

Symposium: Concrete Geometries – Spatial Form in Social and Aesthetic Processes at the Architectural Association

Friday 15th October 2010

**Architectural Association, 36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES, UK
Main Lecture Hall**

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. The format of each block is a series of four short illustrated presentations followed by a round table discussion. All sessions will be chaired by Marianne Mueller and Olaf Kneer together with an invited guest.

Schedule:

morning session: Thematic Field A: Geometry and Perception

9.45 Brett Steele (director, AA), *Opening Remarks*

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

Block 1: 10.00 – 11.30: Perception and Cognition

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. Being revealed to a user / viewer, these often reach a state of awareness.

10.00 Dr Toni Kotnik (studio master and senior researcher, The Architectural Association and ETH Zürich), *'Towards Perceptive Geometry'*

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

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

10.45 Jaime Gili (artist, Venezuela/UK), *'Diamante de las Semillitas'*

11.00 – 11.30 round table discussion

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

Block 2: 11.45 – 13.15: Sensory Engagement

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

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

12.00 Craig Scott (principle Iwamoto Scott Architecture, USA), *'Voussoir Cloud'*

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

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

12.45 – 13.15 round table discussion

guest chair: to be confirmed

Lunch: 13.15 - 14.00

afternoon session: *Thematic Field B: Geometry and Social Processes*

Block 3: 14.00 – 15.15: Relational Space

Works in this category are exploring 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.

- 14.00 Kathrin Böhm (public works, UK), *'Who is building what. Relational practice and spatial production'*
- 14.15 Fran Cottell (artist, UK), *'House Installation Project'*
- 14.30 Isabelle Doucet (researcher, Manchester Architecture Research Centre), *'Architecture's Concrete Engagement with the Real: What About the Idiots?'*
- 14.45 Robert Mantho & Joanna Crotch (researcher, Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art), *'Social Spatial Genesis. Activity Centered Space Making'*

15.00 – 15.30 round table discussion
guest chair: Kieran Long (architectural critic and broadcaster)

Coffee: 15.30 - 15.45

Block 4: 15.45 – 17.15: Social Contracts

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 organised through spatial and geometric means. This involves an aspect of aspiration – we are looking for utopian rather than dystopian interpretations.

- 15.45 Graziela Kunsch (artist, Brazil) & Rafi Segal (architect and writer, USA), *'Anti-Homeless Ramp'*
- 16.00 Sabine Müller (SMAQ architecture, Germany), *'Charter of Dubai'*
- 16.15 Lukas Einsele (artist, Germany), *'Moments of an M85 – Zenon's arrow retraced'*
- 16.30 Vincent Wittenberg (designer, The Netherlands), *'Familiar Site'*

16.45 – 17.15: round table discussion
guest chair: Ines Weizman (architect and theorist, London Metropolitan University and the Architectural Association)

17.15: roundup

The symposium is part of the AA's Public Programme, an extensive series of public events dedicated to contemporary architectural culture. The language will be English and the admission is free.

Organized by Marianne Mueller and Olaf Kneer.

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