EDITORIAL

A New Deal for Architectural Research

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Introduction

It is with great delight and pride that we announce that the good ship known as the *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research*, or *AJAR* for short, is now launched. A sizeable Editorial Team has created this new journal with help from an even larger and broader Editorial Board that spans around the world and includes many distinguished architects and academics.

AJAR is an online Open Access peer-reviewed journal for all kinds of design research and scholarly research within the architectural field, and has been set up by the Architectural Research European Network Association (ARENA). This research network was established in late-2013 by leading researchers from 24 architectural schools across Europe, and since then the number of institutions involved has expanded to 30 schools and is rising steadily. ARENA now offers a shared platform that aims to promote, support, develop and disseminate high-quality research in all fields of architecture in the widest sense, including also its links to interior design, landscape architecture and urban design/urbanism.

From the outset, the members of ARENA wanted above all to create a brand new online journal that would support the culture of European architectural research, especially by encouraging the exploration of emerging and transdisciplinary/interdisciplinary research fields. Today, with the launch of *AJAR*, we now have a major opportunity to exchange important ideas, communicate innovative forms of research, and generally strengthen the links between universities and architectural practices in Europe, as well as internationally. As is typical of the latest online journals, *AJAR* will not publish issues as such; instead we will upload all new material as soon as it has been approved and copy-edited, thereby creating a rolling programme of publication. Articles will be available in HTML for online reading and as PDFs for downloading.

A number of key distinguishing features about *AJAR* ought to be stressed:

1. **Academic Quality**: we are determined to promote only the very highest standards of academic research and therefore will be using the acknowledged 'gold standard' of double-blind reviewing for every single item that we publish, whether that happens to be for traditional forms of research or newer kinds such as design research and practice research;
2. **Research Innovation**: within the rigorous process of selecting and reviewing the research outputs that we publish, we will also openly encouraged the most experimental and anticipatory research investigations as part of our efforts to expand the boundaries of our field;
3. **Research Diversity**: we plan to publish high-quality material from every subject area within the architectural field, and so have consciously designated the four descriptive categories of Design + Practice + Technology + Humanities – not because we believe in any way that these are separate activities, but rather to encourage contributors to send us material covering all of these aspects;
4. **Global Reach**: not only will the subject matter that we publish be thoroughly international in its scope, but we also intend to bring into our debates and discussions as wide a range of architects and academics from across the world in order to ensure that our intellectual ambitions are suitably global in spirit;

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5. **Open Access**: we are entirely committed to the principle that all research produced by architects and academics should be openly available, at no cost whatsoever, to those who wish to read it, and, conversely, that no academic journal should ever require its contributors to have pay for the privilege of publishing with them;

6. **Links between teaching, research and practice**: our intention is also very much to break down the artificial boundaries between the teaching and the practice of architecture, plus we believe that it is impossible to have high-quality teaching or high-quality practice without there being a significant element of research contained within those investigations.

Therefore, in setting up AJAR, we are being deliberately polemical. For too long now, architectural research has tended to be somewhat introverted, limited in scope, defensive, and resistant to taking on new ideas or methodologies. Quite simply, it is remarkable that *AJAR* is the first journal anywhere in the world that seeks to include every conceivable form of architectural research – ranging from the most scientific through to the most creative – and which is committed to unifying innovative design-based and practice-based research with the more traditional methods of architectural research. The members of the AJAR Editorial Team, as well as many of the other members of the ARENA network generally, are closely involved in various initiatives to contribute to the scope of architectural research, as is hopefully clear from some of the items in the select bibliography of relevant titles that accompanies this essay below [5, 7, 8, 9, 20, 21]. Our aim with *AJAR* is also very much to publish the work of doctoral students and young scholars just as much as that by established architects and academics. Architectural research can be made far stronger, livelier and more diverse, and it is going to require all of us within the field to make this happen.

In regard to the process of creating our new online journal, we are indebted to Ubiquity Press for their expertise and professionalism, and above all we would like to thank Tim Wakeford for advice and encouragement that has gone far beyond the call of duty.

We now welcome you as the readers of *AJAR* to put forward essay proposals as part of our desire to provide an international standard, freely accessible route for the very best architectural research that is being produced today.

Competing Interests
The author declares that he has no competing interests.

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