

FOREWORD

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Architect-citizen or citizen-architect? How do we as students, educators, practitioners, historians, critics, and advocates of architecture understand the role of citizenship in the present day? More importantly, how do we individually and collectively act as citizens in our globalized yet fractured world? And as global citizens, what are our roles and responsibilities in the places we inhabit, work, study, and visit? These questions serve as the foundation for this seventh volume of the University of Utah School of Architecture's journal, *Dialectic VII: Architecture and Citizenship – Decolonizing Architectural Pedagogy*.

Created as a forum to explore and give voice to diverse viewpoints around important issues of our time, *Dialectic* was the brainchild of the former chair of the School of Architecture, Prescott Muir. Faculty editors, Shundana Yusuf and Ole Fischer, in concert with students, faculty, and guest editors, have shepherded the journal from its initial introspective beginnings to embracing an international perspective and presence. *Dialectic VII: Architecture and Citizenship – Decolonizing Architectural Pedagogy* builds on the ideas and issues explored in the previous volumes. *Dialectic I* started with a broad look at the work produced in the School of Architecture. This led to an outward examination of the role of the economy in architectural education and practice with *Dialectic II: Architecture between Boom and Bust*. Continuing the exploration of pedagogy and practice, *Dialectic III: Dream of Building or the Reality of Dreaming* focused on the current state of design-build education, an important and long-standing domain within our curriculum as well as that of many other architecture schools. *Dialectic IV: Architecture at Service?* built on the previous volume through a critical exploration of the broad role of architecture in society. That exploration led to the fifth volume, *Dialectic V: The Figure of Vernacular in Architectural Education*, investigating the definition and existence of vernacular architecture as a concept. From the conceptual to

the concrete, *Dialectic VI: Craft – The Art of Making Architecture*, then offered a critical assessment of past functions and future possibilities for the role of craft in architecture.

Craft through building construction serves as one place where we as trained designers can connect to and learn from others in the building trades, both professionals and laypersons, formally trained and self-taught. We are quick to say that we value sweat equity in our design-build projects as a means for the homeowner to feel pride and have a stake in their house construction. We also are quick to say that we value engaging community members in design projects that involve their neighborhoods and families. But are we prepared to accept and contend with the variety of situations these activities undoubtedly will bring forth for what we regard as architectural practice? Our value of learning from others who may not have formal training but do have vast local knowledge and a wealth of expertise through experience mandates our conscientious consideration of how we interact with others as architects and as fellow citizens. In addition, as educators we must reflect on how we teach students (and in doing so, also teach ourselves) to understand their (and our) individual self when interacting with others. What preconceptions, points of privilege, and prejudices might we be reinforcing – intentionally or not – through our activities? How does our teaching buttress or emasculate certain ideas and actions?

These questions and concepts, along with a nudge from the dean of the College of Architecture + Planning, Keith Diaz Moore, spurred a long hard look into our School of Architecture curriculum. Guided by a curriculum specialist from the University of Utah's Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and propelled by the pointed questions and comprehensive research of Associate Chair Lisa Henry, the architecture faculty embarked on a journey to re-imagine our

undergraduate and graduate curricula. Starting in fall 2016 and continuing presently, our monthly faculty meetings became animated discussions and engrossing workshops engaging the full faculty in the endeavor of redefining what and how we teach architecture.

The first step was to determine how much change we were willing to make. Do we shift a few things in our twenty-year-old curriculum or commit to real transformation? This decision was surprisingly easy to make. No more Band-Aids. We were ready to try something significantly different. We started by defining our “values” – the principles, concepts, and expertise that we believe to be vital to architecture education and practice today. The nine values we defined were agency, community engagement, critical creative thinking, design excellence, environmental resilience, global citizenship, leadership, risk-taking/exploration, and social equity. These overlap and connect to each other in a sort of Gordian knot – tangled yet ordered. These values also closely connect to our College’s “4 Rs” (Responsibility, Resilience, Respect, and Response), the product of a College-wide visioning session, pithily articulated by Dean Keith Diaz Moore.

Once our values were defined, we then discussed and debated how to best incorporate them into a curriculum, what teaching methods would be most effective – and would best exemplify these very same values. This time the result was a bit more surprising, with perhaps even greater impact. The faculty agreed that studio courses should no longer stand alone but must be integrated with history, theory, building technology, and communications. This integration must start with students, both undergraduate and graduate, learning a variety of research methods and applying them to studio projects. This process would entail intensive collaborative planning and teaching by almost every member of the faculty, including part-time adjuncts.

Working in small groups across areas of expertise, faculty defined learning objectives for each curricular area (building technology, communications, history/theory/criticism, professional practice, and studio) and sorted them according to each semester of the two-year major and the graduate program. Next, the

faculty teaching in each topic area used the objectives to begin building assignments and syllabi, in an ongoing process of creating, testing, and revising. In this process, it is easy to loosen our grip on our values as we concentrate on the hard work of preparing and teaching collaboratively, delivering the content required for NAAB accreditation, and meeting the expectations of an R-1 University. Yet this intensely complicated but highly rewarding process of de-centering the studio, this intentional movement away from teaching “Architecture with a capital A” as the “sage on the stage” to train the next generation of “hero-architects,” is the only way forward as we consider our interactions with others and our roles and responsibilities as global citizens and architects.

Signifying a monumental step forward on the rocky path toward curricular transformation and de-centralization, *Dialectic VII: Architecture and Citizenship – Decolonizing Architectural Pedagogy* provides a broad set of voices offering critiques and techniques, case studies and conceptual inquiries. On behalf of the School of Architecture, I hope *Dialectic VII* inspires change for you, just as it inspires and reminds us of the importance of change for—and in—ourselves as citizens, architects, educators, and students in and of the world. ■