

ARCHITECTURAL THEORY NOW?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Penn Design, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Thursday, April 4 to Saturday, April 6, 2019

Abstract submission deadline: October 15th 2018

Compared with the 1970s, 80s, and 90s—decades when journals such as *Assemblage*, *Casabella*, *Daidalos*, *October*, *Oppositions*, *Zodiac*, and *ANY* were filled with heady polemics that spilled over into popular architectural magazines, seminars, and design studios—architectural theory is today at an impasse, if not passé. Not only are many print journals now gone, architectural theory courses have been eliminated in many schools' curricula in favor of technology-centered courses, research studios, history without theory, and “autonomous theory.” It's as if architectural theory, a field of inquiry developed and articulated over a few thousand years, filling archives and rare book rooms with beautiful and beguiling works of architectural knowledge, was suddenly transformed in unrecognizable ways, or became obsolete. Yet, at least to date, the discipline of architecture has always had a practice of theory and theories of practice.

This symposium asks, “What happened to architectural theory and where is it headed?” Is it M.I.A., D.O.A. or simply in transition? What constitutes the practice of architectural thinking—or theory—today? Surely, even if preoccupations from earlier decades now seem irrelevant, architects and students still have the need to reflect on the greater purposes of their activities. Age-old architectural concerns about aesthetics, function, materials, and construction have not disappeared. The early 21st century has been shocked and traumatized by global environmental concerns and terrorism, and all but overwhelmed by widely debated social, cultural, technological, economic, and political concerns. Indeed, while architects have much to consider, and much is asked of them, generationally critical issues must be addressed by theory. Recently, courageous students, architects, and academics have addressed topics such as gender inequity and social injustices in the profession, unfair labor practices in the construction industry, and the politics of serving in the construction of border walls and prisons. Yet more comprehensive intellectual tools to interpret, assess, and evaluate the long-term social and cultural implications of architectural work, in particular the highly technological expansion of design and building activities, are needed.

If little in architectural theory, as developed in recent decades, has prepared architects to thoughtfully engage in our contemporary challenges, it is perhaps time to make a new start in defining what architectural theory is now. We welcome your abstract.

Submission Guidelines:

We welcome papers that thoughtfully engage, reflect, and articulate the place of architectural theory today in the broadest context of academia, professional practice, or world citizenship. Initial abstracts should be a maximum of 500 words, descriptive of a research field and a question therein, as well as respond to the question what is **ARCHITECTURAL THEORY NOW?**

Because the symposium event will also include two working sessions dedicated to the production of a collectively articulated set of reflections, a complete abstract submission should also include the author's summary ideas (in 4 bullet-points) which answer the symposium's main question. These answers will be compiled in advance of the symposium for discussion during the working session. Lastly, the symposium will result in a publication, which may include individually authored papers. Papers intended for publication, may be longer than symposium presentations, and should be submitted at the time of the conference. Symposium presentations must be no longer than 20 minutes.

Abstract deadline - **October 15th 2018** for full consideration

Abstract Acceptance notification – November 15th 2018, Full Paper Submission March 15th 2019

Send submissions to both Dr. Franca Trubiano (trubiano@design.upenn.edu) and Dr. Peter Laurence (pl Lauren@clems on.edu).