

# THE PRINTED AND THE BUILT

## Architecture and public debate in modern Europe



This project studies the relationship between the built environment and print culture in modern Europe, concentrating on the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this period, a host of new public media developed, altering the way architecture was discussed, understood, and – ultimately – built. Looking particularly at the illustrated press emerging in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, we examine the way architecture in the modern period becomes a site for cultural negotiation through printed media. This multidisciplinary humanities study will, we believe, throw new light on the intricate web of spatial, material and discursive practices that shaped the modern public sphere. The project is based at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) /Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS), in collaboration with the University of Oslo (UiO), the Norwegian National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, and a wide international network.

### Architecture's new public

In *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), Victor Hugo famously proclaimed the victory of modern print culture over architecture: “This will kill that: The book will kill the edifice.” Looking at the intricate relationship between texts and buildings in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, one is struck not so much by the subjugation of one to the other, as by their complex and reciprocal connectedness in the public realm. Architecture, whether built or unbuilt, constitutes a powerful cultural prism in the modern world, and debates about the built environment are at the same time debates about identity and nationhood, power and progress, art and science. From the newspapers’ frenzied celebration in 1851 of the Crystal Palace as a “looking glass of modernity”, to rows over the cultural significance of the Eiffel tower or the iconicity of the United Nations Headquarters, architecture has served as a key vehicle for cultural exchange and negotiation in the modern era.

*The Printed and the Built* examines the relationship between the built, the drawn and the written as it comes to expression in newspapers, journals, magazines, and related printed media in modern Europe. The project moves from the renaissance treatise to 20<sup>th</sup> century mass media, yet our main focus is on the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A marked shift in architectural publication took place in this period, in which the classical treatise was abandoned for genres capable of efficiently disseminating visual and textual information to a large audience beyond the academies. The new illustrated press played an important role in

this process, promoting a debate that placed the built environment firmly at the centre of modern public culture. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the newspapers and journals were supplemented by a rich array of popular genres such as ladies magazines and advertisement, presenting both the private home and the public monument as matters of profound cultural importance. To examine this development is at the same time to examine the preconditions of the contemporary city; an urgent task, it seems, at a time when public space is being rapidly reconfigured, both as a physical structure and a mediated environment.<sup>1</sup>

## Approach

*The Printed and the Built: Architecture and public debate in modern Europe* approaches architecture not as an autonomous object or an isolated aesthetic discourse but as a cultural battle ground and arena for ethical, political, aesthetic and literary exchanges. Such exchanges are not made up only of text, of course. Since the enlightenment, architectural publications have constituted a constantly evolving arena for visual culture in which innovative modes of visual communication have been developed. In order to study these modes, the project draws on several disciplines and approaches, including architectural history, cultural history, comparative literature, book- and publication history, art history, and visual studies. We want to push disciplinary boundaries yet at the same time utilize the particular expertise of each field. Our aim is to bring to light forgotten historical material but also to open up new perspectives on well-known material by observing it through the optics of several different disciplines.

Although our methodological approach is diverse, there is a shared basis to the work. The inescapable public significance of the built environment makes architectural research into a matter of cultural interpretation, and reception theory and hermeneutics constitute important methodological vehicles. At the same time, the sheer physicality of architecture makes it necessary to expand traditional humanist methodologies, finding new ways of studying cultural meaning as it is mediated back and forth between the material and the discursive. The much discussed material turn in the humanities has prompted a new interest in the way material and discursive practices intersect and overlap.<sup>2</sup> The project is inspired by such investigations, yet insists on combining studies of material culture with critical interpretation, both textual and visual. Recent developments within book history, in which publications are studied both as material objects and as carriers of diverse cultural contents, are inspiring in this respect.<sup>3</sup>

Another important methodological tool is cross-national comparison. Although the 19<sup>th</sup> century press has much to say about national particularity it does so in more or less the same way all over the world, testifying to Benedict Anderson's insight that nationalism is indeed an international invention.<sup>4</sup> Looking at parallel cases from Scandinavia, Holland,

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<sup>1</sup> See T. Tierney, *The public space of social media: connected cultures of the network society*, London: Routledge 2013 and C. Berry et. al., *Public Space, Media Space*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2013.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. B. Olsen, *In Defense of Things. Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*. Lanham: AltaMira Press 2010, and A. Appadurai, (ed.) *The Social Life of Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988.

<sup>3</sup> See E. Eisenstein, *The printing press as an agent of change: communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980; A. Johns, *The nature of the book: print and knowledge in the making*, Chicago Ill.: Chicago University Press 1998; J. Derrida, *Paper Machine*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2005; and D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999.

<sup>4</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso 1983.

Germany, France, and the UK, we look for both differences and similarities within the fluid and cosmopolitan print culture of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Combining updated theoretical and historiographical perspectives with meticulous empirical and archival research, the project aims to re-read modern architectural culture not as an isolated professional field but as a practice in the midst of an evolving public sphere.

## Field

The visual culture of the new illustrated press is attracting increasing scholarly attention, and scholars from many fields draw on this material in order to elucidate the cultural history of modernity.<sup>5</sup> These studies have only rarely extended to architecture, however. Gathering a select group of international scholars, the project addresses this oversight. From the classical treatise, through the 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrated journal, to the graphic and typographic revolution of 20<sup>th</sup> century mass media, the illustrated press offers a unique point of departure for studying the relationship between textual, visual and spatial imagination in modern public debate.

Although 19<sup>th</sup> century publication culture remains unexplored with respect to architectural discourse, the relationship between buildings and the printed word is attracting increasing interest. The project is part of a small but rapidly expanding international field of research on architecture and print culture pioneered by e.g. Mario Carpo's *Architecture in the Age of Printing* (2001), Richard Wittman's *Architecture, Print Culture and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century France* (2007), and Beatriz Colomina's groundbreaking studies of 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural mass media.<sup>6</sup> Victor Plahte Tschudi adds to this body of work with his *Baroque Antiquity: Reinventing Ancient Rome in Print*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in 2014. In a Norwegian context, Mari Lending has made a significant contribution to the field with *Omkring 1900. Kontinuiteter i norsk arkitekturtenkning* (2007), and part of the project's Norwegian material has been assembled in Lending and Hvattum's anthology '*Vor tids Fordringer*': *Norske arkitekturdebatter 1818-1919* (2012) which gathers 75 little known texts on Norwegian architecture, the majority from the public press.

The project is based on extensive archival material, encompassing a diverse range of sources, published and unpublished. In addition to buildings, drawings, journals and newspapers, we look at e.g. maps, exhibition catalogues, museum inventories, letters, parliament proceedings, administrative documents and advertisement. The increasing availability of searchable digital versions of newspapers and illustrated magazines from the

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<sup>5</sup> See e.g. M. Lommen (ed.), *Das Buch der schönsten Bücher*, Cologne: DuMont 2012; A. Watson, *Romantic marginality: nation and empire on the borders of the page*, London: Pickering & Chatto 2012; P. W. Sinnema, *Dynamics of the pictured page: Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News*, Aldershot: Ashgate 1998; L. Charnon-Deutsch, *Hold That Pose: Visual Culture in the Late Nineteenth-Century Spanish Periodical*, Pennsylvania State University Press 2008; J. Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany*, Tübingen: Francke 2001; J. Hargrove and N. McWilliam, *Nationalism and French Visual Culture, 1870-1914*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2005; G. D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860*, New York: Palgrave 2001; I. Lackinger Karger, *Die Heilkunde in der Leipziger "Illustrierten Zeitung" von 1870 – 1885*, Herzogenrath: Murken-Altrogge 1983; O. P. Krätz und G. Giesler (eds), *Die Entwicklung der Eisenbahn im Spiegel der Leipziger illustrierten Zeitung 1843-1870*, Weinheim: Deerfield Beach 1985; K. Chew and A. Wilson, *Victorian science and engineering portrayed in the Illustrated London news*, Stroud: Science Museum 1993; R. L. Patten (ed.), *Dickens and Victorian print cultures*, Farnham: Ashgate 2012; J. D. Bishop, *The Illustrated London News. Social history of Edwardian Britain*, London: Angus & Robertson 1977; and C. Hibbert, *The Illustrated London News: Social History of Victorian Britain*, London: Angus & Robertson 1975.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. B. Colomina, *Clip, stamp, fold: the radical architecture of little magazines, 196x-197x*, Barcelona: Actar 2010.

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries will be an important resource for the project. Despite such advances, however, much of our material remains hidden away in un-indexed microfilm archives and on dusty shelves, requiring extensive archival investigation. By invading the often inaccessible stores of modern architectural debates, the project hopes to contribute to unsettle the static relationship between the archive and the canon as it has been established in architectural historiography. We aim to bring forth fresh perspectives on the mediation and representation of public culture in modern Europe, bringing to light a little known material of great cultural interest. Two distinct but interrelated topics and research teams make up the project:

## 1) PRINTED PRACTICE

Architectural publications have a long tradition, from Vitruvius' *De Architectura* (ca 25 BC, first printed edition 1486) via the renaissance treatise, to the 18<sup>th</sup> century essay, encyclopedia and folio publication. While each of these media had profound effects, they catered to a relatively restricted audience of patrons and connoisseurs, addressing mainly the educated elite.<sup>7</sup> This would change radically with 19<sup>th</sup> century mass media, when the new illustrated press became capable of disseminating not only text but also images to a large segment of the population. A glance at publications such as *The Illustrated London News* (1842–), the French *Le Magasin Pittoresque* (1833–) and *L'Illustration* (1843–), the Leipzig based *Illustrierte Zeitung* (1843–), the US based *Harper's Weekly. A Journal of Civilization* (1857–), or Norwegian specimens such as *Skilling-Magazin* (1835–) and *Illustreret Nyhedsblad* (1851–) reveals architecture's notable presence in the new media. Reporting on everything from African huts to classical monuments, and from Chinese palaces to the new building types of industrialized Europe (bridges and railway stations were particular favourites), these magazines and journals provided the new, bourgeois readership with a rich chronicle of architectural culture. They did not merely inform, however. Our hypothesis is that the new publication culture impacted fundamentally on the way architecture was commissioned and made. By juxtaposing past and present, low and high, near and far, the illustrated press contributed to break the hegemony of classicism and open up a new and heterogeneous field of architectural expression and deliberation. Furthermore, these journals put architecture at the service of an entirely new public; the modern bourgeoisie. As the architectural historian Barry Bergdoll writes, "The emergence not only of public architecture as a programme but of a public discourse and debate on architecture is one of the most fundamental shifts in the longer history of modernity in culture and politics."<sup>8</sup> In other words: The new civic sphere manifested itself architecturally, not only in the form of buildings but also as debates, programs, reactions and negotiations in and over public space. The spatial practices of the modern city was negotiated in print, making architecture a key vehicle for what Jürgen Habermas came to call the structural transformation of the public sphere.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Developments within the treatise tradition are discussed in e.g. V. Hart and P. Hicks, *Paper Palaces, the rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1998, and A. Payne, *The Architectural Treatise in the Italian Renaissance: Architectural Invention, Ornament and Literary Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999.

<sup>8</sup> B. Bergdoll, in R. Wittman, *Architecture, Print Culture and the Public Sphere* Aldershot: Ashgate 2007, preface. See also Bergdoll, *Léon Vaudoyer. Historicism in the Age of Industry*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT 1994, pp. 114-119.

<sup>9</sup> J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Neuwied: Luchterhand 1962.

This study poses two overriding questions. Firstly, how did the representation and circulation of architecture in public media change over the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and what were the cultural and architectural repercussions of this change? This means studying the transition from treatises and prints to modern mass media, looking at the way the new illustrated journals were made and used, by whom, and for what. Our second question concerns the relationship between discourse and practice – between the press and architectural decision making, that is, but also between spatial practices and their representations. How did the new media impact on the way the built environment was shaped and understood, and how, in turn, did architecture and urban space infiltrate and shape the media?

An apt example of the kind of cases we will be studying is the competition for a Norwegian Parliament building in 1856–57. One of the first architectural competitions in Norway to be exhibited in public, the Parliament competition sparked a wide ranging debate on national identity, modernity and democracy, played out largely in the public press. The exchange was dominated, not by architects, but by philosophers, poets, politicians, and members of the public.<sup>10</sup> The illustrated press played a major role in the debate, publishing detailed descriptions of the competition entries and analyzing their cultural connotations at length. The Parliament building that was built after more than a decade of such debate must be considered a result of these public negotiations. Its architecture was invested with a complex set of cultural meanings and political aspirations, fought out and shaped in the realm of print. The Parliament case will feature prominently in the study, and will be paralleled with other European examples, particularly the public debates around the rebuilding of the British Parliament in the 1830s. The case will be the topic of an edited collection and an exhibition, launched in conjunction with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Norwegian Parliament building in 2016. The exhibition, in which all the 1857 competition projects are recreated in models and drawings, executed and curated by Master students from AHO, will be hosted by the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, section architecture.

## 2) PRESERVED IN PRINT

Cultural heritage is a modern invention. It was only in the aftermath of the French revolution that the historical monument came to be construed as an endangered species, in need of protection and conservation.<sup>11</sup> This resulted in actual monument conservation, of course, but surprisingly often the rescue operation took place on paper, in the form of measurements, drawings, and descriptions of historical buildings. When the Norwegian municipality of Aker in 1851 decided to tear down the 12<sup>th</sup> century Aker Church, for instance, the only demand from the *Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments* was to be allowed to measure and draw the church before demolition, thus preserving it in print. Similarly, when the Dresden based painter J. C. Dahl published drawings and descriptions of medieval stave churches in his *Denkmale einer sehr ausgebildeten Holzbaukunst* in 1837, it was with the hope of saving them – not from demolition, but from oblivion. The book was to “retain their

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<sup>10</sup> See e.g. B. Bjørnson, “Nogle Bemærkninger i Anledning af den paatenkte Storthingsbygning” I-III, *Morgenbladet* 8., 9. og 11.8.1857. See also B. Astrup, *Stortingsbygningen i Christiania. Dess förhistoria och tillblivelse samt analys av dess arkitektur*, master thesis, University of Oslo 1972, and M. Hvattum, *Arkitekt Heinrich Ernst Schirmer (1814–1887)*, Oslo: Pax 2014 (forthcoming).

<sup>11</sup> T. Arrhenius, *The Fragile Monument: On Conservation and Modernity*, London: Black Dog 2012.

character in the printed word”, Dahl proclaimed, a feat that physical preservation seemed incapable of.<sup>12</sup> Paper, it seems, lasts longer than wood or stone.

Dahl’s paradox sparks a number of questions regarding the relationship between matter and discourse, durability and ephemerality, copy and original.<sup>13</sup> If one studies architecture in print one soon discovers that these texts and images are not mere re-presentations, but presentations in their own right; active and effective ‘originals’ that are themselves copied, collected, reproduced and circulated. As Carpo argues, renaissance and baroque architecture relied on the print industry to provide accurate architectural models for emulation. The 19<sup>th</sup> century conservation movement, similarly, relied on the public press to establish the meaning and the value of the historic monument. Canonization, as Jean-Louis Cohen reminds us, takes place in print, not in stone.<sup>14</sup> Again, the illustrated magazines provide good examples. Presenting monuments from all ages and corners of the world, the new media provided something like an imaginary museum – a comparative collection of monuments whose merits and characteristics could be assessed across time and space. As Lending shows in her forthcoming book *Monuments in Flux: Architectural Plaster Casts as Mass Medium*, the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a prolific circulation of monuments in various forms, distributed as descriptions, inventories, lists, casts, and images, and ordered according to various taxonomic regimes. This study will look particularly at the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century distribution of medieval Norwegian stave churches. These monuments were subject to a lively circulation in various media during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both in Norway and abroad. As their physical reality dwindled (more than hundred stave churches were demolished in the period 1820-1900), their historical importance increased, relying, as Dahl had predicted, more on printed distribution than on physical presence. These were monuments, to borrow Wittman’s words, that “retained a major public importance, but were best able to perform that role when uncoupled from their traditional grounding in real space.”<sup>15</sup> The stave church case will be paralleled with other European examples of monument circulation and preservation in print, for instance the reception of Greek and Roman building fragments in 19<sup>th</sup> century northern Europe. Looking at the canonization, reproduction and circulation of monuments in print, this study examines the paradoxical status of the modern monument. Master students at AHO will contribute to the research through an OCCAS master studio running in the fall of 2015.

## People

The Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS) is a research centre for advanced studies in architecture, situated at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design. Established in 2009, OCCAS has become a key center for advanced architectural research in Scandinavia.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> J. C. Dahl, *Denkmale einer sehr ausgebildeten Holzbaukunst aus den frühesten Jahrhunderten in den innern Landschaften Norwegens*, Dresden, 1837, preface.

<sup>13</sup> Explored as a philosophical and aesthetic issue in K. Gundersen and M. Lending, *Kopi og original. Inversjoner i opprinnelsestenkingens historie*, Oslo: Spartacus 2010.

<sup>14</sup> J.-L. Cohen, "The Misfortunes of the Image: Melnikov in Paris, 1925 (On Architecture and Photography)", in B. Colomina (ed.), *Architectureproduction*, Princeton Architectural Press 1988, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup> Wittman, *Architecture, Print Culture, and the Public Sphere*, p. 213. See also W. Lipp, *Natur, Geschichte, Denkmal: zur Entstehung des Denkmalbewusstseins der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt: Campus 1987.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. *Arkitektur.nå: Norsk arkitekturpolitikk 2009*, Oslo: Kulturdepartementet 2009, p. 78. OCCAS has attracted several large research projects in recent years, most notably the Norwegian Research Council funded FRIHUM project *Place and*

With material ranging from objects, buildings, projects, exhibitions, and texts, to architectural processes, contexts, and landscapes, OCCAS insists on the contemporary relevance of historical and theoretical research into architecture, its critical potentials, and its urgent function for understanding the built environments of the present and the future.

OCCAS' academic activities are overseen by an international advisory board, consisting of outstanding scholars in the field.<sup>17</sup> For *The Printed and the Built* project we draw particularly on three board members: Professor Adrian Forty from University College London; professor Caroline van Eck from University of Leiden; and Beatriz Colomina from Princeton University. Associate professor Richard Wittman from University of California, Santa Barbara, and professor Wallis Miller from University of Kentucky will also take part, contributing to project publications, conferences and network meetings.

The Oslo-based team consists of the project leader, professor Mari Hvattum (AHO), specializing on 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural theory; professor Mari Lending (AHO), architectural historian and literature scholar, working on the medialization of modern architecture in models, exhibitions, and print; and Helge Jordheim, professor of cultural history, specializing on conceptual history and book history, in particular the cultural history of the encyclopedia. Jordheim's home institution, the Institute of Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) at the University of Oslo is at the forefront of material culture studies in Norway, making it an ideal partner for the project. Also contributing are professor Victor Plahte Tschudi, art historian working on baroque architectural prints and professor Tim Anstey, architect and architectural historian, leader of AHO's PhD program and specialist on the renaissance treatise. The team involves a three year Post doc based at AHO as well as two PhD candidates, one of which is financed by and based at AHO, the other based at UiO and financed by the project. Master students from AHO will take part in the project through OCCAS studios and elective courses. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design will host the 2016 exhibition on the Parliament building competition.

The project will strive for a balanced representation of gender in the research team, and aims to recruit widely and internationally. We are particularly concerned with creating an international and interdisciplinary meeting place across generations, and will actively integrate Master students, PhD candidates, Post doc and senior scholars from several fields and institutions into the project.

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*Displacement: Exhibiting Architecture* (2011–2014), the KULVER funded *Routes, Roads and Landscapes, aesthetic practices en route 1750–2015* (2008–2012), and the post doc project *Modernism on Display* (2006–2009). In 2012, OCCAS became one of very few humanist research environments to make it to the second round of NFR's Centre of Excellence nomination. For more on OCCAS, see [www.occas.aho.no](http://www.occas.aho.no)

<sup>17</sup> OCCAS' advisory board consists of professor Barry Bergdoll (MOMA/Columbia University NY), professor Iain Boyd Whyte (University of Edinburgh), professor Beatriz Colomina, (Princeton University), professor Caroline van Eck (University of Leiden), Adrian Forty (University College London), professor Charlotte Klonk, (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin), professor David Leatherbarrow, (University of Pennsylvania), Christine Macy (Dalhousie University), Johan Mårtelius (Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm), Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen (Yale University), Carsten Thau (Royal Academy, Copenhagen), and Panayotis Tournikiotis, (National Technical University, Athens).