

Subject: CFP:

Theophil Hansen transregional - Dissemination and Reception of Historicist Architecture

Conference at the Research Unit History of Art of the Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies (IHB) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), Vienna

Dates: June 19 to 21, 2024

Organisers: Timo Hagen, KHI, University of Bonn

Richard Kurdiovsky, IHB, ÖAW Wien

Gábor György Papp, MI, HUN-REN, Budapest

Frank Rochow, IBK, BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

Venue: Postal Savings Bank (Postsparkasse), Georg Coch-Platz 2, 1010 Vienna

Deadline (for submitting proposals): January 31, 2024

Hardly any other architect had such an impact on the architectural life of the Habsburg Monarchy and its neighbouring countries in the second half of the 19th century as Theophil Hansen (1813-1891). Born in Denmark, Hansen had a considerable influence on the appearance of Vienna's *Ringstrasse* with large-scale projects in the style of the "Hellenic Renaissance". He also designed Byzantine and otherwise historically inspired buildings for the capital of the monarchy, as well as many of its regional centres from Brno in today's Czech Republic to Kežmarok in today's Slovakia and L'viv in today's Ukraine. Above all, however, Hansen was an extremely effective teacher active between 1868 and 1884, whose students at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna took his design ideas to their home regions within the Empire and to its neighbouring countries such as Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania. Last but not least, Hansen acted as a prolific publicist of his own designs in professional journals and understood how to promote their reception by encouraging the production and distribution of the associated terracotta building ornaments through Viennese brickworks.

Although numerous exhibitions and publications were dedicated to Theophil Hansen on the occasion of his 200th birthday in 2013, his broader transregional impact and in particular its development in the work of his students, collaborators and adepts has so far remained largely unnoticed. In Hansen's case, the interplay between the active dissemination of architectural concepts and design ideas and their widespread reception, which experienced a renaissance after his death - promoted by the *Hansen Club* of his students - seems particularly suitable for examining the mechanisms of the dissemination and establishment of historicist architecture.

The conference therefore aims to bring together research on Hansen's work and his reception in different regions - from his native Denmark, to Central and South-Eastern Europe, to Greece, where the architect spent formative years and helped shape the capital of the young kingdom. On the one hand, the focus will be on the instruments of dissemination - academic teaching, design office and building site operations, specialist publications, the sale of building ornaments, skilful action in the social arena, etc. On the other hand, the various socio-cultural factors that contributed to Hansen's reception will be examined. Here, the role of Hansen's public and

private clients and his perception by the general public come into focus. Hansen's antique designs were regarded by contemporaries such as Rudolf Eitelberger to be exemplary for a "Viennese Renaissance" that was "patriotic towards the empire". However, his students included a large number of early career architects from Hungary, a country particularly concerned with its autonomy within the Dual Monarchy. Additionally, it was often non-Catholics who enrolled with Hansen as a Protestant teacher, or as patrons made use of his Byzantine designs for Orthodox or Protestant sacral architecture. Here, processes of appropriation, further development and reinterpretation of architectural forms can be observed. The sometimes mimetic adoption of architectural forms by designers and building component manufacturers, raises questions about the copyright dimension of such processes. Last but not least, the limits of Hansen's perception and effectiveness must be explored and their conditionality questioned. In this context, a comparative look at similarly influential contemporaries such as the Prussian architect Friedrich August Stüler or the Viennese proponent of the neo-Gothic style Friedrich Schmidt can be revealing; comparative perspectives also offer themselves with regard to the formation of artistic schools and commemorative practices concerning architects.

In this way, the interplay of dissemination and reception processes can be understood as a decisive factor in the architectural development of the 19th century and beyond. Such a project can reveal the existence of transregional communication spheres, that remain out of focus for a nation-state oriented art historiography, and help define their nature and boundaries.

In addition to the aforementioned topics, proposals could also address the following questions:

- What were the specifics of Hansen's teaching method? Did it find successors in Vienna, Budapest or elsewhere, and how did this affect his reception?
- To what extent did Hansen's preferred styles, construction principles and new technologies, as well as building tasks and types, benefit the reception of his design ideas? Which of these aspects could also have had an inhibiting effect on the implementation of his designs and on the further dissemination of his ideas?
- Did sustained networks of Hansen students and employees in professional life exist, and if so, what effects did they have with regard to Hansen's reception?
- What effects did generational differences in Hansen's student body have in the course of his many years of teaching?
- What role did Hansen's reception play in the development of "national styles" in the young nation states of Southeast Europe, and what role did it play in the national currents of Central Europe?
- How did institutions such as the *Hansen Club* contribute to the phenomenon of the cult of genius (from the immaterial internal discourses of this association to its physical manifestations in the form of individual buildings, monuments, prizes, publications etc. in honour of the "master")?
- What role did architectural criticism and early art historiography play in the perception of Hansen and his designs?
- To what extent do the awards, honours, titles and memberships that Hansen accumulated in the course of his professional career provide information about his social standing and status in the (inter)national professional community?

The conference will be followed by an optional excursion on Saturday, June 22 2024. More detailed information and a request for registration will be sent to participants at a later date.

Please send presentation proposals (max. 500 words) and a short CV (max. one page) to [kunstgeschichte@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:kunstgeschichte@oeaw.ac.at) by January 31, 2024. You will hear back from us by February 29, 2024. Travel and accommodation costs are planned to be reimbursed by the organiser.

The conference language will be English.

Concept and organisation:

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