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EDITORS' NOTES ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH AND SUSTAINABILITY AS OVERALL CHALLENGE

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This mixed issue presents three scientific articles, one academic essay, one PhD thesis review by Dr. Leif Östman, and one book review by Dr. Marius Fiskevold. All four scientific contributions in the issue are characterized by a certain understanding of architecture knowledge and expound in different ways on the need for sustainability in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. The concept is very broad. Sustainable design stands out as a global challenge for architecture as discipline, research field, academic program, practice, and profession. Evidence for this assessment may be found in the proceedings of the International Union of Architects' (UIA) World Congress in Copenhagen, July 2–6, 2023.[1] Under the heading "Sustainable Futures – Leave No One Behind", architects and professionals from the building and planning communities were invited to Copenhagen to support the United Nations' 17 Goals for sustainable development. The intention was to innovate and discover sustainable solutions that would enable a leap forward toward accomplishing the goals by as soon as 2030. The clock is ticking. At the *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, our contribution is to broadly distribute architecture knowledge by peer-reviewing and publishing architectural research.

1 See: https://uia2023cph.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PROGRAMME-SESSIONS-JUNE-V2.pdf

We have only one planet to look after and manage. From this perspective, "leave no one behind" was the central, transformative promise behind the sustainable development goals of the congress in Copenhagen. This promise represents a commitment by the entire architecture community to reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that could leave people behind during the necessary transformation in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. The Copenhagen congress addressed how architects, urban planners, and the construction industry may contribute to a more just, resilient, and inclusive society – and how these actions can be further improved. The overall objectives were to share collective experience and best practices from projects and research, generate and share as much knowledge as possible during the congress, and create a global commitment to design, build, and reuse in a sustainable way. According to the website, the Copenhagen congress seems to include as many aspects of sustainable design as possible in a global manner. In research, on the other hand, sustainable design is a more action-oriented approach often expressed as "avoid, reduce, reuse, replace, recycle and recover" (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

The association and organizer behind the congress, the International Union of Architects (UIA), was founded in 1948 to unite the architects of the world through an association of their national organizations.[2] The UIA has grown to include the key professional architects' associations in more than a hundred countries, organizing an estimated 1.3 million architects and celebrating its 75-year anniversary in 2023. The UIA is an international non-governmental organization recognized by UNESCO and is the only architectural union operating at an international level, according to its website. The UIA's Coordinating Council has been responsible for establishing the general principles governing the UIA World Congress in Copenhagen, monitoring and orienting the preparatory works, achieving coordination and cooperation among different parties, and managing the agreement signed between the UIA and the Danish Association of Architects.

2 See: https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/

The Copenhagen Lessons

The lessons learned from the discussions and presentations during the four days of the congress was summarized in ten guidelines for designing the future. We hope these foundational ideas will be debated, since they are of public interest and shape architectural policy. The ten guidelines are aimed at rapidly and radically transforming the built environment to align with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ten guidelines, presented at the congress in Copenhagen, call for the following actions:[3]

3 See: https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/news/copenhagen-lessons/

- Dignity and agency for all people are fundamental in architecture; there is no beauty in exclusion.
- People at risk of being left behind must be accommodated first when we construct, plan, and develop the built environment.
- Existing built structures must always be reused first.
- No new development must erase green fields.
- Natural ecosystems and food production must be sustained regardless of the built context.
- No virgin mineral material must be used in construction when reuse is possible.
- No waste must be produced or left behind in construction.
- When sourcing materials for construction, local, renewable materials come first.
- In everything we build, carbon capture must exceed carbon footprint.
- When developing, planning, and constructing the built environment, every activity must positively impact water ecosystems and clean water supply.

These ten guidelines for actions represent a crucial responsibility for architects to apply in design and in the physical planning of societies. Inclusivity, equality, and accessibility are more important in sustainable design than ever before. But can architects respond to this responsibility and its ethical code of conduct? We need actions that bridge borders and cultures, and with the increase in economic and social disparity, our solutions must rely on collaboration among diverse professionals and companies across the building sector.

For the UIA World Congress in Copenhagen 2023, the Nordic architect associations organized a special event called "The Nordic Pavilion – Collaborate for a Regenerative Future." The pavilion was indented to be a space for inspiration and dialogue about how architecture and construction can be central tools in achieving a more sustainable future, featuring key stakeholders from the Nordic architecture and construction sectors. The pavilion was a collaboration among the Danish Association of Architects, Architects Sweden, the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA), the National Association of Norwegian Architects (NAL), the Faroese Architects Association (ARK), Iceland Design and Architecture, SUSTAINORDIC, and Nordic Sustainable Construction. A critical note is the lack of expertise in architectural research among the invited speakers. Research was largely absent from the final session on September 5, entitled "Collaborate for a Regenerative Future – Visions for the Needed Transformation." One of the speakers invited to the Nordic Pavilion in session one was described as a climate activist.[4] Two were from architect associations in Denmark and Finland. Most speakers were officials from governmental ministries in the Nordic countries, representing Trade &

4 See: https://www.nordicsustainableconstruction.com/events/2023/july/uia-2023

Industry, Business & Affairs, and Culture. Architectural research seemed to be absent as well from the closing discussion at the pavilion concerning visions for needed transformation. None of invited speakers are presented as researcher.

Articles and essay

The relationship between the scientific articles in this issue and the ten overarching guidelines from the World Congress in Copenhagen 2023 may not be obvious. But we believe they communicate and enrich each other in an open way for sustainable design in architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. This is a general approach that needs to be deepened, clarified, criticized, and developed by architectural research.

The first article in this mixed issue is Tommy Lindgren's "The Vulgar Townscape: A Proposal for a Cartography of Style." This contribution focuses on the attempt to redefine the notion of *style*, which is rarely used in architectural discourse now and is mostly considered an obsolete concept. The author argues, on a pure conceptual level, for a new meaning of this word with the support of important and influential contemporary theoreticians and writers like Latour with Yaneva on Actor-Network Theory but also DeLanda on assemblages. Lindgren's source of inspiration, meanwhile, and his major reference point, seems to be the legendary classic of urban architectural design books, Gordon Cullen's *The Concise Townscape* (1971), which is full of widely admired and highly romantic imagery of small-town Britain. The high-water mark of stylistic architectural design, the *modern style* era between wars, with Le Corbusier and others, was a time when *style* was used as a sign of distinction, of design superiority and a valid winning radical political argument in situations of architectural competitions but foremost as a tool for an artistic professional breakthrough in access to major commissions. Later the most radical position was to be based on destruction of the concept urged to move far *beyond* the very notion of style.

The author offers valuable insight into a wealth of sources for theory and suggested methodologies in architectural research. The foremost of these sources is Levi Bryant, who introduced the notion of *onto-cartography* in his 2014 book, a timely multi-disciplinary analysis of human relations with machines and media, as in in built environments. This article provides a valiantly refreshed new conceptual language for architecture – a heroic project that deserves further exposition and exploration in light of related contemporary empirical findings in order to assess the validity of the approach. What the reader might want is a better clarification of how the suggested cartography or mapping of styles should be conducted and presented. An interesting question that lingers after reading is how a reformed definition of style can help us communicate publicly in a better way.

The second article, by Anne Corlin and Mette My Madsen, is titled "Thinging Architecture: Architectural Affordance in Community Making." The authors offer a detailed insight concerning the way neighborhood residents decorate their houses, including the importance of taking this kind of community-making by non-professionals seriously in architectural design. The article demonstrates how the use of potted plants, doormats, door decoration, or Christmas lights in the transition zones from private to public domain can play an important role among residents in Denmark and offers a way of negotiating personal and communal expectations. Corresponding expressions are found among tenants and owners of single-family homes in Norway, Finland, and Sweden.

The authors refer to studies by architectural scholars who connect acts of decorating and opportunities to do so with well-being among residents and the joy of looking out the window at their own things. By analyzing empirical cases from three typologically different housing estates in Denmark, Anne Corlin and Mette My Madsen argue that architectural design heavily influences the extent to which residents can express themselves through things. Combining theory and empirical data, the article defines *thinging architecture* as a key concept for categorizing and identifying design elements that allow residents to build community. The concept is a part of participatory design and cooperative design strategies. However, in this article, thinging architecture is a community process. It is something residents do. They express themselves by decorating their homes. The conclusions are summarized in the end of the article in four interconnected points. First, there is an overarching link in expressions based on coherence across scales. Second, the transition zones are important spaces for residents to create individuality. Third, the typology of the common spaces influences the choice of design elements. Finally, the connections between the individual home and the common space are highlighted as community marking.

"Build Back Better? Pandemic Lessons for Future Residential Architecture" by Marie Stender, Sigrid Bonderup, and Malene Rudolf Lindberg is the third article in this issue (2-2024). The authors examine the concerns and suggestions raised in the pandemic and early post-pandemic research literature on dwellings and residential architecture. Moreover, the article discusses the possible long-term effects of Covid-19 on residential architecture and built environments and its role in the development of modern architecture and urban planning. The review highlights the importance of social equity, the need to rethink the design of outdoor space surrounding the home, and (multi-) functional needs. The literature review shows that vegetation had a substantial positive impact on our quality of life during the pandemic and shows how we can enhance access to urban green areas, including outdoor spaces and nature. The authors offer a detailed picture of the home as not only a physical frame but a place to hold the psychology and emotional state of the resident

during a crisis. They further address the prerequisite for a renewed post-pandemic engagement, in which the identified literature illuminates the need for engagement with monitoring and describing equality in societies, neighborhood-level mobility planning, and issues related to architecture and housing density.

The fourth and final scientific contribution in this mixed issue is titled "The Review: To Encapsulate and Quote, to Commentate and Criticize" by Jerker Lundequist (1942–2015). He presents important guidelines for conducting reviews that need to be debated. This academic essay was originally written in Swedish and has been translated by Professor Emeritus Sten Gromark**.** The contribution was first published already in 1989 in the Journal of Architectural Research No. 3 (*Tidskrift för Arkitekturforskning*). The reason for translating and republishing the academic essay is that it can serve as a guide, discussing both what a peer review should contain and how a proper peer review should be conducted. Lundequist offers some personal advice on peer reviewing architectural works that can be seen as a model.

Journals have used evaluation and critical peer reviews to improve performance, provide credibility, and maintain quality standards for nearly three hundred years (Kronick, 1990). Jerker Lundequist's essay can serve as a guide for what a peer review should contain and how to conduct proper peer reviews. In the most general sense, the peer-review principle guarantees an environment of unrestrained criticism (Drummond, 2003), and Lundequist emphasizes that, "It is not kind to be kind!" In other words, a peer reviewer should read the work with sufficient attention and necessary depth and not use a vague and general approach. Ultimately, peer review is about assessing research quality and should contain a high standard of constructive criticism. Some concluding notes from the editors are that the rigor of peer reviews should be debated more consistently in order to promote "good" peer reviews and ensure the future quality of published scientific material.

PhD review

The thesis "Sattuman varassa: ristiriitaisuus rakennussuojelussa" (Randomness: Contradictions in the Preservation of Built Heritage) by Retta Nousiainen is reviewed by Dr. Leif Östman. The thesis is written in Finnish. Östman is Principal Lecture at NOVIA University of Applied Science in Finland. His review is in Swedish to make the dissertation accessible for a larger audience. The main finding of this PhD research project, which examines the national context for preservation of built cultural

heritage, concludes that protection is random, or the actually achieved end result is random. A wide methodological perspective based on grounded theory has been applied in an original manner.

Title: Sattuman varassa: ristiriitaisuus rakennussuojelussa
Author: Retta Nousiainen
Publisher: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2024

Book review

Einar Lillebye has written the book called "Våre gater. Hva er gater og hvordan planlegger vi dem?" (Our Streets: What Are Streets and How Do We Plan Them?). The author is an architect and professor emeritus and knows the design and planning process for streets very well from many years working at the Norwegian Public Roads Administration and from being a lecturer at NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) and a professor in street design at NMBU (Norwegian University of Life Sciences). The book is reviewed in this issue by Dr. Marius Fiskevold, a landscape architect who works both in academia and as a practicing architect. Both the book and the review are in Norwegian. The publication is about understanding knowledge when designing and planning streets and focuses on the intersection between profession, authority, and academia. The aim is both to demonstrate the design of streets from a professional point of view and to describe the hierarchical context of street planning in Norway. Fiskevold notes that the relationship between good quality (understood as subjective values) and right quality (seen as measurable and objective properties) is still a central issue in the design and planning of streets for citizens.

Title: Våre gater. Hva er gater og hvordan planlegger vi dem?
Author: Einar Lillebye
Publisher: Universitetsforlaget, 2024

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