Call for Papers for the GTA PAPERS issue no. 4 (2021): THE CORNICE / DAS GESIMS

edited by Maarten Delbeke and team, Chair of the History and Theory of Architecture
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In many ways, the cornice is the crowning element of architecture. Drawn, measured from ancient models, and theorized over centuries, it was fiercely discussed in the 20th century, and banned from modern architecture, only to make a triumphant and prominent re-appearance in postmodernism – but also leading a secret life as shadow line and protrusion, gutter or even awning. Not as overtly classical as the column, the persistence of the cornice as an element establishing architectural order, rather than orders, is not last due to its practical aspects: to keep water off a façade, to form a communication between wall and roof, or between wall and ceiling in the interior.

The 2021 issue of the GTA PAPERS will discuss the cornice as a building element that is (literally) as prominent as it is overlooked. And yet the cornice offers an oblique perspective on crucial architectural questions across a range of fields, from construction to law, from interiors to urbanism. Symbolic meaning and visual power combine in the cornice.

We are looking for contributions on the cornice with a chronological range from Early Modern to contemporary times, on cornices made from stone to plaster to fiberglass, and on any aspects of the cornice that will further the debate on an element in architecture that has too long remained overlooked. We welcome case studies that discuss particular texts, cornices, buildings or objects in their semantic dimensions and in their relevance to architectural and cultural discourse. We explicitly encourage unusual views onto cornices and onto what may or may not be a cornice, and we are also interested to see cornices discussed that appear in objects beyond architecture – maybe in a toaster, in a sailing boat, in a racing car. Images may form a part of a contribution.

Contributions from this Call for Papers will complement a selection of papers from invited authors which form the majority of this volume.

Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words and a very modest CV of three lines to erik.wegerhoff@gta.arch.ethz.ch by 30 September 2019.

If you have a question, write to the same address.

Proposals will be selected by the editorial team of this issue in collaboration with the editorial board and the managing editor of the GTA PAPERS.

Final contributions may consist of essays of up to 5,000 words, or shorter pieces of about 800 words. Texts must be written in English, will be due 31 January 2020, and will be subject to rigorous editing and a peer review which is not blind.