Interferences: A M O   A T L A S **W i r e d** Content V O L U M E

In the course of the seminar ‚Research Architecture: The Case of OMA / AMO' it was about the extended role of the architect in a changing working environment. The focus of the new fields of work is the research work that has always been immanent to the profession but is now to be professionalised and accordingly capitalised. As an illustrative example, the projects of the theory-think tank *AMO* should be examined, as they exemplify a successful implementation. *AMO* can be understood as the theoretical counterpart to the internationally renowned architecture firm *Office for Metropolitan Architecture* (*OMA*). Since its foundation, it has been responsible for the production of everything *non-architectural* within the organizational structure of *OMA* - officially *AMO* is named ‚research and design studio'[1]. Projects are often handled in parallel by *AMO* and *OMA* (from different points of view)[2], the boundaries between the sub-organizations are fluid (also in terms of personnel)[3]. Therefore, for the sake of readability and sometimes difficult distinctions, *AMO* should in the following text be always representatively cited for both entities. Also emerged from a certain entrepreneurial need, which has to do with the change of the role of the architect in the world[4], *AMO* is characterized by increased publication work. Among them for the American, monthly magazine *Wired* for a tech-savvy readership with an interest in its implications for society as a whole, whose June edition was curated by *AMO* in 2003 and named ‚Koolworld'[5]. Though the issue was just the culmination of a two-year collaboration that began with the appointment of *Rem Koolhaas* as *Editorial Marketing Consultant* for the *Condé Nast Publishing Group* in July 2001[6] and a thorough review for the magazine's reestablishment that followed. Interestingly, *AMO* was initially not supposed to focus explicitly on *Wired*, but the clients generally appreciated their universal ability to ‚draw different media and different ideas together'[7]. In fact, at the beginning of the collaboration, it seemed more likely that *AMO* should look after a lifestyle / shopping magazine[8], as at the time its study on shopping was about to be published. *AMO* was thus already known as a catalyst and an analyst for a variety of topics[9]. Also, the hope was probably in an image boost (the parent company of the publishing house had already had a successful collaboration with the artist *Alexander Liberman* in the past[10]) and in an identity-forging momentum that *AMO* could later produce for other customers such as *Prada*, *EU* and others.

The main source for the research was the *Wired* edition to be dealt with - named *Koolworld* (mainly for the content-related exploration[11] and for the direct comparison with the publications *AMO Atlas*, *Content* and *Volume*) - not least because the secondary literature on *AMO's Wired* engagement is low. It was helpful to come across the chart *OMA Time-line of publications 1975 - 2007* by the archi-
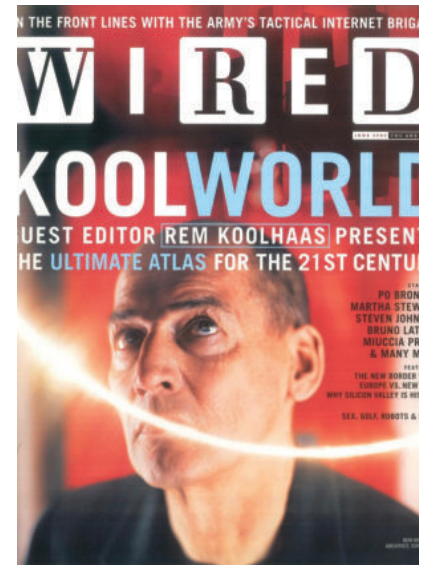

fig 1 Koolworld Cover

1   cf.: https://oma.eu/office
2   cf. ib.
3   cf. Borasi 2015, pp371-372
4   for further descriptions of founder Rem Koolhaas see Koolhaas, Rem: contents in: Content (Taschen 2004), p20.
5   A neologism that refers to the theme of the issue and the office founder Koolhaas.
6   cf. Kuczynski 2001
7   see ib.
8   cf. ib.: magazine's name: "Lucky"
9   compare: Universal HQ/US(1995), Schiphol Airport/NL(1996), Harvard Project on the City(2001-)
10 cf. Kuczynski 2001
11 see also Anna Dietz' seminar paper

tectural historian *Beatriz Colomina* (with the help of *Urzti Grau* and *Daniel Lopez Pérez*)[12] at an early stage, since there were first important clues about the entire published work of *AMO* (a ,white / black phase' suggests certain coherences, the meaning of the ,dictionary format', detailed in-house publication-inventory-count / survey testify to the importance of journalism for *AMO*), as well as links between the *Wired* edition and other publications in particular, which then had to be further investigated[13].

Content (2004)
Colomina calls *Koolworld* a ,precursor' to *Content* and *Volume* magazine. *Content* (as book as exhibition likewise) to be understood as a sequel to *S,M,L,XL*[14], helped well as important source of information for the previous study on *Wired* (see below), and was (most likely) chief-edited by *Brendan McGetrick*, like he did for the *Koolworld* issue[15]. Further personal matches can be found with *R. E. Somol, Theo Deutinger, Michael Rock, Lucia Allais, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Ellen Grimes, Richard Barnes, Fenna Haakma Wagenaar, Beatriz Colomina, Jeffrey Inaba, Markus Schaefer, Nanne de Ru* and *AMO*-partner *Reinier de Graaf*, who all contributed to both projects[16]. The central theme of both publications is geography: As if in *Koolworld* all articles (primarily of the *AMO* part from page 115 on) operate under the keyword ,space' and suggest a changed world-order[17], as if in *Content* the texts are arranged by their geographical position with the destination *China* as old, new centre[18]. Even more the articles ,Context' (pp. 96-105 by *AMO*), ,No more surprises' (pp 222-227: Interview by *Beatriz Colomina* & *Rem Koolhaas* and *Martha Stewart*) and ,White Briefs against Filth' (pp. 236-239 by *Rem Koolhaas*) from *Koolworld* directly found their way in *Content*.

fig 2 Content Cover

AMO Atlas (2002)
If you look at the project description of *Content* on *oma.eu* you will find more cross-references to the projects ,AMO Atlas' and ,Mutation', so that the connecting lines had to be extended[19]. The *AMO Atlas* in particular represents an important work: For architects and urban planners, dealing with the terrain, the topographical map, as well as the impact of geography on the social fabric of entire societies have always played a significant role. At a time of general interest in geography and its representation on maps *AMO* creates its form of an atlas, which deals with different, unconventional topics, such as suicide, imprisonment, tax oasis, etc.[20]. Only briefly commented, it appears in excerpts both in *Koolworld*[21] and in *Content*[22].

Archis (2004) / Volume (2005-)
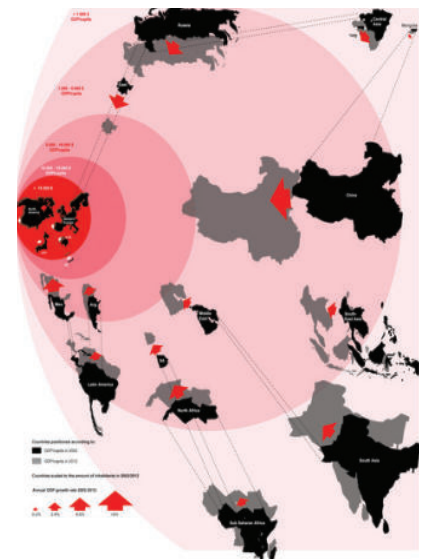For the magazine *ARCHIS*, one of the most important Dutch architectural

fig 3 AMO Atlas Excerpt

[12] first published in: Colomina 2007
[13] cf. ib.
[14] Reinier de Graaf in conversation with Borasi/Zardini). Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA2HDn-igFI
[15] see McGetrick 2004, p18 and Koolhaas 2003, p115
[16] cf. ib. and ib
[17] cf. Koolhaas 2003, p117
[18] cf. McGetrick 2004, p16
[19] cf. https://oma.eu/publications/content and oma.eu/publications/mutations
[20] cf. oma.eu/projects/amo-atlas. There AMO emphasizes that they didn't created new data but only found new ways to display them (the maps have indications of their datasource which are mainly large institutions).
[21] cf. Koolhaas 2003, pp 118 - 131. (All associated creaters (according to oma.eu/projects/amo-atlas) also contributed to Koolworld.
[22] cf. McGetrick 2004, pp 96-105

magazines since 1929[23], the *AMO Atlas* is also significant enough for to be dealt with in issue 2/2004: *Brendan McGetrick*, who is also a *Koolworld*-editor, and *Theo Deutinger* use in their article ‚Political (correct) mapping', excerpts from the *AMO Atlas* and lessons learned there[24]. This issue deals in-depth with the topics atlas, geography and different types of spaces, so the title of this February issue is ‚ARCHIS is Atlas'. Last but not least, the article ‚TIT al ap as Savior - The Usefulness and Disadvantages of Mapping: The Case of The Ultimate Atlas for the 21st Century' by urbanist *Betancourth*, which reviews *Koolworld*[25], testifies to *ARCHIS*' editorial interest in *AMO's* editorial work for *Wired*. Finally, this interest[26] culminates in a joint periodical publication called *Volume*, which continues *ARCHIS* and what is a collaboration of the *ARCHIS*-editors, *AMO* (notably for the first *Volume* edition: *Rem Koolhaas, Brendan McGetrick, Jeffrey Inaba, Beatriz Colomina*[27]) and the *Columbia Laboratory for Architectural Broadcasting* (‚C-lab' a university institution)[28]. When *Colomina* calls *Koolworld* a journalistic predecessor to *Volume*[29], she is right inasmuch as *Volume* acts as an public organ for *AMO* by publishing themed issues (quasi what *AMO* suggested for the relaunch of *Wired*[30]), what pushes the public towards certain topics (eg identity, unsollicited architecture, writing,[31] ...). Another interesting congruence between *Koolworld* / *Wired* and (pre-Volume) *ARCHIS* can be found in the issue ‚Archis_ is_island', that was published in the same year as *Koolworld*: It is the conceptual equivalent to *Koolworld,* meaning: there is a geographical transfer of actual data / topics. And there is leitmotif / central theme of having a magazine structured by a glossary style. While in *Wired* it's: ‚_-space', in *ARCHIS* it is ‚_-island'[32].

fig 4 Volume #1 Cover

Wired 2001 (2001)
The actual object of investigation, *AMO*-edited *Wired* edition of June 2013, was preceded by a 2-year investigation of the magazine. This is already indicated by the graph *OMA Time-line of publications 1975 - 2007*, which is still vaguely described here as ‚Wired 2001' and ‚Wired Real Tools 2001'[33]. A closer look at the research project is provided by the *AMO* publication *Content*, in which *Michael Rock* and *Lucia Allais* (both working for *OMA* at the time) wrote a richly illustrated article about it[34]. It should be critically noted that this was the only traceable source that describes the collaboration between *AMO* and *Condé Nast* from 2001 onwards. Therefore it remains unclear what exactly is the difference between *Wired 2001* and *Wired Real Tools 2001*. It is also a self-referential source: *AMO* describes the work of *AMO*. Its ability to supply a neutral standpoint is limited, however much the editor's letter emphasizes that *Content*, even more than its prequel *S,M,L,XL*, is a critique of its own projects[35]. Nonetheless, here *Content* provides an interesting insight into the *Wired 2001* project and / or *Wired Real Tools 2001*, which roughly breaks down into the stages of *analysis of the magazine*(I), *readership analysis*(II), *overarching development of the ‚digital revolution'*(III) (and their direct correlation with the magazine) and the *synthesis*

23   cf. www.archis.org
24   cf. McGetrick / Deutinger 2004, pp 18-24
25   cf. Betancourth 2004, pp 33-37
26   preceding were also commonly organised so called 'R.V.S.P.-events' -cf. http://
      volumeproject.org/about/ and in Archis 6/2003.
27   cf. Volume#1/Archis 1/2005, frontpage
28   from the Colophon, Volume#1/Archis 1/2005, p 104
29   cf. Colomina 2008
30   see below in Wired 2001 chapter.
31   cf. Volume #1 / Archis 1/2005
32   cf. Archis 6/2003
33   Colomina 2008, see column year 2003
34   Allais / Rock 2004
35   cf McGetrick 2004

(IV) and will be described in more detail below:

(I)The study of the magazine begins with a formalistic approach that can be described as somewhat uninspired. Thus, the text modules for the magazine's seven-year appearance have been meticulously recorded, counted and catalogued in an own *AMO* publication (‚Wired Dictionary') (see fig. 5). The most frequent word, ‚new', becomes a thematic anchor in the following, according to *AMO*, it describes symbolically the magazine's attempt to declare itself a ‚Herald [of] the new'[36]. This fits in with the (repeated) prophecy claiming a (technical) ‚revolution', as an attempt to attract the readers' attention by *sensational journalism*, but which can fulfill less and less. The inflationary use of the words ‚new' and ‚revolution' reveals the reality that the magazine is struggling with decreasing circulation at the time of publication of the study. If the magazine was the *thing of the moment* 7 years earlier, it now appears to got oldfashioned[37]. (II) In addition, the bursting of the *dotcom bubble* and the consequent end of the golden start-up *go-go years* for large parts of the digital industry are seen as the cause of a general *hangover*, as the core readership recruits from this particular milieu. Other current events of the day (eg the *9/11 terrorist attacks*) put the issue in a larger context, according to the study they have their share in the fact that the (earlier) clear, editorial orientation of the magazine got lost (in favour of an actual ‚Cacaphony'[38]) or at least noticeably splintered. (III)The passive readership of the magazine receives more attention than the actual active producers of the same - at least in the (few) published pages of the study (namely in *Content*) there are no personnel decisions or individual members of the editorial board or members of the publishing board explicitly mentioned and made responsible for the development of *Wired*. Instead, the original readership gets classified into various categories of *geeks* (*pragmatists, idealists, technocrats, nihilists*)[39], which, across categories, is a definite male, tech-savvy readership. (IV)Here, the study proceeds to the solution that *Wired* should open up to other readers of the wide-ranging journalistic portfolio of the *Condé-Nast group*: *AMO* sees in the heterogeneous journalistic offer of the group (from *Vogue* to *Golf Travel*) a ‚theoretically unlimited offspring'[40] of new readers for *Wired*, who are to be addressed by special/themed issues (art, global, politics,...) and guest-editor-volumes (*Noam Chomsky, Bjork, Kofi Annan*,...) (see fig. 6).

At the time of completion of the *Wired 2001* study, *AMO* will probably already have had the desire to edit its own special edition. At least there is an *AMO -Wired* cover in the ‚Wired dictionary' displayed in Content (see fig. 7). It was probably also *AMO* itself, who approached the publisher with the proposal to make its own issue and not vice versa. This is supported by statements by the two *AMO* partners, according to whom *AMO* is supposed to infiltrate existing magazines and exploit their aura (*Koolhaas*:,[...] it was more about infiltration and and to exploit the kind of aura of each of these magazines.'[41] and *de Graaf*:,I mean [with] *Wired* we were guest editor. you know over magazine that exists and we could infiltrate clearly and we like doing that also as AMO that you've become a guest editor but you inhabit the format of some something else.'[42]). The assumption is evident that the desire for a publication of their own positions in a magazine,
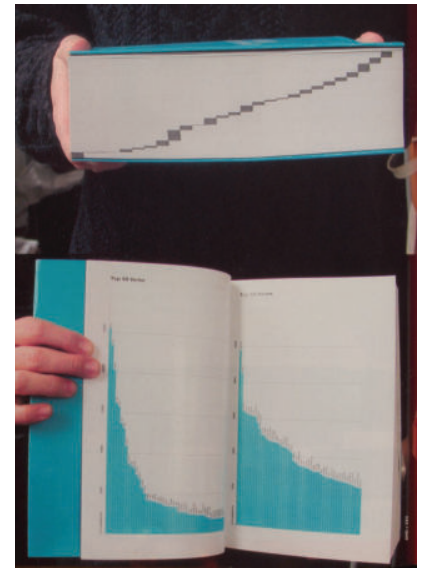

fig 5 Wired dictionary

fig 6 Wired demographics: actual readership and potential new readerships via special issues

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[36]   cf. Allais / Rock 2004, p109
[37]   cf. ibid, p110
[38]   see ibid, p111
[39]   see ibid.
[40]   see ibid, p115
[41]   Rem Koolhaas in conversation with Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini (for CCA). Ca. 34:10 min. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA2HDn-igFI
[42]   Reinier de Graaf in conversation with Borasi/Zardini). Ca. 39:30 min. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA2HDn-igFI

which is far from the usual spectrum of architects, was from the beginning there and this prospect the driving force when accepting the commision of *Condé Nast*. *Giovanna Borasi* also refers to the *Wired job* for a relaunch / redesign as ‚infiltration' and as *AMO's* ‚media strategy'[43]. That the publisher was initially only considering the study or consulting, is plainly evident by the commission of *Koolhaas* as ‚Editorial Marketing Consultant' and by the statement of editorial director of *Condé Nast*, *James Truman* (‚He won't be editing the magazines. He will be looking at them from the larger perspective of how they communicate and how they are marketed.'[44]).

Whether the results of the study have been summarized exclusively in the so-called *Wired dictionary*, can not be answered with certainty. It would, however, be in keeping with *AMO's* journalistic ambition that the study was perfectly completed in a single reading. Furthermore, it may be assumed that copies of this project-related dictionary were only made for internal use and for the client. There are no indications of a free sale.

AMO's procedure in the investigation of *Wired* resembles a project course for the realization of architecture: First, the existing is examined in detail, or the environment in which there is to build, if you like, as in the same way as the user is studied. The analysis concludes with a far-reaching investigation of the (social, economic,...) circumstances in which the architectural project is embedded. If in pre-analysis of architectural projects latter research plays hardly a role for the vast majority of architectural firms (although in fact the circumstances always play a role in practice for all involved in the form of legislation, norms, habits, but architects usually deal this fact inappropriately), the built projects of *AMO* are always the result of a long analysis of the given superordinate conditions - or at least *AMO* makes them appearing so. The solution approach, or the building, evolves from the results of the analysis. The peculiarity of the *Wired* case lies in the fact that in the end the first programming (namely the own 'Koolworld' issue), or to stay in the architectural analogy: a concrete use for the empty multifunctional building, is included in the delivery. Perhaps one can call this proactive action a typical strategy of *AMO*: The proposed solution is intended primarily to serve AMO's own strategy, rather than the client's need. The solution is tailored to the actual goal (here: a dedicated *Wired* edition). Following this thesis, a similar approach can be observed for other *AMO* projects: The publication 'The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping' was intended to prepare the ground for potential acquisition of future private clients (like *Prada*), the publishing of *Content* ('Going East') provided the analysis for the logical, consecutive, structural engagement of *AMO* in *China*. However, in the last case, the theoretical framework could not quite keep up in time with the building and was delivered to the construction project subsequently.

The last example relativises the assertion that *AMO* projects are actually always preparing *OMA* projects, that a market-strategic mastermind of *Koolhaas*, who sees the situation better than anyone else, and his anticipatory abilities only serve clandestine economical goals. It has to be noted that this is not just a market strategy, but that *AMO* always provides its analysis in order to draw the public's attention to certain topics[45] in order to possibly initiate actual social changes[46]. Interestingly enough, the ambiguity of the open interpretations behind the AMO projects is precisely their secret to success.

fig 7 possible Wired-cover, edited by AMO

[43]   see Borasi 2015, p58
[44]   cf. Kuczynski 2001
[45]   for the analysis with regard to content of Koolworld see the report of Anna Dietz/ presentation.
[46]   Marc Kirschbaum stresses the "extreme proximity" between marketing/Public Relations and knowledge transfer: cf. Kirschbaum 2008, p139.
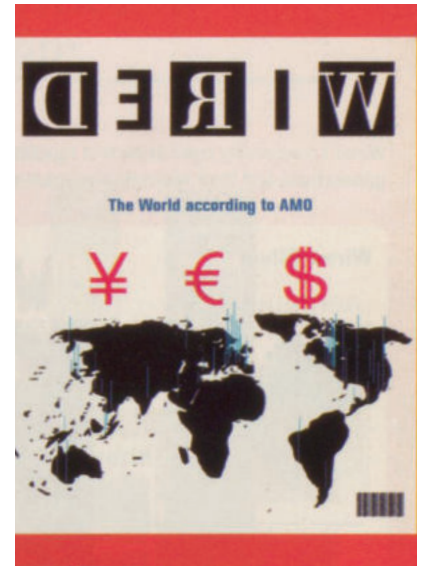
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Register of illustrations:

All source references of the illustrations can be found in the images folder.