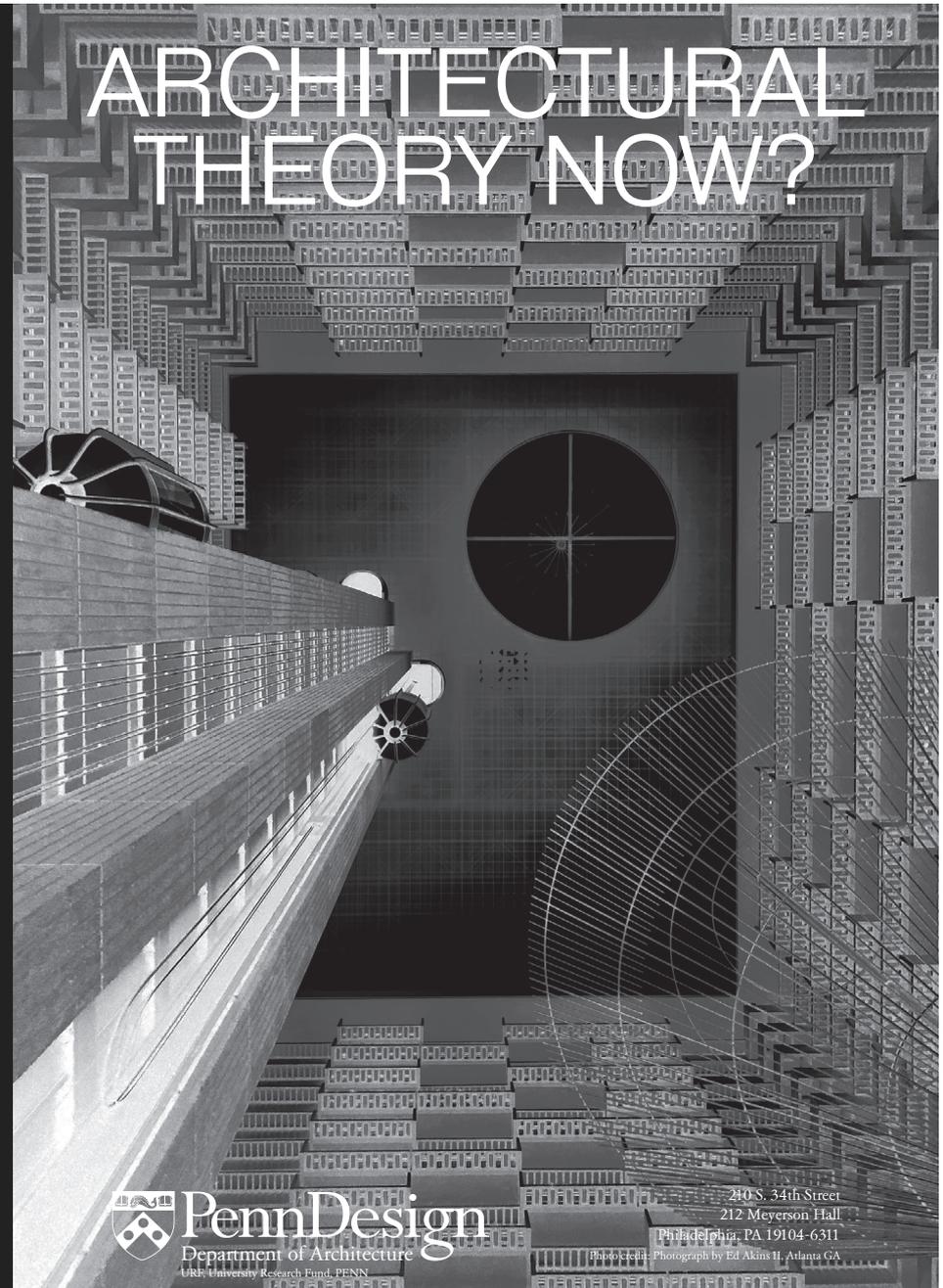


# ARCHITECTURAL THEORY NOW?

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 beguiling works of architectural knowledge, was suddenly transformed in unrecognizable ways. This symposium asks, "What has 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 earlier preoccupations now seem irrelevant, architects and students still seek to reflect on the greater purpose of their activities. Age-old architectural concerns about aesthetics, function, materials, and construction have not disappeared. Yet more comprehensive intellectual tools are needed 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. 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 architectural theory now.

## ORGANISERS

Franca Trubiano (PENN),  
David Leatherbarrow (PENN),  
Peter Laurence (Clemson)



 PennDesign  
Department of Architecture  
URF University Research Fund, PENN

240 S. 34th Street  
212 Meyerson Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6311

Photo credit: Photograph by Ed Akins II, Atlanta GA

# Thank you. . .

Events such as Architectural Theory Now? are only possible with the support and assistance of many. We are pleased to acknowledge their efforts and commitments. To begin with we are grateful for the substantial financial support offered by Dean Fritz Steiner of the Stuart Weitzman School of Design. His support proved essential in the early days of the project's planning and it remains important at its launch. We were honored to receive a University of Pennsylvania Research Foundation grant (URF) in support of the conference. And we are thankful for the continued financial and administrative support offered by the Department of Architecture Chair Winka Dubbeldam and her staff, without whose collaboration the conference's organization would not have been possible. Thanks to Dana Fedeli, Ivy Gray-Klein and Sean Limlaw for their attention to all matters, big and small.

We also extend a big thank you to our Penn Design community: Sandi Mosgo and her team in Facilities for having made possible all of the physical infrastructure; Brandon Orselli and Cathy Dibonaventura from Computing who've facilitated all IT and Audio; Bill Cohen from the Kleinman Center for making available to us their space; and Bill Whitaker, Curator and Collections Manager of the Architectural Archives, for graciously hosting us during the PhD Seminar.

We also thank students Antonios Thodis and Yitian Zheng for their assistance with the preparations and colleagues Daniel Barber and Sophie Hochhäußl for acting as moderators.

Curating the event requires the help of many who are out in the field and for this we offer thanks to our paper reviewers including Grace Ong, Joanna Merwood Salisbury, Esra Sahin Burat, Eric Bellin, Alicia Imperiale, David Rifkind, Jin Baek, and Charles Davis. We are also grateful for the participation of so many who submitted abstracts, for their diverse and important contributions to our shared fields of interest and concern. And to all our participants—PhD students, paper presenters, and conversants—we are grateful for your efforts.

And last, but not least, thank you to you for attending and sharing this experience with us.

Sponsored by:



Franca Trubiano, Stuart Weitzman School of Design

David Leatherbarrow, Stuart Weitzman School of Design

Peter Laurence, Clemson University

April 4th, 2019

# Schedule

## Location

210 S. 34th Street  
212 Meyerson Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6311

## April. 04

- 6:00<sup>PM</sup> OPENING REMARKS  
– Fritz Steiner,  
Dean Stuart Weitzman School of Design
- 6:00<sup>PM</sup> – 7:30<sup>PM</sup> **Keynote Conversation 1**  
**Within/Without** - Franca Trubiano(Moderator)  
Jonathan Massey, Jane Rendell, Adam Sharr

## April. 05

- 9:00<sup>AM</sup> OPENING REMARKS  
- Winka Dubbeldam, Chair Department of Architecture,  
Stuart Weitzman School of Design
- 9:30<sup>AM</sup>–11<sup>AM</sup> **Paper Session 1**  
**Within/Without** - Papers which discuss architectural theory's  
dual origins in ideas, principles and contexts internal to the discipline and  
far beyond it.  
  
- Daniel Barber (Moderator), Juan Manuel Heredia,  
Rebecca Williamson, Lynette Widder,  
Andreea Mihalache
- 11:15<sup>AM</sup>–12:45<sup>PM</sup> **Keynote Conversation 2**  
**Practices** - Peter Laurence (Moderator),  
Michael Cadwell, David Leatherbarrow
- 12:45<sup>PM</sup>–2:00<sup>PM</sup> ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES OPEN HOUSE  
- Across from entrance to Meyerson Hall
- 2:00<sup>PM</sup>–3:30<sup>PM</sup> **Paper Session 2**  
**Practices** - Papers which discuss contemporary practices of  
architectural theory as defined through the lens of writers, philosophers,  
and theorists.  
  
- Franca Trubiano (Moderator), Jon Yoder, Ufuk Ersoy,  
David Salomon, Ellen Grimes
- 3:30<sup>PM</sup>–5:00<sup>PM</sup> **Paper Session 3**  
**Re-definitions** - Papers which expand the definition of  
architectural theory by introducing and discussing alternative methods,  
practices, and values.  
- Sophie Hochhäusl (Moderator)  
Jonathan Hale, Christian Parreno, Terrance Galvin
- 5:15<sup>PM</sup>–6:45<sup>PM</sup> **Keynote Conversation 3**  
**Re-definitions** - David Leatherbarrow(Moderator),  
Francesca Hughes, Joan Ockman, Michael Benedikt



Jonathan Massey  
University of Michigan

Jonathan Massey is an accomplished architectural historian and authority on architecture and planning education. Through research and scholarly leadership as co-founder of the Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative, Massey shows how architecture shapes civil society, culture, and consumption. As dean at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, he leads more than 100 faculty and 40 staff in educating nearly 700 students across seven degree programs. In this role and in previous leadership positions at Syracuse University and California College of the Arts, Massey has helped faculty, students, and alumni generate the knowledge and capacities to address the world's grand challenges. With colleagues at and beyond Michigan, he is currently pursuing a human-centered redesign of education for excellence and equity.



Jane Rendell  
Bartlett UCL London

Jane Rendell is Professor of Critical Spatial Practice at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, where she co-initiated the MA Situated Practice and supervises history/theory and design PhDs. Jane has introduced concepts of 'critical spatial practice' and 'site-writing' through her authored books: *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* (2017), *Silver* (2016), *Site-Writing* (2010), *Art and Architecture* (2006), and *The Pursuit of Pleasure* (2002). Her co-edited collections include *Reactivating the Social Condenser* (2017), *Critical Architecture* (2007), *Spatial Imagination* (2005), *The Unknown City* (2001), *Intersections* (2000), *Gender, Space, Architecture* (1999) and *Strangely Familiar* (1995). Working with Dr David Roberts, Bartlett Ethics Fellow, she leads the Bartlett's Ethics Commission; and, with Research Associate, Dr Yael Padan, she is CoI for Ethics on KNOW (Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality), PI Prof Caren Levy. In 2018, she received the RIBA Research Award for History and Theory, for May Mo(u)rn, her research on housing and psychoanalysis, and a UCL Provost's Education Award for her work on ethics.



Adam Sharr  
Newcastle University

Adam Sharr is Head of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University, UK; Editor-in-Chief of the Cambridge University Press journal *arq*: Architectural Research Quarterly; Series Editor of *Thinkers for Architects*, Routledge; and Principal of Newcastle University's design research consultancy, Design Office. He is author, editor, or co-editor of seven books on architecture including *Heidegger's Hut* (MIT Press, 2006); *Reading Architecture and Culture* (Routledge, 2012); *Demolishing Whitehall: Leslie Martin, Harold Wilson and the Architecture of White Heat* (republished Routledge, 2017); and, most recently, *Modern Architecture: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2018). He has been actively involved in the establishment of a PhD by Creative Practice programme in architecture at Newcastle over the last eight years, which has now graduated eight students, and is the largest such programme outside London in the UK.



Franca Trubiano (Moderator)  
PennDesign

Franca Trubiano is Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a Registered Architect with l'Ordre des Architectes du Québec. Her edited book *Design and Construction of High-Performance Homes: Building Envelopes, Renewable Energies and Integrated Practice* (Routledge Press 2012), was translated into Korean and winner of the 2015 Sejong Outstanding Scholarly Book Award. She is presently completing her manuscript *Building Theories for Routledge* which challenges late 20th century definitions and practices of architectural theory; and is co-editing the manuscript *Women Re[Build]: Stories, Polemics, Futures* (ORO, 2019). Franca was President of the Building Technology Educators Society (BTES) (2015); a founding member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Technology, Architecture and Design (TAD)*; and a member of the *Journal of Architectural Education (JAE)* (2013-2016). She has published essays on high-performance design in edited books *Architecture and Energy* (Routledge 2013) and *Architecture and Uncertainty* (Ashgate 2014).



Daniel Barber (Moderator)  
PennDesign

Daniel Barber is an Associate Professor of Architecture and Chair of the Graduate Group in Architecture at PennDesign. He is an architectural historian studying the relationship between the design fields and the emergence of global environmental culture across the 20th century. Daniel received a PhD in Architecture History and Theory from Columbia University, and a Master of Environmental Design from Yale University. He currently holds a Fellowship for Advanced Researchers from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which he is spending in intermittent residence at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich, Germany, and at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. In March 2017 he was be a Visiting Fellow at the Sydney Environmental Institute, University of Sydney, Australia; in 2015-2016 he was the Thomas A. and Currie C. Barron Visiting Professor in the Environment and Humanities at the Princeton Environmental Institute, hosted by the Princeton School of Architecture.

### Paper Presentation 1

04.05.19, 9:30 am Meyerson Hall

# WITHIN / WITHOUT

- Papers which discuss architectural theory's dual origins in ideas, principles and contexts internal to the discipline and far beyond it.



Juan Manuel Heredia  
Portland State University

Juan Manuel Heredia is Associate Professor of Architecture at Portland State University. He studied at Universidad Iberoamericana and received a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. He has taught at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Mississippi State University, and lectured at University of Lincoln and Universidad Nacional de Colombia among other institutions. He co-organized the *Second International Architecture and Phenomenology Conference* (Kyoto, 2009) and *The Place of Theory in Contemporary Architectural Practice and Education conference* (Bangkok, 2013). His research focuses on but is not limited to Latin-American modern architecture. With Miquel Adrià, he coauthored Juan Sordo Madaleno (1916–1985) and is coediting, with Nicholas Temple and Andrzej Piotrowski, the *Routledge Handbook on the Reception of the Classical Tradition*.

#### Architecture is its own Theory Juan Manuel Heredia

*When Vitruvius presented his Ten Books to emperor Augustus what he gave him was not a work of “architectural theory.” No, he gave him architecture itself, the actual thing or, rather, its “body,” the corpus of knowledge constituting the architect’s discipline. Architecture is not buildings. Buildings are the product of that discipline and acquire the status of architecture only by extension. Architecture is a making and like every making it is also a “know-how,” a dichotomy expounded by Vitruvius as *fabrica et ratiotinatione*. It is significant that his “theory” does not begin with a definition of architecture but by describing the “science of the architect.” Indeed, architects precede architecture. Even before the appearance of the latter term, the word “architect” had centuries of existence being used by philosophers to distinguish “suppliers of knowledge” from laborers. In the late fourth century Theophrastus transformed the noun to a verb referring to well-conceived buildings as “well architected.” Cicero then coined the neologism *architectura* to name the art that architects had been perfecting over the centuries, Vitruvius formalizing its principles only two decades later.*

*Characteristic of contemporary “architectural theory” is its trans-disciplinarity, which also has its origins in Cicero and Vitruvius who in elevating architecture to a “liberal art” put it in dialogue in other spheres of knowledge, undermining its “autonomy” and highlighting its “dependence.” Mark Wigley recently praised architecture’s “hospitality” towards other disciplines, defining theory as a “relentless interrogation of the discipline [from] philosophy, gender, sexuality, orientation, identity, psychoanalysis, post-coloniality,” etc. In this context architectural theory loses all identity, becoming the other of the discipline. This paper recovers a sense of theory not only from the challenges of the new millennium but from conventional uses in the United States, arguing that architecture is its own theory.*



Rebecca Williamson  
University of Cincinnati

Rebecca Williamson is an architect with experience in practice in Switzerland and New York. Her research explores the roots of contemporary problems in architectural and urban design practice and pedagogy through close examination of primary sources. Since March 2016, following many years of focus on design studio teaching, she has coordinated the MS and PhD Programs in Architecture at the University of Cincinnati. Prior to joining Cincinnati in fall 2006, she taught for five years in France at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Versailles through an exchange with the University of Illinois and at the Master of Urbanism Program of the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences-Po). Since 2011 she has led Cincinnati's collaboration with counterparts in Bordeaux in research related to housing, energy, and mobility.

### Theory Calls Out from the Rubble Rebecca Williamson

*Despite dramatic shifts in context, architectural theory remains present in the depths of thoughts and decisions about how and what we build. Instead of spreading into every broader fields of engagement or seeking legitimacy as an elite form of expertise, architectural theory can reclaim meaning in a revived focus on architecture itself, and in particular, on the art of building, our know-how.*

*Examples of the intertwining of know-how, on the one hand, and theory as an articulation of higher aims, on the other, are plenty within the long history of the production of texts about architecture. Writers such as Daniele Barbaro and Claude Perrault sought to translate and illustrate Vitruvius by probing the meaning of his words and their relationship to building practices in their own time.*

*They deploy this probing in the pairing of images and footnotes with the translated passages. Their drawings are not so much illustrations as extractions from a flawed and confusing source. Footnotes and other forms of marginalia, on the other hand, expose the translator's doubts. They are a place to explore and compare the implications of one or another interpretation.*

*The footnote is also a place to engage in debate with a predecessor or contemporary. Footnotes continue to play this role in later texts, notably Giambattista Piranesi's and Gottfried Semper's. The illustrations, on the other hand, are designs in their own rights. They are not so much reconstructions of ancient practices as new constructions of an imagined past that project a possible future.*

*These texts and images demonstrate that the way forward is through a reengagement with the art of building, adapted to our current conditions: the social, economic, technological, and other changes that impact how we bring physical spaces into being. The means to do this will emerge through the continuing reconciliation of those conditions with the theoretical foundations of practice.*



Lynette Widder  
Columbia University

Lynette Widder (M.Arch, 1990; Sc.D., 2016) joined the faculty of Sustainability Management at Columbia University in 2013. Prior to that, she was Associate Professor and Chair of Architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design; and taught at the ETH Zurich, Cornell University, City College of New York and Cranbrook Academy. Her articles have appeared in *Daidalos*, *Bauwelt*, *architecture*, *Manifest*, *Kritische Berichte* among other publications. She co-authored two books, *Ira Rakatansky: As Modern as Tomorrow* (2010) and *Architecture Live Projects: Pedagogy into Practice* (2014); and is author of a forthcoming book on Kaneji Domoto. Her professional work with *aardvarchitecture* has been published in the US, Europe, China and Australia. From 1994-98, she was editor of the bilingual architecture quarterly *Daidalos*.

### The Theory of Architecture in Year Zero: the Darmstädter Gespräch of 1951 Lynette Widder

*The Darmstädter Gespräch of 1951 was one in a series of conferences envisioned to reckon with the cultural dilemmas facing Germany at 'Year Zero'. Like its 1950 predecessor 'The Image of the Human in our Time', its topic was the human, albeit in relation to space. Chaired by Otto Bartning, Protestant church builder and director of the "other" Bauhaus, the event had four components: an exhibition, an invited building competition for war-razed Darmstadt, a series of prepared lectures and an open participant forum. In its conception, Mensch und Raum intended to educate a lay audience through its exhibition and radio broadcast; to engage the practical problems of rebuilding through the competition; to propound complex propositions about the nature of space offered by philosophers Martin Heidegger and Jose Ortega y Gasset, and by the theologian architect Rudolf Schwarz; and finally, to provide a forum in which practitioners could consider the relevance of what they'd heard.*

*The mandate was daunting. As Adorno and Horkheimer had argued in Dialectic of Enlightenment (1947), the Modernist project was morally, architecturally and technically inextricable from the Third Reich as death machine. Style guaranteed nothing. Modern architecture, understood as the apotheosis of technology and Zeitgeist in Kunstwollen, had been grasped and leveraged by Albert Speer's minions, who deployed a Modernist idiom for factories, exhibitions and new towns.*

*To salvage space meant to reconceive the dependencies among material or technology, historical era and spatial expression. Could architecture embody contemporary transcendental aspirations even without modern technical means? Could a building built without transparent modern materials represent the prevailing discourse of democracy? To revisit Mensch and Raum is to value its ambition to unite practical concerns – none less urgent than the dearth of housing and building materials in resource-strapped West Germany – with their theoretical imperatives.*



Andreea Mihalache  
Clemson University

Andreea Mihalache is Assistant Professor of design, architectural history and theory, and visualization at Clemson School of Architecture. With a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech, she is currently examining intersections of architecture, art, philosophy, and aesthetics in the middle decades of the twentieth century from the particular lens of boredom studies. Her research has been published in various books and journals, and presented at national and international conferences. She is working on a book manuscript for the University of Virginia Press, provisionally titled “*Boredom’s Metamorphoses: Bernard Rudofsky, Robert Venturi, and Saul Steinberg.*”

On “Deferred Judgment:” Historical and Contemporary Perspectives  
Andreea Mihalache

*Questioning the nature of architectural theory and history has been a pervasive phenomenon in academia. Architecture schools in the United States have always shared a common concern (though never a consensus) on its pedagogy, “use,” and directions. In April 1967, the Society of Architectural Historians organized, during its spring conference held at UCLA, the symposium titled “Architectural History and the Student Architect.” At the time a faculty member at UCLA, Denise Scott Brown wrote an article for the May 1967 issue of the journal *Arts and Architecture* commenting on the different positions that scholars in the field were advancing. She focused on the debate between Peter Collins (McGill University) and Spiro Kostof (UC Berkeley). The former advocated for teaching a “history of the theory of architecture,” with the goal of developing students’ critical thinking; the latter argued that architectural history should simply be a “broadening experience” for the student and not a selection of critical perspectives curated by the teacher. Scott Brown proposed to bridge the gap between these two stances through a methodology that embraced history and theory thematically, rather than chronologically, by means of analysis and comparison. It was one of the early instances when she addressed the notion of a “non-judgmental view.”*

*Scholarship on Venturi and Scott Brown tends to situate this idea at the origin of a post-modern direction in architecture and reduces it to the partnership’s questionable enthusiasm for the architecture of the Las Vegas Strip and, at a larger scale, for commercial architecture, suburbia, and the non-architecture of signs and billboards. Instead, I am making the argument that an overlooked aspect, manifested particularly in Scott Brown’s early work, is that of history as lived presence, rather than as a (post-modern) inventory of shapes and forms. To have a non-judgmental view is to live within, rather than outside history.*

*Looking at previously unexamined archival letters, as well as a series of articles published between 1965 and 1969, I will trace the beginnings of “deferred judgment” in Scott Brown’s theory and offer an alternative reading of its (perhaps) unsuspected possibilities. Having a non-judgmental view and living within history, gives a presence to alternative voices and discourses otherwise kept silent, expands the world of architecture to artifacts other than buildings, and legitimates speculative modes of thinking and practice.*



Michael Cadwell  
Knowlton School

Michael Cadwell is the Walter H. Kidd Professor and Knowlton School Director at The Ohio State University. He received his BA in English Literature from Williams College and his Master of Architecture from Yale University. Cadwell designed and built a series of small wood buildings on remote New England sites and public sculpture parks, which were collected as Pamphlet Architecture 17 by Princeton Architectural Press and received design awards from ACSA and the New York Architectural League. He has been a fellow at the Woodstock Arts Colony, the McDowell Arts Colony, and the American Academy in Rome. In teaching and practice, Cadwell explores construction as a transformative cultural act. Cadwell's book *Strange Details* (MIT Press) articulates this interest through essays on canonic works of 20th century architecture. More recently, his writing on contemporary architecture has appeared in *Hunch*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, *Log*, and *Domus*.



David Leatherbarrow  
PennDesign

David Leatherbarrow is Professor of Architecture the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches architectural design, as well as the history and theory of architecture, gardens, and cities. His recent books include: *Three Cultural Ecologies*, with R. Wesley; *20th Century Architecture*; *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*; *Topographical Stories: studies in landscape and architecture*; *Surface Architecture*, with M. Mostafavi; and *Uncommon Ground: architecture, technology and topography*. Before that were: *The Roots of Architectural Invention: site, enclosure and materials*, and *On Weathering: the life of buildings in time*, again with Mostafavi. His research has focused on selected topics in the history and theory of architecture, also landscape architecture, and, most recently, on the impact of contemporary technology on architecture.



Peter Laurence (Moderator)  
Clemson University

Peter Laurence is Associate Professor of Architecture at Clemson University School of Architecture. He is the author of *Becoming Jane Jacobs* (Penn Press, 2016) and founder of [theurbanismproject.org](http://theurbanismproject.org).

Paper Presentation 2  
04.05.19, 2 pm Meyerson Hall

## PRACTICES

- Papers which discuss contemporary practices of architectural theory as defined through the lens of writers, philosophers, and theorists.



Franca Trubiano (Moderator)  
PennDesign

Franca Trubiano is Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a Registered Architect with l'Ordre des Architectes du Québec. Her edited book *Design and Construction of High-Performance Homes: Building Envelopes, Renewable Energies and Integrated Practice* (Routledge Press 2012), was translated into Korean and winner of the 2015 Sejong Outstanding Scholarly Book Award. She is presently completing her manuscript *Building Theories for Routledge* which challenges late 20th century definitions and practices of architectural theory; and is co-editing the manuscript *Women Re[Build]; Stories, Polemics, Futures* (ORO, 2019). Franca was President of the Building Technology Educators Society (BTES) (2015); a founding member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Technology, Architecture and Design (TAD)*; and a member of the *Journal of Architectural Education (JAE)* (2013-2016). She has published essays on high-performance design in edited books *Architecture and Energy* (Routledge 2013) and *Architecture and Uncertainty* (Ashgate 2014).



Jon Yoder  
Kent State University

Jon Yoder is a designer and scholar of Modern architecture and visual media who received his Ph.D. in Architecture from UCLA. He teaches theory, design and history at Kent State University and taught previously at Syracuse University and SCI-Arc. His designs with Pei Cobb Freed, ZGF Architects and SPF:architects have been published widely, and his research on architectural visuality has been supported by numerous grants and awards. In 2016, he received an ARCHITECT Studio Prize for his graduate design studio “Graphic Novels / Novel Architecture” along with a Graham Foundation grant for his forthcoming Getty Research Institute Publications book, *Widescreen Architecture: Immersive Media and John Lautner in Postwar Los Angeles*.

## Design vs. History: Materializing Theory After the Post-Linguistic Turn

Jon Yoder

*In the wake of the linguistic analogies that dominated architectural production during the postmodern period, different post-linguistic agendas began asserting themselves at the turn of the twenty-first century. The influences of Marxism, psychoanalysis and post-structuralism famously waned as architects embraced digital fabrication, rapid prototyping, sustainable technologies, parametric modeling and new material systems. These platforms all provided such fertile territory for design research that many raced to declare the death of theory. All this ironic theorizing about the end of theory also signaled simultaneous post-linguistic and postcritical paradigm shifts. Linguistic analogies no longer sufficed, but neither did architecture’s longstanding critical assumptions about its social, political and economic agency.*

*The resulting critical/post-critical debates of the early-2000s radically repositioned theory within architecture’s disciplinary landscape. Unfortunately, the critical (Tafurian) attempt to strip theory (in its various ideological guises) away from materialist histories has sometimes led to a disappointingly hermetic academicism that is decidedly disconnected from contemporary design concerns. Indeed, history and design—which had been intimately involved during their postmodern period—retreated to opposite corners of architecture’s expanded field. By the mid-2000s, theory had been consciously uncoupled from history and coupled with design.*

*Today, the projective pursuit of new micro/momentary ideologies in postdigital practice is helping to produce a diverse array of what might be termed materialist theories. From the Neo-Primitivism of Ensemble Studio, Matter Design and T+E+A+M; to the Object-Oriented Ontology of Mark Foster Gage, Ferda Kolatan, Ruy Klein and Young & Ayata; to the Neo-PoMo/Pop of Jennifer Bonner, Bureau Spectacular, Sam Jacob and Andrew Kovacs—theory and design have aligned themselves along various post-linguistic axes of materialist experimentation. If it sounds like reification, it should. But if ideology was traditionally understood to drive design, theory’s material operations are now helping to accelerate the design of ideologies themselves*



Ufuk Ersoy  
Clemson University

Ufuk Ersoy is an Associate Professor at Clemson School of Architecture. Ersoy completed his Master of Architecture, Master of Science in Architectural History and Theory, and Ph.D. in Architecture Degrees at the University of Pennsylvania. Before Clemson School of Architecture, he taught at the University of New South Wales, University of Pennsylvania, and Izmir Institute of Technology. He was the co-editor of a special issue of *World Architecture* on “*Architecture in Turkey: A Glocal Production*,” and acted as the primary editor of *100 Years of Clemson Architecture: Southern Roots + Global Reach*. His most recent publications concentrate on the role of metaphor and memory in architectural imagination.

Building as a Fiction: Paul Ricœur’s Metaphor of Narrative Architecture  
Ufuk Ersoy PhD, Clemson University

*Today, the lure and mystery of technology once again encourages architects to look for alternative analogical models. A large number of these metaphoric hypotheses, however, bring a serious professional problem into light: many of architects do not hesitate to renounce the ethical and political burden of architecture and simply relegate being to looking like or working like. Even an advocate of digital architecture, Antoine Picon expresses his growing concern, if not frustration, with the prevailing post-critical pragmatist approach. He claims that, for architects, “the time has come to reinvent utopia and memory.” If so, then, how could a recovery of utopia and memory in architecture ever be imagined so long as visual and instrumental thinking dominate the discipline. Although Picon leaves this challenging question unanswered, Paul Ricœur already brought up a proposal at the dawn of the Twenty-First Century, in his “Architecture et narrativité” (1998).*

*Distant from the metaphors in architecture based on apparent similarities, Ricœur juxtaposed architecture with narration by virtue of their sharp dissimilarities. His goal was to generate an apprehension of similarity that would enable him both to deviate the definition of building and to apply his narrative model of imagination to architecture. Particularly, he liberated the word building—both as an object and an act—from its common denotation to show its fictive capacity to pervade into human actions that render the city alive and distinguish its identity. Likewise, his hermeneutic spiral of threefold mimesis—prefiguration, configuration and refiguration—helped him elucidate the role the human faculties of memory and forgetting played in the imagination of the architect as well as the citizen. This paper discusses Ricœur’s metaphorical exploration with reference to contemporary architecture in terms of an attempt to characterize the architect as a “capable” agent of “philosophical anthropology” in search of a better life.*



David Salomon  
Ithaca College

David Salomon is an Assistant Professor of Art History and the Coordinator of Architectural Studies at Ithaca College; and a Lecturer at Penn Design. He is the author of *Symmetry: The One and the Many* (DiTella, 2018), the co-author of *The Architecture of Patterns* (Norton, 2010) and a co-curator of the traveling exhibition *Ambiguous Territory: Architecture, Landscape, and the Postnatural*. His published research interests focus on the ubiquitous but unexamined aspects of architectural design, discourse and pedagogy, including: the history of the driveway, the relationship between conceptual art and suburbia, the aesthetic function of infrastructure, and the history of the architecture design thesis.

An Invariance Despite a Transformation:  
Towards a Symmetrical Theory of Architecture  
David Salomon, Ithaca College

*There is more to symmetry than mirror reflections. Much more. The cultural history of symmetry reveals how its definition has changed over 2500 years: from commensurate, to well-proportioned, to axial, to a lack of information, and to an invariance despite a transformation. For over a century this last definition has been integral to breakthroughs in mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics. More recently symmetry has been recognized by scholars of science as an effective epistemological tool, one that establishes continuity across divergent physical, cultural, and conceptual phenomena.*

*In all cases symmetry's value is tied to its ability to be both descriptive and heuristic. In a word, it is theoretical. A theory is defined as a set of ideas, concepts and laws that explain an established set of facts. It can also be an unsubstantiated but useful hypotheses. While symmetry has performed these roles in other fields, it has not, despite its longstanding presence, done the same in architecture.*

*Therefore, after first describing the multiple modes of symmetry, and second drawing on Von Fraassen's, Latour's and DeLanda's understanding of symmetry as supplying an invariant conceptual connection to divergent phenomenon, it is the task of this paper to outline a symmetrical theory of architecture. This theory locates all modes of architectural production on shared ontological ground in order to equitably examine their specific similarities and differences. Work to be examined includes an ancient Chinese ritual ball, a medieval Hindu Temple, a 21st century skyscraper, and a neo-post-modern house. While these diverse examples all make use of reflections, rotations and translations, formally, ideologically, and historically they are decidedly asymmetrical. Looking at this diverse work through the conceptual lens of symmetry allows us to ask: how might these physical similarities be used to establish specific disciplinary facts, and in turn use those facts to conceptually speculate upon their relevance within a wider social and historical context?*



Ellen Grimes  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Ellen Grimes is an associate professor of architecture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an editor-at-large at *Flat Out*. She has worked with Bruce Mau Design, Garofalo Architects, DLK, and Greg Lynn Form, and is a principal in FlohrGrimes, a design practice. Her writing and editorial work has appeared in *Buildings and Almost Buildings*, *Bowling*, *Flat Out*, *Log*, *the Journal of Architectural Education*, and *Contents* (ed. R. Koolhaas). She was awarded the Van Alen Institute's New York Prize for Public Ecologies, a project at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. She holds an MArch from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an MBA and BA from the University of Chicago.

### No Future for the Recent Past: Architectural Theory After Sustainability Ellen Grimes

*Since the late 1980s when architects began to use the term sustainability, it has been difficult to define and put into practice – forty years later there are no reliable metrics, engaging calls-to-action, pragmatic heuristics, and thoughtful discussions of these problems are rare. This strange state of affairs is, in part, a theoretical challenge.*

*The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, an 8,000-hectare site in the Chicago metropolitan area, was the location of a failed project for a landscape-scale ecological experiment where we were forced to work around sustainability's theoretical problems. Our proposal included a public space and a scientific installation, a collection of enclosures and walkways that were simultaneously an aesthetic project and a data-gathering device, in an attempt to embrace the dynamics of ecosystems along side the complex temporalities of human culture and imagination. This was not a landscape urbanism strategy – we were not deploying techniques of landscape design in an urban setting -- we were designing the study of ecological dynamics in an exurban brownfield. Our proposal demanded a particular logic, a form of thinking about the site that shed the idea of the natural for a bio-politic of change. Our arguments for the project aligned with Guattari's demand for an aesthetic project in response to ecological disaster in his essay, *The Three Ecologies* (1989), where he links Bateson's ecological registers -- social life, subjectivity, and an environment in flux -- with Foucault's notion of biopolitics, the ordering of life through political power. Despite the failure of the Midewin project, I will argue that it shows how Guattari's work, alongside more recent theoretical discussions, can prompt the construction of alternative imaginaries of the environment that offer new logics, distinct from sustainability's systematizing, for architecture's response to climate catastrophe.*

Paper Presentation 2  
04.05.19, 2 pm Meyerson Hall  
**RE-DEFINITIONS**

- Papers which discuss contemporary practices of architectural theory as defined through the lens of writers, philosophers, and theorists.



Sophie Hochhäusl (Moderator)  
PennDesign

Sophie Debiasi Hochhäusl is an Assistant Professor for Architectural History and Theory. Her scholarly work centers on modern architecture and urban culture in Austria, Germany, and the United States, with a focus on the history of social movements, environmental history, and women's and gender studies. In the academic year 2017-2018 Professor Hochhäusl was the Frieda L. Miller Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced study at Harvard University. Currently, Hochhäusl is working on two forthcoming book projects. *The monograph Housing Cooperative: Politics and Architecture in Vienna, 1904-1954* elucidates the role of cooperatives in shaping architectural debates in the first half of the twentieth century. The interdisciplinary history and translation project *Memories from Resistance: Women, War, and the Forgotten Work of Margarete Schütte-Libotzky, 1938-1989*, illuminates the Austrian architect's participation in the Communist resistance against the Nazi regime. In addition, Hochhäusl is a co-editor of the forthcoming volume *Architecture, Environment, Territory: Essential Writings since 1850* with Irene Cheng and Daniel Barber (University of Pittsburgh Press).



Jonathan Hale  
University of Nottingham

Jonathan Hale is an architect and Professor of Architectural Theory at the University of Nottingham, where he is also Head of the Architecture, Culture & Tectonics research group (ACT). He holds an MS from the University of Pennsylvania (1996) and a PhD from the University of Nottingham. His research interests include: architectural theory and criticism; phenomenology and the philosophy of technology; the relationship between architecture and the body; narrative design and digital media in museums. He was the founding chair of the international subject network Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA). His latest monograph is *Merleau-Ponty for Architects* (Routledge, 2017) and he is co-editor of *The Future of Museum and Gallery Design* (Routledge, 2018). [www.bodyoftheory.com](http://www.bodyoftheory.com)

Theory 1, 2 & 3  
Jonathan Hale

*Theory 1, 2 & 3*

*In this paper I argue that most disagreements over the meaning of the word 'theory' arise from the fact that the term has at least three different meanings. To clarify this confusion I adopt a schema taken from the writing of Christopher Frayling, former Rector of the Royal College of Art, who in 1993 offered a useful distinction between three definitions of the word 'research' operating within the broad fields of art and design\*:*

- 1) *Research INTO art and design*
- 2) *Research THROUGH art and design*
- 3) *Research FOR art and design*

*I would like to suggest that we might learn something useful about the various roles of theory in architecture by adopting a similar approach, in fact by simply replacing the words 'research' and 'design' with 'theory' and 'architecture'. This is not to suggest that 'theory' and 'research' are in any way identical, but rather that the same three-part distinction might prove similarly useful.*

*I then go on to consider the creative process as having two distinct phases of activity, usually repeated in iterative cycles until the designer (and/or the client) is happy with the outcome: a) the generation of possible solutions and b) the selection of appropriate alternatives. Creative practitioners who, in the Kantian sense 'cannot account for their actions' may well claim that they 'have no theory' on the basis that they work intuitively, and hence without the need for their actions to be explicitly guided by concepts and methods. However, I will conclude by arguing that theory is still a key element of their work. For example: while some designers may feel able to dispense with 'Theory 3' in their spontaneous pursuit of 'Theory 2', in the choices they make between alternative solutions they cannot help invoking 'Theory 1'.*



Christian Parreno  
Universidad de San Francisco

Christian Parreno is assistant professor of history and theory of architecture at Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador. He holds a PhD from the Oslo School of Architecture and Design and an MA in the Histories and Theories Programme from the Architectural Association. In 2014 he was a Visiting Graduate Researcher at the University of California Los Angeles, and in 2011 a PhD Student at The Bartlett School of Architecture. His research focuses on the relationship between architecture and conditions of boredom and sameness, as components of the modern built environment.

## Unamused Muses and Two Generations of Theory Christian Parreno

*In April 2002, after seven years as chairman of the Department of Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Jorge Silvetti delivered a Walter Gropius Lecture. Published as 'The Muses Are Not Amused: Pandemonium in the House of Architecture', it examined the architectural production of the 1990s, with the aim to reflect on the possibilities of theory as an instrument for design. Significantly, theory was differentiated from 'pure autonomy' or 'stifling historicism', posing it as an aspect of the discipline that ought to contribute to its practice. The crisis of the four trends identified in the review — programism, thematization, blobs, and literalism — suggests that the theories surrounding their production were insufficient as well. Looking back at the lecture in 2015, the renowned practitioner and educator asserted that theory should not be prescriptive but should provide 'an atmosphere [...] that somehow is always focused on the design process and creativity [...]'. That is what, in the best moments, it did'. In his view, there are two generations involved in theoretical discourse:*

*The first one, with truly active practitioners, use the project to anchor speculative thinking, such as Peter Eisenman. Then there are the theoreticians, such as Jeffrey Kipnis and Sanford Kwinter, who come from philosophy and from other disciplines. I find them [...] incredibly intelligent [...] but, in the end, their discourse has not helped anything.*

*Based on an interview with Silvetti, this paper will explore 'The Muses Are Not Amused' as an expression of architectural knowledge that emphasises theory as functional rather than as an independent practice with its own history. The analysis will focus on the critical tone of the lecture and its boredom and dissatisfaction with the overall state of architecture and its narratives.*



Terrance Galvin  
Laurentian University

Terrance Galvin studied architecture at University of Toronto, the Technical University of Nova Scotia, and McGill University's history and theory of Architecture program. He received his doctorate in Architecture from the GSEA at the University of Pennsylvania, writing on the English Enlightenment architects Joseph Michael Gandy and Sir John Soane. In the early 1990s, Galvin taught design and theory at McGill as an Adjunct Professor and later as a Research Associate. Later, he was Associate Professor and Director of the School of Architecture at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Most recently (2012-17), Galvin became the Founding Director of Laurentian University's McEwen School of Architecture, the first new school of architecture in Canada to open in over 40 years, and the first tri-cultural school of its kind in North America. His writings have been published in Canada, the USA and Germany.

#### Embodied Design Theory, Indigenous Cosmologies and the Creation of Place Terrance Galvin

*A new curriculum for the Canadian North offers the promise of rethinking place and tectonics while drawing upon indigenous cosmologies. Elders work alongside design professors in design studios, recounting the cosmology of Turtle Island (North America) to students. An annual studio includes the harvesting of birch bark and subsequent making of a birch bark canoe, complete with bear fat seams. A Métis elder leads a largely non-indigenous group of students to build within a framework of Anishinabek and Métis worldviews. In this context, the canoe acts as a vehicle to teach respect, the harvest of materials, sustainable practices, and seven generational thinking.*

*Our theoretical matrix has placed several layers of interrelated subjects in parallel and overlaid one upon the other. Elders' worldviews overlay the geological story of Sudbury; devastation of the environment is tempered by 'design for climate change,' recalling McHarg and greening; lessons from indigenous cultures are infused by Banham's 'well-tempered environment.' The School is predicated upon the study of the local and extrapolating lessons to elsewhere, with hands-on learning and embodied knowledge at the source of phenomenological experience. References to Levinas, Simone Weil, and Merleau-Ponty are alongside Basel H. Johnston and Carl Beam.*

*This new site of engagement brings together First Nations' knowledge as direct experience of something, with design-build knowledge that begins with materials and techniques. This pedagogy resonates with both indigenous and non-indigenous students as it favors the primacy of place and geography, with community. In a broader reflective manner, lessons learned from the sequence of courses begins with the particular and leads to the general. We intentionally arrive at theory through practice in a model that values storytelling and the oral tradition over treatises.*



Francesca Hughes  
U Tech, Sydney

Francesca Hughes has recently taken up the position of head of School of Architecture at UTS, Sydney. Prior to this she taught both design and history & theory at the Architectural Association and The Bartlett since 1993. She is author editor of *The Architect: Reconstructing her Practice* (MIT Press, 1996), *Drawings that Count* (AA publications, 2013) and most recently, author of *The Architecture of Error: Matter, Measure and the is adventures of Precision* (MIT Press, 2014). Her forthcoming book explores a cultural prehistory of the architecture's computer, tentatively titled *An Indiscrete History of the Architect's Universal Discrete Machine*. Francesca has lectured internationally and is cofounder of the art/architecture practice, Hughes Meyer Studio whose work has been published by AA Files, AR, ANY, Art Forum, e-flux, Harvard Design Magazine, Random House, Routledge, Monacelli and Wiley and been supported by the Arts Council of Great Britain.



Joan Ockman  
PennDesign

Joan Ockman is Distinguished Senior Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design and Visiting Professor of Architecture at Cooper Union and Cornell. She served as director of the Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia from 1994 to 2008. She began her career in the mid-1970s at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York, where she was an editor of *Oppositions* and other publications. Her writings on architectural history and theory have appeared widely in journals, anthologies, and exhibition catalogues. Among her edited or co-authored books are *The Modern Architecture Symposia, 1962–1966: A Critical Edition* (2014); *Architecture School: Three Centuries of Educating Architects in North America* (2012); *The Pragmatist Imagination: Thinking about Things in the Making* (2000); and the award-winning *Architecture Culture 1943–1968: A Documentary Anthology* (1993). In 2017 she was named a Fellow of the Society of Architectural Historians.



Michael Benedikt  
UT Texas, Austin

Michael Benedikt is the Director of the Center for American Architecture and Design (CAAD) at the University of Texas at Austin, where he holds the Hal Box Chair in Urbanism and teaches design studio and architectural theory. He is a graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa and of Yale University. He has worked in a medium-sized firm and run a small architectural practice of his own (mainly residential). He is better known for his teaching and writing. He has published over one hundred articles and book chapters. His books include *For an Architecture of Reality* (1987), *Deconstructing the Kimbell* (1991), *Cyberspace: First Steps* (1991), *Value* (1997) and *Value 2* (1998), *Shelter: The 2000 Raoul Wallenberg Lecture* (2001), *God Is the Good We Do: Theology of Theopraxy* (2007), and *God, Creativity, and Evolution: The Argument from Design(ers)* (2008). His book-in-progress is titled *Architecture Beyond Experience*.



David Leatherbarrow (Moderator)  
PennDesign

David Leatherbarrow is Professor of Architecture the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches architectural design, as well as the history and theory of architecture, gardens, and cities. His recent books include: *Three Cultural Ecologies, with R. Wesley*; *20th Century Architecture*; *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*; *Topographical Stories: studies in landscape and architecture*; *Surface Architecture*, with M. Mostafavi; and *Uncommon Ground: architecture, technology and topography*. Before that were: *The Roots of Architectural Invention: site, enclosure and materials*, and *On Weathering: the life of buildings in time*, again with Mostafavi. His research has focused on selected topics in the history and theory of architecture, also landscape architecture, and, most recently, on the impact of contemporary technology on architecture.

