

# *postmillenium practices*

## **- critical theory in architecture – xakt 2002**

**Time:** Dec 18th 2002, 13-20  
**Place:** KTH School of Architecture,  
Östermalmsg 26, Stockholm,  
Lecturehall A2

**A one-day conference outlining the research practices of xakt, a research group at the KTH School of Architecture pursuing critical and creative research into the fields of architecture and critical theory.**

**Issues:** *For example...*

*What are the responsibilities of the architect in producing and protecting public space, whose desires does it fulfil, what do we mean by public space today?*

*What role has architecture played, and does still play, in the construction of national identity, and what does it take to destabilise this operation?*

*What are the natures of the realities in which and through which architecture operates today, where do we find the sites in which architecture has the potential to pose questions of acute relevance for a contemporary society?*

*How is the architect as a figure constituted at a time where professional boundaries blur, how has the authority of the architect been maintained through history, and is today the time of its creative deconstruction?*

**Program:** The afternoon will be divided into four sessions chaired by Sven-Olov Wallenstein:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 13-14.15    | Power and Public Desire   |
| 14.30-15.30 | Constructing the nation – Questioning Authenticity                          |
| 16-17       | Operational Realities   |
| 17.15-18.15 | Architecture and its Mythologies - Authorship Judgement and Representation. |
| 18.15-19    | General discussion  |
| 19-         | Bar   |

Each speaker will give a ten minute presentation, after the three presentations, 30 minutes of discussion will follow in each session.

**Coordinators:** Katja Grillner, Katarina Bonnevier, Anna Odlinge, Lars Raattamaa

**Presentations by:** Tim Anstey, Thordis Arrhenius, Ana Betancour, Katarina Bonnevier, Catharina Gabrielsson, Katja Grillner, Rolf Hughes, Ulrika Karlsson, Helena Mattson, Anna Odlinge, Lars Raattamaa, Meike Schalk, Malin Zimm

**Moderator:** Sven-Olov Wallenstein

# **abstracts**

13-14.15

## ***Power and Public Desire***

**Catharina Gabrielsson**

### *Public Space as Medium*

Today public space is generally understood as a 'construction' - something we create. There is no ideal past to return to. Public space may be regarded as a place, as part of an urban, social and political reality, and, as an architectural and artistic expression. In this investigation, I understand public space as a medium, a surface onto which differences and conflicts (both visual and discursive) are projected, of and for society. Public spaces is, when regarded from this view-point, put into relation with the concept of democracy, which in its turn, also constantly changes and is constituted a new in every moment. I will develop this perspective in relation to Lefort.

**Lars Raattamaa**

### *Criticism of Power – Criticism of Space*

What about the values in architecture? Are they eternal or not? Is there any such thing as golden proportions? Or where do the values come from. This is my practice: to try to understand why we prefer something instead of something else. Architecture is a matter of taste – that's why it is a matter of power, and that's why it is a matter of negotiation, that is theory. And it goes all along all makings of spaces, from the mirrors of John Soane's breakfast parlour to the discussions of who is deciding if a shopping-mall is a public space.

**Helena Mattson**

### *Architecture and Consumption*

I will discuss the relation between architecture and consumption from the viewpoint of Reyner Banham's concept of an "expendable aesthetic". I will also raise the question of inscribing studies in architecture in a wider field of cultural and economic production.

14.30-15.30

## ***Constructing the Nation – Questioning Authenticity***

**Thordis Arrhenius**

### *The Fragile Monument - On Modernity and Conservation*

The presentation will focus on the art-historian Alois Riegl's notion of Intentional and Unintentional monuments as formulated in his essay the *Modern Cult of Monuments, its Character and Origin* published 1903 in Vienna.

## **Katarina Bonnevier**

### *Looking at the World's Columbian Exposition.*

There are stories about power and gender concealed within the surface of architecture. By looking at the overlooked this research is attempting to unveil scenes and patterns hidden in the constraint of bipolar opposition. The stage for the investigation is The World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893 and the practice is theatrical. Working title of thesis: The Decorative/Theatrical Art of Architecture – Ornaments, Coulisses and Other Figures.

## **Meike Schalk**

### *The Opposition City-Countryside*

"The Opposition City-Countryside," investigates the application of marxist thought to political activism in the realm of art, urban sociological practice, cultural criticism, and urban design theories, between the 1920s and 1970s.

## **Ana Betancour**

### *Latin American Modernity – Buenos Aires 20's-30's*

16-17

## **Operational Realities**

### **Ulrika Karlsson**

#### *Design and research collaboration*

Through a couple of examples (Lobbiports and Lattice Archipelogs)I will be discussing non-goal oriented research, a mode of research within the design and research collaborative SERVO.

### **Malin Zimm**

#### *Dreamscape- digitally distributed research in progress (the Dying Dreamer - Architecture of Parallel Realities)*

In Dreamscape (the Dying Dreamer - Architecture of Parallel Realities) my research project will be presented through the interface of a hypertextual field of navigation: the digital Dreamscape. The project investigates the processes of turning dreams into physical space, exemplified by four extraordinary creators and collectors of space, each one a pursuer of obsessive architectural activities, all haunted by transitive dreams. These artists and architects will function as "dreamguides" in this transgressive realm from straight paperwork into non-linear explorative form, and bring the architectural experience in virtual space to illustrate its own perceptual and representational problems. The study includes an analysis of Joris-Karl Huysmans' novel Against Nature (original title À Rebours, 1884).

## **Anna Odlinge**

### *Form in the Margins*

*In my work as an architect, presently constituted by the writing of my dissertation "Form in the margins", I use the concepts of marginality, autonomy, context, integrity and integration. The present project is a three-dimensional weave made of studies, thoughts and text. The studies concern America during a few decades of the first half of the last century; they are performed through texts of Frank Lloyd Wright and of Ayn Rand. The thoughts concern my position as a researcher; they are guided by the texts of Jean François Lyotard. They also concern architectural objects; they are defined with the help of the above concepts and their extensions. The text verbalizes the first two parts and is defined by its margin, which in its turn is accentuated by me.*

**17.15-18.15**

## **Architecture and its Mythologies – Authorship Judgement and Representation**

*Architecture and its Mythologies – Authorship Judgement and Representation* is a collaborative research project at the KTH School of Architecture in Stockholm starting up in January 2003. It examines authorship, judgement and representation as three critical concepts in the formation and transformation of the discipline of architecture as it relates to other artistic and professional disciplines and aims at providing a deeper understanding of the different features that make up our contemporary idea of the architect. It involves the researchers Katja Grillner, Timothy Anstey, and Rolf Gullström-Hughes, who will present their respective parts of the research project.

## **Timothy Anstey**

### *15<sup>th</sup> century foundations for modern architectural discourse*

Three factors have developed and sustained the discipline of architecture from its modern beginnings: the idea of authorship, the faculty of judgement, and the techniques of representation. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century architects have staked their claims, defended their territories and maintained their status through arguments that find their locus in one or all of these areas. The study will provide an historical account of the origin of the concepts of authorship, judgement, representation as they have been applied to architecture, locating this origin in the writings of Alberti (1402-1472), his activities as an architect, and the artistic culture of 15<sup>th</sup> century Italy. In developing such a thesis, the study will argue for the structural importance of these categories to later architectural discourse, and, as a result, will emphasise their contemporary significance.

## **Katja Grillner**

### *Architects in the Landscape Garden – Challenging authorship, judgement and representation*

The topic of this study is the formation of the theoretical discourse and the role of the garden designer in the 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape garden. The art of landscape gardening evolved during the eighteenth century into a paradigmatic art-form in its bringing together of all other arts - from poetry and painting to architecture - and in its capacity to impress the mind with a multiplicity of sensations and the most sublime and beautiful ideas. The presentation will particularly discuss how, through its alternative theories of design, landscape gardening practice and theory radically challenged the domain of architecture proper, in ways that are still not fully comprehended, and that remain highly significant for the development of architecture, cities and landscapes today.

## Rolf Hughes

### *Hybrid theory: The poetics of design*

Communication is the most central concept in design, yet few writers have fully explored the implications of this for design disciplines. Situations increasingly arise within rhetoric, design and architecture that demand integrative practices for which no professional preparation currently exists. An artefact made by multiple, hybrid (or even non-human) 'authors' demands different criteria of evaluation, as do multiple uses and users of the artefact. A particularly urgent problem concerns the basis and communication of judgement. By exploring relationships between philosophical and literary modes of writing, I seek to isolate certain characteristics of narrative investigation and of philosophical inquiry and ask how these shape relationships to readers and the formation of descriptions and pictures of the world.

## 17.15-19 General discussion

## Participants

**Tim Anstey** is a qualified architect in practice and senior lecturer at the School of Architecture, KTH, Stockholm with responsibility for undergraduate and graduate teaching. His research is concerned with origin narratives for the discipline of architecture and the relation of architectural discourse to that within oratory, theology, music, and law. Member of the xakt research group.

**Thordis Arrhenius** is an architect currently teaching at The KTH School of Architecture in Stockholm. She holds an MArch in the Theory and History of Architecture, AA, London. Her PhD-thesis *The Fragile Monument: On Modernity and Conservation* will be completed in the spring 2003. Member of the xakt research group.

**Ana Betancour** is an architect currently teaching at The KTH School of Architecture in Stockholm, and at the Bartlett School of Architecture, London. She holds an MArch in the Theory and History of Architecture, from the Bartlett. Together with Peter Hasdell she has run P.H.A.B architects. She is pursuing PhD-studies on questions of representation and identity in Latin-American modernity. Member of the xakt research group.

**Katarina Bonnevier** is an architect and PhD student at the School of Architecture, KTH in Stockholm, within the research group fakt. She holds an MArch from Iowa State University, USA as well as KTH and was trained in physical theater at Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, Paris. Since 1998 Bonnevier runs her own office and she is part of the art, performance and architecture group Great Eastern Hotel. Member of the xakt research group.

**Catharina Gabriellsson** is an architect, writer and critic, currently pursuing PhD-studies at the School of Architecture. Since 1998 she has worked for the State Art Council as a project manager for projects on public art, and collaborations between architects and artists. These experiences feed into her research. She is a member of the editorial board of MAMA (currently planning an exhibition at Arkitekturmuseet 2004), a member of Stadsmiljörådet, Member of the board of Arkitekturmuseet, one of the founders of Färgfabriken. She is also a practicing architect, most recently participating (with Lasse Vretblad) in the invited competition for a Swedish Embassy in Washington DC. Member of the xakt research group.

**Katja Grillner** is an architect, researcher and critic, practising in Stockholm, Sweden. She is a senior lecturer at The KTH School of Architecture in Stockholm. She holds a PhD from KTH, and a MArch from the Theory and History of Architecture program at McGill University, Montreal. In her role as architectural critic and educator Grillner has been engaged since two years at White architects. Her latest publications are *Just White - Handbok för Framtidens Arkitektur* (White Arkitekter, 2001) and

*Ramble, Linger, and Gaze: Dialogues from the Landscape Garden* (KTH, 2000). Member and coordinator of the xakt research group.

**Rolf Gullström-Hughes** is an English writer and researcher whose fiction has been published in Britain and the USA as well as broadcast on BBC and Sveriges Radio. He holds a PhD in Creative and Critical writing from the University of East Anglia. He is the director of *Metamorphosis: Centre for Performance and Writing Research*, and a researcher in *Architecture and its Mythologies*, a research project at the KTH School of Architecture. Member of the xakt research group.

**Ulrika Karlsson** is a landscape architect and a PhD student at the School of Architecture. She holds an MArch degree from Columbia University. She is a founding member of the international design collaborative *serv.o*, which has exhibited their works widely, most recently in *Latent Utopias*, Graz, Austria, and at the Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York. Member of the xakt research group.

**Helena Mattsson** is an architect, and a PhD student at the School of Architecture; KTH. She is also an editor of the magazine SITE. Her PhD-thesis *Arkitektur och konsumtion - en studie av Reyner Banhams utbyttbarhetens estetik* will be completed in the spring of 2003. Member of the xakt research group.

**Anna Odlinge** is an architect and PhD student at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, Sweden. She holds a MofArch from SCI-arc, in Los Angeles, California, as well as a MofArch from the KTH, after studies in Stockholm and Switzerland. She also studied Astrophysics at the University of Umeå, as well as at the Observatory of Stockholm in Saltsjöbaden, Sweden. For the past two years she has been teaching at the KTH, as well as she has been involved as an editor. Member of the xakt research group.

**Lars Mikael Raattamaa.** Architect and Poet. As architect: 1:st price in the competition on the Pro Forma Theatre and Culture centre in Oerestad, with Great Eastern Hotel (Katarina Bonnevier, Klas Ruin, Elin Strand, and myself), Copenhagen; Centre of physics and astrology, Stockholm, with Henning Larsen; As poet: Latest book, *Helgonlegenderna: väv*, some poems are translated to English, Spanish, Lithuanian. Member of the xakt research group.

**Meike Schalk** AADipl, PhD-student at the Department of Landscape Planning Alnarp, SLU, educated as an architect in Berlin and London, has worked in architectural practices since 1989, has taught architectural and urban design at the School of Architecture KTH in Stockholm since 1997, was responsible guest editor for: "feminine practices," MAMA (magasin för modern arkitektur) 26, 2000, is an editor for the magazine SITE. Member of the xakt research group.

**Sven-Olov Wallenstein** is a lecturer in art theory at Konstfack, in Philosophy at Södertörns Högskola, he is also teaching architectural theory at the KTH School of Architecture, Stockholm. Chief editor of the journal SITE and has translated books by Frege, Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas and Deleuze. He has published widely on contemporary art and philosophy. Among his most recent publications are *Heideggers väg* (1999, with Daniel Birnbaum), the anthology *Arkitekturteorier* (1999), *Bildstrider: Föreläsningar om estetisk teori* (2001), and *Den sista bilden: Det moderna måleriets kriser och förvandlingar* (2002). Forthcoming publications include *Den moderna arkitekturens filosofier*, and translations of Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, och Gilles Deleuze, *Folding*.

**xakt** is a research group pursuing studies in the field of critical theory in architecture at the KTH School of Architecture. It was founded in January 2002. Coordinator Katja Grillner.

**Malin Zimm** graduated as an architect in 1999 at the School of Architecture KTH, after having completed two year Diploma course (BA Hons) at the Bartlett, University College London. Zimm started her PhD architecture studies in 2000 at KTH with Dr. Katja Grillner as supervisor. Member of the xakt research group.

# Articles

Timothy Anstey: *Review of Anthony Grafton 'Leon Battista Alberti. Master builder of the Renaissance'* (To be published in *Albertiana*, 2003)

Timothy Anstey, Katja Grillner, and Rolf Hughes: *Research Program for Architecture and its Mythologies – Authorship Judgement and Representation*, 2002.

Thordis Arrhenius: *Unintentional Monuments, Index3-4* 1997

Ana Betancour: *The Interior: Constructions of the Feminine* (Mama 26:2000, *Feminine Practises*, Ed Meike Schalk)

Katarina Bonnevier: *Looking at the World's Columbian Exposition* (To be submitted to NA for publication)

Catharina Gabrielsson: *Om det specifika* (Arkitektur 3:2001); *I slutna rum* (Arkitektur 1:2001)

Katja Grillner: *När arkitektur är arkitektur är arkitektur konst* (Ur *Det transparenta huset*, Red. Thomas Lauri, Statens konstråd 2001)

Ulrika Karlsson: *Corporate vernacular* (SITE 2:2002)

Helena Mattson: *Going Public* (from *Den stora skalan*, Red. Catharina Gabrielson, Statens Konstråd, 2000.)

Anna Odlinge: *Fler och bättre dimensioner*, (MAMA, 1996)

Lars Raattamaa *The representation of Silence in Louis Kahns Writing on Architecture* (To be published in SITE)

Meike Schalk: *The Urban Mental Hospital*, (SITE 2:2002)

Malin Zimm: *The Dying Dreamer*, (Ur *Reflexive Architecture*, AD, Vol 72, no3, 2002)