

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

GAM.19 – Professionalism

Architecture achieves its expression through the professional practice of building. Whoever builds is inevitably confronted with a jungle of different positions, all with one thing in common: they are the views of professionals. Craftsmen, for example, act with undisputed professionalism according to their training and practical experience, as do engineers with their professional commitment to scientific expertise, or building authority bodies with their administrative experience. In these cases, the basis of the professional competency is clear, and an assessment of professional or unprofessional actions is easy to make.

And architecture? It, too, is a collectively based discipline and can thus make a professional contribution to building. Its practitioners have sound theoretical knowledge, expertise in design and planning, and experience-based knowledge. It is organized as a profession, strives for social relevance, and deals—more or less—responsibly with the fact that building is not a private matter. However, as a discipline, it occupies a special role: it is a profession itself, and one which relates to numerous other professions and integrates them into its practice of planning and building.

So what layers of meaning does professionalism embody in an architectural context? If the term “profession” is extended—via its etymology (Latin *professio* = public declaration, confession)—to include the very personal sense of an *avowal*, then talk of architectural professionalism can quickly become dominated by individual styles, and the common foundation of the architectural profession sinks from sight. Architects passionately try to imbue even the smallest things with a higher creative significance—and in doing so act, at times, in an apparently highly personal and unprofessional manner. Indeed, they do not simply push resistance aside, but instead work their way through it, even generating more resistance in the process—not because they have to, but because the opposition drives them to it, and the resulting friction then generates new (often highly personal) insights. Funding or mandates seem to be secondary, as does the often presupposed professional detachment from one’s own actions. Building and life merge into one.

GAM.19 is interested in the tensions arising between these poles of the architectural profession and asks about different manifestations of architecture as a professional practice. How much have the professional foundations of the discipline changed? Do architects borrow their professionalism from other disciplines, or is there a genuine architectural professionalism, and, if so, what is it? Does “professional unprofessionalism” even exist, such as when we pay more attention to the mistake, the error, the obstacle in the design than to what is sensible or obvious? And what is there to be learned from all the hybrid forms in which professional procedures are circumvented by radically unprofessional procedures in order to produce professional but hitherto unknown results?

Abstracts on the theme of “Professionalism,” along with a short biography, may be submitted by email to gam@tugraz.at by **May 16, 2022**. The deadline for final submissions is **September 12, 2022**.