

Press Release

15 August 2017

Rethinking Modernity. Architecture and Urban Planning of the 20th century – Between the Avant-Garde and Tradition

International conference on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Interbau Berlin

10th – 12th September 2017

The Cold War and the Iron Curtain have left behind a thinking in terms of incompatible contradictions. As such, 20th-century European architectural history still often juxtaposed avant-garde trends and traditionalist tendencies as incompatible extremes. In Germany, this antagonistic notion peaked in the 1950s when the West was identified with “international modernism” and the East with building in “national traditions”. Berlin has two built manifestoes of this political and aesthetic confrontation: The Karl-Marx-Allee (formerly Stalinallee), constructed between 1951 and 1958, and the Internationale Bauausstellung Interbau from 1957. The architectural turn to postmodernism since the 1980s and the political turnaround after 1990 led to a change in this post-war perception. The tradition-conscious and the progress-oriented heritage of post-war architecture are enjoying growing appreciation in many circles in both the East and the West. With the state of Berlin’s application (2013) jointly proposing two sections of Karl-Marx-Allee in the East and all units of Interbau in the West for the German registration list of the world heritage nomination at UNESCO, the usual contrastive pair has been broken up and made conducive for a new approach.

The international conference **Rethinking Modernity** aims to place the current Berlin-based debate in a larger context on the basis of parallels and counterexamples from eastern and western Europe, facilitating international examination and assessment by means of historical analyses and typological comparisons. In a modernist understanding which extends up to the present day, tradition and progress condition and permeate each other, remaining distinguishable but also inextricably linked.

Participants of the conference include the Academy members Arno Brandhuber, Michael Bräuer, Jean-Louis Cohen, and Vladimír Šlapeta. The conference day on 11th September will be inaugurated by the Academy’s president, Jeanine Meerapfel.

In cooperation with the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, the Berlin Monument Authority, and ICOMOS Germany. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Internationale Bauausstellung Interbau Berlin in 1957, and

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representing the state of Berlin's contribution to the European Cultural Heritage Year 2018 under the motto "Sharing Heritage".

Concept: Thomas Flierl, Jörg Haspel

Conference language: German and English with simultaneous translation

Event locations

10th Sept., Berlin Town Hall, Rathausstrasse 15, 10178 Berlin

11th Sept., Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin

12th Sept., bcc Berlin Congress Center GmbH, Alexanderstraße 11, 10178 Berlin

Free admission

Registration required until 7th September to Karin Lelonek: lelonek@adk.de

Detailed programme at

<http://www.adk.de/de/programm/PDF/moderne-neu-denken.pdf>

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