

# **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY: WHAT TO TEACH, HOW MUCH AND HOW?**

*By Suna Güven*

## **ABSTRACT**

Compared with barely three decades ago when our more seasoned teachers of Architectural History (and Art History too) were college students, an astounding plethora of visual technologies are available today for teaching both in and out of the classroom. Once ubiquitous lantern slides and slide-projectors have now become totally obsolete and any so far undigitalized collections of slides – no matter how valuable - are abandoned to oblivion on dusty shelves. Even worse, unless they are eventually transferred to the electronic medium, these precious personal archives painstakingly accumulated over the years are doomed to physical annihilation due to the limited life span of brittle film.

Yet there can be no doubt that widely utilized digital possibilities at present have expanded pedagogical choice in the teaching of Architectural History, and continue to do so at an accelerating rate. As the digital world becomes an indispensable part of our lives, new directions in research and the way we teach have emerged, leading to faster and more efficient ways of producing and disseminating architectural knowledge. Formal evidence of elevation, plan, structure, material and decoration can now be re-constituted and examined in countless sophisticated ways. In addition, re-construction or even re-creation of context often involves experiential aspects too, leading to the perception of augmented reality besides the material data. Given these new technological amenities, the question of how to frame the object of the past poses new challenges. Does digital technology sometimes surpass the role of being the purveyor of architectural knowledge at the expense of the latter? This paper aims to address old and new perspectives in teaching especially in the ancient era of architectural history. It will take into consideration the student body vis-a-vis the teacher of the historical built environment based on the teaching experience of the author.

**Keywords:** Architectural education, architectural history