METROPOLE: BILDEN

METROPOLIS: EDUCATION

JOVIS

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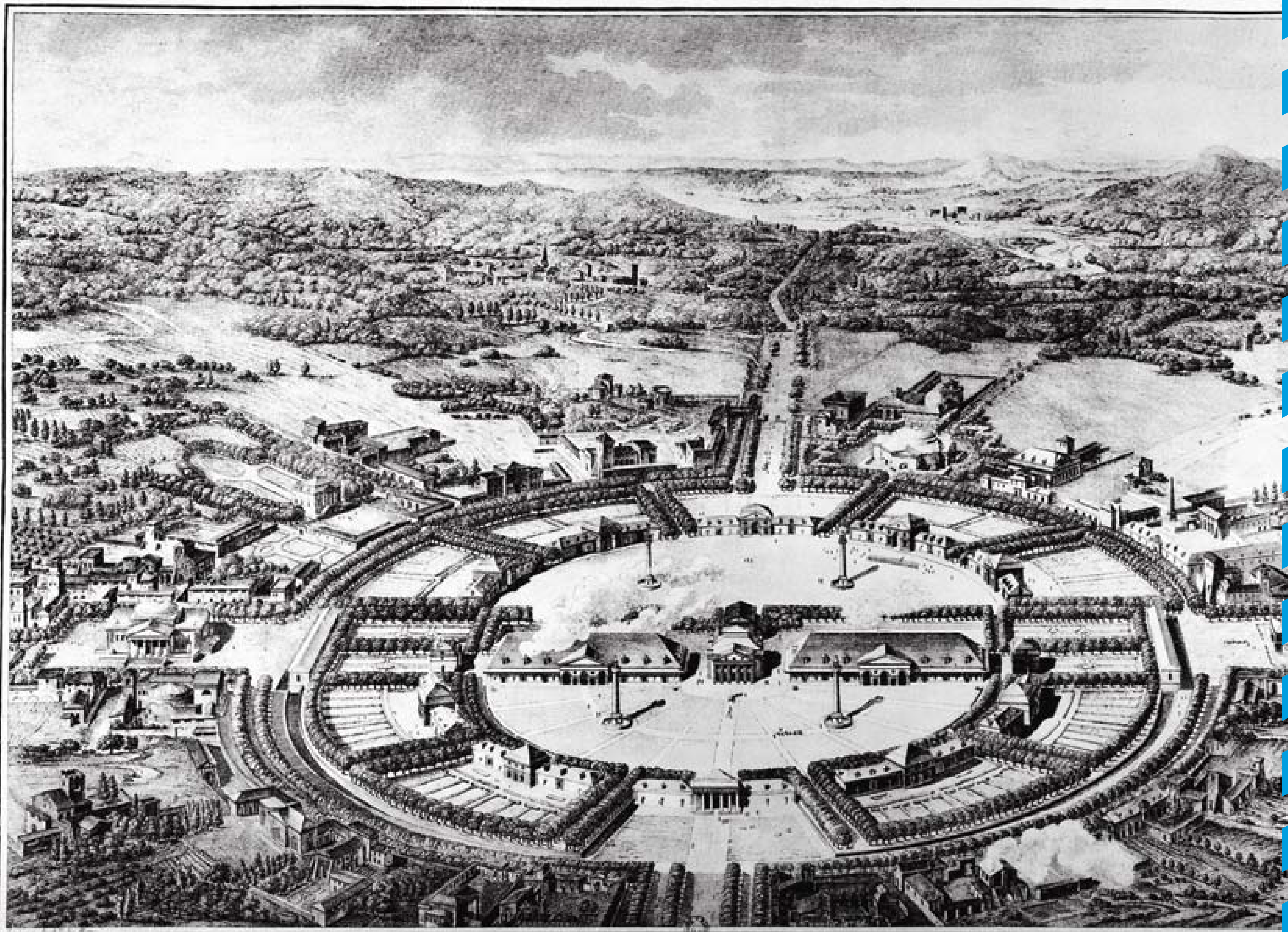
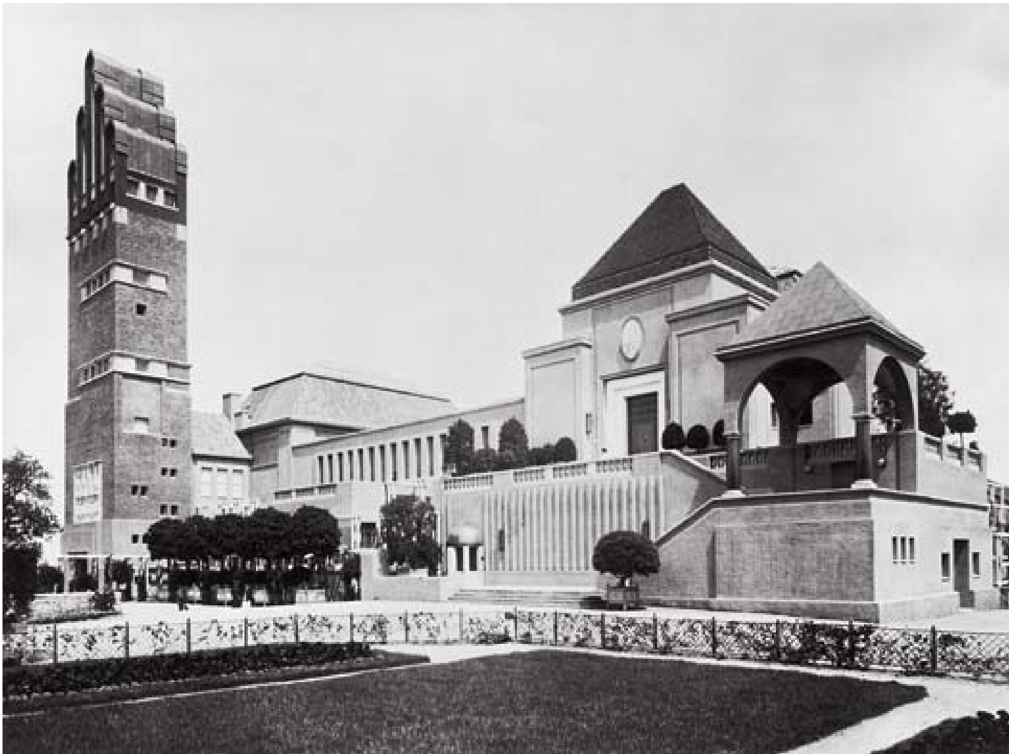
Metropolis—Education

Prologue





Ganzheitliches Verständnis von Architektur, Kunst, Arbeit und Gemeinschaft: Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt (Architekt: Joseph Maria Olbrich) An integrated understanding of architecture, art, work, and community: Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt (architect: Joseph Maria Olbrich)

Why does the Internationale Bauaustellung (IBA; International Building Exhibition) concern itself with educational policy? What influence do not just the functional and social, but also the design qualities of city and district architecture have on the education of a human being? What, in short, has building got to do with education?

We have to thank Leon Battista Alberti, the first writer in the early modern age on the theory of architecture, for his insight that architecture also has a moral quality: "Beauty," Alberti writes in the sixth of his

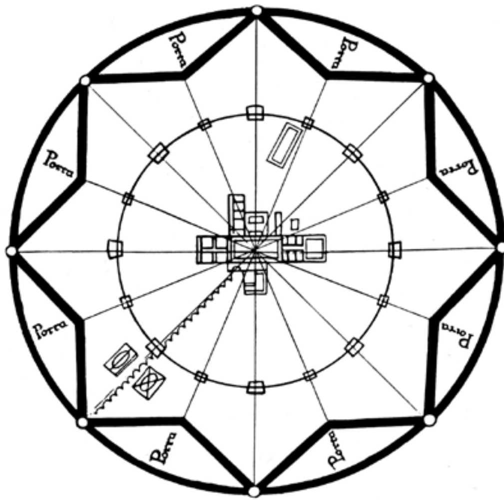
, "will have even dangerous enemies rein in their rage and leave it unharmed; indeed, I would dare to claim that there is nothing that will make a work safer and less likely to be harmed by the violence of man than the dignity and grace of its form."[1] After all, don't we often see with astonishment how beautifully designed—and also beautifully kept—squares, façades, or works of art in public spaces, even in so-called problem areas, evidently create such respect or indeed admiration that they appear to be miraculously protected from vandalism? At least for as long as the magic spell of untouchability remains unbroken.

In the eighteenth century, the "moral" and at the same time "educational" effect of aesthetics became a basic principle of German humanist education. For Friedrich Schiller (*On*

), education means the laborious path to personal perfection of "the True, the Good, and the Beautiful." Aesthetic education, in this process, plays a central moral part in overcoming the duality of the spiritual and the material; it raises Man above his natural state and is what makes him free. Schiller, like many of his contemporaries, including Wilhelm von Humboldt—the founder of the humanist system of education—saw the architectural ideal of beauty in Ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance: the very style of building whose moral effect had already been affirmed by Alberti.

The socio-economic developments of the nineteenth century and the associated explosive growth of industrial cities, however, led to a quite different structural and social reality that had little in common with the aesthetic ideas of German idealism. Modern criticisms of city life, from Friedrich Engels (

tion) to Werner Hegemann ( ) do indeed primarily concern themselves with the negative social effects of the rapidly developing tenements in districts prey to speculative building at the end of the century. The nineteenth century city was blamed as the cause of a general "moral decay," for the spread of epidemics, and for neglect and crime. The educational reformers of the time also saw the developing system of universal schooling not as a way out of general cultural decline, but as a requirement of capitalist industry, and, therefore, without any liberating features. From criticism of this school and education system, scientific, life-reforming, and theosophical theories of a "new education" (those of Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori, for instance) arose—theories that subscribed to an ideal of education not formed by the laws of the market, but by the potential for development of the individual within the community.



Idealstadt Sforzinda: Sternförmiger Stadtgrundriss des Architekten Filarete für den Mailänder Fürsten, 1461. Zwei Quadrate werden übereinandergelegt. Vier Ecken versinnbildlichen die vier Elemente, die anderen die vier aristotelischen Fähigkeiten (Trockenheit, Feuchtigkeit, Kälte und Wärme). The ideal city of Sforzinda: the star-shaped city layout by the architect Filarete for the Milanese rulers, 1461. It comprises two squares on top of one another. Four of the corners symbolise the four elements, and the others the four Aristotelian properties (dryness, humidity, cold, and heat).

A comparable development took place in urban planning theories. As early as the first half of the nineteenth century, enlightened intellectuals and industrialists in England and France, at the time the most developed industrial states, began to combat the more monstrous features of capitalist exploitation such as the fourteen-hour work day, child and female labour, the destruction of the environment and of social relationships. They devised models of a new urban society, distinguished by equality, in which the education of the individual was not subject to the dictates of the production process but moulded by the ethos of the community. Utopian socialist models of ideal towns were created (for example by Robert Owen and Charles Fourier); in the field of art and architecture, style moved in anti-industrial directions, as demonstrated by the Arts and Crafts movement. Towards the end of the century, these developments were joined by the Garden City movement (Ebenezer Howard and others) in England and Germany, which wanted to unite town and country in a new utopia.

It was in this environment that the first German building exhibition, held in Darmstadt, proved a great success. The last grand duke of Hessen-Darmstadt, Ernst Ludwig, wanted to revive artistic, pre-industrial craft skills by creating a colony for artists where a holistic understanding of architecture, art, work, and community could unfold, and in which human beings—very much in the sense of the reforming ideals of his time—would be "educated." The great claims made for the educational reform to be brought about by this project are exemplified by the fact that, in the memorandum of 1898, the revival of crafts was compared in importance to the introduction of the Technical Universities in the nineteenth century. With a total of four widely respected events in the years up to 1914, in which renowned artists such as Joseph Maria Olbrich and Peter Behrens took part, Ernst Ludwig founded a tradition unique in Europe, and one that continues as part of the spirit of the Internationale Bauaustellung to this day. Although each of these exhibitions needs to find its own focal point, their decisive common feature is the superior value of building and architecture above mere construction and design. It was and is important not only to exhibit remarkable buildings but also to make a little piece of utopia visible in the place in question. Each Internationale Bauausstellung wants to be a paradigmatic model for the reasons why town planning and architecture should be seen as visual—and educative—art.

Building and Education—Two Sides of a Single Term

"Building" and "education" are not that far apart in meaning. If you build, you are shaping, making something. Education is the shaping of a human being. If you have successfully "built up" something, it is thriving. Indo-European *bheu*, the etymological foundation of "build," means something like "become," "grow," "thrive," "live," "be." In his remarkable lecture given in Darmstadt in 1951, Martin Heidegger drew attention to how the word for "to build" (in German) has changed in meaning. Originally, it had less to do with the technical aspect of building—in the sense of Latin —but more with Latin , the origin of , the word for "adapting," "improving," "planting," "cultivation," "care:" that is to say, "culture." This deep meaning of "building" is not just closely related to that of "education"; it also refers to the common social task of these two fields of action, education and architecture.

In his lecture, Heidegger also points out that the actual meaning—including the historic linguistic meaning—of "building" is "dwelling," as an expression of a "nurturing" and "caring" treatment of the Earth. Caring, according to Heidegger, means protecting the Earth ("*das* ," "framework") in its essence. To this extent, "the actual hardship of dwelling consists in the fact that mortals have to keep on seeking out the essence of dwelling over and over again, that ."[2]

This is a far-sighted statement, made half a century before catastrophic climate change has so plainly shown us that "building"—in the

sense of living on the Earth—has a great deal to do with responsibility for the basis of our lives and those of future generations. "Mortals dwell to the extent that they save the Earth."[3] Just as building must not be reduced to the purely technical and craft aspects of production, education must not be limited to the simple teaching of formal knowledge. If you say "education" and mean only the level of knowledge that can be tested, you will fall short, just like the person who says "architecture" and means no more than the construction of buildings.

State Building—the Ideal City as an Educational Ideal

Building and education also go together in the history of thought. Ever since Plato, the organisation of the state and ideals of education have formed a system of mutual analogies. As early as this, the spatial medium of these analogous arrangements was the city, or rather the city state, represented as an ideal by sunken Atlantis. In the Italian Renaissance, the founding period of modern humanist education, the models of ideal cities were revived, and up to the twentieth century, they provided a theme for social utopias. Filarete's , Thomas More's , or of Tommaso Campanella, to name only the best known, are the constructed ideal states of a new rationalism, consciously opposing itself to the all-powerful Catholic Church and divinely approved determinism in state and society. There were no utopias in the Middle Ages, because none existed—or were tolerated—apart from Paradise. The state and city models of the rising modern age created a new order based on human reason. Descartes explained it, just as he did philosophy, using the laws of mathematics. This meant that it was only consistent that the built or even only imagined manifestations of the new rational state should, without exception, be based on strict geometrical forms. The most obvious way in which these mathematical and rational measures were realised was in those military fortifications that were, in a sense, intended to be seen as allegories of a society governed by reason.

The early ideal city models already incorporated those features that, in essence, were to continue to the present day: the abrogation of private property, state-regulated distribution of goods and services, the abolition of poverty and of money, state control of relations between the sexes, and collective raising of children. Since Plato's time, the private domain in the ideal state and city models has not been considered one of personal freedom, intimacy, and individual happiness, but of poverty, adversity, and the dependence on family and clan. Urban utopias are not based on the accident of birth, status, and tradition, but on an order of state and society based on reason, educating, nurturing, and guiding people from the cradle to the grave. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, who with Salines de Chaux founded the ideal of the modern functional city, summed up the "educational function" of the built environment aimed at socialising human beings as follows: "L'architecture, par ses attractions, est la souveraine du monde"—because of its attractions, architecture is the sovereign of the world.
The counter-movement to the appropriation of the individual by society and its institutions also arose in the eighteenth century. For his exemplary pupil Emile, hero of the didactic novel of the same name, Jean-Jacques Rousseau chose a village in the country as a suitable environment for education and life: "The city is a maw that devours the human race. After a few generations, the race decays or degenerates. It must renew itself, and it is always the country that contributes to the renewal. Therefore send your children to the place where they will renew themselves."[4] It is not the state that is to educate human beings, but "Nature." Because of the , human beings are forced, actually very much against their nature, to submit themselves to society and its institutions. As a consequence, human beings live best where they are closest to Nature—in the country. In Rousseau, the "ideal of Nature" was for the first time opposed to the ideal city as a place of alternative models of education and living—a theme that survives to the present day to breathe life into

Utopie des 20. Jahrhunderts: Plan von Le Corbusier aus den 1920er Jahren zur Umgestaltung der Pariser City, 1932   Twentieth century Utopia: Le Corbusier's 1920s plan for redesigning the city of Paris, 1932

the fantasies of all urban refugees, country communes, and "New Urbanists."

In actual fact, the utopia of ideal Nature is not that far from that of the ideal city. Ever since Thomas More, ideal cities—even in relation to the town sizes of their times—have in fact been more like ideal small towns. There were no plans for the growth of cities; if they exceeded a certain size, they were not to be expanded, but new cities were to be founded. The reasons for this were fear of increasing anonymity and of loss of the manageable scale of the community as size increased. On this point, all urban utopians have, ever since Rousseau, been of the same mind as the critics of cities. The unpredictable big city was the source of all social evils, and it was no place to bring up healthy children and to live in peace. No wonder then that Le Corbusier's plan "Voisin" wanted to wipe Paris off the map again a century and a half after Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Le Corbusier's ideal place for education was, however, not the country, but the modern residential estate: "An industrially produced residential estate, well arranged," he wrote in

, "would give an impression of peace, order, and cleanliness, and would inevitably teach its inhabitants discipline."[5]

Urban utopias open up possibilities, and yet, at the same time, they run the risk of opening new prison doors. They can show us that the future is more than the continuation of the present; they anticipate—at least in some aspects—what is desirable. This makes them necessary and essential components of the human dream of happiness and, in the best cases, little steps towards it. The fascination of urban utopias lies in their basic context: namely, the shaping of places by the power structures of society and social behaviour. Urban planning and architecture are products of everyday social, legal, and cultural life, and affect the existence of individual and social reality in a complex interwoven process. Urban utopias turn this situation upside-down and make it a matter of absolute, simple mechanics: the city shapes—and educates—the human being. In places where utopian cities have been considered concrete plans of action, and not as criticisms of the existing conditions or historical visions, they end in totalitarianism and the complete disenfranchisement of the individual. Urban utopias are simply—as Michel Foucault called them—"Places without a real place (and) in essence deeply unreal spaces." The idea that an ideal city could be made real in a direct, simple process is based on the same mistaken belief as the hope that one could "shape" or "educate" the human being through the ideal state.

A New Educational Understanding of the City

In today's debates on education the city continues to play a special role—as many contributions in this third volume of the IBA series of publications show. On the one hand, the city has been discovered as a "place of learning" for the school education of children and young people, and, on the other, the cities themselves have developed into places of ongoing education. Over the last few decades, a cultural

industry of private and public educational institutions has grown up, contributing to enlivening urban tourism with "edutainment" or science centres. City tours that include visits to theatres and museums or festivals attract more and more people. Education has become one of the most popular leisure activities. It offers people splendid opportunities to enjoy new experiences and to widen their cultural horizons, and thanks to new communications technology it creates hitherto unknown access to people and information. No generation has ever before had the opportunity to educate itself—including in the idealistic, humanist sense—so widely.

On the other hand, social segregation is never so clear as when it comes to educational opportunities, taking part in education, and educational success. And in a social and spatial sense, nothing shapes our cities more clearly than differences in education. The social demography of our cities perfectly matches the educational profile. If the "educational landscape" is divided, the city landscape is bound to be. For years there have been isolated, selective, and professional attempts to improve the situation in "problem areas." Much money has been spent on urban regeneration and job creation—with limited success. The stigmatisation of city districts with a "bad address" has increased rather than decreased.

It is, therefore, not only important to develop new strategies for coordinated action in education and urban planning, but absolutely essential, if our cities are not to lose their greatest social strength, their power of integration. Education is decisive—and this is hardly a new insight—for the opportunities to participate in social life and for personal, professional, and economic progress. The smallest share in education and the lowest level of educational success—and this too is hardly news—lies with those who have little knowledge of language or whose language skills are poor. This particularly affects children from migrant families and young people from socially deprived households. Given the fact that in Hamburg, for example, almost every other young person under eighteen comes from such a background, it is necessary for educational policy to focus on those city districts with a large proportion of migrant children and young people, and a high level of unemployment and state benefits. This is the only way to break the vicious circle of poverty, social and cultural isolation, and lack of skills.

Urban renaissance must also become a renaissance of the city as a space for education—and not just for those who are already educated. However, in contrast to the historic precedents, it will not be an imagined ideal city that will "educate," but the real city, the district, the actual lived-in environment, that will form the starting point for the educational process. In modern ideas of educational reform such as, for example, those developed by the educational philosopher Paulo Freire, respect for the "popular knowledge of people from certain social and cultural environments" necessarily includes "respect for the cultural context. The actual world those to be educated live in is the starting point for understanding how they construct their world. 'Their' world is in the end the first and indispensible formulation of the world itself."[7]

Children and young people are not empty shells to be stuffed with knowledge. They are people with a real social and cultural history, which is the starting point for a joint learning process by students and teachers. The aim of this educational process is not just the imparting of formal knowledge, but a conscious "being in the world" (Freire); we are concerned with knowledge of the social reality, its limitations, but also its possibilities for change. Or, to put it another way, the aim is not to "educate" people by the material constitution of their space. It is rather to understand the material constitution of their space as a social process of education, which can be shaped by conscious action.

In contrast to the state and urban utopias of the past, the city and the community are not imperatives in education, not superior schoolmasters and disciplinarians, but the object and the—changeable—system of relationships in the educational process. On this point, we can see interesting parallels with a new understanding of urban planning as an active participatory

process and a new understanding of the profession of town planner or architect. In recent years, they have learnt (or at least they should have learnt) that the involvement of citizens and persons concerned is not a superfluous duty within the planning procedure. Instead, those who live in a district or an area have the best expert experience of the world they live in. Theirs is not the only, but, nonetheless, an essential component of the planning and building process. In this sense, planning procedures—like educational procedures—are also learning experiences in dialogue form, where both sides, professionals as well as the people affected, are prepared to put their (preconceived) ideas up for discussion, and, if necessary, to revise them. The situation at the end of a serious participatory process is, therefore, just as in any other learning process, rather different than at the beginning, something "better" in the dialectic sense.

Education and building are creative processes, demanding and encouraging creativity in those who perform them, and enabling them to act with social responsibility, to lead the "vita activa" in the sense of Hannah Arendt. The utopian element in modern urban planning, rather like in education, does not appear to lie today in the "grand design" of the ideal city (neither does it in the corresponding ideal human being), but in incremental procedures and projects in civil society. Recent years have shown, in many small and large projects, both in education and in the building of cities, in environmental and ecological matters, that a future different from the status quo can be envisaged. The decisive factor is a new culture of process, supported and shaped by committed people open to dialogue and of the most diverse cultural backgrounds and competences. We are concerned with a "consensual educational process"—though not in the sense of the "lowest common denominator"—but with the negotiation of solutions in the sense of "best" or, perhaps even better, of "next" practice. It is the task of, and the challenge to, every IBA to contribute to this process.

This third volume in the series of publications by the IBA Hamburg is able to report on many encouraging and future-oriented projects involving cooperation by builders and educators—not least within the bounds of the IBA Hamburg itself. These examples, intended in the true sense of the word to "teach by example," contain new possibilities for the development of our cities and their young and adult citizens. These are the "real utopias" of a new, active ethic of responsibility in building and education, an ethic urgently needed with regard to both the cultural globalisation of cities and to global urbanisation, as well as the ecological consequences of both.

Notes

1 Quoted in Hanno-Walter Kruft: *Geschichte der Architekturtheorie*. Munich 2004, p. 52.

2 Martin Heidegger: *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, Vorträge und Aufsätze. Stuttgart 1964, p. 156, emphasis in the original.

3 Ibid., p. 144.

4 Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Emile oder Über die Erziehung* [*Emile, ou l'education*]. Stuttgart, 1963, p. 151.

5 Le Corbusier: *Ausblick auf eine Architektur* [*Vers une architecture*]. Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1982, p. 182.

6 Michel Foucault: "Von anderen Räumen". In: Jörg Dünne/Stephan Günzel (eds.): *Raumtheorie*. Frankfurt/Main 2006, here p. 320.

7 Paulo Freire: "Kein Abschied vom Traum einer humaneren Welt". In: Peter Schreiner (Hg.): *Paulo Freire. Bildung und Hoffnung*. Münster 2007, esp. p. 57.