

Final Report

Project AKTION 84p20 – Architects, Education and Institutional Critique

The project “Architects, Education and Institutional Critique – lecture series” supported by AKTION has been successfully realized according to the project proposal without major changes or problems. The main body of the project – three lectures of Austrian scholars financed by Aktion – took place between April 2 and November 5 2019. The three lectures become part of lecture series “Are we architects? On Education, Architectural Profession and Institutional Critique” that took place at the Faculty of architecture Brno University of Technology during the whole year of 2019.

The three lecturers financed by Aktion were Michelle Howard (Institute for Art and Architecture, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna), Peter-Fattinger (Faculty of Architecture of Vienna University of Technology), Bart Lootsma (Faculty of Architecture of the University of Innsbruck)

Additional participating speakers have been: Dubravka Sekulić, Joan Ockman, Tatjana Schneider, Peter Staub, Johan de Walsche, Miodrag Kuč, Yanze Wang.

Lecture Series Abstract:

In the last fifteen years or so the architectural education has seemed to be increasingly under double pressure. One set of criticisms stems from the recalibration of institutional frameworks and is linked to the so-called “research turn” to which architecture schools and other design disciplines reacted with vaguely articulated approach of research by design or design by research. This subterfuge clearly signals epistemological divide between architecture and other methodologically more grounded sciences. Second set of problems seems to orbit around “eternal” wrestle between theory and practice and such criticism is typically pointing at disconnectedness of architectural education (and by extension academic research in architecture) from the “real world problems” and its relevance to the “real life”. Relevance is precisely the sore point that connects all the anxieties arising from the relation between academia and the architectural profession and by extension from the relation between the profession and the “Society”. By this vector of thought the epistemological question becomes an ontological one: How do we, as architects, relate to the world?

Evaluation and results:

The project helped to foster professional cooperation through a lecture series on the topic “Architects, Education and Institutional Critique”. Involved academicians contributed to the discussion on faculty accreditation process and future orientation of architectural education. The established contacts are basis for further collaboration between the Faculty of Architecture BUT and Austrian academic institutions.

1) Lecture of Michelle Howard, April 2 2019

THE VALUE OF USELESSNESS IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Historians predict that the rise of artificial intelligence will produce a “useless” class that will not only be unemployed, but unemployable. This lecture discusses usefulness and employability in current societal discourse, how these affect the current practice of architecture and proposes alternatives.

Michelle Howard is an architect and educator. She directs a Berlin based practice called constructconcept (COCO) and, since 2008, teaches at the Department of Art and Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. At the Academy she leads the platform for Construction Materials and Technology (CMT) and uses it to explore a program which is documented in the publication Research-Observe-Make. An Alternative Manual for Architectural Education (Birkhäuser Verlag, 2015). It comprises of five complementary books - introduction and theory, the “elemental”, “spatial” and “material” projects, and documentation of workshops, lectures and experiments. Michelle believes that greater perception of and interaction with the world around us can provide untold levels of inspiration, and indeed propose solutions, if we only looked closely enough. Furthermore, when we create something, it is added to an existing framework, it is an intervention in an existing situation with its own unique qualities. Thus developing methods of research and observation to discover and integrate these qualities is paramount. She proposes acting, not just problem-solving, using research and observation to propose new futures for others and the profession.

Recording of the lecture:
<https://youtu.be/c5njNg1GybM>



Relevant links and reports:

<http://www.fa.vutbr.cz/pages/prispevek.aspx?ID=3213&langID=cz>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/426822227860637>

<https://www.tvarchitect.com/clanek/architektka-michelle-howard-vystoupi-na-fakulte-architektury-v-brne-bude-prednaset-o-tom-jak-dulezita-je-neuzitecnost/>

<https://www.archip.eu/events/michelle-howard-are-we-architects>

2) Lecture of Peter Fattinger, May 2 2019

DESIGN.BUILD STUDIO. HANDS-ON SOCIAL ACTIVISM IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

The design.build studio at Vienna University of Technology offers students the particular opportunity to be physically involved in all phases of a real architectural project, from design to construction. The project-based learning method fosters learning in a very immediate way: within the project, students have a hands-on building experience where they can learn a lot about building techniques and detailing, how to deal with the budget, schedule and unexpected obstacles, as well as to work in a big team, in collaboration with others. In the course of the projects the students communicate and negotiate with real clients, prospective users, local authorities, consultants, craftsmen and material suppliers. And consequently, in the construction phase, the students are also confronted with the frictional resistance which usually occurs, when plans get transformed into built reality.

The poster features a central photograph of Peter Fattinger, a man with glasses and a beard, sitting in front of a wall with a repeating pattern of small icons. The text on the poster includes the title, the date and time '18:00 2/5 2019', and a vertical slogan 'are we architects?'. At the bottom, there are logos for various institutions and organizations.

design.build studio
hands on social activism in
architectural education

fa.vutbrno

18:00 2/5 2019

are we architects?
On Education, Architectural Profession and Institutional Critique

Peter Fattinger

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Founded by Peter Fattinger in 2006 at the University's Institute of Architecture and Design, the design.build studio has been realizing a big variety of different projects, ranging from temporary installations in public space back to permanent buildings for social institutions, located in Austria, South Africa and beyond.

In the lecture, Peter Fattinger will present a selection of these various design/build projects and discuss their framework and process as well as their relevance in architectural education.

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Relevant links and reports:

<https://archiweb.cz/n/prednasky/are-we-architects-peter-fattinger>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/609449092863454/>

<https://allevants.in/brno/are-we-architects-%E2%80%94-peter-fattinger/200017179723432>

<https://www.fa.vutbr.cz/pages/prispevek.aspx?ID=3173&lang=en>

3) Lecture of Bart Lootsma, November 5 2019

THE PRACTICE OF THEORY, BETWEEN HISTORY, CRITICISM AND SPECULATION

The architectural theory has a long tradition, which in Europe goes back at least to Vitruvius, who lived in the first century BC. Although music theory has an even longer history in Europe, dating back to the ancient Greeks, theory and practice did not meet until the Middle Ages. The architectural theory had practical relevance from the very beginning. Because of its long, well-documented history, the architectural theory is still predominantly Eurocentric. We know there is a tradition in Japan, but we know too little about that. Over the last decades, the theory produced in American universities has growing importance. In the context of globalisation and especially the Internet, the architectural theory is slowly but surely becoming a global practice. This has to do with the global web platforms like ArchDaily and Dezeen, with amounts of visitors that were unthinkable until recently, but also with technological developments. This has changed the relationship between design and production, as in CAD-CAM and particularly through robotics, but also between building and organisation. What can the European theory, with strong focus on housing and urbanism for all in the last hundred years, contribute to this development?

Recording of the lecture:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXu8cRd26_Q&feature=youtu.be

The Practice of Theory, between History, Criticism and Speculation

fa vut brno

18:00 5/11 2019

Bart Lootsma

are we architects? On Education, Architectural Profession and Institutional Critique

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as faculty's publisher
UNIVERSITÄT BRNO
BRNO UNIVERSITY OF ARCHITECTURE

prof. Ing. arch. Bart Lootsma
SOFA, vi per

Relevant links and reports:

<https://archiweb.cz/n/prednasky/are-we-architects-bart-lootsma-teorie-mezi-historii-kritikou-a-spekulaci>

<https://www.artmap.cz/are-we-architects-bart-lootsma/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/fakulta-architektury-vut-faculty-of-architecture-but/are-we-architects-bart-lootsma/257344358540466/>

<https://www.fa.vutbr.cz/pages/prispevek.aspx?ID=3258&lang=cz>

Photoreport:



Lecture of Michelle Howard



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Lecture of Bart Lootsma



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