



Regarding the Unseen – On assessments of architectural inheritance A three days seminar organized by The Danish Research School of Cultural Heritage

This PhD course is organised by The Danish Research School of Cultural Heritage and takes place at The Royal School of Library and Information Science, Birketinget 6, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark,

25th – 27th October 2010, class room C6.02

Processes of passing down architecture across time forms important conduits in cultural continuity, for instance as intermediaries between generations and societal groups or as decisive elements in the formation of local identities.

In practical terms, authorities, academically trained specialists and practitioners organise the future destiny of built material by classifying its physical elements and by appointing its degrees of significance according to established criteria within their disciplines. Institutionalized procedures of listing and protecting also define ways in which these elements are to be handled materially and legally. Often their criteria have a bias on the purely visual aspects of buildings or rely on understandings of buildings as stable material objects, rather than as parts of processes and relations. Sometimes their recommendations privilege a particular or idealized stage in the life span of the architectural elements concerned.

Based on discussions of existing examples, the seminar 'Regarding the Unseen' aims to explore aspects reaching beyond understandings which are based on the objecthood of built material and its purely visually perceived aspects. These might concern the manners in which pieces of architecture have been involved in social and cultural processes, for instance by their successive users and inhabitants. Processes of remembrance may not necessarily be bound to the physical presence of architecture and live on in myths and stories. At the same time, remembrance and local identities may be conveyed through sensations of touch, smell and hearing or generally through the formation and re-formation of concepts, which almost all architecture is exposed to over time, irrespective of its scale. Negotiations and the mediation of understandings of local identities typically take place in design and planning. The seminar will therefore concern some examples of architectural projects, which consciously work with dynamic understandings of built form and which aim to understand and mediate the complex and imponderable processes by which a piece of architecture might have come into being.

When discussing their work with passed down architecture, all invited speakers will base their presentations on concrete examples from the built environment. These will concern both theoretical and practical aspects of working within the field and provide a frame for exploring 'unseen' and 'overlooked' aspects of passing down and inheriting architecture.

Organisers

Art historian PhD Rikke Stenbro and architect PhD scholar Robert Gassner, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Institute of Building Culture.

Programme

25 October 2010

'Potentials of Abandoned and Residual Spaces'

9:30 – 10:00

Rikke Stenbro and Robert Gassner
Introduction

10:00 – 11:00

Tom Nielsen
Lecture title: Superfluous Landscapes

11:00 – 12:00

Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius
Lecture title: Kissing Awake – The Art of Appropriation

12:00 – 12:30

Discussion

12:30 – 13:00

Lunch

13:00 – 13:40

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)
Jens Toftgaard, University of Southern Denmark, "The Making of the Modern City Centre"

13:40 – 14:20

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)
Amy Gilley, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, "Silent Witnesses"

14:20 – 15:00

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)
Gunnar Cerwén, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, "Soundscape Design"

15:00 – 15:15

Coffee break

15:15 – 16:00

Discussion of papers

Reading list

25 October 2010

'Potentials of Abandoned and Residual Spaces'

Literature Tom Nielsen

Nielsen, T., 2002. "The Return of the Excessive – Superfluous Landscapes" in *Space and Culture*, 5(1): pp 53-62.

Smithson, R., 1996. "A tour of the monuments of Passaic", in Jack Flam (ed.), *The Collected Writings of Robert Smithson*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp 68-74.

Literature Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius

Oswalt, P., 2005. "The Ephemeral", in Kyong Park (ed.) *Urban Ecology – Detroit and Beyond*. Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers, pp 115-116.

Rich, M., 2005. "The SLIDE – For Hotel Neustadt", in Kyong Park (ed.), *Urban Ecology – Detroit and Beyond*. Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers, pp 105-114.

Maier, J., 2008. "Acting in Public: raumlaborberlin". Berlin: Jovis Verlag, pp 3-35.

Concerning the project "Hotel Neustadt" by raumlaborberlin, refer to
<http://www.raumlabor.net/?p=78>
http://www.hotel-neustadt.de/english/index_html_e.html

General literature

DeSilvey, C., 2006. "Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things." *Journal of Material Culture* 11(3): pp 318-338.

Slide show essay "Rot in Peace". <http://www.slate.com/id/2129660/slideshow/2130072/>

Ørskov, W., 1992. "Terrain-vague". Copenhagen: Borgen, pp 22-29.

de Sola Morales, I., 1995. "Terrain Vague", in Cynthia C. Davidson (ed.), *Anyplace* 123, Cambridge/Massachusetts: MIT press, pp 118-125.

Programme

26 October 2010

'Contested Architecture'

9:00 – 10:00

Mélanie van der Hoorn

lecture title: 27 Fragments of a Research on Undesired Buildings

10:00 – 11:00

Meira Ahmemulic

lecture title: to be announced

11:00 – 12:00

Discussion

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch

13:00 – 13:40

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)

Dongming Xu, Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim, "Norwegian Value"

13:40 – 14:20

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)

Yannis Zavoleas, National Technical University of Athens,

"House-as-machine: the influences of cultural heritage of early modernism"

14:20 – 15:00

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)

Marwa Dabaieh, University of Lund, "The unseen side of desert vernacular heritage in Egypt"

15:00 – 15:15

Coffee break

15:15 – 16:00

Discussion of papers

Reading list

26 October 2010

'Contested Architecture'

Literature Mélanie van der Hoorn

Decker, R.T., 1994. "*Tactility and Imagination: Considerations of Aesthetic Experience in Architecture*", in Mitias, M.H. (ed.), *Philosophy and Architecture*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp 203–19.

Colloredo-Mansfeld, R., 2003. "*Introduction: Matter Unbound*", *Journal of Material Culture* 8(3): pp 245–54.

Colloredo-Mansfeld, R. and Peterson M., 2003. "*Preface*", *Journal of Material Culture* 8(3): pp 243–44.

Literature Meira Ahmemulic

Weizman, E., 2007. "*Jerusalem: Petrifying the Holy City*", in Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land*, London and New York, Verso, pp 25-52.

General literature

Lucas, G. and Buchli, V., 2001. "*Between Remembering and Forgetting*", in Gavin Lucas and Victor Buchli (eds.), *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*, London and New York: Routledge. pp 79-83.

Forty, A., 1999. "*Introduction*", in Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler (eds.), *The Art of Forgetting*, Oxford: Berg, pp 1-18.

Huysen, A., 2003. "*After the War: Berlin as Palimpsest*", in Andreas Huysen, *Present Pasts. Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp 72-84.

Stallaerts, R., 1999. "*History, Sound and Image. The role of sound and image in the construction of memory*", in Mandy Nauwelaerts (ed.), *The Future of the Past – reflections on history, urbanity and museums*. Antwerpen: Stadsbestuur, pp 251-260.

Programme

27 October 2010

'Inherited Architecture and its Social and Cultural Roles'

9:00 – 10:00

Clare Melhuish

lecture title: Fetishising the Brunswick: a reconsideration of Modernist architectural heritage

10:00 – 11:00

Hermann Czech

lecture title: Examples of Architectural Transformations

11:00 – 12:00

Discussion

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch

13:00 – 13:40

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)

Marie Pilegaard, Aarhus School of Architecture,

"Preservation of Built Environments – Approaches to Aesthetic Ideals and Architectural Values"

13:40 – 14:20

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)

Silje Sollien, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture,

"Slums, museums, or rethinking site-specific architectural practice?"

Traditional building techniques and World Heritage in Ilha de Moçambique"

14:20 – 15:00

Paper Presentation (20 mins + 20 mins questions)

Søren Nielsen, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture,

"On the parallel resources of the built environment"

15:00 – 15:15

Coffee break

15:15 – 16:00

Discussion of papers

Round-Up discussion

Reading list

27 October 2010

'Inherited Architecture and its Social and Cultural Roles'

Literature Clare Melhuish

Melhuish, C., 2005, "*Towards a phenomenology of the concrete megastructure: space and perception at the Brunswick Centre, London*". *Journal of Material Culture* 10 (1): pp 5-29.

Buchli, V., 1999, "*Introduction*", in Victor Buchli, *The Archaeology of Socialism (Materialising Culture)*, Oxford: Berg, pp 1-23.

Pels, P., 1998, "*The spirit of matter: on fetish, rarity, fact and fancy*", in Patricia Spyer (ed), *Border Fetishisms: material objects in unstable spaces*. London: Routledge, pp 91-121.

Literature Hermann Czech

"*Hermann Czech: Urbanihaus, Vienna, Austria*" (interview with H. Czech, conducted by Gabriele Kaiser), 2008. *Architecture Today* 189 06/2008, p 24. can be accessed on <http://www.architecturetoday.co.uk/?p=4516> .

For images on the same project, refer to <http://www.hermann-czech.at/> , "*Umbau Urbanihaus, eines barocken, bis ins 13.Jh. zurückgehenden Wohnhauses, Wien 2004-2007*".

General literature

Brinckerhoff Jackson, J., 1976-, "*'Sterile' Restorations Cannot Replace the Sense of the Stream of Time*", in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (ed.), *Landscape in Sight- Looking at America*, 1997. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp 366-368.

Invited speakers

Tom Nielsen, architect, associate professor, Aarhus School of Architecture, Aarhus.

In his research on urban planning and the construction of urban space Tom Nielsen has dealt specifically with residual urban spaces, i.e. the spaces that were left over by planning and can be characterized by their lack of political organization. This specific urban phenomenon is most profoundly analyzed in his book 'Formless: The Surplus Landscape of Contemporary Metropolis' (Arkitektskolens Forlag), in which he attempts to look at residual urban spaces in an unbiased way and point at their unseen potentials in order to suggest new ways of interventions at these sites.

Benjamin Förster-Baldenius, architect, raumlaborberlin, Berlin.

As a member of raumlaborberlin Förster-Baldenius has been exploring the margins of the architectural profession for a decade. Many of the projects he has been engaged in deal with urban spaces that one way or another have become disregarded or dysfunctional. By addressing such spaces in an action-oriented way, raumlaborberlin seeks to reveal the hidden potentials of these spaces, and to make them perceivable to the people that spend time in them.

Mélanie van der Hoorn, cultural anthropologist, Utrecht/Vienna.

In her recent work 'Indispensable Eyesores – An Anthropology of Undesired Buildings' (Berghahn Books), van der Hoorn is interested in the social (after)life of buildings, which have been eliminated or which we would be delighted to eliminate, yet which we cannot do without. Based on pieces of contested architecture in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bosnia and observing the perceptions of, and attitudes towards these undesired edifices, van der Hoorn discusses multi-sensory experiences of materiality in their crucial roles when defining the ephemerality and durability of built forms.

Meira Ahmemulic, artist, Gothenburg/Berlin.

In several of her recent works Ahmemulic has been addressing some of the contested urban spaces in Berlin, amongst others Teufelsberg and the Automobil-Verkehrs- und Übungs-Straße, better known as AVUS-track. Ahmemulic has looked into how our receptions of these inconvenient historic spaces are tainted by their appearance in fiction, for instance in movies. In her artistic production she uses both visual, filmic and auditive strategies investigating the construction of contested urban spaces and their manifold layers of history.

Claire Melhuish, social anthropologist, Brunell University, London.

Melhuish's research is concerned with the social and cultural origins of Modern Movement architecture and how we interpret its cultural legacy and significance today. Based on a long-term ethnographic study of a 1960ies concrete 'megastructure' in London, Melhuish focuses on a comparison of perceptions of this building from the 'inside' and 'outside' and she discusses what relation official evaluations of architecture as cultural heritage may bear to everyday experience of domestic and urban life within a non-traditional built environment.

Hermann Czech, architect, Vienna.

The heterogeneous architectural work of Hermann Czech comprises unbuilt projects, dwellings, schools and hotels, exhibition designs as well as interventions of a small scale. He has taught at Harvard, ETH Zurich and TU Vienna and has published a wide array of theoretical and critical texts on architecture. Both in practice, writing and teaching, Czech works with a strong consciousness of local contexts of forms of use and forms of production, consciously embracing contradictions existing within these. "Conversion" plays a central role in Czech's theory, both as a type of architectural job and as a theoretical concept.

Practical information

The seminar takes place at Det Informationsvidenskabelige Akademi (IVA) / The Royal School of Library and Information Science, Birketinget 6, 2300 Copenhagen S, class room C6.02. www.iva.dk

The nearest Metro station is "DR Byen/Universitetet". Check www.rejseplanen.dk for transport options.

The seminar will be held in English.

Participation is free of charge.

At the end of the seminar, participants will receive a certificate confirming their attendance, stating their accrued ECTS credits. 2 ECTS will be given for full participation; 3 ECTS will be given for full participation with paper presentation.