



Concrete Geometries: Spatial Form in Social and Aesthetic Processes

15 October 2010

Concrete Geometries is a work-in-progress term derived from the synthesis of 'concrete', registering an existing reality or actual experience, and the abbreviation 'geometries', denoting spatial form.

Set up as a research cluster at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, Concrete Geometries is seeking new ways of thinking about spatial form as a socially engaged and experientially relevant tool.

The day will be structured into two thematic fields and four discussion blocks, each consisting of a series of four short illustrated presentations followed by a roundtable discussion. All sessions will be chaired by Marianne Mueller and Olaf Kneer together with an invited guest.

Morning Session Thematic Field A: Geometry and Perception

9.45am Brett Steele (Director, AA)
Opening Remarks

9.50am Marianne Mueller & Olaf Kneer (directors, Concrete Geometries), Welcome

1: Perception and Cognition

10–11.30am

Walter Benjamin argues that the interaction with architectural space happens in a state of distraction ('Zerstreuung') or low level of consciousness. For works in this category, processes of perception and their relation to geometry are in the foreground.

10am Dr Toni Kotnik (studio master and senior researcher, Architectural Association and ETH Zurich), 'Towards Perceptive Geometry'

10.15am Christine Rusche (artist, Germany), 'Room Drawings'

10.30am Eric Martijn (artist, Netherlands), 'Sloped Floor'

10.45am Jaime Gili (artist, Venezuela/UK), 'Diamante de las Semilitas'

11am Roundtable discussion
guest chair: Christian Derix (head of computational design and research, Aedas|R&D)

2: Sensory Engagement

11.45am – 2pm

This block discusses works that explore immediate sensory experiences, involving many bodily senses, a type of immersion. Dealing with atmo-

sphere and phenomenological presences, perception is here defined as a process of engagement, involving the user / viewer as a participant, a process that might involve a response or might develop a social dimension.

11.45am Jane Hutton (landscape designer, Canada) & Adrian Blackwell (visual artist and urbanist, Canada), 'Dymaxion Sleep'

12.00pm Craig Scott (principal, Iwamoto Scott Architecture, USA), 'Voussoir Cloud'

12.15pm Susanne Hofmann (founding director, Die Baupiloten, Germany), 'Form Follows Fiction'

12.30pm Sandra Manninger (founder, SPAN Architecture & Design, Austria), 'Sense and Advanced Sensibility'

12.45pm Roundtable discussion
guest chair: TBC

Afternoon Session Thematic Field B: Geometry and Social Processes

3: Relational Space

2–3.15pm

Works in this category explore the notion of spatial form as providing literal and immediate support for the unfolding of social situations, the creation of human relations and their social contexts as a practice, the geometry of social environments and the production of intersubjective encounters.

2pm Kathrin Böhm (public works, UK), 'Who is building what. Relational practice and spatial production'

2.15pm Fran Cottell (artist, UK), 'House Installation Project'

2.30pm Isabelle Doucet (researcher, Manchester Architecture Research Centre), 'Architecture's Concrete Engagement with the Real: What About the Idiots?'

2.45pm Robert Mantho & Joanna Crotch (researcher, Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art), 'Social Spatial Genesis: Activity Centred Space Making'

3pm Roundtable discussion
guest chair: Kieran Long (architectural critic and broadcaster)

4: Social Contracts

3.45–5.15pm

Legal systems use spatial and territorial configurations to organize how we live together. The basis of this is a type of contract or agreement. Works in this category investigate how societies are organized through spatial and geometric means. This involves an aspect of aspiration – we are looking for utopian rather than dystopian interpretations.

3.45pm Graziela Kunsch (artist, Brazil) & Rafi Segal (architect and writer, USA), 'Anti-Homeless Ramp'

4pm Sabine Müller (SMAQ architecture, Germany), 'Charter of Dubai'

4.15pm Lukas Einsele (artist, Germany), 'Moments of an M85 – Zenon's arrow retraced'

4.30pm Vincent Wittenberg (designer, The Netherlands), 'Familiar Site'

4.45pm Roundtable discussion
guest chair: Ines Weizman (architect and theorist, London Metropolitan University and the Architectural Association)

5.15pm Conclusions

The symposium is part of the AA's Public Programme, an extensive series of public events dedicated to contemporary architectural culture. Admission is free.

Organized by Marianne Mueller and Olaf Kneer.

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