

# Critical Studies Design Studio

## About the Studio

The Critical Studies Design Studio engages in critical and feminist strategies for the production of architecture and design. Subversive and dialogical design and research practices are applied to specific themes and/or locations in the four courses: Feminist Design Tools, Dialogical Interventions, Participatory Mapping, and Altering Practices.

Throughout the design projects and in our seminars we engage in the notion of an altering practice, both in terms of understanding the change of existing conditions that each architectural project can bring about, and in terms of understanding how one's own future practice as an architect can be conducted in such a way as to actively engage in social transformation. The studio provides 4th- and 5th-year students an opportunity to work through critical and experimental design methods, with the support of lectures, workshops, tutorials and seminars.

A unique aspect of our studio is the integration of writing and making practices, preparing students for both professional practice, as well as research positions, and supporting the student to position oneself, to reflect and to imagine otherwise. The studio facilities are located in Tensta and at KTH, which provides a great potential to develop place-specific projects, involving important social issues and specific narratives of people in the area.

## Courses

### 4:1 (A42K1B) and 5:1 (A52K1B) Feminist Design Tools

Course leader: Katarina Bonnevier

This studio evolves in a rapid stream of production, expanding around ideas of fictional sites and fictive memories. We enter into the domain of exaggerations, a maximum-architecture whose main interest is to provoke sensibilities. Feminist Design Tools aims to develop critical skills, methods and projects in order to identify, explore and propose new or alternative possibilities within the thought and practice of architecture and design – to initiate a realization of dreams of transformation.

### 4:2 (A42K3B) and 5:2 (A52K3B) Dialogical Interventions

Course leader: Brady Burroughs

This studio develops architectural design projects in dialogue with a historical, physical and theoretical context, where a critical approach to power relations is used to synthesize, shift and transform the thought and practice within architecture and design. Through the design of physical interventions, we will explore the relationship between power and the built environment. Dialogical Interventions aim to develop the ability to work with architectural design through a combination of generative and explorative critical perspectives.

### 4:3 (A42K2B) Participatory Mapping

Course leader: Meike Schalk

This studio develops tools for spatial research, collecting site-specific knowledge through narrative methods, and building a participatory engagement with sites, contexts and actors. The application of feminist and activist methods and tools unearths a specific knowledge of sites, which complements analytical and generalized instruments for the purpose of planning with personal, subjective, and narrative accounts. Urban proposals will be developed, which consider the intimate scale of 1:1 as well as larger conceptual frameworks.

### 4:4 (A42K4B) Altering Practices

Course leaders: Katarina Bonnevier, Brady Burroughs, Meike Schalk

This studio builds on urban and architectural proposals developed in previous projects and explores methods for articulating their transformative potential in an extended geographical and temporal perspective. The design process engages further mapping and critical writing practices that are employed to expand and develop the architectural, material, and programmatic precision of proposed urban and architectural interventions.

## Studio culture

The Critical Studies Design Studio is a place where we engage in design and research, and we do this in an integrated way. Architectural design projects produce knowledge and instigate change. In our projects we will frequently return to questions such as, what knowledge have we gained here and how will this project alter the conditions right here, who may benefit from this change, who might not? Research in our studio is pursued both as you build up your individual portfolio of design projects and collectively as we test out and develop new critical design methods in collaboration. A series of research and methodology seminars will support this aspect of the studio which includes during the autumn producing a booklet to clarify individual design and research questions, programs, methodologies and concepts.

Students will be required to make a connection between their work and the effect it may have 'outside' of the academic environment, raising questions about social responsibility through architectural means. Combining resources between the masters studio and the FATALE elective courses in Architecture and Gender, we anticipate a vital exchange amongst participants with various backgrounds and build an international network for future work and collaborations.

Thérèse Kristiansson and Annika Enqvist from The New Beauty Council are planning this year's study trip scheduled for Berlin. We will visit projects and meet planners and architects pursuing critical urban and spatial practices in Berlin and elsewhere, which are inclusive and dialogical. In Berlin we find a great number of innovative approaches to participatory urban development and regeneration, such as the system of Quartiersmanagement, a form of participatory urban redevelopment of spaces of social conflict, and Zwischennutzungsagentur, working as agents for temporarily unoccupied urban spaces.

The studio promotes a critical design practice engaging in issues of gender and power relations. The core teaching team form the feminist architecture group FATALE ([www.fatale.nu](http://www.fatale.nu)) founded in 2007. Our aim is to increase the awareness and knowledge about the effect of gender perceptions and assumptions on the subject of architecture, as well as the effect of architecture/the built environment on gender perceptions. To reflect on how these perceptions are promoted within education, how they are formed, reproduced and maintained in professional life, and to use this critical perspective to reform and revitalize the subject.

Specific readings will be addressed in studio workshops and lectures, as well as in theory and methods seminars. The titles mentioned below are central references for our studio work throughout the year.

*Altering Practices* (Doina Petrescu (ed.), Taylor and Francis, 2006)  
*Architecture and Participation* (Peter Blundell Jones et al. (eds.), Spon Press, 2005)  
*Gender Space Architecture* (Jane Rendell et al. (eds.) Routledge, 2000)  
*Negotiating Domesticity* (Hilde Heynen & Gulsum Baydar, eds., Routledge, 2005)  
*The Pragmatist Imagination* (Joan Ockman (ed.), Princeton Architectural Press, 2000)  
*Transforming Knowledge* (Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich, Temple University Press, 2005)

## Tutors, Teachers, Professors

- Katarina Bonnevier, Architect and PhD. Teacher and researcher at KTH School of Architecture. Author of *Behind Straight Curtains – Towards a Queer-feminist Theory of Architecture* (AxilBooks 2007).
- Brady Burroughs, Architect. Teacher at KTH School of Architecture. Author of "Do Bodies Matter? : Stone, water, light, skin and material performativity in Therme Vals" (Stockholm University 2007).
- Katja Grillner, Architect and Professor, Critical Studies in Architecture, KTH School of Architecture. Author of *Ramble, Linger and Gaze – Dialogues from the Landscape Garden* (KTH 2000) and co-editor of *Architecture and Authorship* (Black dog publishing 2007).
- Meike Schalk, Architect and PhD. Teacher and researcher at KTH School of Architecture. Author of *Imagining the Organic City – Modern Tropes of Organization* (SLU, Alnarp 2007).
- During the autumn we are collaborating with Thérèse Kristiansson and Annika Enqvist from the New Beauty Council who will participate as tutors in the projects as well as arrange the international study trip and the lecture series.

