



International Forum on Doctoral Education in Europe

# Archidoctor Universalis

## Future of Research in European Architectural Education

Riga, Latvia 12-14 March 2013

Riga Technical University, School of Architecture  
University of Umeå, School of Architecture

### Call for Papers

#### The theme

The changes occurring nowadays in architectural education and professional practice have a significant impact on the way innovation and new architectural knowledge are generated. Schools of architecture are directed by the current dynamics to reform their doctoral education strategies, structures and processes in order to have a more efficient contribution to architectural research and innovation. As the doctoral education is the least developed and discussed after the Bologna declaration, the question of the structure, the contents and the expected outcomes of the so-called third cycle of higher architectural education remains an interesting subject in the process of creating the European Higher (Architectural) Education Area. The Forum will investigate the expected structures, contents and outcomes of the doctoral education in architecture. The Forum will also investigate how the appropriate profile of the researcher of architecture is to be offered by schools of architecture in Europe, how the researcher is able to generate useful and innovative architectural knowledge as well as experience for the society.

#### The Rationale

In the fast changing environment of the so-called information society, architecture as a cultural phenomenon, seeks to be associated with a new framework of values and principles, of knowledge, skills and competences, of tools and means, of priorities and preferences - in other words to form a new paradigm. The consequence is that new values, new aesthetics and styles as well as new orientations are quickly grounded in the consciousness of architects, opening up architectural experimentation on education and research to new possibilities of architectural creation and generation of architectural knowledge. **In this new environment the profile of the researcher in architecture as the generator of innovative architectural knowledge and experience cannot stay the same.**

Innovation is increasingly seen as the motor of economic and cultural development and is considered more than ever one of the most fundamental objectives of architecture's social project. Innovation is manifested as a process of relocating architectural thinking and creating of new forms of expression and creative paths. It is conceived as a window introducing new ideas about the social experience of space. It is eventually a

value transgressing the requested architectural 'other' able to ensure new architectural forms for a new social demand. **There is a need for a more ambitious and broad-based innovation strategy in the domain of architectural creation, education and research in order to embrace the requested innovation.**

The majority of schools of architecture in Europe declare that beyond teaching they run doctorate research programs. There is a significant production of doctoral research in Europe, which, even though not systematically recorded, can be estimated, in an average number per year to be between 110-140 doctorates. However, beyond this significant production of research training, the generation of architectural innovation related to ideas, forms, techniques, materials and practices based upon technological advances, is primarily developed outside higher education institutions. **In its majority, innovation is generated by the advanced experimentations happening in a distinctive part of architectural practice or by research in the domain of the building industry and not by schools of architecture.**

Architectural education institutions generate only a small part of this innovation across Europe. It is not easy to estimate the impact of this research outcome of schools of architecture on the domain of education or on professional practice. Schools appear rather conservative and resistant to incorporate innovative ideas and approaches in their academic curricula. There is always a considerable time lapse between the emergence of innovation and its integration into the academic life of the school. **It becomes increasingly imperative for Schools of Architecture to redefine their research strategy in order to assure a more dynamic impact in the production of architectural innovation and a better placement of the international competition of their degrees. In order for this objective to be achieved, it is necessary to reconsider the existing architectural doctoral research (infra)structures and to redefine the profile of the contemporary researcher of and in architecture.**

### The existing tendencies

An extended academic debate has started on the reconsideration of the nature and the characteristics of architectural doctorates in the early 2000s, expressed in a big number of international conferences: Ohio 1999 (Doctorates in Design Conference), La Clusaz (Foundations for the Future: Doctoral Education in Design Conference), Delft 2000 (Research by Design Conference), Paris 2000 (Research and Architecture), Montreal 2002 (Conference in Design Theory and Methodology), Stockholm- Helsinki (Four Faces: The Dynamics of Architectural Knowledge), Tokyo 2003 (Asian Design Conference - Doctoral Education in Design), Marseille 2004 (La Question Doctorale), Delft 2004 (Conference on Research and Design), Dublin 2004 (Between Research and Practice), Brussels 2005 (The Unthinkable Doctorate), the program *Villard d'Honnecourt* in Venice (2004-).

As the European University Association (EUA) states in its annual publication Trends 2010, the European tradition of the doctorate – as the production of a piece of original research under the supervision of one professor, with very little emphasis on taught courses – has been increasingly questioned in recent years. Discussions in Universities have focused on the need to make doctoral degree holders internationally more competitive, which has led to a decade of successful experimentation with the introduction and funding of structured programmes and graduate or research schools in some countries. The changes brought to doctoral education in the past few years have focused on the need to embed doctoral programmes at institutional level by:

- Creating structures, such as doctoral/ research or graduate schools, in order to provide a dynamic research environment and create reliable quality standards for supervision and support.
- Introducing more taught courses and training elements to broaden the perspectives and competence profile of doctoral candidates, including e.g. transferable skills provision, in some cases with credits attached, and without losing the strong role of the mentor.

**It can be believed that schools of Architecture in Europe have not yet made significant progress on this subject.** The Higher Education of Europe has changed tremendously since the Bologna Declaration was signed. One of the results of the transformation is the renewal of doctoral studies. While the two-cycle education of under- and graduate levels has become quite universal, its final destination – the third cycle in doctorate is still emerging. Here both the traditions and innovations intertwine, different research cultures run parallel and three letters (PhD) standing for *doctor philosophiae* can mean several different things, especially in architecture. Even though the discussion about doctorates in architecture appears to be popular between academics, proved by the number of conferences on the subject mentioned above, investigating the nature of the research in architecture and of doctorates in Architecture, the Doctorate as part of an educational process leading to a profile of contemporary researcher of architecture is marginally discussed.

## The objectives

In order to discuss the above-mentioned issues the LLP Thematic Network ENHSA organises a Forum, which will be hosted by UMA School of Architecture and Riga Technical University. The main objective of this event is to investigate the European potential of doctoral education in architecture as generator of a potential profile of contemporary researcher, able to produce innovative architectural knowledge and experience. We want to know how this potential is articulated in the different Countries of Europe and beyond. We want to establish networks to know more about it.

The Forum will be organised upon three complementary themes:

### 1. Forms and reforms of Doctoral education in Schools of Architecture in Europe

The first theme of the Forum is what we actually have in doctoral education in Europe. The recent transformations in research at doctoral level and more generally in architectural research and innovation. How is it seen in the different schools of architecture? Has it changed in time? Has the Bologna process had any influence? We have less than one-century experience in architectural doctorates. What was in the past the expected profile of the architectural researcher? To what extent did doctorates in architecture follow the changes occurring in architectural thinking and creating? To what extent did architectural doctorates in the past reflect the requests for innovation addressed by the society and by architectural practice? Which are the implemented innovative approaches in the way doctoral education is structured in your institutions? What are the perspectives for the future?

### 2. Thesis and hypothesis for the future of doctoral education in Architecture

The second theme will investigate what we wish to achieve in doctoral education in Europe. We are interested in how the structure of PhD courses can influence the content and outcomes of doctoral education. Will it remain the original individual piece of research? Will it be shifted into a collection of publications brought together only for final examination? What must be the conditions of publications either being part or a requirement of the doctoral dissertation? How will it be incorporated in the so-called “research by design”, “research through design”, “artistic research” or “practice-based research” in the existing doctoral education structures? Has the curriculum of Bologna system and ECTS system shifted the doctoral education closer to taught courses of the third cycle? What are the basic rules and criteria for the supervision of a PhD in your university? What are the basic rules and criteria for the teaching of a PhD in your university? What are the basic rules and criteria for the evaluation of a PhD programme in your university?

### 3. Synthesis of the researcher' s profile to generate architectural innovation

The third theme will reflect on the outcomes of doctoral education in terms of the profile of the graduate and the impact of the work generated. We want to question the relevance of doctoral education for the profession and education of architecture. How are practitioners benefitting from the doctoral education? Are practitioners involved in doctoral education? Has the Bologna Process urged for doctoral education? Have there been any changes in the history of doctoral education concerning its goals in your university? Which are the main characteristics of the contemporary profile of a doctoral student? Which competences and skills he or she has to fulfil beyond the specialised knowledge? Does our educational system in bachelor and master level help adequately the development of such skills and competences? Does this system create the basic profile of a

researcher in architecture or does it only assure an identity suitable for practice? How and under what circumstances does such a profile have to be prepared?

The Forum is addressed to Research Coordinators and Heads of Schools of Architecture in Europe and their representatives. We kindly ask schools of architecture to join in with presentations and participation in round table discussions to shed some light onto the questions presented above. The presentations and round table discussions will be documented and published as conference proceedings.