



CAROLINE MANIAQUE (ed.)
Les années 68 et la formation
des architectes

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Great change is never totally unexpected — and less so in academia. The photographs taken in the École des Beaux-Arts on rue Bonaparte, Paris in May '68 all convey the upheaval taking place but the earthquake that hit the teaching of architecture in France was preceded by warning signs and followed by countless aftershocks. History consists not only of a series of chapters about milestones but also a minute narrative that threads them together. In this instance, the focal point is the specific methods used to teach architecture which were analysed by a research team led by Caroline Maniaque in the book *Les années et la formation des architectes*.

Maniaque's book was part of the 50th anniversary of a date that marked the dismantling of the traditional teaching methods employed in Beaux-Arts ateliers and the subsequent creation of new teaching units or *unités pédagogiques d'architecture* (UPA). These units were quite autonomous as regards curricular design and teaching methods and evolved into today's *Écoles Nationales Supérieures d'Architecture* (ENSA). This book rounded off the exhibition 'Mai 68: L'architecture aussi!' (*Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine*. Paris, 16.05-17.09.18. Catalogue by Editions B2) and was part of a far-reaching, public-sector research project designed to provide an overview of the history of the teaching of architecture in France.

The introduction by Caroline Maniaque, essential reading for anyone unfamiliar with

the French setting, is followed by a chapter by David Peyceré, the director of the *Centre d'archives d'architecture du XXème siècle*, which reveals the scope of the documentary research involved, whilst the contextual insight of Jean-Louis Violeau emphasises catalysing moments that are, in themselves, intellectual challenges. (One example is the saga of architecture's dalliance in politics that enmeshed Ricardo Bofill's projects in France). The second part of the book is a compilation of the teaching methods used in the different UPAs, either on the basis of subject matter, e.g. the history of architecture (Anne Debarre), or the viewpoint of such remarkable teachers as Bernard Huet, Henri Ciriani, the UNO group or Claire and Michel Duplay (Juliette Pommier, Alison Gorel Le Pennec, Christel Marchiaro, Damien Renault), or even the permeability of international influences (Caroline Maniaque). The third section examines how the teaching of architecture extended beyond the framework of French institutions. The school in Toulouse gazed in awe at the Bauhaus and Ulm School of Design in Germany (Andrea Urlberger); the Franco-Belgian co-operation at the school in Saint-Luc de Tournai is extremely enriching (Élise Guillerm); and the comparison with the AA School of Architecture in London (Carlos Machado e Moura) provides extremely interesting new insights. This section also analyses the experimental frameworks provided by the innovative teaching methods used at the summer workshops in Aix-en-Provence (Éléonore Marantz) and the cross-disciplinary approach adopted from the outset by the Institut de l'environnement (Marc Frochaux). The final section of the book features contributions by such foremost figures as Philippe Panerai, Jean Castex, Jean-Paul Jungmann, Bruno Queysanne, Ginette Baty-Tornikian, Rainier Hoddé and Guy Lambert, without whom any study of this nature would be incomplete.

Two different periods of reflection emerge as one reads this book: during and after. Immersing oneself in the scene of events reveals that the changes in teaching were situated at the very edge of their possibilities, i.e. in the real world of available resources and means. From a distant, decisive viewpoint, however, any contemporary teachers, not only those from France, can see how indebted they are to those events.

May '68 began in the early 60s and continued until the late 70s. This idea has been championed in previous publications (J.L. Violeau, *Les architectes et mai 68*, 2005) and is reasserted in *Les années 68...* time and time again. By 1965, the architectural section of the École des Beaux-Arts had already given rise to three subgroups of workshops known as traditional, external and progressive. Many reports and changes ensued in the next three years, and after being closed down in 1968, many reopened as UPAs and made constant modifications to their teaching methods, partly also because of their very small and rather sub-standard rooms. The school was already using adjoining premises due to a lack of space (i.e.

in the external and progressive ateliers) but the overhaul of the new UPAs caused a disparity of locations which, strangely enough, had a certain impact on the symbiosis of teaching methods.

In addition, the key figures in the events constantly encountered each other and coincided in a succession of different roles: students who quickly became teachers, lecturers who edited first-rate journals and published papers about their students' output, acclaimed architects who brought their experience into the classroom... The outcome was a diverse but delimited community that generated feedback about the different teaching methods half way between people's desires and real possibilities, clear-cut decisions and improvisation, and experimentation and activities based on the syllabus.

Many of the methods described in this book are now familiar and readers will find the in-depth text and wealth of documents (syllabuses, photographs, exercises and students' answers) particularly interesting. College-based education, practical courses based on contextual analysis, discussion groups, syntactical approaches, experimental mock-ups, series of brief exercises related to projects, the commitment to learning by doing, etc. are all reminders of the validity of the main concerns about *what* an architect should be taught and *how*. The matter of *who* should do this teaching also changed in a way quite in keeping with that period. The replacement of the *patron d'atelier* (workshop manager) by independent teams working in the different UPAs was the first step towards the dissolution of this figure, together with the diversification stemming from the co-existence of different teaching methods.

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