

Acknowledgements

Building Institution presents research that has been underway for over fifteen years and began with my dissertation at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at ETH Zurich (2007–11). During this time, the work took me to the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal several times as a research student, to Columbia University in New York as a visiting researcher for a year, and to various archives and libraries (in addition to the Avery Library, also at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, these include Princeton University, Yale University, and Sarah Lawrence College in New York State), and still bears traces of the network of all the intellectual and interpersonal relationships and interactions I enjoyed there. Since then, more than a decade has passed before the release of this publication, and in addition to the subject and method, i.e., institutional history, or indeed institutional analysis based on diligent archival research and a comprehensive oral history, this circumstance alone makes it almost impossible to fully acknowledge everyone for their contributions.

The book came about in a number of different institutional and thus also political contexts, and the project was shaped by the corresponding interests and values, opportunities and offerings: the Institute gta, where I was employed for three more years as a postdoctoral researcher (2012–15) following my dissertation, and where I was able to produce a first draft; the CCA, where I subsequently worked for three years as Associate Director of Research (2016–18) and contributed, among others, to the exhibition “Educating

Architects. Four Courses by Kenneth Frampton” (2017), as well as revising my manuscript once again after engaging in further archive research, especially in the recently acquired and not yet catalogued Kenneth Frampton Fonds; and the University of Manchester (since 2019), where, as a member of the Manchester Architecture Research Group, I was given the opportunity to finally translate my manuscript from German into English and transform it into a final version ready for publication.

As is so often the case in life and work in institutions, the production of this book was characterized by a process of converging and fading interests, of received and withdrawn verbal promises, of different capacities and needs, of opening up new paths and bearing the consequences. At the end of this long journey, I would therefore like to thank all those people who contributed critically and constructively and whose names I can still recall at this stage of writing (some of whom are listed chronologically, others alphabetically) and who have made this book publication possible in very different roles, functions, and relationships.

Above all, I would like to express my gratitude to:

Supervisors and reviewers of the original research project and those who were involved in various capacities and acted as advisors and mentors: Laurent Stalder (ETH, first supervisor), Günter Lenz (Humboldt University of Berlin, second supervisor) and Mark Jarzombek (MIT, third supervisor), as well as Axel Sowa (RWTH

Aachen University, external review); also Ákos Moravánsky (ETH), to whom I am indebted for his excellent book recommendations (e.g. “How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art” and “Please Kill Me. The Uncensored Oral History of Punk”); Giovanna Borasi (CCA) for her support and encouragement during my time there; and finally, Albena Yaneva (UoM/MARG) for reviewing the book and ensuring that it performs well in the UK Research Excellence Framework.

Protagonists of the Institute and other persons involved who feature and have a voice in this collective biography: above all Peter Eisenman for his support and help from the very beginning in 2006, for introducing me to certain circles and making telephone calls that facilitated the first round of conversations and interviews, and especially for introducing me to Robert Gutman; Kenneth Frampton for repeatedly engaging with me and inviting me to Columbia University in 2009–10, which made my research in New York possible in the first place; also Suzanne Frank and Andrew MacNair, with whom I had a long relationship and became friends; and all the members of the inner and outer circle, Fellows, Trustees, Visiting Fellows, staff, students and interns and contemporaries, with whom I was able to talk about their experiences, memories, and perceptions of the North American and East Coast architectural milieu in the course of my oral history.

All those in Zurich and Berlin who have supported this project at various stages and contributed in many ways with questions and suggestions, proofreading, comments, etc.: early fellow sufferers and longstanding collaborators, Achim Pietzcker, Elke Beyer, Anke Hagemann; everyone who shared a workspace at the Ideenshop/Haus des Reisens in Berlin in 2010–11, and Stefanie Schlüter and Nadja Geer, for reading and commenting on chapters of my dissertation; my later colleagues at the Institute gta, Cornelia Escher, Moritz Gleich, Gregor Harbusch, Anne Kockelkorn, Caspar Schärer, Sabine von Fischer, for daily exchanges; Diogo Seixas Lopez, for mutual interest, the numerous visits to the HIL building, and interchange of ideas; as well as the participants in the Doctoral Program in History and Theory, especially Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Laila Seewang, and Dubravka Sekulić, for numerous conversations.

Colleagues and confidants in New York who took the time to contribute to this project by discussing it with me, and who also served as inspiration, reference, and role models through their work: Cesare Birignani, Craig Buckley, Ralph Ghoche, John Harwood, Olympia Kazi, Reinhold Martin, Mary McLeod, Joaquim Moreno, Felicity Scott, Meredith TenHoor, Mark Wigley, and especially “common room” (Lars

Fischer as one of the founders and members, alongside Maria Ibañez de Sendadiano, Todd Rouhe, and Geoff Han) for sharing their desks, networks, and knowledge.

Institutions, schools, museums and archives where I conducted my research and the archivists who processed and made available the countless boxes and folders of documents that made my work possible in the first place: the CCA, in particular Collection and the Study Room under the direction of Martien de Vletter (first Anne-Marie Sigouin and Renata Guttman, and later Mathieu Pomerleau, Colin MacWirther, and Mar Golzáles Palacios), Publication under the direction of Albert Ferré, who showed interest in my book and even supported it for a certain time by providing an editorial review and a test translation, as well as the great research team working on the “Educating Architects” exhibition, Jacqueline Meyer as researcher and Tania Tovar Torres as curatorial intern; also the archivists of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), and the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities (NEA and NEH), whose names are regrettably not known to me.

Organizers, moderators, respondents, and peers at academic conferences that provided opportunities to present research and receive valuable feedback, as well as for networking and conversation: the 2009 Graduate Student Workshop “What Site?,” hosted by the History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture and Art Program at the School for Architecture and Planning, MIT (Mark Jarzombek, Felicity Scott); the 2009 Dissertation Colloquium of the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University (Reinhold Martin, with Lucia Allais, John Harwood, and Timothy Hyde); the 2012 international workshop “The Making of Architects / Architecture in the Making” of the Architectural Sociology Working Group, TU Darmstadt (Monika Grubbauer and Silke Steets); the 2012 symposium “The Göhner Case. On the Crisis of Large-Scale Housing Production in the 1970s,” ETH Zurich (Anne Kockelkorn, Susanne Schindler, Fabian Furter, Patrick Schoeck-Ritschard, and Philip Ursprung); the 2013 conference “Architecture Education Goes Outside Itself. Crossing Borders, Breaking Barriers,” School of Design, University of Pennsylvania (Joan Ockman, David Leatherbarrow, Daniel Barber); the 2013 conference “ISSUES? Concerning the Project of Peter Eisenman,” Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade (Vladan Djokić and Petar Bojanić); the 2014 conference of the European Architectural History Network (EAHN), Politecnico di Torino; the 2016 J. Irwin Miller Symposium “Learning/Doing/Thinking: Educating Architects in the 21st Century,” Yale

School of Architecture (Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, Anya Bokov); the fifth thematic 2017 EAHN conference “Tools of the Architect,” TU Delft; the 2019 symposium “Wer bestimmt die Architektur? Netzwerke, Wettbewerbe und der öffentliche Diskurs,” TU Darmstadt (Oliver Elser, Carsten Ruhl, and Daniela Ortiz dos Santos).

Teachers, mediators, and facilitators, as well as students and the public, whose lectures, seminars and workshops, and events helped me to sharpen my arguments, clarify terms, and explain facts: Todd Rouhe and Lars Fischer (“Provisional Practices,” Barnard College); Craig Buckley (“Images after Images: Case Studies in Architecture and Print,” Columbia University); Carsten Ruhl (“Modern Architecture in Italy: From Futurism to Neorationalism,” Bauhaus-Universität Weimar); Nikolaus Kuhnert, Anh-Linh Ngo (Arch+ features 19: “Die Netzwerke des Peter Eisenman,” Haus Ungarn, Berlin); André Bideau (“Die 1970er. Umbrüche in Architektur und Städtebau,” University of Basel); Liane Lefavre (University of Applied Arts, Vienna); Patrizia Bonifazio (“Urban and Planning History,” Politecnico di Milano); Andreas Rumpfhuber (Architektursalon, Depot, Vienna); Gaia Caramellino and Ivo Covic (“History, Theory+Practice” lectures, Politecnico di Milano); Christophe Van Gerwey (film screening of “The Making of an Avant-garde. The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies,” EPFL); Léa-Catherine Szacka and Salomon Frausto (“Berlage Afternoon Symposium,” TU Delft).

Editors and publishers of architectural journals, online magazines, exhibition catalogues, and anthologies who have supported, promoted, and disseminated this research: Reto Geiser (*Explorations in Architecture: Teaching, Design, Research*, 2008); Nancy Levinson (*Places*, 2010); Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley (*Clip, Stamp, Fold. The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X–197X*, 2010); Susanne Schindler and Axel Sowa (*Candide 5*, 2012); Hannes Meyer (*Archithese 6*, 2012); common room (*Arts for Living*, 2013); Nikolaus Kuhnert and Anh-Linh Ngo (*Arch+ features 19*, 2013); Giovanna Borasi (*The Other Architect*, 2015); Véronique Patteuw and Léa-Catherine Szacka (*Mediated Messages: Periodicals, Exhibitions and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture*, 2018); Sylvia Lavin (*Architecture Itself and Other Postmodern Myths*, Leipzig: Spector Books, 2020); Peter Laurence (*Histories of Architecture Education in the United States*, 2023).

Various sponsors and the publisher who ultimately made this book in its present form possible and provided for the necessary professionalism through their generous financial contributions: after a joint research grant from CCA

and ETH and a personal grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), initially a publication grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in Fine Arts, Chicago (2013) for copyrights and reproductions; another seed grant from SEED, UoM from the post-pandemic recovery fund, which enabled a final research trip to the USA in 2022; an open access publication grant, again from the SNSF (2023), for the copyediting and proofreading by Nicola Heine, the graphic design by Till Sperrle, the image editing by Achim Hatzius, the typesetting by Jan Gerbach, the production management by Die Produktion, and the widest possible dissemination and accessibility; Transcript Verlag, who in the end made the best publication possible, Jörg Gleiter for making contact; Johanna Tönsing for the project support; Gero Wierichs for the production management.

Research institutions, museums, libraries, collections, and archives that provided images and various documents (plans, photography, and graphics) for publication, some of them free of charge, and the archivists who handled my multiple and often complex requests professionally and promptly, sometimes with great enthusiasm, dedication, and goodwill: Natalia Sciarini, Matthew Rowe, and Moses Goren as research assistant at Yale University’s Beinecke Library (where Dorothy Alexander’s slide archive is located); Jennifer Whitlock at the Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Rochester Institute for Technology; Céline Pereira at the CCA; and all the individuals who also provided documents from their private collections without hesitation: Cameron Armstrong and Deborah Berke for the student photos, Suzanne Frank for the institutional photos, Theodore Liebman for the construction photos, and Suzanne Stephens for the editorial photos.

Above all, my family and friends, longstanding allies and companions who have provided practical and emotional support over the years (despite several changes of publisher): my parents, Ursula and Joachim Förster, the latter of whom passed away far too soon and was thus unable to witness the completion of my dissertation or the publication of this book; my brothers Kai Förster and Klas Förster and their families—Klas also being my portrait photographer; Sascha Roesler, who has followed the dissertation and then the book project from the beginning and repeatedly commented on it over the years with consummate Swiss precision; Lars Fischer, who has always actively supported me, who was the only person to have read and comment on the revised manuscript, and who finally provided me with the title; Anuschka Scheibel, who patiently listened and kept me focused over the last decade.

My most sincere thanks are therefore owed to all those who have accompanied, backed, and collaborated with me on this project, the dissertation and the book, or parts of it. Those who have supported me and encouraged me to remain critical of institutions rather than simply conforming to and assimilating into hierarchies. Those who view themselves as belonging to the camp of the instituting rather than the instituted. Those who work to promote a critical understanding of architecture and its relationship to the world, and who leave nothing unquestioned. Those who are more interested in knowledge than power. Those who continue to form groups in the name of autonomy and self-determination and to pursue alternative architectural practices instead of chasing the latest hype and celebrating stardom. Those who, despite all the temptations of neoliberal capitalism, do not allow themselves to be co-opted so easily. Those authors, historians, and critics whose work made the existence of *Building Institution* possible the first place.

My interest in institution building through architectural and cultural production began in the mid-2000s, when it became fashionable to found or re-found our own groups, organizations, and institutions, to address the actors and networks (and more specifically periodicals, exhibitions, artefacts, and concepts) of postmodernism, and has now culminated in this book at a time when the institution of architecture itself, the office, the curriculum are being called into question and perceived as in need of repair in the face of the polycrises that humanity is facing in very different ways. Given the task of combating the climate emergency and loss of biodiversity, however, it is hard to tell where to start, because we now know that transformation must be both rapid and comprehensive. Once again, the multifaceted, problematic, and ambivalent relationships with institutions must be explored anew, and it is up to everyone to decide for themselves whether to embark on the journey through existing institutions or to find other paths.