

Editorial

L'imagination au Pouvoir

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In May 1968, the *Journal of Architectural Education* published an essay by Philip Thiel titled “Our New Environment and Our Old Universities.” Professor Thiel argued that architectural education had become overly specialized and, as a result, was missing the opportunity to “enhance the quality of human experience.” Other essays in the issue signaled the figurative—but not yet literal—death of the Beaux-Arts and discussed the influence of mathematics and sociology on architectural education. The May 1968 issue was bookended by two issues composed of papers presented at the AIA/ACSA Teacher’s Seminar in Chicago that same year. At the seminar, which was notable for the inclusion of “new media” such as television, Kenneth Frampton offered his own reflections on the state of architectural education:

It may be necessary for us to now think of our task as that of rebuilding the environment, with the mental set of a socially aware designer, rather than that of the architect in the old humanist sense. The danger, of course, lies in a technical escapism, in a technical idolatry, the confusion of means with ends and with the consequent loss of all human value. It seems to me, that for education, industrialization implies not solely training in technique, for no particular technique can be a universal panacea, but rather the broadest possible design-based education we can organize of adequate depth within the time space of an academic course.

It is interesting to consider these words, presented over forty-five years

ago, and in the context of revolution, to our current crisis surrounding the value of architectural education. Can the value of an architectural education be understood solely on the grounds of a return on investment? Of course not, but this is the reality many of us face. As we all know, “our numbers are down.” In this context, might we have an opportunity to revolutionize architectural education? While the project-based model of studio has been translated into other disciplines, does it still make sense to encourage and expect sole-authored design solutions? In many ways architectural education has always been interdisciplinary, yet we suffer from overly deterministic disciplinary boundaries that often limit rather than protect our profession. How can architectural education integrate with other fields of inquiry? A retreat from or ambivalence toward technology seems to be as dangerous as a blind acceptance. Rather than hyperspecialization in technique-based production, however, might we imagine other forms of architectural agency that such technology has the potential to engender? Also undergoing profound change is the production and dissemination of architectural scholarship. It is difficult to navigate the seemingly unending flow of images and opinions on all of our mobile devices. Self-publication, vanity press, and the ever-evolving world of the blogosphere put into question the nature of peer review. Will the number of times a tweet is reposted or site views to a personal blog become the new citation metric?

While not yet revolutionary, volume 68 of the *Journal of Architectural*

Education brings with it a few changes. The most obvious, perhaps, is the physical presence of the *JAE*. In the fall of 2013, the graphic design firm Project Projects was enlisted to develop a new design. What you are now holding, hopefully more easily than previous issues, is the result of their work. The redesign will allow for flexibility in future issues while maintaining our graphic identity. The new design also signals that the *JAE* will be a material object for the foreseeable future. Notwithstanding our commitment to the printed word, the online presence of the *JAE* has also been redesigned and is constantly evolving. Over the past eight months, reviews and other web-native content have been posted online. Rather than simply reposting PDFs of the journal, which we will continue to do, the online presence of the *JAE* is poised to become a platform to develop new modes of architectural scholarship. This volume also marks the beginning of my tenure as Executive Editor. It is an honor to be appointed as the Executive Editor of a journal with a heritage such as that of the *JAE*. I am excited to continue working with such a dedicated Editorial Board as well as to build upon the initiatives of previous Executive Editors. It is a stimulating, but also precarious, time to be publishing architectural scholarship. It is our intention that the *JAE* lead the discourse surrounding architectural education and do so in provocative ways. Perhaps therein lies the power of imagination.

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