Editorial

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Since its foundation in 2006 the European Architectural History Network (EAHN) has become the preeminent European association of academics, architects and professionals concerned with architectural history. From its inception, the Network has wished to initiate a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, as a service for the members of the Network but even more as a contribution to the development and promotion of the multifaceted discipline of architectural history. Aided by a generous grant from the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO), we were able to announce the foundation of *Architectural Histories. The online journal of the EAHN* at the second biannual conference in Brussels, in June 2012.

As should be expected, the journal will provide researchers with an opportunity to publish their research, encourage and facilitate exchange and discussion in the global architectural historical community, and form a solid platform to strengthen and intensify the activities of the Network. More in particular, as formulated in our mission statement, the EAHN wishes to create a new space for dialogue between the different disciplines entertaining historical perspectives on architecture and the built environment, such as architectural history, architectural criticism, architectural theory and heritage studies. Steeped in a profound conviction of the inherent plurality of the discipline, *Architectural Histories* will publish across these disciplines while maintaining the highest standards of scholarship.

Much is to be gained from an exchange between the different disciplines that constitute architectural history writ large. The field of architectural history is in a state of transformation. The digital analysis and modeling of data such as measures, drawings and archival material generate new insights into building practices, design processes, construction techniques as well as the use and experience of buildings. Architectural history finds new alliances with a wide range of disciplines in the humanities, ranging from literary theory to cultural studies. The ever-increasing importance of heritage in the cultural policies of governments across Europe makes new demands on architectural historians, theoreticians and critics. Moreover, architecture has taken an increasingly visible role in the cultural landscape, requiring well-informed and astute criticism to be made publicly available.

Digital open access publishing is key to establishing a platform for this exchange. Science foundations across Europe as well as the ESF promote open access publishing, and currently we experience an important increase in the number of online journals across all disciplines. There are good reasons for this. In our case, an open access journal will significantly improve access to current research across the EAHN constituency and beyond. Moreover, publishing in a digital environment will enable interaction between authors, their readers and the Network. Thanks to its inherent flexibility, an online journal is well placed to reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of contributors and readers far more easily than a print journal. Finally, an open e-publication provides the opportunity to publish material that is too expensive or simply impossible to include in print media, such as virtual models of buildings or interactive computer graphics.

We feel that it is vital to offer these services to EAHN members and the international community of architectural historians. A large part of the membership is based in areas outside of the traditional centers of academia, such as Eastern Europe, and has sometimes limited access to scholarly resources and channels of publication. It is our ambition to provide scholars across and beyond Europe with such access and create an integrated academic community. In this way, we also believe that we can contribute to the rejuvenation of the field of architectural history. The Network represents a broad spectrum of disciplines concerned with architectural history and the organization has a strong appeal for the upcoming generation of scholars. Graduate students, post-docs and assistant professors play key roles at all levels of the EAHN, working in close collaboration with more experienced scholars. *Architectural histories* aims to act as a catalyst for this process, offering opportunities to younger scholars both to publish innovative work and gain experience in academic editing and publishing.

Our decision to initiate an online and open access journal rather than a printed publication brings with it a number of peculiarities that may take some time getting used to. First of all it means that the journal is literally constructed in public. The digital medium enables us to publish contributions as soon as they have passed the appropriate selecting and editing process. Non-themed issues will aggregate online and be closed off at a previously announced date. This procedure implies that contributions may be submitted at any time and will appear in a relatively short delay, regardless of the closing date of the issue in progress. In parallel we will be working on themed issues that are made public in their entirety. Our first such issue, on *Crisis*, is currently in preparation and will go online this Summer.

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Second, our journal runs on a platform that also supports the submission, reviewing and editing process. In order to streamline this process, we encourage authors to submit contributions online rather than by email to the editorial board. To do so, it is necessary to register for the journal (rather than the Network). This is free of charge and grants access to the submission module.

The mention of charges brings us to the third point. An open access journal shifts the onus of financing the publication from the readers to the authors. This happens by means of a so-called Article Processing Fee, which covers the costs of producing an accepted contribution. We waive this fee for the first issues. It will be instated progressively as the journal starts to deliver what it promises: the fast and highly visible publication of cutting-edge historically grounded research into all aspects of architecture and the built environment. Inherent to this project is our ambition to integrate *Architectural Histories* in the important research indexes.

Finally, fourth, we will continue to explore the particular features of an online publication, in close concert with the development of the EAHN website. Besides the features mentioned earlier, the production process, format and medium of the journal encourage us to rethink, for instance, how the peer review process is reflected in the final version of an article, or how a scholarly article connects with open source content such as digitized books or publicly available images. On the most basic of levels, it is possible to comment on articles. Some online journals extend this feature to the peer reviews and in due time we will weigh similar options for our journal as well.

The success of a journal depends on the quality of its articles. You are warmly invited to submit either essays for peer review or shorter position papers, or propose reviews to the apposite editors. We encourage you to consider contributing to position papers, which aim to give room to critical stances, work in progress or even snippets of research that might be worth sharing with the community. You are also invited to address proposals for themed issues to the editor-in-chief or a member of the editorial board. All this should contribute to our final goal: of establishing a new journal driven and shaped by its community of readers and authors.