Communications - ResArc PhD Course
Staging the Message. The Architecture of Communication

Contributing to the ResArc PhD course series:
Tendencies-Approaches-Philosophies-Communications

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Course description
Staging the message. The Architecture of Communication
The ResArc Communication course intends to offer participants in-depth theoretical and practical tools for communication and media production.

With the course "Staging the Message. The Architecture of Communication" we will analyze, discuss, learn, test and develop – with the support of excellent scholars and practitioners from the field of the image, writing, editing, and curating architecture publications and exhibitions - how the form(at) of your dissertation/research – right from the start, and during the development of your research as a whole – can enable you to critically reflect and develop its content through the interplay between content and form; while the chosen and developed form also will enable you to broadcast, (edit, communicate and mediate) your ideas (content) to an audience within our information age at large.

With its special emphasis on the interplay between content & form this course – overcoming the problem that dissertations almost never work as publication, we like to clarify that every relation needs a mediator; that this mediation comes with a form; an aesthetic discourse that by itself already empowers, limits and produces a specific kind of value system that (co)-produces, reworks and mediates the content. Form and content operate always interdependent of each other. Without mediation there can be no communication: Form is content, content is form, says Beckett, and only through a form(at) – and being aware of its consequences – you can start and are able to reflect, curate, edit, produce and direct information in communication to yourself, others and an audience.

With Modernism architects started to see how important the intimate relation between architecture and media is, the one of publishing and exhibiting. And – as Beatriz Colomina has pointed out – "that architecture only becomes modern in its engagement with the mass media, and that by doing so it radically displaces the traditional sense of place and subjectivity"[1] So it is of no coincidence that Le Corbusier – as revealed by Christine Boyer[2] –listed his profession as "homme de lettre" (man of letters) instead of having the name architect in his passport. Le Corbusier was meticulous how through page layout, the form of type, the genre of writing, photographs, diagrams, sketch books, exhibitions and even promotional material, his ideas could be mediated, but also how these formats could help him to advance his ideas about architecture, urbanism and society in the new machine age. For contemporary architects alike, such as Denise Scott Brown and for instance Rem Koolhaas, research, writing, making publications, editing journals and designing exhibitions has been inseparable from their practice. As Denise Scott Brown wrote in her introduction of the recent reprint of Learning from Las Vegas[3] facsimile edition: "Photography was our primary tool. Propounding ideas with a focus as unpalatable as everyday architecture is not easy. We knew it would require showing 'what is' before proposing 'what should be' and would call for pictures as well as words to explain to ourselves what we were learning, but we soon found that the

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[1] Beatriz Colomina, "Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media", the MIT Press, 1996.
[2] Christine Boyer," Le Corbusier _Homme de Lettres_, Princeton Architectural Press, 2010. Boyer counted that Le Corbusier wrote more than 79 books, catalogues and pamplets, 511 articles, edited 55 issues of journals, designed exhibitions, and worked closely with photographers, and filmmakers.
[3] Denise Scott Brown, "The Tyranny of the Template: The graphic Design of the First Edition of Learning from Las Vegas", in "Learning from Las Vegas", facsimile Edition, MIT publishers, 2017.

combination could help others understand our ideas too. And we discovered what every architectural journal knows, that the captions under pictures are the only texts most architects will read. So we chose a medium with generous captions – the photo essay." Or in other words – as Rem Koolhaas put it: "Part of the work is to describe architecture's evolving present, ... to prepare ourselves to deal with issues, ...to know what kind of architecture you want to do. I try out different genres, different tones, clinical – Generic City, or hysterical – Junk Space"[4]. Through experimental forms of architecture communication, mediating space; by means of books, journals, genres, models, exhibitions and alike) the architect discovers and mediates what the evolving present is about, and where moments of transformations can be enacted.

Another essential element of the communication course is how your mediated research can establish a pro-active relation with its audience in today's society. In reaction to the virtual realism of the spectacle dominating mainstream media – which prevents a substantive use of word and image, this course deals with the textual, visual (photography, video, internet) and spatial practices that furthermore refine, complex and argumentative forms of communication and foreground the constructed nature of their messages in order to solicit the active interpretation of the viewer/reader. To paraphrase architect Stefano Boeri we are in need of interactive antennas that counter a geopolitics that destroys any chance of communicative action[5]. It is for this reason that the course focuses on the practices of a narrative language use in text, image, spatial and electronic media with emphasis on the potentialities and richness of the 'reflexive' or 'dialogic approach'. It tries to recuperate the specificity of its progressive and participatory practice – due to its role in the socio-cultural context producing meaning and symbolic values – by concentrating on the editing and making process. Which is to say that the course will introduce a way of directing that structures the collection of information and its editing in such a way that the staging, the 'mise-en-page' of the message gets the complementary sensitivity its content deserves.

While Module 1 will look into different formats, editing and communicative strategies of the architecture book (including the one of dissertations) Module 2 will specifically address how you as an architecture researcher can edit/stage the message through the format of the exhibition. Module 3 (optional, for another 2.5 credits) invites all participants to present their individual PhD dissertation formats for a panel of different research, curating and media experts in the field of architecture communication.

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[4] Beatriz Colomina in conversation with Rem Koolhaas: "The Architecture of Publication", Rotterdam, February 2007, AMOMA Rem Koolhaas, Theory & Practice II, El Croquis, nr. 134/135, 2007.
5 Stefano Boeri, Architecture and Geopolitics, Domus 901, 2007.

Module 01 – Publishing Architecture. Cultural Production's Gearbox

With Els Kuijpers, Meike Schalk, Karin Reisinger and Roemer van Toorn.

Working, as cultural producers do, in the tension between thinking and making, between theory and practice, between presentation and representation, presupposes linguistic awareness and requires a deliberate staging of the message. Focusing on narrative strategies and methods, media and language uses of critical sense making from different cultural fields – literature, fine art, architecture, communication design, and film. Els Kuijpers will sketch a history of mentalities in which attitude gets form under changing socio-economic conditions. Roemer van Toorn will outline how thought in architecture (theory) over time developed and through what kind of formats it emerged. PhD research is a rather recent development in architecture, what to think of research as dissertation, examples how it can be done, and what kind of formats of thinking influences the practice (what are canonical examples, what are its channels of broadcasting, and where do we stand as academia (examples).

Program Module 1

Wednesday the 21st November 2018

- 11.00   **Checking in**, and coffee at the KTH, Stockholm.
- 11.30 – 12.00   Welcome Meike Schalk, introduction lecture to the course Roemer van Toorn, and Els Kuijpers.
- 12.00 – 13.00   Lunch.
- 13.00 – 14.45   Seminar lecture "Staging the Message, The Architecture of Communication", Roemer van Toorn and roundtable discussion with Els Kuijpers, Karin Reisinger, and Roemer van Toorn.
- 14.45 – 15.00   Coffee.
- 15.00 – 16.45   *Editorial session(s) 1*, PhD participants short individual presentations (5 min) and roundtable discussion.
- 17.00   Public lecture by Els Kuijpers, "Staging the Message: a Dialectic History of Mentalities in Communication."

Thursday the 22nd November 2018

- 09.00 – 10.30   Seminar lecture by guest professor Els Kuijpers: "Staging the Message: Strategies, Meaning Production and Visualization."
- 10.30 – 10.40   Coffee.
- 10.40 – 12.00   Seminar with presentations and roundtable discussion on "Academic publishing and potential Reinterpretations", Meike Schalk, Karin Reisinger, Els Kuijpers, Roemer van Toorn and the KTH Library.
- 12.00 – 13.00   Lunch.
- 13.00 – 17.00   *Editorial Sessions (2)* discussing individual PhD work, with Els Kuijpers, Meike Schalk, Karin Reisinger, Roemer van Toorn.

Friday the 23rd November 2018

- 09.00 – 12.00   *Editorial Session(s) 3* discussing Individual PhD work, with Els Kuijpers, Karin Reisinger, and Roemer van Toorn.
- 10.30   Coffee.
- 12.00 – 12.30   Lunch.
- 12.30 – 13.30   Concluding (and evaluation) of the module with Els Kuijpers, Karin Reisinger and Roemer van Toorn.
- 14.00 – 15.30   Public lecture by Beatriz Colomina: "Are we Human? The Design of the Species", Konstfack, Stockholm.
- 16.00   Departure

Module 01 – Biographies

Els Kuijpers is a publicist, educator and curator design and visual culture, and teaches design history and theory the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, NL, and exhibition design theory at Artez, Institute of the Arts, Zwolle. Publications i.e.: Ootje Oxenaar, designer + commissioner, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam. Currently she is finalizing her PhD research entitled: "The politics of design: the liberating potential of communication design in post/modern times – Towards a critical methodology in communication design". (https://www.linkedin.com/in/els-kuijpers-a6b3376).

Meike Schalk is an architect and associate professor of Urban Studies and Urban Theory at KTH School of Architecture. She is head of the doctoral programs in Architecture; and in Art, Technology and Design, a collaboration of KTH with Konstfack, the University of Arts, Crafts and Design. Since 2015, she has been the director of the strong research environment Architecture in Effect: Rethinking the Social. While her first discipline is Architecture, she holds a Ph.D. in Theoretical and Applied Aesthetics of Landscape Architecture from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 2007. Schalk was co-founder of the feminist architecture teaching and research group FATALE and is part of the nonprofit association Action Archive dedicated to urban research through approaches of oral history and participatory historiography. Her recent publications include Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice: Materialisms, Activisms, Dialogues, Pedagogies, Projections, co-edited with Thérèse Kristiansson and Ramia Mazé, 2017.

Karin Reisinger is an architect with a PhD in Visual Culture from Vienna UT. She has been teaching the courses *Art in Changing Environments* at Vienna UT (Institute of Art and Design) and *Feminist Ecologies* at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (Institute of Art and Architecture). Currently, Karin is a research fellow at ArkDes Stockholm, following a postdoctoral fellowship in Critical Studies in Architecture at KTH Stockholm (2016-2017) which allowed her to engage with the mining areas of Northern Sweden. Book chapters include "Insomnia: Viewing Ecologies of Spatial Becoming-With" in *After Effects* (forthcoming 2019, Actar), "Abandoned Architectures: Some Dirty Narratives" in *Architecture and Feminisms* (2017, Routledge), and "Connective Oscillations: Architectures Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" in *More* (forthcoming 2019, Didapress). Karin co-organised the AHRA conference *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies, Technologies* (2016, KTH Stockholm) and edited, together with Meike Schalk, the volumes *Architecture and Culture* issue 5(3) "Styles of Queer Feminist Practices and Objects in Architecture," and the *field* issue 7(1) "Becoming a Feminist Architect," both 2017.

Roemer van Toorn is an architect, writer, educator, curator and photographer in the field of architecture and cultural studies. He is also the Architecture Theory professor at the Umeå School of Architecture. He has been in charge of the History and Theory program, was director of publications, exhibitions and the PhD research school at the Berlage Institute. He has lectured and written extensively about architecture and has been the editor of several magazines and publications internationally. Recently he finalized, with the editorial team of the Strong Research Environment Architecture in Effect, Stockholm, the Formas funded double volume research publication "Rethinking the Social", and "After Effect", Actar Publishers, 2018. His photography work has been exhibited in Winnipeg, Los Angeles and was part of the exhibition Cities on the Move curated by Hou Hanru and Hans-Ulrich Obrist. Currently he is finishing his forthcoming publication Making Architecture Politically. From Fresh Conservatism to Aesthetics as Form of Politics, while finalizing his text-image book the Society of The And. (www.roemervantoorn.com).

Module 02 - Exhibiting Architecture. The Architecture Exhibition Complex

With Thordis Arrhenius, Elke Krasny, Christina Pech, Meike Schalk, and Roemer van Toorn.

The module will include besides editorial meetings where the work of the PhD students will be further developed and discussed a public lecture by one of the guest professors, a public forum debate with different researchers, curators on architecture exhibitions and a tour through the architecture museum ArkDes.

More information will be announced.

Module 02 – Biographies

Thordis Arrhenius is an architect and architectural researcher with a strong engagement in contemporary architectural and urban practice and their theories. Her teaching and research is characterized by a dedication to contemporary critical issues in heritage and urbanism where the historical perspective informs actions and strategies. Arrhenius' research interests concern the exhibition of architecture in mass culture, the relation between architecture and the museum, and the curatorial aspects of preservation. Recent research projects investigate the role of the architectural exhibition in the reception of modern architecture in Scandinavia, the historiography of conservation, and the strategy of alteration and its architectural and theoretical implications. Under the working title Restoring the Welfare State she is at present developing a cross-disciplinary project on the welfare-state, its cultures, politics, materials and agents, that aims, through study the 'making' of the welfare state, to contribute to the understanding of how the material heritage from the post-war period today is valued. Arrhenius has an international profile in teaching, publication, and research dissemination. She has been appointed full-time professor in Culture Heritage at the Department of Social Change and Culture (ISAK), Linköping University Sweden (2015-2018) were she directed a new research platform in modern heritage. She has been appointed professor in Architectural History and Conservation at the Institute of Form, Theory and History, Oslo School of Architecture (2007-2014) where she initiated in collaboration Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS, http://occas.aho.no) and directed the international research project Place and Displacement: Exhibiting Architecture (2011-2014) funded by the Norwegian Research Council as well as the research project Mediated Architecture; the Exhibition as a Discursive Field with the Swedish Architecture Museum (Arkdes) funded by the Swedish Art Council (2012-2014).

Elke Krasny is a curator, cultural theorist, urban researcher and writer. She is professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria. Her theoretical and curatorial work is firmly rooted in socially engaged art and spatial practices, urban epistemology, post-colonial theory, and feminist historiography. In her curatorial practice she aims to contribute to debate in these fields through forging experimental post-disciplinary alliances between research, teaching, curating, and writing. She has been City of Vienna Visiting Professor 2014, Urban culture, public space and ways of life – Everday life and scientific insights, Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, Vienna University of Technology and 2013 Visiting Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuernberg, Master Architecture and Urban Research. In 2006 she was Visiting Professor at the University of Bremen; in 2011 curator-in-residence at the Hongkong Community Museum Project; 2012 artist-in-residence at the Audain Gallery, Simon Fraser University Vancouver and Visiting Scholar at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal. She has edited and authored a number of books on architecture, urbanism, and feminist historiography. Her writing has been published widely in edited volumes, exhibition catalogues and magazines. Exhibitions she curated include *The Force is in the Mind. The Making of Architecture* at the Architecture Centre Vienna (Architekturzentrum Wien), *Penser tout Haut. Faire l'Architecture* at the Centre de Design de l'UQAM in Montréal and Dalhousie University in Halifax, *Hongkong City Telling*, and *Mapping the Everyday: Neighborhood Claims for the Future* at the Audain Gallery in Vancouver. In 2012 her exhibition *Hands-on Urbanism 1850-2012. The Right to Green* was presented at the Architecture

Centre Vienna and subsequently at the Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2012.

Christina Pech is an architectural historian, acting research coordinator at the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design (ArkDes) and lecturer at the KTH School of Architecture. She is scientific curator of the forthcoming permanent exhibition on architecture in Sweden at ArkDes and pursues a research project funded by the Swedish Arts Council.

Current research interest revolves around the historiography and theory of Swedish modern architecture as well as the international development of exhibiting, collecting and archiving institutions of architecture (both funded by the Swedish Arts Council). Another strand of research examines the interrelatedness of scientific practice, architectural design and urban development in the modern era, investigated within the framework of a research fellowship at the Brussels Center for Urban studies (2017-2018) and presented in the recent article *Vetenskapens moderna landskap* (with Monica Sand, Plan Journal 2018). Distant as the two orientations may seem, they share the interest in architecture's role for the processes of modernization and its institutionalization. Teaching activities include a survey course on architectural history and theory in the basic level and an experimental studio engagement in the advanced level.

Module 03 – Presentation Conference

With Meike Schalk, Roemer van Toorn, Ana Betancour and others to be announced).

Students will present their developed PHD communication work (after having followed the two earlier modules as explained above) to and in dialogue with different experts in the field of communication (writing and exhibiting) and doing architecture research. Program and participants will be announced at a later stage.

More information will be announced for this March 2019 module.

General Information

Structure

The course consists of three seminar modules (each three days long: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) and takes place at the KTH School of Architecture, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm (Module 1 + 2) and in collaboration with the UMA School of Architecture, Umeå University at the Royal College of Art, Stockholm (Module 3).

The course is headed by Meike Schalk and Roemer van Toorn, with the assistance of PhD participant Vasily Sitnikov (KTH) and developed in close collaboration with experts and invited guests for each module. Every seminar – module – will be devoted to one specific framework (as explained above) and will include introductory and specialized internal and public lectures besides working sessions – editorial meetings – where we discuss the readings, your submitted blog, analysis of communication projects and discuss possible form(at)s of your research content.

Participation

Before each seminar begins participants will be expected to upload blog posts to the ResArc-communication course weblog. For each seminar a reading list, and projects to analyze will be made available to all participants through the website. Besides comparative critical analysis of publications and exhibitions, critical readings and interpretive blogs, we ask each participant to "form(at)" his/her own research according to the knowledge and experiences s/he gained through the course. Besides preparing work in advance for each seminar, work will be further developed, produced, discussed and reviewed in collaboration with the guest professors and coordinators invited.

Assessment (Teaching-Learning Activities)

Participants will be required to respond to a series of minor exercises across the three modules by using a combination of image (diagram, collage, models and so forth) and text. These exercises will be discussed in class and uploaded to the communication course Blog.

Participants will be invited to actively contribute to the editorial meetings which are held besides the different introductions and (public) lectures during each module.

As initiated in the philosophy course participants will be asked to create a "Conceptual Guidebook". You are encouraged to compile the activities and exercises undertaken across the three modules as a "Guidebook" that highlights your specific research questions. Add to your Conceptual Guidebook a title, a contents page, an introduction, and responses to discussions, readings and exercises across the three modules. This will be compiled as a PDF document and emailed to Meike Schalk (meike.schalk@arch.kth.se), Roemer van Toorn (roemer.vantoorn@arch.umu.se).

Course credits

Participants can achieve either 5 or 7.5 credit points for this course.
To achieve 5 credit points participants are required to attend 2 modules, and complete two blog and module assignment. To achieve 7.5 credit points participants are required to attend 3 modules and complete the presentation assignment

Active participation in the seminar is required, including the submission of 2 of 3 blogs on the website and reworking of own research (it can be an article, the draft dissertation, video, photography, or other media that are an essential part of the research) during the three modules. At the final module – for an extra 2.5 credits – each individual PhD students can present her/his dissertation communication format.

Key dates

November the 21ˢᵗ, 22ⁿᵈ and 23ʳᵈ, 2018 at the KTH Stockholm.
Communication Course Module One – Publishing Architecture. Cultural production Gearbox

February 20st, 21st, 22nd, 2019 at KTH Stockholm
Communication Course Module Two – Exhibiting Architecture. The Architecture Exhibition Complex.

March (date to be confirmed) 2019 at Royal College of Art, Stockholm (to be confirmed)
Communication Course Module Three – Presentation Conference. Conclusion-Examination.

Communication

The content, time schedule and pre-course module assignments will be presented by email, and published on the communication weblog, to everybody enrolled for the course.

Practicalities

The address is:
KTH School of Architecture
Osquars backe 5
Stockholm,
Sweden

Tube stop: Kungliga tekniska högskolan
Take the left exit and walk up the hill, towards the entry building. The School of Architecture is right behind.

Place: KTH School of Architecture, Conference room, level 6
Take the elevator; you need an entry card to get access to floor 6. A few of us will have an entry card. You can phone them to ask to open the door when needed if the door is closed, call: 073-6000906 (Meike Schalk), Roemer van Toorn (070-3236161), Vasily Sitnikov (…).

Good lunch places at/near the Stockholm campus:
- Café in the entry building run by the student union
- Open Café, opposite of the School of Architecture, on the corner
  Valhallavägen 79, http://openlabsthlm.se/open-cafe.
- Restaurang Nymble, upper floor in the student union building
  Drottning Kristinas väg 15, https://ths.kth.se.
- Vegetarian buffet in the café of the student union building,
  Drottning Kristinas väg 15.