

## A step towards education for reuse

From 6 to 9 September 2016, the major event concerning the discussion on the reuse of Modern Movement buildings and sites occurred in Lisbon: the 14<sup>th</sup> **docomomo** Conference. More than 500 people from five continents came together, around keynote and paper sessions, round-tables, tours and workshops, to discuss the subject “Adaptive reuse. The Modern Movement towards the future”. It not only gave rise to the most up-to-date scientific result on the topic – the homonymous *proceedings*<sup>1</sup> –, as many other strengths and initiatives were driven from that moment on. The research project *RMB - Reuse of Modernist Buildings* was born from this gathering, in parallel to the first paper session in **docomomo** conferences specifically dedicated to “Education for Reuse”.<sup>2</sup>

The premise was simple: it is urgent to introduce the topic of reuse in the basic educational programs training architects. As **docomomo** has been stating in past years, the preservation and transformation of modern architecture and urbanism will be the main field of activity for architects all over the world, and it demands specific knowledge. As reuse – and even rehabilitation – is usually absent from architectural education which is mainly focused on the artistic and technical formation of the architect, a group of **docomomo** members<sup>3</sup> came together to apply for an EU Erasmus+ research project. Its main goal was to draft a joint masters degree course on the reuse of modern buildings.

To that end, the project developed seven main outputs:

- A curriculum, with course descriptions.
- A methodology.
- The infrastructure necessary to implement the master, intended to be virtual utilizing digital tools.
- Teaching material, ranging from traditional texts and PowerPoint presentations, to filmed conferences and audio interviews.
- Scientific papers in the field of investigation undertaken by the project researchers.
- E-learning tools and content.
- A case study handbook, with examples of best practices, working cases and theoretical practices.<sup>4</sup>

Parallel to this production, international conferences with published proceedings<sup>5</sup> and student workshops have been set up. Confer-

ences promoting exchange of knowledge in the field and workshops putting words and thoughts into action. The latter turned out to be the best active products of the main goals and research undertaken for the project. Intended to test the joint master curriculum and methods defined along the way, workshops were opened to students from the RMB university partners, simulating what could happen in the real masters degree course where student exchange between countries should take place every semester.

Housing was the typology given primacy in the four workshops organized. The first one (2017) took place in Marl, Germany, under the theme “An experimental development of new residential and working environments and typologies in large-scale housing projects of the post-war era in Marl”. The second one (2018) was held in Coimbra, Portugal, dedicated to “Coimbra modern city today – from functional buildings to community spaces”. “Renewals and interrelations for 1960s cooperative houses in Istanbul” was the subject of the third workshop (2018), held in Istanbul, Turkey, while “After the military has gone” was the topic of the fourth and last one (2019), held in Detmold, Germany.

All the workshops were focused on specific case studies from the sites where they were held, so that students could undertake visits, physical and social surveys, understand the surrounding context, and develop their own interpretation of the place. In different ways, all the case studies suffered a change of political, economic, and social paradigm, having become in need of a re-evaluation able to understand if an adaptation to current demands would be possible. Most of them were in bad condition, abandoned or planned for demolition. Architectural design projects, proposing sustainable reuse projects, that might allow contemporary forms of living and dwelling, were the intended result.

The diversity of proposals and the trial of different approaches, methods and tools, necessarily based on interdisciplinary research, ranging from technical to social knowledge, from economics to politics, was symptomatic of the pertinence and urgency of such education for reuse as the basis for a sustainable future of our cities. The strong involvement of inhabitants, institutions and the press in the workshops was the ultimate confirmation of the relevance of architecture and reuse for our society, testifying the relevance of **docomomo**'s efforts. Finally, it proved the importance of empirical knowledge, through the direct contact with case studies – from the object to the city – and of the face-to-face discussion with local entities and our pairs of students, as a complement to the masters degree course which is designed to be assigned online.

01 1<sup>st</sup> RMB workshop, Marl, Germany, 2017. © RMB



02 2<sup>nd</sup> RMB workshop, Coimbra, Portugal, 2018. © RMB



03 4<sup>th</sup> RMB workshop, Detmold, Germany, 2019. © RMB



04 3<sup>rd</sup> RMB workshop, Istanbul, Turkey, 2018. © RMB

RMB was a 3-year project, having ended last September 2019. In the meantime, the team will continue to work in the accreditation process, so that the planned 2-year masters degree course can be implemented in the future, as one of the few international post-graduate programs on the reuse of modern buildings in the world.

For more information, please visit the website: <http://www.rmb-eu.com>

Zara Ferreira

#### Notes

- 1 Ana Tostões, Zara Ferreira (Ed.), *Adaptive Reuse. The Modern Movement towards the Future*, Lisbon, **docomomo** International & Casa da Arquitectura, 2016.
- 2 Gonçalo Canto Moniz, Carolina Quiroga, Uta Pottgiesser, "Education for Reuse", in *op. cit.*, 830-867.
- 3 RMB partners: OWL University of Applied Sciences (applicant), **docomomo** International, Instituto Superior Técnico – University of Lisbon (Portugal), Faculty of Science and Technology – University of Coimbra (Portugal), Universiteit Antwerpen (Belgium) and Istanbul Teknik Üniversitesi (Turkey). Associate partner: TERİ – The Energy and Resources Institute (India). Advisory Board: Wessel de Jonge, Alex Dill, Tim Rieniets.
- 4 Els De Vos, Eva Storgaard and Uta Pottgiesser (Ed.), *Reuse of Modernist Buildings. A Case Study Handbook*, Universiteit Antwerpen and Erasmus+ Project Reuse of Modernist Buildings, 2019.
- 5 Michel Melenhorst, Uta Pottgiesser, Christine Naumann, Theresa Kellner (Ed.), *Detmold Conference Week 2017. RMB conference 2017*, Detmold, Hochschule OWL, 2017; Michel Melenhorst, Gonçalo Canto Moniz, Paulo Providência (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> RMB Conference Re-use of Modernist Buildings – Design Tools for Sustainable Transformations*, Coimbra, Universidade de Coimbra, 2018; *Proceedings of the 16<sup>th</sup> docomomo Germany / 3<sup>rd</sup> RMB Conference*, Berlin, Hochschule OWL (University of Applied Sciences) and **docomomo** Deutschland, 2019.