales et Méthodes de Conception**

18ème Conférence de l'AEEA, 1-3 novembre 2000, Université Polytechnique de Delft, Pays Bas

La conférence à Ankara a été annoncée, déjà, dans le Bulletin de l'AEEA No 58. Depuis lors, le magazine a reçu le texte du Dr. Esra Akin Fidanoglu:

**A Comment from Ankara and Gazi University on the Threshold of the 19th EAAE Conference**, qui décrit le cadre professionnel de la conférence et en même temps, ce texte donne aux lecteurs connaissance des programmes d'études et d'enseignement à l'Université de Gazi, Faculté de Construction et d'Architecture (à la page 1).

Dorian Wiszniewski (Grande Bretagne) était l'un parmi le grand nombre de participants de la conférence internationale: **Stratégies Architecturales et Méthodes de Conception**. Dans ce numéro du Bulletin de l'AEEA, Dorian Wiszniewski contribue par un rapport critique de la conférence (à la page 17).

La conférence, qui a eu lieu du 1-3 novembre 2000, a été organisée avec la collaboration de l'AEEA et l'Université Polytechnique de Delft, Faculté d'Architecture. Le comité de l'organisation était composé des membres suivants: Prof. Jürgen Rosemann (président), Prof. Dr. Taeke de Jong, Prof. Leen van Duin, Prof. Dr. Arie Graafland, Dr. Herman van Wegen, Dr. Gerard Wigmans (secrétaire).

L'intention de la conférence était d'éclaircir et discuter les caractéristiques de **Research by Design**.



The paper: **Too Many Ideas** is also from the conference in Delft (see page 20). The paper is written by Professor Jeremy Till (United Kingdom).

The article **Universal Design Education** (see page 13) is written by Professor H. P. Froyen (Belgium) with a special view to publication in the EAAE News Sheet. The author of the article wants to arouse an interest in and discussion of the subject of the article among the members of the EAAE.

Last but not least, I am happy to draw the readers' attention to an exclusive interview with **Lord Richard Rogers** (United Kingdom) (see page 7).

Yours sincerely

Anne Elisabeth Toft

*L'article, **Too Many Ideas**, vient aussi de la conférence (à la page 20). Cet article est rédigé par Jeremy Till (Grande Bretagne).*

*L'article l'Enseignement **Universal Design Education** (à la page 13) est écrit par Prof. H. P. Froyen (Belgique) pour le publier dans le Bulletin de l'AEEA en espérant éveiller l'intérêt et un débat parmi les membres de l'AEEA.*

*Enfin, j'ai le grand plaisir de pouvoir présenter aux lecteurs du Bulletin une interview exclusive de **Lord Richard Rogers** (Grande Bretagne) (à la page 7).*

*Sincèrement*

*Anne Elisabeth Toft*

## Lord Richard Rogers

Interview with the British architect, Lord Richard Rogers, 10 September 2000

In the past few years Lord Richard Rogers and his firm have addressed growing concerns for the global environment by developing research into intelligent, energy efficient buildings.

Richard Rogers Partnership is also committed to schemes which create successful public space and enliven inner city areas. Master-planning forms about one third of the office's work.

In 1998 Richard Rogers was invited to chair the Urban Task Force (UTF), a government-appointed body given the task of establishing a new vision for urban regeneration founded on the principles of design excellence. The Urban Task Force report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* focused on the plight of key urban areas in England and champions the cause of brownfield-development. It was published in June 1999 and many of its recommendations have since been incorporated in the government's Urban White Paper, published in November 2000. (Source: [www.richardrogers.co.uk](http://www.richardrogers.co.uk))

Lord Richard Rogers was invited to participate as a guest of honour and keynote speaker at the international conference; "*Design Diplomacy: Public Policy and the Practice of Architecture*" which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark from 6 to 9 September 2000.

EAAE News Sheet Editor, Anne Elisabeth Toft and Editorial Assistant, Troels Rugbjerg met with Lord Richard Rogers in Copenhagen.

**Yesterday you were a keynote speaker at the AIA-conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. The theme of the conference was *Design Diplomacy: Public Policy and Practice of Architecture*.**

**What did you talk about in your lecture?**

I talked about the work I have been doing for Tony Blair and the British Government. I chaired an Urban Task Force which looked at the state of our cities, the general decline of our cities, and how to make the cities once more the centres of culture and economic revival. We produced a very large report called *Towards an Urban Renaissance* with 105 recommendations for the government to take so as to make cities once more the cultural and command centres of our society.

In England 90% of our population lives in cities. 80% of our population lives in cities of more than 100.000 people. So, if the cities, towns and neighbourhoods do not work, then nothing works!

**What do you think of the development of European cities today?**

**Do you like the way the urban planning is being performed?**

What I do not like is the way planning has not solved the problems.

The earth that we inhabit is very precious. England and most of Europe has very little land in relation to the amount of people - so we must not waste it.

First of all we have to recognize that planning is a tool.

In most of Europe urban design is scarcely practised. Architects concentrate on buildings and planners concentrate on roads, and we do not concentrate on the space between buildings, which for me is really the most important part. I am less concerned, I suppose, with the different philosophies and more concerned with the lack of philosophy and the lack of recognition of the problems.

It is fascinating to be in Copenhagen.

I am not saying this because I am here, but there is no question that Denmark is one of the most sophisticated countries in the world. Not only is it a wealthy country, but it looks after its citizens. And, it does so much more than most countries - certainly much more than England! You have had a continuity since the war of being sensitive to the problems. However, at the same time it is clear that not even you are doing enough about the urban design. So, it is not so much a war between concepts and different understandings. The important thing is; A) to realize that there is a problem, B) to look at different types of solutions, C) to work with people both from bottom up and top down.

In connection with that, I think that one of the wonderful things about the information age is that you can start participating both locally as well as internationally!

**In what way have your ideas about and visions for a “new” architecture changed since you started practising in the sixties?**

The most important thing, I suppose, is the sustainable development. There was a sort of consciousness about the first building we did after I split from *Team 4*. It was called the *Zip-Up House* (Prototype Housing Unit, 1968 & 1971). We were conscious of flexibility, conscious of the effect that the things you do in a building will last much less time than the buildings themselves. That was the sort of things we were conscious of at that time. It was not really until the oil-crisis in the early seventies that we became aware of sustainability. I remember reading a book at that time called *The First Club of Rome*, or something like that. It was about a group of international people who got together to look at the state of the world. They said that all materials would run out in a few years. They were absolutely wrong, but it was a wonderful warning!

I think you can say that our architecture (Richard Rogers Partnership) is today not so much about technological inventions, but more about environmental implications.

So, I suppose the tendency has been towards receiving information from the problems of the environment, whilst not forgetting all the problems that are still the same problems that they were before.

**Do you think that the teaching at European schools of architecture is up-to-date? Has the gap between the academic world and the practice become too wide?**

I think we have very, very serious problems generally in the lack of skills. It is not specifically at schools. I worked for two years on this project that I told you about for the British government, and if I had to point out one of the most serious problems that I found it would be the amazing lack of skills to solve the problems which we have to solve – especially in England. If I want to be somewhat negative I would say that design schools in England only work in two dimensions. What I mean is that they design towns, cities and urban design in two dimensions. They talk about numbers of housing units, but they do not think in three dimensions. They think in two dimensions.

In a way I have to say that some schools of architecture only think of aesthetics and not of social implications. Somehow we have to get this sort of social-, urban- and three-dimensional implications down. And the problems are out there – everywhere. I only have to look out of this hotel window to think – gosh, what a mess!

I do not want to be too materialistic, though. You should have a very free and artistic view, and I actually think that one of the problems with practising architects is that they are so materialistic that they close the visions before they can actually sort of take off.

Problems of pollution, problems caused by cars, the problems of “brownfields”, etc. These are real problems that have to be solved. I am amazed by the work by Jan Gehl<sup>1</sup> and his wonderful books, and it is quite fantastic to see the improvements in the public domain here in Denmark – especially since 1965 when Jan Gehl started his work.

Just by going around with a camera and “measuring” the number of people, etc. you get some very interesting results. And *that* is in a way using your eyes and using your mind to solve problems. Architects solve problems in the built environment.

**Why is it that students in England tend to only solve their projects in two dimensions?**

First of all I must emphasize that it is mainly planners and not so much architects that tend to solve their projects in two dimensions. However, architecture students do not learn much about social implications. The point I am making is that architects have to have a very broad understanding.

In one sense architecture is no different from medicine. You have to understand the anatomy. If you do not understand the anatomy it is very difficult to make any diagnosis – and it is no good to operate before you know where the heart is! (laughs) I think it is an important thing to realize. We *have* to have a strong basis on which we can build on. Imagination, however, is the real power!

**You were educated as an architect at the AA in London and you received your Master’s Degree at Yale University. What was your education like and who were your teachers?**

I have to start by saying that I was a bad student. I was always a bad student! I had some very good teachers, though. At the AA I had Robert Furneaux Jordan, Peter Smithson, and a rather wonderful man who died very young called John Killick. At Yale I had Serge Chermayeff, Paul Rudolph, and Vincent Scully, who was a marvellous lecturer and historian. However, I have to say that I am not very good at learning from formal teachers. So, I have always learned most from my colleagues, but also from travelling and by studying on my own – looking and reading, etc.

When I was at Yale there was a very good and inspiring group of architects. I met Norman Foster

there and an other English architect called Eldred Evans. She was probably the finest of us all... And obviously I learned a lot from my American colleagues, too.

The biggest and most instructive experience was, however, to be acquainted with Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. I went over to San Francisco and Los Angeles and I saw all his work there. I think that the architecture by Frank Lloyd Wright probably influenced me more than anything else. Also, just arriving in New York City for the first time was amazing. I was in my late twenties and I went over on a Fulbright Scholarship. I came by boat and leaving Southampton where everything was on such a small scale and coming to New York City with its incredible skyline was absolutely fantastic. I have learned a lot from that experience!

**So, what was the most important thing you discovered about architecture when you were a student?**

I think that the most important thing that I discovered about architecture was that I enjoyed it! I had a very difficult childhood. I am dyslexic and when I grew up people did not recognise it as dyslexia. I had very wonderful parents, but I do not think my childhood was great in terms of school. So, I thought it was fantastic to find something that I really enjoyed and that suited me. I did not decide till I was twenty. I did my military service, and I then decided that architecture was for me because it joined many important concepts such as: art, sociology, politics, etc. I had influence, too. My mother was a potter, my father was a doctor and my father's cousin was perhaps the most prominent Italian architect after the war, Ernesto Rogers. But, I have always enjoyed the fact that for me architecture is so wide – you can both be passionate about a door handle and you can be passionate about the sustainable development of the globe, if you like.

This is one of the important reasons why I find that architecture is fantastic – it includes so many aspects of life! Architecture does not have to be about building – it can be about many other things. I think that anyone who is interested in the state of people, is likely to have some link to architecture. One of the interesting things, for instance, that we discovered when we looked at many different cities for this task force report was that a lot of the best mayors are actually architects!

Anyway, I suddenly realized that I enjoyed broad concepts – and that I am better at broad concepts where you have a massive range. Therefore, architecture is a suitable vehicle for me!

**If you should single out a “mentor” or a specifically important source of inspiration – who or what would it be?**

There would be many! However, if I look at it historically I suppose the architect that I like the most is Brunelleschi. I have a keen interest in the Renaissance. The early Renaissance excites me much more than the high Renaissance, though. In the 20th Century I would single out Frank Lloyd Wright, but also the other “masters” - Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, etc.

Besides, I have always learned very much from my partners - Norman Foster, Renzo Piano, Peter Rice, John Young, Mike Davies, and today Graham Stirik and Ivan Harbour.

**How important was Ernesto Rogers to you?**

He was very influential. It was partly because of him that I chose to become an architect. He was very close to my parents. My parents were Italians and I came to England from Italy with them in 1939. Immediately after the war I went to Italy to visit my relatives there. This was when I met Ernesto.

**When one looks at photos of you from the early years – the years when you were part of *Team 4* – you always look so happy. Please tell us a little about the early years and why you chose to establish your own firm. What were your ambitions in *Team 4*?**

When I was at Yale I worked quite well with Norman Foster. We were friends.

At some point I was given the opportunity to design a small house for the parents of my then wife. At that time it seemed to me like building the biggest building in the world (laughs) – and I took it all very seriously, so we rushed back to England. My wife (Su Rogers) and I had actually thought of staying in the U.S. We were very excited about America and our life there. We were very happy. I worked at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in San Francisco. The office there was very relaxed, which I liked, and San Francisco was a beautiful city. Anyway, we came back to England to build this little house. Norman Foster and I established *Team 4* with my wife and an old girlfriend. She soon became Norman Foster's wife, so we really became four! (laughs)

We started like everybody else – with very small and humble assignments – kitchen extensions, etc. But, then we managed to do this house in Cornwall (*Creek Vein*, 1964-1967) which became rather well

known. It did not help us get any more work, but it was a clue. In fact, one of the things that happened to us was that we realised that we were too many architects working on one house – it could not be economic.

It took us about four years and I think we went through some 200 different designs! (laughs) I think that in a way this pushed us towards looking at the process of construction. I remember writing to myself at one point: “We need 300,000 dwellings a year in England and we have managed to produce one dwelling in 3-4 years!”

It was obvious to us that there was something wrong with the systems – or the way we were doing things. At this point we really began to understand much more about the industrial production systems. Of course we had seen them in the U.S., but now we really tried to adapt to them.

We did a factory – our first major work - and a few other things. It gave us a chance, but we really did not have enough work, so Norman and I broke up. I started up a practice with my wife, Su.

Su was actually a sociologist, but she had been to Yale with me. We ran this practice for a couple of years and then Renzo Piano came to England and we teamed up with him.

In 1970 we won the competition about the Pompidou Centre. It was an amazing opportunity! We lived in Paris for five years and Renzo, Peter Rice, our engineer, and I became very close friends.

**Have you ever taught at any school of architecture?**

Yes! I actually taught quite a lot in the early days. First of all, I was interested in teaching, but it was also necessary for me to teach as I didn't have very many building assignments. I started teaching at what was called Regent Street Polytechnic and the AA in London. I taught in Cambridge and later on at Yale and UCLA. Now, I do not teach anymore. I still lecture, though.

I think teaching is very, very demanding. I also think that teaching is perhaps one of the most creative things I have ever done. However, I found that it was almost impossible for me to teach and lead a practice at the same time. I had to make a choice – and I did seriously consider being a teacher – between teaching architecture or practising architecture.

**What were you trying to pass on to your students?**

I suppose my limited experience at that time! However, working with students is a two-way system. I have always enjoyed the debate of architecture, the open discussion. Teaching is a very

good way of formulating your own ideas. It is a wonderful way of forcing you to express ideas in words. Most of the time architects do drawings!

**How do you think that we as teachers can avoid teaching our students “formulas” or “recipes”?**

That is the most difficult thing! (pause)

I think that often the best teachers are not the best “architects” - or should I say “builders” – and vice versa. Certainly, when I look back, some of the teachers which I did not mention before, because their names would not be known to anyone, were probably more influential than some of the more famous architects. One of the reasons why I think Vincent Scully was so great, though, was that he did not teach us how to design – he taught us how to look. I came from England, where things were very academic. The teaching in those days was very intellectual – it was really a thought process. In the U.S., however, I experienced that it was much more a visual process.

I think that there are many, many ways of teaching. The danger, though, is when architects – and especially those who have some experience – think that they should teach their students to do things the way they do. One should never do that! You should teach the students to think about it, but you should not teach them your personal solutions, techniques, etc. It is very complicated, though – and I am not sure that I was a very good teacher myself, which was also partly why I gave it up.

However, I hope that I am a good teacher in the office. I work very well in the office. We have a very open studio. We are laid-back in a way since we do not work specific hours – but we work a lot. We also play a lot, though! I like that. I like the sort of open criticism that you get in studios. You can be very direct.

At schools you have to be very, very conscious that you are discussing something with someone who is vulnerable. You have to realise that the person in front of you is completely open!

I remember myself as a student. If Chermayeff had told me that I could fly I would have jumped out of the window. He would convince me and the other students of anything! It is actually frightening... but, it took me years to get rid of the influence of people like Chermayeff, Rudolph and Scully! (laughs)

I do not mean to be negative, but the first buildings I did were strongly influenced by everything I picked up from Chermayeff and Frank Lloyd Wright. I am still influenced, but maybe by now I have managed to filter their influence through my ideas. Before, I was bringing their ideas down without understanding them in many ways!

I think this is a complication in teaching. It is very, very difficult not to shape the student's life in areas where he or she should be shaping it – not you!

**Do you not think that the best teachers are the ones who are passionate? You seem to be a very alert and passionate person yourself!**

Yes! I think that passion is absolutely wonderful - and I have always been passionate! My point is that you should be passionate, but you should be passionate to teach the student and not to teach your philosophy – and *that* I think is quite complicated.

**In what way do you think the use of CAD and digital media should be integrated within the education?**

Maybe we are all in danger of thinking that we arrived at the peak! (laughs) However, when it comes to computer information technology we are all aware that we are really just in the beginning of an incredible development. It is therefore extremely difficult to comment very specifically about the use and significance in the future of the computer. We must not forget, however, that it is a vehicle – not a solution, though it provides the potential for doing things that have never been done before. Nevertheless it is still a vehicle for good or bad things.

**Is the use of the computer as sketching tool and representation tool respectively contributing to the fact that the projects are only being solved in two dimensions?**

Yes, certainly! I think there is a whole new world of two-dimensional expression. Interesting enough we thought that the computer would stop us from making models, etc.

Actually, what we find out at the moment - but then again we are only in the beginning of the epoch of virtuality – is that the computer does not really replace the other techniques. It is just another tool – another supplement - but may I add, one very important tool.

**So, when you draw –do you make use of the computer?**

Not much.

In many ways things do not change. You must be careful not to think that. All you need really to be

creative is your mind - and a pencil. A pencil helps! (laughs)

One of the greatest inventions was when the cave-man left his cave to build a primitive hut. That was a fantastic move, but it was driven by ideals. The cave was a very safe and warm place - you could even draw on the walls - it did not leak, etc.

Then suddenly someone thought - hey, I can chase women or something if I have a hut! (laughs).

My point is that this move from the cave to the hut was a matter of social implications.

Nothing has changed really. We are still doing basically the same today; creating shelters which respond to or hopefully improve the built environment in relation to social, economic and political problems, etc.

**How do you define architectural quality? Can it be defined in words?**

(Long pause)

I suppose it is not any different from, for instance, defining a good meal or defining a wonderful book or listening to a great piece of music. It gives amazing satisfaction to the user. You can then analyse it if you have the means. You can analyse what gave you that satisfaction - or the ingredients and you can look at the way the ingredients were put together, etc.

But, I am actually much more interested in the sensations that I get when I am confronted with a piece of architecture - does it make me feel comfortable or uncomfortable, does it excite me, etc.

Architectural quality is about space. It is about mass and transparency. It is about harmony. It is about scale and grade. It is seldom about height and width.

It is about moving the spirit - which is what beauty does. It is about being technically sound, socially driven and economically correct.

And, in the end, it is about moving things a little bit towards a more just society!

**A more just society...**

**This makes me think of Le Corbusier's book *Vers une Architecture*. In the end Le Corbusier says: "Architecture or Revolution. Revolution can be avoided."**

**What do you think about his statement?**

It is a wonderful statement!

Yet, we live at different times. (pause)

Le Corbusier and the early "masters" fought a frontline revolution where everybody was going in one direction and they wanted to go in the other direction. We still have a revolution because archi-

**Biography**

Richard Rogers was born of Italian parents in Florence, Italy in 1933. He studied architecture at the Architectural Association in London, UK and at Yale University, USA. In 1963 he returned to England where he and Norman Foster founded Team 4. He worked with Su Rogers 1967 to 1971 and, starting in 1970, with Renzo Piano. Rogers and Piano collaborated on the winning competition entry for a cultural center in Paris; The Centre Georges Pompidou. The project was completed in 1977. In 1977 Richard Rogers, along with John Young, Marco Goldschmied and Mike Davies, founded the Richard Rogers Partnership in London. In 1978 the firm won the competition for the Lloyd's Building, London, and since then they have had numerous commissions, both public and private in the UK, Germany, France, the US and Japan. Richard Rogers has taught and lectured throughout England and the United States. He has received the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture from the Royal Institute of British Architects and he is a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres. Richard Rogers was the architecture laureate for the prestigious Praemium Imperiale, 2000. Richard Rogers has been a juror for many international competitions. He has participated in conferences and written essays and articles on architecture and his work. Richard Rogers was knighted in recognition of his contributions to architecture.

...tects are not doing very well - I mean, we are not changing what we should be changing - but, on the whole, there is much less disagreement. The revolution, in my opinion, is not between different architects or even different universities, which was often the case during the pre-war period. The revolution thing is probably now more focused towards the importance of better quality architecture. Maybe it should not be achieved through revolution, but rather through understanding what the problems are. My enjoyment of early Renaissance, however, is because that was a revolution. By the time Michelangelo came along the revolution was over. All the early "masters" of the 20th Century hated the city. Just look at Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* for Paris. All his buildings were non-urban buildings. They were tall, but they were all about the landscape coming through. The reason why all the "masters" hated the city was that it was so terrible. In the 19th Century, anybody who had any sensitivity - and the "masters" were formed in the 19th Century - got out of the city, because that was the only way to survive. Today we are saying - *the city is the answer!* It is much more sustainable, it is much more environmentally friendly, it pollutes less, etc. So, suddenly the city has become once more the Hellenic constellation - the city as meeting-place for the exchange of ideas of Mankind.

**The city as a meeting-place... It makes me think of Louis Kahn and his ideas about the city!**

Yes!  
Louis Kahn was a fantastic architect and he was probably the first of the great "masters" who really came to grips with the city.

**Selected projects:**

- Patscentre Research Laboratory, Melbourn, Hertfordshire, UK (1976-1983)
- Inmos Microchip Factory, Newport, Gwent, Wales, UK (1982)
- Reuters Data Centre, London, UK (1987-1992)
- Marseille International Airport, Marignane, France (1989-1992)
- European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France (1989-1995)
- Channel 4 Television Headquarters, London, UK (1990-1994)
- Tomigaya Exhibition Space and Turbine Tower, Tokyo, Japan (1992-1993)
- Law Courts, Bordeaux, France (1993-1996)
- Battersea Flour Mills Housing, London, UK (1994-1995)
- Terminal 5, Heathrow, Middlesex, UK (1995)
- Lloyd's Register of Shipping, City of London, UK (1995-2000)
- New Millennium Experience, Greenwich, UK (1996-1999)
- Barajas Airport, Madrid, Spain (1997)
- Antwerp Law Courts, Antwerp, Belgium (1999-)

**Do you think that, in the future, we will be able to have a collective understanding of architectural quality?**

I think there probably will be a collective understanding - at least to a certain degree. (Pause) Actually, it is a very interesting question about why we have perhaps in many ways failed to ignite the imagination... (Interruption by telephone call)

**Do you think that architecture has an "ethical" function?**

I think architecture *must* have an ethical function! Everything has an ethical function! I cannot imagine doing anything that does not have an ethical function. If architecture does not have an ethical function it does not have a function! (Long pause) I think everything is measured against improving the state of our lives. The fact that you can think about ethical dimensions is to me the most exciting part of being a human being! ■

1. Gehl, Jan: *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*. New York, 1987.

Gehl, Jan: *Places For People: Melbourne City 1994/ The City of Melbourne, Urban Design Branch and Strategic Planning Branch in Cooperation with Jan Gehl*. Melbourne, 1994.

## Universal Design Education

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18 February 2001

Jane Alexander, in her introduction to “Strategies for teaching Universal Design”<sup>1</sup> clearly describes the new concept:

*The concept of universal design goes beyond the mere provision of special features for various segments of the population. Instead it emphasizes a creative approach that is more inclusive, one that asks at the outset of the design process how a product, graphic communication, building, or public space can be made both aesthetically pleasing and functional for the greatest number of users. Designs resulting from this approach serve a wider array of people including individuals with temporary or permanent disabilities, parents with small children, and everyone whose abilities change with age.*

It is only decades ago that people with a physical impairment, like myself, would have been blamed for the inherent misfits between badly designed facilities and their restricted abilities to use them.

Elsbeth Morrison’s adage: *Bad environmental design disables far more than any medical condition*<sup>2</sup> sounds like a bold overstatement but in fact it expresses, in a rather intuitive way, a crucial shift in the social sciences and in medicine. As a matter of fact, an impressive number of objects, buildings, public spaces and facilities are not accessible for a large number of people.

Some people, for example, cannot enter a specific post office.

This is an objective fact. But further analysis of causes and circumstances might lead to different conclusions:

- Conclusion A (1980): these people move around in wheelchairs, they have a medical problem resulting in disability, which prevents them from entering specific buildings and places.
- Conclusion B (2000): the facilities designed and built in a given society are not fully accessible because personal factors together with social and physical barriers prevent some people from entering and using the facilities.

The dates 1980 and 2000 are not arbitrarily chosen but refer to two influential publications of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

In 1980 the WHO published the first trial version of the ICIDH (International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps).

Now in 2000 after two decades of use, it has become clear that the classification requires revision in the light of changes in health care and a new social understanding of disability.

ICIDH-2 is now being field-tested. It classifies human functioning not only at the level of the body or the whole person but also focuses on the complete social and physical environmental context.

The ‘*biopsychosocial*’ model underlying ICIDH-2 helps researchers and designers, among others, to identify facilitators as well as barriers in the human made environment.

Handicap is, to a great extent, a characteristic of a situation, a ‘handicap situation’.

This new insight gradually leads to new approaches in the field of product design, architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, etc. Specifically, two competing overall design concepts need further explanation. First of all there is the concept of ‘*design for special needs*’ and secondly there is ‘*design for all*’ or universal design.

### Minority Group or Civil Rights Analysis

For some decades now, and long before the World Health Organisation reacted, minority groups and civil rights groups have fought social discrimination and environmental barriers.

The seeds of minority group analysis can be found in the popular political movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s. Yet, it was only towards the end of the twentieth century that it became clear how important these civil rights movements of black people, women, elderly, handicapped, etc. had been in the emancipation processes and on a political level.

A small number of pioneer designers understood the message and designed special devices for special needs.

Victor Papanek wrote in “Design for the real world”<sup>3</sup>: *The poor in the developing world, together with the poor and the handicapped in the rich nations and with all those of us who must make wise choices about the tools, systems, and artefacts we make and use, form one global constituency.*

Design for Special Needs or particular design solutions for particular users will always be required. But designers, builders and manufacturers of today, and

certainly of the future, must confront a much larger, more global task.

Private houses for example are designed to fit the initial (dis-) abilities of owner-occupiers but how about adaptability to futures needs. Are they designed and built as 'Lifetime Homes'?

Public buildings and public facilities on the other hand should be adapted and should serve the widest possible array of (anonymous) users from the very beginning.

Social and demographic changes, a population rapidly growing older, longer life expectation, emancipation of people with disabilities, rising costs of traditional social security systems and health care, all force us to look for new integrated solutions.

### Universalism

Underlying the more recent universalistic strategy is a conception of disability as fluid and continuous, entirely contextual.

J.E. Bickenbach writes<sup>4</sup>: *Disability is not a human attribute that demarcates one portion of humanity from another (as gender does, and as race sometimes does); it is an infinitely various but universal feature of the human condition. No human has a complete repertoire of abilities, suitable for all permutations of the physical and social environment. Scientifically speaking there are no inherent or intrinsic boundaries to the range of variation in human abilities; ability-disability is a continuum and the complete absence of disability like the complete absence of ability, is a limiting case of theoretic interest only.*

*(...) The call for universal disability policy presupposes that the principal aim of disability policy must be to secure justice in the distribution of resources and opportunities. Universalising disablement policy begins by demystifying the 'specialness' of disability.*

*Rather than identifying special needs that require special attention (...), we need to see that all people have needs that vary in roughly predictable ways, over the course of their life span.*

*Disablement policy is therefore not policy for some minority group, it is policy for all.*

### Universal Design

The European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD) founded in Dublin in 1993, clearly links the quality of design to the ability of people to use these human made facilities in an optimal way.

The main objective of the EIDD is 'to enhance quality of life through universal design'.

The concepts of 'Barrier free design' and 'Design for all', or as the North Americans call it 'Universal design', all have the same goals and adopt similar strategies. The legal framework in the USA (cf. 'Americans with Disabilities Act', ADA) and in Europe, however, is quite different. Ron Mace points

out that: *legislated changes notwithstanding it is designers who will decide whether accessibility will take the form of better design for everyone, or simply unattractive, costly, Band-Aid responses to annoying code requirements.*<sup>5</sup>

### Universal Design Education

A new ethic of design education and practice is also rapidly developing, one that values and celebrates empirically grounded human variation.

Obviously it is important to educate and train young design students in this new paradigm of universal design.

Katherine Seelman<sup>6</sup> describes the new paradigm in terms of service and opportunities:

*The USA is currently shifting its perspective towards individuals with disabilities by adopting a 'new paradigm' of service and opportunities. Under this new paradigm, the environment of the individual with a disability is seen as the 'disabler', and not the person him or herself. The initial paradigm of disability research grew in the field of medicine and was essentially reductive to impairment and condition with an apparent emphasis on sickness and the professional. The new paradigm is more integrative and, while retaining its medical components, is broadened to include many other fields and disciplines.*

Design disciplines obviously are heavily involved in this social and theoretical shift towards integral and inclusive design, as expressed in the principles of universal design.

A working group of architects, product engineers and environmental design researchers elaborated and published a first set of seven 'Principles of Universal Design'<sup>7</sup>:

- Equitable use. The design is useful (...) to people with diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in use. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- Low physical effort. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
- Size and space for approach. Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.
- Etc.

The authors acknowledge that the principles of universal design in no way comprise all criteria for good design, only universally usable design.

From a technical point of view, all sets of particular principles, be it for fire safety, energy efficiency, sustainability, barrier free access, etc. are only important parameters to be taken into account.

The universal design approach, however, goes well beyond the mere technical and pragmatic rules of

thumb for door width, accessible toilets, assistive technology, etc.

If, for example, the aesthetics of a building or an open space should also satisfy blind users, the dominance of visual perception will be fundamentally challenged. Good universal design might lead to a much richer sensuous built environment with a more complex Gestalt quality.

#### Thematic Network: Universal Design Education.

In the USA the passage of the 'Americans with Disabilities Act' in 1990 heralded the opportunity for a paradigm shift. Extending the design discussion beyond the realm of building codes and into the realm of civil rights took the design profession and the building industry by surprise. Individual design schools started re-arranging their curricula.

In January 1991 'Adaptive Environments' was officially awarded funding to initiate the Universal Design Education Project and subsequently brought 22 North American pioneer design schools together.

*The twenty-two schools developed a wide variety of strategies for teaching universal design, ranging from single courses to cross-department, cross-curriculum infusions.*<sup>1</sup>

Also in Europe, many schools of architecture already include the basic principles of universal design in their curriculum. It is time to join forces.

Some possibilities:

- EAEE could organise a 'Universal Design' workshop.
- People all over the world, teaching Universal Design, can join the *Global Universal Design Educator's Network* mailing list.

To subscribe to the list, e-mail to

[listproc@trace.wisc.edu](mailto:listproc@trace.wisc.edu) with the following request in the body of the message:

"Subscribe UNIVERSALDESIGN-ED firstname lastname"

- The SOCRATES-ERASMUS programme provides funding for thematic networks. If your school of architecture is interested in a European Universal Design Network, please contact Hubert Froyen at [HFroyen@mail.phlimburg.be](mailto:HFroyen@mail.phlimburg.be)

#### Interesting Links

- World Health Organisation, ICIDH  
<http://www.who.int/icidh/>
- European Institute for Design and Disability EIDD: <http://www.design-for-all.org>
- The Center for Universal Design  
<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/index.html>

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Photo by Arch. Ingrid Huyghe.  
“Barrierfree EXPO 2000, Hannover World Exhibition”.

**“Barrierfree EXPO 2000, Hannover World Exhibition”**

The undulating ramp, which goes down some 3 meters, provides an integral and inclusive solution for all users.

The horizontal section of each wave acts as a landing. Physical effort and rest are well balanced. During the night the illuminated boundary between the corrugated central path and the wooden boards guides the way. People can also sense the difference in texture.

It provides a creative, functional, playful and non-stigmatising solution.

## Architectural Strategies and Design Methods / *Stratégies Architecturales et Méthodes de Conception*

18th EAAE CONFERENCE, 1-3 November 2000, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

### Report

Dorian Wiszniewski, The University of Edinburgh, Department of Architecture, United Kingdom

The conference was held over three days each day addressing a particular aspect of the overall theme of research by design - The Architectural Intervention, Design Methods and Architectural Strategies, and Research by Design in Practice. Presentation of papers was organised under the title of the second day and was the filling to this three-day sandwich. This was a very good conference that I enjoyed both formally and socially. It prompted many interesting meetings and conversations. We should not underestimate the value of academic conferences, but given the endeavour and costs associated with running and attending conferences, it is important to maximise their value for all involved.

#### Day 1 - The top slice:

The Delft hosts seemed to be looking for "inspiration and consensus in dialogue" [Dirk Freiling]. In serving this ambition, it is interesting, if not altogether understandable, but nonetheless wonderful, that Delft seemed to welcome a provocation to their own position by inviting to participate in the conference the three American Michaels, Hays (Harvard), Bell (Columbia), and Speaks (SCI-Arc), who each represent the architectural *avant garde* by a particular view on cultural heterogeneity - respectively, a roughing-up of 'Ideological Smoothness', wanderings in the 'Terrain Vague', and pioneering in 'Media Entrepreneurialism'. Hays as a dutiful chairman did his best to curtail the Americans' ability to run away with the discussion. He declared his respect, but I also detected frustration, for the integrity of the Delft position, admiration for the intellectualism of Columbia, and his loathing of the SCI-Arc position ["I used to think Michael (Speaks) was an ass-hole, now I think he is more of an e-hole"].

Hays always tried to bring Delft representatives into the discussion, regrettably usually unable to get the interest level up by doing so and failing to make full use of the Americans' provocations. Sometimes the social conscience of the critical theorist can be a dreadful bore. The Delft representatives seemed to politely dismiss the contributions of Bell and Speaks as impertinent diversions

of theoretical Post-Modernism, presumably lacking the necessary idealism of the 'great stories' (Modernism for example?), that have 'justice', 'freedom' and 'solidarity' as their central tenets [Freiling]. They were treated too abstractly (look, listen, express few thoughts) like the exhibitions in the foyer (The Heracles Programme, Greece, and 'De Resident', The Hague, Netherlands), and like the celebrity practitioners of the third day (Wiel Arets, Ben van Berkel and Rob Krier). It is a pity that Hays did not encourage this debate to flourish and flush out whether Delft's heroic ideological position or the American's 'ideology' [Hays] of heterogeneity was the most capable of dealing with the contemporary contingencies of research and design. I believe the fundamental differences between the two positions are symptomatic of the very different nature and relations of the academies, the practitioners and the audience of architecture that exist in America and Europe. I am sure highlighting some of the differences would be of mutual benefit and significant to the themes of the conference.

#### Day 2 - The filling:

A well-presented conference book of abstracts was produced for the delegates. It sets out the themes and sub-themes, and has a fourth section as a supplement to the papers selected for conference presentation. However, the arrangement of the papers in the book created a bit of confusion. Many of the delegates I spoke to seemed not to understand the logic of the selection between either conference presentation or only book publication, or whether the paper was published in full or in abstract. Perhaps the publication of the full proceedings, apparently planned for early in 2001, will redress this issue by publishing the abstracts and papers together and in full.

The Delft TU was represented in 25% of the total papers presented. The sessions were organised generally as groups of four presentations in various rooms throughout the building. It seemed as though there was a paper from Delft in every session. This may or may not be the fact of it but the impression was very much this. 25% is not an over representation of the Delft school. Not at all,

but the manner in which Delft representation was spread throughout the sessions seemed to form the logic of the grouping of papers and made it very frustrating. If this was the tactic then it worked against the themes and the philosophical orientation of the various papers. Academic conferences are a great opportunity to engage in and extend architectural discourse at the highest levels. It is an opportunity to meet with experts in one's own specialist areas. The inarticulate grouping of the papers did not prevent this entirely, but worked against it. The categories and themes were not badly conceived, I think just poorly arranged.

In my own session everybody kept to the times leaving a few minutes for debate. This was not taken up to any great extent. In my view because the papers were incompatible. There was Randy S. Swanson, UNC Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, promoting methods of making frame models that paid careful attention to a literal expression of pin-joints or moment joints; Willemjin Wilms Floet, TU Delft, Netherlands, promoting her book on drawings of twenty Dutch buildings of the twentieth century; Kevin McCartney, University of Portsmouth, England, who illustrated a plethora of flow diagrams on organisational methods for research activity; and our own paper, presented by Richard Coyne and I, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, which presented a critique of various philosophical questions into what constitutes architectural legitimacy. How on earth were we supposed to communicate other than through platitudinous remarks? If we were to really comment upon each other's papers it would be no more than a reflection of the fundamental differences that were already very obvious through the presentations. How was an audience to select their sessions and how were they expected to make contributions?

This was the pattern in the other sessions. For example, I witnessed Jeremy Till, University of Sheffield, England, and his hermeneutic extravaganza on his own house; Francois Claessens, TU Delft, Netherlands, and his thesis on the traditions of urban handbooks of the German Empire (1871-1914); Hyoung-June Park, University of Michigan, USA, and his proposal to make design

databases for the ad-hoc recycling of formal and elemental arrangements as a re-interpretation of Durand's principles of typology; and Paul Drewe, TU Delft, Netherlands, and his description of TU Delft's 'Network City' design studio proposals to study the relation between land-use and urban technology networks. All interesting, some more than others, but again an incompatible arrangement of subject interests, stifling debate rather than promoting it. Thankfully, the publication of the conference papers should allow the readers to establish retrospective connectivity between interest areas.

### Day 3 - The Bottom slice:

Toyo Ito couldn't make it after all. Wiel Arets and Ben van Berkel were able substitutes. I enjoyed this first hand insight into their work. Clearly they are proponents of what appears to be a Dutch system of education. Arets and Berkel had a similar tendency to legitimise their work by constructing a narrative leading directly out of analysis. This need for underpinning structures says much about the perceived audience of architecture, the perceived responsibilities of architects, and a particular view of what constitutes research. Arets presented a sports stadium in the city outskirts (unfortunately I failed to register precisely where this was but I think in the Netherlands), proposed as having an architecture with in-built proto-urbanity. The 'proto' condition arises through extended functionality. He called upon the Piazza del Mercato, in Lucca, which illustrates the historical re-appropriation of the oval perimeter of a Roman arena as an armature for holding diverse arrangements of private and social urban functions. Arets suggested that by aggregating a similar crust of mixed functions around his stadium, including canoeing canals on the roof, this created an all day occupation to an urban phenomenon that in recent times has dealt only with the singular, occasional and interior use demands. He hoped this all round collection of functions may project its own diversity of timetable and utility onto the neighbouring sites.

Ben van Berkel's principle project was for his intervention into Manhattan, New York. The

analysis of flows and speeds was extensive (therefore, impressive and presumably good). But it became clear there is a graphic transfer between the presentation of empirical graphs, flowing bubble diagrams and the formality of his architecture. The graphs, bubble diagrams and the buildings ('blobs') had all been coloured on the computer using a 'neon' rendering tool. Curiously he said little of this transference until provoked by the audience. This particular design trajectory was not so readily explained.

In the afternoon it was Rob Krier's turn to hold the floor, alongside his patron Ton Meijer principle of the development company MAB Groep B. V., apparently a sponsor of the conference, presenting the project for the masterplanning of 'De Resident' in The Hague. Rob Krier's position is well documented. As one delegate said to me, "better to put him in his box and keep him there." This was a simple expression of doubt as to whether Rob Krier's Beaux-Arts principles have relevance for today. Ironically, this contribution provoked the most voluble response from the delegates. At least one section of the audience got very angry that he should be given so much opportunity to speak about this project and its procurement. Their complaint was that this form of 'master' planning and patronage was outmoded and offered nothing to the conference themes. There was little research in his work only "pompous implementation of a corrupt bourgeois system" [Christiaan Weiler].

It was clear that the contributions by Wiel Arets, Ben van Berkel and Rob Krier needed interlocution to bring their research and design methods into the critical framework of the conference either as determined before the conference, or as developed over the three days of the conference. The final day panel did little to bring the various streams of thought together leaving the discourse to the social deliberations of the delegates.

#### **Consumption of the Sandwich:**

I think Hay's frustration with the Delft school is really to do with the articulation of its own position. There seems to be a political modesty about

the school's view, with many of the Delft TU papers invoking very traditional lines of enquiry (Methods and Systems Theory). It is enormous, with 2500 students and 250 staff members. If Delft has something to offer the international discourse it seems the architectural community would have no option but to take notice. The syncopated discourse the conference structure established seemed to echo the hit and miss arrangement of elevator access throughout the building! The delegates had to bridge the gaps by themselves.

The conference did bring all of the above issues together, and more. That is the most important thing. I did enjoy it. ■

## Architectural Strategies and Design Methods / *Stratégies Architecturales et Méthodes de Conception*

18th EAAE CONFERENCE, 1-3 November 2000, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

### Too Many Ideas

Jeremy Till, Professor of Architecture and Head of School, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom  
Partner, Sarah Wigglesworth Architects

- We are building a house and office for ourselves next to a railway line in London<sup>1</sup>
- London is not a frontal city; it enjoys its backs
- The building is at the end of a forgotten street
- The front gate hints at the hybridity beyond; medieval willow hurdles against new steel
- Letter boxes in the United Kingdom are red
- Above, a wall of sandbags signals protection - aural and otherwise - from the railway
- Over the course of some years, the cloth of the sandbags will decay and the sand, cement, lime inside will gradually harden....
- ....leaving a rippling wall of concrete, with the imprint of cloth
- A wall designed not to shrug off time but designed to let time pass through
- In a moment of vernacular inspiration, we use railway sleepers left on the site as window surrounds; the builders call it Flintstone architecture
- The protection of the sandbags gives way to bandages of cloth around the office
- Offices are normally the antidote to the domestic - hard, shiny, corporate (and male)....
- ....but our office is wrapped in a quilted duvet, a domestic technology
- The builders call it the nappy; they understand
- The office sits on constructions of recycled concrete held in wire cages....
- ....memories of ruins that once stood on the site
- The elevation of the house brings all the complexity of the domestic interior to the surface
- The house is protected by straw; thick, comforting, straw bales
- The slick and the hairy; no nostalgic vernacular here
- Through it all rises a tower, of books....
- ....a vertical library with an eyrie at the summit
- If we acquire a hundred and fifty books a year, it will take forty nine years to fill the shelves to the top of the tower; by this time we shall be too old to climb the stairs
- We started with the dining table, neatly laid as a plan, which architects would have us believe is a description of the world
- But then we let time move in, disturbing the impossible purity of the plan....
- .... to leave traces of occupation....
- .... which we then inscribed in a plan; a plan of action
- An interior interrupted by domestic difficulties
- Pregnant larder
- A bodily seat
- And in the office, dancing rooflights come to rest over the last remaining drawing board in London, from where an enlightened Sarah surveys her scene

The project described here is a building that Sarah Wigglesworth and I have designed. In the first major publication of the project, the critic described the building as having "too many ideas". This was not a compliment. He also said the design was "self-indulgent." Again, this was not a compliment.

What these two terms, too many ideas and self-indulgent, indicate is a certain tendency in architectural culture, and in particular British architectural culture. It is a tendency of puritanism which demands that architecture be a transparent manifestation of simple truths. One idea, rigorously carried through from large scale to the detail, is seen to be enough. Mature architecture is signalled by a consistency of approach, clarity in the parts. Mature architecture is seen to fit into a genealogy of architectural progress, from which awkward moments, inconsistencies and hybridity are ruthlessly edited. Architectural critics establish these genealogies through their writings, defining neat packages of styles, methods, techniques, and taste. If you fit into one of these categories you are an architect. If you define one of these packages you are a great architect. But if you transgress these packages and categories, you are dismissed as wayward, immature, self-indulgent, maybe even not a proper architect. This, perhaps, could be our fate. But we relish it. Too many ideas?

Guilty as charged.

What I want to argue is that this puritanism that infects the production (by architects) and reception (by critics) of architecture also infects research into design and research by design - and this infection is not healthy. I work in a University whose motto is: "To discover the cause of things." This motto is a paradigm that guides much research. It assumes that there are definable causes to things and that these causes can be discovered in a rational, essentialist, manner. It is a paradigm that has its roots in Enlightenment fundamentalism. This posits that genuine knowledge issues from a procedure of legitimation which subjects all explanations to public and repeatable testing. If the method is one of testing through empirical processes, the belief system is one which is structured around the idea that truth can be reached through rational inquiry. In the architectural context, the shadow of Enlightenment fundamentalism can be seen in the adoption of prescriptive design methodologies, the excesses of functionalism, the belief that there is an inevitable logic to construction, the adoption of supposedly neutral technology as mark of objective progress, the typological rules of the stylistic rationalists, the search for perfected form through algorithmic processes ...I could go on. With modern computer technologies, these methods are assuming new power and being used still more uncritically.

Importantly, this reliance on the belief system of Enlightenment fundamentalism is a means by which architecture attempts to legitimate its presence within the academy. Architecture often feels an orphan in the academy, adopted by neither the sciences nor the humanities, and misunderstood by both. In order to gain credibility, and in order to survive both financially and intellectually, we turn to the rational and progressive principles set down by the Enlightenment. These systems presume to construct a stable and testable knowledge base by which the causes of things - in this case buildings - can be objectively analysed, and thus the making of things - buildings - can be rationally developed. Teaching within the academy becomes a matter of learning the rules. Research in the academy becomes a matter of refining the rules in the search for a more precise version of the 'truth'. Practice

outside the academy becomes the application of these rules. Strength is found within the academy through the academic legitimation of rational enquiry.

Enlightenment fundamentalism thus becomes a guiding principle of much research into architecture and much so-called research by design. There was much talk in the Delft conference of methodologies, attempting to place a straitjacket over the act of design in a way that eventually restricts it. Having too many ideas is a challenge to such simple orthodoxies, which cannot cope with complexity or contradiction. The problem with a reliance on rational methodologies is that in the search for universal truths or approaches, the world has to be severely edited. Enlightenment fundamentalists cannot accommodate historical or social contingency. They escape from the awkwardness of the lifeworld, with all its multiple, overlapping, modalities, and find intellectual succour in neat, comforting, packages of thought. In searching for the 'truth', they bypass the real. They cannot tolerate the unpredictable. They reduce human behaviour to a set of norm-based rules. So, in fact Enlightenment fundamentalists are describing something which is not, and never can be, architecture.

Architecture turns one way to the muse of genius for artistic succour and the other way to the rationality of science for intellectual legitimation - and in this endless oscillation sometimes forgets to establish itself as a discipline in its own right. There appeared to be confusion at the Delft conference between research into design and research by design. The former attempts to explain the process of design and leaves me confused because the explanation is carried out in such abstracted terms that I cannot recognise myself, as a designer, in the system. The latter, research by design, was the real subject of the conference, but was rarely addressed in terms of how the act of design can be considered as an act of research. As a result, what was ignored was what the real strength of the concept of research-by-design could be in the architectural context - what unique architecture has to offer to the discipline of research. In looking to legitimate

our research through the methods of others, we ignore ourselves. We are too modest.

For me the extraordinary strength of research by design in the architectural context is twofold. The first is that the act of design is a synthetic act of research through which new forms of knowledge are created. Design of buildings, by necessity, has to address a broad range of intellectual, physical, social, and political, conditions. This engagement can and should take the form of research. Research into the conditions at stake in a rigorous and ethical manner is the prerequisite for design. The act of design then takes these strands and through synthesis (an intentional not impulsive moment) moves to the production of new forms of social inhabitation and engagement. These forms, lets call them buildings, are indeed new forms of knowledge. However, this knowledge is not apprehended through the traditional virtues of scholarship but through our engagement as cognisant, sentient, beings. If one of the defining features of research is that it leads to new forms of knowledge, then I would argue that design is an exemplary form of research, but only if we allow the definitions to move away from the model of other academic disciplines. Where traditional research is often based on an analysis of the given, architectural research-by-design is projective and dynamic. Where traditional research is concerned with the objective, architectural research by design is necessarily speculative inasmuch as it looks forward to a future over which it does not have full control. Where traditional research is often obsessed with method and the correctness of the process of research, architectural research by design is more concerned with the outcome. As Ben van Berkel noted at the conference, the most important thing is not the research itself but what you find - a lesson many of the delegates would have done well to learn.

The second strength of research by design is that the act of design is contingent. A defining feature of architectural design is its very contingency. Architecture is continually open to uncertainties. It is buffeted by forces beyond its control. The process of design cannot be subjected to method, the process of briefing cannot be fully rationalised (clients are hardly simple beings), the process of building is open to continual uncertainty, and the occupation of architecture is unpredictable. Bring to this rich mix the social and political context in which architecture is situated, and it can be seen that at every single level architecture is contingent on other forces.

But surely this very contingency is sign of weakness? How could I possibly present it as a strength?

Weakness at an intellectual level because of the lack of certainty in being able to analyse the 'cause of things', with contingency seen as an impediment to the establishment of a stable knowledge base. Weakness also at a professional level. A profession cannot tolerate what it cannot control, because what it cannot control threatens its whole *raison d'être* as the holder of certain truths, skills and actions. It may be argued therefore that as soon as one accepts the epistemological fragility which contingency may imply, then one also has to accept the fragility of the profession and architectural research - or does one?

Early Marx is clear in stating that the contingency of human events should not be seen as a defect in the logic of history but rather as its very condition. He states: "Men make history but not always in circumstances of their own choosing". If we replace the word 'history' with 'architecture' - men make architecture but not always in circumstances of their own choosing - then my point is made on his great back. Contingency is not seen as a defect in the logic of architecture, but as its very condition. Marx then argues that the role of the historian/philosopher is not to try to rid history of its contingency, as would previous philosophers (most notably Hegel) in their pursuit of exhaustive comprehension. Rather, he argues, the role is to understand the contingency and in particular to see history (or for our purposes architecture) as a set of social relations. In this light, contingency, far from a defect, is in fact a catalyst for strong interpretation. And in this light Le Corbusier's famous call for "ineffable space (which) drives away contingent presences"<sup>2</sup> is doomed to failure, as are any theories or methodologies that attempt to rid architecture of its contingency.

Contingency is only a sign of weakness if one feels that it inevitably leads to position of relativism. By this I mean an intellectual stance in which no one competing position or argument is seen to have authority over another. Where the Enlightenment fundamentalist clings to a foundational belief system, the relativist rejects it. Where the Enlightenment fundamentalist has no place for contingency, the relativist embraces it as the very condition of intellectual pursuit. However, the contingency of architecture does not necessarily lead to a relativist position and with it to a position of potential weakness. The philosopher Richard Rorty argues that contingency leads us to a position of individual responses to the world, defined through irony<sup>3</sup>. In the rejection of any notion of foundational truth, Rorty posits the self as a "tissue of contingencies". But architecture cannot afford the solipsism implied by Rorty's take on contingency<sup>4</sup>, not only because architecture is never just

the work of the individual self but also because architecture is part of a public and political life-world and in this cannot afford to be structured through a set of individual, solipsist responses. Instead, we must respond to the contingency of architecture in a manner which is responsible - responsible that is to the social and political world that architecture resides in. In this way, contingency leads us to the necessity of making strong interpretations - to what the philosopher Nicholas Smith calls strong hermeneutics<sup>5</sup>. These interpretations avoid the unitary responses determined by orthodox methodologies so beloved by architects and architectural educators. Instead, they are flexible in the face the contingency of the world, but not overwhelmed by it, because the interpretations are founded on research and informed by an ethical stance. Judgements are then made. These interpretations are thus responsible. They may not be perfect, they will not be the same from person to person, but they do carry with them a political awareness.

So if, as I argue, architecture is a contingent discipline, how can we possibly research it through the act of design? Surely the context in which design is set is so open a field, so full of obstacles and conflicting forces, that it is impossible to address it in a manner which has any clarity or goes beyond a relativist response? Everything is just too slippery. My response to this apparent problem is twofold. The first is driven by intent, the second is driven by doubt.

The architect has to act with intent. Where the weak response of the relativist is 'anything goes' - and with this there is an abrogation of intentional action - the response of the strong hermeneutic is one that surveys and researches the contingent field, then makes interpretations, then acts with intent. In so doing architecture retains a resistive and redemptive potential; it responds to the forces of the lifeworld in a manner which both attempts to play a part in the reformulation of those forces (but not the only part, that was the modernist fallacy) but is also alert to and humble in front of them. Humility is not something our masculine profession finds easy to accept, but the contingent field we operate in demands it. We can only do as well as we can, never be perfect.

My second response to the slipperiness of the contingent field is driven doubt. How, you may ask, can doubt be a strength as the basis of research? Let me turn to Merleau-Ponty for an answer. He opens his inaugural address as Professor of Philosophy with the following words: "The man who witnesses his own research, that is

to say his own inner disorder."<sup>6</sup> A philosopher who opens his inaugural with a profession of doubt - and philosophy the presumed harbour of truth; it is wonderful. The point is that Merleau-Ponty sees doubt as an essential condition of his life as philosopher and researcher. To understand this, he argues, we must remember Socrates. Socrates who refused to flee the city, but insisted on facing his tribunal, because he does not see his philosophy as some "kind of idol that must be protected but as a mode of thinking which exists in its very living relevance to the Athenians."<sup>7</sup> Socrates is killed in the end because he inflicts on others the unparadonable offence of making them doubt themselves. Seventy-five years later Aristotle will leave the city, arguing that he cannot allow the city to commit a new crime against philosophy. Now is it too much to liken some strands of architecture to Aristotelian retreat, a reaction to protect the purity of buildings against the stains that society will wish to inflict? I think not. And is not Socratic engagement the better model? I think so. This model is one that proceeds through doubt, in a constant unravelling of what may be wrong in order to make it better. But this engagement is not one of hopeless capitulation. Merleau-Ponty argues for a continual movement between retreat - and radical reflection - and engagement - and intentional action. "We must withdraw and gain distance in order to become truly engaged." Architectural research takes on this movement from retreat to engagement - never fully immersed (because then uncritically overwhelmed) but never fully distanced (because then implausibly pure). The movement is underpinned by a condition of doubt, without which we are in continual danger of deafness to, and imposition on, others.

This doubt is also an essential part of education. Without it, teaching becomes the inculcation of orthodoxy. Power is asserted by the tutor over students through the imposition of prescriptive methods, rule-based learning and the continuation of the status quo.<sup>8</sup> Doubt, on the other hand, encourages the development of what Dewey calls 'reflective intelligence', whereby each student begins to develop their own structure of thinking with which to judge a variety of competing positions. In architecture, the development of this reflective intelligence is an essential preparation for the contingency of the architectural world.

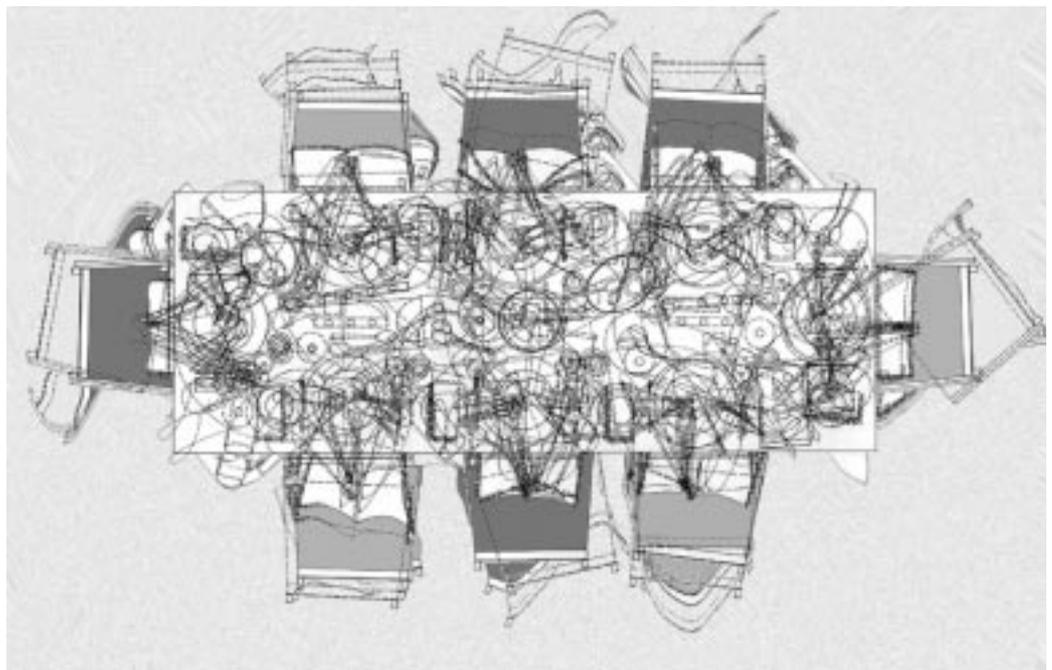
The architect, the architectural researcher, and the architectural student must operate in the territory that the philosopher Gillian Rose calls the 'Broken Middle'<sup>9</sup>, away from the battle between the impossible purity of foundational beliefs and the damaging fragmentation of the individual's 'tissues of contingencies'. Interestingly Rose identifies architectural design as a mode of thinking (or in her

terms a structuring of concept and learning) which allows one to manoeuvre within this broken middle. But architecture, and its research-by-design, can only do this if we are confident enough to talk about it as a discipline in its own right without recourse to the legitimation of art and science, and also if we are confident enough to accept the condition of its very contingency. If we are, then I would argue that architecture becomes an exemplary mode of intellectual pursuit and active engagement, and that research-by-design within the contingent field becomes not only possible but also absolutely necessary.

I started with a discussion of our house and office. We are both academics and both architects, operating in that transgressive field of theorising practitioners and practising theoreticians. Part of our approach in its hybridity and gawkiness may be a frustrated reaction to the dominance of late modernism in the United Kingdom, the anally retentive mode of architectural discourse. More seriously, we always saw the project as a piece of research-by-design, attempting to synthesise, or rather to bully, our intellectual preoccupations into some kind of material form. If these preoccupations are multiple, sometimes contradictory, sometime inconsistent, then so be it. That is the way of the world. That is the nature of the contingent field we operate in which cannot be policed by the intellectual straitjacket of simple methods and which cannot be reduced to a single idea. Too many ideas is OK. ■

## Notes and References

1. Illustrations to accompany this opening section can be found at [www.swarch.co.uk/eaee](http://www.swarch.co.uk/eaee)
2. Le Corbusier, 'Ineffable Space', reprinted in Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968* (Rizzoli, New York, 1993) pp 66-67
3. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989)
4. see Richard Bernstein's critique of Rorty's argument and its apolitical nature: Richard Bernstein, *Rorty's Liberal Utopia*, in *The New Constellation* (Polity Press, Cambridge 1991) pp 258 -292
5. see Nicholas Smith, *Strong Hermeneutics, Contingency and Moral Identity* (London, Routledge 1997)
6. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy*, trans. John Wild and James Edie, Northwestern University Press, 1963, p60
7. *ibid*, p64
8. This attitude is typified in the books issued to delegates at the Delft Conference which purported to set out rational systems of teaching and learning.
9. Gillian Rose, *Broken Middle*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, pp 300ff



[www.swarch.co.uk/eaee](http://www.swarch.co.uk/eaee)

## Conference on Architectural Research and IT

Nordic Association for Architectural Research Annual meeting 2001  
27-29 April 2001, Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark

The development of Information Technology has resulted in changes in the profession of architecture as well as in the concept of architecture all the way from design through 'the art of building' to the scale of urbanism and landscape. The same is true of architecture's related profession. Thus architects and engineers collaborate in new ways due to Information Technologies. Likewise the attitude towards interdisciplinarity is different than previously. Concepts from the architectural world are, through the help of Information Technology filtered through to other areas, at the same time as still more architects are turning themselves loose from the traditional fields of the profession in order to work with 'the virtual'. In the same way Information Technology has made its way into the profession of architecture from closely related professions such as engineering and the fields of graphic production. Information Technology in the profession of architect-

ture is no longer only connected with visualization, but also with communication and the making of form, analysis and planning as well as the overall managing of processes.

The purpose of the Conference on Architectural Research and Information Technology is to put the question of the relationship between architectural research and this development on the agenda.

- *How and with what kind of thematizations and with which results is research made with the concept of architecture as an essential pivotal point concerned with this development? What kind of new issues originate from the development of Information Technology?*
- *Are they subjects of research, and if so, how could they be explored? Have for instance new areas in the*

*periphery of the traditional fields of architecture come into existence due to the development of Information Technology?*

- *What is the role played by Information Technology in research itself, as a tool, a generator of theory, a way of presenting things? Has the relationship between basic research, applied science and the professional architectural practice changed due to the mediation of Information Technology?*

The Nordic Association for Architectural Research invites through this conference architectural researchers and researchers from other areas concerned with 'architecture' to meet in order to reflect on these basic questions concerning the development of architectural research as well as its fields and conditions seen in the light of the development of Information Technology.

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### Information and registration form at:

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## MATIÈRES

Cahier annuel de l'Institut de Théorie et d'Histoire de l'Architecture (ITHA) du Département d'Architecture de l'Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne

### MATIÈRES 4

L'architecture est née à la conscience des sociétés humaines comme "monumentale", établissant l'équation "architecture = monument". Cette vision a bâti le monde pendant des millénaires. Mais à l'époque de la modernité, de nouvelles équations s'installent, si bien que le "monumental" peut devenir le "banal", et vice versa.

À quoi doit-on ce bouleversement de conceptions? Existe-t-il, dans notre époque actuelle, la possibilité du monument, peut-on en envisager la conception? Le concept de monument est-il suffisamment évident? Quelle est la multiplicité de significations que le terme "monument" évoque?

Si l'on considère l'histoire comme permanence de valeurs transmises, leur traduction ne fait guère problème dans des compositions paradigmatiques, monuments qui entendent précisément célébrer pareilles certitudes indiscutées

et indiscutables. Mais l'augmentation générale de la complexité des phénomènes, un relativisme diffusé, la crise des idéologies, affaiblissent aujourd'hui la possibilité de créer des monuments exaltant ingénument personnes ou événements considérés comme emblématiques de valeurs. Le concept même de "valeur" entendue comme vérité universelle fait l'objet d'une critique diffusée, accentuée par la complexité de la métropole actuelle. L'ensemble de ces conditions amène à repenser dans ce cahier 4 de matières la relation entre architecture et monumentalité et à réfléchir sur les transformations du concept même de monument.

#### Table des Matières:

##### Essais

- Bruno Marchand - *Ce que j'écris n'est pas à moi*
- Sylvain Malfroy - *Manières de penser la grandeur, Genève et l'expéri-*

*ence de la mondialisation dans les années vingt et trente*

- Alberto Abriani - *Architecture e(s)t Monument*
- Luca Ortelli - *Sur la toile de l'ordinaire*
- Jacques Lucan - *La théorie architecturale à l'épreuve du pluralisme*

##### Monographies

- Dominique Delaunay - *Ostensions discrètes* (reportage photographique)
- Patrick Mestelan - *Monumentalité, Hypogée et cénotaphe*
- Roberto Gargiani - *La Sacristie dans Saint-Laurent de Filippo Brunelleschi, monument à l'idée de structure*

##### Chroniques, Reportages

- Emmanuel Rey - Le bâtiment de "La Suisse Assurances" à Lausanne: Evaluation de différentes stratégies de rénovation
- Maurice Lovisa - La villa bleue et la villa rose

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## Architectural Information Management

29-31 August 2001, The 19th eCAADe-Conference, Finland

The 19th eCAADe-conference will be held in Finland in the end of August 2001.

The conference presents CAAD-related scientific and research papers, but it also acts as a forum to present project reports of ongoing educational topics.

The special aim of the eCAADe 2001 conference is to concentrate on a modern and near-future architectural design project and building project information and knowledge.

What kind of information, knowledge and data are architects working with, and how are they managing it?

### Important Dates

Abstracts, before 1 March 2001.

Notification of acceptance, before 15 April 2001. Reduced conference fee, before 15 May 2001. Final papers, before 1 June 2001

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**EAAE PRIZE:** In EAAE News Sheet # 60 you will find information about the EAAE Prize: "Writing in Architectural Education".

**EAAE News Sheet**

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**NEWS SHEET deadlines**

#60 (B2/2001), May/Mai 01/01  
#61 (B3/2001), Sept./Sept. 01/01

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**Contributions to EAAE News Sheet**  
**Contributions AEEA News Sheet**

Contributions to the News Sheet are always welcome, and should be sent to the editor, who reserves the right to select material for publication. Contributions might include conference reports, notice of future events, job announcements and other relevant items of news or content. The text should be available in French and English, unformatted, on either disk or as an email enclosure. Deadlines are announced in the News Sheets. ■

*Les contributions au News Sheet sont toujours bienvenues. Elles doivent être envoyées à l'éditeur, qui décidera de leur publication. Contributions d'intérêt: rapports de conférences, événements à venir, postes mis au concours, et d'autres nouvelles en bref sur la formation architecturale. Les critères à suivre sont: Les textes doivent être en Français et en Anglais, en forme d'un document de texte non formaté, qui peut être attaché à un e-mail ou être envoyé en forme d'une disquette. Les dates limites sont publiées dans chaque bulletin. ■*

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