

For Example Delft: A case study discussed in the context of institutional profile(s) and the future of architectural education

The conference 'For Example Delft' addresses approaches in architecture education, their past, present & future in relation to professional practice and the architectural discipline. Using the example of Delft, the conference starts from the observation that the broad field of architecture and the built environment carries a re-assembled character that has lost its Modern, structured and disciplinary way. Moreover the conference addresses the issue what architecture research currently means and upon which policies Delft as an institution has set eyes, for example with regard to its ambitions, organisation and profile.

When overlooking the current status quo, there is not one dominant way of teaching. Instead, we discover multiple kinds of preparations to practice, and various claims from society to be involved in education. Working with computers and robots also opens up networks and possibilities, which have not been there before.

The 2016 conference will explore future pedagogies in changing societies from four propositional questions: What to teach in the Context of Changing Architecture Practice? What to learn from the Humanisation of Design? How to be prepared for Multi-Actor Approaches? How to be qualified in an age of Animated and Automated Creation? These questions will be discussed in relation to the fundamental nature of education on undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels in the sphere of architectural, urban and environmental design, engineering and planning.

The conference aims at a mutual dialogue and discussion via key-note speakers that highlight very specific institutional approaches ranging from highly specialised to broad and multidisciplinary. We invited speakers from outside Europe and the Netherlands to reflect on contemporary architectural education with a more distant view. One afternoon will be spent to discuss these profiles presented during key-note lectures with renown representatives from the Delft Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment and the audience to finally draw conclusions vis-à-vis future profiles and curricula of European architecture schools.

To complete this state of art overview, we invite all EAAE schools to present their approach to architectural education and institutional profile with a poster. This, of course, will also open up opportunity for mutual discussion and inspiration. Societal change effects architectural education and vice versa. As highlighted in several former EAAE conferences before, at present, schools around Europe are updating and innovating their program to prepare the next generation students for future professional practice. Basically, each school explores a different path. Hence, 'what to teach', often relates to the specific institutional profile and its context-

tual setting. This European diversification and richness is exactly what this conference is focusing on. At the moment, in quick scan, we detect at least seven drivers of change in architectural education and various institutional aspects:

- Costs en length of education; Delft, and in fact all faculties and academies in the Netherlands, offer a 3+2+2 trajectory, which is followed by the possibility of 4 year of doctoral education at one of the two Universities of Technology (i.e. 3 years bachelor, 2 years masters and 2 years of professional training in practice (+ 4 years of 3rd cycle education delivering a PhD degree).

- Specialisation versus generalisation; basically, Delft has chosen for a broad bachelor, and specialised Masters. This broad bachelors program integrates architecture, urbanism and landscape architecture, building technology, and management in the built environment. Practical experience during bachelors and masters is not obligatory. However to receive professional registration, 2 years of guided practice is required, obtained after the bachelors or the master degree

- Not all EAAE schools offer master courses in English. However, some just started and others have already a fully English spoken curriculum.

- Considering Delft, its size and broad range of tracks, internationalisation is simply a must. The decision to teach master courses in English has been taken in 2004. Offering an international bachelor program will be, without doubt, the next step.

It has also become obvious, that without the teaching to Erasmus and International Masters the curriculum could not be maintained in its full width. Relating global development to local issues and professional training is, therefore, one of the main goals of the current curriculum and future professional practice. Regarding the Dutch identity and local issues, specialised courses are worth considering.

- Students have to be regarded as producers not customers. Since 1968 the Delft program is based upon training to ask questions instead of providing answers (i.e. problem based learning). The problem-solving capacity in specialisations, for example technical solutions is usually rather evident.

However, with regard to the integrative role of architectural and urban design as a problem-solving discipline, still a lot of work has to be done. As we all know, architecture and urbanism as a broad disciplinary field between humanities, art and technology encounters many difficulties in gaining for example for European funds. Thus, developing and advocating research-by-design on all levels, from studio teaching to PhD training, deserves increasing attention also regarding its theoretical underpinning and practical experience.

- As a consequence of the dichotomy between specialisation and generalisation, the global and local, European Schools have to develop very specific institutional profiles or to put it in others words, with the number of specialist practise set to increase, schools might have no choice other than differentiate themselves¹.

On the other hand, in the case of Delft, clasping apparently irreconcilable opposites has brought forward an energised system of education, which profits from this dynamic.

- Facing the broad and global field of issues, ranging from challenges like mass migration to sustainability, all imply physical consequence for the built environment and professional practice, which. fields of involvement become equally varied. This situation places stress on students, both of having obligations as citizens and specialists.

1

Regarding architectural education and future institutional profiles please also see: Daisy Froud, Harriet Harris et al., (2015), *Radical Pedagogies, Architecture and the British Tradition*, Newcastle on Thyne, RIBA enterprises. We thank the authors for their inspiring insights and reflections.

- Finally, and to conclude, we would like to question the necessity of radical, rooted approaches to architecture education, its purpose, and its obligation to link past, present and future.

During the EAAE Conference in Milano last year a major statement of the president's introductory speech was, that the process of reorganizing and resituating schools of architecture in Europe:

'...is not leading to a "global studio" or a "global curriculum". Rather the situation is that schools try to keep and develop their own profile and character, defining a 'local' strategy to be able to cope with a 'global situation', to distinguish the school, and highlight their originality.'

We hope that de 19th EAAE annual assembly and conference 2016 will offer plenty of space and time to discuss in depth above-mentioned issues with a great audience from Europe and the world during the conference meetings and informal encounters and to help us to head for an enlightened and bright future of architectural education in complex times.

Conference convenors
Susanne Komossa, Maurice Hartevelde,
Roberto Cavallo, Delft, May 2016