JABORNEGG & PÁLFFY

OVERVIEW

Christian Jabornegg
András Pálfy

Friedrich Architekt: The Concepts “Old” and “New” are not about Time
On the works of Jabornegg & Pálfy

"Only as part of a sentence or a speech act does a word take on its definitive meaning. Shakespeare knew this, or at least it is what he himself practised—and with great universality, too. We have known it since Wigitstein at least, if not before. In architecture, meanwhile, Josef Frank’s critique of the often all-too simplistic (if not to say naïve) path of modernism alerts us to the unreliability of the performative and semantic relationship between old and new. In an altered context, in other words, the old can appear completely new, or the new completely old. Modernism’s supposedly linear progression had the effect of landing values and evaluations in illusory stability, while the clear-cut separation of old and new which the Venice Charter propagated for the preservation of historical monuments has led to a banal consistency of dogmatic positions that is essentially meaningless.

At the risk of stating the obvious, it is worth reiterating that speech is not architecture, and if speech speaks, then not through the medium of language. Yet there are analogies, especially in the semantic realm of ambiguity. When Bruno Rechlin uses the word ‘draft’ to describe the exploration and reinterpretation of existing structures and the role they play in the context of the new, he is also propounding a key theme in the works of Jabornegg & Pálfy. That much is clear and makes sense theoretically, too, but as always, the devil is in the details. What are these ‘vices’ which old halls or buildings, sites, palaces, avenues, windows, walls, spaces, and scenes turn into?