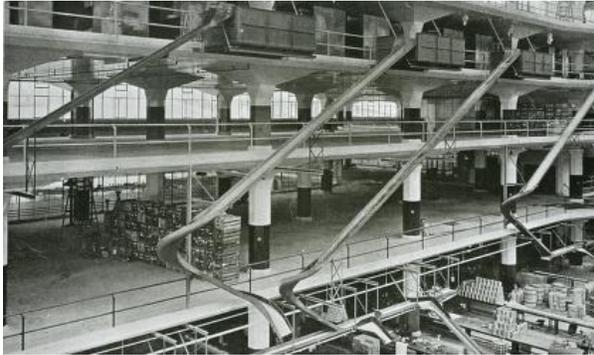


The Path of Kahn: *Amerikanismus* between Moscow and Detroit

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June 26-August 15, 2014



Boots Factory, Beeston (O. Williams), 1932

Description

This travel course follows the trail of influence of Detroit architect Albert Kahn throughout Europe and the former Soviet Union. We will juxtapose buildings on international sites with Kahn's Michigan archives (built and drawn). We will visit major sites on which Kahn's work can be found as a building (Kharkov, Ukraine, via Moscow), as a precedent (Nottingham, Rotterdam, Frankfurt, Turin), or as a counter-precedent (Amsterdam, Berlin, Dessau). We will study six buildings closely, but also trace the route of interwar "Amerikanismus" to provide context more generally. Comparing extant buildings to their 'original state' in drawings, photographs, and texts, we will consider the fate of industrial architecture in a post-industrial age.

Returning to Ann Arbor, we turn to the shadow architecture of the archive and to local Kahn buildings permanently altered through retrofit or demolition. To conclude the course, we will visit extant buildings, many of them ruins, in the Detroit area, and relate them to the buildings of *Amerikanismus*. In so doing, we begin work on an Alternate History of the Twentieth Century, in which American functional building proceeds without mid-century sublation by European emigrés.

In our industrial archaeological survey, we compare building use today with earlier iterations. Henry Russell Hitchcock called this industrial architecture, strangely enough, 'the architecture of bureaucracy.' Yet his condemnation appears now like a benediction. The Van Nelle Fabriek, Fiat Lingotto, the Zeche Zollverein in Essen, and Peter Behren's remarkable brick powerhouses in Berlin, along with numerous other industrial installations, are newly occupied by espresso bars, luxury lofts, exhibition venues, and internet start-ups. Buildings for which 'the bottom line' was also the site of intense architectural investigation, Kahn's industrial work inspired a group of buildings that were integral to modernism around the world, and whose mythical power resonates with one force wherever gentrification occurs, and a wholly different force where ruins predominate. We will reflect on the role of industrial architecture today and in future, as ruin and retrofit, in analytical projects that bring present and past into relationship.

Itinerary: 6/26/14 – 7/28/14
London, Nottingham 6/27-7/4
Rotterdam 7/5-7/11
Frankfurt/ Berlin 7/11-7/17
Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev 7/17-24
Turin, Venice (Biennale) 7/24-28
Ann Arbor: 7/28-8/13

Final Project

Students will give one on-site report, produce a travel report during the trip, and make one comparative analysis of a comparable building studied from materials in the Kahn archive or in the Detroit region. Two concluding weeks in Ann Arbor allow time for production of our final project using photographs, drawings, film/video, literature available on sites, in the archive, or in the library, and interviews with scholars and building users. This final project, our "alternate history," requires visualization processes, historical research, and analytical reflection.

Cost to student (pending grants) ca. \$5000

Six Buildings for intensive study: 1. Boots Factory, Nottingham; 2. Van Nelle Fabriek, Rotterdam; 3. Turbine Hall, Berlin; 4. Market Hall, Frankfurt; 5. Tractor Factory, Kharkov; 6. Fiat Lingotto plant, Turin

