

ACTIVATING TRANS-EUROPEAN MODERNISM

The ETOM NEB-Lab for the New European Bauhaus and the ETOM – European Triennial of Modernism

The collaborative trans-European dimension of Modernism engenders particularly three huge potentials – especially exploring the developments beyond east and West dichotomies: first, a scope of incredibly rich and diverse modern cultural heritage, second the vital realm and diversity of historic protagonists as well as of current actors, topics, and formats and, third, its fruitful relevance and diverse perspectives for contemporary challenges and opportunities.

And yet these potentials lack behind to be unlocked, based on knowledge, exchange, and joint projects, across nationally, disciplinary, and sectoral borders. The knowledge has been growing, dark spots became tendentially enlightened in the recent years, but still leave tremendous uncovered and unpersuaded topics and sub-topics remaining. However, the need for increasing knowledge goes along with even more major lacks which need to be transformed into their contrary – naming three As: due to raising activity, raising awareness, and raising appreciation (AAA).

These to be unlocked potentials and lacks addresses the ETOM initiative and the new ETOM NEB-Lab, not only initially with focus on Central Europe, from north to south along the former Iron Curtain. Not least it is the commitment to overcome the outdated but still lasting East-West divide, to emphasize on the special role of the region for the European idea and to foster transnational societal coherence, based

on the resilience of modern values and cultural cooperation.

Taking up the enrichment of knowledge and raising of AAA faces common and different local, national, and international circumstances. The answer to this needs of increment and sustainment certainly is represented by the trinity of capacity building, co-creation, and communication (CCC) and transnational, transectoral, and transdisciplinary (TTT) collaboration.

The successful rise of activity firstly tackles the dedicated actor's engagement of each country, including to provide informative and interactive offers across target groups, aiming to speed up getting into action as well as to maintain the pursuit of topics and collaborations in the long run. The rise of awareness is based on a middle term approach, addressing different interests, incentives, hurdles, and sensitiveness to the target-groups of the national, and vice versa the foreign or international discourse and views. The rise of appreciation calls for the long-term approach, as well of certain differences of the target groups' national or international relations but aiming on a much more widely change of dominant perception or valuation.



Conference "Convergences and Divergences" – ETOM and Pilecki-Institute, Berlin 2023 © Photos: Pilecki-Institute, Grzegorz Karkoszka (collage ETOM, buschfeld.com)

As response to this goals the ETOM NEB-Lab builds for a circular triennial ecosystem to bear and maintain plural collaboration in CCC. The concept of the ETOM ecosystem and the triennial rhythm is to track four parallel objectives for cross-sectoral capacity building, transdisciplinary research, co-creative development and realization of transnational projects, and the recurring triennial trans-European and decentralized ETOM festival.

The partnership follows a strictly transnational set-up of heterogeneous backgrounds and sectoral profession, with already more than 40 partners including around 10 official NEB community members, from 15 countries, primary from Central Europe, from Baltic to Balkan: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Germany, The Netherlands, Czech Republic, Belgium, France, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and North Macedonia.

The prior aim is not on connecting national umbrella associations, the objective is to interconnect local plus transnational structures in trans-European collaboration. The model is to include partners in particular across three sectors to engage in active and responsible roles and to share, work, and communicate on-eye-level. The sectors incorporate cultural institutions (small to large, private to public), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and municipal or national governmental organizations (GOs). This exemplary cross- or transsectoral approach is inevitable to win achievements in capacity building and for best practice, not least in the protection and careful development of heritage.

Likewise the TTT principle follows the objective for collaborative research and projects highly supporting participation along the five Cs of co-creation co-learning, co-design, co-production, co-presentation, and co-evaluation. The aim is on the incubation, development, realization, and exploitation of certain topic related Milestone-projects and for the triennial festival. As target- and starting point for the circular ecosystem, the ETOM festival reinvents the conventional schemes of Biennials or Triennials, to interlink actors, joint activities, and exchange formats for a multilo-cal festival of public offers and locations. To sustainably develop and pursue topics, ETOM fosters public dialogue to bridge between professional and civic target groups and audiences, activated by the Lab, at regular meetups, with curated encounters, partner-events, and the recurring triennial festival.

The trans-European exploration of Modernism opens up a large cosmos of findings and insights. One the one hand this concerns the developments of origins and transformations, on the other hand and maybe even more the developments of interpretations and agencies, as in the final aim to derive answers for pressing planetary and future questions and tasks.

Robert K. Huber
Ben Buschfeld

ETOM NEB-Lab and ETOM

The ETOM NEB-Lab establishes a co-creation lab on trans-European Modernism to evolve and realize trans-national cooperation, best-practice, research, and capacity building. The Lab was created by the NEB-partners BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche with KÉK – Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Center and ICOMOS international, National Gallery Prague, Slovak Design Center, and Estonian Academy of Arts. The partners act as the Lab's coordination group, together with buschfeld.com. The ETOM initiative was founded by the curators Robert K. Huber (BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche) and Ben Buschfeld (buschfeld.com) during COVID-19 pandemic, as international spin-off to the superregional Triennial of Modernism (TDM) in the cities of Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin, curating the festival program for the Berlin section. The development of the ETOM NEB-Lab and ETOM network has been accompanied and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) hosting the German «NEB National Contact Point» (NCP), and the Berlin Monument Authority (LDA).