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Véronique Patteeuw

“I think for an architect, to edit a magazine, like teaching, or participating in public debates, is a way of cultivating theoretical reflection, not as a separate activity, but as an indispensable part of design craft.”¹

A heroic project of self-education²

- ¹ In April 1980, a group of students from the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Delft, went on a study trip to France. Amongst them were Peter Drijver, Dirk-Jan Postel, Roy Bijhouwer and Miel Karthous. The trip brought the students to the Citroën assemblage factory CX in Aulnay-sous-Bois, Le Corbusier's Maison la Roche and Pierre Chareau's Maison de Verre in Paris, before ending in Nancy, where they met Jean Prouvé in his home two years before his death.³ In the summer of that same year, the projects they visited and the conversations they engaged in, led the students to organize “a first meeting to study the possibilities of a new periodical.”⁴

Figure 1. O, 1, 1981

- 2 Critical of the lack of architectural reflection in Dutch-speaking journals at that time, the editors ambioned an editorial project that would encourage the dissemination of research in their faculty and contribute to a culture of debate.

The opportunities the educational institutions have for discussing current developments remain largely unused: instead of taking a lead, education (and in particular the educational programs) is lagging behind.⁵

- 3 Their main reason for starting the journal was to assemble “knowledge, insights and attitudes hidden in minds and drawers.”⁶ Making it accessible in their faculty and elsewhere, would complement the Dutch professional journals available to the students at the time. “*Wonen TA/BK* was moving away from design and entering more philosophical perspectives on architecture and *De Architect* remained in our eyes a too superficial journal.”⁷ In the spring of 1981, the first issue of their journal was published. Its title, ‘O,’ referred to the threefold editorial content it proposed: ‘*ontwerp, onderzoek and onderwijs*,’ or design, research and pedagogy.
- 4 The first issues of *O* covered a wide range of the students’ topics of interest. Two recurrent sections testified to their editorial policy. While ‘Nice Buildings’ introduced project-analyses of buildings that were “unfairly unknown but nevertheless interesting,”⁸ the section ‘Technique and Architecture’ gathered articles on out-of-the-box construction techniques. However distinct, both sections focussed on “plan material that was worth retaining” and experimented with “analysis methods in order to gain insights into and compare material.”⁹ Delft teachers at the time, such as Tjeerd Dijkstra, Max Risselada, Henk Engel, Rein Geurtsen or Kees Vollemans centered their pedagogical approaches around project analysis, be it on an architectural, constructive, urban or historical level.¹⁰ The material gathered in these courses was often photocopied and distributed amongst the students. *O* would allow for a better

dissemination. Particular attention was given to urban renewal projects and competitions in the Netherlands, such as the competitions for Kruisplein in Rotterdam¹¹ or Amsterdam's Oosterdok¹². These articles were juxtaposed with analyses of foreign architectural approaches, such as Jean Prouvé's façade system, Le Corbusier's Pessac housing and Bruno Taut's Siedlungen in Berlin. The study trips often provided material for articles, such as on the Maison de Verre, the Vesnin brothers and Konstantin Melnikov, the planetarium of Moscow, or Moisei Ginsburg's Narkomfin housing complex. Last but not least, the students aimed to clarify certain terms, concepts and systems of thoughts that were recurrent in their teaching. "In order to give an impetus to a more detailed definition, which provides consensus on the use of the terms type, typology and morphology,"¹³ they published in-house translations of Philippe Panerai's 'Typologies,'¹⁴ Carlo Aymonino's 'Typology,'¹⁵ Anthony Vidler's 'Third Typology,'¹⁶ and Robin Evans' 'Figures, doors and passages.'¹⁷ Publishing both project analyses and theoretical texts, as well as in-depth reviews of the pedagogical programme and presentations of worthwhile buildings, the initial issues of *O* testify to the position the students wished to occupy within their journal: in between design, research and pedagogy.

Figure 2. *O*, 3, 1982

- 5 It is necessary to situate OASE in a long tradition of student-lead organizations and events at the TUDelft. In 1962, a group of students had founded the INternational DEsign SEMinar (Indesem), in collaboration with Wiek Röling and Jaap Bakema, gathering a series of workshops and lectures assembling both students and teachers. While the 1962 conference was driven by the humanistic ideas of Team 10's Dutch protagonists, the 1967 meeting was highly polemical and politicized. The participants of the seminar "disapproved of the established professional architectural practice, mainstream 'functionalist' theories, and, more importantly, blamed the profession and

professional education for being subservient to the social and economic 'establishment.'"¹⁸ The turbulent years of protest that followed led to the democratization of architectural education at the TUDelft. Stylos, the student association, had played an important role in this process, particularly in the decade preceding *O*'s birth. In the late sixties and early seventies, members of the student organization had made a call for a critical analysis of the school's pedagogy, arguing that Delft lacked a clearly identifiable ideological position. Stylos organized debates on the role of the architect and the future educational programs in the school. Although, the school, in its urge to reform education, focussed on organizational matters, Stylos searched for ways to open up discussion and bring the debate back to architecture. In this context, the journal *O* played a pivotal role. Published by Stylos and backed up by the organization's administration, the journal reintroduced a strong focus on design at the Bouwkunde faculty.¹⁹ Although the journal was born and based at the TUDelft, and included only TUDelft editors at that time, it aspired to opening the debate to other disciplinary and geographical contexts, and proposed a network of like-minded people willing to look elsewhere. "The intention is not to make a school newspaper, but a publication that collaborates with the Technical University of Eindhoven, the various academies of architecture and art history departments in the Netherlands. It aspires to continue the commitment of the student movement that started in 1966, and to offer a platform that can react to current issues."²⁰

- 6 *O* also sprang out of a strong culture of editorial practices among the Delft students. Several magazines preceded the birth of the journal. In the 1960s, the *Delftse School*, which was "a collection of stencils with a few illustrations (...) largely based on discussions that took place in the lectures of Jo van den Broek," commented on issues facing the Netherlands at the time, such as social housing, industrial construction methods and commercial design.²¹ The editorial of the first issue of *Delftse School* situated the students' initiative in reaction to the absence of platforms for debate: "We truly admire the excellent magazine that is published under the name *Forum*; however, its editors are obsessed by their own ideas, leaving no room for divergence. All other Dutch architectural magazines stick to the reprehensible convention of tolerating the mediocre. These utterances only demonstrate an ethics of kindness. Dutch architecture has its good points, so why slash it? By publishing this magazine, we want to clear the air, get rid of the odd solemnity, romanticism and mysticism that adorns Dutch architecture, increasingly confusing the wider audience, professionals and students alike."²² *Delftse School* was followed by *De Elite*,²³ a one-time publication released in 1970 on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of Stylos. Critical of the Delft pedagogy, *De Elite* wanted to expose the out-of-date character of architectural education and argued for the many social implications of architecture. In the 1970s, other periodicals followed, such as *B-nieuws*, *Styloskrant*,²⁴ *Projectenradar* and *Utopia*.²⁵ While these periodicals were informative on the teaching activities (*B-nieuws*), had an activist take to on architecture (*Projectenradar*), or were more anarchistic (*Utopia*), the journal *O* kept a middle ground position. Avoiding ideological identification between left and right, it focussed on design instead of political debate.

Figure 3. Anthony Vidler, "De derde typologie", *O*, 3, 1982, pp. 2-3

- 7 One can also situate the origins of *OASE* in relation to other publications initiated within teaching environments, such as *Perspecta* (Yale), *AA Files* (AA School), *Faces* (EPFL), *Trans* (ETH) or the *Harvard Design Magazine*. As Beatriz Colomina and Joan Ockman argued, throughout the twentieth century, journals offered throughout the twentieth century, platforms for the dissemination of research and debate within the pedagogical contexts of schools, universities or academic institutions.²⁶ The first editors of *OASE* were certainly familiar with *Oppositions*, the journal of the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, *Arch+*, or *Lotus International*.²⁷ Journals were available at the faculty's library and/or bought in London, brought back to Delft and sold in the Stylos bookshop, another initiative of the Stylos student-organization lead by several of the *O* editors.²⁸ Unlike most of these journals, however, *OASE* was not an initiative of academics, but a heroic project of self-education by a generation of students who found that the opportunities of debate offered to them lacked rigor and breadth. The journal's format and design reflected both the editorial ambitions of its editors as well as their timid exploration of architectural publishing. The first issues were printed on glossy A4 paper and stapled on the side. They varied between 40 and 50 pages per issue and combined texts and images in a rather classic setup: a three-column grid proposed two columns for the main text and a third for footnotes and small illustrations. The materiality and graphic design of the journal stayed close to the content it proposed. In its early years, the journal could probably best be described as the effort of a generation of students to discuss architects, architectures and ideas about architecture.

Maturing in reflectivity

- 8 The embryonic phase of *OASE* (1981-1985, issues 1 to 10) ended with a change of name, imposed by Federatie O, the body bringing together the professional organizations from different fields of design in the Netherlands. At that time, the name-change was

merely accompanied by a small editorial note in OASE#11, reassuring the readers that the journal would stay on the path it had been on:

Obviously, we will continue to identify developments, new or otherwise, in education, research and professional practice in the fields of architecture, urban planning and public housing. The journal's objective remains focussed on studying respectively research situations. Unlike many professional situations, a learning situation offers opportunities to make connections, to follow side roads and to explore border areas. In short, we continue where we left off. The subtitle remains "Design, Research, Education", this issue number 11.²⁹

- 9 The journal continued to use its subtitle – design, research, pedagogy – and published articles according to its three subcategories on topics as diverse as 'les Salines d'Arc-et-Senans,' 'the production of Charles and Ray Eames' or 'architecture and philosophy.' Its postmodern context was reflected in essays such as 'the appearances of postmodernism,' and 'modernity as an unfinished or completed project.'³⁰
- 10 Slowly but steadily, O developed into OASE, as the editorial board of students grew into a board composed of both students and professional architects as well as academics. The symbiosis with the educational programme of Delft began to loosen up when other interests entered into the editorial content. Closely guarding the link between the practice of architecture, its historical dimensions and theoretical perspectives, the issues became more reflective and thematized. Themes ranged from postmodernism (OASE#13), modernism, aesthetics and phenomenology (OASE#16), to urban renovation (OASE#17), or architecture and film 'from the montage of space to the architecture of a movie'³¹ (OASE#18). Two separate small-format editions accompanied the journal in 1984-1985. Under the name of *Cahier*, they explored the disciplinary boundaries of architecture with the translations of Jean Baudrillard's 'L'effet Beaubourg'³² (O#7, spring 1984) and Martin Heidegger's 'Bauen, Wohnen, Denken.' (OASE#12, 1985-1986). The process of maturing is also reflected in the design of the journal. OASE#13 proposed a new cover and logo, made by students of the Rietveld Academy who were guided by Karel Kruijsen. Marjolijn Ruig's design would set the tone for the next 14 issues. OASE allowed itself freer compositions of texts and images on its pages. But notwithstanding these striking yet singular experiments, the journal stayed close to its initial graphic concept: a black-and-white, stapled magazine, exploring possible relations between text and images within the margins of its original design.

Figure 4. Karel Martens, graphic proposal for *OASE*, 32 “Over architectuur en stedenbouw in de jaren zestig”, 1992

Photography by the author.

- 11 By the end of the 1980s, *OASE* searched to professionalize and came into contact with the socialist publisher SUN, short for the Socialistische Uitgeverij Nijmegen. Although the connection with Delft University of Technology was still influential, the journal opened up its editorial board even further, and the influence of staff members of the Eindhoven University of Technology, became increasingly apparent. Along with the new publisher, the journal began to evolve from an “instrumental and politicizing approach to a reflective one.”³³ The writing became contemplative, expanding the empirical approach and linking research into original materials with criticism.³⁴ Architectural design was seen by the *OASE* editors as an expression of architectural culture. The issues became fully thematic, announced the theme and the table of contents on the cover, and took on less articles but made them more extensive. The contents testify to a broader perspective on architecture, opening up to questions of architectural culture at large: *OASE*#29 and *OASE*#30 were dedicated to *architecture parlante*, *OASE*#36 to the architectural drawing, *OASE*#31 explored the idea of tectonics, and *OASE*#34 brought the interior under attention. The name change can be interpreted in this perspective: *OASE*, Dutch for oasis, represents “a fertile place, but one concealed in a barren hostile landscape.”³⁵

Figure 5. Karel Martens, sketches for OASE, Gerrit Noordzij Prize Exhibition, Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten, The Hague, 2012

Photography by the author.

- 12 The journal's new phase was accompanied by a significant attention to printed matter. In 1990, the OASE board invited Dutch graphic designer Karel Martens to become responsible for the journal's overall design. Martens had done a series of book-covers

for SUN Publishers and had an interest in the cross-over between art, architecture and graphic design. In response to the ambitions of the editors to make the journal more reflective, Martens proposed a smaller book-like format, bound instead of stapled, including different paper types, and a flexible grid that could be adjusted to the needs of each issue. Opposed to the then widely accepted dogma of uniformity, Karel Martens deliberately employed a graphic design based on the contents of the journal instead of following a preconceived concept. The hand-made test prints for OASE#28, the first issue under Martens, clearly signaled this new beginning: the logo of OASE was abandoned immediately, the contents were positioned on an otherwise empty cover, the borders of the page were explored without refrain, a central large column enabled a certain “slow reading,” images became equal to the text, and footnotes created small moments of friction. The back cover of OASE#28, with a full-bleed image of a space shuttle launch, perfectly visualized the ambition of renewal.

Slowness and amateurism

Figure 6. OASE, 79 “The Architecture of James Stirling 1964–1992”, 2009

- 13 At the turn of the twentieth century, OASE’s editorial board became bilingual³⁶, opening up to persons outside the Netherlands, first to Belgian scholars, and later to Belgium-based practitioners.³⁷ The infrastructure of reflection, criticism and discourse present at the Universities of Leuven and Ghent at that time, had a profound effect. While broadening OASE’s territory of investigation to the Low Countries, the journal centered its efforts on reflective critical practices and situated architecture in a larger cultural environment, with issues dedicated to Consumption and Territory (OASE#52), Rereading the Generic City (OASE#54), or exploring the idea of ‘The Visible and the

Invisible' in architecture (OASE#58). Ambitioning an international perspective, OASE changed in 2003 from SUN to NAI Publishers, the Rotterdam publishing house, collaborating with the Netherlands Architecture Institute, amongst others. NAI Publishers' extensive distribution network and its important impetus strengthened OASE's academic status,³⁸ and enabled the journal to attain the position it occupies today. English became the dominant language and the thematic issues became, although anchored in the Low Countries, extremely European in their orientation. OASE#62 focussed on 'Autonomous Architecture and the Project of the City,' OASE#64 on 'Landscape and Mass Tourism,' OASE#69 explored 'Shared Territories in Historiography and Practice' and OASE#71 was dedicated to 'Urban Formation and Collective Spaces.'

Figure 7. OASE, 81 "Constructing Criticism", 2010

- 14 But if OASE is a bilingual platform for research today, with the academic status of a blind peer-reviewed journal, it does not follow the standards of academic publishing. True to its hybrid character, it is run by academics and practicing architects that try to elude any form of compartmentalization and preserve space for speculation, reflection and experimentation. Emerging from the intense debates on the so-called 'democratization' of education in the 1970s, OASE publishes both texts and projects, inviting academics as well as professionals (artists, poets, photographers). Its themes range across disciplines and historical periods, and peer-reviewing does not exclude non-academics from contributing. Several thematic recurrences run throughout the issues published over the past four decades. These recurrences can be identified in relation to a certain contextual framework, but are mainly the result of the heterogeneous composition of OASE's editorial board, evolving over time, and of its democratic approach to editorial content. In his essay 'Recent History,' architectural historian Maarten Delbeke grasped the themes of issues 28 to 75 in five red threads. According to Delbeke, OASE contains a number of issues on the "design process and its

tools”; it has a series of monographic issues on “important (yet hitherto partly neglected) architects and bodies of work.” A third series of issues examines “the qualities or properties of architecture and/or buildings”; while a fourth series is dedicated to “the tasks of the designer” and a last category examines, again according to Delbeke, “the conditions of architectural practice.”³⁹ Since the publication of Delbeke’s text in 2008, a sixth thematic thread can be identified, assembling issues on architecture’s manifold forms of representation and criticism. One might notice that the themes with which the editors started *O* in 1981 are still leading the editorial contents of the journal.

- 15 The above-mentioned thematic threads are not exceptional in an academic journal dedicated to the history and theory of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture. What is then *OASE*’s specificity? What distinguishes the journal from other European periodicals dedicated to architecture?
- 16 What makes *OASE* distinctive is firstly the journal’s democratic approach to editorial content. Since its origin, *OASE* has been run by volunteers, without an editor in chief, and has relied on the commitment of a wide variety of authors, advisors and friends. The particular epistemological positioning of the journal makes it a rather atypical example of an editorial model shared between academic, theoretical, critical and sensitive approaches. Indeed, the collaborative project behind the journal enables more than one point of view, more than one perspective. Without an editor-in-chief, the editors’ approach towards the decision-making processes is organized in a democratic manner. Ten monthly and two biannual meetings assemble the editors around the editorial content of individual issues and allow extended conversations on themes for issues to come. While each individual issue is elaborated by a smaller editorial core, the monthly meetings allow for group discussions. The editorial take of *OASE* might be best defined by the underlying amateurism of its editors. Referring to the ‘amour’ or ‘love for’ their work, the amateur-editor enjoys the open intellectual space offered by the magazine. Their commitment to the journal is not one that searches for financial gain, nor academic or professional prestige, it is first and foremost because of the alternative modes of reflection, research or writing allowed by the editorial space. Situated at the interface between the academic world and professional practice, *OASE*’s amateurism lies precisely in bringing together a series of individuals, of ‘searching voices,’ bridging theory and practice.
- 17 Within the current realm of architectural publications – with professional magazines documenting current production on the one hand, and scholarly journals serving as an outlet for academic research on the other, *OASE* occupies, as Christoph Grafe and Johan Lagae have claimed, a ‘position of neither’: it is a journal that reflects sensibilities rather than particular disciplines.⁴⁰ There are examinations of architectural history or historiography, but it is not an architectural history journal. Issues of architectural theory may be addressed, but the impetus is not that of an academic discourse limited to theory. Articles that could be described as exercises in architectural criticism take a form that would be impossible in most professional journals. Finally, there are essays that defy any form of categorization; that is, very personal cultural reflections that give the journal a sense of urgency.⁴¹
- 18 What the issues have in common is also the ambition to explore alternative canons. *OASE* matured in the 1990s, at a moment when Super Dutch architecture was applauded internationally and seen as an export product promoting the dynamics of the Dutch

nation. Within this context of glorification, OASE has always taken a step aside, proposing alternative perspectives and ushering unconventional stances towards the spectacular. While OASE#46 *Essential architecture* explored the work of Sigurd Lewerentz, Max Bill and Rudolf Schwartz, OASE#67 *After the party* examined the post-Super Dutch generation and OASE#103 revisited Kenneth Frampton's Critical Regionalism. The alternative canon was also broadened by extending architecture's geographies, widening the dominant Eurocentric perspective – one can think of OASE#82 *L'Afrique, c'est chic* –, or by reevaluating dominant historiographical concepts in issues such as OASE#69 and OASE#109 *Modernities*. OASE's plea for slowness is to be situated in this perspective. OASE does not defend a univocal ideology. On the contrary, disconnecting the thematic content from the urgencies of the present and from the specific stances of the individual editors, has proven valuable in order to reread, revisit and reformulate approaches to architectural history, theory and practice that are too dogmatic.

Figure 8. OASE, 82 "L'Afrique, c'est chic", 2010

- 19 OASE's editorial line could easily be criticized for being incoherent, marginal or irrelevant. The topics covered in OASE are usually not related to current affairs, quite the contrary. Since it takes, on average, a year and a half to prepare an issue, most thematic issues are out of date as soon as they are published, or have never been up-to-date in the first place. Because they spring from the individual fascination of the editors, the themes have a certain timeless character. In fact, the journal is mostly used by its editors as a vehicle to pursue personal interests, following a certain degree of intuition and focusing on architecture as part of a wider culture. This gives OASE a certain fragility; but it is precisely this fragile character, between firmly established positions and beyond established management models, that distinguishes OASE. It has always marked the position of the journal over time and its editors have continuously

engaged in protecting this characteristic against outside pressure, be it from publishers, academia, professionals, subsidizing bodies or even readership.

Figure 9. *OASE*, 83 “Commissioning Architecture”, 2010

Readerly criticism

- 20 As history has shown, independent publications are proactively engaged in developing alternative, sometimes radical, approaches to “traditional” editorial practices. Instead of following and adapting its editorial line to current developments, as most conventional journals would do, *OASE* tends to reinvent itself in each issue. Using literary approaches to respond to the architectural object such as fiction, storytelling, collage, or poetry, *OASE*#70 explicitly dedicated an entire issue to this theme, including very personal descriptions and stories. *OASE*#69 juxtaposed two voices next to each other, creating dialogues on architecture throughout the whole issue; while *OASE*#109 constructed epistolary exchanges with five European architects over several months, addressing the multiple modernities in their work.
- 21 In *OASE*, the author is not defined as a final assessor, but rather as a contributor to a field of knowledge. The journal places less emphasis on the role of judgement and favours critical and theoretical modes of writing and thinking. By offering factual information about the contexts and conditions in which a building is designed, as well as the parties involved and the reality of the project, *OASE* tends to offer a multi-perspectival reading. In doing so, it conceptualizes the object and bridges the gap between discourse and construction. In the context of the growing acceptance of architecture as a mere production of images, this “illumination” of the semantic richness of the architectural object -- its capacity to invite multiple, even contradictory

and ambiguous interpretations -- is, for OASE, one of the main objectives. As such, the journal cherishes a form of readerly criticism,⁴²: not by preconceiving an opinion but by giving the reader an active role. This stance was explored in OASE#81, *Constructing Criticism*, in which the same project was approached by three different authors, offering three different perspectives on the building.

Figure 10. Walter Warton, 'Pieces of MAS,' OASE, 81 "Constructing Criticism", 2010, pp. 101-110

- 22 In reaction to the hegemony of iconographic representations of architecture, OASE also tries to rethink the role of illustrations. While some theoretical journals have completely abandoned images, and others hardly give attention to content other than photography, OASE attempts to explore the potential of iconography as a critical instrument. In OASE#79, an issue devoted to the work of James Stirling, photographer Bas Princen captured the invisible context of each building, putting the work of Stirling into a new perspective. In OASE#81, the artist Walter Warton was invited to develop a visual critique of the MAS, a then newly built museum in Antwerp. With the help of a series of sketches, taken from his memory, he excavated what reminded him of the building after his visit. In OASE#90, the illustrator Eva Le Roi was invited to develop a visual essay, translating the various approaches to the central theme 'What is good architecture?' into black and white drawings. Her series of drawings, always based on the same graphic figure, were distorted, enhanced or nuanced, depending on the content of each of the essays. In OASE#91, devoted to 'Building Atmosphere,' photographs of building details by Peter Zumthor illustrated the tactile atmosphere of his architecture. Instead of explaining the building by means of plans, drawings and sections, these approaches revitalized its representation. As written narratives, these alternative drawing techniques or iconographic essays explore the potential of visual criticism.

- 23 The format of *OASE* can be situated between that of the journal and that of the book; perhaps the perfect compromise for an equal relationship of text and image. By magazine standards, it is an intimate and unpretentious format. At certain points in the history of *OASE*, the size of the object was deliberately empathetic. For example, *OASE*#34, an issue on interior architecture, was published with an “error”: the book block never having received its final cut at the top, right and bottom, the reader was forced to tear out the pages to reach their “inside.” In *OASE*#58, ‘The Visible and the Invisible,’ each section of the book is printed on paper of different shades and tactile qualities, echoing the title. *OASE*#82, ‘L’Afrique, c’est chic,’ has a big folded map of the African continent as its cover.

Figure 11. Eva Le Roi, ‘Drawings,’ *OASE*, 90 “What is Good Architecture?”, 2013, pp. 51-64

- 24 It is rare to find magazines or journals that last so long. If the title remains, often the journal takes on a different design, editorial approach, format or content over the years. The examples of *AD*, *Domus*, *Casabella* or *Wendingen-Forum* are telling. *OASE* has a striking coherence: after its transformation in 1990, it soon became the journal it is today. This coherence is perhaps the result of the continuous evolution of the editorial board of a dozen people, which ensures the transmission of know-how to new members. This “third cycle,” in which young editors are trained by their peers, also applies to its design. When Karel Martens co-founded the two-year graphic design Master’s program Werkplaats Typografie in Arnhem in 1998 with Wigger Bierma, Martens introduced the design of *OASE* as a practical assignment to explore with his students. While this exercise involved young designers in the production of a printed publication, they challenged *OASE* by bringing in new and uncompromising ideas. Martens’ artistic practice is closely linked to his work as a designer. It is motivated by a fascination for the materiality of paper, the logic of the grid, the beauty of error,

industrial artefacts and geometric and kinetic structures. OASE's rare sculptural quality is indebted to the long-lasting presence of Martens.⁴³

After-thoughts

Figure 12. Karel Martens, *Motion*, 2017, installation view, Kunstverein München, Munich; *OASE Journal for Architecture* 28-97, 1990-ongoing

Photography by Art Viewer

- 25 Initially a project of self-education and a critical act against mainstream publishing, OASE has explored alternative approaches to architectural writing and thinking for over the past 40 years. In doing so, the editors have invested the wide range of instruments at their disposal, while cherishing slowness, amateurism and readerly criticism. Fascinated by the graphic explorations of avant-garde magazines and their heirs in the 1960s and 1970s, they were equally interested in printed matter and explored graphic design, typography, form and materiality as means for building editorial contents. They do not only question the traditional way of speaking about architecture, but assimilate new capacities for approaching the architectural object.
- 26 Using OASE as a site for renewed architectural writing, the editors exercise different ways of contributing to present-day reflections on the built environment. In times of transition, shifting positions and practices of change, the journal however defended its original aims: examinations of the architectural object, be it embedded in a larger cultural context. Converging theoretical discourse and design sensibilities, and questioning canonical interpretations, OASE is conducting -- we could argue -- a form of design research through writing.

Figure 13. *OASE Journal for Architecture*, 1-103, 1981-ongoing

Photography by the author.

- 27 But what happens when the immediate context from which the journal emanates becomes a topic of international interest? What happens when the architecture of the Low Countries becomes internationally acclaimed OASE occupies an international authoritative function? In parallel to OASE's own maturing process, the architectural scene has evolved, along with OASE's position within it. Today, the alternative canons the journal explored in the 1980s and 1990s, are often acknowledged as leading within architectural production. The analyses of 'unfairly unknown but nevertheless interesting' buildings have now turned into references for numerous students and practitioners. Furthermore, the historical or theoretical topics addressed by OASE seem to offer frameworks of academic research. The challenge for the upcoming generations of editors might therefore lie less in keeping OASE alive and more in avoiding the journal's institutionalization. The searching voices behind OASE's long history and the unremitting curiosity of its editors could very well be essential to safeguard its continued autonomous existence.⁴⁴

NOTES

1. Vittorio Gregotti, "The Necessity of Theory", *Casabella-Continuità*, n°494, September 1983, pp. 12-13.

2. This article is based on a series of interviews with Dirk-Jan Postel, Peter Drijver, Paul Groenendijk, Henk Döll, Miel Karthuis, Roy Bijhouwer as well as a deep reading of the consecutive issues of *OASE* and the active participation in the journal's editorial board since 2005.
3. Dirk-Jan Postel and Peter Drijver in conversation with the author, 16 and 23 November 2021.
4. Letter from Peter Drijver to Karin Theunissen, Dirk-Jan Postel, Janne Habus, Roy Bijhouwer, Eric Hordijk and Henk Döll inviting them to a first meeting, dated August 3, 1980, Personal archive Peter Drijver.
5. "Editorial", *O*, 1, 1981, p. 1. "*De mogelijkheden die de onderwijsinstellingen hebben bij het ter diskussie stellen van aktuele ontwikkelingen blijven doorgaans onbenut: in plaats van voorop te lopen, hobbelt het onderwijs (en vooral de onderwijsprogramma's) maar zo'n beetje achteraan.*" (Translation by the author).
6. Letter of the *O* editorial board to the Stylos Foundation, dated September 23, 1980, personal archive Peter Drijver.
7. Peter Drijver in conversation with the author, 23 November 2021.
8. "Editorial", *O*, 1, 1981, p. 1.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Roy Bijhouwer in conversation with the author, 19 November 2021.
11. Kruisplein was a competition won by Henk Döll, Francine Houben and Roelf Steenhuis, students of the TUDelft at that time. See Peter Drijver, Janne Hobus, "Illusie en verleiding rond de Kruisplein-prijsvraag", *O*, 4, 1982, pp. 34-38.
12. Reinder Nust and Marc de Reus, "Amsterdam, Oosterdok: prijzen en spelen. Gemengde gevoelens bij een prijsvraag", *O*, 7, 1984, pp. 23-28.
13. Philippe Panerai, "Typologieën", editors note, *O*, 1, 1981, p. 26.
14. Philippe Panerai, "Typologies", *Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale*, December 4, 1979, pp. 3-20; Philippe Panerai, "Typologies", *Arch+*, n°50, 1980, pp. 7-16. The article was translated by Janne Hobus and Roy Bijhouwer, and published as Philippe Panerai, "Typologieën", *O*, 1, 1981, pp. 26-37.
15. Carlo Aymonino, "Typology", translated by Janne Hobus and Roy Bijhouwer, *O*, 2, 1981, pp. 18-25.
16. Anthony Vidler "The Third Typology", was originally published in *Oppositions*, 7, Winter 1977. It was translated by Leen van Duin and published as Anthony Vidler, "De derde typologie", *O*, 3, 1982, pp. 2-10.
17. Robin Evans, "Figures, doors and passages" was originally published in *Architectural Design*, 4, 78. It was translated by Miranda Reitsma and published as Robin Evans, "Typologie. Mensen, deuren en gangen", *O*, 5, 1983, pp. 2-16.
18. Alexander Tzonis, "The Lost Years", *OASE*, 75 "25 years of critical reflection on architecture", 2008, pp. 10-17.
19. *O* was independent and appeared four times a year. It was published by Stylos. The student organization also provided administrative help.
20. "Editorial", *O*, 1, 1981, p. 1.
21. Delftse School, onafhankelijk blad van de bouwkundige studenten aan de T.H. Delft, Delft, Technische hogeschool Delft Afdeling bouwkunde, 1960-1968.
22. "Why", Editorial, *Delftse School*, n°1, 1960, cited in Henk Engel, "Autonomous Architecture and the Project of the City", *OASE*, 62, 2003, pp. 27-28.
23. Stielos, d. b. s. g., *de elite, een analiese van de afdeling bouwkunde van de technische hogeschool te delft*, Vol. 1, Delft, SUN Nijmegen 1970. Published on the occasion of the 70 years of existence of student organization Stylos.
24. *Stielos - Voorkant Stieloskrant* 1, September 1970.
25. *Utopia, tweemaandelijks tijdschrift voor wetenschappelijk amusement*, 1975-1978.

26. Beatriz Colomina, "Radical Pedagogies". See: [on line] [<https://soa.princeton.edu/content/radical-pedagogies%3A-collaborative-research-project>]; Joan Ockman (ed.), *Architecture School, Three centuries of educating architects in North-America*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), MIT Press, 2012.
27. Roy Bijhouwer in conversation with the author, 19 November 2021. "Peter Eisenman's drawings analyzing the Casa del Fascio in *Oppositions* were directly photocopied, cut and pasted in the first issue of *O*. This led Kenneth Frampton to contact the editors of *O* and ask for a revised version of the journal."
28. Dirk-Jan Postel in conversation with the author, 16 November 2021.
29. "Editorial", OASE, 11, 1985, p. 3. "*Uiteraard blijven wij doorgaan met het opsporen van al dan niet nieuwe ontwikkelingen in onderwijs, onderzoek en beroepspraktijk op het gebied van architectuur, stedenbouw en volkshuisvesting. De optiek van het tijdschrift blijft gericht op studie-resp. onderzoekssituaties. Anders dan in vele practijksituaties biedt een studiesituatie juist de mogelijkheden tot het aanbrengen van dwarsverbanden, het bewandelen van zijwegen, het verkennen van grensgebieden. Kortom we gaan gewoon verder waar we gebleven waren. De subtitel blijft 'Ontwerp, Onderzoek, Onderwijs', dit nummer is 11.*" (Translation by the author).
30. OASE, 11, 1985.
31. OASE, 18, undated.
32. Jean Baudrillard, "Het Beaubourg effect", translation by Maurice Nio, *O*, Cahier 1, Spring 1984.
33. Gerard Van Zeijl, "O, OASE, OH", OASE, 75 "25 years of Critical Reflection on Architecture", 2008, p. 163.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Carsten Juel-Christiansen, "Woestijn, centrum en periferie", OASE, 33 "Over de transformatie van de metropool", 1992, p. 51.
36. The English was positioned on the (less important) left page in a smaller column next to the illustrations, while the Dutch text had its broader column on the right-hand page.
37. Such as Belgium based editors Tom Avermaete and Johan Lagae, later Véronique Patteeuw, Bruno Notteboom, Michiel Dehaene, Christophe van Gerrewey, Bart Decroos, David Peleman, Jantje Engels, Asli Cicek and Maarten Liefvoeghe.
38. OASE proposes regular calls for abstracts and calls for papers, and organizes academic board meetings and double-blind peer reviewing of the articles.
39. Maarten Delbeke, "Recent History", OASE, 75 "25 years of Critical Reflection on Architecture", 2008, pp. 258-263.
40. Christoph Grafe, Johan Lagae, "OASE", Kirk Wooller (ed.), *20/20: Editorial Takes on Architectural Discourse*, London: AA Publications, 2011, pp. 111-118.
41. *Ibid.*
42. OASE, 81 "Constructing Criticism", 2010.
43. Carlo Menon and Véronique Patteeuw, "Magazine Architecture", OASE, 100 "Karel Martens and the Architecture of the Architecture Magazine", 2018, pp. 83-142.
44. Research on OASE, *Journal for Architecture* is rather limited. See: Christoph Grafe C., Johan Lagae, "OASE: confessions from the inside on how to occupy a position of 'neither' in the Low Countries", in Kirk Wooller (ed.), *20/20: editorial takes on architectural discourse*, London, AA Publications; 2011, pp. 109-17; Véronique Patteeuw, "Triggering Theory: The case of OASE, *Journal for Architecture*", *Materia Arquitectura*, n° 16, December 2017, pp. 111-116. See also Joachim Declerck, Filip Geerts, Véronique Patteeuw, Marc Schoonderbeek (ed.), OASE, 75 "25 Years of Critical Reflection on Architecture", 2008, pp. 3-7; and Bart Decroos, Véronique Patteeuw, Marius Schwartz, OASE, 100 "Karel Martens and The Architecture of the Journal", 2018. In 2005, all issues of OASE were digitized and assembled on the OASE website, offering an important database into for the issue. The individual archives of Karel Martens include numerous documents on the

graphic design and printed matter of the journal. The individual archives of the consecutive editors and board members remain largely unexplored. In the framework of this article, interviews were organized with the first-generation editors of OASE. This oral history project on the journal will be pursued in the near future.

ABSTRACTS

Founded in 1981 by a group of students from the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, OASE started as a stapled journal called *O*, referring to the threefold editorial content it aimed for: design, research and pedagogy (in Dutch: *ontwerp, onderwijs, onderzoek*). Over the past four decades, *O* turned into an internationally acclaimed bilingual journal, while holding onto many of the editorial choices originally made by the students. The particular epistemological positioning of the journal makes it a rather atypical example of an editorial model, shared between academic, theoretical, critical and sensitive approaches. On the basis of archival research, interviews with the first editors of the journal, and cross-readings of the journal's 110 issues, this article uncovers the history of OASE. While presenting its many editorial continuities since 1981, the article also situates the challenges the journal might face in the future.

Fondée en 1981 par un groupe d'étudiants de l'Université de Technologie de Delft, OASE a fait ses débuts sous la forme d'une revue agrafée appelée *O*, en référence au triple contenu éditorial qu'elle visait: design, recherche et pédagogie (en néerlandais *ontwerp, onderwijs, onderzoek*). Au cours des quatre dernières décennies, *O* est devenue une revue bilingue de renommée internationale, tout en conservant une grande partie des choix éditoriaux initialement définis par les étudiants. Le positionnement épistémologique particulier de la revue en fait un exemple assez atypique d'un modèle éditorial partagé entre des approches académiques, théoriques, critiques et sensibles. Sur la base de recherche en archives, d'entretiens avec les premiers rédacteurs de la revue et de lectures croisées des cent dix numéros existants, cet article dévoile l'histoire d'OASE; tout en présentant les nombreuses continuités éditoriales depuis 1981 ainsi que les défis auxquels la revue pourrait être confrontée dans le futur.

INDEX

Keywords: Design, Research, Pedagogy, Readerly criticism, Printed matter

Mots-clés: Design, Recherche, Pédagogie, Critique littéraire, Imprimés

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(Rotterdam, 2021), *Oase*, 103, “Critical Regionalism Revisited” (Rotterdam, 2019), and *Mediated Messages: Periodicals, Exhibitions and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture* (London, Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018).