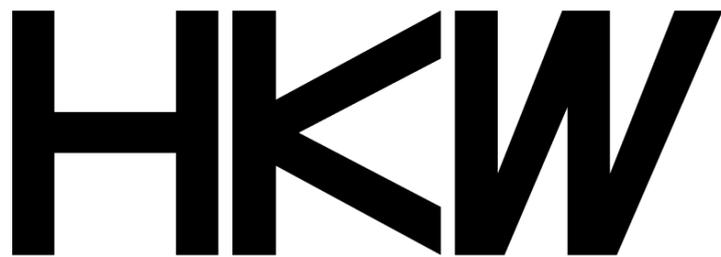


Education Shock. Learning, Politics and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s

Tuesday, March 23, 2021
Haus der Kulturen der Welt

as of March 23, 2021
subject to change



Haus der Kulturen der Welt

Press Release

Berlin, Mar 9, 2021

HKW puts its thematic focus on education in 2021 – Education Shock exhibition opens on April 1

With a focus on education, Haus der Kulturen der Welt is exploring how educational utopias of the past shape the classrooms of the present – and how they can become ideas for the schools of the future. The state of emergency caused by the coronavirus pandemic has once again made it clear: learning and teaching have to be rethought.

From April 1st, the exhibition **Education Shock. Learning, Politics and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s** will focus on the interaction between concepts and architectures of learning; in May and June, with **Education in Concrete** and **Schools of Tomorrow 3**, HKW triggers a speculative reflection on tomorrow's learning.

Education Shock. Learning, Politics and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s looks back on the decades after the Sputnik shock of 1957 when education expanded on a global scale. The exhibition and the publication of the same name show how spaces of learning were constantly rethought and planned under the pressure of demographic and technological developments, the Cold War and the 1968 movements. In collaboration with artists, scholars and architects, curator Tom Holert examines an era of experimentation and suggests it be discovered as an archive and resource for current debates. An accompanying program creates diverse approaches and thematic in-depth knowledge of the exhibition content.

In addition to the exhibition, the **Education in Concrete** project is going to eight Berlin schools. Together with artists, the students examine their school buildings from the 1960s and 1970s and speculate about the learning environments of the future. During the exhibition, guided tours of the participating schools will allow visitors to discover the students' perspectives on educational realities and utopias.

Together with education researcher Caroline Assad and artist Cana Bilir-Meier, the 8–18-year-old students have written a manifesto with demands on their learning environment. As a format with potential for resistance, the manifesto of the Berlin students aims to generate attention for their own concerns and get them involved in the current education debate.

With **Schools of Tomorrow 3. Dear Future**, HKW again initiates school projects for artistic research into the schools of the future. What do schools have to be like in order to enable democratic, self-determined and sustainable action? Together with artists, activists and everyday experts, children and teenagers at eleven Berlin schools are developing collective visions for the future. The results will be presented to the public at the closing festival **Dear Future**, and discussed with experts from the field of education.

Education Shock. Learning, Politics and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s

Exhibition, [publications](#), accompanying program

Exhibition Apr 1, 2021 – Jul 11, 2021

Digital press conference: Mar 30, 2021, 11am; accreditation: presse@hkw.de

Curated by Tom Holert

Exhibition architecture: Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik, Berlin

Exhibition graphics: HIT, Berlin

Further information: hkw.de/educationshock

With contributions by Michael Anhoff, BARarchitekten (Antje Buchholz, Jürgen Patzak-Poor), Elke Beyer, Sabine Bitter, Antje Buchholz, Arne Bunk, Evan Calder Williams, Fraser McCallum, Filipa César, Inga Danysz, Nuray Demir, Christopher Falbe, Dina Dorothea Falbe, Guests & Hosts, Gregor Harbusch, Marshall Henrichs, Claudia Hummel, Ana Hušman, Jakob Jakobsen, Ana Paula Koury, Monika Mattes, Larry Miller, Maria Helena Paiva da Costa, Silke Schatz, Dubravka Sekulić, Lisa Schmidt-Colinet, Alexander Schmoeger, STREET COLLEGE in cooperation with Käthe Wenzel, Maurice Stein, Alexander Stumm, Oliver Sukrow, Ola Uduku, Clemens von Wedemeyer, Sónia Vaz Borges, Helmut Weber, Florian Zeyfang, Francesco Zuddas

Exhibition in cooperation with BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, where the project began with the exhibition Learning Laboratories: Architecture, Instructional Technology, and the Social Production of Pedagogical Space Around 1970 (2016/2017) and the conference The Real Estate of Education (2017). Exhibition in cooperation with the Harun Farocki Institute.

Thanks to: rbb

Film program in cooperation with Arsenal. Institut für Film und Videokunst

Film program and series of talks funded by the Federal Agency for Civic Education

Education in Concrete

School projects, presentations, manifesto

May to June 2021

Further information: hkw.de/educationinconcrete

Participating artists: Bauereignis Sütterlin Wagner Architekten, Alexandre Decoupigny, Nezaket Ekici, Dr. Turit Fröbe / Carina Kitzenmaier (Die StadtDenkerei), Eva Hertzsch / Adam Page, Evgeny Khlebnikov, Maryna Markova, Branca Pavlovic, Sarah Wenzinger and Thomas Wienands

Participating schools: ATRIUM Jugendkunstschule/Bettina-von-Arnim-Schule, Campus Hannah Höch, Carl-von-Linné-Schule, Carl-von-Ossietzky-Schule, Hans-Rosenthal-Grundschule, Johann-Gottfried-Herder-Gymnasium, Thomas-Mann-Gymnasium, Walter-Gropius-Schule

In cooperation with ATRIUM Jugendkunstschule, advised by Montag Stiftung – Jugend und Gesellschaft, funded by Berlin's Project Fund for Cultural Education, PwC Stiftung.

Schools of Tomorrow 3

Dear Future,

Presentations of the school projects, lectures, discussions

Jun 17 – 18, 2021

Further information: hkw.de/en/tomorrow

With Anna Ehrenstein / Heiko-Thandeka Ncube, Azin Feizabadi / Mariam Mekiwi, Stine Marie Jacobsen, QuerKlang, SuperFuture (Kotti-Shop) and many others

In cooperation with the Berlin state branch of the Kulturagenten für Kreative Schulen (DKJS GmbH).

Part of The New Alphabet (2019-2022), supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media due to a ruling of the German Bundestag.

Haus der Kulturen der Welt is supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and by the Federal Foreign Office.

Press photos: hkw.de/pressphotos

All events take place under the applicable protection and hygiene regulations.

Publication

As an integral part of the research and exhibition project *Education Shock*, a German volume has been dedicated to the major experiments in education and space over the 1960s and 1970s, a period in which, then as now, the renewal of education was deemed indispensable. Contributions by artists, scholars, and architects, supplemented by primary texts from the 1960s and 1970s, render a time of reforms, experiments, and breakthroughs ready to be revisited as archival resources amid current debates.

Edited by Tom Holert, HKW

De Gruyter, 2020

German edition

300 pages, approx. 180 illustrations, 22 x 30 cm, paperback

ISBN: 978-3-11-070126-5

Price: 28 €

De Gruyter, 2021
English edition
128 pages, 38 illustrations
ISBN: 978-3-11-071094-6
Price: 14 €

Education Shock. Learning, Politics and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s

It was a triumph of Soviet space flight: On October 4, 1957, Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite, orbited the Earth. In the middle of the Cold War, the ensuing “Sputnik crisis” caused deep insecurity, especially in the USA, but also in large parts of the rest of the world. How should the ostensible “technological gap” be closed? At the same time, the perceived crisis sparked the next wave of modernization. Governments adopted large-scale investment programs for research and education in series, whereupon the spaces and hours made available for learning literally exploded. Comprehensive schools and educational centers were built, reform universities were founded, and language laboratories were set up. The “city as classroom” was discovered and “lifelong learning” was invented. These and many other measures can also be read as attempts to prevent an impending “future shock,” as the title of a 1970 bestseller put it in a nutshell.

The research and exhibition project *Education Shock: Learning, Politics and Architecture in the 1960s and 1970s* questions this unique epoch against the background of current debates on the relationship between education and space. On the one hand, the term education shock refers to the shock metaphors of the time; on the other, it refers to the shocks to which education was subjected in the process of reform and modernization. Last, but not least, the concepts and practices of education—and this includes its spaces and architectures—can have a shock-like, traumatizing effect on all those involved.

Education Shock is made up of several interlocking components: the exhibition at HKW, which is communicated and expanded via guided tours, lectures, and workshops; contributions from eight Berlin schools; an extensive film program at Arsenal—Institute for Film and Video Art; as well as two publications.

The exhibition itself is composed according to the principle of the case study. Each of the almost forty stations of the exhibition elaborates upon a particular aspect of the global education scene of the 1960s and 1970s. To this end, the participating artists and scholars have perused the archives. The architecture of the exhibition is designed to take up and reinterpret elements of the historical design and architectural language of the time. Visitors are introduced to an age marked by experiments, a spirit of optimism, criticism, and doubt. *Education Shock* can thus serve as a resource for dealing with the crises of educational politics of the present and the future.

What characterizes the exhibition? A few brief explanations of its conceptual basis:

The Spatial Structure of Learning

The spaces in which learning takes place affect the learning itself. Architecture plays an essential role here, but the concept of space in this exhibition project exceeds the built environment in the stricter sense; it also pertains to the territories that are created through social, educational, and technological performances. *Education Shock*, therefore, makes visible a structure: of buildings and people, mobility and education, barriers and openness, society and geography.

Past Futures

The examples of these—always already political—conditions, come from a period that seems to be an eternity ago: the long years of the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, those two decades have perhaps never been as close as they are today. The project asks: What past futures, what plans, projects, and visions, both realized and unrealized, can be connected with? *Education Shock* assumes that the future of education depends on its coming to terms with its own history. This history also includes episodes of failure—of new educational policy, new beginnings, pedagogical reforms, and architectural concepts.

“Education for All”

The spatial and temporal expansion relates to the fact that more and more people worldwide were to be given access to education. The model of the welfare state was to be reflected in international development policy. The geopolitical tensions of the Cold War were great, but global postwar societies were united by the goal of expanding the space and scope of education. The discourse of human rights had launched the demand “Education for All”—an appeal for equal opportunities and democratization in the face of an alleged crisis in world education.

From the Industrial to the Knowledge Society

The influence of science and pedagogy increased to such an extent that societies were becoming “scientized” and “educationalized.” Education and learning became a basic condition for economic growth. At the same time, technological developments drove a profound structural change. The process of transformation from an industrial to a knowledge society demanded renewed modes of education and training for more segments of a growing population. Moreover, it demanded new architectures and spatial programs, and a new understanding of education.

Experimentalization of the Social

In the countries of the global North and West, experimentation was more extensive than at any time since the days of progressive education in the early twentieth century. The ongoing automation of economic production played a decisive role in this experimentalization, which ultimately affected the whole of society. But the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s also had an impact. There were the anti-racist struggle for civil rights in the USA, anti-colonial uprisings in the global South, increasing transnational migration of labor, the second wave of feminism, and the anti-authoritarian rebellions in the metropolises—all of which changed concepts of learning as well as its infrastructures, often radically.

Education Policy and Economics

Between 1960 and 1980, the average number of school years in the Federal Republic of Germany rose from 9.60 to 11.35, in Italy from 4.95 to 6.48, in Japan from 8.59 to 10.52, and in the USA from 10.56 to 12.14. Worldwide, however, the average number of school years in 1980 was still 5.34. Acquiring more and new skills and knowledge was intended to boost economic performance.

In the interests of national (and individual) development, governments acted according to the maxims of change and growth. The notion of education was applied to institutions and organizations. Metaphors such as “learning society” and “lifelong learning” gained traction—both as slogans for emancipation and as a new way of governing the social and the self.

Open plan—Open Learning

Opening and expansion are metaphors that suggest altered spatial conditions. And indeed, spaces and places of learning changed in the 1960s and 1970s: schools and universities planned for an increasing number of learners and students, but were simultaneously to embody openness, flexibility, and mobility. The traditional corridor-style school had to be dissolved, a flexible use of space was strived for, and the learner—at least theoretically—was placed at the center. Learning environments were now to be discovered everywhere: in the city, in the mass media, and in nature.

To what extent did the model of the large school area with its “open” floor plan correspond to the concepts of anti-authoritarian education discussed so much around 1970? Such connections were made, but also rejected. Expansive educational planning produced all kinds of contradictions. And the architecture that was built played its part too when demands for flexibility led to anonymity and critical perception that authority had been lost in the mass school system.

Segregation, Integration, and Inclusion

Despite all the calls for expansion, many young people remained excluded from the educational justice they were seeking. From segregation in the USA or apartheid in South Africa to the situation of the children of so-called Gastarbeiter (guest workers) and Vertragsarbeiter (contract workers) in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR)—access to educational facilities was repeatedly restricted or completely denied to parts of society. Barrier-free access was even less self-evident for students with disabilities, only gradually did concepts such as inclusion start to trickle into the mainstream of pedagogy and educational planning in the 1970s.

Exhibiting the Spatiality of Learning

Modern Architecture for the Modern School was the title of probably the first museum exhibition on school architecture, curated by Elizabeth Mock at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in 1942. In 1974, when enthusiasm for reform of the post-Sputnik years had noticeably waned (not only) in the USA, Mildred S. Friedman conducted a kind of stocktaking with New Learning Spaces and Places at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Further to which, several educational crises later, Juliet Kinchin organized the 2012 overview Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900–2000 (again at MoMA). These exhibitions are reference points for *Education Shock*—if only because their theme—of the relationship between space and pedagogy—has barely been negotiated in the exhibition medium to date.

“Learning processes”: On the Method

In the period focused on in the project, there was much talk of “Lernprozesse” (learning processes). *Educational Shock* is also the result and starting point of learning processes. It is about research and production, archives and experiments, theses and their verification, revision and criticism, knowledge and de-learning. In the course of such a process, boundaries between scientific, essayistic, pedagogical, or artistic approaches tend to dissolve.

The project traverses and charts the history of experiments with learning, politics, and architecture. It documents successful and unsuccessful reforms. There has been no attempt to gain an overview covering all aspects, as the topic is such a broad one that any all-encompassing documentation is an impossibility. No doubt, the exhibition’s case studies could be supplemented by further examples. Closing the existing gaps is a joint task: between the project *Education Shock* and you, the visitors and participants. For we all were and are learners and have had specific experiences with spaces of learning.

Pandemic as Learning Site

The COVID-19 crisis has forced the work on this project to pause at an important point in its development. The exhibition had to be modified and many considerations—from hygiene to compliance with social distancing rules—were necessary. But the pandemic also made clear that wherever learning processes are involved, the organization and design of the space have a decisive effect. Home-schooling, digital learning formats, redesigned classrooms, and adapted curricula reflect the new conditions. Arguably, many of the responses and strategies to cope with COVID-19 bear a striking resemblance to the ideas and models that emerged in the education shock age. How spaces of learning should be designed remains a point of departure for every debate on the politics of education.

Curatorial Statement

In 2021, an exhibition titled *Education Shock* raises very specific expectations. After all, Covid-19 has sent education systems worldwide into a state of shock. Once upon a time, home schooling was a cherished concept of alternative pedagogy: but under the impact of the pandemic, schooling at home proves to be an enormous test of endurance for children and parents, pupils and students, societies as a whole. It becomes abundantly clear that the institutions of education are ultimately—and most likely should remain—semi-public places outside the family and the home. Suddenly, the experiential circumstance of meeting teachers, classmates, and fellow students in the physical environment of the classroom or seminar seems gone.

Not only in Germany did the pandemic painfully demonstrate the failures and inequalities of so-called digitization. Even if distance learning using cloud-based learning environments may occasionally work, uneasy questions regarding equity and accessibility, proximity, and distance to education and thus about social participation call out for answers.

How can a research and art project on the relationship between educational policies and spatial politics in the 1960s and 1970s contribute to the urgencies of the day? What is achieved by an exhibition devoted to an era fifty years ago, when investments were made in the infrastructures and architectures of education on an unprecedented scale and “revolutionary” pedagogies blossomed globally, defeating the “capitalist” model of learning and knowledge production? What can it offer those affected by the current crisis?

Education Shock approaches these questions by attending to the always experimental, often provisional character of educational policies—as an object of historical curiosity and epistemology. The decades in which the transition to a post-industrial society was initiated were still enthralled by the belief in modernization, trust in how shapeable of the future it could be, however, was waning increasingly. School and university reforms were implemented in anticipation of new forms of work, value creation, technology and concomitant forms of subjectivity and sociality. Everything was supposed to be renewed and changed in the experiment: people, curricula, cities, the economy, politics, culture. Such measures did not always meet with the success anticipated. But the historical work on the models of a future society can be reconstructed and visited in the present—as a glimpse into an erstwhile laboratory of a future that, confounded, but also unrealized, still seems worth considering today.

The opening of *Education Shock* was originally planned for September 2020. Immediate work on the exhibition began around summer 2018, but early research on this project dates back to 2008 to 2010, when virtually no one, at least in Europe, foresaw an pandemic that would shut down social life and much of the educational system.

At that time, I organized a lecture series on the visual culture of pedagogy together with Marion von Osten at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. We also edited the accompanying reader *Das Erziehungsbild*. In researching the history of education, questions about architecture came up repeatedly: what were the ideas about school performance, the psychology of learning, knowledge production or didactics? How did they inform the designs for school and university buildings, research facilities and libraries? And how are the built environments of education used by those who work within as well as with (and occasionally against) them?

Another few years on, in 2016 and 2017, I had the opportunity to present partial results of my (now advanced) research at the Basis voor actuele kunst (BAK) in Utrecht. The exhibition *Learning Laboratories. Architecture, Instructional Technology, and the Social Production of Pedagogical Space around 1970* not only was focused on the 1960s and 1970s already, but it also had a similarly collaborative character in the manner of *Education Shock*.

Many of the researchers and artists who participated in Utrecht were to be won over for the continuation at HKW. Last, but not least, the Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik could be enlisted again to design the architecture of the exhibition. Furthermore, at HKW itself, various collaborations related to *Education Shock* were initiated — the educational art project *Education in Concrete* being just one result of these interactions. With Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art, the natural partner for a comprehensive film program was quickly found.

Exhibitions on education and its history are always tricky, as they cannot succeed in enabling the experience of a learning process that differs to the one which, in the best-case scenario, is actually occurring in the exhibition space itself. It is as if the immateriality of cognitive and emotional processes defies exhibition. What can be shown, however, are scale models, plans, teaching aids, printed matter, and other archival items from the histories of architecture and pedagogy. In what ways these materials and the experiences they retain can be looked at, analyzed and put on display is demonstrated above all by the contributions of the participating artists and researchers. Their case studies provide access to an epoch that was an educational test drive of its own. In doing so, the educational crisis of the present is put into an unexpected and, in all likelihood, constructive perspective.

Tom Holert

Education in Concrete

School projects, presentations, [manifesto](#)
2020-2021

Presentations: May to June 2021

In Berlin, the issue of school development is red hot due to the Senate's multi-billion euro school building offensive. But schools are usually built without the involvement of the students who are meant to learn in these spaces.

In the run-up to the exhibition *Education Shock*, which examines the global education offensive of the 1960s and '70s, *Education in Concrete* reaches out to eight Berlin schools whose buildings date from this period. What is it like to learn today in yesterday's educational laboratories? And how can they be co-shaped as future learning environments?

In fall and winter 2020/2021, students will explore their own learning environments together with artists. Using resources from architecture, film, sound, performance and visual art, they considered possible learning environments and drafted a [manifesto](#) for their transformation and redesign to initiate a dialogue with policymakers.

CHANGE THE CLIMATE!

Too cold in winter, too hot and stuffy in summer—we demand ventilation and heating systems that save energy and help protect us from the coronavirus!

GREEN DEAL

We demand more plants! Green schoolyards and roofs with places to garden, sit, climb, and play. We'd also like aquariums, terrariums and a school garden with school animals, a fish pond and bees.

GRAY IS OLD-SCHOOL

We demand more colors and shapes! Colorful walls and graffiti, corners, edges and curves, mosaic-tile columns, plants and pictures on the walls.

LET IN THE LIGHT!

We need large windows for light-filled classrooms and better lighting in the building.

BRING NOISE ON THE CONCRETE!

NOISE OFF!

It's too loud; we need quiet to concentrate. We demand good sound insulation for relaxing acoustics.

GET LOUD!

We demand places to have fun, be loud and move! How about climbing walls, high-ropes courses, gaming rooms, ball game areas, a swimming pool, and skater ramps?

FOOD FOR THE MOOD!

We want food that tastes good! We want to have a say in what we eat, cook for ourselves sometimes and have well-designed rooms to eat in. And how about a chocolate fountain?

Education in Concrete Manifesto: Students' demands on the school buildings of today and tomorrow

HAVE A SEAT—OR NOT!

Mobile room modules, armrests, foldout tables, height-adjustable furniture, loungers, a climbing wall: We demand more flexible furnishings, enough with sitting for hours!

MORE ART AND DIVERSITY!

We demand cinemas, theaters and recording studios for more art, music and drama classes! Dance groups and jukeboxes need space. We want a diverse and open-minded school with room for cultural diversity!

CLEAN IT UP!

No trash cans in sight, soap dispensers empty again. The school is often filthy and smelly. We demand clean and hygienic rooms. Self-cleaning toilets would be great!

21ST CENTURY, NOW!

We demand better equipped computer rooms, (strong) WiFi, smartboards, tablets! Cell phones are part of everyday life so we demand a phone class! VR glasses and a school robot would be cool too.

DO NOT DISTURB!

We want to feel at ease at school. We demand meeting areas and quiet rooms to relax in. Lounges and retreats with sofas, pillows, massage chairs and hammocks would be helpful. We also want water kettles and snack machines.

GET OUT OF SCHOOL!

We demand more excursions and partnerships! We want to learn in the city and our neighborhood with and from other people besides just our teachers.

FROM A TO B

Most schools are huge. Not all of us are able or want to just climb stairs. We'd prefer escalators, slides and elevators for more accessibility and a change of pace while moving around!

With students at Bettina-von-Arnim-Schule, Campus Hannah Höch, Carl-von-Linné-Schule, Carl-von-Ossietzky-Schule, Hans-Rosenthal-Grundschule, Johann-Gottfried-Herder-Gymnasium, Thomas-Mann-Gymnasium, Walter-Gropius-Schule

In Berlin, the issue of school development is a hot topic due to the Senate's multibillion-euro school construction offensive. With this manifesto, Berlin students articulate their own demands for school buildings and thus position themselves within the public debate. The demands are the product of the school project *Education in Concrete* (2020/2021), part of the research and exhibition project *Education Shock* for HKW's long-term project *The New Alphabet* (2019–2022).

HKW.DE/EDUCATIONINCONCRETE