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Werner Durth is an architectural historian who belongs to the generation of forty-year-olds. Insofar he can neither claim the serenity of an impact achieved from many years of professional experience and connected to the claim of a seemingly overview potential, nor lay claim to the habitus of the heroes of the classical modern age, who report on the knowledge originating from intimate friendship.

He can, however, claim for himself the achievement of making transparent the "biographical interrelationships" of the German architectural community in our century, not just as one of the first, but rather also with a highly unique and pronounced independent methodology.

Biographical interrelationships mean that Werner Durth on the basis of biographies and destinies, analyses and often first actually discovers the path, the carriers, and even the ideological and political perils of many German architects – and not just from prominent representatives of his profession.

We primarily have Werner Durth to thank for the knowledge developed against resistance how certain architects planned the restoration of German cities, uninhibited by moral considerations during the collapse of National Socialism and how they then quickly and continuously established themselves in the young Germany of restoration.

Durth is a moralist – and I mean this in a positive sense. His interest in knowledge applies not only to the traditional or even "the good, the true and the beautiful" ensured by the intelligentsia, but rather to the obligation of architectural politics to which such architects were subjected and their reactions to such a challenge.

It must be emphasised here that Werner Durth with all the rigor of his interest in knowledge never makes the simple conclusion of solely stating any personal obligation. Instead, he demonstrates the conditional network in which responsibly acting architects and city planners are involved in the political system and which they can usually only avoid marginally with personal decisions and statements of intent.

It is therefore consistent that Durth, as a second step, has turned to the objective results of such biographical relationships in terms of architectural history after having researched the personal destinies. His magnificent two-volume study on the planning for the restoration of the destroyed cities in West Germany between 1940 and 1950 "Träume in Trümmern", which – and we are particularly proud of this – the German architectural museum funded along with his study of the biographical interrelationships, is, in my opinion, the most valid analysis of the "restoration" system to this day. It not only clearly explains the sociological and psycho-historical principles involving architectural politics and city-planning concepts, but also uses current knowledge to look back on and explain and interpret the past.

To this extent, Durth has provided the writings of architectural history with an analysis model based on his interdisciplinary research approach. This model specifically deals with the German situations; both its methodology and the form of its clearly formulated moral commitment allow it to be applied to other European circumstances.

I can only wish that Werner Durth will continue his challenging work to the benefit of our profession and that others will also choose to follow these pursuits.