

Die Realität des Imaginären.

Architektur und das digitale Bild

X.

In 1976, fifty years after the opening ceremony of the Dessau Bauhaus building, the first International Bauhaus-Colloquium took place in Weimar as a conference of researchers in the field of Bauhaus history. From that early beginning the Bauhaus Colloquium without doubt was the largest and most influential architecture conference in East Germany. And it was an exceptional East-Western meeting place.

In 1992, three years after the collapse of the wall and the decline of the GDR, we started once again the Bauhaus-Colloquium in Weimar, the 6th one. Impressed by the unveiled pathology of political systems and with Nietzsche in our mind, the Colloquium reflected on the relation of "Architecture and Power". In 1996, under the headline *Techno-Fiction*, we thought about the invention of technological utopias, mainly the expectations for a new digital world—indeed a very topical question. In 1999 the title of the Colloquium was *Global Village. Perspectives of Architecture*. Frederic Jameson suggested that cultural globalization will construct new modes of architectural production, new codes, and hybrid styles. Michael Hays told us about the smoothness and flatness of the world. In 2003 we focused on *Medium Architecture*, trying to read architecture as a medium. Jean Baudrillard spoke about 9/11 and it became fully evident that "architecture is what its media are". Trying to seize crucial questions of architecture, the Bauhaus-Colloquium rose to be some kind of a jewel in Bauhaus-University. Step by step it became a very prominent place for theorizing architecture.

In 2007 once again the world of architecture theory was gathering in Weimar at the X. International Bauhaus-Colloquium. We are very glad to have had contributions by 51 leading scientists from Austria, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Japan, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA. These include the media, art, and literature theorist Prof. William J. T. Mitchell (University of Chicago), a leading figure in visual culture and the author of *Iconology* (1986) and *Picture Theory* (1994), the star architect Arata Isozaki (Tokyo), who designed the Olympic stadia in Torino and Barcelona, the Harvard Professor K. Michael Hays, the best-selling author and anime researcher Kaichiro Morikawa (Tokyo), the Director of the McLuhan Program, Derrick de Kerckhove (Toronto), the former Gropius-Professors in Weimar Kari Jormakka (Vienna) and Kurt Forster (Yale University), the image philosopher Lambert Wiesing (Jena), the historian Mario Carpo (Paris), the architectural historian Sylvia Lavin (Los Angeles), the architecture theorists Arie Graafland (Delft), Alexander Tsonis, Liane Lefavre, and many other outstanding and leading figures in the world of architecture theory and philosophy. And I am especially glad that again we had a group of very promising young researchers in the workshops of the Colloquium.

topic

Like Etienne-Louis Boulée, El Lissitzky, Le Corbusier, and many other architects, Henry van de Velde originally was a painter. Walter Gropius was not a painter, but searching for a fundamental visual grammar of all art and architecture. The Barcelona Pavilion for a long time existed only as a group of photographic pictures, which we took for reality. Rudolf Arnheim told us decades ago what now is fully evident, that iconic thinking and the use and production of pictures and iconic metaphors is crucial for architecture. In short: Architecture is picture processing.

But today, in the time of what we may call digital imperative, and under the conditions of global networking, pictures are no longer what they were before. Digital pictures are no longer analogy, but construction. And this makes a fundamental difference. And digital pictures are no longer regional, but globally present. And this makes a fundamental difference too. Subsequently, digital imaging is one of the upcoming super-powers in the beginning of the 21st Century.

The old questions are transforming into new ones. If reality and imagery implode, how are we then to speak about delusion, iconoclasm and the magic power of iconic rituals? Especially architecture may help to answer such questions, because it is mainly architecture, which consists of this unique dual nature to be material and iconic, spatial and pictorial in the same time. Architecture is: stony images. And what about these authors who talk about a renaissance of the analogue against the digital?

Bauhaus-University Weimar today integrates architecture, engineering, design, art and media. It seems to me, that the main question of our colloquium is a core question for the university too. We have extended work here in all faculties about modeling, simulation and visualization, and we plan to focus on these scientific and artistic capabilities. Thus after van de Velde and Gropius, digital imaging as a cultural technique is at the centre of Bauhaus-University which claims to be a Bauhaus of the 21st Century. Today's Bauhaus should be a digital one, not in order to ignore the material and analogue world, but to change this world in a pervasive and ubiquitous way.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the advisory board of the conference and Dr. Norbert Korrek, who, again like in the colloquia before, was the head of organization of the whole conference. And I would like to thank the members of our Chair for Design and Theory of Architecture for their intensive work in preparing the conference: Chris Dähne, Sandra Schramke, Olaf Pfeifer, and the technical staff Birgit Röckert and Nancy Leser. Thanks to Junior-Prof. Frank Eckardt (Faculty of Architecture) and Junior-Prof. Oliver Fahle (Faculty of Media) for taking an active part in the conference.

We would like to thank our partners and supporters of the conference, the German Research Association, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the Foundation for Technology, Innovation and Research Thüringen (STIFT), the Faculty of Architecture at Bauhaus-University, the Architects Chamber Thüringen, Stiftung Baukultur, and the other sponsors.

Special thanks go to the editor Dr. Heidemarie Schirmer and the student Michael Kraus for the hard-working collection and the accurate editing of the conference papers, now published by the Bauhaus-University Press. Thanks again to Olaf Pfeifer for translating some of the papers.

I am especially grateful to Prof. Jörg H. Gleiter who, for more than two years, has been deputy professor for Design and Theory of Architecture at the Bauhaus-University, a remarkable scientist. He wrote the preparing conceptual papers of the conference and he did a lot of communication with our speakers and partners. We have been working together for a long time, and I hope to continue with this partnership.

Prof. Dr. Gerd Zimmermann