

MEMO B: ON Teaching and Collaboration

On Teaching

1. As perspectives of history broaden in the twenty-first century, and approaches from World History to Global History to Big History and to Planetary History abound, it becomes incumbent upon architectural historians working under the rubric of Global History to be able to situate their framework with respect to other approaches, both for the benefit of their research and the clarity of their stance in the classroom.
2. How do we reposition our perspective on the concept of the Global such that it does not perpetuate the universalist ethos of Western Enlightenment, but is rather the product and practice of a deliberate engagement with cognate disciplines of study? In other words, how do we convey, with clarity, the imperative of Global education to our students? Moreover, how do we do so while facing curricular challenges within our various institutions, further challenging the teaching of global architectural history.
3. How can the innovations leading to the emergence of “the digital classroom” aid the cause of teaching global architectural history? Can the networked telepresence of a collective of teachers with broad collective experience be more effective in teaching a broad historical scope? Can digital resources such as video or even virtual reality contribute to the mission of a specifically global approach to architectural history. How is our imaginary of the global being reshaped by the incessant surge of new digital technologies and how do we create and teach while being mindful of their impact?
4. How can we empower teachers to think creatively about the conceptualization of global history, when they are frequently under the pressure of NAAB accreditation review with its limited interpretation of the global as mandated by the following sentence:

National Architecture Accreditation Board Minimum Requirement for Architectural History:

A.7.

History and Culture: Understanding of the parallel and divergent histories of architecture and the cultural norms of a variety of indigenous, vernacular, local, regional, settings in terms of their political, economic, social, and technological factors.

On Collaboration

1. If the initial mission of the GAHTC has been the much-needed reform of the architectural history curriculum to overcome the narrow (and implicitly triumphalist) story of architectural history from Greece to the United States, making architectural history more global in scope, what should be the GAHTC's broader and enduring mission once the initial work of curricular reform has been achieved? Should the GAHTC move to a focus on teaching collaboration, (the TC of GAHTC) rather than the mission of Globalizing Architectural History (the GAH of GAHTC)?
2. During GAHTC 1.0 we saw some innovative collaborations emerge, such as the "expanded classroom model" practiced by members of the FAAC (Feminist Art and Architecture Collaborative) in which a network of professors share the classroom space between their various institutions. As we move into GAHTC 2.0 can we think about ways in which such collaborations can be further advanced such that the collaboration itself becomes central to the mission of the GAHTC, rather than being only a by-product of the project, occurring at the margins? What would other models of collaborative teaching look like, especially in terms of global collaboration? How do we make diverse voices and perspectives on architectural history visible and legible to each other and to our students?
3. How can we nurture collaborations between academics within the US and those who are working and teaching in resource-strapped parts of the world? This is especially important as educators based in the US and Europe continue to broaden the scope of architectural history, without necessarily diversifying the authors or producers of that knowledge. What is the responsible and sustainable way to bridge the gap between the architectural expert and the subjects of our study?
4. Should the mission of GAHTC itself be a global mission rather than a mission focused exclusively on the curricular reform in the U.S., i.e. should GAHTC sponsor the sharing of professional expertise and teaching resources of faculty in the U.S. with partner institutions all around the world, supporting visiting positions and sabbaticals, or learning and teaching exchanges between a global network of architecture schools?
5. How do we connect with similar collaborations (such as the Berlin group and the Princeton group) who are grappling with global architecture in order to have a critical mass and advance our mission together? Perhaps even more importantly, how do we engage with historians and teachers around the world who do not have the resources of GAHTC or- presumably-of the Berlin and Princeton groups? This also creates the opportunity to reflect on, evaluate, and assess our discipline's broad mission.