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The desire of this EAR issue "Format Matters" was to embrace and critique the agency of various formats in their impact on the transmission and reception of architectural ideas and concepts. The EAR journal itself, established in 1978 was a traditional print journal, the format of which had remained much the same since its inception. On discussing the call for papers and our aims for our time as editors, we considered the changed world of publication and the values attached to the everchanging mediums and technologies of communication. A concept that unites the editors and all researchers is how research is disseminated; but how often is the method and format of that chosen form of communication critiqued as having its own power to change, alter, and in some cases distort the original message?

Over the last few decades, architectural scholarship has become increasingly interested in the relevance and involvement of various media in the architectural discourse, history and design practice.[1] While matters of format are frequently incorporated into such investigations, shifting the focus decisively away from the medium to the matter of formats provides an alternative lens through which to examine the various ways architecture is produced. "*Format*," to quote Jonathan Sterne, "denotes a whole range of decisions that affect the look, feel, experience, and workings of a medium. It also names a set of rules according to which a technology can operate."[2]

In the world of bookmaking, from which the term 'format' originates, it addresses "the relationship between the physical structure of finished books and some of the printing-shop routines that led to this structure," namely the size of the pages and the way the printing sheets were arranged, folded and bound.[3] In everyday language, however, 'format' refers commonly "to the nature and order" of specific contents or information.[4] We think of formatting and reformatting as an adjustment of information according to a set of standards or given parameters. We format our writing so that it fits a specific page format or to comply with the conventions of a specific profession, institution or referencing style. We change the format of electronic files to make their content more accessible, comparable or legible and

[1] See for example: André Tavares, *The Anatomy of the Architectural Book* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016); Andrew Higgott and Timothy Wray, eds., *Camera Constructs: Photography, Architecture and the Modern City* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Claire Zimmerman, *Photographic Architecture in the Twentieth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Mario Carpo, *Architecture in the Age of Printing: Orality, Writing, Typography, and Printed Images in the History of Architectural Theory* (London: MIT Press, 2001); Kester Rattenbury, ed. *This Is Not Architecture: Media Constructions* (London: Routledge, 2002); Richard Koeck, *Cine-Scapes: Cinematic Spaces in Architecture and Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Robin Wilson, *Image, Text, Architecture: The Utopics of the Architectural Media* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015).
[2] Jonathan Sterne, *Mp3: The Meaning of a Format* (London: Duke University Press, 2012), 7.
[3] Thomas Tanselle, "The Concept of Format," *Studies in Bibliography* 53, no. 1 (2000): 67.
[4] Ibid.

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prepare a digital storage medium by formatting it. In fact, we constantly deal with and choose formats, yet, often without giving much thought to the process and subsequent implications.

It appears as though we only become more acutely aware of a format whenever established routines and standards for assembling, storing, distributing and working with information are called into question, for example through the emergence of new formats. While the invention of the MP3 format has reshaped the music world, how we conduct research in the humanities has changed fundamentally through the "migration of cultural materials into digital materials," a process vitally contingent on the development and accessibility of new digital formats.[5] This not only changed the ways in which knowledge would be stored and disseminated, it also brought about new modes and sites of knowledge formation.

We also become much more acutely aware of the significance of formats and their ability to "shape events in the creation of content by manipulating the dimensions of space and time" if the transformation of information from one format into another fails, or if specific formats render themselves incompatible with a particular program or changing environment – such as the world during the midst of the global Corona Virus pandemic.[6] When we drafted the call, we could not have foreseen the very situation we are now facing while we are putting the final touches to the issue. With many of us confined to their homes and physically isolated, everyday life as well as work and leisure has changed fundamentally and for many of us, it continues to take place in new or at least unfamiliar formats.

Witnessing a profound alteration of our physical and virtual environment at a global and unprecedented scale, the issue of "format" takes on a new and very active meaning. In a world where we are physically isolated, this issue's focus on the agency of format provides us with case studies and methodologies of interrogation which traverse the boundaries of disciplines, media, and the traditional virtual-physical duality. What unites all of the papers is their embracing of fluidity; fluidity of format, reception, representation, and importantly of meaning and understanding.

[5] Anne Burdick et al., *Digital Humanities* (London: MIT Press, 2012), 6.
[6] Timothy Pmeyer, "On Mediated Communication Theory: The Rise of Format," *Annals of the International Communication Association* 11, no. 1 (1988): 224.

Based in this experience of perpetual change and extended into the present condition of hyper-complexity, "**Notating Not Knowing: The Oceanic Challenge to Format and Medium" by Rachel Armstrong, Simone Ferracina, Rolf Hughes and Christos Kakalis** interrogates the format of the traditional journal article in its four individual explorations of experimental architectural practices. The paper offers a series of prototypes for further experimentations on design realities within the dissolution of polarities such as formattable/unformattable, known/unknown, certain/ uncertain, alive/inert, linear/non-linear. Using an oceanic approach to explore the fluid and liquid space between these binaries, experimental formats and mediums emerge in a condition of constant change. This traversing of the of the unknown provides us with examples of how uncertainty and discomfort is often what gives rise to creativity, providing methodologies for further experiments in this field.

George Themistokleous's "Re-Format It: Techno-Logic" similarly explores the relationship and interconnectivity of architecture and new media, where various formats construct an ever-changing virtual architecture. The increasing ability to manipulate and distort these formats shifts the understanding of conventional architectural explorations. Through an analysis of a multi-media installation *diplorasis*, the division between the physical and the virtual is explored, as well as the linear notion of time. The resultant mediated image activates its agency in space-making, and by extension the interaction of the observer with architecture is altered. Our own understanding of our embodiment and navigation of the physical world through technology as an extension of the self, becomes especially significant in a world where we are reliant on digital technologies to maintain a sense of societal normality.

The desire to alter the relationship of the individual with physical space is further explored in **Jessica Bonehill's** contribution "**Art on the Outside: The Contextualising of a Fluxus work in the Urban Environment,**" which discusses High Red Center's *Street Cleaning Event* (1964)*. The radical move from stagnant modes of artistic representation to the continually moving canvas of the city in the 1960s created an urban intervention which embraced the fluidity of format. The format of *Street Cleaning Event*,

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deliberately unstructured, allowed the city and the participants to direct and distort the trajectory of the work. The following representations and documentation of the event in text and photographs have determined, and in some instances, stagnated its reception. The fluidity and revolt of the 1960s is therefore confined to the modes of representation we have to record its activities. Bonehill's contribution invites us to appreciate the lessons of the past; analysing the period that followed the event itself allows us to consider the changing representations over time. Whilst a natural process, we are encouraged to actively reflect on the significance of the role of the researcher, and their choice of format, in forming and shaping reception.

Similarly, in "**Reformatting the Monograph: The Book Form as a Site of Plurality," Deniz Balık Lökçe** interrogates the format of the conventional monograph by placing it in opposition to OMA's *Content* (2004) and BIG's *Yes is More* (2009) in their inclusion of mixed media, use of irony, and subversion of the conventional. Through a reconsideration of format, the monographs become critical sites of rethinking established canons and projecting temporary, momentary, and spontaneous visions. They render architecture visible in the public sphere as an analytical mechanism, a discursive manifesto, a research platform, and an experimental device. The multitude of roles a singular format can elicit is particularly poignant in a world where fluid technologies are all-pervasive. What OMA and BIG offer us, is the tools we can use to subvert the dominant narrative through the multiple potentialities of the conventional form.

Olga Ioannou's "Experimenting with the design studio format by devising encounters in multiple learning environments: a case study" returns the issue to the prescient question of how architectural teaching can be informed by changing formats. A consideration which takes on renewed relevance in the midst of a global pandemic. The exploration of the hybrid format of an urban design course where students and teachers move between the classroom, in situ workshops and online platforms provides us with a potential case study for a post-Covid world. The results of the exploration are offered as being mutually beneficial, developed at a time when the altered format was not a necessity, we can see the benefits of embracing new technologies and formats

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to inform pedagogy and design thinking. The result is an architectural education which opens up new possibilities for positive change.

It is on this note of positivity that we would like to close the editorial. We find ourselves in unprecedented times, where modes and methods of communication are increasingly virtual and increasingly overwhelming. Yet these five papers show how through interrogating format and embracing the fluidity and uncertainty of new media and uncontrollable events, such as the interventions of multiple voices and inputs, can give rise to new and refreshing understandings of our relationship with space. Not just in questioning the way in which we communicate, or in the emergence of new design ideas and concepts which develop from the unknown, but in understanding our own agency in directing these trajectories through our choice of format, and as such altering our relationship with both the built and the virtual world.

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