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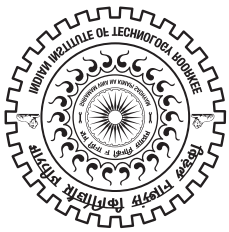
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In this issue of *Candide*, we present some of the outcomes of a research project that has taken place over the past three years, as part of a transnational cooperation between the RWTH Aachen University (Department of Architectural Theory) and the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (Department of Architecture and Planning), at the initiative of the two project coordinators Axel Sowa (RWTH Aachen University) and Smriti Saraswat (IIT Roorkee).

The thirteen authors involved in this issue address from different perspectives the theme of "Experimental Architecture and Material Culture," whose acronym of EAMC pays homage to the name of the online digital inventory for earth and stone architecture shared among those who contributed to this joint research endeavor. This homage to a digital platform is also a way to evoke the atmosphere of virtual exchange, undertaken as a Covid-19 containment measure, that has characterized the last year and a half of our (and not only academic) lives.

Candide 13 therefore results from a joint effort of scholars, researchers, and students who, in different ways, have put themselves into play as experimenters, travelers, and also careful analysts of issues such as sustainability, the wise use of resources, and international cooperation. In their own way, each author seems to express a personal point of view on these issues without proposing individual solutions, while keeping in view a collective goal that provides this issue of *Candide* with a particularly harmonious and conciliatory feature that underwrites the "well-balanced serenity" and "steadfast optimism" at the roots of this journal.

The editing of this issue required a selection of contributions that seemed to best represent the aspects of the research's generality, or rather the procedures and methods followed by the participants in their effort of observation, exchange, and experimentation with different media. Nevertheless, we are aware that this issue returns only a minimum part of the bundle of knowledge about building techniques, crafts, and material production that the participants were able to experience.

As editors, we also thought that this experimentation could be extended to how the journal is conceived. Therefore, we went back to the question of which genres of writing can orient the reader in the vast—almost endless—field of architectural knowledge. And this has meant returning to *Candide*'s initial five genres (Essay, Encounters, Fiction, Projects, Analysis) and asking ourselves the questions raised by the first issue: *How is knowledge generated, increased, stored, and propagated in architecture? How does action derive from this knowledge?* We were then able to see an opportunity to implement a new genre, born from the exchange with our partners and especially from the desire to give voice to students and researchers who, while traveling throughout Germany and India, have acquired and stored up intercultural experiences of intellectual and human growth. The new genre we present in this issue is therefore the Travel Report.

The first contribution is a photo essay authored by Gernot Minke, a true symbol of experimentation with natural materials with an endless bibliography of handbooks translated into several languages.

The two following essays are dedicated to stone architecture. Smriti Saraswat presents some observations on stone craft used in the realization of an Indian temple, while Narinderjit Kaur proposes an overview of the experience of scientific and didactic collaboration on the theme of the construction of a micro-architecture in stone.

We then present a conversation with Bernadette Heiermann regarding her long experience as a design-builder in Africa and Germany.

The next four contributions are Travel Reports written by students and researchers involved in study trips to Europe and India in 2019 in search of earthen architecture. Florian Eschner reports from the Himalayan regions, Ladakh and Spiti Valley; Frederic Schnee from some nomadic villages at the foot of the Himalayas; Ramona Schaefer from Karnataka, a region in southern India; and Vanessa Koepper from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes in France.

This is followed by an essay written by Axel Sowa focusing on the experimental aspects of the construction of an earth and clay pavilion, as an Indo-German educational experience that took place in the summer of 2020 at the site of Hoogcruts (NL), a few tens of kilometers from Aachen.

Four short essays written by some of the students of a research seminar on earth and clay held at the RWTH Aachen University, close the issue. The essays by Ting-Chun Yang, Merle Yilmaz, and Theresa Bandmann propose a critical argumentation starting from the case studies collected during the construction phase of the inventory. Suryendu Dasgupta's essay meanwhile proposes a phenomenological reflection on the sandstone of Jaisalmer (India).

The range of contributions covers a good spectrum of issues addressed during the research, but still comes to fill only part of the pool of contributions and the breadth of documentation that has been produced. We say this with the gratitude of those who had the privilege of participating in this initiative, and we hope that this issue of *Candide* may serve as a stimulus for readers to undertake similar paths of cooperation and intercultural exchange.

The editors wish to thank the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service) and all the academic and non-academic partners who, in various ways, offered their willingness to provide the space, materials, equipment, and technical expertise essential to the conduct of the research itself. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to all of them; a thanks that the individual contributions that we collect in this volume will be able to further specify. Special thanks goes to Leonie Bunte and Henning Storch, teaching assistants in the chair of architectural theory at RWTH Aachen University, as without their editorial help this issue would not have been possible.

Axel Sowa,
Andrea Alberto Dutto

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