A Question of Immediacy: The Exhibition “Rational Lot Development” at the Third Congrès international d'architecture moderne in Brussels, 1930

Une question d’immédiateté : l’exposition « Rational Lot Development » au troisième Congrès international d’architecture moderne à Bruxelles, 1930

Clara Teresa Pollak
Planning and hosting exhibitions played a central role within the *Congrès internationaux d’architecture moderne* (CIAM) from 1928 to 1959. All pre-war congresses—aside from CIAM’s founding congress in La Sarraz in 1928—were accompanied by at least one exhibition. These exhibitions were not only shown at the respective congress, but also as traveling exhibitions during the following years. For example, CIAM’s first exhibition “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence” (“Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum”), which was first shown at the second Congrès international d’architecture moderne (CIMA-02) in Frankfurt in 1929, was presented in at least seven further cities. And CIAM’s second exhibition “Rational Lot Development” (“Rationelle Bebauungsweisen”), which was first shown at the Third *Congrès international d’architecture moderne* (CIAM-03) in Brussels in 1930, was exhibited in at least eight further cities. However, in contrast to CIAM’s eleven congresses, their publications and leading contributors, the exhibitions have so far been accorded only little attention. This is surprising given the significance and the multifaceted functions of these exhibitions for CIAM itself as well as for CIAM’s congresses as the research behind this article reveals. Instead of underscoring canonical histories of CIAM built upon their congresses and individuals, the research introduces an alternative approach to its history. By looking at CIAM through the lens of its exhibitions, new fields of inquiry are introduced to reframe established histories. The planning of these exhibitions, to a significant degree, took
place on paper: CIRPAC members (Comité international pour la réalisation des problèmes de l’architecture contemporaine) exchanged a vast number of letters devoted to their planning, preparations and execution on site, now stored at the gta Archives at ETH Zurich. There, the archival documents were systematically examined, analyzed, and interpreted in regard to their content, context, and implications. Despite the challenges which come along with such a vast collection of material, the exhibitions’ constantly changing and continuously growing significance can be traced through and on the material corpus.

Whenever CIAM’s exhibitions are mentioned in the literature, there are formulations such as: “(...) was evident in the accompanying exhibition (...)” or “The exhibition ‘Housing, Working, Traffic, Recreation in the Contemporary City,’ the embodiment of the fourth CIAM congress (...).” This research, however, shows, that CIAM’s exhibitions have neither just been an “accompaniment,” nor a mere “material embodiment” of the lectures given at the congresses, but served as a primary working method of the congresses. This is because CIAM’s exhibitions served as space, program, material, format and theme for CIAM’s congresses: During the meetings of the congress, the attending members visited the exhibitions. It was the exhibition space at the congress that needed to be considered as the working environment of and a fundamental condition for a productive atmosphere. Not only the spatial immediacy between the exhibition and the meeting space was crucial, but also the temporal immediacy; it was the opening of the exhibition that was equated with the opening of the congress. But there is more to it than that: first, it was the theme of the exhibition, that defined, specified and limited the thematic scope of each congress. Second, the “congress” was understood as the typology of assembling, and the “exhibition” was the format of addressing the subject of CIAM-03. Each exhibition’s contents served as an immediate realization of CIAM’s methodological aims of completeness, comparability and comprehensibility. But the exhibitions also served as an instrument for policy making within CIAM itself: e.g. the preparation of the exhibition material served as a way of activating members as well as of demanding their commitment. In this article, along the planning of the exhibition “Rational Lot Development,” the exhibition’s significance as space and program for CIAM-03 will be demonstrated.

The Exhibition “Rational Lot Development” of CIAM-03

The exhibition “Rational Lot Development” was devoted to the different patterns of settlement schemes in Switzerland, Germany, England, Finland, and the Netherlands. Between 56 and 60 exhibition panels showed a broad variety of urban patterns ranging from unbuilt to built projects, from historical examples to counterexamples, as well as from projects within, and designs outside the building regulations of the different countries. With this topic, CIAM did not mean to stress rationality (German: “Wirtschaftlichkeit”) of settlement schemes, as the name might indicate, but rather aimed to highlight the balance between economic, social and psychological demands of urban patterns. The exhibition was on show on the ground floor of the newly erected Palais des Beaux-Arts by Victor Horta.
Ill. 1: Photo of the “Berlin Building Exhibition” showing the exhibition panels of the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” in the background, Berlin, May-August 1931.

Through the doorway the header “Rationelle Bebauungsweisen” from the traveling exhibition is visible, Berlin, May-August 1931.

Ill. 2: Photo of the "Berlin Building Exhibition".

Ill. 3: The traveling version of "Rational Lot Development" in Amsterdam, June-July 1932.
The panels, as can be seen in the photograph of the traveling exhibition in Berlin (Ill. 1 and 2) and Amsterdam (Ill. 3), were arranged in four categories of low-, middle-, mixed- and high-rise buildings and according to their location.

Every exhibition panel followed a standardized layout with a uniform graphic language in black and white. The layout of the panels was divided into two halves. The city of the project and—if the project had been built—the year of construction were given as a header at the top of the exhibition panel. The upper half showed the settlement scheme, always in the scale of 1:200 and in the same orientation. On the lower half of the panel key figures were given, which enabled a numerical comparison of the projects, among others by looking at housing density, built up area, number of apartments per hectare, and population density per hectare. On the right side of the lower half, most of the panels showed additional graphic material, like photographs of the settlement, floor plans of selected apartments, schematic sections, or street profiles—either on their own or in combination. The exhibition was opened on the first day of CIAM-03, November 27, 1930. Afterward, Cornelius van Eesteren, the delegate of the Dutch CIAM group, and Victor Bourgeois, delegate of the Belgium CIAM group and the leading voice of the exhibition committee in Brussels, gave guided tours of the exhibition, before the marathon of the lectures began.

Beside the exhibition “Rational Lot Development,” which aligned with the theme of CIAM-03, a smaller exhibition was organized, “Horizontal Sliding Windows” (“Horizontale Schiebefenster”) (Ill. 4).


The exhibition panels of CIAM’s first exhibition “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence” are in the background.

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After the previous CIAM congress, the group had agreed to exhibit and discuss “one technical detail” at every following congress. The aim was to enhance technical progress in the building industry. This exhibition was opened on the second day of CIAM-03, November 28. A guided tour with Rudolf Steiger, delegate of the Swiss CIAM group, as well as explanations of attending window manufacturers followed. With this exhibition, CIAM wanted to take a position against conventional building exhibitions, as stated in a letter by Sigfried Giedion to aluminum manufacturers. And thus, 28 models of “Horizontal Sliding Windows” in real size were exhibited including technical illustrations of the opening mechanisms.

To receive funding for CIAM-03 the Belgian group organized the public side event “Journées de l’Habitation Minimum” that took place in the four days preceding CIAM-03 at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. The “Journées de l’Habitation Minimum” consisted of a public lecture series and guided tours through Brussels on the topic of minimal housing. The major part however was the exhibition “Une Exposition de l’Habitation,” comprising six different exhibitions (Ill. 5).

Among them was CIAM’s first ever exhibition “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence,” which had been first shown at CIAM-02 in Frankfurt in 1929. Its display at CIAM-03 had been planned even before the exhibition “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence” was exhibited in Frankfurt. During a CIRPAC meeting in preparation for the previous CIAM, it was Le Corbusier who brought forward the idea of showing exhibitions also at the following congresses. He envisioned these shows as “une exposition savante,” which should continuously be complemented with CIAM’s newest results. However, such a repeated display was only done once, at CIAM-03.
Besides the exhibitions “Rational Lot Development,” “Horizontal Sliding Windows,” and “Une Exposition de l’Habitation,” Le Corbusier showed an exhibition on “La Ville Radieuse.” This solo show caused some internal disputes. In particular Walter Gropius, delegate of the German CIAM group, was afraid that Le Corbusier’s exhibition could “tear apart” CIAM’s exhibitions by mixing the theme of the congress with Le Corbusier’s own urbanistic ideas. However, Le Corbusier was undaunted by such skepticism and against the will of the other delegates, he ultimately exhibited sixteen colorful boards on his new urban principles in Brussels.

Based on the available archival material from the CIAM Archives in the gta Archives at ETH Zurich, CIAM’s exhibition “Rational Lot Development,” its planning process and preparation can be reconstructed. As main leads for the reconstruction serve the minutes of three so-called CIRPAC meetings, the meetings held in preparation for the upcoming congress. The exhibition guidelines included a questionnaire, the introduction to the guided tours, three planning reports by Victor Bourgeois as well as correspondence between CIAM members.

**Spatial Immediacy: “[…] it will be better to meet in the conference room which is right next to the exhibition.”**

The planning of the exhibitions for CIAM-03 took up a major role during the three preparatory CIRPAC meetings. Two major preoccupations were the question of space and the spatial arrangement of the exhibitions. During the first meeting the newly erected Palais des Beaux-Arts by Victor Horta in Brussels was brought forward as venue. Victor Bourgeois’ decisive reasoning for his preference was its variety of spaces: “We have just built a palace containing large and small meeting rooms, and exhibition halls. All I need is your approval to sign the prepared contract for this purpose. This project is advantageous because the Palais des Beaux-Arts will provide our equipment. […] Everything will be centralized, which is very important from a practical point of view.” What could Bourgeois have meant by his remark about centralization? It is likely to assume that Bourgeois was differentiating the envisioned venue for CIAM-03 from the venue of CIAM-02, or, rather, the venues. In Frankfurt, the meetings of the previous CIAM were held at the Palmenhaus, whereas the exhibition “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence” was shown at the Werkbundhaus at the fairgrounds, several kilometers southeast. The opening of the exhibition happened on the last day of CIAM-02 and it was planned for members to visit the exhibition then. The different venues did not allow for spontaneous or multiple visits of the exhibition during the meetings—a circumstance, which was considered as far from ideal. Already before CIAM-02 had started, the organizers were aware of the deficiencies of the two venues. Initially, questionnaires were planned as a basis for the discussions. They were sent to CIAM members in the run-up and asked to be answered and returned prior to CIAM-02. But only two weeks before the opening, Giedion wrote to Werner Nosbisch, employee at the Hochbauamt Frankfurt and highly involved in the preparation of the exhibition of “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence,” to let him know that due to the few and poorly answered questionnaires “it has proved necessary to make the exhibition available to Congress members already on the first day to facilitate the discussions.”

The agenda was rescheduled at the last minute and visits of the exhibition brought forward. Therefore, already before the official opening of CIAM-02, attending delegates
left the Palmenhaus, crossed Frankfurt, and visited the exhibition at the Werkbundhaus. But this deficiency was to be prevented at CIAM-03. And so, when Bourgeois suggested the Palais des Beaux-Arts as a venue, he stressed that a variety of spaces—including “large and small meeting rooms, and exhibition halls”—were all “centralized” under the same roof.

14 Three months later, during the second CIRPAC meeting, Giedion took such an already radical change one step further. He proposed not only to have the meetings and the exhibition happening under the same roof, but also in the same room: “Why don’t we do it this way: if we are in [stressed by the author] the exhibition, we can start working straight away [...].” 15 This proposal was accepted without substantial discussion. However, matters should turn out differently, since Bourgeois had forgotten to bring a floor plan of the Palais des Beaux-Arts to the meeting. 16 Therefore, the spatial arrangement was discussed without a plan as the basis for negotiations. Bearing in mind that the attending CIRPAC members were all either trained or practicing architects, the following discussion resembled more that of lay people:

“M. DR. GIEDION - What is the size of the rooms? Is it possible to show two exhibitions? The old one and the new one?
M. BOURGEOIS - Explain to me where you are regarding the exhibitions.
M. DR. GIEDION - I would like to know if there is enough space for two exhibitions?
M. BOURGEOIS - It will be bigger than in Frankfurt.
Prof. MOSER - The second exhibition, which will also include questions on urban planning, will be larger than the one in Frankfurt.”

15 After this circumlocution, it could not have come as a surprise, that the chosen exhibition hall for the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” was ultimately not big enough for showing both the exhibition and for holding the meetings. And thus, in Bourgeois’ third and last planning report about the ongoing preparations for Brussels, he had to face the consequences of the forgotten plan (Ill. 6 and 7). While his first reports had still announced that the meetings could “perfectly be held” 18 within the exhibition (Ill. 6), he now had to withdraw this proposal: “For the meetings of the congress I think that, except for the guided tours, it will be better to meet in the conference room which is right next [stressed by author] to the exhibition. This room can hold 300 people or more.”
Ill. 6 and 7: The third planning report on the preparations for CIAM-03 in Brussels in which Bourgeois stresses that the meeting space will be “right next” to the exhibition, 1930.

Already at this moment in time, Giedion was highly concerned about the exhibition’s preparations. A few days earlier, when he had received the plan with Bourgeois’ spatial arrangement of exhibition and meetings to be held in two different spaces, he “fear[ed]
the worst:” “The focus is on the numerous exhibitions [from “Une Exposition de l’Habitation”] and the Congress will have a pencil-thin space measuring 5 meters wide by 19 meters long in addition to a 6-cornered annex. The pencil-thin room will be used for the meetings. After what happened in Frankfurt this is no option.” So, despite the spatial immediacy of meeting and exhibition space, Giedion was not yet relieved.

Temporal Immediacy: From the Last to the First Item on the Agenda

Beside the question of where to exhibit the panels of “Rational Lot Development,” the questions of when to visit, and when to open the exhibition was a recurrent topic during the CIRPAC meetings. Like the question of space, these further concerns were not resolved until shortly before the beginning of CIAM-03. Besides an ongoing dispute about the necessity of opening the exhibition of “Une Exposition de l’Habitation” independently from the exhibitions “Rational Lot Development” and “Horizontal Sliding Windows” so as not to interfuse CIAM’s exhibitions with the folksy happenings of the “Journées de l’Habitation Minimum,” the right moment for the inauguration of CIAM’s exhibition was discussed over and over again. And with the event approaching, the opening of the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” was continuously moved forward, until its opening was the very first item on the agenda.

During the second CIRPAC meeting, the agenda was heatedly discussed. Karl Moser, then president of CIAM, got straight to the point and proposed to start “with the essential thing,” referring to the opening of the exhibition. Moser highly criticized the agenda of the previous CIAM congress, since “[t]he exhibition was at the very end, when everyone was leaving.” This was also the moment when Giedion proposed to start “in the exhibition.” At this moment in time, Giedion still differentiated between the internal beginning for CIAM members and the public opening of the exhibition: “[...] if we are in the exhibition, we can start working straight away, and then we’ll have the inauguration 3 days later. The delegates could start to work straight away, otherwise we will lose time. We need to have the inauguration at the end, with a big session.”

However, this differentiation between the beginning and the official opening of CIAM-03, didn’t last long. On September 25, during the delegates meeting subsequent to the third CIRPAC meeting, it was declared that the exhibition should be opened on the first day of CIAM-03. Beside the continuous rescheduling of the opening of the exhibition another particularity needs to be stressed; a particularity, which lies in the bilingual character of CIAM’s work and in the differentiation between internal and public documents. And, finally, a particularity, which leads to the assumption that, in the end, the opening of the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” was equated with the opening of CIAM-03. For most documents, there are four different versions—due to the bilingual character of CIAM, a German and a French version, and due to the differentiation between members and non-members an internal and a public version. Taking into account the numerous authors involved in different drafts as well as numerous revision loops, the number of variations and deviations in different versions of the same document can be understood. Thus, when specific wording in these versions is congruent, it is not only an exception, but almost a curious occurrence—which leads to the temptation of taking the content literally. In this case, the final
version of the agenda for CIAM members in French is almost identical with the French
draft for the agenda for non-members. Both versions read as follows: “Thursday, Nov.
27, 10 a.m.: congress opening by Mr. Prof. Moser (Zurich). Immediately afterwards, visit
of the exhibition ‘Rational Lot Development’ led by V. Bourgeois in French and C. van
Eesteren in German.”

Besides the fact, that the two different versions are almost identical, the use of
“immediately afterwards” in an official agenda is remarkable since it resembles more a
request or a demand, which creates the impression that the agenda was less a
timetable, but rather a reminder to everyone to “start working straight away”—to use
Giedion’s phrase. As it was the case for the exhibition space in relation to the meeting
space, which stood in a spatial immediacy to one another, here the temporal
immediacy of the opening of CIAM-03 with the opening of the exhibition is stressed:
Nothing else should happen in between the opening of CIAM-03 and the guided tours of
the exhibition. The switch from the opening and from Karl Moser to the guided tours
given by Bourgeois and van Eesteren should be made immediately, should happen
seamlessly—as if they were one thing.

Immediate Consequences

One day before the opening of the exhibition “Rational Lot Development”—and thus
before the beginning of CIAM-03—a delegates’ meeting took place at the Palais des
Beaux-Arts, during which CIAM’s next president was to be elected. To the surprise of
the attending members and contrary to expectations, it was not Victor Bourgeois who
was elected as Karl Moser’s successor, but Cornelius van Eesteren. Aside from the fact
that Giedion feared a French-speaking alliance among leading members of CIAM,
there was another reason for Bourgeois’ defeat, which was linked to his organization of
the exhibition “Rational Lot Development.” On the last day of 1930, Giedion sent a
letter to Ernst May and reported:

“[t]here were similar surprises in the presidential election. It was widely believed
that Bourgeois, who is highly regarded on both a professional and personal level,
would win the presidency. But Gropius then proposed van Eesteren at the meeting,
who won the upper hand because Bourgeois had failed organizationally in Brussels.
We had endless trouble to keep Bourgeois on the track, who always wanted to mix
our congresses with his popular event ‘Journées d’Habitation Minimum.’ I believe
that if Eesteren had not taken the trouble to check if everything was in order in
Brussels a few times from Amsterdam, the exhibitions would not have been opened
until long after the Congress had ended.”

This link between Bourgeois’ accused failure in the organization and his loss of the
presidency does not only stress the significance of CIAM’s exhibitions, but it also shows
how the organization had immediate consequences for the personnel policy within
CIAM—if you do not put the exhibition first, someone else will take the first place.

How CIAM’s Exhibitions Were Almost Lost

In light of the significance of CIAM’s exhibitions as a primary working method of the
congresses, the question remains: how were CIAM’s exhibitions almost lost in its
historiography? In this case, it has been a chain of unfortunate circumstances. One
explanation might lie in the ambiguity and inflationary use of the word “congress,”
which was used for the association, for the congresses, i.e., the events, for the lectures given, and for the exhibitions. All these different planning aspects were collected under one single term, “congress.” Thus, even before the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” was shown at CIAM-03, its significance was already undermined by the way it was addressed. The undifferentiated use of the word “congress” on the one hand led to the way CIAM shaped how its work was historicized. And on the other hand, it also influenced the way that CIAM’s work nowadays is historicized based on written sources. This inflationary wording even confused its members. Right at the beginning of the first CIRPAC meeting, Victor Bourgeois, read aloud a letter by Raphaël Verwilghen, member of the exhibition committee in Brussels. The letter contained what can be regarded the first outline for the exhibition “Rational Lot Development.” Right after Bourgeois finished reading, he tried to make clear that what he had just read was solely and exclusively addressing the “urban planning exhibition—and not the congress.” The constant back and forth during the meeting in addressing the lectures, the venue, the engagement of the members, as well the exhibitions, led to a common confusion among the attending members as to the topic under discussion. And thus, at the end of the meeting, when Giedion and Bourgeois addressed the right time for CIAM-03, no one knew anymore what was meant. In response to Giedion’s question, when “the congress” will take place, Bourgeois answered that “the exhibition could last two weeks, starting on Saturday, September 27, and closing on Saturday, October 12.”

It was Walter Gropius, delegate of the German group, who oversaw the preparations of the traveling show of “Rational Lot Development” at the “Berlin Building Exhibition” (Berliner Bauausstellung) in 1931. While the planning and preparation of the exhibition in Brussels was regarded “collective work” with shared responsibilities, Gropius alone had the responsibility for taking the show to Berlin—a common understanding among members regarding CIAM’s exhibitions that labeled the shows for the congresses as collective work and traveling shows as individual responsibilities. Multiple letters from Gropius to Giedion give testimony of the highly chaotic preparations in Berlin as well as of Gropius’ growing frustration. Until shortly before the opening, it was unclear in which section of the “Berlin Building Exhibition” the panels of “Rational Lot Development” should be mounted. In the end, they were shown at the “International Exhibition for Urban Planning and Housing” (“Internationale Ausstellung für Städtebau und Wohnungswesen”), but much to Gropius’ frustration only with a fraction of the exhibition panels. Gropius complained about this embarrassment and the “yawning emptiness on the walls.” But the apex of his frustration was the catalogue entry for the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” in the official publication of the “Berlin Building Exhibition.” A portrait of Gropius and his name prominently stretched over one third of the entry. The font size of Gropius’ name is more than twice as big as the shy reference to the “International Congresses for Modern Architecture,” alleging incorrect authorship. Gropius’ numerous attempts to alleviate such a confusing attribution before the catalogue’s release were unsuccessful and so Gropius’ well-known headshot headlines the catalogue entry, giving another possible explanation for the seeming disappearance of CIAM’s traveling exhibitions—misattribution.

Photographs of CIAM’s exhibitions are a rare commodity. In the case of “Rational Lot Development” in Brussels not one photograph was taken, much to the irritation of Giedion. Even though Bourgeois had taken multiple photographs of the exhibitions of “Une Exposition de l’Habitation” (Ill. 5) and “Horizontal Sliding Windows,” (Ill. 4) he
hadn’t taken any of “Rational Lot Development.” The only visual testimony of the exhibition panels of “Rational Lot Development” are photographs from the subsequent venues, which—and here lies another explanation for the loss of CIAM’s exhibitions—were often wrongly, or not at all identified. A photo album in the Landesarchiv Berlin documents the exhibition on “Living-Culture, Cleanness, and Hygiene” by the city of Berlin for the Building Exhibition. The album also contains two photographs which show the panels of “Rational Lot Development” (Ill. 1 and 2). However, the captions only refer to the exhibition in the foreground of the image and skip the panels of “Rational Lot Development.” The same applies to a photograph of the show’s iteration in Amsterdam, where it was shown on the occasion of an event held by the “Dutch Institute for Public Housing and Urban Development” (Nederlandsch Instituut voor Volkshuisvesting en Stedebouw) from June 25 – July 6, 1932 (Ill. 3). However, the panels were not attributed to CIAM. Having in mind Giedion’s disappointment about the lacking documentation of the exhibition, it is something of an irony of fate, that the few existing photographs of “Rational Lot Development” did not fall in the hands of CIAM or were correctly assigned. But the impression that CIAM did not try to document or archive their exhibitions is incorrect. In March 1930, after the exhibition “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence” was shown in Warsaw, Giedion approached Szymon Syrkus, delegate of the Polish CIAM group, and asked for documentation of how CIAM’s first exhibition was presented: “Since, unfortunately, we do not understand your language, we would be grateful if you could give us a short communiqué about how you organized the exhibition. We intend to create an archive documenting how it was shown in the different places.” However, this idea was never realized and gives another example of the chain of unpleasant and unfortunate circumstances which nearly led to the loss of CIAM’s exhibitions in its historiography.

NOTES

1. From December 1929 to September 1930, the “The Dwelling for Minimal Existence” exhibition traveled to five different cities in Switzerland (including Basel and Zurich), Germany (Munich and Magdeburg), and Poland (Warsaw) before it was once more exhibited at CIAM-03 in Brussels in 1930.

2. From February 1931 to January 1933, the “Rational Lot Development” exhibition traveled to eight different cities in Switzerland, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy. It was on display alongside “Horizontal Sliding Windows” in Zurich (February-March 1931). Then it was shown independently in Berlin (May-August 1931), Basel (October 1931), Barcelona (April 1932), Madrid (April 1932), Amsterdam (June-July 1932), Milan (January 1933), and Bologna (January 1933). In 1936, the exhibition panels were gifted to the Bausammlung of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH), where they were later lost.

3. This article is based on the author’s PhD thesis “CIAM’s Exhibitions as Method of Work. An Analysis of the Third Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne, Brussels, 1930,” defended on April 8, 2024, at the Technical University of Munich.

4. Three CIRPAC meetings were held in preparation for CIAM-03 between February and September 1930. The first two were held in Le Corbusier’s studio in Paris on February 3 and on
May 17 and 20. The unplanned departure of Ernst May, Hans Schmidt and Mart Stam to the USSR led to a third meeting. It preceded the long-planned delegates meeting on September 25 in Frankfurt. The protocols of the CIRPAC meetings prove that the planning of the exhibitions “Rational Lot Development” and “Horizontal Sliding Windows” took up a major role within these meetings. The minutes of all three meetings are stored at the gta Archives at ETH Zurich.


7. No exact number can be given because no exhibition brochure that lists the exhibited material was published. Archival sources do not give the exact number of the panels either, and secondary literature gives varying numbers. Cf. Martin Steinmann, *CIAM, Dokumente, 1928-1939*, Berlin, Birkhäuser, 1979, p. 102; Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism*, op. cit., p. 53.


9. CIRPAC, Compte-rendu de la réunion tenue à Paris, le 3 février 1930, exemplaire n°1, February 10, 1930, p. 22. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-1-11F.


13. Translated from French [translation by the author]. CIRPAC, Compte-rendu de la réunion tenue à Paris, le 3 février 1930, exemplaire n°1, February 10, 1930, p. 23. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-1-11F.


15. Translated from French [translation by the author]. CIRPAC, Séance de la commission du samedi 20 mai 1930, p. 2. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-1-22F.


17. Ibid.


22. CIRPAC, Séance de la commission du samedi 20 mai 1930, p. 2. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-1-22F.

23. Ibid.

international d’architecture moderne Bruxelles. Palais des Beaux-Arts, 10 rue Royale du 27 au 29 novembre 1930, undated. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-2-62F.

25. This fear is reported on in the literature on CIAM, whereas the role of the exhibition is never mentioned. See: Franziska Bolero (ed.), Cornelius van Eesteren. Urbanismus zwischen de Stijl und C.I.A.M, Braunschweig, Vieweg, 1999, p. 166.


27. CIRPAC, Compte-rendu de la réunion tenue à Paris, le 3 février 1930, exemplaire n°1, February 10, 1930, p. 24. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-1-11F.

28. CIRPAC, Compte-rendu de la réunion tenue à Paris, le 3 février 1930, exemplaire n°1, February 10, 1930, p. 43f. Zurich, gta Archives, 42-3-1-11F.


31. Ibid.


33. On the occasion of the Berlin Building Exhibition, one CIRPAC meeting was held in preparation for CIAM-04. This meeting is well-known and mentioned in the literature. However, that the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” was on display at the same time and at the same place got lost. See: Mumford, The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, op. cit., p. 61f.


ABSTRACTS

CIAM’s exhibitions are a mystery. Despite their prominence within the collection of congresses, meetings, publications and events, they have been overlooked in scholarship. The following article is based on doctoral research at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), which aims to unfold the significance of CIAM’s exhibitions as a working method for and of the Congrès internationaux d’architecture moderne. The research aims to introduce an alternative approach to reframe the canonical histories of CIAM’s congresses and well-known actors. It contributes to the quest for a more complex view on the historiography of architectural modernism. The article puts CIAM’s second exhibition “Rational Lot Development,” first shown at the third CIAM
meeting in Brussels in 1930, into the focus. Based on archival material from the CIAM Archives in the gta Archives at ETH Zurich, it deciphers the significance of the exhibition “Rational Lot Development” as space and program for the third CIAM meeting.

Les expositions des Congrès internationaux d’architecture moderne (CIAM) sont un mystère et, malgré leur importance dans la série des congrès, des réunions, des publications et des événements, elles ont été négligées par la recherche académique. L’article est basé sur une recherche menée dans le cadre d’une thèse de doctorat menée au sein de la Technische Universität de Munich (TUM), qui entend révéler l’importance des expositions du CIAM en tant que méthode de travail mise en place pour et par le CIAM. Cette thèse vise à introduire une approche alternative de l’historiographie du CIAM, en vue de repenser le cadre de ses histoires canonniques, tant de ses congrès que de ses acteurs bien connus. Cette recherche entend ainsi contribuer à la quête d’une vision plus complexe de l’historiographie du modernisme architectural. Cet article met l’accent sur la deuxième exposition du CIAM, « Rational Lot Development », présentée pour la première fois lors du troisième congrès du CIAM à Bruxelles en 1930. Sur la base de documents d’archives provenant du fonds du CIAM conservé aux archives gta de l’ETH Zurich, cette contribution vise à déchiffrer la signification de l’exposition « Rational Lot Development », à la fois en tant qu’espace et en tant que programme pour le troisième congrès du CIAM.

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