

Editorial

Henrieta Moravčíková

Are research methods based on the relation of the centre and a periphery still relevant in the context of current architectural historiography? How does one approach an assessment of architectural works in the regions which are traditionally marginalized or completely ignored by western historiography? How does the architecture in the former Communist countries overlap with international architectural historiography?

These and many other questions were posed by the participants in the first international colloquium of architecture historians from Central and Eastern Europe in February 2013. The Faculty of Architecture STU, in cooperation with the Institute of Construction and Architecture, Slovak Academy of Sciences, organized the colloquium as part of the Annual Business Meeting of European Architectural History Network (EAHN). The Faculty hosted many distinguished architecture historians, whom we had the opportunity to meet from 31st January to 2nd February. Within those few days, this unique common ground which was offered to participants from many parts of the world undoubtedly facilitated the communication among historians dealing with European architecture. Moreover, this international event allowed architecture historians from Central and Eastern Europe to join in and share their erudition.

This issue of ALFA presents a selection of the topics which were presented at the colloquium. Many of them deal with topics determining the architectural historiography of the former 'East Bloc' countries. The articles reflect on the relationship between the centre and the periphery and the related concepts of architecture history writings; they also bring in questions dealing with the connection of the centre and the periphery in the current polycentric world, as well as the internationalisation of research on local history of architecture. Attention was also concentrated on themes relating to specific areas in architecture, such as the architecture of the second half of the 20th century – its ideological tendencies and its current interpretation, or new findings arising from research on the architecture of the first decades of the 20th century.

The selected papers, including talks and discussions which were presented at the colloquium, prove that permanent interfacing among the various research areas and concepts of history is not only inspiring, but also necessary, because it unveils specific as well as the universal laws and associations of architecture and its research. Such international discussion is at the same time a necessary precondition for the definitive removal of the Iron Curtain within architectural historiography.