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The Table of Contents - A Reflection on Editorial Work
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The Table of Contents – A Reflection on Editorial Work

Abstract:

This paper reflects on the editorial work that has been involved in the production of *Architecture and Culture* since the journal's inception. *Architecture and Culture* is the journal of the Architectural Humanities Research Association. Provoked by a meditation on the role of the Table of Contents, the paper asks what "humanity" might mean, both for the content of the journal, and for the way in which that content is gathered.

Image captions:

Figure 1. Plates for Chimie (chemistry) and Broderie (embroidery) from the eighteenth-century Encyclopédie, edited by Jean Rond d'Alembert and Denis Diderot, as shown in Amy Kulper's article "Representing the Discipline: The Operations of Architecture's Discursive Imagery," *Architecture and Culture* vol. 1, issues 1 and 2, November 2013: 46. Photograph by Rachel Travers.

Figure 2. Suzanne Lacy's International Dinner Party, accompanied by other exhibits at the AHRA conference "Architecture and Feminisms," held at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden, 2016, as shown in Elke Krasny's article "Suzanne Lacy's International Dinner Party," *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 5, issue 3, November 2017: 449. Photograph by Rachel Travers.

The Table of Contents – A Reflection on Editorial Work

Architecture and Culture is the Journal of the Architectural Humanities Research Association, or AHRA, a group originally convened in 2003 to provide a "support network of researchers in the architectural humanities."¹ The journal was launched by AHRA some years later (its first issue was published in 2013) as a vehicle to disseminate the work of those researchers, whoever and wherever they might be. Its remit was broad. As the journal's

¹ AHRA website, <https://ahra-architecture.org/about> (consulted May 2024). AHRA was founded by Jonathan Hale from the University of Nottingham, UK, who brought together a core group of colleagues working in the architectural humanities. It currently has approximately one thousand members worldwide.

declared Aims and Scope put it, it sought to “promote a conversation between all those who are curious about what architecture might be and what it can do.”²

Volume 11, issue 1 – this issue – looks back on the journal’s first ten years. It also marks a transition from one editorial team to another. Founding editor Igea Troiani and editor Jessica Kelly (who joined the team in 2018) both stepped down at the end of 2022. Suzanne Ewing, editor since 2012, sought to conclude her role in Summer 2023, and almost succeeded. To provide at least some continuity, Diana Periton – also a founding editor – is for now still on the editorial team; her involvement started in around 2008 when, with Igea, she shaped the Aims and Scope and pitched the journal to potential publishers. With continuing contribution from editor-at-large Stephen Walker and from the Editorial Board, Diana is now joined by Jamie-Scott Baxter and Séverine Marguin, Teresa Stoppani and Alessandro Zambelli, with Inès Gartlinger as assistant editor.³ Ray Lucas will be part of the team from Summer 2025. This juncture provides an opportunity for us to reflect on what *Architecture and Culture* is, as a journal – not just what we thought we wanted it to be, but what it has become.

We use, as a device for reflection, the Table of Contents. What has been contained in the journal – who has been in or at the table? How have the contents been organized, or tabulated? Are we content with all that has been contained? If a Table of Contents holds things together, our understanding of such tables for *Architecture and Culture* is that they also reach outwards; while they do bring an internal order, they are ultimately concerned with forging connections beyond the table itself. In the early issues of the journal, we were interested to question the boundaries of what constitutes architecture and its culture. Through the Tables of Contents we set out to make space for, and to cultivate, conversations in which architecture’s particular modes of “knowing” or research – already very varied – could be both asserted and at the same time investigated in relation to other discourses. We hoped to bring to the table practitioners and thinkers from within the discipline of architecture as well as from elsewhere, established researchers and those whose voices were new, using

² *Architecture and Culture*, Aims and Scope, <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rfac20> (consulted May 2024).

³ Stephen Walker is officially our book reviews editor, but we have elected for the time being not to publish book reviews *per se*. The term editor-at-large, or editor-to-be-called-on-in-times-of-crisis, seems to capture his role more aptly.

conventional essay forms and other modes of writing.⁴ We sought to ask, not just what architecture's culture is, but what its role within wider culture could be. Here, perhaps following Ursula Le Guin's proposition that "to discover something is to make it," we look back to see what was made, and what we have learned.⁵

Architecture's Knowledge

Our first issue – a double, entitled *Architecture's Disciplinarity* – addressed the question of architecture's disciplinary boundaries head on. Tim Gough's opening article confronted the often-made assertion that architecture is a "weak" discipline, because it borrows or pillages from so many others, by meditating on different attempts to posit it as "strong" – particularly those making claims for its autonomy.⁶ Gough's conclusion was that architecture's strength lies ultimately in its very weakness, in understanding it as a "resilient formation, an open ... set of relations," however problematic these relations may be.⁷

Gough's meditation was followed by Amy Kulper's "Representing the Discipline," on the ways in which the practice of architecture is depicted.⁸ Kulper used engravings from Diderot and d'Alembert's eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* to suggest what is at stake if a profession or discipline is rendered

⁴ From the mid 1990s, when scholarly journals began to proliferate in order to address the demands of research assessment exercises in various countries, most peer reviewed activity in architectural research that did not fall into purely historical, technical, educational or professional categories centred around the *Journal of Architecture* (launched 1996) and *Architecture Research Quarterly* (launched 1995-96). *AA Files*, *LOG*, *Cabinet* and other well regarded institutional-based publication series nurtured thematic, essay-based content that primarily worked with a guest editor model. Reflecting deepening interest in theoretical dimensions of architecture, *Architecture Theory Review* appeared in the mid-1990s; *Footprint*, Delft Architecture Theory Journal published its first issue in 2007. *Architecture and Culture* is indebted to all of these, but we saw our remit slightly differently – to be open to new, untried researchers, and to new modes of exploration, while seeking as far as possible to maintain academic rigor.

⁵ "To make something is to invent it, to discover it, to uncover it, like Michaelangelo cutting away at the marble that hid the statue. Perhaps we think less often of the proposition reversed, thus: To discover something is to make it." Ursula Le Guin, "World-making," 1981 essay, published in Ursula Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1989), 47.

⁶ Tim Gough, "Architecture as a Strong Discipline," *Architecture and Culture* vol. 1, issues 1 and 2, November 2013: 21-42. "The science of the architect depends upon many disciplines and various apprenticeships which are carried out in the other arts," wrote Vitruvius in the first century CE, identifying already architecture's reliance on crafts as well as technology, on written records, on drawing, mathematics, scientific inquiry, philosophy, music, on medicine, law and astronomy (see *Vitruvius: On Architecture, Books I-V*, trans. Frank Granger, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press [Loeb Classical Library], 1931, 7-9).

⁷ Gough, "Architecture as a Strong Discipline:" 21.

⁸ Amy Kulper, "Representing the Discipline: The Operations of Architecture's Discursive Imagery," *Architecture and Culture* vol. 1, issues 1 and 2, November 2013: 43-67.

easily describable. She drew attention to the way in which the plates in the *Encyclopédie* repeatedly illustrate different practices with a table on which different ingredients and tools of the trade are laid out, tools and ingredients which are then separately tabulated (Figure 1). The effect of the near elision of tables and *tabulae* is that the background or context to the table recedes. We concentrate on *how* something is made from its different components, rather than asking *what* is being made or *why*. Kulper's concern is that the table or *tabula* becomes itself a "cultural horizon – a surrogate for the differentiated grounds upon which culture operates."⁹ While Diderot and d'Alembert do not attempt to reduce the discipline of architecture to a single drawing or table, the *Encyclopédie* was written at a time when the architectural drawing was already coming to stand in for architecture's practices.¹⁰ The disciplinary equivalent of the surrogate cultural horizons occurs when the "translation from drawing to building" – Robin Evans' phrase – comes to seem direct.¹¹ Apparent autonomy is achieved with the assumption that architecture *is* the drawing, with that which lies beyond it rendered unimportant. Following Evans, Kulper looks for ways in which drawings are used subversively, less like *tabulae*, refusing self-sufficiency, and actively drawing in the cultural background that supports them.¹²

In our own tabulation of this first journal issue, we imagined a shift from a focus (in the earlier articles) on architecture itself, seen from within the discipline, to a concern (in the

⁹ Ibid., 47. In vol. 9 of *Architecture and Culture*, Lisa Landrum describes the etymological link between tables and *tabulae*; both refer to the Roman *tabula*, a board covered with wax on which inscriptions can be made. See "Tableaux Vivants: Tables and Stages of Architectural Striving," *Architecture and Culture* vol. 9, issue 3, September 2021: 524.

¹⁰ The account of architecture in the *Encyclopédie* is written by Jacques-François Blondel, and starts with a description, both verbal and visual, of the classical orders – see "Blondel dans l'*Encyclopédie* (1748-1757)" in Aurélien Davrius, *Jacques-François Blondel, Architecte des Lumières* (Paris: Garnier, 2018), 171-235. The primacy of the drawing as the site of architectural work might be traced back to the fifteenth century and Leon Battista Alberti, but for an account of its rising importance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Jacques-François Blondel's involvement, see, for instance, *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, edited by Arthur Drexler (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977).

¹¹ See Robin Evans, "Translations from Drawing to Building," 1986, in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), 152-193, discussed by Kulper in "Representing the Discipline."

¹² Lisa Landrum, in "Tableaux Vivants: Tables and Stages of Architectural Striving," makes the case that the architects' drawing table or board should be considered as exactly such a place of "drawing in" – its separation from and engagement with all that surrounds it is like that of the theatre; it is "at once a curiosity cabinet and a garden of worldly delights; a stage for the choreography of geometrical operations; a dance floor where cunning intelligence rehearses its moves; and a playground for acting out life scenarios both poetically tragic and wonderfully comic." *Architecture and Culture* vol. 9, issue 3, September 2021: 529.

later ones) with its relationships with other disciplines or practices.¹³ We ordered the papers from discussions of potential autonomy (always questioned) to explorations of the way architecture's interactions with other disciplines might occur. The halfway point was Jane Rendell's explicitly titled "Working Between and Across: Some Psychic Dimensions of Architecture's Inter- and Trans-Disciplinarity." Drawing on a range of psychoanalytical thinkers (Félix Guattari and Donald Winnicott, Jean Laplanche, Diane Fuss, Jessica Benjamin among them), Rendell reflects on what it means to work, first in places between disciplines – which means that we need to ask about the edges or borders that define their identities – and then across disciplines, actively giving ourselves over to the other. This, writes Rendell, means making ourselves vulnerable to other modes of thought without losing our identity (architecture's specificity) in the process.¹⁴

Looking back at that first double issue, the intentions of the journal seem clear. Through it, we sought to understand how architecture operated as a discipline and as a culture or sub-culture. We were not content to leave architecture's workings implicit, hidden in Reyner Banham's "black box."¹⁵ We wanted also to explore how architecture learns from other disciplines and cultures, and how it might do so more knowingly and openly. Yet our approach to this exploration was highly conceptual, pieced together from and gathered into the architectural theorist's point of view. At our table were fellow architects-turned-theorists, each with their own set of carefully selected guests or references. It took us some time to move beyond our own disciplinary boundaries, to dare to be as vulnerable as Rendell asked us to be – to dare to follow the desire-lines sketched out by some of the practice-based

¹³ The Table of Contents printed inside this double issue (Issues 1 and 2: 5-6) registered Issue One, "Discipline: Architecture's Disciplinarity" and Issue Two, "Architecture's Inter-/Trans-/Un-disciplinarity" as potentially separate entities. This separation did not appear on the Table of Contents printed on the back cover of the journal, where the articles appear as a single list.

¹⁴ Jane Rendell, "Working Between and Across: Some Psychic Dimensions of Architecture's Inter- and Trans-Disciplinarity," *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 1, issues 1 and 2, November 2013: 129-141.

¹⁵ "I propose to treat the architectural mode or presence as a classic 'black box,' recognized by its output though unknown in its contents." Reyner Banham, "A Black Box: The Secret Profession of Architecture," 1990, in *A Critic Writes: Essays by Reyner Banham*, selected by Mary Banham, Paul Barker, Sutherland Lyall and Cedric Price (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 293. We referred to Banham's "black box" in our Introductory essay for the first issue, and it is mentioned in several other articles there, including Amy Kulper's – see Igea Troiani, Suzanne Ewing and Diana Periton, "Architecture and Culture. Architecture's Disciplinarity," *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 1, issue 1 and 2, November 2013: 11. See also "Behind the Scenes: Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms in Design and Architecture," *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 6, issue 1, April 2018, edited by Jessica Kelly.

researchers in that same first issue: Alessandro Zambelli's excursions into archaeological drawings, Michael Fowler's soundscapes, or José Vela Castilla's experimental writing.¹⁶

Architecture's Vulnerability

The early issues of the journal were each built around a theme, their content the result of a call for papers. Some were guest-edited, others had themes we conceived of ourselves.¹⁷ It was not until Volume 4, in 2016, that we felt confident enough to publish our first open issue. We had, we thought, gathered enough unsolicited work to start to judge what we might be "open" to, in what would be our tenth Table of Contents.

In this issue, Mark Dorrian's article, "What's Interesting? On the Ascendancy of an Evaluative Term," helped us to understand our predilections a little more clearly. Dorrian proposed that, where architectural projects are concerned, perhaps "good" work – work which could be identified as meeting pre-existing criteria – was being usurped by "interesting" work, harder to evaluate because it focuses not so much on built or buildable form as on the conditions in which architecture takes place. "Interesting" work makes those conditions visible and thus "dramatizes" and puts pressure on them.¹⁸ This, we recognized, was what we hoped the journal might do through its content, through the selection of work that would engage with and confront the conditions of architecture's production. The vulnerability of being "open" was not just a vulnerability to other disciplines and modes of thought, as Jane Rendell had put forward, but a vulnerability to the drama, the *agon*, of our situation. When we wrote that "the openness of self-aware engagement involves – as our

¹⁶ See Alessandro Zambelli, "Scandalous Artifacts: Practice between Archaeology and Architecture," *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 1, issue 1 and 2: 183-202; Michael Fowler, "Sound, Aurality and Critical Listening: Disruptions at the Boundaries of Architecture," *ibid.*: 162-181; José Vela Castillo, "Live Adventures – and Misadventures – of Style: The Discipline of Architecture," *ibid.*: 203-215.

¹⁷ The titles of the journal special issues, not including AHRA conference issues, up to the first open issue, are as follows: "Discipline: Architecture's Disciplinarity" (2013), "Disciplinary Practices" (2014), "Architecture Filmmaking" (2015), "Urban Atmospheres" (2015), "Architecture and the Spaces of Information" (2016). Later thematic issues are "Solids and Flows: Architecture and Capitalism" (2017), "Architectural Storytelling" (2017) (this was a later open issue which seemed to adhere to a theme), "Behind the Scenes: Anonymity and Hidden Mechanisms in Design and Architecture" (2018), "Spaces of Tolerance" (2019), "Re-Viewing the Review" (2019), "The Neoliberal University" (2020), "And Yet It Moves: Ethics, Power and Politics in the Stories of Collecting, Archiving and Displaying of Drawings and Models" (2021), "Spaces of Welfare" (2022), "Sacred, Spiritual, Secular: Spaces of Faith in the Twenty-first Century" (2024).

¹⁸ See Mark Dorrian, "What's Interesting? On the Ascendancy of an Evaluative Term," *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 4, issue 2, 2016: 180.

authors repeatedly show us – tact, with occasional outrage, and care,” we were probably not being trenchant enough.¹⁹

Among the guest edited issues of the journal are those based on the proceedings of AHRA’s annual international conferences. Each conference has a different focus and is hosted by a different institution.²⁰ The ”Architecture and Feminisms” conference, held at KTH in Stockholm, Sweden, also in 2016, produced an issue of the journal which was undoubtedly “interesting” in Dorrian’s sense, and “open” in ours.²¹ It sought to find new tactics for the practice and critique of architecture that drew direct attention to architecture’s conditions of misogyny, its hierarchies, and its assumptions of correctness, and to do so by proposing and presenting alternatives. The issue’s title, “Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects in Architecture,” interesting in its very awkwardness, forced attention on each of the words used within it and their relationships. What was meant here by style? By queerness, or feminism? Why the urgency to address styles of both practices and objects?

The issue is exuberant and serious in equal measure. It opens with a review of the “Revue of Styles” of queer and feminist architecture whose performances punctuated the conference; it discusses architectures of childbirth and the hospital waiting room; it invites us to go late night photo-shopping. In the middle of the pile-up of articles is one that addresses the reader directly. By Elke Krasny, a keynote speaker at the conference, it acknowledges how hard it must be to read about an event that has passed, a performance that is over, a dinner party to which we were not invited; she asks us nevertheless to bear with her and try to engage. In “Suzanne Lacy’s International Dinner Party in Feminist Curatorial Thought,” Krasny tells us about a dinner party that took place in 1979 to accompany the opening of artist Judy Chicago’s installation, *Dinner Party*, in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.²²

¹⁹ Suzanne Ewing and Diana Periton, “An Open Issue,” *Architecture and Culture*, vol 4, issue 2, 2016: 170.

²⁰ The titles of the conference issues provide an index of the concerns and enquiries driven by the AHRA community during these years: “Dissidence” (2014), “Transgression: Body and Space” (2014), “Into the Hidden Abode: Architecture and Production” (2015), “This Thing Called Theory” (2016), “Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects in Architecture” (2017), “Architecture, Festival and the City” (2018), “Smartness?” (2019), “Architecture and Collective Life” (2020), “Inhabitation, Housing and the City” (2022). Currently In production are “Fluid Regions” (2023) and “Situated Ecologies of Care” (2025).

²¹ “Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects in Architecture,” edited by Karin Reisinger and Meike Schalk, *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 5, issue 3, November 2017.

²² Elke Krasny, “Suzanne Lacy’s International Dinner Party,” in *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 5, issue 3, November 2017: 435-453.

Chicago's installation was a table set for thirty-nine mythical and historical women, all of them familiar and all of them powerful. Its lush place settings, arranged in a triangle with thirteen along each side, facing inwards, were crafted by a team of embroiderers, seamstresses and ceramicists, arranged on bespoke joinery tables. Suzanne Lacy, one of Judy Chicago's art school students, sent invitations to 200 women's organizations around the globe asking them to host their own dinner parties in collaboration and celebration with the exhibition opening, and to send a telegram back to San Francisco as they sat around their own tables. Lacy put pins in a large map of the world as the telegrams arrived, to show where and when each dinner was taking place.

In Stockholm, at an exhibition that accompanied the conference, the map with pins was reproduced, as were the telegrams, held in ring-back files (see figure 2). Telegrams came, for instance, from a women's group in Christchurch, New Zealand, whose members sat around their table in solidarity with the women of Iran (this was 1979, the year of the Islamic Revolution), as did those of a group from Edinburgh. An alliance of people who called themselves simply "feminists living in Rio de Janeiro" sat round their dinner table specifically to discuss women's reproductive rights in Brazil. The Stockholm exhibition accompanied this archive with installations from a number of current feminist and LGBTQ activist groups. Among them, Queering Yerevan, which organizes "happenings," film screenings, workshops, and raises funds, all to support people confronting homophobia in Armenia, showed one of its films. Aktion Arkiv exhibited work from its "mobile archive" of "participatory history writing" – its members had been touring housing estates in Sweden to ask residents about their experiences of the restructuring of the Swedish welfare state after 2008 in line with "austerity measures," asking what this restructuring meant for residents' homes and their lives.

Elke Krasny's letter to the reader, and the objects and practices it describes, while not taxing conceptually, demands our engagement. It asks us to transport ourselves to San Francisco in 1979, or to Yerevan or Sweden in 2016, and to immerse ourselves in the styles of practice that were being explored and the objects they entailed. The exhibition at KTH that she describes shows Rendell's "working between and across" in action – not just between and across disciplines (the exhibition involved many different modes of operating) but also across the awkward spaces of the foyer in which it was shown, across continents, across time zones and times. It was immediately evident that the exhibition was a work of collective endeavour,

building on and working with what has come before and what surrounds it, as part of an ever-changing, ongoing conversation. Reading Krasny's piece re-activates its relationships; it asks us to give ourselves over to each of its concerns and the links between them, making the reader potentially part of that conversation. In terms of Kulper's apprehensions about the primacy of technique, about the *how* becoming the focus of architectural discourse, subsuming the question of what we build, why, and in what context, Krasny's letter makes clear that the *what*, the exhibition with its sub-exhibitions, acknowledges within itself how it is made, and why – and it does this within shifting and expanding cultural horizons.

Revealing Work

It would be disingenuous to suggest that “Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects in Architecture” of 2017, guest edited by Karin Reisinger and Meike Schalk, marked a turning point in *Architecture and Culture*'s self-understanding (or rather, our understanding, as managing editors, of what we were doing). It is more that, looking back, we can learn from what it shows. The issue seems to encapsulate the journal's gradual shift from work that was predominantly focused on the discourses of architecture itself to a concern with architecture's involvements and effects. It brought to its table practitioners from art, dance and other performing arts, creative writing, gardening and urban planning; those who were architects were part of collective formations already engaged in disciplinary exchange. The content may have been reflective, but its concern was active: what can architecture, viewed through the lens of gender, do? The conference that the issue emerged from took place just as the results of the 2016 US elections had been declared, bringing the immediate criticality of its work into sharp relief.

In the same issue of the journal (volume 5, issue 3) is an essay by Jos Boys and Julia Dwyer called “Revealing Work. Interrogating Artefacts to (Re)View Histories of Feminist Architectural Practice.” It was written when Boys, Dwyer and others were setting up the Matrix Open Feminist Architecture Archive, an attempt to collect items pertaining to the work of the Matrix design co-operative to which both had contributed. In doing so, they tell us, they

“became particularly concerned to reappraise what counts as work; the work of actual doing; the work of finding a way to generate social change; the experience of that

work as embodied; and the work that the artifact itself does – how, through what happens to it in the world, it exceeds or alters what had been intended.”²³

For us, as editors, this puts forward a potentially valuable way of thinking of the “work” of the journal. Reflecting on the “Architecture and Feminisms” issue allows us to understand what we have been doing – and certainly what we hope to do – as extending a conversation about the different kinds of work and the effects of that work that Boys and Dwyer describe. The emphasis they placed on the archive makes other aspects of the journal’s work clearer, too: its issues and volumes are not simply places where articles can be collected and tabulated, they are a repository of listening, acknowledging, registering, and allowing for disagreement and for connection. On the Matrix Open Archive website, asking “What makes an archive feminist?” Boys says:

“... we wanted to articulate the things that make up an archive as moments-made-in-concrete in longer, complex processes, which they are affected by, and on which they have effects. This is because design and activism is [sic.] always unfinished, contested and multiple work.”²⁴

Just as Krasny demonstrates in her re-engagement with Suzanne Lacy’s International Dinner Party, we can now see each article, each issue, as a moment-made-in-print, digital or otherwise, of longer, complex processes, always multiple (there are many voices, skills, places involved), and never complete, potentially daring to confront contested and difficult topics.

If we understand “Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects in Architecture” not as a turning point, but as an indication of the journal coming into its own, we can see also that we were becoming more explicit about our own practices and work as editors. In “Spaces of Tolerance” (2019), for instance, the exploration of what it might mean to be “open” was extended.²⁵ As an editorial team we had become increasingly aware of the conditions of *Architecture and Culture*’s own production, with its hierarchies and structures of power, its

²³ Jos Boys and Julia Dwyer, “Revealing Work: Interrogating Artifacts to (Re)View Histories of Feminist Architectural Practice,” *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 5, issue 3, November 2017: 487-504.

²⁴ Jos Boys, “What Makes an Archive Feminist?” June 12, 2020, *Matrix Open Feminist Architecture Archive*, <http://www.matrixfeministarchitecturearchive.co.uk/explore/test-post/> (consulted August 2023).

²⁵ Igea Troiani and Suzanne Ewing, “Spaces of Tolerance,” *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 7, issue 1, March 2019: 7-30.

layers of exploitation, its reliance on enthusiasm, neediness and trust.²⁶ We asked what it might mean to reveal “what counts as work” in the work taking place between editor, author, guest editor and co-editor, peer reviewer, publisher and reader. We wondered what it might mean genuinely to work “openly” between all these workers – and how difficult this would be in the current neoliberal academic publishing industry.

In “Re-Viewing the Review” (2020) we sought to clarify, to ourselves and to others, our position on book reviews. While we have a book reviews editor, and are happy to publish articles that discuss books, we currently have no dedicated reviews section in the journal. This, we realized, is because all work is in some a sense an act of reviewing, of “entering into a conversation not just with the work [to be reviewed], but also with the very idea of conversing. To review becomes to chat, to discuss, to argue – with oneself, with things, and with others.”²⁷ Books – recent or otherwise, some explicitly part of architectural discourse, others not – contribute to much of the conversation at the table (Stephen Walker’s review of Margaret Atwood’s 1985 novel, *A Handmaid’s Tale*, in our first double issue, was an early experiment in how we might bring literature to bear on architecture’s concerns).²⁸ We remain reluctant to review recent publications as part of a marketing exercise, concerned to resist complete co-option into the supply and demand chain of academic assets, even as we realize we are part of it. We are keen to explore exhibition, building and project reviews in the same way.

Curatorial Care

Like an intimate agora, a generous table is a discursive space and social forum, providing a place not only for individual expression but for actions and work to appear conspicuously with and for others while in formation. The place and occasion of the table offers a hospitable site of communal conversations, open negotiations, critical inquiry and shared eureka.²⁹

²⁶ It is perhaps worth mentioning that finding peer reviewers for work submitted to academic journals, *Architecture and Culture* included, is becoming increasingly difficult, suggesting that resistance is developing to the expectation that peer review is undertaken for free.

²⁷ Diana Periton and Stephen Walker, “Re-Viewing the Review: A Preview,” *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 8, issue 1, 2020: 10.

²⁸ Stephen Walker, “Reviewing *The Handmaid’s Tale*,” *Architecture and Culture*, vol. 1, issues 1 and 2: 112-126.

²⁹ Lisa Landrum, “*Tableaux Vivants*,” 539-540.

As the journal matures, threads of conversation and connection are emerging across and beyond its pages. In her paper “Urgent Minor Matters: Re-Activating Archival Documents for Social Housing Futures,” published as part of volume 10 issue 3 in 2023, Heidi Svenningsen Kajita refers to Boys and Dwyer’s 2017 journal article, among others, and the “social processes” that their focus on re-imagining the architectural archive asks us to consider. Kajita’s paper tells us about her own project to “re-activate” the archives pertaining to Newcastle’s Byker estate in Northeast England, social housing built by Ralph Erskine’s Arkitektkontor in the 1960s and 70s. She studies the “scant scraps” that Arkitektkontor collected when they turned their site office into a place where Byker’s residents could drop in and chat – before, during and after the building process – about disruptive behaviour, curtain dimensions, the problems of external stairs and communal gardens, or simply to have a cup of tea and escape family tensions. She discusses these records with current Byker occupants over bingo and more tea, giving value to those people’s own histories in relation to their forbears, and exploring ways of imagining the future of their homes.

Volume 10 issue 3 still has a Table of Contents, as do all our issues. However, over the life of the journal the prominence of a specific issue, bound between covers and containing thematically linked papers, has waned (the print run for *Architecture and Culture* is now 65 copies, with others printed on demand).³⁰ Online, individual articles appear before complete issues on the journal’s website; they are discovered through keyword searches or the logics of other search engines. The “performance” of the journal – another aspect of its work – is assessed through the number of views or downloads of these individual papers. If the work of an editor is a work of curation, of *cura* or care, it is probably the care invested in individual papers that now matters the most.³¹ Relationships between papers come predominantly from within them, whether in the conversations their authors acknowledge or from AI’s iterative patterning processes of link-making, regardless of the choreography and tabulation conceived by their editors.

³⁰ The covers of the printed editions of *Architecture and Culture* are deliberately non-figurative. They change subtly across issues and volumes, lightly articulated by titles and dates, in a rhythm of ebb and flow – see “Covers” in this issue. The Tables of Contents then take on the familiar role of listing or mapping the work published inside. Until Volume 8, the Table of Contents for each Issue was printed in white type on the coloured back cover as well in black type inside. Its disappearance from the outer cover in 2019 is related to the demise of the printed copy and the rise of digital downloads – the table is simply less important than the search engine. Online, the journal issue covers are tiny thumbnail images, momentary reference points that perhaps punctuate a swipe or a scroll.

³¹ It was former AHRA Steering Group member Davide Deriu who pointed out to us that one of the Italian terms for editor is *curatore*.

The shift in focus from issue to article means that each article, each author's voice, must be able to stand or stand out on its own within a worldwide web of others. Perhaps particularly because *Architecture and Culture* has always sought to bring to the table those who are new to writing as well as those who are more established writers, those who operate outside the discipline of architecture as well as those who work knowingly within it, conversations between author, editor and guest editor are vital, as is the role of the peer reviewers. Work that is published in the journal has been through a long process of discussion and revision – of curation or care.³² To address the pressure placed on the individual article, new editing practices are emerging – workshops for authors to discuss their work together (we thank guest editors Henriette Steiner and Luca Csepely-Knorr for initiating this), open discussions with peer reviewers, again through writing workshops (new editor Alessandro Zambelli has introduced us to the idea, still to be enacted),³³ an editorial workshop for PhD students and writers early in their career to discuss the peer review process (initiated by AHRA's Ph.D. student representatives Khaoula Hannachi, Megan Brien and Soscha Monteiro de Jesus).³⁴ The structures of power identified in "Spaces of Tolerance" of 2019 are not dismantled, but they can at least be addressed.

Architectural Humanities

In reflecting on *Architecture and Culture*'s editorial work, we were intrigued by Dorothea Tanning's 1988 collage, "The Table of Contents," which appears as part of the front matter

³² We are aware that our authors have recently been finding it too long, and we apologize for this. The current period of transition from one team of editors to another has been difficult. The regular rhythms of journal production have been interrupted as the new editors learn its processes and become part of the journal's conversation, listening as well as contributing to it. Pressures from the publishers – to produce more (in volume 8, 2020, we moved from three issues per year to four; from 2023, we have been contracted to provide a minimum number of articles per issue), to conform to top-down systems that do not readily acknowledge the particularities of journals' "styles" of practices and objects – have served to increase our current delays. At the same time, the transition has provided the chance – the need – to reflect on what the journal has become, an instructive exercise in self-understanding.

³³ In the early years of the journal, we were sometimes alarmed by the vehemence of peer reviewers in their comments, and by an occasional severe lack of tact. We redesigned the peer review pro-forma to ask quite specific questions about the way in which an article positioned itself, in order to build towards more constructive general critique. We value the work of our peer reviewers very highly; our concern was to make sure that their reviews also gave value to the work of the author.

³⁴ The Doctoral Student Academic Publishing Workshop was held online on 13 June 2024. It was organised by AHRA student representatives Megan Brien, Khaoula Hannachi and Soscha Monteiro De Jesus, with new managing editors Séverine Marguin and Jamie-Scott Baxter. A short version of this paper was rehearsed as part of the workshop.

for this issue.³⁵ Front matter is an ingredient we have included since the first double issue – an image, a quotation, maybe both, or maybe a very short piece of writing – something that not only points to or orients the Table of Contents but might also act to unsettle it.³⁶ In Tanning’s collage, an arrow points assertively downwards at a table, set with plate (its glazed pattern an array of cats’ paws, simultaneously stiff and pugnacious), knife and fork (both dangerously sharp). A napkin, or something much more troubling, pokes from underneath the crumpled, veil-like tablecloth. Beyond the place setting is framed, perhaps, a window (the arrow is on one of the window jambs). From behind a billowing black curtain – from the very background of the collage – emerges a tiny female figure, not entirely human, covering her ears and turning away from the scene.

Tanning had made paintings of dining tables before, while living with Maz Ernst in France in the 1950s, in what might be called a magic surrealist style. People already appear at different scales, failing to engage with one another; the most animated creature is the dog.³⁷ “The Table of Contents” of 1988 operates more like a cubist collage, in which fragments of inner and outer worlds are brought together, asking us to think about their relationships. The table setting is both familiar, domestic, and unsettling, hinting at violence. As a still life, it freezes a specific moment in such a way that we cannot help but ask what came before, and what will follow. In 2004, Tanning published a poem called “A Table of Content” which makes explicit the difficulty of bringing contents together, as well as the fecundity of doing so. It describes two tables, one hers (its contents part “artistically arranged” and aiming to please, part “in disrespectful disarray”), one his (a “classroom table of multiplication” when the class is adjourned and anything seems possible, desirable), and the moment their contents might coincide. “Why wait?” reads the penultimate line, before the final injunction: “Wait.”³⁸

Tanning describes the table with its contents as a “tablemap.” It presents for us a condition of provisional containment, of contingent contentment, and of connection, expected and unexpected. There is a vulnerability to it, a sense of power at play. Tables can be laid in a familiar way. They can also be cleared, turned, re-arranged.

³⁵ Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012) made the *Table of Contents* when she was 78 years old, living in New York.

³⁶ It is tempting to call it an *amuse-gueule*.

³⁷ See, for instance, Dorothea Tanning, *Family Portrait* (1954).

³⁸ Dorothea Tanning, “A Table of Content,” in *A Table of Content: Poems* (New York: Graywolf Press, 2004), available online at <https://www.dorotheatanning.org/life-and-work/view/333/> (accessed 05 July, 2023).

Let us summarize what we have learned. We have understood that the journal represents a place in which, for a moment, objects, ideas, emotions, habits can be gathered in conversation, reviewing previous conversations, looking ahead to new ones. We have recognised the importance to us of the journal's mode of curation or care, as active listening and attentiveness, allowing for communication to develop across borders or differences that are disciplinary, geographic, hierarchical, material and more – communication that may be difficult. We have realised that the work of the journal is always provisional, ongoing, never complete, and that it involves editors, authors, peer-reviewers and also readers in making ourselves vulnerable as we dare to speak out about the imperfect conditions in which architecture takes place.

This article leans heavily on the journal issue that emerged from the AHRA 2016 conference “Architecture and Feminisms,” and its divergence from some of the more purely conceptual, discipline-focused issues of the journal that preceded it. Does this make *Architecture and Culture* a feminist journal, we asked ourselves?³⁹ In the humanities, editorial work is often perceived as a feminised activity. Editors serve an author's voice and intent; they are less concerned with scientific factual correction and a fixed format of argumentation than with flow and cadence, interpretation, judgement of how a piece makes its appearance and might “land.” They are busy working threads together – discovering through making, as Le Guin would put it.

We realize we have always valued dialogue – we ask guest editors, wherever possible, to work in pairs or teams of three or four. This means that they often also become co-authors, something we should perhaps encourage more. Reflecting on the way we have worked on this editorial essay, we have had to accept disagreement as well as enthusiasm, entering into each other's spaces of emergent thought and writing. We have had to trust each other, to follow and make changes with empathy and critique, taking time (often while sitting at a table replete with plates and cutlery) to discuss, dispute and find ways to proceed. Is this feminist practice?

³⁹ For the journal's first ten years, we were sometimes amused, sometimes proud to be an almost all-woman editorial team (Stephen Walker being the one exception).

The answer, of course, depends on the definition of feminism. We would suggest simply that this is “writing with” as it occurs in the humanities, and that *Architecture and Culture*, as the Journal of the Architectural Humanities Research Association, is a journal that takes the “humanity” in “humanities” seriously. Writing in *The London Review of Books*, Stefan Collini describes scholarship in the humanities as

“scholarship ... that may be undertaken by individuals but which relies on and contributes to cumulative intellectual inquiry which transcends boundaries between nations as well as between generations.”⁴⁰

Such scholarship is work that, rather than producing tangible, measurable goods, is one of “those kinds of intellectual inquiry that are goods in themselves.”⁴¹ In the case of the architectural humanities, those goods, we would suggest, are concerned with understanding, and feeling enabled to engage with and potentially unsettle and alter, the culture in which architecture takes place and to which it contributes. *Architecture and Culture* has become a recognized locus of inquiry into architecture’s modes of operation, of knowing and of acting, inquiry which works from and with the vulnerabilities of beyond-disciplinary reach and with openness to our changing situation. We find ourselves writing this article at a moment of extreme political unease, unimagined ten or twelve years ago when the journal was first launched. The need to address the conditions in which architecture operates and which it operates on – the urgency of bringing the architectural humanities into dialogue with contemporary concerns – is evident. There is clearly ongoing work to do.

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⁴⁰ Stefan Collini, “HiEdBiz,” *London Review of Books*, November 06, 2003. Stefan Collini is now described as a Professor Emeritus of Intellectual History and English Literature – see <https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/people/Stefan.Collini/> (consulted May 2024).

⁴¹ Ibid.

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