

ARCHITECTURE AS COLLABORATION

Dissertation workshop 2021/2022

Tutor: Ksenia Litvinenko



Still image from “Koolhaas Houselife” (2016) by Ila Bêka and Louise Lemoine

Abstract

Histories of architecture often operate with concepts of “authorship” and “influence,” centring the figure of the architect and the creative aspects of architectural work. In contrast, this group will explore contemporary approaches to architectural labour as a lens to craft more relational accounts of architectural practice that are perceptive to collaborative and routine aspects of design and the material production and maintenance of buildings. The workshop is interested in reflecting upon the synchronic and diachronic relationships between architectural workers and other co-producers of historical and contemporary built environments — draughtsmen, construction workers, engineers, maintainers and urban residents. By attending to relationships, in the words of Peggy Deamer, between “intention and execution, thinking and making, opportunity and liability, and innovation and responsibility” (Deamer 2010), workshop participants will develop more situated portraits of architectural practice based on archival research, oral history, and/or secondary literature analysis.

Keywords

Work; Labour; Care; Collaboration; Politics of Architecture; Built environment; Construction history

Schedule

Tuesday, November 16 2021, 9.00am – 12.00pm (GMT)

First Meeting (Group Meeting)

Reading Seminar 1 and Presentation of Research Interests

Beginning with the discussion of the core analytical concepts — work and labour — the first reading seminar will highlight the changing character of the architectural profession from the historical perspective and its embeddedness in broader economic, political and socio-technical contexts. Students will be asked to discuss the assigned readings and map out initial ideas for their dissertation topics.

Tasks:

1. Students present their preliminary dissertation proposals and research interests (max. 5 minutes oral presentation, Powerpoint slides are optional). You can pitch your idea around a specific case study, question, historical artefact, or research problem. What aspect of architectural work from a contemporary/historical perspective would you like to learn more about? Are you interested in conducting a theoretical/empirical study or both? Would you like to choose a specific geographical area/region or even a particular design practice as your research focus?
2. Students should also read the following texts and identify questions and points of interest that could be useful for developing a research question for their dissertations:

Readings

Work and labour in the history of the architectural profession

- Deamer, P. in conversation with Levinson, N. (2020) "Architectural Workers," *Places journal*, URL: <https://placesjournal.org/article/architectural-workers/?cn-reloaded=1#0>
- Stanek, L. (2020) "Gift, Credit, Barter: Architectural Mobilities in Global Socialism," *e-flux Architecture*, URL: <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/housing/337850/gift-credit-barter-architectural-mobilities-in-global-socialism/>
- Davis, H. "Four Building Cultures in History: From Medieval London to Modern New York," In Davis, H. *The Culture of Building*, Oxford University Press, pp. 43-66.
- Osman, M. (2019) "Specifying: The Generality of Clerical Labor," In: Zeynep Çelik Alexander and John May (ed.) *Design Technics: Archaeologies of Architectural Practice*, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 129-162.
- Tombesi, P. (2010) "On Cultural Separation of Design Labour," In Bernstein, P. and Deamer, P. (ed.) *Building (in) the Future : Recasting Labor in Architecture*, Princeton Architectural Press. pp. 117-136.

Tuesday, November 30 2021, 9.00 am – 12.00 pm (GMT)

Second Meeting (Group Meeting)

Reading Seminar 2, input on Academic Writing and Structure of Dissertation, Presentations of 'Mind-Maps'

The workshop will further situate architectural work within construction history by exploring writings on the material production of buildings and cities. The session will give students the means to reflect on the politics of extraction, architects' responsibilities and empirical research methods for bringing to light the marginalised voices of construction workers. In this meeting, we will also discuss academic writing requirements and the structure of the dissertation. Building upon the short presentations from the previous session, the students will be asked to prepare and present preliminary 'mind maps' for their dissertations.

Tasks:

1. Prepare and present a 'mind-map' for your research. For example, you can sketch your research topic, hypotheses, theoretical framing, preferred research methods, possible case studies, directions of a literature review, and other ideas (5 min max, 1-2 slides).
2. Input and questions on academic writing and structure of a dissertation.
3. Students will be asked to read one of four assigned texts and present it as a group to their peers (5 min oral presentation, no slides). Group allocations will be announced after the first reading seminar. Afterwards, we will collectively reflect on how these texts might help better understand the dissertations' research methods.

Readings:

Material production of architecture

- Wall, C. (2019) "It Was a Totally Different Approach to Building!": Constructing Architectural Concrete in 1960s London, In Gosseye, J., Stead, N. and van der Plaats, D. (ed.) *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, pp. 50-75
- Ferro, S. (2018) "Introduction: How to Look at Architecture "From Below", In Kapp, S., Lloyd Thomas, K. and de Almeida Lopes, J. M. (ed.), [*Concrete as Weapon*](#), pp. 1-18.
- Hutton, J. (2019) "Range of Motions: Granite from Vinalhaven, Maine, to Broadway, 1892," In Hutton, J., *Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements*, London: Routledge, pp. 64-101.
- Tonetti, A. C. and Nobre, Ligia V. (2019) "Counter-Conducts: Politics of Architecture and Labor in Brazil," In Fitz, A. and Krasny, E. (ed.) *Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 78-90.

Tuesday, January 11-2022, 10 am – 12 pm (GMT)

Third Tutorial (Group Meeting)

Reading Seminar 3

The final reading seminar will engage with the topics of care and maintenance of designed buildings and infrastructures. The assigned texts discuss the role of volunteers and urban residents in sustaining and repairing a public library in Manchester (UK), a housing block in Vinh (Vietnam) and Egypt's irrigation system, foregrounding their everyday maintenance and care work. This meeting will also discuss research design and set requirements for dissertation proformas to be submitted by the end of the following week.

Tasks:

1. Students will be asked to read a selection of texts and prepare questions or points for discussion – concerning their dissertation topic. The readings might be adjusted later to address the emerging dissertation topics in the group.
2. Input and questions on research design, explanation of dissertation proformas.

Readings:

Maintenance and Care Work

- Mattern, S. (2018), "Maintenance and Care," *Places Journal*, URL: <https://placesjournal.org/article/maintenance-and-care/>
- Graziano, V. and Trogal, K. (2019) "Handling Replacement: Tending to a Local Library and Repair Center" In Fitz, A. and Krasny, E. (ed.) (2019). *Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 99-107.
- Schwenkel, C. (2020) "Renovation," In Schwenkel, C. *Building Socialism: The Afterlife of East German Architecture in Urban Vietnam*, Duke University Press, pp. 260-292.
- Barnes, J. (2017) "States of maintenance: Power, politics, and Egypt's irrigation infrastructure," *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, Vol. 35(1): 146–164.

DEADLINE: Send your dissertation proforma by the end of **Monday, January 24, 2022**, at the latest. The dissertation proforma is essentially an extended abstract of your thesis that summarises the main topic, and research question/hypothesis, provides a paragraph on methodology, describes the case(s) to be used, and outlines the main areas of the bibliography for your dissertation.

Tuesday, January 25, 2021, 10.00 am-12.00 pm (GMT)

Fourth Tutorial (Group Meeting)

Workshop on Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

There will be a presentation + QA on the literature review, its structure, and its role in the thesis.

Tasks:

1. Please come with questions about the literature review.
2. Each student will select a literature review section from a [MArch thesis](#) of their choice. They will be asked to do a 5-minute presentation on the literature review structure, the main arguments, the theoretical framework, and identified research gaps (you can show the text to the group via share screen, no Powerpoint necessary).
3. Following presentations of existing literature reviews, each student will be asked to reflect upon a plan for their literature review with examples of titles to be analysed and preferred theoretical framework (5 minutes each).

Tuesday 8 February 2022, 10.00 am-12.00 pm (GMT)

Fifth Tutorial (Group Meeting)

Workshop on Literature Review, Research Methods, Dissertation Structure, Bibliographies, Referencing System

This workshop will provide space to discuss your ongoing work, and ask questions on the literature review, research methods, dissertation structure, and bibliographies. This is a

feedback-oriented meeting, so please prepare questions and be open to commenting on your group peers' work. The tutor will deliver a short lecture on the Harvard-style referencing system.

Tasks:

1. Please be prepared to present and discuss the preliminary table of contents (structure of your thesis) (max. 5 min, 1 slide or a word file).
2. Short input and questions on the referencing system and bibliographies will be provided.

DEADLINE: Submit your draft of the literature review (2000 words) and your table of contents by **Monday, the 1st of March 2021**.

Monday, 11 March 2022 and Tuesday, 22 March 2021, time TBC
Sixth Tutorial (Individual Meetings)

Students will attend 30-min individual meetings to discuss the literature review and table of contents submission. The tutor will provide feedback and ask questions concerning ongoing data collection.

Tasks:

1. Please come prepared to discuss your data collection and fieldwork plan and how you aim to analyse your data (conceptual/theoretical framework). We can also use the time to discuss the data and analysis you have already completed.

Monday, 22 March 2021 and Tuesday, 23 March 2021, time TBC
Seventh Tutorial (Individual)

Students will attend 30-min individual meetings to 'check in' and ask questions/feedback on the ongoing work, whether a piece of writing, revised dissertation structure, research design or a data analysis question.

DEADLINE: Send a complete draft of your dissertation by Monday, the **12th of April 2021**, at the latest.

Monday, 26 April 2022, time TBC
Eighth Tutorial (Individual)

This final 1-hour individual tutorial will be organised for feedback on the complete draft of your thesis. Please come prepared with final questions about the dissertation.

DEADLINE: Final submission date: **May 6th, 2022**.

Bibliography

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- Fitz, A. and Krasny, E. (ed.) (2019). *Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
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- Peggy Deamer In Conversation With Nancy Levinson, "Architectural Workers," *Places Journal*, September 2020. Accessed 09 Oct 2020, <https://doi.org/10.22269/200908>
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Digital resources

- Architecture Lobby, <https://architecture-lobby.org/>
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- Bêka & Lemoine, *Koolhaas Houselife*, 2016, <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/koolhaashouselife>

- Christine Wall, [BUILDING BRUTALISM: CONSTRUCTING IN-SITU CONCRETE IN 1960'S LONDON](#), God is in the Detail: Architecture, Labour, and the Politics of Construction, Symposium at the AA, 20th November 2020.
- Festival of Maintenance, <https://festivalofmaintenance.org.uk/>
- From Domesticity to Modernity: What was Home Economics?, <https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/homeEc/default.html>
- [God is in the Detail: Architecture, Labour, and the Politics of Construction, Symposium at the AA](#), 20 November 2020.
- Jane Hutton, [Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements](#), The AA Seminar, 16th February 2021.
- Katie Lloyd Thomas, [NEW SITES OF LABOUR:](#)
- Maria Sheherazade Giudici, [HOC OPUS, HIC LABOR: TECHNOLOGIES OF THE VISIBLE AND OF THE INVISIBLE IN ANCIENT ROMAN ARCHITECTURE](#), God is in the Detail: Architecture, Labour, and the Politics of Construction, Symposium at the AA, 20th November 2020.
- Peggy Deamer, [Architecture and labor: Peggy Deamer](#), TEDxCalArts, 19th June 2014.
- Peggy Deamer, [Architecture and Labor: Peggy Deamer with UVW-Saw](#), The Architecture Foundation, 24th November 2020.
- [PROPRIETARY SPECIFICATION AND THE RISE OF BUILDING PRODUCTS IN INTERWAR BRITAIN](#), God is in the Detail: Architecture, Labour, and the Politics of Construction, Symposium at the AA, 20th November 2020.
- The Maintainers, <https://themaintainers.org/>
- Translating Ferro, Transforming Knowledges, <https://www.tf-tk.com/>
- Who Builds Your Architecture? (WBYA?), <http://whobuilds.org/about/>