

THE UNTHINKABLE DOCTORATE

This colloquium is intended to re-examine the question of doctoral research in architecture, and particularly the more specific question of what might constitute such research for architects who are active as practitioners or who maintain close links with design practice.

Doctorates that treat architecture more as a scientific object than as **a method of knowledge production** – one might speak of "architectural sciences", were it not for its mainly technological connotation in English-speaking contexts – are widely recognized as legitimate in academic circles. One problem with this situation, long recognized in architecture departments, is that this legitimacy is often "borrowed" from other disciplines who have furnished ready-made research paradigms, concepts, and standards.

Whatever the advantages of this approach, the notion of a doctorate in architecture, which is constituted from within the broad spectrum of architects' work – the verb "to architecture" is as yet lacking from our vocabulary – has not yet really been explored. What is its field of application? What criteria are applicable to it? What options might be available, and what should be required of potential candidates?

Is it a good way of "thinking" architecture, or simply unthinkable?

The colloquium has set itself the ambitious task of bringing together an international and interdisciplinary group of architects, educators and researchers who are interested by this problem and would like to help stimulate **change in our intellectual and practical landscapes**. Through both plenary presentations and round tables, the colloquium will be organized around four thematic groups of questions. It is our hope that the colloquium will lead to conclusions and recommendations, broadly shared and strongly stated, toward that end.

Thematic groups for plenary and roundtable sessions:

1. Epistemology and institutions: knowledge and knowing

The question of the doctorate in architecture is perhaps above all that of the meeting of epistemologies. Over the course of its development, the University has slowly conceived the formats into which research is considered to fit, its notions of the scientific and the scholarly, and the accepted means of verification and expression. These canonical formats result from an institutional history driven by conflicts and contradictions whose epistemological dimension is patent and inescapable. On the other hand, architecture, whose own history has not always been linked with that of the University, has developed its own standards for research, verification, expression. The sessions addressing this theme will examine both latent and manifest conflicts in epistemological terms, and try to suggest new, perhaps more synthetic, models for architectural knowledge and knowing within and outside the academy.

2. Organising the PhD: the structure of production

Architectural research is not everywhere the same. What different types of degrees are offered in different schools? What current and recent developments are most likely to structure future initiatives? These sessions will attempt to provide a broad view of organisational developments and evolutions which might contribute to the development of specifically architectural research, particularly in the matter of design-