

POSITION PAPER

Reports from the Fifth EAHN Meeting in Tallinn

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The fifth international meeting of the European Architectural History Network was held in Tallinn, at the National Library of Estonia, from 13 to 16 June 2018. The reports from this meeting aim to capture some of the main themes that came up during four intense days of academic discussions and exchange, meetings, and free-form interaction in different spatial and social settings. After the introduction by Andres Kurg, host of the Tallinn Meeting, five delegates review the five thematic tracks which organised the selected sessions and ran in parallel throughout the three days of the conference: Mediations, Comparative Modernities, Peripheries, Discovery and Persistence, and Body and Mind. In his closing keynote lecture, Reinhold Martin from Columbia University further reflected on the ample critical discussions which had taken place throughout the conference.

Introduction

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The fifth international meeting of the European Architectural History Network was held in Tallinn, at the National Library of Estonia, from 13 to 16 June 2018. The confer-

ence brought together 294 delegates, including 142 speakers and 46 chairs, from 42 countries altogether (**Figure 1**). In addition to paper and round table sessions, the programme included nine interest group meetings; three keynote speeches (by Christine Stevenson from the Courtauld Institute, Krista Kodres from the Estonian Academy of Arts, and Reinhold Martin from Columbia University); lunch tours to thirteen different sites in the city; receptions; book and exhibition presentations; a gala



Figure 1: Andres Kurg presenting the geographical outreach of the 5th EAHN International Meeting in the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn, 13 June 2018. Photo by Anne Hultzsch.

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dinner, and an after-party. Behind this list of events and participation numbers were four intense days of academic discussions and exchange, meetings, and free-form interaction in different spatial and social settings, sustained by the summery June weather.

As organisers, we aimed to open up the city to the conference participants. This was achieved not only through the lunch tours, but also through the different settings of our receptions and satellite events. These highlighted the history and social changes in the city further. The opening reception took place at the Kumu Art Museum, designed in 1994 by architect Pekka Vapaavuori and completed in 2006 (**Figure 2**). One of the first major public structures to be designed in the early 1990s, this building represented the aspirations of the newly independent Estonian state through its combination of modern yet monumental forms and regional materials. Contrasting with this well-established institution, the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM) was the venue for the after-party. Founded in 2006 on the site of an ex-squat, within the abandoned office buildings of a former heating plant, EKKM is a non-profit institution that works towards producing and promoting local and international contemporary art. It also aims to alter the prevailing work practices of conventional art institutions.

A different set of buildings introduced the earlier history of the city. The Rotermann salt storage building, currently housing the Museum of Estonian Architecture in Tallinn's harbour area, was constructed in 1908 (engineer Ernst Boustedt) (**Figure 3**). Originally serving as a storage facility for the salt used by nearby bread factories, it represents the wave of industrialisation under the Russian Empire of

the 19th and early 20th centuries. On the other hand, the Ungern-Sternberg family residence, located at the edge of Toompea hill (architect Martin Gropius), referenced the Baltic-German heritage of the country and its continuing role under the Russian czar.

Yet it was perhaps the main venue of the conference that most tellingly revealed the recent history of the country. Designed in 1984 by architect Raine Karp and interior architect Sulev Vahtra, the National Library (**Figure 4**) opened in 1993, when political circumstances had been drastically altered. With its sombre façade, historical references, and grey limestone finishing, it appeared to users of the turbulent 1990s as a monument to a bygone era. But details like the interconnection of different units within a system of galleries and roof terraces (that extend access from the front street across the top of the building to the park and amphitheatre behind it) point beyond the spatial logic of a bureaucratic socialist regime and reflect the architect's desire to build a complex public space for local citizens. In addition, during the time the building was erected, its own construction process became a site of political struggle. Joined by hundreds of volunteers, in the late 1980s the pro-perestroika National Front organised a public work day to speed up its completion. With its puzzling form and 'untimely' character, Tallinn's National Library indeed calls for historians' work to uncover the shifting perspectives and ideologies of its past and bring them to bear on its meanings and practices in the present.

When we started preparing for the event more than two years ago (the proposal to host the conference was accepted at the EAHN business meeting in Pamplona in January 2016), one of the ambitions was to use the



Figure 2: Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn, 1994–2006, architect Pekka Vapaavuori. Photo by Toomas Volmer.



Figure 3: Museum of Estonian Architecture, Tallinn, 1908, architect Ernst Boustedt, reconstruction 1995–1996, architects Ülo Peil, Taso Mähar. Photograph courtesy of Museum of Estonian Architecture.



Figure 4: The National Library of Estonia in Tallinn, 1984–1993, architect Raine Karp. Photo by Paul Kuimet.

conference to draw attention to the whole Nordic-Baltic region, rather than remain within the borders of the nation-state. As this was EAHN's first meeting in this area, we also saw the conference as an opportunity to expand the organisation's geographical reach and to critically address centre-periphery relations within Europe

(**Figure 5**). This is why the local organising committee also included members from Helsinki and Vilnius. They were responsible for satellite events, including the PhD seminar of the Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) at Aalto University in Helsinki (organised by Aino Niskanen two days before the conference in Tallinn), and

an exhibition and presentation of modernist architecture in Lithuania, 'Architecture of Optimism: The Kaunas Phenomenon, 1918–1940', in the main conference venue (curated by Marija Dremaite from Vilnius).

Many of these initial aims were also reflected in several sessions of the conference programme. Put together through two consecutive open calls (a call for sessions in December 2016, submitted for selection to an International Scientific Committee, and the call for papers in September 2017), the final programme included 26 paper sessions and two round tables. In a preliminary meeting in Warsaw in early 2018, the Scientific Committee organised the selected sessions into five thematic tracks that ran in parallel throughout the three days of the conference. Of these, perhaps the tracks on 'Comparative Modernities' (which addressed supra-national networks and institutions as channels for instigating the processes of global modernity) and 'Peripheries' (which addressed architectural history production in diverse regional contexts) spoke the most to the concerns and challenges faced by historians who work outside the hegemonic centres.

The main aim of the EAHN biennial conferences is to map the present state of research. Hence, the function of the tracks was to reflect the emerging discussions,

subjects, and tendencies in architectural history in Europe and beyond, *anno* 2018. Representing a research theme that has been steadily growing over the past decades, the 'Mediations' track gathered together sessions that addressed the history of the sites of architectural knowledge production. These included critical discussions on architectural criticism, architectural magazines, foundations supporting architectural research, and the role of history as mediated in the architectures of the 19th and 20th centuries. The 'Body and Mind' track consisted of a great variety of sessions. One researched the fascination with the 'irrational' and the surreal in late modern and post-modern architecture. Another mapped various structures that have historically operationalised the body (ranging from children's architecture designed to train future – ideological – subjects, to the architecture of reform in the late 19th century, and the mid-20th-century architecture of creativity). The 'Discovery and Persistence' track went farther back in time, to look at the early modern world. These paper sessions discussed early modern residential systems, the *longue durée* of the baroque in Europe, representations of the Orient before the 19th century, and the representation of architecture in erudite writing.

To draw the sessions together, all tracks had designated followers throughout the conference who presented

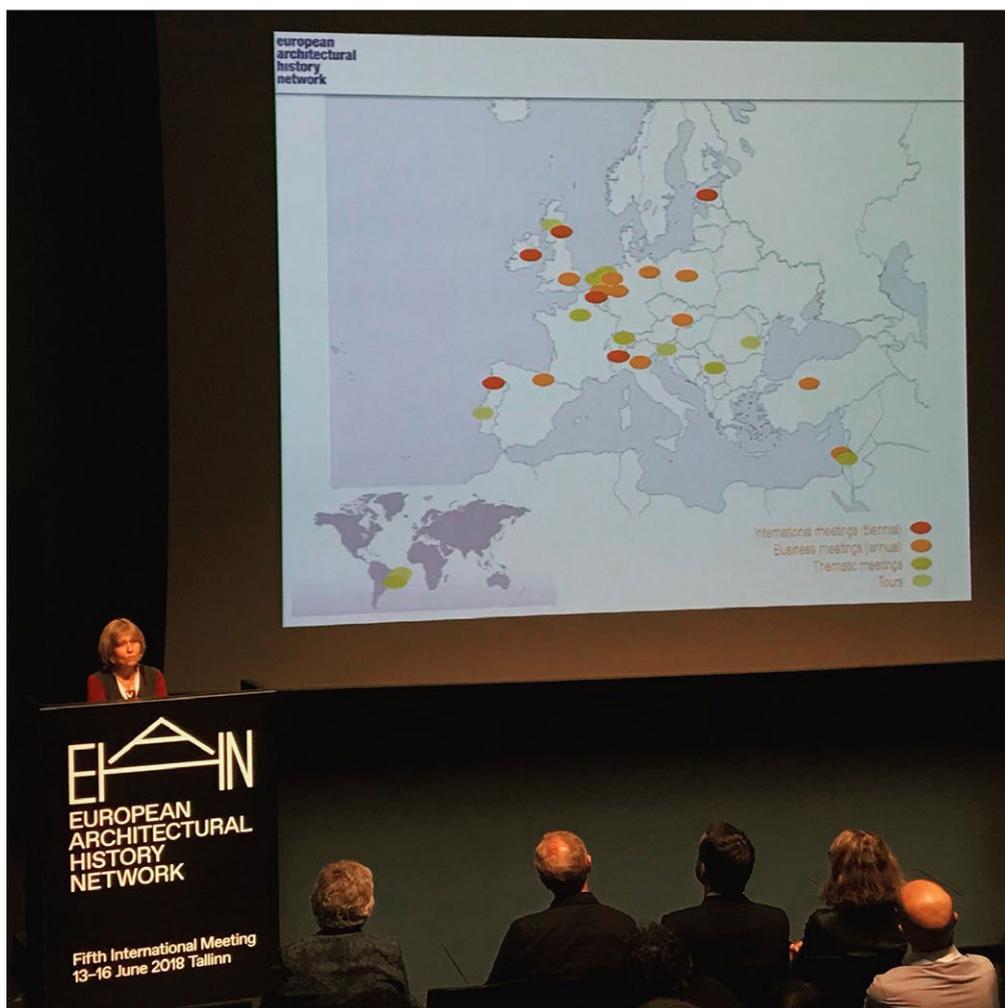


Figure 5: Hilde Heynen presenting the geographical spread of EAHN'S events at the 5th International Meeting in the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn, 13 June 2018. Photo by Anne Hultzsch.

a brief overview of the discussions and papers at the wrap-up session. Following this, Reinhold Martin in his closing keynote lecture further reflected on the critical discussions which had taken place throughout the conference. In this way, the conference aimed to make up a map of contemporary research, recognising at the same time the contingent and partial character of any such attempt. It also sought to keep up the tradition of EAHN transnational meetings as a new kind of platform, where authoritative scholarship and more polemical and overtly political accounts go hand in hand. They provide the scholarly community a space for addressing uncomfortable questions, and for raising issues that transcend the confines of national traditions.

Mediations

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When the scientific committee for the conference designated one of the tracks as 'Mediations', I believe the members had in mind both the media (the conduits through which architecture is described, explained, and created) and the interventions or negotiations through which architecture's tensions are navigated and explored. That is to say, they pointed both to the means and the practices of communication. In point of fact, the twenty-odd papers I heard and the discussions they generated led at times in somewhat different directions. Their disparate case studies ranged from the colours of Estonian medieval churches to the Ionic columns erected in front of Mies's Barcelona Pavilion. Instead of reciting the specific topics of each session, I will try to relay some themes or refrains that repeatedly surfaced throughout them.

The two strains that emerged most prominently are an engagement with the production of architectural materiality on the one hand and the production of architectural knowledge on the other.

One of the more pressing messages emanating from these sessions is the need to pay as much attention to the *making* of architecture as to interpreting its *meaning*. The implication was that attention to the making will expand and enrich our understanding of meaning. So, for instance, something as basic as investigating the economic consequences of selecting Irish over Italian marble for Victorian Irish church interiors, owing to a new canal infrastructure, sheds new light on the polychromies of church interiors. In another paper, the colour range of Kodachrome film enters into new perceptions of architecture, with implications for how it is further conceptualised. But the pursuit of *making* also extends to the institutional frameworks that constrain and enable architectural production. Here, historians question the impact of funding on architecture, and its political ramifications. What changes in the architect's identity ensue from working within bureaucratic settings? And when public commissions dry up and the private developer becomes a mediating factor between user and architect

in 1980s Britain, how does the design of office space come to reflect the demand for added value through new digital infrastructures and adaptability? My sense is that architectural historians continue to shift their focus from individual architects to the frameworks, economic and institutional, within which the built environment is mediated. They examine the material conditions of architectural production construed broadly.

But interrogation of the multifarious means for the production of architectural knowledge was by far the dominant theme of this track. It will be difficult to do justice to all the questions raised and the quality of the discussions held. These ranged from such fundamental issues as an inquiry into the origins of architectural magazines to the very conceptions of time that inform our methods of writing history (and these in turn ranged from our understanding of how normalised notions of temporality have shaped architectural thinking to the most critical contestation of the status of facts, data, and the constitution of architectural research). Let me try to give you a quick sketch of these far-ranging and provocative topics.

First: Is the architectural critic a guide to taste? An educator of the public? Engaged only with other architects within disciplinary debates? And what assumptions are then being made about the identity of the architect or the functions of architecture? Who is the audience for architectural knowledge? How is architectural knowledge communicated to the public, to clients, to architectural students, historians, and architects? And perhaps more importantly, what are the implications of the methods used for truth, justice, and social welfare?

What constitutes architectural research? Is it intended to propagate the values and interests of the funding agency? Should architectural research model itself on research carried out in fields like medicine? Can architectural research, as emanating from a profession, be distinguished from pure science (and should it be)? Is there space for subversive and disruptive modes of inquiry within the funding structures of architectural research?

Central to such queries is an interrogation of the very narratives historians invariably construct and the assumptions they make about time, historicity, and temporality (while they simultaneously unearth the temporal frameworks that are revealed through architectural design). Sacred, eternal, and eschatological conceptions of time were contrasted with secular, progressive, and abstracted conceptions (**Figure 6**). The inevitable contemporaneity inherent to reconstructions of the past was contrasted with the inevitable presence of the past in the modern period.

And finally, most fundamentally, many papers raised a question that has become increasingly urgent in the aftermath of a long-sustained critique of the Enlightenment and in the current political climate: what is the epistemological status of data? Through their research into the materiality of architecture, the 'Mediations' track scholars are clearly engaged in a new criticality that has certainly benefited from the decades of postmodern theory, but has also embraced a critical empiricism.



Figure 6: Richard Wittman presenting 'The Modernity of Rejecting Modernity in Architecture' in the 'Mediations' track of the 5th EAHN International Meeting in the National Library of Estonia, 16 June 2018. Photo by Anne Hultsch.

Comparative Modernities

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The five sessions gathered under the heading of 'Comparative Modernities' offered a panorama of exciting new research that uses the tools of architectural historiography to address new questions and highlight interesting entanglements.

The series was bookended by two sessions that focused on developers as agents of modernity. Convened by Lawrence Chua, the first session looked at *comprador* networks in Southeast Asia in the colonial era. Chaired by Tim Verlaan and Alistair Kefford, the last session thematised the role of private developers in the post-war European welfare state. Both sessions brought new actors to the fore. They did not concentrate, as we usually do, on architects, but rather on developers as co-producers of the built environment.

The *compradors* were rich, usually Chinese, merchants who acted as middle men between colonial administrations and local populations. They built warehouses, popular neighbourhoods, commercial real estate, and their own private mansions. We were presented with case studies covering Shanghai, Singapore, Macao, and the Dutch East Indies. Private developers were also crucial actors in the European welfare states. Business men and companies brought the necessary capital for investment in construction. Working

in conjunction with public administrations, politicians, urban planners, and architects, they invested in profitable (commercial and residential) real estate. Modernist new towns, urban renewal projects, as well as the results of these private-public partnerships in the UK, Norway, Italy, and Belgium, were analysed in this session. In the discussion that ensued, some interesting methodological questions also came to the fore: Where do we find the archives that contain pertinent material? How do these archives shape the historian's narrative? (To cite just one example, there was no analysis of the networks of trade and kinship among the *compradors* themselves, as Chinese secret societies are notoriously difficult to research.) And what is the role of oral history and fieldwork?

Two other sessions dealt with development as an objective of modernity. Convened by Richard Anderson and Elke Beyer, the first of them looked at the organisation of architectural production in the socialist world. Here, case studies covered China, the Baltic countries, the USSR, and Romania. One paper developed a wider perspective by looking at the export of Eastern European architectural expertise to non-aligned countries. For the other session, Tom Avermaete and Samia Henni brought together a series of contributions that analysed the role of the United Nations vis-à-vis the built environment in the non-Western world. The presenters revisited the Habitat conference in Vancouver (1976) and took us to Cambodian-Thai refugee camps, school construction sites in Lesotho, and tourism infrastructure in Cyprus, before unveiling the dream of a trans-African highway network.

Both sessions offered exciting material and food for thought. They showed how, as co-producers of development, architects are confronted with risks, failures, and difficult entanglements with politically and socially contested situations. However, the two sessions were strangely disconnected. Whereas the first one, on the socialist world, consciously aimed to pay attention to a part of the world that is less well known in Anglophone scholarly circles, the second seemed to act on the silent assumption that the UN's main agenda had to do with the integration of the Third World into global capitalism. But the socialist (or second) world was also part of the UN. Many socialist countries were actively involved in development strategies for the Third World (as we had heard in the first session that same morning). This disconnection seemed, to me, to re-enact the Cold War, with both sides somehow in denial of the legitimacy of the other.

But one session did actively engage with the entanglement of Western and Eastern modernities. Léa-Catherine Szacka and Maros Krivy curated a session on the political aesthetics of postmodernism, looking at both late socialist and late capitalist contexts. This session featured case studies in Czechoslovakia, the UK, East Germany, Chile, and the USSR. Hence, it effectively encompassed the First, Second, and Third Worlds. The session clearly showed that something like an imaginary community of architects indeed exists across the world. In the 1980s, postmodernist aesthetics popped up in the most diverse contexts, with totally different political, economic, and cultural conditions. This phenomenon by itself questioned Fredric Jameson's diagnosis of postmodernism as the 'cultural logic of late-capitalism'. As the ensuing discussion pointed out, this diagnosis would certainly be applicable to Chile. But it was harder to validate it for Czechoslovakia or the USSR, where maybe Lyotard's understanding of the post-modern condition as the loss of utopia would be a more appropriate theoretical framework.

All in all, this was a very rich track that offered ample new perspectives and animated discussions on a series of pertinent issues in contemporary architectural historiography.

Peripheries

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In what follows, I will not summarise this track's sessions. I will instead offer some observations and a couple of proposals.

1. *The peripheral is a projection (I)*. Three days spent in small rooms with small groups, some five floors away from any other session, showed me all about what being peripheral means in a conference like this. And then to come in to a session housed in a big lecture theatre at the last, when my own track had ended early – a session where microphones are passed round, voices amplified, with five or six times the number of attendees – now that is what we might call the centre!
2. *The peripheral is a projection (II)*. My sessions, apart from the first (when it was in the title), barely mentioned the peripheral. One of them started by explicitly rejecting it – 'Mosques in Europe Are Not Peripheral'. That I was the only person who followed this track throughout its length may indicate that the peripheral is not in itself a rubric towards which architectural historians are drawn unless it is qualified with another term.
3. *Centre v periphery (I)*. I set out wanting to see my task as a question: 'What has happened to the centre-periphery model?' It certainly appears – and passing comments confirmed this – more than a little shop-soiled. A formulation that came into architectural history in the 1990s (probably from political geography and postcolonial studies) is now mostly referenced only as a discredited model, bound up with notions of exportation, coercion, and permanent subordination. Instead, we now prefer conceptual models that involve networks, negotiation, diversity, reciprocity, and entanglement. (And then there is our restless intellectual need for the new. In a conference like this, who will be seen wearing the clothes of twenty or thirty years ago? And, after all, who wants to claim peripherality for their work? To be peripheral cannot be a value.) But while power may have become more complexly understood in this process of intellectual change, it has also sometimes been left behind.
4. *Centre v periphery (II)*. Despite all this, it is pretty clear that the centre-periphery model persists. And it persists in modified or veiled forms. It is not dead, but undead, impossible to get rid of. And so, I heard accounts where local things are bound into systems and relations so that everything is upgraded or becomes a centre. The peripheral is still there in these modes of thinking. But now there is either an imperial metropolis (Moscow/London) whose centrality is both affirmed and denied, or a regional or global system with several centres, again both affirmed and denied.
5. *Critical periphery*. In these peripheral sessions I saw something of Postmodernism and something of the evergreen Critical Regionalism debate. What is clear from this view is how these issues continue to carry the agenda of their progenitors. We inherit their claims now as assumptions. They need inverting: to talk of a global Critical Regionalism, and of local Postmodernisms.
6. *Everything peripheral*. There was a passing glimpse in the 'Socialist Block' session of architectural weather systems. Cold fronts, prevailing winds from the south, heat waves, threatening storms. Everything was now peripheral, in a new sense; architecture sitting there awaiting each change, responding, in a region that made sense, a geography that was not of the nation. It was just a flash ...

7. *The centre that must not hold.* One of the themes that emerged through the 'Europe's Own Islamic Architecture' session was of architecture pulled into and out of the centre of attention: mosques in Bosnia suddenly made targets for civil war hatreds; those in contemporary Georgia drawn into the politics of Ottoman nostalgia; others not allowed to build minarets or to have the calls to prayer broadcast from those already built; the larger vectors of Persian Gulf and Southeast Asian investment. The centre might not be a place to occupy when it becomes a function of discursive hysteria.
8. *A proposal (I).* If the centre-periphery dichotomy cannot be willed away, then perhaps it can be finessed by embracing a slightly different conceptual framework. Experimental psychology uses a tripartite model of visual attention: the foveal (in the centre of attention), the perifoveal (on the edge of attention), and the parafoveal (between the two). This 'foveality' can be useful in describing temporal as well as spatial changes of interest. It is not an oppositional or hierarchical, but a relational schema, as objects are never fixed in place. And it makes clear that sight or attention is what is at stake.
9. *A proposal (II).* For all its implicit structuring by centre-periphery, the 'Tasman World' session (with its sealer dealers, timber merchants, whalers, and pilferers) perhaps inadvertently suggests another model, one that architectural historians seem not to have adopted in any sustained way. Fredric Jameson's 'cognitive mapping' would help us understand power in more finely differentiated ways than the centre-periphery dichotomy, and in terms that avoid the metaphor of networks (which are only good for certain-sized fish). Connections become routes and tracks across an always-being-drawn map. Relations of production and consumption tie disparate things into chains that reveal different logics of space. Cognitive mapping can reduce our artificial disciplinary distinctions and cut open our falsely oppositional models.

Discovery and Persistence

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During the EAHN 2018 conference, much was said about the importance of studying architectural history to read the present and reflect on future societal and human challenges. This has become particularly evident today, at a moment that launches a series of questions about the ways in which the rest of the century will unfold. A century ago, the world was putting an end to a devastating war that would not only transform the global political geography, but also turn the page on a long, eclectic 19th century. The 'Discovery and Persistence' track went farther back. Early Modern studies were a common denominator

for the five sessions of this track that looked as far back as the late 1400s.

This long temporal frame was instigated by a session on 'Residential Systems', which addressed the nomadic way of living from a spatial point of view, whether territorial or architectural, and challenged traditional typological designations. Focusing mainly on northern Italy and the Low Countries, the session debated urban constellations and mental geographies of representation and sociability. Papers demonstrated the inadequacy of centre-periphery models to explain these complex residential configurations, established by the elite and by merchant, newly rich classes. The session presented networks as expressions of power, with a clear objective: to revisit the margins of mainstream early modern European housing.

This discovery of the margins went further in two other sessions. Although the 'Provincial Baroque' session intended to look at how the periphery can challenge the canon, the focus was rather more on how political, economic, and religious conditions shaped artistic rings around our main historiographical concepts. Piedmont, Malta, Catalonia, and Old Livonia proved fertile territories for the exploration of questions around style, regionalism, and the *longue durée* persistence of language in a broader geographic territory.

The 'Architecture of the Orient before Orientalism' session further worked on this discovery of the margins chronologically. The session explored the foundation of the perception of 'eastern architecture', at a time when new aesthetic notions like 'taste' were being introduced. The 17th and 18th centuries were scrutinised to refer to non-classical architectural forms through the eyes of western travellers like William Chambers or Thomas Hope. From the eastern Mediterranean to China, these papers also analysed the integration of the 'other' in western thought and practice.

These three ways of exploring 'otherness' (spatially, geographically, or chronologically) to foster unexamined terrains of scholarship in architectural history, were further developed in two more sessions. These shared the intent to examine written and drawn sources in a new light. This way, they suggested that, sometimes, our discipline requires moments of distance and seclusion to form novel insights.

'Locating Architecture in Early Modern Erudite Writing' focused on the treatment and appearance of architecture in coeval writings as repositories of knowledge. This session aimed to understand the scope, variety, and originality of architectural thought in that period. It ultimately questioned our understanding of the discipline within the scope of the liberal arts. Papers in this session dissected texts and publications of the 16th and 17th centuries. They contextualised what was recommended in the treatises; from them, they drew new meanings and alternative principles; and they analysed imagery, often exposing the Vitruvian echoes in anti-Vitruvian material.

A similar 'Rediscovery of Antiquity' reverberated in another session devoted to 'New Sources and New Interpretations of Old Ones'. This session was more

specifically focused on the interdisciplinary and international network of ongoing archaeological research in Rome that existed by the mid-1500s. The session mapped spatial papal intentions and invented antiquities with exceptional visual flair. It proposed figures such as Androuet du Cerceau or Palladio as defiant of canonical perspectives of the discipline.

Summing up, this track proved that architectural history, especially for the Early Modern period, thrives at the fringes. Questioning the established status quo of seminal works triggers a natural curiosity for the unknown that needs to be comprehensively examined or revisited. I was personally challenged and puzzled by the mysterious title 'Discovery and Persistence' that was attributed to this track. One can easily accept 'discovery' as a confirmation of a vivid discipline that is ambitious to propose new scholarly findings. But I found 'persistence' more of a slogan for a track totally devoted to the Early Modern. In fact, and besides two keynote addresses, very few other sessions touched upon pre-1800 periods. Therefore, 'persistence' is not the summation of these five panels, but rather a resilient manifesto for earlier chronologies. This is especially pertinent in a pan-thematic conference of architectural history today where, more and more, scholars share research on the 20th century, post-war, and recent subjects. Whether chronology is still a dimension to consider in a multi- or trans-disciplinary forum devoted to language, space, theory, or programmes is certainly a question for the EAHN to reflect upon.

Body and Mind

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The 'Body and Mind' track followed presentations that examined historical, theoretical, and conceptual architectural constructions of subjectivity. In particular, papers emphasised architectural historiographies about the corporeal nature of lived human experience of the late 19th and 20th centuries. In addition, the politics of human corporeality featured strongly in this session. This is not surprising, given present-day global social tensions about the production and ethics of individuation and subjecthood, especially vis-à-vis the need to examine the uneven distribution of power relations in public and private domains, but also within some areas of the university sector. Five sessions examined formations of architectural 'selves' and communities in light of scientific, technological, political, cultural, and societal transformation. In a clear move away from more universal, essentialist, or phenomenological definitions of selfhood (such as ideas of spatio-temporality, interiority, and thresholds, or the embodiment and inhabitation of buildings and cities) questions of process, equality, productivity, responsibility, and affective modes of expression were posed.

The status of the corporeal body, as an ontological site of architectural meaning, led to authors reflecting upon who the modern historian might be: where is s/he located?

How does s/he define her/his method or practice? How does s/he create historiographies which contribute to architecture and inform other disciplines/institutions? Bodies of evidence as a concept of epistemological inquiry were also prevalent: for example, the session included studies on ephemeral, incomplete, conflictual, or 'leaky' subjects, such as women, children, and those living with variable mental health. These were taken seriously as *minority* 'ways of knowing' which still need to be considered as necessary historical accounts.

From a more systemic historical perspective, the political formation of our biological lives figured across panels. Interestingly, however, most papers did not present critiques of governmentality as binary power relations between an architecture, building, or system and its users. Instead, many of these 'biopolitical' papers drew creatively from archival and historiographic sources to define more processual and sociologically imbricated understandings of the architecture and its respective 'people', as found in the village, housing complex, school, educational camp, or office system.

Within a surrealist historiography, the 'model' architectural and historical subject were also destabilised. Modernist and functional laws of appropriation or productivity were unsettled as critical points of entry for discussing historical discontinuities in health, politics, design, curation, and gender relations. The ethical power of gendered historiography to decolonise architecture was presented in a nuanced account of Simon de Beauvoir's highly personal encounters with black post-war USA. It was further demonstrated through the complex ideological imbrications of Schütte-Lihotzky's post-war work in China. The interplay between the child as both 'a model project' and 'projection' of utopian design was captured in papers on 20th-century Soviet childhood and Israeli youth villages. Vitalist and reformist impulses of the 19th and early 20th century highlighted how 'proto'-modern representational, political, and institutional architectural design prefigured later modernist ambitions in architectural interactions with experimental science and public welfare. Papers on the office management aesthetics of Bürolandschaft and Stuart Brand's Californian camps showed how these value systems were then subsequently captured by corporate and private interests in mid-20th-century Germany and the post-war US. In the final session, environmental architectural history located the researcher within the complex contemporary technological and political planetary and oceanic networks of human and non-human ecologies. In a discussion among colleagues from Europe, the US, South America, and Southeast Asia, ambitious and challenging questions of narrative, historiography, and responsibility were posed. Taken together, they highlighted how the historian is necessarily imbricated with her/his local and planetary ecologies and ontologies.

Overall, this corporeal strand demonstrated that historiographic architectural research is very much alive. It is a multifarious discipline (and community) that suggests architectural, historical, and theoretical powers have the capacity to tackle serious and challenging social issues

through close archival and critical conceptual analysis. Secondly, the participants understand that their practice raises questions about bodily life that are not only necessary to present-day constituencies. They also enable future local and global historiographic values. Third, these concerns were deftly designed into the conference proceedings by the organisers themselves, who began the event with informal ‘interest groups’. In this way, they *gave time* to research and pedagogic cultures in which different generational conversations could be initiated, new friendships and collaborations seeded and nurtured.

The social role of the architectural historian and her/his topic’s proximity to lived reality is important for many of us in our work. To cite just a few examples, as a humanities discipline, we share the serious international concern about the economic pressures on research funding, the financialisation of the higher education sector, and the impact these structural changes have on sustainable careers for researchers, especially for the young, female, and postdoctoral researcher. Also, for some architectural historical colleagues (across generations, race, and gender), the location of historical research power has also shifted. The historian may be situated both inside the institution as a ‘scientific’ researcher, but s/he may also deliberately practise her/his craft outside the institution within the public and political realm. While the conference did not contain papers that proposed quite so directly the ‘public’ or ‘activist’ historian, its papers nevertheless reflected debates about the role of the historian in society and what it means ‘to be’ a historian today. Reflexive and complex societal questions were especially important in the panels on women and transnational architectures, and on climate change. Researchers took seriously the question about what skill set and knowledge base constitutes the historian today, and where her/his work might be most effective or most needed. Across the ‘Body and Mind’ sessions, the matter of the architectural historian’s disciplinary agency persisted as a necessary constituent that motivates a researcher and her/his work.

Closing Keynote

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To begin where we are, I want to thank the organisers and in particular, Andres Kurg, for their extraordinary work, and for inviting me to take on the daunting task of offering these closing thoughts. It is truly a very personal honour to have been asked to speak with you here in Tallinn, just a short walk (by New York standards, at least) from the Tallinna Reaalkool, where my father, Reinhold Martin, graduated gymnasium in 1942. Inevitably, much of what I will have to say reflects this transatlantic perspective; while its standpoint, my point of view, remains solidly in New York, one personal and historical vanishing point is located here in Tallinn and converges on events and ideas and born of the mid-20th century.

Now, I take as my main assignment to offer concluding – though certainly not conclusive – reflections on what, exactly, we may have been doing here together these past few days (**Figure 7**). For that, it seems necessary to consider what, besides the hospitality of our hosts and this beautiful city, has brought us together in the first place. On the face of it, we seem to share a discipline, architectural history, or the history of architecture, or of art, or of cities, depending on your preference. But even a brief glance at the conference programme casts significant doubt on the proposition that we share a set of objects, a curriculum, or even a specialised language, though all of these are to some degree true. No, speaking for myself at least, I think that what brings us together, first and foremost, is that we share a conversation.

We share a series of semi-overlapping, somewhat dissonant, somewhat coordinated discussions, in different languages, about different things, at different times, in different places. This, I think, is the ‘networked’ quality of EAHN in action, a network that notably and happily differs from other, more rigid professional gatherings. I will limit myself, then, to trying to indicate some of the tangled threads running through the conversations I’ve had a chance to overhear, or to hear about, these past few days. But I’ll also risk rudely interrupting, perhaps awkwardly, with what may seem a slightly anachronistic, if not untimely, interjection.

Let me begin by shifting the emphasis of the term ‘discipline’ away from shared subject matter or method to what, in a certain language, is called a regime of truth. Seen this way, what we share is not a set of facts and artefacts, or a list of names, places, and dates, but a very particular way of telling the truth. I insist on this not only for the obvious reason that facts themselves are under sustained, calculated assault today in the transnational mediascape. Unfortunately, we know that this is nothing new, although its potential consequences are dramatically magnified by apocalyptic military force. More modestly, I begin with the problem of telling the truth simply because the interdisciplinary humanities have, in the last generation or two, found it difficult to use that word without putting it in scare quotes or otherwise apologising for its partiality, its built-in perspectival distortion.

This is for very good historical reasons that we forget at our own peril, but also at the peril of those who are not usually admitted to rooms like this, those who have been for generations on the receiving end of the epistemic and physical violence borne by the regime of truth known so confidently as ‘the West’, to say nothing of whiteness, patriarchy, hetero-normativity, or – last but not least – capital. Hence the reasonable and necessary response, quite visible throughout this conference and others like it, to multiply and diversify sites, subjects, and sources. Too often, however, euphemisms like ‘global’ are used, for example, when the real programme should be decolonisation. Since, infrastructurally speaking, the need to multiply voices and references is accompanied by the less evident, more intractable need to recognise – and to historicise – why some and not others have been able or allowed to speak and be heard in the first place, by



Figure 7: Reinhold Martin delivering the closing keynote at the 5th EAHN International Meeting in the National Library of Estonia, 16 June 2018. Photo by Anne Hultzsch.

whom, and in what manner. Indigenous voices, the voices of women, of the poor, of entire excluded and marginalised populations echo through the rooms and hallways of every single monument that we study, across the ages and around the world, their whispered truths exchanged among those who have been employed, if they are lucky, to clean the toilets.

Along related lines, it is notable how many panels in the conference have centred on new or neglected archives. It seems fair to say that most of these have emphasised the evidentiary value of their discoveries, while the old

art-historical problem of distinguishing documents from monuments appears largely to have exited the stage. Refreshingly, the critical historian has decisively crowded out the antiquarian and the connoisseur. But there is also something slightly regrettable in this, since, among the symptoms of archive fever within the regime of truth called architectural history is diminished attention to what the art historian Erwin Panofsky called the 'iconological' register. Panofsky, who as you know was principally an early modernist, delighted in the document-versus-monument dilemma, which he found most deeply at work not in the

iconographical decoding of artworks, but in the iconological elaboration of their world view or, to rehearse his own perspectival metaphor, the sociocultural standpoint that made them meaningful in the first place. Iconology, in Panofsky's formulation, differs from the mere contextualisation of monuments or the sketching-in of background, just as buildings, paintings, and sculptures can offer crucial documentary evidence to the social historian who cares little about their formal or literary qualities. To have an iconology, you must have an artwork (or at least an artist), and by my count, about one-third of the papers in our conference did not begin with this assumption.

Although any direct correlation would be misguided, I suspect that one reason for this is that a large percentage of our speakers, if not the majority, do not, unlike the Panofskys of the world, hail from departments or faculties of art history, by training or profession. By my imprecise count, the conference panels comprised a mix of scholars from professional schools of architecture, polytechnics, academies of fine art, and institutes of design, along with a formidable cadre of art historians. The latter, of course, have other annual meetings: the College Art Association in the US, the Association for Art History in the UK, and assorted, more specialised gatherings organised by time period, area, or genre. At most of these, the history of architecture is treated on comparatively few panels, despite the fact that writing and teaching about architectural monuments was central to the institutionalisation of art history as an academic discipline in the first place. Zoom out further, to the humanities as a whole (which is something I've been privileged to do regularly of late at my own institution), and you will be reminded even more dramatically of how small our fractured little discipline really is, by noting just how few historians of architecture exist on any faculties, even in large research universities like my own.

In short, if there is anything like a discipline represented in this room, it is a minor one, tiny compared to the legions of other humanists – literary scholars, philosophers, historians, linguists, musicologists, classicists, archaeologists, and art historians – whose books and terminology contribute mightily to our own debates. And this, before we even begin to consider the social sciences – economics, sociology, urban studies, anthropology, and even the anachronistic 'area studies' – that have left their mark on the footnotes, the language, and the argumentation of a great many of the presentations we have heard these past few days. Still, there are advantages to working in a minor field. For I would suggest that as a whole, and despite its periodic conservatism, architectural history in its current form is an insurgent discipline, a discipline with very little to lose, and therefore able to take certain risks that, if navigated carefully, promise abundant rewards.

We have, for example, comparatively few intellectual police guarding the borders of our field, although we are surely all acquainted with one or two. When these police are asleep, among the risks worth taking is that of claiming not just contingent truths, insights limited to the necessarily narrow frame of a given conference paper, panel, or theme, but universal ones. Yes, universal truths, but only

in the sense of the questions to which they correspond. Now, I can already hear some of you squirming in your seats at this mention of universality. Let me reassure you that by this I do not mean to revive those totems of the European Enlightenment and its affiliates – including the totem of universal History itself – that have, over the centuries, so efficiently chained bondsmen to lords, or slaves to masters, in Hegel's dialectic. No, I mean something much less metaphysical, much more literal. First, I want to point out that, from the human perspective – that is, the perspective of the humanities, of which Panofsky himself was such an able representative – no truth, however sweeping, is ever universal in the sense that it verifiably applies to the entire universe. Here, we are closer to the empiricism of the laboratory scientist than to the idealism of the metaphysician. But the nontrivial point still holds: For our disciplinary purposes, even the grandest truth claims are at best planetary; most, if not all, become irrelevant – for the time being – the minute we exit Earth's atmosphere, or at least the solar system.

Of course, even the comparatively small enclosure of the humanities is riven with an almost uncountable number of fissures, conflicts, hierarchies, and other differentials. The organisation of our conferences and of our universities recognises some of these, like the difference between living and non-living things, or the difference between languages, or that between numerical pursuits and textual knowledge, even as so-called interdisciplinary mixtures and interfaces proliferate. But just now I've said 'planetary' rather than 'global', to highlight the limits of simply adding sites and subject matter – arrogantly, provincially termed 'non-Western' – to fill in the blind spots in our curricula and our colloquia. For I think it more fruitful to use one of the tools in our disciplinary tool kit and reframe the decolonisation of the mind and of the archive as, in part, a question of scale. What we want to contest is, precisely, the anthropocentric projection of a particular subjectivity, weaponised and enriched by centuries of exploitation, not the idea that beings on a tiny planet or workers in a tiny discipline can have anything in common.

Which allows me to turn to the universal question as a form of truth. This will lead us eventually to the scaled-up enigmas of 'environment', 'climate', and other urgent matters; but, as I said, I want to begin where we are. As Andres explained in his opening remarks, we are in the national library of a former Soviet Socialist Republic, in a building designed by Raine Karp and Sulev Vahtra, and completed shortly after independence (or re-independence), in 1992. It amuses me to learn that, after four decades as the State Library of the Estonian SSR and prior to its relocation, this institution (not the building) was briefly named after Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, the 19th-century author of the Kalevipoeg, a myth with which, for better or worse, I grew up. In fact, I can imagine a paper on this library being delivered under any one of the conference themes: 'body and mind', 'comparative modernities', 'discovery and persistence', 'mediations', or 'peripheries'. Although each version of that paper would be slightly different, all would have to address the

question, is this building a document, or a monument? It certainly aspires to monumentality, and therefore to artistic meaning. But this national library also poignantly documents, in its form and in its contents, what it might have meant a quarter of a century ago for a small democratic republic to emerge out of occupation under state socialism. In that sense, the building is many things in many places at once: It is in the former socialist world, at the so-called European periphery, in the Baltic region, and among the class of objects called libraries where, as an artwork, it bears a mixed iconography that we would strain to call postmodern.

Addressed to this building, the iconological question of artistic meaning – not ‘What does it mean?’ but ‘How does it mean?’ – turns, I think, on two enormous concepts, democracy and socialism, that conspire to pose a universal question: the question of equality. Though testifying to their brutal incompatibility across the Eastern European 20th century, and with a sizeable dose of mystic nationalism thrown in, the building we are in does not negate the aspiration towards equality that animates both of these ideas. Here we leave Panofsky behind, since, although the question of equality is an ancient one, his iconological analysis did not raise it. It is debatable whether his archive or his own particular modernity prevented him from doing so. By most accounts, of course, only around 1750 did societies begin periodically and unevenly asking the question of equality, often aided by books in libraries. In our conference, those sessions grouped under the early modern ‘persistence and discovery’ thread have shown, largely by omission, how difficult it was to ask such a question – of real, universal, human equality, especially in architectural terms – during an earlier period, even one that witnessed a rearrangement of relations among nobles and peasants, or the birth of a mercantile bourgeoisie: the modern (or postmodern) library, then, as symbolic form.

But is this difficulty a truth borne out by the historical record, or the artefact of an archive that has preserved the perspectives of noblemen and priests much more effectively than it has preserved those of, say, 16th-century subalterns like Menocchio, the peasant protagonist of Carlo Ginzburg’s microhistory, *The Cheese and the Worms*? I will leave it to the early modernists to adjudicate this question. From the perspective of ‘peripheries’, another conference thread, you will notice certain other blind spots in my map. Leaving aside the likelihood that the inhabitants of alleged peripheries (the majority of the world’s population, that is) would disagree that their lives are lived on the edges, it is impossible to say, based on what we’ve heard, how the question of equality might have been posed, for example, in dynastic China prior to 1900. Nor have we been given any insight into its asking in pre-colonial African societies, or those of South Asia or the Americas, or indeed, the pre-colonial Tasman world. This is not a criticism; it is a fact of most architectural history conferences, simply because a de facto colonial perspective – and a colonial archive – still shapes our discipline. Efforts like those of the Global Architectural History Teaching Collective have tried to overcome this by reconnecting architecture and art history with archaeology, to

remind us that for millennia, countless cultures around the world have had robust monumental traditions. Yet, however important its contribution, such a perspective evades the truth, I think, by settling for cultural relativism in place of universal questions.

So forgive me for interrupting the pluralistic conversation. By universal I do not mean timeless or placeless. On the contrary, I mean, to borrow a borrowed term from one of our panels, that even – or especially – universal questions are situated. The rising, uneven prominence of the question of equality in some parts of the world, made available through architecture over three centuries, might therefore compel us to ask if and when it was posed elsewhere, why or why not, by whom, and under what conditions? Is the question of equality, strictly speaking, a ‘modern’, European one? Of course not. But precisely its asking might also cause us to revise the document-monument equation, and look for ways that such a question has arisen in buildings, texts, and visual materials in other places and other times: a veritable genealogy of equality, architecturally speaking.

My point, then, is to contest the perspective from which the universal and the particular are eternally at odds. In doing so I have clearly defaulted into a meditation on the uses and disadvantages of history *for life*, as Nietzsche said so well, despite the abundance in this conference of rather more disinterested points of view. Any ruling perspective can seem disinterested when it surveys what looks like settled terrain, the contours of which can be described dispassionately and self-evidently, their objects and personages neatly arranged so as not to disturb the placid surfaces of its museums and its libraries. But doubts and insecurities rumble incessantly below. As an insurgent discipline, the field of architectural history is, in its present form, capable of impudently posing universal questions like the question of equality. As a minor science, it is a potentially troubling regime of truth.

Minor, by virtue of its minuscule representation in the great faculties of the world and in their intellectual histories, and by virtue of the eccentricity of its objects, but a science nonetheless. Perhaps you are again squirming in your seats at what might seem an unseemly positivism hiding in this word: science. To calm your fears, allow me to allude, in conclusion, to a little book in which I have personally taken solace from time to time, translated into English as *The Historian’s Craft*, by the French medievalist Marc Bloch. A veteran of the First World War, Bloch, who was Jewish, interrupted his writing to join the French resistance. Most remarkably, he wrote without access to anything like the research library we’re in right now. The book is unfinished; Bloch was arrested and executed midway through what appears to be the fifth of seven chapters. Lucien Febvre, his fellow Annales School founder, compiled his friend’s manuscript into the volume we have, which appeared in 1949 as *Apologie pour l’Histoire, ou Métier d’Historien*. Bloch was not shy about using the word ‘science’ to describe his craft, or *métier*; indeed, he defines history as the ‘science of men in time’, but neither does he disguise his disdain for his positivist predecessors. From the perspective of today’s history of science, which

has taken a 'material turn' towards a renewed interest in medieval and early modern artisanal or 'craft' knowledge as epistemologically constitutive, Bloch's use of 'métier' is surely suggestive. For these and other reasons, I prefer its modest pragmatism to the term 'discipline' which, especially in English, cannot help but carry an air of the police about it.

So let me add that if we share a discipline, it is not only in the sense of a vaguely dissonant conversation about big questions like equality, but also in the sense of a common métier, or vocational technique, which the English term 'craft' does not quite capture. If we're feeling bold, we might even risk using 'art' in its place, as in 'the historian's art', since truths artfully told are often the most compelling of all. Either way, one hallmark of our particular technique is the careful use of images – universal, as far as I can tell, among all the speakers on all the teams. For, when historians of art and architecture meet, it is often in the dark, to better see our documents and our monuments, and practise the tradecraft required to decode them.

An adept practitioner of a different but related art, Marc Bloch was, as I said, a medievalist whose life was cut short by modern events. Any reader of his magisterial chapter on source criticism, with its complex meditations on forgeries and fakes, would think it fair that he be regarded, like Panofsky, as an intellectual peer to those fastidious laboratory scientists whose work proved so deadly in the summer of 1945, a year after Bloch's death. Among Bloch's objects were Merovingian charters, inscribed on parchment and sometimes copied to paper, and among the documents he found frustratingly missing from his archive were records of prices sufficient to establish a statistical table. Panofsky spent most of his time with paintings, etchings, and the ancient, medieval, and early modern texts with which they spoke. But what do these materials have to do with the documents and monuments left behind by the century in which both of these two figures lived?

I ask, because close to three-quarters of the papers in our conference dealt with the 20th century. My evocation of these two seemingly anachronistic figures, Panofsky and Bloch, might therefore leave most members of our colour-coded thematic teams scratching their heads – with the possible exception of the yellow, early modern 'group of death'. But here, I make a special appeal to my fellow green 'mediators', as well as to all of those other modernists (and postmodernists) assembled under the colours violet, blue, and red, to say nothing of the greys: recognise the problems of historical science and art that these figures and others like them addressed as windows onto truths as disputable and debatable as those coming out of any 20th-century physics laboratory. Be as suspicious of your documents as Bloch was of his royal charters. Look as carefully at buildings as Panofsky did at paintings. Do not accept uncritically the pieties of a present – our present – that is as profoundly unmoored as Bloch's and Panofsky's was, a present that took one to his death in a field near Lyons, and exiled the other to suburban New Jersey.

Asked to speak from that transatlantic standpoint (from New Jersey, that is) in 1952, Panofsky observed the

differences that held at the time (and to some extent still do) between the American university system of specialised departments and the European system of specialised chairs. In the US, academics moved around a lot, going to conferences like this. In Europe, it was students who tended to move from place to place; the faculty stayed sitting in their chairs. Either way, his story is quaintly elitist; both systems have efficiently reproduced the academic patriarchy, but the comparison is timely when we remember academic purges then and now. (It was suggested that at least one of our colleagues, from Turkey, was apparently unable to attend this conference for political reasons.)

Panofsky the iconologist also assumed his visual science to be cross-hatched with discursive lines. Comparing vocabularies, he demystified the philosophical depth of the German language with the example of 'taktisch', which, connoting both tactical and tactile, allows terminological imprecision to masquerade as profundity. Panofsky preferred the literalness of English, and I have just suggested the French 'métier' in place of 'discipline' or 'craft'. Even so, we remain within the master languages of Europe. Are there any terms of art from the Estonian language or its Finno-Ugric cousins (all so-called minor languages) that merit admission to our conversation? Or, while we're at it, what specialised terminology might be available from non-European languages rarely studied in art history departments or schools of architecture, but increasingly spoken, for complex historical reasons, by their students and their faculty?

Non-rhetorical questions like these put categories like 'centre' and 'periphery' in perspective. But I said I would end with the cloudy grey enigma of 'environment'. Today, I think we can say that environment's sister term, climate, has come to designate another universal question. Having elicited a crackdown on truth in the natural sciences, the climate question is gradually reshaping the historical, social, and literary ones. There is no small irony to this; since the 19th century, naturalists have used climate to subdivide the planet into regions, variations on which later acquired the sociocultural status of 'areas' – as in 'area studies' – in the think tanks, libraries, and classrooms of the Cold War. But over the past half-century, terms like environment and ecology have taught us to recognise the physical interrelatedness of these areas, as well as their historical interdependence, if only to mark the cruel, deeply uneven universality of the climate question. To some extent, world systems theorists share this perspective with Annales historians like Fernand Braudel, who wrote *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* in captivity during the war. We hear echoes of that work's geo-historical frame, centred on a body of water, in such remapped areas of study as the 'Atlantic world' or the 'Indian Ocean world'. These, too, are environments that blend nature and culture, and their treatment by practitioners of a craft close to ours reminds us that terms like 'environment' or 'climate' do not necessarily designate an exotic new domain of study. As important as architectural history's contribution to the emerging environmental humanities will be – and I think it should be central – we can do worse than re-examine

our archives, and those in allied arts, for documents and monuments that testify to the *longue durée* of anthropogenic environmental change. We might remember that nature itself is not merely an object of passive contemplation mirrored in our orders or our ornament, but a material complex to which every artwork and every city belongs. Or, that when we use terms like mechanisation or industrialisation with respect to buildings, we are referring to systemic processes – some visible, some not – that have asymmetrically transformed our planet's very particular, very situated climate.

My reflections, then, have only amounted to an attempt to interrupt the conversation by interjecting two untimely, universal questions – those of equality and of climate – from a perspective whose picture plane sits somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. This perspective is, of course, just as partial and just as interested as any other from which we have heard these past few days. I am

by no means suggesting that these two questions are the only ones worthy of our ultimate attention. But by forcing the issue, I hope to have made clear that, if not exactly opposed, these two questions and their derivatives name an epic struggle that has been going on for centuries. By expanding their scope to include artworks like the building we are in, and the socio-economic processes to which they correspond, we can reread our entire conference from an agonistic point of view and watch, inevitably, winners and losers start piling up. This is not the only way to practice our craft, but it is one way in which, early in the summer, these past few bright, Baltic nights might have helped illuminate, or enlighten, what another mid-century transatlantic thinker, Hannah Arendt, once called – with sharply optimistic defiance – 'dark times'.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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