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RICHARD VIKTOR HAGEMANN
FABIAN REICHEL

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c/o Faculty of Architecture,
Department for
Theory of Architecture
RWTH Aachen University
Templergraben 49
D-52062 Aachen

t. +49 (0)241 80 935 -71 / -72
f. +49 (0)241 80 925 72
e. candide@theorie.arch.rwth-aachen.de
w. candidejournal.net

Partners
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Editorial

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 two years 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

Theresa Bandmann
is studying architecture in the master's program at RWTH Aachen University and works as a freelancer in architecture. Previously, she completed her bachelor's degree and worked at Spine Architects in Hamburg.

Leonie Bunte
is Research and Teaching Associate at RWTH Aachen University—Chair of Architectural Theory. Before completing her master's degree at RWTH Aachen University she received the UROP scholarship and conducted research with Professor Vikram Bhatt on the topic of "Low Cost Housing" at McGill University in Montréal in 2019.

Suryendu Dasgupta
is an architect and urban designer working in the field of urban built heritage. He works as Project Fellow at IIT Roorkee, where he completed his PhD and his master's in architecture. His doctoral research led to the development of a comprehensive heritage management approach for colonial hill stations in India, within the context of Darjeeling.

Andrea Alberto Dutto
is Research and Teaching Associate at RWTH Aachen University—Chair of Architectural Theory. His research activity is sponsored in part with DAAD funding. In 2017, he completed his PhD at the Politecnico di Torino in co-tutelle with the RWTH Aachen University. Between 2018 and 2020 he worked as Postdoctoral Researcher at Politecnico di Torino, where he was also appointed as Adjunct Professor.

Florian Eschner
is a research assistant at the Department of Architectural Theory at RWTH Aachen University since July 2020. Before, he finished his master studies at RWTH at 2019. During his master's degree he went for a six-month Erasmus study program to the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares. After his Master's degree, he received a scholarship for the research project "A New Passage to India" and spent half a year researching the topic of earthen construction for the teaching and research area of architectural theory in India.

Bernadette Heiermann
teaches at the Chair of Building Theory at RWTH Aachen University alongside her work at her Cologne-based office Heiermann Architekten. Together with colleagues, she founded the design_develop_build (ddb) studio at RWTH Aachen University in 2005. Since then, she has realized her holistic teaching approach from the conceptual design to the technical implementation, together with ddb, in hands-on projects worldwide, including numerous cultural and educational buildings.

Narinderjit Kaur
is a doctoral research scholar at IIT Roorkee. Her research focuses on native Indian settlements and culture as a collaborative effort of underlying design thinking and responding to different contexts. Alongside this she has worked as an architect and environmental planner in the field of urban settlements and the built environment for over two decades.

Vanessa Koepper
is an architect working at Jankowski Bürgener Architekten in Cologne. In 2020, she completed her master's degree at RWTH Aachen University. Previously, she worked as a student assistant at the Chair of Architectural Theory at RWTH Aachen University and was involved in the collaborative project "Earthen Architecture and Material Culture" between RWTH Aachen University and IIT Roorkee.

Gernot Minke
is an architect and retired professor from the University of Kassel (Germany). Here he founded the *Forschungslabor für Experimentelles Bauen* (Building Research Institute) in 1974. At the FEB he directed fifty research and development projects in the field of low-cost-housing, sustainable architecture, building with earth, straw bales, bamboo, and green roofs. He was invited speaker at more than sixty international conferences and gave lectures and workshops in all continents. He published more than 300 scientific articles and is the author of several textbooks. Most known are: *Building with Earth*, which was published in twelve languages, *Building with Straw*, and *Building with Bamboo*.

Smriti Saraswat
was trained as an architect and interior designer. She is currently assistant professor in the department of architecture and planning, and a joint faculty member in the department of design, at IIT Roorkee. Before, in 2010, she was awarded with a Letter of Merit for academic excellence in master of interior architecture and design, from the CEPT University at Ahmedabad. She is a DAAD fellow and grantee. Her PhD is an attempt to explore and investigate material culture, traditional architecture, and building crafts of the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand in India.

Ramona Schaefer
is currently studying architecture in the master's program at RWTH Aachen University. After completing her bachelor's degree (B.Sc.) in 2018, she continued her studies for one year at l'Università degli Studi Roma Tre. In October 2019, she received a scholarship for the research project "A new passage to India," with which she travelled to India for half a year to conduct research on earthen construction methods.

Frédéric Schnee
is currently a research associate at the Institute for Architecture, Construction and Theory at the Technische Hochschule (TH) in Cologne and is working on his PhD on mutualism in building processes. Previously, he completed his master's degree in architecture at RWTH Aachen University. Alongside this, he worked for BeL in Cologne, INABA Inc. New York, and OBRA Architects and is currently working on projects in Beijing with his own practice.

Axel Sowa
is professor in the Chair of Architectural Theory at RWTH Aachen University and editor of the *Candide Journal for Architectural Knowledge*. Between 2000 and 2007, he was editor-in-chief of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* in Paris.

Henning Storch
is currently studying architecture in the master's program at RWTH Aachen University and is a Research Assistant to the Chair of Architectural Theory. In addition, he works as an intern at SMAA Architekten and is freelancing.

Ting-Chun Yang
is a master's student in architecture at the RWTH Aachen University. During her undergraduate studies at Detelling Aachen she worked as a student assistant and completed an Erasmus year at University of Porto.

Merle Yilmaz
is currently completing her practical semester at Heupel Architekten in Münster. Previously, she worked at HJPlaner Aachen and won the first prize in the ReBau competition for the development of the community of Schophoven handing in her bachelor thesis. In 2021, she began her master's studies at RWTH Aachen University.

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