

# Critical Studies Design Studio

## **FATALE** Feminist Architecture Theory - Analysis Laboratory Education

Studio-teachers: Katarina Bonnevier, Brady Burroughs, Meike Schalk

Co-teachers: Katja Grillner and Lena Villner

Examinor: Katja Grillner

The **FATALE** studio promotes a critical practice where gender acts as a significant analytical category, often through the intersection with other power relations. 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 – both how these perceptions are promoted within education, and how they are formed, reproduced and maintained in professional life – and to use this critical perspective to reform and revitalize the subject. *An altering practice.*

The studio is divided into four project blocks, consisting of both design and research work, as in practice-led research. The primary location of the studio in Tensta provides an enormous potential to develop place-specific projects, involving important issues and specific narratives of people in the area, as well as current projects already in progress. The studio will also meet regularly at the architecture school at KTH in conjunction with weekly studio lectures and seminars, as well as required courses in architecture theory, history and technology.

The studio provides the possibility for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students to work through experimental design methods, with the support of lectures, workshops, tutorials and seminars. Parallel to the course, there is also a series of text seminars with literature on methodology and theory. A unique part of the **FATALE** studio is its effort to work actively with critical writing in relation to making, preparing students for both professional practice, as well as research. Another requirement within the studio, will be to make a connection between design work and the effect it may have 'outside' of the academic environment, raising questions about social responsibility through architectural means. In combining resources between the masters studio and the **FATALE** FoV courses, we anticipate a vital exchange amongst participants with various backgrounds and an interesting base to build up an international network for future work and collaborations.

### Studio course structure

The four projects are structured to didactically perform a progression from 1) becoming acquainted with and beginning to make use of *feminist design tools*, to 2) developing and performing a *participatory mapping* of site-specific spatial and social conditions, to 3) proposing concrete architectural design projects in terms of *dialogical interventions* on-site, and 4) understanding these interventions in terms of their transformative potential, and how they may operate as an *altering practice*. Fourth and fifth year students will generally follow the first two courses together. However, some differences between the two levels will occur in order to prepare fifth year students for thesis work during the spring term. During the third and fourth course, the fourth year will work within some given project limitations while the fifth year students will be challenged to pursue independent explorations.

The **FATALE** studio works with critical and feminist strategies in architecture and design, based on theories of gender, queer, post-colonialism and power relations. The studio engages in subversive and dialogical research and design practices applied to specific themes and/or locations.



### Course descriptions

#### ***Feminist Design Tools*** autumn 2009

Responsible teacher: Katarina Bonnevier in collaboration with **FATALE**

*Feminist Design Tools* is a studio with two parallel aims. It will provide an orientation in contemporary and historical feminist architecture theory, methodology, practice and activism. It also 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.

Framed by feminist references and methods, queer and postcolonial perspectives, where performativity, affect and intersectionality act as central terms, the course applies and develops several productive tools – reflections, texts and actions – to critique power relations in the built environment. We will move between full-scale experiments, re-interpretation/performance, writing/drawing and practice of architecture and design, in a social and historical context as materialized proposals for new realities.

Our site will be Tensta, both as a base for our studio as well as a project-site. Investigations and interventions with this specific location will reflect, question and affect each participant's own experiences, assumptions and positions, while providing a connection to projects already in progress such as *Vision Järva 2030*, *Tensta Arkitekturskola* and other local happenings.

We will conduct a study trip to Berlin and visit the recent Baugruppen-projects, as well as examples of Quartiersmanagement, a form of participatory urban redevelopment of spaces of social conflict. We will also visit intercultural gardens to meet and discuss with some of the main actors pursuing urban and spatial practices in Berlin and elsewhere, which are inclusive and dialogical. Understanding the historical and political dynamics, which lead to different developments, will enable us to speculate on altering practices that instigate change.

## **Participatory Mapping** autumn 2009

Responsible teacher: Meike Schalk, in collaboration with **FATALE**

*Participatory Mapping* is a research studio based on the critical design tools and methods from *Feminist Design Tools*. Its aim is twofold, first, to develop and test tools for spatial research such as methods for collecting site-specific knowledge through narrative methods that - in contrast with more analytical methods - require a participatory engagement with sites, contexts and actors. Second, to explore different modes of representation in relation to the mapping out of found processes. Processes that in their turn generate proposals that inspire a change of existing conditions.

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. Through engaging in a closer dialogue with a site and its agents, participatory and collective forms of acquiring and mapping information are established. This produces material, informative as well as fictional, which has the power of opening up for new site-specific themes and discourses. Urban proposals will be developed, which consider the intimate scale of 1:1 as well as larger conceptual frameworks.

## **Dialogical Interventions** spring 2010

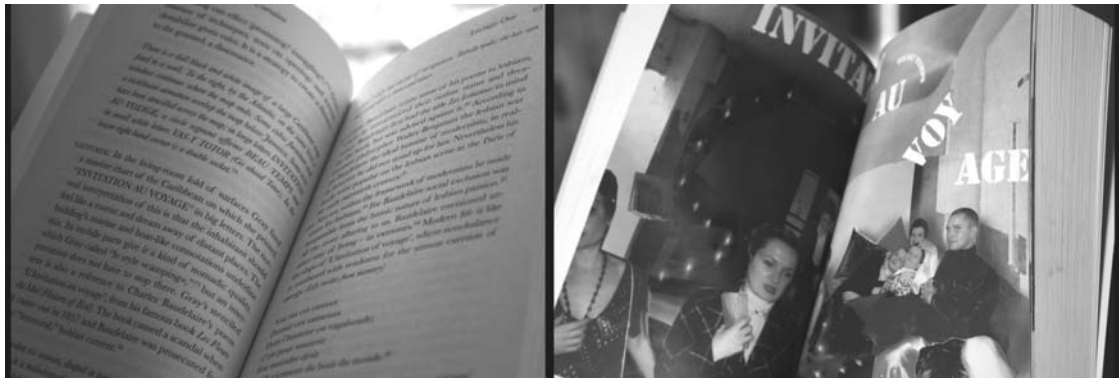
Responsible teacher: Brady Burroughs, in collaboration with **FATALE**

*Dialogical Interventions* is a studio based on design tools and methods developed in the courses *Feminist Design Tools* and *Participatory mapping*. We will develop architectural 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 urbanism, architecture and design. Relationships between space, bodies and places are the main focus. Through physical interventions themes such as diaspora, identity/subjectification, materiality and power in 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works of various scales will be explored. The research conducted through the studio will use practice-based methods considering the architectural design projects to have a principal role in knowledge production. The aim of the course is to develop the ability to work with architectural design supported by a combination of generative and explorative critical perspectives.

## **Altering Practices** spring 2010

Responsible teachers: Brady Burroughs and Meike Schalk, in collaboration with **FATALE**

*Altering practices* is a studio based on critical design tools, methods, and projects developed in the courses *Feminist Design Tools*, *Participatory mapping*, and *Dialogical Interventions*. The principal aim of the course is to develop the capacity to critically understand, evaluate, and contextualise the transformative potential of one's own and others' design projects and practices. The design process will engage further mapping and critical writing practices. With the point of departure from proposed interventions, we will work with methods for imagining our projects' specific transformative potential in an extended geographical and temporal perspective. Further, we will articulate, through self-reflexive and dialogical methods, the practice developed over the course of the year in terms of an altering practice.



### Studio readings

In each project specific readings will be addressed. The titles mentioned below are central references for our studio work throughout the year:

- Altering Practices* (Doina Petrescu (ed.), Taylor ad Francis, 2006)
- Architecture and Participation* (Peter Blundell Jones et.al. (eds.), Spon Press, 2005)
- Feminist Political Theory* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Valerie Bryson, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
- 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)

### Upon completion of these courses, participants should be able to:

- Orient themselves and develop a position within feminist architecture theory and contemporary feminist thought and activism, through central themes such as performativity, affect, intersectionality, diaspora, identity/subjectification, materiality and power.
- Practice, present and design architecture from several academic and political feminist perspectives, through the acts of identification and creation of dialogical strategies and through new modes of representation.
- Recognize, explore and redefine normalizing notions, power structures and situations in the built environment.
- Develop narrative, participatory, dialogical, and subversive strategies for collecting site knowledge and for projecting possible futures.
- Pursue a self reflexive critical practice by understanding and reflecting critically on central notions such as transformative potential, emancipatory strategy, and altering practice.

### Assessment and examination requirements for all courses:

- Minimum of 80% attendance and active participation in scheduled lectures, seminars, reviews and tutorials
- Submit design tasks according to specifications
- Submit research tasks according to specifications
- Documentation and presentation of individual/group work
- Participation in study trips or alternate scheduled activities

**FATALE** is a group of architects, researchers and educators at the School of Architecture, KTH, pursuing research and education within, and through, feminist architecture theory.

**Katarina Bonnevier**, Arkitekt och Fil.Dr. Lärare och forskare vid Arkitekturskolan KTH. Författare bl.a. till avhandlingen *Behind Straight Curtains – Towards a Queer-feminist Theory of Architecture* (AxlBooks 2007). **Brady Burroughs**, Arkitekt. Lärare vid Arkitekturskolan KTH. Författare till kandidatuppsats i genusvetenskap: "Do Bodies Matter? : Stone, water, light, skin and material performativity in Therme Vals" (Stockholms Universitet 2007). **Katja Grillner**, Arkitekt och Professor, Kritiska Studier i Arkitektur. Författare bl.a. till avhandlingen *Ramble, linger and gaze – dialogues from the landscape garden* (KTH 2000) och medredaktör till *Architecture and Authorship* (Black dog publishing 2007). **Meike Schalk**, Arkitekt och Fil.Dr. Lärare och forskare vid Arkitekturskolan KTH. Författare bl.a. till avhandlingen *Imagining the Organic City – Modern Tropes of Organization* (SLU, Alnarp 2007). **Lena Villner**, Docent i Arkitekturhistoria. Lärare och forskare vid Arkitekturskolan KTH. Författare bl.a. till avhandlingen *Tempelman: Arkitekten Olof Tempelman 1745–1816* (Stockholmia förlag 1997)