

To fully appreciate the Dutch interest in *poiesis* and architecture, one should keep in mind that the two main schools of architecture in the Netherlands are embedded within universities of technology. One with a standing tradition, namely Delft, which was established in the nineteenth century, and the other with the freshness of relative youth, namely Eindhoven, established in the post-war years as part of the large-scale project of the welfare state. The context of educating engineers for Shell, Philips and the civil works that keep the Netherlands dry and running, is not always favourable to educating architects, who need to be trained in understanding culture beyond the sheer pragmatics of the applied sciences.

'*Poiesis* and architecture' was a symposium organised by the Eindhoven chair of history and theory in 1987, and the *OASE* editors, at the time based in Delft, gladly offered the journal as a platform to publish the lectures, which ranged from reflections on the writings of Martin Heidegger, Paul Valéry, Julio Cortázar and Paul Celan to the work of Mies van der Rohe, Aldo Rossi, Cesare Cattaneo and Gianbattista Piranesi. The focus on *poiesis* and its manifold relations with architecture should be understood as part of the discursive politics at stake, and as such the symposium was one of the various attempts to reclaim the territory proper to architecture.

At the time Geert Bekaert held the Eindhoven chair of Architecture History and Theory. The title of his contribution, 'Le réel du discours', immediately illustrates his intention to firmly defend the hermeneutic tradition as another discourse parallel to the one of scientific knowledge. 'Le réel du discours' represents to Bekaert a discourse that is equally real and without which we can't grasp the construction of the human universe. Clearly, among others, Heidegger and Valéry belong to this tradition, yet in this text, Bekaert reframes Valéry's dialogue 'Eupalinos ou l'architecte', a Socratic dialogue, in order to demonstrate how poetry and thinking is prima-

rily construction when marking the transition from chaos to order.

From thereon – after establishing 'thinking' as 'building' – Bekaert starts to weave his argument. He proposes various paradoxes, including the one of a 'thinking' that is absolutely free yet cannot go beyond the limits of construction. Eventually, Bekaert's profound humanism also becomes clear from this text, when he situates the paradox of human existence within the act of construction. According to Bekaert, construction itself already implies the possibility of change, and the imagination of another world. Construction and thinking, then, are also acts of distortion.

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