

through to the end. The Bataille Monument was the most difficult and trying, most expensive, and most wonderful project I have ever done.

Why architecture?

Ole Bouman

First and for all Archis is not about making money, informing people or serving an industry. It is about favouring a certain attitude. Sure, this ambition is hardly new, and has been determining the character of this medium for 75 years. Architecture and its cultural context have never been taken note of. There always remained the search for the cultural significance of architecture, for its potential to act as a culture medium that serves a greater purpose than its own continued existence. *Het Katholiek Bouwblad*, *Goed Wonen*, *Wonen/TABK*, and finally *Archis* wanted architecture to mean something. For the religious perception, for the emancipation of the working class, for the social consciousness, for philosophy, for an ideal. *Archis International*, a bimonthly periodical in two separate language versions, still wants to achieve this. It is searching for moments and opportunities in which architecture surpasses its definition as the built environment and is valued by everyone. It treats architecture not as a pure profession or a service-providing profession but as a cultural phenomenon involved in everything. Every time it poses the question: Why architecture? There are innumerable architecture and culture media that are interested in what is currently happening. They provide news about the latest developments, the newest projects, and document them. They answer the universal question: what is going on? by effectively presenting it. There are also innumerable media occupied with how something was done. They explain which methods and techniques were employed by this or that architect and artist, and the means required to get the project off the ground. Finally, there are also innumerable media focussing on who is at the top of the ladder, which celebrities are hot. They are interested in the people behind the accomplishment. For these questions, the What, the How and the Who, there are generally accepted markets. There is certainly an insatiable hunger for news. There is a professional necessity to learn from each others' methods. And there is unquenchable curiosity about the comings and goings of Famous Architects. Such markets usually take care of themselves very well, thank you. In addition, there is also an enormous market for the answers to What, How and Who. This involves the promotional productions which exclaim: That one! So!

Mine! That genre is also robust.

But is there a market for the question: Why? Is there a market for complicated and confrontational answers? One thing is certain: if you count up everyone who despite everything continues to ask why, there definitely is a market there. But it cannot be translated into the terms of a consistent target group, cannot be traced back to a professional niche, nor to a clearly definable market segment. A medium targeting this group cannot be evaluated with the same marketing parameters as an average product or most specialist information. A medium like that must continuously search for this group of people, to develop the same mercurial curiosity that characterises this group, and with the same unbridled need to explore the limits of professional spheres, specialities, disciplines and vocabularies.

Recently, *Archis* has begun to take the search even literally. We're moving out. First of all, the website www.archis.org has gone online for these people, which not only acquaints them with the contents of *Archis*, but can be used to create new contents, by establishing innumerable links between many years of contents of *Archis*, but also by participating in debates and various webprojects. *Archis* online is becoming a place to meet the like-minded. Secondly, *Archis* has just initiated a series of international events, in collaboration with AMO, Rotterdam. Not like a congress, podium discussion or round table conference, more like a barbecue, flash mob and funeral. With *Archis* RSVP events this thinktank graduates to a performing role along with its reflexive role. We are going to do something. The debate returns to the environment which stimulated the debate. The asphalt jungle. The forgotten country. The glorious monument. The exception to the rule. Hi Ha Happening!

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