

Umeå University
UMA School of Architecture
Autumn Lectures 2012

Relational Architecture

Thursday 15 November, starting at 19.00 Hours

Public Lecture: **The Ethological City, Alex van de Beld**, co-founder of ONIX architects together with Haiko Meijer, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Thursday 29 November, starting at 16.00 hours

Open Campus. All departments of the Arts Campus welcome the public from 16.00 hours on. The Bildmuseet (Modern Art Museum) will be open the whole evening! The closing event of the Open Campus will be the public lecture of Helena Mattsson.

Thursday 29 November, starting at 19.00 Hours

Public Lecture: **Third Way Architecture: Postmodernism and Politics in the 1980s, Helena Mattsson**, Professor in Architecture, History and Theory at the School of Architecture, and vice-dean of the School of Technology and the Built Environment, KTH (Royal Institute of Technology) Stockholm, Sweden.

Wednesday 5 December, starting at 19.00 Hours

Public Lecture: **Telling by Hand: Making, Drawing, Writing. Tim Ingold**, Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom.

In collaboration with the masters program Laboratory of Immediate Architectural Intervention.

Thursday 13 December, starting at 19.00 Hours

Public Lecture: **Where is our Collective Imagination? Architecture and the Crisis of the Public, Teddy Cruz**, Professor in Public Culture and Urbanism in the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego, where he directs Center for Urban Ecologies, United States of America.

All lectures take place at 19.00 hours in the UMA Auditorium of the architecture building at the Art Campus. Address: Östra Strandgatan 30 C, Umeå.

The Public Lectures are livestreamed and can be accessed via the UMA website.

Introduction

Relational Architecture

Something forces us to think. This something is not an object of recognition, but a fundamental encounter.

Gilles Deleuze

There exists no "reality" prior to the event of communication, in which *perception* and *agency* are never separated. There is nothing outside situated relations, no being other than being-through-communication and being-in-relation. The world constitutes itself, so to speak, from meridian point of encounters.

Anselm Franke

It is becoming clear to the social sciences, architects, designers, and artist that space is more complex and dynamic than previous formal models allowed. Ideas about spatiality are moving away from reading physical objects and autonomous forms towards the variety of territorial, political and psychological social processes that flow through space. The interrelationships amongst things in space, as well as the effects that are produced through dynamic interaction, are becoming of greater significance to intervening in urban landscapes than soley compositional arrangement of objects and surfaces.

Now that relationality, networking, connectivity and other dynamic experiences in our heterogenous time effect the nature of the architectural project – its conception, procurement, construction and use but also its shape, image, materiality and aesthetics – we have to start to analyse, judge and create projects on the basis of the inter-human relations they represent, produce and enact in our global cultural industry.

Although the urban, neoliberal, and modern everyday is pushing towards increased homogeneity in daily life, the irreconcilable disjunctions born in our generic city full of anachronistic interstices make it impossible to think of modernization as only negative. Michel de Certeau's work confirmed the impossibility of a full colonization of everyday life by late capitalism and stressed that potential alternatives are always available, since individuals and institutions arrange resources and choose methods through particular creative arrangements from within their generic condition. It are precisely these unpredicable situations of co-existence that should be of interest for the relational architect, designer and artist. It is here where modernity revolutionizes itself through the complex overlapping of co-existing realities. It is these realities the relational architect, designer and artist wishes to engage with, without ever wishing to finalize them. We, as space makers, should ask ourselves the essential question what "modern" could mean in this complex global culture. Or in other words, how we as architects, designers and artist could help create conditions of "situated freedom" for both the collective and the individual now that globalization is total, and neo-liberalism has no answers to confront the disasters it created on the level of the city, the landscape (ecology) and humanity as a whole.