Architecture's Turn to History 1970-1990 (Zürich, 11-12 Sep 15)

Zürich, Sep 11–12, 2015
Deadline: Dec 10, 2014

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Call for Papers
Conference at ETH Zurich, 11/12 September 2015
Institute gta, Theory of Architecture, Prof. Dr. Ákos Moravánszky

East West Central 03:
Re-framing Identities
Architecture's Turn to History 1970-1990

The year 1990 marked the end of Europe's political division. Looking back at the two decades before this event, this conference seeks to investigate the significance of the "historical turn" in urban design and architecture in both East and West Europe since the beginning of the 1970s in relation to the political and socio-economic transformations of this period. Moreover, we intend to reflect on the emergence of the third category of Central Europe at that time, creating a new cultural entity in order to bridge the political divide. "Re-framing Identities" follows the two previous East West Central conferences "Re-Humanizing Architecture" in May 2014 and "Re-Scaling the Environment" in November 2014.

Our aim is to discuss the growing interest in theory, phenomenology and meaning in architecture and urban design as well as revisionist thinking and the rise of antimodernism. This radical intellectual shift that originated in discourse of Postmodernism affected East and West equally, encouraging, for example, many East European architects to reassess attempts to engage national and regional traditions under Socialist Realism in the 1950s. During the 1970s and 1980s, the recognition of architecture's capacity to reflect and ground identity reignited the search for local, national and regional languages. At the same time, an expanded understanding of history, freed from the notion of progressive tradition, allowed for integrating regional differences and multiple histories into a wider spectrum of "heritage". In this process alternative spatial identities were developed, which questioned the ideological and territorial divide between East and West.

We seek contributions that:
- test political concepts and terminologies such as late capitalism and late socialism, addressing the notion of crisis with regard to the post-1968 cultural landscape in East and West.
- investigate the mutual impact of the critique of functionalism and the "historic turn" on urban as well as architectural developments in East and West. For example, the conflict between the intended mobilization of history for critical ends and its subsequent utilization for preserving the status

quo would deserve interest.
- examine the fabrication of identities and the will to expression by producing mythical, national or transnational, pasts - at times valorizing history in processes of urban regeneration, preservation and commercial (e.g. touristic) image-making.

We will discuss attempts to establish transnational networks and institutions, publish journals and pursue projects with the participation of architects from state socialist and capitalist countries, and we plan to invite some of the protagonists. This will allow considering for the first time the complex and at times contradicting dimensions of architectural culture of the recent past in East, West and Central Europe.

Please send an abstract of up to 300 words and a brief biography (max. 150 words) to: professur.moravanszky@gta.arch.ethz.ch

Abstracts can be submitted until Wednesday, December 10th, 2014. The selected participants will be informed by January 12th, 2015. Drafts to be submitted by August 2015.

A limited number of travel allowances might be available for successful applicants.

For further details and updates please visit: http://www.moravanszky.arch.ethz.ch/veranstaltungen/eastwestcentral03

Prof. Dr. Ákos Moravánszky (chair)
Torsten Lange (coordinator)

Reference:
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