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# Golden Years? How Postmodernity changed the Theoretical Discourse on Architecture and the City

## Editorial

Theoretical discourses play a prominent role in the postmodern architectural debate. It is not only the "return of history" to architecture that can be noted in postmodernism, but equally the introduction of philosophical concepts into architectural discourse—and in a hitherto unprecedented breadth. Certainly, architectural theory has a very long history, which we can trace back to antiquity, as a glance into the still valid standard work *Geschichte der Architekturtheorie. Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (History of Architectural Theory from Antiquity to the present) by Hanno-Walter Kruft, which was first published in 1985, easily shows. Incidentally, the fact that Kruft was inspired in the mid-1970s, of all times, to undertake such extensive studies of historical source writings in architectural theory (by questions from students who were pressing for a theoretical reflection of their subject, as he writes) is probably no coincidence either[1]. In his opus magnum, Kruft also impressively demonstrates that for the longest time the emphasis of theory formation had been on aesthetics[2].

This began to change in the decades between 1960 and the turn of the millennium: Theories from all directions were virtually absorbed: semiotics, post-structuralism, Gestalt theory, systems theory, phenomenology, cultural theory, chaos theory, to name just a few. Concepts were imported from many different disciplines (from psychology as well as from political science, physics or sociology). Suddenly anthropologists, philosophers, literary scholars… spoke at architecture conferences. The integration of the most diverse fields of knowledge expanded the boundaries of what was considered worth discussing in architecture far beyond aesthetic questions. At first glance, this is astonishing, because at the same time there was a return to formal questions and aesthetics, and indeed to architecture as a genre of art in general. At the same time, however, reading became popular at schools of architecture, arguably more than ever before or since. In many cases, this intellectual debate

[1] See Kruft 1995: 7.

[2] See Kruft's definition: "Architectural theory is any comprehensive or partially written system of architecture based on aesthetic categories. Even if aesthetics is reduced to function, this definition remains valid." (Kruft 1995: 13; translation into English by the authors)

was probably based on the desire to substantiate aesthetic decisions in a way that was compatible with the intellectual moods of the time. With the passing of the modern narrative, function and rational expediency lost their binding force as a basis for decision-making. Only very few actually were able and willing to implement the radical offer of an "anything goes" in their own practice, i.e. to endure the epistemological pluralism of a Paul Feyerabend with its consequences of extreme openness, tolerance of ambiguity, and pleasurable indecision in the long run.[3] Instead, a competition of theory-based interpretations soon set in, which, at least in parts of the discourse, was in no way inferior to the objectionable dogmatism of modernity.

Consequently, the writing guild enjoyed a high reputation among architects. And architects also started to write themselves. The trend turned away from the manifesto-like, short form of the modern avant-garde with its apodictic truths, its demands and instructions for action, towards the narrative, the metaphorical, the ironic, the associative. Titles such as *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) by Robert Venturi or *Collage City* (1978) by Fred Koetter and Colin Rowe are required reading at many schools of architecture until the present day.

## Spaces for theory

This ubiquitous need for theory was also reflected structurally in the academic world. To illustrate this fact, a few architecture faculties in Germany and its neighbouring countries may be singled out as examples. The "Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture" (gta) at ETH Zurich, which was modelled on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), had already existed since 1967. In the same year, Jürgen Joedicke began teaching in Stuttgart at the "Institute for the Foundations of Modern Architecture" (IGMA), which he had founded. He was one of the first to explicitly teach a theory of architecture that was not primarily based on historical thinking. Joedicke's approach was initially firmly rooted in modernism. However, by wanting to place modern architecture on a scientific basis and reflect on it critically, he undoubtedly contributed to its transition into postmodernism. He thus stands for an influential strand of development that is often forgotten when looking back at postmodernity, namely an evolutionary derivative of modernism that refrains from an explicit break and instead keeps standing epistemologically and methodologically firmly on the ground of modern thinking.

Elsewhere, too, architectural theory was only slightly interwoven with architectural history. The chair Josef Paul Kleihues held at the TU Dortmund from 1974 onwards was called "Building Planning and Architectural Theory" until the mid-1980s and had a strong practical orientation, since Kleihues, as a practising architect, mainly taught design. Parallel to this, during the 1970s and 1980s architectural theory became a research subject for art and architectural historians. In addition to Hanno-Walter Kruft (TH Darmstadt, University of Augsburg), Werner Oechslin (since 1985 at the ETH Zurich) and Jan Piper (TU Berlin and RWTH Aachen) should be mentioned here. During

the 1990s, many faculties in Germany established specific chairs of architectural theory based on the Anglo-Saxon model. At the TU Berlin, Fritz Neumeyer was the first professor of "architectural theory" from 1993 onwards, in 1996 Eduard Führ was appointed at BTU Cottbus and Ákos Moravánszky at ETH Zurich, in 1998 Kari Jormakka at TU Vienna, to name but a few others.

Journals also played an important role in the discourse on architectural theory.[4] Architectural journals considerably expanded their spectrum of content. The usual architectural reviews and project descriptions, photos and plans were replaced by essays on overarching issues in the new theoretical journals. Magazines such as the Italian *Domus* or the *British Architectural Design* became venues for the negotiation of postmodern concepts. In Germany, the journal *Arch+*, founded as early as 1967, developed into an important forum for postmodern debates towards the end of the 1970s under Nikolaus Kuhnert and Sabine Kraft. Until the 1990s, international theoretical debates were presented here to a German-speaking audience, for example with thematic issues on Charles Jencks, Vilém Flusser or Rem Koolhaas.

Important new periodicals include *Archithese*, founded in 1971 by Stanislaus von Moos and Hans Reinhard[5], and the New York-based magazine *Oppositions. A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture* (1973–84), to which Peter Eisenman, Kenneth Frampton, Kurt W. Forster and Anthony Vidler contributed significantly. In 1981, Werner Oechslin and Ulrich Conrads (the longtime editor-in-chief of *Bauwelt*) founded the journal *Daidalos, Architektur Kunst Kultur*, with others. In the twenty years that the journal existed, a wide range of topics were discussed across disciplines: such as memory, hearing, atmospheres, drawing, size, landscape, the human body or the underground.

Theoretical debates were also held in the context of events: Josef Paul Kleihues brought an international audience to the West German "province" from 1975 onwards on the occasion of the "*Dortmunder Architekturtage*" (Dortmund Architecture Days) and "*Dortmunder Architekturausstellungen*" (Dortmund Architecture Exhibitions), which he initiated[6]. By putting themes such as "axis and symmetry" or "classicism" on the programme, Kleihues deliberately broke with the dogmas of modernism. In addition to architects, he invited art historians, philosophers, sociologists, and artists, and showed architectural drawings by Hans Hollein, James Stirling, Ieoh Ming Pei, Richard Rogers, Philip Johnson, Aldo Rossi, Robert Venturi and Gottfried Böhm in Dortmund's *Museum am Ostwall*. Kleihues established international contacts in this context, which he was later able to build on as director of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Berlin 1984/87.

Another aspect should be mentioned: exhibiting architectural drawings and models as works of art in a museum, as Kleihues did in Dortmund, was—as is often overlooked today—still a provocation in the 1970s. In the field of exhibitions, a similar tendency can be observed as in the production of theory. Architecture exhibitions experienced a heyday in the 1980s, and they had little in common with the also highly remarkable architecture exhibitions of the 1920s. In the interwar period, the architects of the modern avant-garde

**4** See Patteeuw, Szacka 2018.

**5** See Schaad, Lange, Torsten 2021.

**6** See Meseke 2008.

essentially wanted to educate a broad public on how to furnish their homes—and thus how to live. In the major exhibitions of postmodernism, on the other hand, architecture was embedded in a broad discourse on art and theory, and the medium of architectural drawing was aestheticised as a work of art in its own right. The Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM, German Museum of Architecture) in Frankfurt/Main, for which founding director Heinrich Klotz built up an extensive collection of postmodern architectural representations, opened its doors in 1984 and the opulent inaugural exhibition "The Revision of Modernity. Postmodern Architecture 1960–1980" was an immediate success with the public. It was perceived as a programmatic manifesto.[7]

**7** Seee Klotz 1984, Elser 2014.

After the postmodern discourse on form and ornamentation on the scale levels of architecture and the city as well as the relationship of architecture to history and tradition have been discussed in issue 41, issue 42 presented here is dedicated to another aspect of this discourse that is no less significant in retrospect: it is focused on the question of how postmodernism has changed the way of thinking and speaking about architecture, of representing and communicating it. We have assigned the selected contributions to two focal points and captioned them *Representations, Media, Communication* and *Discourse, Reception, Transformation*, respectively. These two focal points, which are of course not clearly separable but overlap and are mutually dependent, add essential facets to the umbrella topic *Identifications of Postmodernity*. If identification means the assignment of an observed entity to a concept, then the studies presented here help us to understand postmodern architecture less from the perspective of its material appearance and more from the perspective of the discourse formats accompanying it. In doing so, it becomes clear at several points that the changes in the way architecture was thought about, discussed, represented and communicated, including how the relationship between architecture, city and society was refigured, exert a stronger influence on the situation of architecture today than the formal, aesthetic and stylistic innovations associated with the epoch.

## Representations, media, communication

The first part is opened by a detailed and wide-ranging investigation by Kasper Lægring, which bears the *crisis of representation* in its very title. Lægring questions Charles Jencks' view, still prominent today, which sought to divide the variety of postmodern strategies into sometimes highly pointed currents and then juxtaposed them in direct opposition, for example the "historicist" approach of Venturi and Scott Brown with the "ad hoc urbanism" of Rem Koolhaas and OMA. With this strategy, Jencks was able to successfully reduce the complexity of postmodern strategies and stage debates with high public appeal, but he arguably also contributed to the schematisation and ultimately the banalisation of postmodernism. From Lægring's point of view, it is much more productive to focus on commonalities instead of constructed opposites, and he recognises these in the use of collage as a thought pattern and design principle. According to the author, collage has been recognised by

the supposed antipodes as a contemporary answer to the diagnosed "crisis of representation". Lægring finds collage-like strategies in essential protagonists of early postmodern thought, starting with Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter in their programmatic text *Collage City*, through Oswald Mathias Ungers' studies on the urban archipelago to Koolhaas' surrealist montages being themselves influenced by Ungers. According to Lægring, these connections only gain contour when the principle of collage is interpreted hermeneutically in a fundamental sense. With reference to the philosophers Odo Marquardt and Thomas P. Brockelman, Lægring develops a description that identifies the use of collage as an architectural instrument of cognition as a central feature of postmodernity and shows how this strategy has changed all subsequent discourses in such a way that we can no longer go back behind it today.

It has already been mentioned that the architecture galleries and museums we are familiar with today have emerged predominantly since the 1970s. On the one hand, this was related to a newly awakened appreciation of the historicity of architecture, but on the other hand also to the phenomenon of "paper architecture", the increasing detachment of the value of the design drawing from the exclusive goal of realisation. Prepared by the utopian designs of groups of the sixties such as *Archigram* or *Superstudio*, it became accepted practice to understand architectural drawings as conceptual works of art that could be exhibited and traded in galleries. In the process, the degree of abstraction varied greatly, from site- and context-less spatial configurations to proposals for concrete competition situations that could be built in principle. Alexandru Sabău discusses the variety of different procedures and approaches in the field of "paper architecture" referring to a concrete historical constellation, namely Romanian architecture in the 1970s and 1980s with the culmination of the 1989 revolution. The situation of Romanian architects in the late phase of the socialist Ceaușescu regime was extremely difficult and the confrontation with postmodern developments from the countries of the Western hemisphere was only possible under more difficult conditions. Nevertheless, there was a strong interest in current developments, and architects in offices and at universities found numerous ways to inform themselves and to circulate postmodern ideas and adapt them to local conditions and their own needs. The medium of drawing played an essential role in this process. It was essential for the survival of the progressive Romanian architects of this era to develop, at least temporarily, an understanding of architecture that focused entirely on representation and discourse and declared realisation to be of secondary importance. Sabău conducted interviews with important protagonists of this era and reconstructs the prevailing discourse formations and goals very precisely. In the process, many aspects that are typical of postmodernism in general are once again sharpened from a specific angle. The heterogeneity of postmodern motivations, ways of thinking and strategies becomes recognisable as a liberating and emancipating expansion of the space of possibility, but at the same time it also becomes clear that this space of possibility was used quite differently by the various actors. Accord-

ingly, individually, at the end of the postmodern high phase, the classical architectural career can stand just as well as an academic or artistic practice that attempts to permanently radicalise the aporias and paradoxes of postmodern thinking in a self-reflexive way.

The detachment of architectural drawing from the purpose of building enabled its presentation in exhibitions and galleries and its perception as an independent work of art and as a contribution to discourse. In the context of postmodernism, however, the exhibition medium also experienced a considerable increase in significance in other respects. Samuel Korn traces this innovation, which continues to have effects on present practices, in his contribution using a concrete case study. It is about the exhibition *MAN transFORMS*, which the Austrian architect Hans Hollein, undoubtedly also one of the essential figures of postmodern architecture, curated in 1976 at the newly founded National Museum of Design of the Smithsonian Institution in New York, which had emerged from the collection of the Cooper Hewitt Museum, as a programmatic prelude. Samuel Korn shows how Hollein develops a strategy of the fragmentary to meet the requirement of a holistic notion of "environment" or environmental design. Hollein, who biographically marks a striking turning point from modernism to postmodernism in that he radicalizes and at the same time ironizes the immanently totalitarian design claim of classical modernism through his well-known dictum *Everything is architecture (Alles ist Architektur)*, had the opportunity to think the medium of exhibition in a completely new way with the commission for this epoch-making presentation. As Samuel Korn demonstrates in detail, he solved this task by interpreting the exhibition as an "ecosystem", which assembled a great variety of artefacts and media in an associative manner and presented them in an artful arrangement in which the meaning of the individual exhibits largely recedes behind the systemic context and the interpretive, fragmentary and sign-like character of the arrangement. This curatorial approach, it can be argued, is an appropriate response to the increasing fragmentation of the world and to the postmodern insight that claims to truth can henceforth only be formulated with reference to a specific observer's perspective. An interesting side aspect of this new understanding of the exhibition is that Hollein as a person and artist does not retreat behind the quasi self-dynamically developing arrangement of the exhibition—as the simultaneously emerging discussions about the "death of the author" would suggest—but, on the contrary, becomes the proponent of a development that stylises the curating of exhibitions itself as an art form and in this way can subsume it into a comprehensive understanding of architectural (or artistic) practice. Hollein's own career from provocateur to acclaimed Austrian state artist illustrates this aspect of postmodernism in an impressive way.

Hollein's career draws attention to the rapidly growing importance of the multiple forms of mediation in the incipient postmodern era. The opposition to the (allegedly or really) repressive dogmatics of modern architecture created a power vacuum and an uncertainty that demanded interpretation. New forms of presentation and representation, of explanation and obfuscation were

called for and for a short time were received and discussed with great openness and curiosity. It is hardly surprising, however, that the desire for discourse and theory, for playful provocation and paradox, for epistemological perspectives and a reinterpretation of history already mentioned at the beginning soon came under pressure from power, politics and economic interests. Here, the media of representation, but above all the person of the curator, took on a special significance. In fact, the re-formation of the discourse created spaces for a new breed of leading figures.

Giovanni Carli also looks at the relationship between power, representation and architecture in the early postmodern era and focuses on a specific place, Milan, for this purpose, but in his case it is not the medium of the exhibition that forms the centre of analysis, but that of the magazine. Carli describes the 1980s as an era of political instability and a society under perceived threat, which at the same time mark the beginning of a market-liberal economic policy, to which individualism, narcissism, consumerism and the search for entertainment correspond on a cultural level. He refers to David Harvey's book *The Condition of Postmodernity* and applies its theoretical tools to the magazine *Domus Moda*, which in many respects stands as a symbol of the zeitgeist described. Its editor Paolo Mendini is presented as a paradigmatic figure who has mastered the postmodern game of "smoke and mirrors" with bravura and propagates a postmodern expanded conception of architecture that combines exquisitely with the neo-bourgeois concepts of a stylistically confident homo economicus. In the *Domus Moda* project, Milan, as the location of a globally significant fashion, design and furniture industry, becomes the quasi-natural starting point for the new concepts of a playful, over-aestheticized architecture that soars to become the medium of a comprehensive way of life, taking in all levels of scale from the cup to the table and the house to the city. At least for a while, it seems possible that architecture in this postmodern sense would be able to occupy the vacuum left by the—supposedly or actually—failed political utopias. The first part of the volume ends with this fractured and ironic analysis of a historical moment in which the hedonistic facet of postmodernism came to full fruition.

## Discourse, Reception, Transformation

In the editorial of the previous issue 41, the question of periodisation has been raised. After all, there is still no consensus on what is to be regarded as postmodernism at all. Especially if we do not look at the quotations of historical architectures understood as "POMO", but rather at the production of theory, it seems quite plausible to broaden the scope of observation from the early 1960s to well into the 1990s. On the one hand, this takes into account early theoretical writings, such as Jane Jacobs' book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published in 1961.

Guia Baratelli dedicates her contribution to such an early theoretical writing, namely the book *Experiencing Architecture* by the Danish architect Steen Eiler Rasmussen, published in the USA as early as 1959. Baratelli stretches

the time frame in the above sense by convincingly interpreting the book as a precursor of postmodern readings of architecture and urban space. In the late 1950s, Rasmussen saw the discipline of architecture in an existential crisis, which he sought to address by introducing new methods of teaching. He wrote an easy-to-understand textbook for young architects in which —as Baratelli points out—he focused on the viewer's perception, including their bodily perception and everyday actions. By integrating insights from Gestalt theory and phenomenological approaches with art historical considerations, Rasmussen created the foundations for a renewed understanding of architecture and urban space beyond the abstract-modern aesthetics that were still rarely being questioned at that time. In doing so, he tied in with authors such as Camillo Sitte, who in his 1889 book *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen (Urban Planning According to its Artistic Principles)* had also promoted the idea of designing public urban spaces as pleasant and varied places as a backdrop or even stage for human life in all its richness to unfold. The detailed reading of Rasmussen's slim but today still read booklet that Baratelli presents here thus enriches the narrative about the origins of the "postmodern era".

If one broadens the view of postmodern theory formation in the other direction, i.e. towards the turn of the millennium, architectural debates and designs can also be included in the consideration that have long since broken with the vocabulary of forms usually understood as "postmodern". This applies equally to the currents known in their time as "deconstructivism" and "high tech", which have emerged since the mid-1980s, as well as to the debates on ecological building and participatory architecture.[8] Should all these approaches and tendencies be understood as part of a pluralistic postmodernism, or are they to be interpreted as counter-concepts to a narrowly understood idea of postmodern style characterised by reference back to a traditional canon of forms? This debate—which is at the same time a debate about the periodisation of postmodernism—is currently still in full swing and is by all means controversial, as was recently demonstrated at the conference "*Denkmal Postmoderne. Preserving a 'non-terminable' epoch*" in March 2022 at the Bauhaus University in Weimar/Germany.

This problem forms the background of Giacomo Pala's contribution. Starting with the writings of the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, who introduced the concept of postmodernism into the debate in 1979 with his study *La condition postmoderne*, he first notes that the latter explicitly included architecture as a discipline in his considerations. And follows this up with the question of what Lyotard's actual interest in architecture was. To this end, Pala not only analyses Lyotard's writings, but also focuses on an exhibition opened in 1985 under the title *Les Immateriaux* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. This exhibition, which Lyotard curated together with Thierry Chaput, is today considered a milestone of scenography, and thematised the changed living environment of a future shaped by new media and technologies. Architectural designs by Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, Zaha Hadid and others were also shown in a multidisciplinary setting. Following his anal-

**8** See Berkemann 2021.

ysis, Pala arrives at the question of whether, based on Lyotard, postmodern architecture should not be defined quite differently—and above all much less based on formal criteria—than is customary today.

The fact that postmodern exhibition makers saw themselves to a great extent as designers and actively contributed to the theoretical discourse has already been emphasised several times. This fact is also underlined in the contribution by Sabine Brinitzer, who examines the concept of "fiction", which plays a central role in the writings of the German art historian Heinrich Klotz. The starting point is Klotz's 1984 dictum *Nicht Funktion, sondern Fiktion! (Not function, but fiction!)*. Dismissing one of the key concepts of modernism, Klotz here emphazised the narrative moment of architecture. Brinitzer meticulously traces the levels of meaning of the term, which ultimately always revolve around the question of how architectural design can (again) negotiate themes and ideas beyond the abstract, the functional, and the constructive. For Klotz, this included what he called "image-creating ideas" as well as playing with symbols and forms. Although Klotz, as Brinitzer also shows, was not the only one to use the term "fiction" in his time, this term did not ultimately establish itself as a key concept of postmodernism. In any case, the go-getting Klotz probably left his mark on the German postmodern debate less through theoretical treatises than—as already mentioned—through the founding of the *Deutsche Architekturmuseum* in Frankfurt am Main in 1979, for which he quickly built up a top-class collection of architectural drawings and models from the 20th century. Klotz was passionately committed to establishing the then still young postmodern movement in German architecture, whereby he obviously acted much more strategically and polemically effective as a speaker than as an author.

The Italian architect Aldo Rossi is a protagonist of postmodern architecture who shaped the debate both through his built work and his theoretical writings. Kenta Matsui takes this into account in a meticulously detailed study. Matsui examines Rossi's concept of "analogy" as a method of design. Starting from the well-known representation *La città analoga*, which Rossi made with others for the 1976 Venice Biennale, Matsui succeeds in creating an interesting new interpretation of Rossi's concept. He traces back how Rossi's interpretation of the concept of analogy changed over the decades, from the topos of analogy in the city to analogy in architecture. Rossi was initially concerned with theoretically grasping the juxtaposition of buildings of different times and epochs in a historically evolved city. But at least since his book *A Scientific Autobiography*, published in 1981 for a US readership, he increasingly aimed to explain the individual process of architectural design. Rossi described designing as a constant recombination of elements, fed by the reservoir of different personal memories that an architect accumulates over the course of his life—freely combining models from architectural history and his own buildings. One can interpret Rossi as saying that the city as a collective memory reservoir is comparable to the individual architectural experiences of individuals collected in memory. The different interpretations of the concept coincide in the metaphor of the city as memory.

Finally, Frida Grahn turns her attention to a country that is generally not considered a stronghold of postmodernism: Switzerland. She examines the reception of theories and concepts by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, which were imported from the USA to Switzerland from the early 1960s until the 1990s. Using extensive source studies, Grahn traces how theoretical concepts that are nowadays considered typically postmodern were adopted by Swiss theorists and practitioners in university teaching, disseminated in architectural journals such as *Archithese* and in various exhibitions, translated into designs, and controversially discussed. The Swiss players (above all René Furer, Martin Steinmann and Stanislaus von Moos) were particularly interested in topics such as symbolism and the sign character of architecture. The artistic strategy of alienation and ironic quotation also gained particular importance in the Swiss context. Grahn elaborates on the special interest of Swiss architects in the concept of the "real" or "ordinary", which, in turning away from the abstractness and autonomy of international modernism, was able to theoretically re-found the link to vernacular building methods. She also shows how, during the 1990s, postmodern concepts were then increasingly viewed critically and consequentially lost their relevance as a new interest in material took centre stage and a tendency emerged that is now well known as "Swiss minimalism".

## Résumé

Taken together, the nine contributions to this volume do not provide a unified picture of postmodern architecture, but of course that was not to be expected in the first place. In the diversity of the developments, tendencies and examples described and analysed, however, there appear several recurring themes that give cause to reflect on why it is still worthwhile—or worthwhile again, for that matter—to deal with this period today.

The intensity of the discourse, the interest in new forms of presentation and representation of architecture, the founding of institutions to perpetuate these discourses and to research their foundations are postmodern achievements from which we still benefit today. Not only the positions, but also the media of communication and distribution of these positions became more diverse and, at least for a while, also more open, anarchic, provocative. Spaces for thought have been opened that had not existed before. From the point of view of architectural theory, postmodernism has undoubtedly been a fruitful period, perhaps even its "Golden Years"? Before the view backwards is sentimentally transfigured in this way, the contributions presented here also show in precise case studies how precarious such conjunctures are, and in how many ways the rudiments to future failure had already been laid out in the beginnings of postmodernism. But failure in this context can only ever be understood as relative. The contributions also show what strong influences postmodernism still has on today's practices, for example in the exhibition system, but also in relation to design approaches and strategies that have since pluralised, diversified, and opened up.

It would be interesting to ask to what extent postmodern influence is still reflected in architectural education today. People certainly study differently today than they did in 1980, but at the same time the supposed certainties of a classically modernist education can hardly be restored. The desire to counter today's diagnoses of crisis and the resulting insecurity by means of sprawling theoretical debates, ironization, delight in paradox, strategies of hedonism and over-aestheticization can be observed at best sporadically, arguably with a somewhat increasing vehemence in recent years. What has taken the place of these postmodern coping strategies and why cannot be answered by the contributions that we are happy to present in these two issues of Cloud Cuckoo Land that deal with "Identifications of Postmodernity". But they do provide numerous clues as to where such an analysis could start. A look back can certainly be inspiring here. Not necessarily to pick up where we left off. But perhaps to bring back something of the desire to theorize, to debate and to experiment. From the audacious idea of reconnecting concrete architectural work with the existential questions of our time, and this not only in the immediately obvious sense of resource conservation and climate neutrality.

## Authors

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Riklef Rambow (Dipl.-Psych. 1992, University of Bielefeld; Dr. phil. nat. 1999, University of Frankfurt/Main) has been Professor of Architectural Communication at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology since 2009. Previously, he taught and conducted research at JWGU Frankfurt/Main and WWU Münster, BTU Cottbus and RWTH Aachen. His research deals with the perception, use and communication of architecture and urban space. Riklef Rambow was co-editor of cloud-cuckoo-land between 2001 and 2012 and has been again since 2016.

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