

Developing public taste, mobilizing the public: the Architectural Exhibitions of the MBB and AetA

Citation for published version (APA):

Figueiredo, S. M. (2016). Developing public taste, mobilizing the public: the Architectural Exhibitions of the MBB and AetA. In K. James-Chakraborty (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of the European Architectural History Network* (pp. 195-196). UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy.

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2016

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

If the publication is distributed under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license above, please follow below link for the End User Agreement:

www.tue.nl/taverne

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at:

openaccess@tue.nl

providing details and we will investigate your claim.

system that had so far consisted of architect and client only. It investigates the coverage of the exhibition and its accompanying catalogue both in general-interest titles, such as *The Times*, *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Spectator*, as well as in special-interest papers, such as John Loudon's *Architectural Magazine*, the *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* and the *Mechanic's Magazine*. This paper argues that it was through a combination of printing and exhibiting, of words and images on the gallery wall as well as on the printed page, that architecture took over a new, more dynamic role within the civic society of the Victorian age.

Developing Public Taste, Mobilizing the Public: The Architecture Exhibitions of the MBB and A et A Sergio Miguel Figueiredo, Technical University Eindhoven

In the 19th century, continued reforms and the industrialization of Dutch economy resulted in substantial economic prosperity. With such improved economic outlook, the Dutch government undertook a structural reorganization of the arts with direct implications for the production of architecture. Most notably, it established and appointed the first College of Government Advisors for Historical and Artistic Monuments (College Rijksadvieus voor de Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst), which was mandated to elaborate policies in the preservation of historical monuments and the construction of new governmental buildings.

Architects, however, were noticeably marginalized from the process, since the College of Advisors was entirely composed by non-architects. As such, both the past and the future of the discipline were to be determined by a restrict group of laymen and antiquarians, as they decided on the merits of historical monuments and entries to invited architectural competitions for new state buildings. With the very future of Dutch architecture at stake – and powerless in the decisions of this body – the Amsterdam architecture societies increased their efforts to broaden public discourse on architecture by actively engaging with a general public.

Accordingly, this paper will both argue and demonstrate how the public exhibition of architecture was approached as a fundamental instrument for developing public taste in order to elicit public debate on architecture in the Netherlands. Specifically, it will be claimed that both the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst* (Society for the Promotion of Architecture) and the *Genootschap Architectura et Amicitia* (Society Architecture and Friendship) instrumentalized architecture exhibitions to educate the public on the issues, processes, and ambitions of architecture, ultimately, to mobilize its support. These exhibitions in which architecture was presented in its artistic-cultural and technical-practical dimensions became the frontline for

architecture, shaping public taste and eliciting an inclusive, informed debate that the state hierarchy simply could not ignore.