

The
Economic
Structure
of
Architecture
in
Theory and
Practice

Asymmetrical
Lobby
Architecture
in
Theory and
Practice

Asymmetric Labors: The Economy of Architecture in Theory and Practice

Edited by Aaron Cayer, Peggy Deamer,
Sben Korsh, Eric Peterson, and Manuel Shvartzberg

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Introduction

Aaron Cayer, Peggy Deamer,
Sben Korsh, Eric Peterson,
Manuel Shvartzberg

In between teaching, writing, and researching, this booklet emerged while working outside of work: it is the product of nearly six months of dialogue and debate, over 500 essay-length e-mails exchanged, a half-dozen group calls, and coordination across three different time zones. As members of the US-based Architecture Lobby, we editors initiated the booklet first as architectural workers advocating for the value of architectural work in the general public and in the discipline. Interested in how the Lobby's stance on architectural practice might apply to questions of history and theory both in the US and globally, we drafted and circulated a call for submissions. We sent follow-up requests—some never replied, others were too busy—and insisted that the essays be personal and polemical. The end result, *Asymmetric Labors: The Economy of Architecture in Theory and Practice*, is a booklet with nearly fifty texts by workers who discuss the social, economic, and political value of their labor. They are architectural historians, writers, researchers, professors, students, and practitioners. The various calls that were sent out roughly read:

The scenes are familiar ones: the scribe of the gallery plaque, the bespeckled figure hurrying from the archive to the classroom, the designer reluctantly forced to write to make her tenure case, the turtle-necked critic summoned to embellish the panel at a biennale. As in many professions, the architectural historian or theorist comes in many forms. Unlike most professions, though, the figure must be made to explain herself. Not at all wed to art historical methodologies, nor interested in drawing connections between his intellectual project and built offerings, all the while refusing to identify as either a scientist or humanist. Who is this person? What is their work?

Perhaps the best way to get at the peculiarities of this situation is to ask: what is the labor of an architectural historian/theorist? Or, first to ask: why is architecture history/theory separate from other dimensions of architectural practice? What is its role within the everyday office? Why is this distinction necessary, and what ends and logics does it reflect? Taking these questions to imply an inherent asymmetricality of work—one form imagined to be the domain of the office and another of the academy—there are many ways to address this question within an economy of intersecting labors: whether it is the commodification of “knowledge” itself within architecture firms using research program as marketing tools; how it is used to uphold or deconstruct class distinctions between construction, engineering, and architecture; the different political valences attached to the role of ‘theory’ in architecture; how it associates/dissociates from actually existing social movements; the professionalization (and depoliticization) of thought in the academy by way of tenured professorships; etc.

Beyond the academy itself, how can we understand the instrumentalizations of history/theory in practice (ie., ‘research’), and the various outlets that configure ‘architectural discourse’ at large, such as publications, exhibitions, and biennials?

We are interested in the particular kinds of labor these modes of production require and reproduce. As critical scholars and cultural producers, how does our labor inflect the economy of architecture, and how is it inflected by it? How should we be teaching laboring architects—rather than elitist ‘gentlemen’, ‘artists’, or ‘experts’—in the 21st century? How might history/theory in the academy or in practice address fundamental questions of

social relations in the construction and development industries? And how does all this relate to the increasing precarization of university teachers the world over?

Indeed, as we ourselves ask for yet another unpaid contribution in our field, part of the impetus of this initiative is to gather enough attention and critical mass to create the conditions for being able to pay contributors for such kind of work in the future. We are painfully aware of this contradiction—so often in display at biennials, as much as in the unpaid or underpaid work performed in architecture offices worldwide. Thus, one of the booklet's chief goals is to call attention to the need for better funding of labor rights discourse in architecture and academia at large. But how should we get there exactly?

Questions

This booklet is meant to begin a conversation that is not yet focused, not yet resolved, and not yet clear about its terms, but that is necessary to build momentum against uneven values and unjust labor practices in the academy and the profession. Why must adjunct faculty members need welfare, students need debt, PhDs be unemployable, writers scratch for pennies, and public universities privatize? How do these problems relate to the hubris of real estate, environmental destruction, and social inequity in our cities and built environments? We conjecture that there is another way for academic labor and its ramifications to exist robustly—not merely be surviving.

These are big concerns, to be sure, but many of them could be touched upon by discussing the PhD in Architecture, which is a degree with a relatively short history in the United States and with weird bona fides to academics in different fields. Those holding a PhD in Architecture often hold a

professional degree, but not always; she may be a “former architect” or still practice professionally; she may write for magazines and peer reviewed journals or curate exhibitions; she may present work at art festivals and museums; or she may work for design, planning, or preservation firms. Indeed, one of the more distinct features of the field seems to be the proliferation of engagements by a role that was once just a “historian.” We speculated that examining these forms of labor—as educator, curator, researcher, critic, director, and writer—could get at the asymmetry of labor between the architectural academy and the profession. Though tenure-track lines are closing and the academic job market is tight, the proliferation of programs suggest that history and theory may be one of the fastest growing subfields within the architecture academy.

Despite the growing interest in history and theory, there seems to be minimal impact on the discipline's attention to broader issues, including social, economic, and political inequalities. Perhaps worse, the professionalization of architecture history and theory may only serve to further draw lines between the thinking and the doing of architecture by reinforcing the latter as the profession's primary site of agency. While discussing these realities, a current MArch student and Architecture Lobby member, Violet Whitney, provoked:

I've spent a lot of time being overworked just to perpetuate the very things that I hate in the world. Most of the buildings I worked on after undergrad were commodity buildings for wealthy clients. When I look at my options when I graduate, the options aren't expanding. My architecture school likes to talk about inequality and social issues,

and for what I have learned here I am grateful. But in order to start to chew on something as insurmountable as inequality, smaller practical tactics are necessary in combination with understanding and theory. This is where I think architecture schools are failing, and why they need to invest and innovate if they intend to have relevance. Most of my peers, including myself, will continue to prepare for the immediate demands of working in the current market because that is our reality. We will build things that are pretty, but they will not help most people. We will work long hours and talk about social aims, all while working hourly wages to make another commodified building that will make a developer a little bit richer.

This sentiment can be read as a powerful indictment of what many of us academics believe we are addressing.

Responses

The responses to our queries took many forms, ranging from a fictional proposal to attract venture capital for history and theory work, to self reflections on emotional labor, to an examination of subcontracted labor used by multinational construction firms, to a manifesto for anti-work politics. Many writers approached the sets of questions by first examining what the historian, theorist, or critic does, and secondly by explaining what the perceived value of his or her labor is. How does the work of a historian or theorist relate to architectural practice more broadly? How are the conditions of architectural and intellectual labor structured? And how is intellectual labor paid, if at all?

Many contributors approached these sets of questions from radically different vantage points. Although a majority are written by US authors, they reflect the various formats that research can take,

and the variations in definition, method, and content of architectural research around the globe. For instance, several contributions from the UK were collaboratively written; in contrast, only one submission from the US was. In other cases, the differences arise in the self-described status of the authors, highlighting varying hierarchies within academic work, as well as different modes of intellectual inquiry. Further, still, is the wide range of responses that reflect the authors' diverging epistemological and institutional settings. For this, we were sensitive to each essay's original regional intonations.

With an incredible range of topics, sharp voices, and powerful critique that could each stand alone, we were hesitant to impose categorization—but hope it is illuminating to read them in the sequence we landed on. We have organized the booklet around a series of themes: Disciplinary Negligence, Intellectual Labor, The Neoliberal Academy, Bridges to Practice, Instrumentalizing Research, and Values of History and Theory. These broad categories are intended to spark a dialogue among and between the different approaches taken to answer these questions, acknowledging that the texts are not discrete in their chapter placement. Many speak to concerns across multiple thematics.

A common thread in the texts is the way that architecture history, theory, and practice can and do inform each other in both occluded and explicit ways. As many of the contributors suggest, by questioning the value of knowledge and history in the discipline, we may begin to probe how the discipline views its work and workers within the world at large.

Disciplinary Negligence

Capital A

Tahl Kaminer

University of Edinburgh

In 2009, I visited New York's Cooper Union with a group of TU Delft architecture students. One of our hosts commented that until the recent 'arrival' of Sejima's New Museum, 'there was no Architecture in New York'. The faces of the Dutch students disclosed their disbelief and bafflement—how could there be 'no architecture' in New York City? Surely, situated in Manhattan's East Village, we were surrounded by a mountain of evidence to the contrary.

This exchange brings to the fore the disparate understandings of 'architecture', a reflection of the very different conditions of architectural production in the United States and other Anglo-Saxon countries to those of countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, or Spain. In the former, Architecture with a capital A occupies the coveted status of a cultural practice yet is (socially) marginalized, 'deployed' in the design of museums, libraries, luxury hotels and the like, whereas in the latter there is no Architecture, only *architect-ure*. At the heart of this difference is the involvement of architects in most European countries in designing mass housing, which necessarily engages architects with societal issues of habitation and daily life.

The international character of institutions such as the Venice Biennale (presuming 'international' is a valid term for describing such a Western-focused institution) encourages a global discourse of architecture which veils the significant differences in the conditions of architectural production across the globe, conditions which shape practice and theory. In conditions in which housing is created without the direct involvement of architects as in catalogue housing in the United States or Britain, Architecture

with a capital A emerges as an alternative, a means of producing rarefied objects and luxury artefacts. A position of Kantian disinterestedness makes sense in such conditions. Eisenmanian theories of a disinterested Architecture 'critical' of, or 'liberated' from compromised society therefore emerge in such circumstances as a means of legitimizing the current conditions of production: they merely explain and exalt conditions over which architects have no control. The expulsion of architecture and other fields of design from direct access to societal issues, from direct influence over social 'content' and societal organization, and the restriction of available commissions to singular buildings, is transformed in such theories from a negative to a positive. No longer are the conditions considered to be detrimental to Architecture, imposed on the discipline from the outside; instead, they are venerated for enabling freedom from society: a creative freedom for the architect. Theory, in this case, functions as a coping mechanism rather than being a vehicle of resistance.

Architecture with a capital A is necessarily allied with theory; not just the theory which legitimizes Architecture's existence and exalts its characteristics and purpose, but theory in general. Both Architecture and theory have shared experiences in contemporary Anglo-Saxon countries: their dependency on academia and involvement in teaching; their distance from ubiquitous forms of architectural and building production; their focus on discourse production and disciplinary issues; paper projects (paper architecture and theory papers) as their main products; and architects, architectural

journalists and critics as their audience. Expectedly, such theory and practice tend to focus on issues that are inherently 'architectural': form and composition, the design process, materialization and so forth. When co-opting theories from other fields, architectural theory has carefully selected not sociology or social theory, but, more often, philosophy and metaphysics, fields which lie at such distance from architectural production that they cannot compromise the purity of Architecture. Stan Allen's nudging of architectural discourse towards a discussion of 'technique' has hardly altered the relations in question, whereas the rebellion of the 'post-critics' against Eisenman's disinterested position appears as a sign of frustration with current conditions misdirected at a figure who has had no hand in creating them, only in legitimizing them.

The critical credentials of theory developed in such conditions is dependent on a critical distance from compromised society and building industry, yet they are undermined by theory's proximity to the practices of Architecture. The role of such theory, it seems, is either to legitimize Architecture in general or, alternatively, legitimize specific Architectural projects or practices, 'operative criticism' in Tafuri's terms.

Aravena's Pritzker and curation of the Biennale, Assemble's Turner Prize, and MoMA's exhibitions 'Uneven Growth' and 'Small Scale, Big Change' are evidence of a profound change in the last years within the discipline of architecture and a genuine desire to engage with urgent social, economic, and political

issues. This has been first and foremost a change of consciousness, but the real battle is in changing the actual conditions in which architects operate. Theory easily adapts, as demonstrated by Cynthia Davidson and Monica Ponce de Leon's curation of the US Pavilion. The argument produced by the curators shifts the emphasis from architectural-specificity to social concerns, selecting, it is argued, 'twelve visionary American architectural practices to produce new work that demonstrates the creativity and resourcefulness of architecture to address the social and environmental issues of the 21st century.'¹ But can a Greg Lynn deliver architecture which has positive 'demonstrable impact' on Detroit? Minor shifts in framing topics, small re-calibration of arguments, steering genuine angst and dismay into apolitical forms of improvement-via-design, and the threats of opportunism and co-optation: all these can easily derail the attempt to radicalize architecture. For the architects engaged with other forms of doing architecture, the challenge is in identifying how forms of practice originally developed within the voluntarist sector (Architecture for Humanity, Rural Studio, etc.) can become part and parcel of an everyday practice without compromising the ambition. This is no minor task, and if successful, Architecture will be subsumed into *architecture*.

1 "Release: Curators Cynthia Davidson and Monica Ponce de Leon to speak at MOCAD, Detroit, on February 25, 2016 at 7pm." The Architectural Imagination, February 5, 2016. <http://www.thearchitecturalimagination.org/news/2016/2/5/curators-cynthia-davidson-and-monica-ponce-de-leon-to-speak-at-mocad-detroit-on-february-25-2016-at-7pm> (accessed 6 April 2016).

Letter from London to São Paulo

Nick Beech

Queen Mary, University of London

The hegemonic drives of neo-liberal political economy, as normative understandings of the built environment, cohere around an acceptable reflection of the real. The informational and social networks developed by the financial industry in London is piggybacked (either that, or they are running a sack race together) by professional and commercial operators based in London—architects, engineers, project managers, solicitors, and contract agencies—who boast of international offices and project portfolios to match. The academy follows suit. With pressure to ‘bring in’ industrial ‘expertise’ through ‘knowledge transfer partnerships’, universities now seek core funding from *anyone* (City guild? Great. Global energy corporation? Why not. Sovereign fund? Well...OK!) on any basis. Restructuring is nominally driven by demands for ‘multi-disciplinary’ and ‘inter-disciplinary’ research (and ‘skills’ and ‘knowledge’, etc.) resulting in the rapid integration and disintegration of departments, whilst research is broken up, and teaching hived off to the production line of a ragbag of discrete elective ‘modules’. Knowledge dissolves, becomes distributed.

The petrification of labour, resulting from the continuing exploitation of migratory workers, with massively differentiated skills and qualifications, results in a politically underrepresented population who face already threatening, now worsening, working conditions. Industry, beyond and wit hin the academy, lurches through the convulsed property market—pulling in and then sloughing off large populations who are frequently working in locations with little or no political representation.

Whilst, astoundingly, it is still possible to hear some European architects describe construction sites today as appearing ‘little different from the time of the pyramids’, the truth is that the processes, materials, and organisation of the production of buildings is undergoing rapid transformation—changing working conditions, wage structures, contracting and sub-contracting chains with major consequences for the livelihoods of workers on site; increasingly sophisticated product manufacture; the simultaneous proliferation and integration of new professional ‘services’ as the legal landscape (over land and building) thickens and the once ‘disinterested’ professions are absorbed in ‘design and build’ contracts; the ‘financialisation’ of general contractors, whose relationship with landowners, developers, and state agencies becomes increasingly complex and/or hidden. The embedded relationship between the state and private developers has been boosted with the ‘dissolution’ of the planning system. The fallout is an ‘emptying’ of the *polis*, a disappearance of polities—in a material sense as populations in former industrial regions shrink, and in a political sense in those global cities whose populations expand but without any political representation.

Finally, the mystification of architecture, largely reduced to an ideological technicism or formalism, encapsulated by that purveyor of capitalist realism Patrick Schumacher (Zaha Hadid Architects, proponent of ‘Parametricism’):

There is no point in allowing political controversy to penetrate and usurp the architectural debate [...] The socio-economic forces of a market-oriented Post-Fordist network society and the attendant political forces of liberal, parliamentary multi-party (and multi-cultural) democracy are delivering the general socio-economic and politico-cultural premises for our parametricist design agendas [...] As professional architects we are not called upon to undermine prior (democratic) political decisions. Who could give us that right? What would give an architect the right to second guess for instance the decision to invest in a public building with a particular programme and represented by a legitimately constituted client representative. The attempt to subvert such legitimate intentions would be arrogant, pompous, and in no way justifiable.¹

How might we measure the gratitude of the Bahrainian people towards this resounding humility of the architect? We can only wonder that they protested, in the spring of 2012, outside the Formula One stadium designed by Zaha Hadid Architects.

Within this depressing political context, damage in the academy is done, not by direct challenges to research, but from the fragmentary nature of this research, a condition not unrecognised:

The [...] feature that stands out [...] is what a bunch of loners we are in architectural humanities. Almost every piece of research consists of the report of a solitary enterprise: we seem to be more or less incapable of developing collective research projects that involve larger groups of people, in more than one country.²

1 Georgie Day, “Interview with Patrick Schumacher”, *PAPER (Platform for Architectural Projects and Research)*, no. 4 (2012), 1–2. (Available at: <http://cargocollective.com/paper-magazine/filter/issue/Issue-08-On-Parametricism-an-interview-with-Patrik-Schumacher-by>).

Isolated critical interventions are given enough space to appear, but only as attractive aggregates, bound inside an otherwise monolithic medium. Policy and action are guided by analyses that are quantitative in regards to the ‘material’ of the built environment—from the ‘stuff’ of the building, through energy, to populations (particularly in terms of ‘resources’), understood in measurable units—and ‘liberal’ in their conception of subjects, as evident in ethical debates that, assuming models of ‘client/provider’ or ‘developer/user’ rapidly deteriorate to utilitarian and classical positions on rational choice and limited responsibility.

A space is required, in which researchers and activists can develop strategies for engaging with institutionalised networks and forums that are otherwise restricted to normative and dominant ideologies in research on architecture, planning, construction, law, etc. That is: the market and state sponsored events that are regularly held and at which technicist, idealist, and vulgar accounts of the production of the built environment are presented. Without such, many of us will continue to feel that we are ‘fighting on all fronts’ as individuals—within our respective institutions and within the wider world.

2 Adrian Forty, “The Politics of Making: Review”, *arq*, vol. 10, no. 3/4 (2006), pp. 187–9, p. 189.

Not an Essay about Architectural Autonomy

Eric Peterson

University of California, Berkeley

In a methods course in a history/theory M.A. program, the professor briefly alluded to a radical moment in the architecture school's history (in the late 1960s) during which students took to the streets and may or may not have been responsible for a devastating fire in the Art & Architecture Building. "We don't think that way anymore," she said before moving on. While this radical episode seemed a blip to her, at Yale I saw the ghosts of the 1960s seemingly everywhere. In a number of enduring yet neutered institutions such as the Building Project, which in its initial incarnation placed an emphasis on collaboration with disinvested communities but now builds houses that garner likes on Architizer and Instagram but are rumored to sit unpurchased and uninhabited for years after completion. It seems not entirely coincidental that the institution of an architecture history/theory degree occurred at roughly the same time as the closure of the City Planning department after its newly-reformed curriculum—replacing an emphasis on technocratic, comprehensive planning with advocacy planning led by minority students—veered too radical for the university administration's comfort.

This legacy hints at broader implications as the discipline staked so much on dealing with the 1960s and 1970s "urban crisis." In recent years historians Brian Goldstein and Lucia Allais have examined attempts by academic institutions and architects such as Peter Eisenman to radically reorient the imperatives of the discipline towards those of black urban residents who brought to bear critique of the results of a previous regime of modernism's brutal remaking of the city (urban renewal as "negro removal").

A host of institutions created to repair the modernism impulse—Model Cities at the federal level, the Black Workshop at Yale—were unable to sustain the vast ambitions of their revisionary projects. These included a decentering of the “expert” architect/planner and, at times, an urgent rethinking of the professional’s role in the logic of growth that had underpinned the vicious cycles of urban investment and disinvestment throughout the postwar era. Many of these efforts were met, of course, with hostility, but more concretely they could not be sustained as line items on the federal budget during a time of increased austerity.¹

Harney & Moten write about the pitfalls of professionalization, and in particular how labor in the university revolves around a mining of the affective labor of academics (who are expected to be managers of their own efficiencies and livelihoods) and in effect foreclosing the connections more radical and collaborative critique could make with the spaces of activism and justice beyond. Questions of justice and of critique are not possible for the professional academic, or must be pursued in the shadows.² This observation might be readily extended to a discussion of architecture both in terms of its disposition (since the end of federal

funding to address the “urban crisis”) towards cultural institutions and image-making where it now garners its biggest cache, as well in the monopolistic nature of the credentialism process and the kinds of labor and skills it bounds off for inclusion or exclusion as architectural skills.

While architecture might exemplify many of the limitations of professionalization, it has an alternative history of practices that, unlike many professions, it might readily call upon to dramatic effect. I think particularly of the still nascent critique of the architect’s “expertise” and substation of the alliance (as “clients”) with those affected by urban crisis of one kind or another rather than with those (most obviously real estate industries) who perpetuate it. Recuperating these neutered histories and reconstituting them alongside the history of the discipline’s theoretical crises could act as a first step. Architectural history—if it wants to weigh in in a serious way on the new forms of “urban crisis” of our times and create serious political commitments more generally—ought to place emphasis not just on the discourses and works of practitioners but also their relationships to the institutional complexes that work to define what work does and doesn’t count as architectural labor.

1 Brian Goldstein, “Planning’s End? Urban Renewal in New Haven, the Yale School of Art and Architecture, and the Fall of the New Deal Spatial Order.” *Journal of Urban History* 37 (2011), Lucia Allais, “The Real and the Theoretical, 1968,” *Perspecta* 42 (2010).

2 Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, (Brooklyn: Atonomedia, 2013) 26.

Architecture History/Criticism/Theory

Peggy Deamer
Yale University

The weirdness of this well-known segment of architectural education is both its uniqueness and its irrelevance. Architecture is singular for this tri-partite naming. Art history (or the history of art) doesn't extend its training to criticism and theory; there are no law classes called "legal history, theory, and criticism"; English departments study history and criticism but not together and not theory in isolation; philosophy being theoretical doesn't name that activity and being reflexive, doesn't name its criticality. Architecture alone supposes that these three activities are identifiably separate but inextricably bound together.

Architectural academia in America, however, while enjoying its unique openness to three activities with seeming equal status, really only supports one: history. Yes, there are theory classes in MArch programs. But at the level of PhD work, where scholarship is identified and financially supported, you can only do history—the history of architects and institutions, or the history of theory, or the history of criticism, but history on all counts. SAH, the forum for the exchange of research and advanced architectural studies can maybe forgiven for only entertaining history—at least its name is honest about that. But still, PhD students and architectural scholars aren't going to SAC or SAT.

The period of critical theory that dominated much of the writing of architecture in the 80's and 90's is not even the exception that proves the rule. In the American University, while plenty of texts referenced Foucault, Derrida, or Deleuze and Guattari, these were not written by those securing or having an

American doctorate. While Mark Wigley brought his kiwi dissertation on Derrida to the US, and Beatriz Colomina brought her Spanish dissertation on the role of publishing in Corb's oeuvre to the US, and Elizabeth Grosz brought her work on Lacan, Deleuze and gender from Australia to the US, no theoretically challenging dissertation was spawned here.

As a result, architectural history/criticism/theory is inherently conservative and intellectually risk-free. One will not find in architecture the ideological battles fought by the New Critics in English studies, the disciplinary antagonism between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy, or the methodological revolution experienced by geography when it recognized Marx's relevance to its spatial subject matter. Instead, architecture history/theory/criticism looks at past masters to study the evolution of ideas, styles, and movements, but the stakes are always historiographic, not ideological.

This is sad for architectural history/theory/criticism but it is sadder for the discipline in general because this conservatism unwittingly reinforces the most reactionary tendencies—read, devoid of political positioning—in design and practice. When we are told by those whose job it is to interrogate our disciplinary boundaries that biography, style, or historic contextualization are the only things at stake, we should not be surprised if our professional output foregrounds these minor, safe, and critically unreflexive concerns.

I have a PhD of which I am proud. It was on a critic; I wrote on his historical context. But what I was interested in and could never write about as a

“scholar” were his ideas and how they related psychoanalytic conceptions to spatial aesthetics. I apply these ideas everyday as I criticize my own work and that of my students. It's just that I've learned to never reference them; they show I never learned my historical lesson.

Who Builds Your Architecture?

Laura Diamond Dixit

Columbia University

Kadambari Baxi

Barnard College and Columbia University

Jordan Carver

New York University

Mabel O. Wilson

Columbia University

On the typical construction site for a large-scale architectural project, labor is performed on a divided field and structured by a series of contractual relationships. The roles can include the Design Architect, the Architect of Record, the Construction Manager, and various subcontractors, including those responsible for specific materials and construction processes (such as curtain wall and glazing subcontractors, structural steel subcontractors, concrete work subcontractors, and electrical work subcontractors). Beyond being hired for the ability to do specialized work, subcontractors are increasingly responsible for the day-to-day conditions that structure the lives of construction workers for much of the time they are away from the construction site. On some of the most visible architectural projects being built around the globe today, subcontractors procure and maintain construction workers' housing, which includes subcontracting for food preparation and service for workers. They also ensure (or fail to ensure) that workers' housing is livable, which includes proper ventilation, fresh water, and maintenance for cleanliness. In some instances, subcontractors also make sure that workers have access to medical care.

The structure of work between the aforementioned actors—architects, engineers, consultants, contractors and subcontractors—on construction sites and their ancillary spaces is fundamentally hierarchical, with contractors overseeing the work of subcontractors, who are in turn responsible for vendors and suppliers. This organization of labor into strictly defined roles responds to temporal pressures

that demand models of efficiency to realize ever-faster construction schedules. Such hierarchies are enabled and reinforced by the professional training that begins in architecture schools and continues in offices. Drawings play a central role in producing this hierarchy of labor relationships, with architectural studios, technology courses, and professional practice courses as key sites in the process of training architects to make different types of drawings, some of which will act as a set of instructions for building—constructions documents bring together structural, mechanical, civil, electrical with architectural information. Post-graduation, interns in architectural offices continue to learn the conventions and standards for the various design phases and the preparation of construction documents before they can become licensed architects. The license exam overseen by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards tests an intern's knowledge of the professional and legal dimensions of construction documents and other aspects of practice. As sets of construction documents that contain drawings of plans, sections, and details move between offices (for example, from the architect to a facade consultant) and to the construction site and contractors, the sets are repeatedly stamped, read, updated, and interpreted. Through this process, the construction drawings enter into the legal system to become legally binding documents. Construction managers and contractors translate these documents on-site to workers, which sometimes requires the use of multiple languages on large transnational building sites.

This diagram of the construction site and its supporting spaces can be filled in with research about the work conditions on specific job sites and the practices of particular architects, engineers, construction management companies, and subcontracting companies. It can also be understood through more abstract models that do not include specific names, but rather use defined labor roles to understand the system that structures today's construction process. Even so, in architectural theory and history we have not yet fully researched and understood the far-reaching impact of globalization on construction.

How, then, might we bridge this perceived split between the discipline of architecture and the global systems that shape the day-to-day conditions of the construction site? Over the past few years, *Who Builds Your Architecture?* has organized workshops and public forums, taken part in panels and lectures, developed visualizations and maps, and written essays to probe and understand a complex set of relationships of architects and architecture in the global construction industry. *WBYA?* has examined links between the labor of architects, contractors, subcontractors and construction workers in the context of the processes of building within the global supply chains of the construction industry. Forums such as biennials and publications have provided a platform for our research. These spaces have helped to advance the work, but have also made us aware of the need to initiate wider dialogue about the role of labor in architecture in schools, in architectural offices, and on construction sites. In what type

of space might we imagine a conversation taking place between an architect, construction manager, construction worker, and historian? Would the conversation take place in an office, or a school, or an installation, or on a construction site? What sort of questions would be raised? And how could one conversation lead to other conversations that begin to make connections and transform hierarchies to become part of a collaborative process that recognizes and protects the dignity of all forms of labor?

Images Want to Be Free!

Joan Ockman

University of Pennsylvania

When I first became involved in the world of architectural publishing back in the 1970s and subsequently began seeing my own writing on architecture appear in print, illustrations weren't a big deal. Mostly you photographed what you wanted out of books or magazines, handed slides or prints over to the publisher, and included a source note in the caption or else in a figure list at the end. Since this was academic publishing, there was an assumption that it was fair use, even if that venerable concept (which actually goes back to British Common Law) wasn't widely invoked yet. If there happened to be a well-known and important photographer involved, say, Ezra Stoller, you wrote a letter to that individual or his company and requested permission. Costs for a single image rarely topped \$50. That was pretty much it. A little later, in the mid-1980s when I became senior editor for architecture and design at Rizzoli, a commercial publisher, we would "troubleshoot" the list of illustrations. When there was a clear copyright holder, like the Fondation Le Corbusier, we negotiated with them directly.

Increasingly, however, copyright protectionism ramped up, and the effects rippled into the world of academic publishing too. A loss I have never quite gotten over had to do with textual rather than image permissions. It occurred in the early 1980s when I was in charge of the Oppositions Books series at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York. We had just published (in association with MIT Press) a beautiful translation of Adolf Loos's first collection of essays, *Spoken into the Void*. Loos had originally collected these writings, written for contemporary newspapers and journals between 1897

and 1900, in a single volume titled *Ins Leere gesprochen* in 1921, and republished the collection with minor revisions in 1931, two years before his death. We had also already translated, edited, and gathered the illustrations for a second volume of essays, containing a collection of Loos's writings from 1900 to 1930, also originally published in Austria in 1931 under the title *Trotzdem*. We were about to put it into production when a man named Adolf Opel got wind of our intention and wrote to MIT Press claiming to represent Elsie Altmann-Loos, Loos's second wife and sole named heir to his estate, and demanding that we desist. Although we could not verify his claim, MIT was unwilling to risk a lawsuit. A dispute over the ownership of Loos's body of writings has continued to the present day, with several other parties emerging to challenge Opel's claim, and *Trotzdem* has never been published in English in its entirety. Opel, however, now in his eighties, has issued several volumes of Loos's writings in both German and English, rearranging Loos's essays according to his own themes (and presumably thus avoiding copyright infringement).¹

1 Incidentally, some of Opel's English translations of the essays from *Ins Leere gesprochen* are very close to those in the Oppositions Books edition. On the copyright controversy surrounding Loos's writings, see Janet Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna: Adolf Loos's Cultural Criticism* (Routledge, 2000), pp. 10–17; and especially a recent elucidation of the tangled *affaire Loos* by Ines Weizman, "The Three Lives of Modern Architecture: Wills, Copyrights, and Their Violations," in Thordis Arrhenius, Mari Lending, Wallis Miller, and Jérémie Michael McGowan, eds., *Exhibiting Architecture: Place and Displacement* (Zurich: Lars Müller, 2014), 183–96. Weizman argues that in 2008, with the passage of 75 years since Loos's death, his writings and drawings have finally entered the public domain and may now be freely republished and reproduced by anyone.

Today, online and off, there is an increasingly formidable array of gatekeepers in the path of scholarly publication. A bewildering set of rules and exceptions governs term of copyright, licensing arrangements, and what is and is not in the public domain. The lack of uniformity in laws and enforcement from country to country adds to the confusion. The appointed middlemen also derive an unspecified share of royalties or fees from their services. Familiar online nowadays are images that have the logos of digital archives and websites stamped across them and online books with grayed-out illustrations, frustrating viewing and reading. At the same time, the great majority of images that appear on sites like Pinterest, Tumblr, and Google Images are posted without provenance (some of them employing devices to make them vanish like the Cheshire cat after a few seconds unless one agrees to become a member of a particular online community).

Almost as dismaying as my experience with the Loos book was an encounter I had ten years ago when, as the editor of a small-format, low-budget series of books published by the Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University in association with Princeton Architectural Press, I found myself obliged to negotiate with the Mondrian/Holtzman Trust for the right to reproduce three black-and-white photos depicting the interiors of Mondrian's studios in Paris and New York.² Because several of Mondrian's paintings or "wallworks" were

2 Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On the Relationship Between Where Art Is Made and Where It Is Displayed* (New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture and Princeton Architectural Press, 2007).

visible within the photographs, the estate's representative demanded that we pay for each of those works additionally. She also required that we show her the complete list of images in the book in advance, and when she discovered that we also planned to include an installation shot of a 1928 gallery in a museum in Hannover, Germany—the famous *Abstrakt Kabinett* designed by El Lissitzky, in which two (subsequently lost) paintings by Mondrian could be seen hanging on the walls—she insisted on charging us for those too! The total cost, supposedly taking into consideration our nonprofit status, came to close to \$3,000, nearly half our editorial budget.

The American-based Mondrian estate is, as I subsequently learned, especially notorious among art scholars. As one exasperated Dutch commentator put it with regard to them,

US copyright law is meaningless. It started out expiring at [the artist's] death, then some years later was extended to support the artist's immediate family. Then Disney came along and no copyright has expired since—the limit gets extended every time it's due to expire. It has nothing to do with protecting heirs from poverty, but rather it is intended to protect corporate interests.³

The net result for all but the most well-endowed publications is a chill atmosphere and a diminution in both the number and quality of publishable

3 See “Mondriaan died 70 years ago, so is his work now copyright-free?” *DutchNews.nl*, January 2, 2015, <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/01/mondriaan-died-70-years-ago-so-his-work-now-copyright-free/>.

images. Architectural writers are forced to hunt for views of buildings that are already in the public domain, or to make use of non-professional shots taken by anonymous photographers (or even with their own cameras—I confess to resorting to my own phone for purposes of a recent essay). Another consequence is that scholarly publishers now tend to pass back the costs of clearing rights to their authors as a matter of contract; for those who need to get their books and articles published, there's little option but to acquiesce. Naturally the readers of scholarly publications (including students) suffer too, being deprived of the best possible illustrations while nonetheless paying a steep price for academic books and sometimes also for articles in scholarly journals on proprietary websites. More fortunate authors may succeed in getting a grant from their university or from a foundation to cover some of the costs. Yet today the budget for artwork in a 250-page monograph on a topic in recent architectural history can easily run to \$15,000 or more.

Images want to be free, to paraphrase Stewart Brand, but images also want to be expensive. The inherent conflict in interest between open scholarly exchange and market forces is difficult to broker. In 2014, the College Art Association issued an extensive report showing that the existing “permissions culture” has taken a heavy toll on academic publishing. Historians, editors, publishers, and other members of the community of arts and letters are scared off from taking full and legal advantage of fair use doctrine. Yet “fair use is a reliable right of free expression,” the CAA affirmed, one

that the courts—up to and including the Supreme Court—“have celebrated as a tool to generate new culture.”⁴

From this standpoint, a recent announcement by the Rauschenberg Foundation, stewards of painter Robert Rauschenberg’s work and legacy, comes as a breath of fresh air. Concluding that it is, in fact, in their best interest to insure that the public has the best possible access to the artist’s body of work through high-quality images, they have decided to make their holdings more easily available for reproduction. A report titled “Rauschenberg Foundation Eases Copyright Restrictions on Art” appeared in the *New York Times* last February 26.⁵ This policy shift, allowing open access for “all but patently commercial uses,” is now spurring introspection among other foundations as well.

Let’s hope a wider change is at hand.

4 See Patricia Aufderheide, Peter Jaszi, Bryan Bello, and Tijana Milosevic, *Copyright, Permissions, and Fair Use among Visual Arts and the Academic and Museum Visual Arts Communities: An Issues Report*, February 2014, <http://www.collegeart.org/pdf/FairUseIssuesReport.pdf>.

5 See http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/27/arts/design/rauschenberg-foundation-eases-copyright-restrictions-on-art.html?_r=0.

Intellectual Labor

LMAO

Eva Hagberg Fisher

University of California, Berkeley

So I don't work for free, except for when I do, like right now. In 2003, I would have made between \$7 and \$14 for that sentence. Seven dollars to talk about how I don't work for free! That seems like a lot, but what's behind it is all the reporting, the thinking, the parties I had to go to to meet the editor and get the assignment.

The first time I was paid for something I wrote was in 2003, when I moved to New York City to become A Writer. I'd been encouraged by my senior thesis advisor—who I paid to read my work and comment on it—to move to New York and write about architecture, and that seemed like a solid plan, by which I mean it was that, or stay in my father's upstate New York house and keep working at a bakery that pretended that everything came out of the oven every day.

I called a well-known architecture writer to ask him for advice on writing about architecture professionally. “Oh, don't do it,” he said. “That's a total dead end.” I called another well-known architecture writer and he ended up inviting me to apply for a job at an architectural publishing house, which I didn't get, but I did get an introduction to another well-known architecture writer (there are actually a few of them—of us?), and we talked on the phone and he offered me \$100/day to do research.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS A DAY. I couldn't even... In college, my parents had given me an allowance of \$50/month, which had been more than enough for cigarettes and ice cream. I called my then-stepfather.

“You know that's not that much, right?”

Like he knew anything about the economics of writing and thinking about architecture.

So I was paid one hundred dollars a day to read newspaper clippings and tag along to Lower Manhattan Development Corporation board meetings and sit in on interviews, and then I went to a party at Storefront for Art and Architecture, where I met Cathy Lang Ho, who was editor of this brand-new publication called the Architects' Newspaper, and she gave me an assignment for which she paid me fifty cents a word. So a 500-word piece about Michael Arad's Reflecting Absence project—I got \$250 for that! And it only took me a day to report and write, so I'd more than doubled my income!

All I had to do was keep it up. Which meant I needed to find more projects to write about, which meant that I got myself into the architectural PR circle and onto the lists for the invitations to the Christmas parties and the studio visits; the economy of thinking about architecture for a living proved baffling in its simplicity and complexity. I was paid by the word but where those words came from required participation in a large and wide-ranging series of ethical and moral decisions. An editor would assign me a profile of an architecture firm, for instance, and the understanding was that the profile, because it had been given seven pages and I was being given 1500 words, for instance, would of course be celebratory. So I wasn't so much paid to be a critic as to be a writer.

I didn't know what to call myself for years. I wasn't a critic. Was I a reporter? I reported—if calling various starchitects and asking them to repeat

what they'd already been quoted as saying in a press release counts as reporting. It didn't feel like the down and dirty All the President's Men-style reporting that, you know, real reporters did. But maybe it was important to understand that once this window had been something else. That this museum architect wanted to preserve the original while adding sleek modernism. That this other starchitect wanted to do surgery on a building that, I guess, needed it?

My pay never went up on its own. It went up depending on which magazine I wrote for—some pay two dollars a word, and then there's one—this mystical unicorn that everyone wants to write for—the word on the street was that they paid what worked out to EIGHT DOLLARS a word. I mean at least that was true in 2007 so probably now it's \$2? But still—so you mean I could have gotten \$56 for my first sentence?

It was maybe two to three years into my career that I stopped looking at architecture for fun. That Venturi house on the islands my grandparents live on? I'm off the clock. Five years later, a Frank Lloyd Wright house in the Chicago suburb my stepmother was temporarily living in? I'm off the clock.

I'm off the clock became my refrain anytime anyone tried to take me on an architecture tour. They thought I was kidding. What architecture reporter/critic/writer wouldn't want to look at as much architecture as possible? But it's like I have an entire complex set of gears in my head that start moving the minute I start really *looking* at architecture.

When I first took an architectural history course, in undergrad, it felt like adding a new language to the one I had already (at that point) barely mastered. I could see clerestories. Ogees. I looked at roof overhangs and mansard roofs and penumbras and suddenly the world was so full of Things That Were Newly Named that I had to learn to turn it off. To go off the clock.

Just recently I met with some friends for lunch in the new BAMPFA building. We parked up Fulton Street and as we walked down, my friend started asking me about the new building—what was up with the skin, why was it like that, who were the architects? I started explaining about the firm, about what they've been known for, about what the public rhetoric was, about what I'd heard someone say about this building vs the Broad, which meant I had to explain the Broad, which meant I had to explain Lincoln Center, which meant I had to explain Blur. And maybe that thing with the MoMA and the Folk Art Museum. I was pouring out this knowledge, amassed over time, the amassing of that knowledge having been its own expense and compensation, and stopped only when we ran into our other friends, who immediately started asking me what I thought of this building.

And finally—"I don't want to work right now." They accepted; they're my friends; they're used to my abrupt and sudden boundaries. And yet my refusal to look at architecture—to really *look*, which requires that same kind of gear-grinding memory of my own history and recent architectural history and also non-recent architectural history—has been seen as a lack of real interest in my topic.

This Huffington Post editor implied recently that you get better work out of people when they're not getting paid because they're doing it for the passion.

No. No. No.

We need to be paid for our labor, even when the invisible gearshifts aren't tangible to anyone but the person thinking them. I need to be paid for my expertise. For the fact that I've toured hundreds of buildings with hundreds of architects.

I got an assignment recently, non-architectural. I had to fill out an outside vendor form and lots of paperwork, and in it there was a line for, basically, "why this person?" And my assigning editor had written, "reputation and style."

That's what they're paying me for. Not the words that I will write but the words that I have already written. For all the words that I have already thought. For all the words that I wrote and then threw out because they weren't working, for the drafts and drafts and drafts that it takes, sometimes, to get somewhere right. Sometimes it'll take me an hour to write a thousand-word piece, and I get a thousand dollars. Have I made a thousand dollars an hour? Yes and no, because what about those ten thousand hours that I paid for? Or the ten thousand hours that I wasn't paid for?

And then sometimes I pay a thousand dollars a month for the privilege of writing a dissertation chapter that will be gently nudged around, that will be read by very very smart people who have either paid for their own degrees or are currently paying

for them or, I guess this is the trick, have some sort of funding (like the funding is enough, like \$1400/month is enough to live on, let's be real, this is now).

This piece right here is about money, not about architecture, because I do not write about architecture for free. And Sben Korsh asked me to contribute something about money, and he said, "The architecture lobby is collecting 500-1000 word blurbs about the problems of labor in history and theory of architecture (not paid tho lmao but that's part of the critique)" and I was like totally LMAO and fuck yeah I get it and lolz.

So we're reduced to lmao and lolz because there's a certain way in which I think we realize that we're totally fucked.

I don't write for free. I just did.

lmao.

At the Intersection of Policy and Design

Susanne Schindler
ETH Zurich

The bio blurb that I've used most consistently in recent years is "architect and writer," generally followed by "focused on the intersection of policy and design in housing." In conversation, I tend to describe my roles as encompassing those of journalist, scholar, curator, editor, and/or designer, and the output as variously being a column, article, lecture, exhibition, book, and/or design proposal. Does my work result from working between established fields or from encompassing them? Is the bridging of different audiences and formats a condition for, or a result of, addressing hard-to-define issues like the intersection of policy and design in housing?

The economics of "architect and writer" certainly aren't the determining factor in pursuing this between-ness. It is impossible to value this sector of work in any established metric: when I was recently offered an honorarium of \$1,200 for participating in a two-hour panel discussion, I thought "wow." Realistically, this is what I should be paid for what will take up one-and-a-half days of my hard time, including travel. And yet what I'm used to is an honorarium of \$250 for writing a 2,500-word piece, which takes me a good month, not full-time, but full-time in mind, to research and write. Or small contributions like this one, to this book, pro bono.

Why do I do this? Because I love it: the topics are urgent and afford the opportunity to connect current questions to historical precedents. The column gives me an audience and likely contributed to me being invited to participate in that panel. And because I can: enabling this output have been a variety of adjunct university positions, one of which

automatically makes me part of a union (which receives 1.5 percent of salary) and simultaneously makes stock-market investments (3 percent of salary) through a pension fund on my behalf. The most recent and most generously paid of these university positions is my current three-year, full-time employment made possible by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

But there are also two other conditions that make this work possible economically, both based on traditional notions of family: a husband with full-time academic employment and access to benefits including employer-owned housing. And industrialist ancestors whose successful entrepreneurialism continues to contribute financially to our life today. In short, as an “architect and writer” I am as much part of “capital” as I am of “labor”; I am as much dependent on state-based welfare systems, as on pre-state kinship laws which transfer wealth across generations.

I recently obtained an EIN (Employer Identification Number) from the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) so as to be able to properly declare what we pay our babysitters, whose work is also critical to making my work possible. I’m not sure where that places me, now suddenly an employer, on the labor–capital spectrum. But childcare is surely something that needs to be addressed structurally in society as a whole, rather than in the individual, ad-hoc manner that characterizes so much of the unrecognized work that makes recognized work possible.

In Germany, since the mid-2000s, there has been a lot of talk about the unstable financial situation of those pursuing intellectual work, particularly in the humanities (including “architects and writers”), and there is a new designation applied to this group: *das Prekariat*— “the precariat”. Those once considered the intellectual or cultural elite are now living in a state of economic and status uncertainty.

Why do people put up with this? In part, because the prize is so great: once you’re in the system, you can do amazingly well. Lifetime tenure, freedom to manage your time, stimulating work. It’s the promise that keeps you going. But this promise is relative. In Switzerland, the salaries at public universities aren’t high enough to attract the Swiss themselves: they tend to go into private industry. To the many academics produced just north of the border in Germany, the salaries in Switzerland are a dream, and so they come. At the same time, the Swiss academic system has realized that our objects of inquiry and personal lives are international and unpredictable, which enables people like me to pursue my work in the United States.

Why is the work of “architect and writer” so unequally valued, between states, between the private and public sectors, between formally circumscribed academia and the so-called real world? I’m not sure. But making the case for a more sustainable economy of architectural discourse will need to use the tools of both politics (policy) and tangible options (design).

Why Write

Gary Fox

University of California, Los Angeles

“Why write?”

The question isn’t mine: those two words, thus punctuated, surfaced early last year like a token materializing a long-held and all-too-present self-doubt. I enjoy writing—but *why*?

Thus pithily put, the question preceded another—“And, why write alone?”—in the curatorial statement to Jimenez Lai’s 2015 exhibition *Treatise: Why Write Alone?* Supported by a Graham Foundation grant, Lai invited 14 design practices to develop treatises to be exhibited alongside drawings, models, and installations—the stuff of design. Against this backdrop, the treatise appeared to offer the possibility of writing as one representational tool among many for the architect. Suggesting that there might still exist a fidelity between writing and design, between thinking and doing, “why write?” interrogates (yet maintains) the agency of the designer. The italicized question mark of the second question, “and, why write alone?”, encourages collaboration as the way forward.

If nothing else, the line of questioning betrays the contemporary gap that isolates writing from practice. The force of Lai’s provocation lay in the proposition that architects might return to a domain where writing and design coexist, which is to say that they otherwise do not. Though posed to designers, not to historians, the issue couldn’t not nag an anxiety-prone historian: whereas writing might serve as a mere accessory to the designer’s labor, it sits very much at the core of the historian’s. (Teaching, critiquing, and, increasingly, curating are no doubt important arenas for a historian’s work, but writing

is arguably the medium that subtends these activities.) Thus recast, “why write?” loses the sense of provocative curiosity it posed to designers and instead suggests a futility to the whole enterprise of history.

In some sense, Lai’s exhibition might be read as an interrogation of (or, even a nostalgia for) an earlier moment when writing and designing were natural allies. The treatise is native to such a moment, and as a form, it prefigures distinctions between thinking and doing. The likes of Alberti, Perrault, or even Viollet-le-Duc would have found such a split puzzling, and it wasn’t until the early twentieth century that the practice of design and the writing of history came to be seen as increasingly irreconcilable practices. In line with a certain modernist ethos, each began to define a disciplinary and professional specificity, and yet the two remained allied in effecting a new present—that is, in effecting history’s culmination. But this Modernist vision was mostly exhausted by the 1960s, and the instantiation of history/theory/criticism PhD programs in the American academy marks the fracture.

The story is well known. But habits, so the cliché goes, are hard to break. In line with a centuries’ long tradition and in spite of the split within the academy, history, theory, and criticism remained tools readily available to the designer. In the first decades after the establishment of PhD programs in architecture, for example, the designing architect-cum-PhD student wouldn’t have been all that unusual of a figure. (Theory and criticism served the autonomy project well.) But by the late 90s, a number of factors conspired to dissolve the alliance

more fully. A few generations of historians had, by then, come of age in a period when HTC was already rigidly professionalized, and these historians had all but turned away from the practice of design. Meanwhile, theory’s dominance in the field had waned, and writing’s status for practice was no longer clear. On multiple fronts, the alliance fell apart.

So, the question becomes: why write today? If as a historian I have little to offer to the designer, if few will read my work, is it a nostalgia for a different present, a Ludditism or a conservatism, that keeps me writing? This is to say: if my labor can no longer be easily instrumentalized, then why?

Lurking in this questioning is an ideology. “Why?” demands justification. As the American academy increasingly places faith in the sciences, in technology, engineering, and medicine, it wittingly subscribes to an ethos of instrumentalization. Making and doing sit, increasingly, in opposition to thinking, and knowledge justifies itself only insofar as it can produce material or behavioral effects outside the academy. (At the risk of claiming a zeitgeist, this is the same logic that undergirds the culture of the startup and of disruption: salvation by way of production and consumption, made possible through branding. Usefulness, expressed in terms of profit, becomes a mass value on both the left and the right.) And under such a regime, the humanities can offer little.

It would be a misrepresentation to argue that architecture has absorbed this logic outright. In certain cases, it has: in its most recent instantiations, environmentalism has served to connect the

discipline to its outside. A longer genealogy of this type of engagement would include Victorian-era efforts to reform housing, modernist attention to the perfection of types vis-à-vis function, and later twentieth-century forays into behavioral psychology, all of which sought to make architecture useful by placing it in service of effecting a new present. In its current state, the discipline tends to resist the positivistic reformism that connects these historical actors, yet it resists in equal measure aspirations to unjustified form-making. At the border of the humanities and its outside, architecture wants it both ways. Sitting immediately inside this distinction, history remains close enough to architecture to find its home in the same university departments as design (unlike the analogue of art history and art), but not quite close enough so as to remain impervious to the lines of questioning that disclose these broader (neoliberal) values.

Again, then: why? I enjoy writing. I enjoy writing history. Enjoyment, by definition, defies justification. Joy cannot be useful; “use” carries with it an unspoken ideology prescribing the rules of a language game impossible to win. This doesn’t, however, reduce history to mere indulgence. “Caring for myself,” as Audre Lorde importantly articulates, “is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

The historian’s labor isn’t writing alone. The historian lectures, sits on juries, curates exhibitions, and participates in conferences, in each context establishing different audiences at different scales. But the politics that attend writing inform these

various exchanges: if students, designers, historians, and their various publics can together recover moments of intellectual joy through historical work, and if that joy can amount to a form of self-care, they share in a radical rejection of a predominant ideology, establishing alternate spaces that resist the politics of instrumentalization.

Head-in-the-sand? Yeah, maybe.

History is self-preservation.

Matters of Life and Death

Anne Kockelkorn
ETH Zurich

Opportunities to think simultaneously about the conditions of production and the value and the effectiveness of intellectual labour within the realm of architecture are rare. To fulfill this broad and risky task in two pages, I will draw on the advice of the serial killer and pigeon breeder in Jim Jarmusch's film "Ghost Dog": to take abundant time to reflect on small and negligible problems, but not to hesitate at all upon matters of life and death.

Content-wise, this booklet seems to be a good occasion to recall that "architecture" in the western world was initially *defined* by intellectual practice. Architecture understood as an intellectual discipline was born with trade capitalism at the dawn of modern times around 1500 in the cities of northern Italy where it acquired the role of a catalyst and cultural power factor. If "architecture," then, is what renders political power and virtue intelligible and effective by administrating its relevant affects, this type of architecture cannot occur without an intellectual practice that defines its codes and protocols. Manfredo Tafuri described this aptly in *Architecture and Utopia* in 1973: according to him, architecture in a capitalist society performs the integrative capacity to synthesize the fear generated by the dichotomy between the realities of the condition of production and moral values of the enlightenment through design.¹ Synthesizing morals and affects—there is no reason to expect that this foundational principle on the function of architecture's symbolic capital in a

1 Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), 1-2.

capitalist society should change anytime soon. What changes, however, are the variants of capitalism and morals specific to historical, geographical, and cultural settings, their modes of regulation as well as the techniques and technologies that intellectual labour and capital can dispose of to exercise their leverage.

Taking this premise of the specificity of capitalism, morals, and technology as a starting point, I will take up two aspects to argue my viewpoint of the role and the mode of architecture's intellectual labour in the present: first the effects of the mechanisms of financialisation for intellectual labour—the mechanisms of neoliberalism and information technology in tandem—namely the devaluation of content generation in favor of content management and trade; second, the foundational misogyny and devaluation of social reproduction inherited from the double genealogy of classical philosophy and capitalism, e.g. the realms of the ideal and the necessary combined.

The devaluation of content generation concerns especially those parts of intellectual labour which are more closely related to the provision of information, since they can more easily be automated and are increasingly performed free of consumption charge. Two features of this general tendency are the crash-like decline of architectural magazines defending their “right to content” against pecuniary interests of publishers on the one side and the provision of self-marketing via websites and monographs by architectural firms on the other (a phenomenon which has only gained significant

momentum since the 1980s). But in spite of – and parallel to—the accelerated decline of information value, the trade and management of architectural knowledge still remains indispensable for the public and the private sectors alike: not least because media technologies increase the need and space for interfaces which require the performance of moral-affect-synthesis whose credibility is, in turn, based on a skillful blend of knowledge and information. The exponential growth of international biennales during the noughties wouldn't be explicable otherwise, and the expensive investment in symbolic and cultural capital that it demands of its participants offers, until today, the hope of lucrative follow-up orders. The more closely knowledge and symbolic power become intertwined, the more Machiavellian the strategies to seize it, and the more evident the necessary survival strategy for intellectual workers to simultaneously surrender to the conditions of production (aka neoliberal self-optimisation) whilst performing its sharp-sighted critique. This paradoxical strategy of simultaneous surrender to and critique of the conditions of production specific to intellectual labour in a capitalist economy is all but new: it was cherished in particular by the French surrealists and pointed out by Manfredo Tafuri as the foundational narrative of any intellectual avant-garde in a capitalist society, and particularly valid for the historical architectural avant-gardes of the 1920s (which according to the self-image of the discipline are so often transfigured as the blissful phase which rendered architecture's potential for emancipation visible).²

2 *Architecture and Utopia*, 64–65.

At that point the second relevant aspect of the present conditions of intellectual labour comes into play, namely its foundational misogyny and contempt for social reproduction. Unfortunately it reaches far beyond the practices and self-image of the surrealists.³ “You have to decide,” a German architectural theorist explained to me once in a moment of well-intended fatherly advice, referring to the choice between family and the aspiration of an academic career. The thresholds of architectural initiation rituals are plastered with that phrase, even if it might take on more amiable formulations. “Women don’t exist in architecture.” When Beatriz Colomina inserted that comment in panel discussions a few years ago, I initially thought she meant it as a metaphor, but as one takes a closer look the absence of women in architectural discourse, the evidence is overwhelming—as authors or artists featured in public archives or canonic anthologies, as participants in contemporary panel discussions, studio critiques and award lists or as biennale directors (one out of eighteen regarding the architectural biennale in Venice during a time span of 36 years). The othering of the female, including her bodily capacity of social reproduction, is as deep as her claim to privilege use value and care over exchange value seems utopian. The feeling of guilt, shame and self-devaluation that affects female intellectual

3 On the misogyny of the surrealist—regarding in particular André Breton, who, in turn, was cited by Tafuri in the above mentioned passage as the model strategy for the avant gardes—see Peter Bürger, *Ursprung des postmodernen Denkens* (Weilerwist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2000), 100-105, 29.

labourers until today when having to perform in public the synthesis of career, pregnancy, and motherhood, is possibly the most unfortunate emergence of that othering; structurally it points to the direct relation between maternity leave and the gender gap in paychecks.

If architecture is to be understood as a type of discourse, its emancipatory potential – if there is one—still consists of understanding and integrating what is outside of it. This practice doesn’t consist in defining essential results or aspirations but draws its political relevance from the continuous effort of translating and relating incommensurabilities. (Despite their seeming irreconcilable ideologies regarding established functions of gender, the feminist philosopher Judith Butler and Manfredo Tafuri both agree on that point, even if Tafuri refers to Marquis de Sade and Piranesi in 1973 whilst Judith Butler refers in 2000 to the political relevance of intellectuals).⁴ So even if the paradoxical position of simultaneous surrender and revolt of the intellectual cannot be disposed of from one day to the

4 See Judith Butler: “Restaging the Universal: Hegemony and the Limits of Formalism” and “Competing Universalities”, in: *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality. Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2000), 20-21, 36-37, 178-79. Tafuri draws the parallel between the libertarian Marquis de Sade as the wicked man and Piranesi as the wicked architect: “(...) the ‘wicked architect’ presents himself as monstrously virtuous; the eruption into writing of that which is external to it brings into discourse the category of aberration as an immanent reality.” Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 47.

next without threatening one's own livelihood, it's nevertheless time to rethink many of the surrealist premises of intellectual labour: in particular its Hegelian foundation regarding the battle of prestige, which is a fight about life and death on the ability to transcend the realm of the necessary.⁵ A new perspective to think architecture as an intellectual practice implies a fundamental ideological shift away from the aspiration to *immaterial life* towards a collaborative effort *to stay* alive, such as Donna Haraway has claimed it in a recent lecture: "I propose that it has become *literally unthinkable* to do good work in any interesting field with the premises of individualism, methodological individualism, and human exceptionalism. *None* of the most generative and creative and intellectual work being done today any longer spends much time—except as a kind of footnote—talking, doing creative work (within these premises) (...). Simultaneously there has been an explosion within the biologies of multi-species becoming-with, of an understanding that to be a one *at all*, you must be a many and it's not a metaphor."⁶

- 5 For an interpretation on the Hegelian battle of prestige, see, Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Basic Books, 1969). On its surrealist interpretation see Bürger, *Ursprung des postmodernen Denkens*, 28-34.
- 6 Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene: Staying with the Trouble", lecture given at the conference ARTS OF LIVING ON A DAMAGED PLANET at Aarhus University, May 8th 2014, 1'20"-2'15" online: <http://anthropocene.au.dk/conferences/arts-of-living-on-a-damaged-planet-may-2014/>, transcript <http://opentranscripts.org/transcript/anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/>

The Politics of Publication

James Graham
Columbia University

Some thirty years ago, Terry Eagleton argued that “criticism achieved security by committing political suicide; its moment of academic institutionalization is also the moment of its effective demise as a socially active force.” He was referring to the consolidation of what we now know as English Literature in the nineteenth century university, but the point surely extends to other fields and times. Those of us who participate actively in the publicatory culture of architectural academia, perhaps especially those of us who take the critical essay to be an indispensably urgent format of architectural thought, might find this an unnecessarily dire tale of criticism’s turn from stoking a “struggle against the absolutist state,” as Eagleton puts it, to “a handful of individuals reviewing each other’s books.” But perhaps this diagnosis can be read not as a point of fact so much as a call to vigilance, a reminder to take stock of the ways that discourse, in its many formats, can be neutralized by its containment within institutions that generally speak to each other, whether universities or biennales.

A great deal of “traditional” architectural labor is, on some level, discursive labor—and yet. The practice of architecture continues to find new purchases beyond (though often complementing) the making of buildings. The rise of PhD. and non-design Masters programs in architecture over the past decades have created remarkable cadres of thinkers, curators, researchers, teachers, and writers, to frequently brilliant effect. These figures are sometimes brought into practices with particularly discursive aspirations, but they more often navigate their way

through what might be thought of as an extended-but-informalized architectural academia, which includes a growing network of exhibitions, editorial programs, entrepreneurial or grant-funded research initiatives, and at many points along the way, independent labors of love. (Some of these are forms of production that sit quite comfortably within the structures of academic advancement, but are often supported only tangentially by the academy through adjunct professorships and discretionary budgets.) The standards of performance within this milieu—a consolidated culture of things like biennales, journals, exhibitions, research books, etc.—are often internally verified, in a way that can at times feel like a drift toward Eagleton’s “political suicide.”

At the same time, this change in the discipline’s discursive production brings with it a sense that discourse itself increasingly involves some of the same forms of credentialing and specialization seen in other branches of the profession, creating something of a feedback loop between the types of available labor emerging from such programs (which, to insist again, have admirably raised the stakes and broadened the terrain of architectural thought) and the organizations that absorb them—which are typically more fluid, in duration and funding, than either the academy or the office as such. The heightened standard of *work* that such professionalization brings has not typically been met with a heightened standard of *working*, since the already inadequate norms of academy and office are in some way suspended in this less categorizable realm.

It seems to me that these two questions—the potential neutralization of criticism through its sitedness within major institutions and the burgeoning forms of discourse-centered employment (often precarious) that orbit around those same institutions—can and should be considered together, even as they tug against one another. One of the central parts of Eagleton’s argument is that politics take root in counterpublics—communities that organize around counter-hegemonic ideas, establish their own spaces, and formulate their own institutions. This is a dynamic of congealed inside and diffused outside that is too simple to describe the entanglements of publicatory practice and the academy but it is a useful reminder that politics inhere not simply within the institution or within the individual, but in what passes between them—a public is not called into being by publication alone. This can be a chastening observation in that it asks us to attend to the limits of who our platforms reach, what kind of a public is genuinely able to form around a given project, whether or not we collaborate with systems of precarity by siting our work within them. But it can also be liberating, in that it reminds us that discourse is a thing to be pursued in our capacity as professionals but also as unprofessionals—that the work of furthering architectural knowledge will always move inside and outside of the institutions that ostensibly support it.

The Value of Immaterial Labor

Jack Self

REAL Foundation

To be an architectural theorist or historian is to perpetually justify your right to exist; before you even come to defending the product of your work, you must be willing to take up the Sisyphean struggle.

This stands in contrast to the historian or theorist of art whose casual self-assurance stems from their unquestionable status within their own field and society at large. They might be well respected, or they might be reviled; they might be praised, or damned—but only a philistine would ask if the practice of art actually necessitates a discipline of history and theory.

The reason for this is ultimately economic. In art, the historian or theorist is not involved in the act of creation and only becomes mobilized afterwards. For their work to begin, the art object must already exist and their task is primarily to rationalize, explain, and give value to that object. In extremely cynical terms, the purpose of art history and theory relates to the provenance and status of the artwork, and therefore to the economic condition of valuation. The entire academic corpus of art history and theory is allowed to exist without question because the art market needs it to function smoothly. Art history is, in some ways, the gold standard backing an artwork's exchange value.

By contrast, the architectural theorist or historian sits on the other side of the act of creation: their work is an *input* to the architectural design process and therefore has an indirect and hence immeasurable material value; it cannot have a metric applied to it because it is impossible to say how important it has been or will be to the act of production. This is

further complicated by the fact architects themselves are frequently also theorists and historians (which is much less common in art), so that the product of architectural theory and the product of architectural design are often the same object. The entire corpus of architectural history and theory is not concretely tied to value generation, which makes its economic status extremely unclear.

Nonetheless, without architectural history and theory, the architect as a figure would cease to exist. Without a discipline telling them how architecture and hence the architect is defined, there can be no architecture. The origin of architecture, it can be argued, is also the origin of architectural history and theory.

One way to remove any question about the value of the labor of architectural theorists and historians would be to shift the entire discipline to the other side of the moment of creation, à la art history. This is indeed quite likely, as the commodification of architecture (begun in earnest during the 1990s) marches on. The saturated, overheated art market has already turned its eye toward rendering architecture (and particularly the house or villa) as a fungible object. In this scenario, the architectural historian or theorist becomes an attachment to the world of real estate and realtors as the art historian is to the gallerist or art dealer.

Another, less flippantly, way would explore the fact that asking why architectural theorists and historians exist is the same as asking why we value culture in general. All cultural institutions ultimately pursue the same ends: to introduce the

individual to new fields of enquiry without direct commercial or vocational application and to provide the conceptual frameworks needed to elevate their worldview. Culture is the formation of globally aware subjects; architectural historians and theorists are the conduits for informed and precise architecture. What is often overlooked is that only by their labor can we justify the existence of the architect.

A Wo_Man's Work is Never Done

Andreas Rumpfhuber

At best, architectural theory work adds to the practice of architecture by offering knowledge of how to tackle a design problem. It is per se a practice that circles around problems and symptoms that make visible what is not working—in our cities, in the built environment, in architecture, and hence in our society. It adapts to different genres. Sometimes its subject is historical and sometimes it is contemporary. Architectural theory work, like the practice of architecture itself, is an endless process of analysis. It tries to understand what is real, without idealising its subject of research. Theory work produces fragmentary knowledge.

Yet what is its value? The question itself stems from a need for justification of a practice that seemingly is not easy to commodify and hence is rendered an obsolete practice beyond academia (put here as the untenable placeholder of the last space of “freedom”). This results in ever more tight and obscene frameworks within academia in order to make this kind of work quantifiable and productive within the given economic logic we live in.

I only can speak of the quality theory has for myself. So let me quickly introduce myself: I am an unaffiliated researcher, having directed various research projects up to 1 Million € (all of which rated “excellent”), published a handful of books, lectured and taught here and there. I am also a licensed architect, engaged in housing projects and spaces for new forms of labour. And, since my wife died some years ago, I am also a single dad of a 4-year old little girl. This very last instance, I think, is important to grasp when we speak of the value of architectural theory work.

Theory work is unpaid labour, like taking care of a child. Many tell you it is necessary to do and admire how well you do it, but nobody will offer you money for it. I don't get paid writing a scientific paper and sourcing (and often paying for) its images. And I don't get paid when I pick up my daughter every day at 3:30 from kindergarten, or when she is ill and I am stuck at home. Sometimes I have to pay a babysitter to attend a business meeting. It won't make you fit for the labour market.

Let's be honest: jobs in academia (at least in Europe) are scarce and underpaid. And the so-called "real" world of the building industry is not interested in someone who just spent years writing a PhD thesis on a little tiny aspect of whatever let alone a single dad (or mum) who is unadaptable to the rhythm and peculiarities of the subject with which one is engaged. One can't be as flexible to move around the world as the academic system and the labour market demands.

As a male in the male-saturated world fond of gender mainstreaming, I've learned a lot about myself and the surrounding world. I've seen what both a PhD and fatherhood can offer you. Doing a PhD helps sharpen your observations and your understanding of the world. Being with kids, with their straightforward ability to observe their surroundings, constantly astonishes. Both will enable you to see the world beyond prevalent preconceptions and hence allow you to think about new ways of living together.

The Neoliberal Academy

The Dust of Adorno

Meredith TenHoor
Pratt Institute

[Setting] SYD, an adjunct professor of architectural history and theory, age early thirties, recent PhD, who teaches at Architecture School X, is walking from home to school while talking on the phone to RAY, age late thirties, a full-time tenure-track architectural history professor who teaches at Architecture School Y. RAY is cooking dinner. It's a chaotic scene with food nearly flying across a cramped kitchen counter. A child plays noisily in the background.

SYD—[excitedly, a bit out of breath] Ray, check it, I KonMari'd my house last week. Then I scrubbed everything for two whole days. My place is gleaming! I write such amazing sentences when my fucking desk is clean!

RAY—Awesome! I get to read more of your work! Keep cleaning!

SYD—[suddenly glum, mutters] You're like the only one that reads it...

RAY—C'mon Syd, you know everyone from UVA to MIT reads your blog...

SYD—It hasn't gotten me a full time job. Nor has my article in JSAH, nor my PhD from our favorite Ivy...

[uncomfortable pause]

RAY—Well... You're still young... But about the cleaning, I realized the same thing last year! We're modernist aesthetes when it comes to dirt! I hired this guy George. A former student who *eradicates* dust. He's changed my whole life... You should call him.

SYD—I should call George! How much do you pay him?

RAY—Uh... Well, it's kind of killing me... but I pay him \$20 per hour. It's New York, he has the keys to my apartment, he does a great job, he has a BA. And my babysitter gets \$25. She's a parent too...

SYD—Holy fuck, no cleaner for me. No kid either. Unless I marry up...

RAY—I know I know, I shouldn't have cleaners or sitters either. But between committees and emails and teaching and writing this job takes sixty hours a week... I have no time.

[pausing a bit, stirring the pot]

You know, even with my nice full-time salary I only make \$5 per hour more than my babysitter. If my partner didn't help and I didn't work all night while the kiddo sleeps I'd be broke. And I spent eight years on my PhD...

SYD—I bet your sitter's spent more than that learning to take care of kids...

RAY—Touché! Oy, so I'm losing some Marxist cred here, forgetting the arbitrary relationship between labor and capital... But still somehow I imagined I'd be able to have a more comfortable life, being a professor and all... My doorman calls me "Doc" but he'll

out-earn me by the time he's 50... The doormen have *such* a tight union.

SYD—So we're both failing bourgeois aspirants with no union... but at least you have a real job...

RAY—Ugh, Syd, you're right, we're so unorganized and so irrational!!

SYD—RAYYYYYY!!!

[pots boil over in the background but Ray turns away from them and listens to Syd's raised voice]

Haven't your studies taught you anything? The rational modernist aesthetics we write about are *fantasies*. Beautiful architectural utopias we stare at all day! They make us imagine something better is possible, and we dream that we might bring some similar rationality or order or equality to late capitalism, but we don't really *do* anything because we have our nice functionalist buildings to comfort us. DUH, that's like Adorno 101! I'm pissed because I know this and I *still* love my work and my stupid part time job. Not because it's ir-fucking-rational.

[Syd is arriving at school, where hip students are smoking furiously and nervously outside the architecture building]

SYD—Shit, I'd better quiet down, I don't want my students to hear.

RAY—[kid screams in the background] Ok, I gotta run too. Talk soon—

SYD—Ciao, Ray.

A few weeks later, Ray's phone rings:

SYD—Hey. I was thinking, what if we just had guaranteed minimum income? I'd kind of be paid for this text I'm writing for Venice.

RAY—Well in a way that's what a full time academic job does... I mean minimum income sounds great but shouldn't we be fighting for more full time jobs so we don't need it?

SYD—Ray—

RAY—Argh, it's crazy that they don't pay you to write for the Biennale when in some small way you're contributing to the economic well-being of that whole town. Some T-shirt seller is making twenty euros thanks to you...

SYD—It's worth it to save Venice! No. Actually, my whole career is like a big gift to the t-shirt and minor memorabilia merchants of the world... But anyway. Guaranteed minimum income is kind of amazing. You get enough to eat and pay your rent every month and you do whatever you want in return. It happens in Sweden, and in Alaska—

RAY—Syd, I know about this, it was big amongst my lefty French friends in the early aughts. But I can't stand how it's now tied to this new "accelerationist" business. As if we're supposed to support full automation,

pure technophilia, and the padding of CEO pocketbooks in exchange for some paltry salary... As if it would do anything structural to stop income inequality.

SYD—But we could make a different version, it doesn't have to be tied to automa—

RAY—Sorry Syd, I have to go, my students are waiting. Let's talk later.

A few weeks later, Ray's phone rings again:

SYD—Ra-ay... Guess what happened to me last night? I met this kind of right-wing stock trader at a bar. Not my type, right? But the trader was a neo-Keynesian, smart enough to remember that Reagan liked some kinds of stimulus... [Pregnant pause] Anyway guess what the trader was all into: *Guaranteed Fucking Minimum Income*. Likes the idea because people will buy more stuff. We talked and talked and talked... What it would mean for housing markets... the design of housing...

RAY—And?

SYD—And I told him we architectural historians have no jobs, but important knowledge, and that we should all have guaranteed minimum income so we can just write and do our thing. That I wanted to start a foundation that would give—

RAY—I didn't know you wanted to start a foundation.

SYD—That's what I was trying to tell you the other week.

RAY—Sorry.

SYD—So anyway, he was *into* my foundation idea. He thought architectural historians were ideal test cases for a guaranteed income experiment: we have experience with it from our days of living off graduate stipends, we're trained to think that our value comes from sharing knowledge so won't squander the opportunity, and we'll buy stuff since we're design junkies. AND now that the art market is tanking and they need another place to invest, we can maaaybe help pick good real estate holdings...

RAY—Ugh, Syd, stop!

SYD—I mean when I realized he had money I thought of asking him to fund me a tenure line, but these donors want us to be capitalists, minimum income means we still have to hustle. No *way* would he pay for tenure... And not like I want to even give money to these rotten schools that won't give me a job... Anyway, he wants to be a *disrupter* and he has ten million he needs to stick in a foundation for some tax shelter reasons...

RAY—He has to stick it somewhere...

SYD—RAY!!! Now you stop!

RAY—But doesn't sex get us everywhere still? And no one will talk about it. Not like people sleep their way into jobs. But like rich parents or partners, and social reproduction, and all that business...

SYD—Ray, I'm not having another depressing late capitalism conversation where we decide that even my love life is monetized, I know about sexual biopolitics, blah blah... The Reaganite liked my *idea*. He's giving me seed money. My foundation is *happening!* I'm calling it the MININCOME FOUNDATION.

RAY—Well good for you! First your blog and now this: it's your latest act of radical generosity!

SIX MONTHS LATER

Ray is skeptical, but donors love the idea of guaranteed minimum income for architectural historians. Syd's Keynesian Reaganite has a quite a few like-minded friends who contribute to the foundation. Their firms manage the seed money and get the commissions, and the foundation has a decent return. Then a few well-endowed universities notice the foundation, and like the idea that their students won't be on welfare when they graduate; a few trustees are encouraged to contribute. The Mellon and Ford foundations step in, and before Syd knows it, the MININCOME FOUNDATION is funded. Syd gets paid a decent salary to run it, and hires Ray's perfectionist house-keeper George as a bookkeeper.

[The camera cuts to a close-up]

CHARTER OF THE MINICOME FOUNDATION

Upon completion of the PhD in Architectural History at a recognized university, or equivalent professional standing and nomination by four peers, the MINICOME FOUNDATION guarantees a monthly stipend to encourage you to share your knowledge of buildings and cities. You may share this knowledge in any manner you deem: from writing scholarly books and articles to tutoring high school students; from giving academic lectures to playing with children.

STIPEND LEVELS

- \$1800 per month standard
- \$2300 per month if you live in a city where median rent for a 1 BR apartment is over \$1900/mo. or if you have a child.
- \$2600 per month if you live in an expensive city and have a child.

The foundation requires annual submission of the first page of tax returns. If your income rises above \$65,000 per year or the value of your assets grows to over \$300,000, we ask that you cede MINICOME STIPEND to another member of the group so that we can continue to support as many as possible.

The MINICOME FOUNDATION can currently accept 100 members; this number will reach a maximum of 300 members within ten years.

Contributions to the MINICOME FOUNDATION are fully tax-deductible.

RAY—Syd, wow!!! I still think we need real jobs. But this is not bad! What if our students had this? And no debt?? OMG, what if the ARCHITECTS had this???

SYD—Ray, SSH! The architects produce even MORE tangible value! We can't let them steal this! I only raised \$95 million!

Work Time

Mark Jarzombek

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

In a conversation with some architecture students the subject of research came up, as it now tends to do. I asked them how long they think it took for me to research an article I had written that they had read. “A few weeks.” “A few months.” When I told them I had worked on it for seven years they were stunned. Now it might be that I am a slow writer; I had to write the article while writing two books and three other articles and teach and travel; I have a family and like to play basketball with my sons and go to the theater with my wife. But it was all those distractions that gave me the time to reflect on the subject of the article and that allowed the argument to jell and mature. For the students, research is merely a phase that is separated from creativity. When I explained that the work of research is not collecting material to some fixed end, but thinking about the subject, and by the word thinking I include activities like reading, hunting down sources, talking to other scholars, and even taking walks. They had no idea what I was talking about. It reminds me of a news article I read some twenty years ago now. A student took an IQ test that showed a drawing of two men, one sitting on a chair reading a book and the other chopping wood. “Which of these is doing work?” The student put the check mark beside the man in the chair, since his father was a literature professor who chops wood for relaxation. Needless to say that was not the normative answer. I am not complaining. After all, I for one follow the motto, “Never let them see you sweat.”

The problem came to a head, however, in a recent discussion about tenure requirements. There was a suggestion by my non-history colleagues that

historians should publish a book every three years or so. Needless to say that is nonsense. Every historian knows that books take on the order of seven years. The publishing process alone can take two years. If the tenure clock is set for seven years, one cannot expect two books. All of this goes to show a general disconnect between the life of the historian (and I include in that term all the hyphenated entities like historian-theorist, historian-intellectual etc.) and the “lay” public. One of the advantages of tenure, of course, is that one can work at one’s own pace, for better or worse, faster or slower. When a local museum called and asked for me to give a public lecture for no compensation, the answer was sure. Preparing, rehearsing (since I do not read from notes) was all background work, like preparing for a theater performance.

Which brings me to a different type of work, not the work of writing and editing, but the work of crafting, a type of work that is not taught and can only be refined over time. I am not here talking about the requirements of intellectual labor that are supported by a set of academic institutions whose members are engaged in specialized professional activities that identify their work as part of some discipline or another. Instead I am talking about the effort that takes place outside the evaluations of disciplinary behavior. Think perhaps of the iceberg metaphor. The visible labor is built on a vast reservoir of effort disproportionate to the apparent result. But that model is inadequate since the reservoir is not frozen in time and hopefully not melting away as one gets older. On the contrary, it has to be continually

refreshed, reshaped and even challenged and rebuilt for it to be of any enduring value. It is an entity that can be hard and inflexible just as it can be malleable and transformable, all dependent on the DNA of our personality. Perhaps one can see this space of work—assuming we are talking about a type of *productive work*—as enmeshed in a tension that Walter Benjamin points to between *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*, both of which translated rather lamely into the English word “experience.” *Erfahrung* is acquired over a long period of time and tends to congeal into something one might call wisdom. When Husserl discussed what he called the research program of life, he used the word *Erfahrung*. Husserlian phenomenology was most certainly not for young people. But let’s face it. Much that passes as wisdom can easily degenerate into hand-me down clichés. *Erlebnis*, on the other hand, is a word that has at its core *Leben*, or life. The word points to the quick pulse of events. Whereas *Erlebnis* said “Take the roller-coaster ride,” *Erfahrung* said “I have already done that—a long time ago—and once was enough.” The natural tendency the older we get is to fail to realize how pernicious that latter sentiment can indeed be. We have to work against our sub-conscious satisfaction in our effort. We must fight the very specter of History itself as dialectically distinct from the Now. But the point is not to seek the fool’s gold of relevancy. The work for the historian (intellectual/critic etc.) asks us to test and experiment as much as it hopes to provide at least some useable platform of knowledge. It might be useful to see the work of research less about a substance called History than about the substance called

Time (that includes the Time it takes to think and write). Even if in our efforts time is compressed into frighteningly imponderable abstractions, and even if connections that were once invisible in the present become visible retroactively within the substance and subject of the text that floats in its own temporal warps, there is at least some hope that it all—at some time or another—provides a platform for meditation on our earthly positioning.

“Profesor Taxi”

Fabrizio Gallanti

FIG Projects

In Santiago de Chile that is the nickname, mildly sarcastic, attributed to part-time professors, who have to teach at multiple universities in order to make a living. In fact, the deregulation and privatization of education imposed in Chile during the Pinochet regime has determined a ballooning inflation of novel universities, oscillating between non-for-profit and for-profit, which cater to the demands of a new middle class that believes in formation as a catapult to wealth. Due to the simultaneous reduction of the administrative self-governing functions of professional guilds and associations, established by the neoliberal dictatorship to support the “free market” of professionals, these institutions grant titles that have a legal value (doctor, engineer, architect, lawyer, dentists, etc.): no surprise that they are so popular! A “profesor taxi” would travel the city, from point to point, by taxi or private transport in order to reach class in time. Public transport would not guarantee the same efficiency, due to saturation at peak hours but also because some of the campuses are located in hard to reach affluent neighborhoods. As only a very limited number of professors are hired as full-time faculty (and only by the few more prestigious and established universities), the majority of teaching is performed by this proletariat of docents, badly paid and almost without benefits. On the other hand, as education is constructed as a commodity, the satisfaction of the clients is crucial, hence the more talented and skilled professors are in high demand and can negotiate better deals at the beginning of each semester (it looks like the exchange market for soccer players). Deans and chairs hire directly, and

often three consecutive negative students' evaluations would put you on some sort of blacklist at that specific school. During a typical week, a "profesor taxi" can teach at up to five different universities, although with the recent surge of evening courses, even more schools are possible in theory. Sometimes the "profesor taxi" recycles the same course in different schools (digital manufacturing or acoustic design), sometimes he or she has to tweak content to fill more specific requests (history of classic architecture in the morning and theory of contemporary urbanism in the afternoon). In architecture, teaching can be a convenient activity to accompany the profession: it is said that 50% of architects in Santiago supplement their income by some academic service. Design studio is the most desired assignment: easy but prestigious, you have to show up and apply the same expertise that you employ in your office. Luckily, Chilean architects are good and start building very young.

Between 2002 and 2006, I was a "profesor taxi" myself, sprinting between four different schools in the same semester and travelling hundreds of kilometers every week not to miss class. In four years I had teaching spells at six different schools, from first year undergrad to PhD students. I reduced my workload only when I was finally hired by one of them (through a proper search process), but also when I realized that for three months in a row, I was mixing lectures between two places, until a student would have complained. Or perhaps I stopped when I realized that I was not able to stretch my expertise beyond a certain limit: "you are Italian, can you teach Renaissance?"

These are the architecture schools in Santiago now: Universidad de Chile, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Universidad Austral de Chile, Universidad Finis Terrae, Universidad Diego Portales, Universidad Central de Chile, Universidad Pedro de Valdivia, Universidad Mayor, Universidad de las Américas, Universidad Andrés Bello, Universidad de Artes, Ciencias y Comunicación—UNIACC, Universidad UCINF, Universidad Autónoma de Chile, Universidad San Sebastián, Universidad del Desarrollo, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez.

Humane and Inhumane Ratios

Peg Rawes

Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL

As an educator of young architectural practitioners¹ in London who wish to pursue design, historical or theoretical research careers, it is obvious that living and working sustainably in the capital is now increasingly difficult on lower incomes.

UK media and charity research highlights the now-inhumane ratios between income and the costs of housing and travel for increasing numbers of the UK population; from the lowest economic social groups, the elderly, students and to young professionals in the public sectors.² Individual and societal capacities to ‘care for the self and others’—i.e. the ability to live well and have self-determination—is diminishing.³ These dysfunctional ratios of inequality and wellbeing now also define the working life of younger architectural practitioners.

I take the term ‘ratio’ from Baruch Spinoza’s study of human powers in the *Ethics* (1677). Writing

- 1 I use the term ‘practitioner’ to refer to practices of writing, research and design; i.e. not just the professionally qualified architect.
- 2 The average UK salary is £27,645 (<https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/pay-gap>). Salaries in the architectural sector include: Part I Architect Assistant £20,000; recently qualified architect, £35,000; Director, £85,000 (<https://adremgroup.com/guidance/uk-architecture-salary-guide/>). In UK academia, Vice-Chancellors average pay was £240,794 in 2015 (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/times-higher-education-pay-survey-2015/2019360.article>), but academics on fractional contracts may earn much less than the average wage (<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/nov/17/university-lecturers-uk-us-casual-posts-food-stamps>).
- 3 For more information about equality and wellbeing see Beth Lord, Peg Rawes and Lonestar’s documentary *Equal By Design* (forthcoming May 2016), www.equalitesofwellbeing.co.uk.

at a time of intense capitalist and urban transformation, in which large differences in income and social equality developed—features clearly resonating strongly with today’s social and economic inequalities—Spinoza repurposed the early modern disembodied science of reason (*ratio*) into a theory of corporeal joy (wellbeing).

However, joy in daily life is in short supply for architectural research professionals and students living on low wages and in poor housing, despite their ‘creative’ capacities to survive austerity. Many *live with* the mental and material insecurities of short-term contracts, long labour hours, poor living conditions and unreliable, expensive travel on a daily basis.

The student or young architectural researcher in London (who may also have a young family) is increasingly likely to live in overcrowded, small and poorly maintained, privately-owned apartments with unregulated rents: features of poor housing that UK housing charity Shelter observes Victorian housing philanthropists, Barnardo, Hill and Rowntree addressed in the late-nineteenth century.⁴

These inhumane ratios of social and physical organisation increasingly dominate our common futures, but Spinoza’s analysis of the mental and

physical relations that compose the individual is helpful for drawing attention to a radical form of rationalism, because it promotes powers of self-determination. His short ‘geometric’ text is not just a prescient counter-theory to inhumane forms of rationalism which philosophers, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler have identified in neoliberalism, but of an affirmative ethics.

For Spinoza, *ratio is located in human difference*, not sameness. An affirmative dissimilarity between our bodily, mental, ecological and political realities builds societies, rather than normative, technocratic monocultures. Unlike Agamben’s influential but negative theory of the human as lack or exception, Spinoza’s relational theory is a ‘biopower’ which has ‘a care with’ contemporary ethical imaginaries that do not exclusively return to oppositional forms of individuation. His proto-materialist essay about *humane ratio* has a ‘critical sympathy’ that accords with the *work(s)* of feminist practitioners; including economists, Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson, and architectural professionals who promote ethical, affirmative and diverse modes of practice.

Despite glimpses of joy in the production/realisation of architectural work (e.g. writing, design, buildings), much educational and professional architectural labour is in a state of mental and economic exhaustion. Moreover, for Anglo-American practitioners faced with the potential that Boris, Brexit and Trump could be our next ‘democratic’ realities, such toxic figures of discrimination and inequality highlight the need for the profession and its institutions to explicitly address equality in all our futures.

4 Studies by Shelter and NatCen observe alarming increases in overcrowding-related health issues, such as, asthma in children and mental health issues in both adults and children, which were addressed by nineteenth-century housing philanthropists such as Octavia Hill, Thomas John Barnardo and Joseph Rowntree (NatCen and Shelter, ‘People living in bad housing—numbers and health impacts’ London: Shelter, 2013).

*

RATIO 1—Working bodies. On completion of a degree, the market for young architectural practitioners is a field of labour signs in which the expanding higher education sector is complicit. We cultivate our graduates to produce original and independent *bodies* of work; prototypes of future public and intellectual value that they, and we, hope will be concretised in a ‘working life’. However, the most likely future of the young career academic in the UK is a fragmented and piecemeal income, a series of contracts at dispersed institutions which require long hours of travel, teaching preparation, delivery, assessment and administration. Working life for a 30-40 year-old academic has reverted back to practices that were consigned ‘to history’ thirty years ago.

RATIO 2—Re-productive labour. For women progressing through academic research in the UK, the experience of reproductive labour is now much more often located in an early academic career. Before the 2000s, women were encouraged to ‘give birth’ to their PhD before considering having children. Now, nurturing a child and a PhD are commonplace practices, although balancing parenting and an advanced level of research is taxing and costs much. This ratio is more humane insofar as it recognises the biological health of women in academia, rather than institutional and funding pressures to complete training before parenting begins; but reproductive labour costs of childrearing are high—childcare costs on average £115 part

time, £215 full time, per week in the UK.⁵ Again, people are ‘creative’, and families in academia use flexible work arrangements to cut down on costs. In the profession, having children is still an explicitly active barrier to equality and progression. *The Architects’ Journal* ‘Women in Architecture’ 2015 Survey reporting that 87% of women consider having children puts them at a disadvantage.⁶

RATIO 3—Housing. The UK housing crisis continues to become more toxic. London is now a city where unregulated private rents are often £700+ a month for a single room in a Zone 1-2 shared house.⁷ Nationally, social housing continues to be systematically sold off as financial assets and house-builders ignore space standards. Among student architects, despite having technological labour-skills that can generate supplementary income, resilience to the high cost of travel and accommodation includes overcrowding rental of flats. Thus, students’ creative work tactics are not just located in the seminar room or design studio, but in their survival strategies of daily life in a city that, in no way, can be seen as a positive choice.

RATIO 4—Political imaginations. Despite all these inhumane ratios, the active architectural researcher

5 <https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/childcare-costs>

6 <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/story.aspx?storyCode=8675349>

7 <http://www.timeout.com/london/blog/this-tube-map-shows-the-average-rent-costs-near-every-underground-station-092915>

is a powerful expression of resilience. Critically-intelligent work by students, young researchers and professionals, shows transformative material and intellectual powers in action. Humane histories and theories of architecture are also necessary for building new political imaginaries, for expressing ethical practices and social realities. These biopowers operate in design, history and theory. History-as-biopower (what we could also call ‘radical’ history) upgrades nostalgic modernist desires for autonomy through an intensive demystification of the ‘facts on the ground’: first, that knowledge is never neutral; second, understanding the production of power relations at the macro- and micro-scale enables new ‘technologies of the self’ to be developed; third, political and historical imaginaries are two kinds of ‘technology’ for societal change.

Humane architectural ratios are therefore situated alongside *others*’ ethical relations—e.g. Vandana Shiva’s critiques of monocultures, J-K Gibson Graham’s post-capitalist economics, or Donna Haraway’s ‘critical sympathy’—cultivating ethical and differentiated ways of living through affirmative and transversal practices.

Architecture, Environment, and Critical Labor

Daniel A. Barber
University of Pennsylvania

What is the value of critical intellectual labor in architecture? The relationship between scholarship in the history and theory of the design fields (architecture, landscape, urbanism) and the professional world is not only abstract, but also, and perhaps necessarily, conflicted. The work of the engaged scholar is to amass historical evidence and deploy conceptual frameworks towards reconsidering the parameters of architectural practice. Architects, and the publishing industry directed at them, should not be expected to pay for the elaboration of this critical apparatus, yet it is increasingly necessary. The crisis here is less between the discourse and the profession (along the vectors of the different publishing venues that apply), and more between the academy and cultural institutions on the one hand, and assumptions about expectations of the professional world on the other.

Architectural scholars are in a unique position. Engaged in rich academic dialogues with their colleagues in schools of arts and sciences, we often teach in professional schools. My colleagues in Environmental History, whose primary teaching tends to be large history surveys, with a few specialized seminars if they are lucky, are envious of this professional school context—the assumption these colleagues make is that because we are teaching professionals-in-training, we have an opportunity to operate more or less directly on the profession.

The obstacles, however, are discursive—many design schools, and the conceptual framework for both industry and academic journals, are, generally speaking, resistant to the elaboration of environmental ideas as a central aspect of architectural practices.

In this sense, then, the labor of architectural scholarship is, at risk of reiterating a premise invoked by Banham in 1960, to transform the discipline to something perhaps unrecognizable to it.

At stake is, first, the recognition that the value of scholarship is in the production of new ideas and frameworks for thinking about architecture—ideas that are often at odds with “business as usual” practices and the cultural outlets that support them. Scholars can’t rely on industry venues to reward their intellectual labor. Second, and following, it is in a more robust and engaged academy and cultural institution that such scholarship can best be positioned, valued, and made public.

The neo-liberal university takes as a main priority the instrumentalization of knowledge—scholars are often assessed for how their work resonates not only in a community of scholars, but also for how it impacts industry. Scholarly assessment metrics in UK and Australia, in particular, focus on this question of “impact.” The important point here is this—such instrumentalization is welcome, but not on the terms that industry proposes; rather, the application of scholarly knowledge is (still) as a critical perspective, offering to transform the discipline. At the same time, cultural institutions, from museums to community non-profits, also have much to offer in terms of grant and funding support, and in providing event and media channels.

So, what is the value of critical labor in architecture? As a field, we can be more precise; or better, in the sub-field of architectural historians and critics who take relationships between architecture and

environment as their primary area of research, we can develop new strategies for negotiating these instrumentalist imperatives. The “impact” of our labor could, indeed, be felt across a wide range of professional actors—architects, writers, policy makers, engineers and consultants. Finding a way to maintain critical perspective while also engaging in normative discourse presents significant challenges. Thus the central site for improving the labor conditions of architectural scholarship is a familiar one—the overly administrated university. Agitation towards more tenure track positions and better pay for adjuncts; in short, less precarious opportunities. Increased support by the academy is crucial. The university is dead. Long live the university!

Self & Funding

Sben Korsh

University of California, Berkeley

“Sounds Selfish”

I first heard of The Architecture Lobby while working at an architectural nonprofit in New York. One afternoon, a meeting convened near my desk. Being a good intern I pretended to work while listening in. The meeting was about fundraising, focusing on architectural practices in the city: who’s new, who’s cool, who had money to give. One of them started describing a new group speaking out about the architecture profession’s bad labor practices and the ideologies that create them. “Sounds selfish,” I chimed in. They quickly retorted, “There’s a lot of architects trying to help others, it’s time they help themselves.”

Funding the Self

Marx says that the rights of man—like those for equality, liberty, security and property—are symbolic rights. These rights exist only in the realm of politics and law but not in the material reality, or “real foundation,” of people’s lives. These rights promote selfish individuals; equal as citizen, but not in flesh. The consciousness of the selfish individual is formed by the modes of production of this material reality. Economics forms the self.^{1(p126)}

So the self is thus selfish and wants funds. An academic gets funds in many ways: working as an adjunct or tenured professor; graduate school stipends; grants from foundations, governments, and universities; receiving awards, fellowships, honorariums, and postdocs. These funds allow for the material

reality of an academic's life, paying for food, travel, health, and housing. People try to increase their funding by applying for more grants, gaining tenure, taking on administrative roles, and negotiating pay raises.

The self is formed through seeking these funds. To get more funds an academic often has to write for them. Writing for more funds, one does so in their self-interest. When writing for funds in the form of a job, grant, or fellowship, an academic often presents themselves in the best light. Writing for funding is certainly a selfish act.

1 In the 1844 "On the Jewish Question," Marx critiqued the superstructure that houses the rights of man. Marx argues rights such as the right to equality, which protects individual interests under the law, is equality formed when "each man is equally considered to be a self-sufficient monad." He explains that rights are premised on an "egoistic" individual, or "man as bourgeois," which holds rights in the political and legal spheres, but not in the sphere "degraded" below it, the material world where "real" man lives. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" (1844) in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 227-234. In an overview of his early studies and intellectual formation, Marx explains in the 1859 preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, that through the "social production of their existence," men must enter into "relations of production" to maintain these material conditions of their life. He says "The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite social forms of consciousness." Karl Marx, "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 425.

Self-Funding

Foucault says that institutions construct new forms of subjectivities. He argues that caring for the self is a means of practicing freedom in the face of institutional discipline and control on our lives. If one cares for oneself fully—knowing one's capabilities, one's responsibilities, and one's relationship to others—one will not abuse power over others. In the economy, where selves are driven to find funding, the self-interests of one person overlaps with the self-interests of others. This overlapping of interests forms a "indefinite field of immanence." In economic terms, this field is the free-market; a place where the self can practice freely.²

2 In the 1984 interview "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," Foucault articulates the idea of caring for the self, rather than constructing a rational to care for others. Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," interview with Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, and Alfredo Gomez-Muller, in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997), 281. In *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978-79*, Foucault use an argument from the philosopher Marquis de Condorcet to give an account of the individual that holds two characteristics 1) the individual's interests "is dependent upon an infinite number of things," and 2) the individual's interest relies on circumstances, many of them, far beyond their control. This places the individual within a "indefinite field of immanence" which connects them to others in a manner that works to their "advantage" and that of others. Through the doubling of an "indefinite diversity of accidents," *homo economicus* is placed in a market that gives each individual their best interest. While this notion applies towards that of Adam Smith's invisible hand, the logic of the argument serves as a poststructuralist account of how something like "the economy" is formed by what Foucault terms the "unknowability of the totality of the process." Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978-79*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 277-283.

Many funds restrict an academic, thus academics often fund themselves: students go into debt; new journals and nonprofits are established; vacations become research trips; unpaid internships and university service; volunteer peer-review and editing. Between scholarly articles, conference papers, and books, the products of academic research are as much tied to self-funding as they are funded by others. Teaching as well, with overloaded course schedules and student advising is often underfunded, so self-funding is needed. Yet this notion of self-funding is not just economic, or material. Self-funding and self-interest comes in the form of noneconomic pushes and pulls. Economies of desires, images, prestige, and affect. Credits of knowledge and acknowledgement. Exchanges of love, laughter, and anger.

It seems religious how much academics put into their own work. Many compare (like they do with architecture) academia to the priesthood, as it encourages one's work to be one's life. Priests and academics are known for speaking their truths. In questioning the priest's actions, instead of trying to convert them, we might ask first why they call themselves a priest.

Interest

In my junior and senior year at the City University of New York I held a fellowship that required interning with nonprofit organizations. It paid \$25 an hour for working two days a week during the semester. The funding required our work be done in the public interest. Many of the fellows worked for politicians, local governments, and charitable programs; I interned with architectural institutions and museums. One of the fund's administrators encouraged us to intern with as many organizations as possible. "See what's out there." "Meet new people." "It's in your interest." I did this while enrolled full-time in school and held two other fellowships, making sure to graduate on time before the funding ran out.

Over the last two years in a MS Architecture History, Theory & Society program at UC Berkeley, which I partly self-funded through student loans, I found work through part-time positions at the university. One term as an archive assistant, a curatorial assistant, a research assistant, a paid internship. There was one time that three of these jobs overlapped—a bit of market euphoria. The pay increased with each position, and in each I learned new lessons and skills. I was able to work with others, including my advisors, in capacities outside of what I thought were my interests, and in turn developed new ones. In my last semester I was a teaching assistant for a large survey course about the "History of American Capitalism." The position was 50% time with the university, and it was the most money I've ever made. I could have paid the interest on my student loans but I was selfish.

“Back to School”

Christopher Barker
Columbia University

Since the late nineteenth century architectural design and architectural history have shared a close relationship in American architecture schools. Under the direction of architect-historians, trained first as architects, the concerns of history and the concerns of design became mutually dependent in professional education. Architecture history legitimated the architectural design, and in turn the design legitimated the importance of architecture history. Today, the relationship between history and design is not so instrumental or so close. The scope of architectural history has moved beyond concerns of style, biography and form. Its archives have moved beyond western European and colonial American subjects, and have multiplied. PhD programs in the history and theory of architecture are more removed from the design studio than ever before. PhD students frequently take as many courses outside architecture school as they do within it. Faculty and graduate students have developed productive relationships with other fields, including urban studies, history of science, American studies, economics, and many others. Architecture historians now freely ask: What is the use of architectural history? What is the relationship of architectural history to design?

Architectural design has also developed outward. Architectural history is no longer the bridge between the design studio and the larger world of ideas: design faculty and students make their own connections. Design studios have developed modes of applied research suited to their own needs and constraints. Architecture departments have developed outward through a proliferation of “labs,”

public and private collaborations, and “networked” international partnerships. These initiatives are propelled by a variety of reasons, including the desire for greater civic engagement, entrepreneurial ambition, research in new technologies, and efforts to join environmental and global discourses. Intentionally or not, the architecture school frequently emulates the expansionist ambitions of the larger university.

With all these interests, the architecture school has grown rapidly to house more sub-disciplines, programs, students, and to connect to more initiatives outside the school. (My reflection is limited to the relationship between architecture history and design, but I acknowledge the other disciplines that have long since resided in the architecture school.) What are the implications for architectural education as the field grows ever larger? Surely the expansion of architectural discourse is a good thing? Efforts to democratize architectural knowledge are welcome, and so are efforts to further diversify teachers and students. But as architectural education has grown, working conditions in the architecture school have become less certain. Is there a connection? Has the outward development of architectural education been detrimental to architectural labor?

The onset of precarious labor, described by Ulrich Beck as “a risk-fraught system of flexible, pluralized, decentralized underemployment,” is a quality of our post-industrial and neo-liberal society. These adverse conditions are not unique to architecture schools, but designers and historians are poorly positioned to push back against them. Many young

educators persevere under the illusion that profitable, secure, full-time employment lies at the end of the road. But more often than not, it does not. Opportunities for tenure are disappearing. Soon, all faculty (not just visiting adjunct associate professors) will find themselves working by contract on a semester-by-semester basis. In turn, the contracts too, will disappear. Meanwhile young graduates, unable to make a living from fledgling practices, have long since relied on architecture schools for part-time employment, and for prestige. In turn, the schools rely on graduates as a steady stream of labor desperate enough to accept low wages with no benefits and no security. Further down the ladder, rising tuition costs leave students with a lifetime of debt, and dissuade poorer applicants from applying in the first place. How should educators respond to these trends?

Architecture school workers can improve their working conditions only if they unite together. Designers, historians, and administrators are still bound together by a shared workplace and a shared employer. The difficulty of thinking of these architecture workers as a unity is evidence of the problem. That many architecture workers labor outside the architecture school, in libraries, archives and home offices, only exacerbates the problem. Architecture workers will benefit from unity and visibility, not disunity and invisibility. Would better workplace security curtail the exchange of ideas within the school, or between the school and the outside world? Everyone is familiar with the old complaint against tenured faculty who have remained at their jobs for too long. But overall, better job

security would increase the quality of teaching and the quality of scholarship, not reduce it. Must the field of architecture continue to expand outward in order to innovate? The rhetoric of growth and development should give us pause. Development of what, we should ask. Too often architecture is first and foremost a tool for economic development, and social and cultural development is denigrated. Conditions inside the architecture school cannot be disassociated from economic realities beyond the campus. Educators and students should recognize that “creative” working environments are too often synonymous with insecure working conditions and meager compensation. This is the “creative discount,” as Andrew Ross once called it, that we give to our employers.

Compared to medicine or law, the discipline of architecture has never been clearly defined. Students learn that architecture is a broad field that encompasses the humanities and the sciences, arts and technics, business and law, and so on. There is no simple doctrine that unifies the changing relationships between these different bodies of knowledge. What holds architecture together is the architecture school, understood here as both a shared workplace and a shared discourse. To reemphasize the architecture school as the place where we work, where we become friends, and where architectural knowledge is created, seems like a good idea.

Commodifying Architectural Education

Felipe Aravena
Joaquín Díez Canedo
Alessandro Toti
University College London

A spectre is haunting architecture students all over the world—the spectre of commodification. From the world of the office practice, where the time to stop and think seems a waste of always scarce resources, postgraduate studies seem a safe haven to develop a critical position independent of everyday struggles. From the inside, however, this view appears as an illusion. Where once we thought we could escape the economic ills of contemporary society and find a space of seclusion from which to critique them, even here we are vulnerable. Where once we believed that we could take a safe distance from which to blow the winds of change, we have been shown that market ideology has a way of sneaking into every crevice. But we have been wondering, were we ever *really* safe? Did we ever *actually* fulfil our roles as those who knit the mantle of Utopia, or was this always nothing other than the blurry image of academia from the opposite side of the discipline? The ideal of the university, after a long history of thinking about itself as a stronghold against capitalism, has given up and has been subsumed into a technocratic logic where what matters is only efficiency and profit. This situation seems irreversible and the causes are multiple, but one of them is the commodification of education.

Architecture itself was born as a commodification of the building activity—some theories place this moment in the 15th century, others suggest far earlier. Without doubt, however, throughout architectural history, commodification has progressively invaded every possible position in architectural practice—from clients to architects themselves, from

theorists to professionals, from scholars to, finally, students. Where once, from the 60s onwards, students and political/Marxist society believed that the young embodied hope, could be agents of change, and students and workers would UNITE! to create a better world, we now find that University is a market commodity—and a very profitable one indeed. Students have now become the model clients of the Education Industry. Instead of opening up a new social model founded on knowledge and independent critique, they are satisfied with becoming the trailblazers of a situation that fits completely with the neoliberal agenda.

In addition, theory and critique are now seen as unproductive because the results they yield are not easily measurable in quantitative economic terms. Perceived by the eyes of profit-oriented technocrats, this lack of “certainty” greatly restricts academia’s agency in a context where the words impact and accountability appears to be the key for success. Even though the evident technocratic bias is in favour of STEM disciplines, the opposition here is not between scientific and humanistic disciplines, but between knowledge generated for profit versus critical, independent knowledge. Nothing today appears more impossible than the latter, with scholars being disempowered in every possible sense. First, they have to adjust the personal or the public scope of their research to fit whatever the funding body deems relevant to their internal causes. Secondly, students have to pay higher and higher fees to access even public universities. In this way, either they are from a rich family who can afford outrageous fees,

or they have to look for private funding—or go into life-binding debt. As a result, we believe that students, legitimised as a result of the cost of their education and training, have started to view their teachers as mere employees, whose role is to passively facilitate institutional forms of knowledge. As a result, universities are rated on Yelp as are shoe stores or coffee shops, and students become nothing more than models for stock photos. Perfect smiles, no content.

Finally, if in order to be financed—which is to say, in order to exist—the University has had to shift its role from a more autonomous production of the common good to critical knowledge that fits its private financier interests, where then is the space of critique? What is critique’s agency and its role? Whilst a loss of independence is not necessarily a bad thing, the failure of University, as well as the indisputable commodification of the students, are warning signs that we need new spaces of resistance. Currently, there is not much promise of a better future for university or for architecture, but for the challenge of interpreting the work of designers, historians, and critics in a more conflictual, and therefore nonconformist, way.

The Service Industry

Tijana Vuosevic

University of Western Australia

I am one of the lucky people who actually like to do what they are paid to do. And, being a unionized professor, I get paid well. But the issue is not whether my work is valued. The issue is what it is valued for. And here is where my opinion and that of my employer slightly diverge.

I think I am inventing new ideas. I think I am guiding people in the process of self-transformation. I think I am doing something good for society. And often this translates into me thinking, perhaps deliriously, that I am on a mission.

The management of my university, inspired by studies done by a major management consulting company, Ernst and Young, is deciding to “renew” how we go about our affairs. From now on, they announce, my work is valuable because it is a service to the customer (the student), and that our institutional and financial aim is to find the highest bidder (the richest student) to pay for this service.

We, the workers, find this quite appalling. There is a major political reason for this, of course. It is not that we think we are only inspiring young people. But there is also a difference in how we see our business. Some of us, driven by a strange combination of the lust for power and the lust for justice, pursue a political cause—facilitating and also guarding the most relevant channel of social mobility. And it is this business that is being shut down by the advice of the luminaries of corporate thought.

The economic logic is very simple, or rather quite crude. Teaching is customer service. Publishing stuff, especially if it is inspired, is a way to increase our “rankings” so that we can charge more for the

service. We are going to grow and grow and grow, not for any particular purpose, but because that is what money is supposed to do.

So I have to come to terms with the fact that I am not really on a mission but that my labor is a service. The way to make sense of this new situation is not to violently reject this notion but rather to think about what it might mean.

To provide service is to serve. To serve the corporate machine, of course. To pretend, in a completely perverse twist of corporate logic, that you are serving your students while willy-nilly constantly judging them, assessing them, making them jump through reasonably or unreasonably positioned hoops. On the other hand, the notion that we have transformed from prophets into servants might help us shed hubris and arrogance that often accompanies our idealism.

This description of the professional turn we are witnessing implies in a way that this turn is also a quasi-monastic one, the return to the monastic origins of the university. But this time, instead of God's servants, we are servants to profit. If there is no God and if we do not want to serve profit, the question is not whether but what we are going to serve not TO but TOGETHER with our students. Since there is no one answer to this question, the ways of resistance are many.

Dispatches from MIT: Becoming Political

Dariel Cobb

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

David Adjaye has just won the McDermott Award: \$100,000 for a handful of public appearances and an equal number of cocktail parties for private guests. Thus the MIT Corporation lays claim to artistic prestige. By way of reputation, the architect is an obvious choice; he's also a timely choice as the Institute is rapidly expanding its physical footprint and in the process will transform its library system—getting rid of all those tedious books, we fear—to make way for our bright digital future. The Future of the Library panel presentation, advertised using slides of Adjaye's public library in Washington, DC, promised as much. When asked why public libraries are today transforming to assume the additional heavy mantle of the public square while the actual public square disappears, David Adjaye, a scholar of the city as well as an esteemed practitioner, simply responded, "We are not politicians."¹ Indeed. And yet, in our working lives we remain political animals no less than in our private ones. One wonders where exactly lie the boundaries of the political. How do we become political? Adjaye's own commitment to high value public space is articulated in his many publications. The arguably more substantial act of taking on the commission of a non-profit public housing project in Harlem, New York City—forgoing his typical fees—is that choice not a political one?

At every turn, the choices we make in our working lives take on shades of the political. As an MArch student, I chose to explore the militarization of US embassies precisely because such buildings are innately

1 The comment was made during the "Future of the Library" panel discussion, 11 February 2016, at MIT.

political, as embodied by their form. It was political too when, during the 2008 downturn, architecture offices across the country first laid off part-time workers, those just returning from leave, and those who would only commit to work 40 hours per week—disproportionately women—before trimming the rest of the ranks. Ignored or occluded, actions in and engagement with the workplace nevertheless mirror a larger system of constitutive social value. Recognizing and actively engaging our political selves is an act of empowerment, no matter the particular domain of our working lives.

Academic labor atypically accommodates a political tone. (That's why the state of Wisconsin seeks to eliminate tenure.) Given the unusually cozy relationship between the academy and architecture practice, if we choose in our research to address the concerns of those who within the workplace of office/studio culture feel stifled—due to its innately hierarchical, and yes, political nature—then with our labor we support and amplify their claim to value. To this end I point to the upcoming issue of *Thresholds*, MIT's architecture history and theory journal, subtitled "Workspace." In their call for submissions, my colleagues Nisa Ari and Christianna Bonin point to the suicide netting outside Foxconn's dormitories in China and ask of a worker who jumps, "is he fulfilling or transgressing the design of the workspace?" They address the condition of labor within an established architectural vocabulary. Likewise, the OfficeUS pavilion at the 2014 Venice Biennale drew attention to architecture offices' constellation of workers, and to their internal diagrams detailing worker organization, rather than to the usual marquee stars.

Academics now need to do more: examine the labor rights of architecture workers and the labor practices of architecture offices within a larger social history. Having personally experienced the unmitigated drudgery of long hours and low pay within a purportedly elite professional architecture setting, I think it's time to move workers' whispers and complaints from blogs and trade publications to the arena of sustained critical discourse. Generations have passed during which such engagement would have been vilified, only to arrive at this ripe political moment for reexamination. And let not the critical gaze be cast only outwards—academics should equally consider their own work as work and their own domains as workplaces. At MIT, the architecture PhD office is nicknamed, "the kennel;" apparently some student of yesteryear worked alongside her dogs. Yet the pseudonym's connotations are less than flattering. Even cultural practices such as these can be probed and questioned. Harvard, for example, offers no architecture PhD office at all.

I grew up with scant example of the typical US workplace. My parents were figures in the New York art world, with its seasonal labor patterns and feast-or-famine monetary rewards. In one respect then I am ill-equipped to comment on work as such, in another, I am supremely primed: I know firsthand the struggles of those for whom self-identification as a creative is meant to elevate and forgive their hardships. Academic research too is a bastion of creative practice. Yet to cede the claim to one's status as a worker only serves as self-censorship, with clear perils. It's time to claim ourselves as political animals. The only way forward is becoming political.

The Academy and Theory Production

Nadir Lahiji

University of Canberra, Australia

In his Introduction to “Toward a Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*,” Marx wrote:

The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to *call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions*. The criticism of religion is therefore in *embryo* the *criticism of that vale of tears* of which religion is the halo.¹

The Academy has been enjoying an *illusory* happiness in the last four decades: the happiness of *affirmative* theory production. This *affirmative* theory is the academy’s religion. But to call for the abolition of this religion, to paraphrase Marx, is to call on the academy to *give up a condition that requires illusion*. To name this condition is to address the religion of capitalism, or to use Walter Benjamin’s phrase, “Capitalism as Religion.” The “premise of all criticism,” Marx said, is the “criticism of religion.” The academy is under the spell of a religion that feeds its *illusion*. This illusion is constitutive. It goes like this: philosophy, or theory/ideation, can directly lead to real conditions without “sublation;” that is, without the “thing-in-itself” as the “real” that is not given to experience and therefore cannot be theorized. Simplistically, it calls this easy transition from ideation to real, “practice.” This is why the academy’s affirmative theory in relation to “reality” (conditioned by capitalist religion) has a “spiritual *aroma*” of that world, to use Marx’s term,

1 See Karl Marx, “Toward a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction,” in Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed., Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 28.

which is its religion. The theory production in the academy is oblivious of the “struggling theory,” and therefore is in need of a *transcendental critique*, in the Kantian sense of the word. Among other things, this critique means that what cannot be theoretically criticized must therefore be practically abolished because of a stubborn fact that *illusion* (*Schien, Idee*, or “semblance”) is constitutive.

The production of affirmative theory as *prescription* for an affirmative practice is the academy’s positive-empirical, and not resistant, response to the turn of capitalism to the neoliberal order; that is, its new religion. This order has co-opted the “spirit” of academy and incorporated it into the “New Spirit of Capitalism.” In the same period, a new generation of critics and architects/writers have appeared on the scene that have labored to produce *affirmative* “theory” of architecture—for which they have deployed all postmodern philosophical theories. For their labor, they have been rewarded not only by the academic institutions but also by the institutions of high culture. This affirmative theory industry has simply no room for the “Critique of the Political Economy” that must be in the center of a possible “labor theory of architecture” that I contend should be in the center of the so-called the “economy of architecture.” Now the latter must be grounded in the concept of “surplus.” This concept contains two interrelated notions: The “surplus-value” in Marxian theory, and its homology, “surplus-*jouissance*” in Lacanian theory. To put it succinctly, today, if you want to do a Marxian analysis you have to go through the Lacanian psychoanalytical theory.

Within the Lacanian theory of discourse—discourse as “social link”—the discourse of affirmative theory can be classified under the “University Discourse.” In the “discourse of university” the dominant position is occupied by knowledge (*savoir*). What has to be noted is that this discourse demonstrates the “fact that behind all attempts to impart an apparently “neutral” knowledge to the other can always be located an attempt at mastery (mastery of knowledge, the domination of the other to whom this knowledge is imparted).”² In a nutshell, the “discourse of university” represents the *hegemony of knowledge*, which in the time of modernity manifested itself in the form of the hegemony of science.

Not to be missed in this theory of discourse is the notion that in any signifying operation there is always a *surplus*, keeping in mind that this surplus is nowhere given to visibility as such. From where does it originate? It comes into being in every structural differential system dealing with *value*. Every system of difference, beginning with language, produces a surplus. In Kantian theory, this surplus is not given to phenomenal experience; it is the “thing-in-itself” that can only be conceptualized. Moving from Kant to Marx and his theory of surplus-value, it is the same differential system at work. The secret of commodity lies in what is not given to an immediate experience as it resides in differential relation between the use-value and the exchange-value, behind which is the labor-power. It can only be conceptualized.

2 See Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), 46.

In the so-called “economy of architecture” in the time of neoliberal order—with the turn of capitalism to total debt economy—one must take into account that it sustains and is being sustained by (re-)production of the surplus-value. It, in turn, reproduces the economic and political imperatives of the system in which the *homo oeconomicus* is separated from the *homo politicus*. It thus produces the docile subject in theory and practice, notwithstanding the illusions of self-styled avant-gardes in the academy claiming high philosophical theories. They have shamelessly abandoned the *project of radical critique* in the discipline.

Marx, in the same “Introduction to a Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*,” wrote:

As philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, the proletariat finds its *intellectual* weapons in philosophy... . Philosophy cannot be actualized without the transcendence [*Aufhebung*] of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be transcended without the actualization of philosophy.³

In this passage, the name “proletariat” is understood as a “surplus,” or “the part with no part,” (to use Jacques Rancière’s term) or, “excluded,” as the *negative* moment which stands for the universal subjective position in capitalism. Now this Subject is not the subject of cognition, but rather, the subject of unconscious. Capitalism therefore comes with its own unconscious. The proletariat is this subject who by no means can be taken as an empirical subject. It is interior in the very system that represses it. As

2 Marx, *ibid.*, 38-39.

such, it is the *symptom*, the negative moment, of the capitalist system.

This negative element, by analogy, must underline theory production in architecture that would “sublate” architecture by turning to philosophy (i.e., theory) not in its *affirmative* mode, but to its *negativity*. The labor of theory in architecture must abandon the illusion of society without negativity or alienation. The theory of *critique* of architecture, in turn, must remain within the mode of thought that Benjamin Noys calls the “persistent of the negative.” The labor theory of architecture must then be grounded in a “transcendental critique” of capitalist subjectivity. It must depart from the Marxian Critique of the Political Economy.

Bridges to Practice

History, Architecture and Labour: A Program for Research

Pier Vittorio Aureli
Architectural Association

Labour has been rarely discussed in architecture. While every Monday morning new topics are being introduced to architectural and urban discourse, the most obvious one—the exploitation of labour for the sake of profit—has been virtually absent. Why is that? I believe that the main reason is that labour is ubiquitous, and as such, it is ‘invisible’. Of course, labour *is* visible as the activity that we do in exchange for a wage (when we are lucky). Labour is also visible in the forms of ‘hard’ physical and mental labour conditions that are still enforced within many job activities. Yet the big picture of labour and its ramifications in all aspects of life is difficult to grasp. Seen from the vantage point of the city, labour is not something that can be contained by a specific action, typology, or subject. If labour is the worker’s capability to produce (the potential for production), then labour is everywhere: at the workplace, in the school, in the house, in the museum, in the park, and on the street in all the places where social life unfolds. Labour is omnipresent but elusive in terms of its representation. Yet without representation, it is difficult to speak about the relevance of labour as a fundamental basis of society. This is a cultural and political problem, which touches on the way we talk about labour and how we make it visible within our work as architects and as pedagogues. How can we make labour visible? How can we make the invisible, visible?

In order to counter this situation and contribute to a possible ‘representation’ of labour within architecture, we can reform the way we approach the history of architecture. I’m aware that to many such a reform may sound like a quintessential academic

issue and a sort of ‘playing the harp while Rome is burning’ vis-à-vis more urgent tasks, such as the struggle against the many forms of exploitations that occur within the building industry—from design to construction. Yet I believe that the subversion of given historical narratives can be effective in changing the presentation of a profession that for many centuries has relied on the very ideologically constructed image of the architect as the indisputable creator and the client as the benefactor of architecture.

Architectural history is traditionally constructed around narratives of dominant styles, important architects-authors, and canonical buildings. While in recent years there have been attempts to go beyond these narratives, the current pedagogy of architecture is deeply influenced by the notion that the production of architecture can be narrowed to the “architect + client = building” formula. What is missing in this representation of architecture is the whole complex that binds together builders, designers, social institutions, the organization of the profession, and the financial capital that is necessary to built architecture. If we take in account this complex, we realise how even strictly ‘disciplinary’ issues such as drawing, design composition, craftsmanship, are far from being the ‘autonomous’ domain of the architect. These themes have emerged in response to specific moments of the organization of labour in architecture. For example, the importance of drawing as the main architect’s medium can be understood as a consequence of the division of labour that has split into two separate professional domains: builders and architects. While the former build, the latter draw.

What would be at stake in a larger picture of architectural history is how design and building techniques have arisen in response to specific conflicts within labour conditions. For example, we would learn about how architecture itself as a profession became clearly distinct from that of the builder. It was not by chance that the architect as we know it today was born in cities, such as Florence, as they grew to be important centres of economic and financial power. The ‘free-lance’ architect emerged there because there was a political and economic elite backing such a figure in order to disempower stone-masons’ and wood-cutters’ leadership over the building site of major public works. These circumstances inspired Leon Battista Alberti to theorize architecture as a *design project* whose disciplinary goal was to single out the architect as a professional figure clearly distinct from builders, whose craftsmanship was increasingly downgraded and subordinated to the architect’s design and to the patron’s brief. Another crucial aspect that such history of architecture would reveal is the emergence of typology as one of the main categories of architecture. The discourse on typology arose in the 18th century to address common features found in different buildings. As such, the study of typology has become a stronghold of architectural disciplinarity and a sort of a-historical x-ray of the essence of architecture. Yet a rigorous typological analysis of architecture would reveal something more interesting: it would allow us to see how apparatuses of governance and subjectivization have subtly influenced the production of specific architectural forms and spaces and

how the latter are not timeless creatures but are always rooted within specific historical conditions. In this case, the role of labour would emerge not only in terms of production of architecture, but also in terms of how architecture itself has been designed as a space for production and reproduction. From housing to factories, and from offices to museums, the goal of modern architecture was to make space attuned to emerging forms of life. Yet the historical process through which architectural typologies came into being was not a univocal top-down project in which capital silently formed docile subjects.

A close reading of architecture as form would allow us to understand how inventions such as the open plan, the use of concrete, and the reform of domestic space are also the result of those who were supposed to inhabit and live in those spaces—those who were, in their daily practices, resistant to such governance and forced public and private institutions to introduce new modes of production and reproduction. Such history would demand to go not *beyond*, but *within* architecture itself. I believe that by getting deep into architectural form and its history and theory, we can use architecture as one of the most tangible traces of how the history of labour and the conflicts that have arisen from its exploitation by capital has defined the world in which we live. What I propose here is not a vision of architecture meant to frustrate the architect as a ‘creator’ and the possibility of his/her autonomy from the forces that have shaped our profession. The program briefly outlined above is intended as a possibility to better situate the architect’s struggle for autonomy within a more

collective struggle shared by all those involved in the labour of architecture.

Centering Organization

Aaron Cayer

University of California, Los Angeles

In the early 1990s, architectural sociologist Robert Gutman noted that the field of architecture had evolved into two kinds of opposing practices: those that were primarily concerned with disciplinary ideas and cultural critique, and those that were focused on pragmatics and profit-making service. Although, as we know, this characterization was overtly reductive, it reinforced what the late sociologist Pierre Bourdieu described as the fundamental logic of culture production. For Bourdieu, the field of production was predicated on an ability of actors and observers to differentiate between practices—those who were commercially powerful vs. those who were symbolically powerful—by drawing attention to their organizational and structural differences. Yet, with the rise of post-Fordist knowledge economy, knowledge itself became a source of commodifiable power, rendering distinctions that were once based on labor and on-the-ground praxis impossible to make. Now, architects are able to amass power by claiming to do “research,” or by hiring theorists and historians to do “research” for them. But, now, how does one differentiate between—and assign respective value to—intellectual practices and commercial practices? Or, even more challengingly, between exploitative practices and consciously engaged ones? One possible answer: histories and studies of organization.

Indeed, the impacts of the knowledge economy on definitions of culture deployed within practice now demand new and more specific disciplinary and professional tools for organizational differentiation—ones that reject rhetoric as a primary tool for distinguishing between one set of actors from

another in favor of true organizational and structural difference. Thus, both the historian and the architect can be viewed as having similar tasks. While the former may write histories of organizing work with the potential of widening the legacy of architectural history beyond studies of form and composition, the latter regularly studies best business practices for optimizing revenue based on accumulated histories without recognizing it.

The wage-laborer who is merely trying to earn a living wage can rest assured that the call I am describing here is not one aimed at re-kindling a kind of expedient relationship between the architect and the historian; rather, it is aimed at pointing out the ways in which the historian and architect work in parallel. Unlike the late 19th and early 20th century, when history was viewed in American architectural periodicals as a “dangerous topic” that only daring publishers could include as a way to encourage practitioners to use certain styles for reconciling contemporary tendencies, history may now have new and perhaps less “dangerous” agency relative to practice. Although journals such as *Oppositions* and *Assemblage* attempted to assert that history was in fact embedded in practice from the 1970s onward, architects working particularly within corporate offices told different stories. Large firms in the US, such as Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) and Caudill Rowlett Scott (CRS) shuttered, and between the 1970s and 1990s, they went after as many developer projects as possible since the efficacy of such projects was immediately and internally quantifiable, and

perhaps more directly, because volume signified counteractive power.

At the contemporary moment, large architecture firms including SOM as well as Perkins and Will regularly invite leading theorists and historians to publicly critique their own work—sometimes ushering them to remote and lavish destinations—to hopefully sharpen the focus of architects within and among their own offices, but also to set them in competition with each other on the basis of critical recognition. Other firms, from Gensler to Gehry, have partnered with academic institutions to work on historiographical projects and to re-think the terrain of design research by using their own office as case study.

As both strategy and historiography, the organizational structures of work, both past and present, are therefore on the mind of architects and historians alike. These efforts represent the unavoidable ability of architects to purchase, fabricate, and market a superficial image of organizational knowledge and expertise regardless of firm size, name, or deployed rhetoric; however, the vitality of the field rests now on the ability of organizational nuance—labor—to be rendered visible, both by the historian and the practicing architect. After all, as Tafuri argued, the architectural historian is propelled by promptings rooted in practice in order to maintain relevancy. But, there are two sides to such an argument. Here, now, is a two-fold plea: one to practitioners to engage more explicitly and deeply with organizational histories; and one to historians to unveil more detailed organizational structures for practitioners to study.

DON'T ACT. JUST THINK.

Anna Goodman
Portland State University

Can designers practice critically? Can education in the technical production of architecture also be an act of critical thinking? Or, is the production of disciplinary expertise antithetical to a broader social knowledge and concern? What is the significance of the labor of social critique on the part of historian/theoretician in the context of architects' attempts to be "socially responsible"?

Somewhere in the middle of my fieldwork, I found myself in the gift shop of the Rural Heritage Center in Thomaston, Alabama. Browsing through the hand-made aprons and jars of pepper jelly, I came to a stack of posters whose colorful block letters shouted from rough card stock backing. Flipping through the pile, one jumped out at me. "PROCEED AND BE BOLD!" it exclaimed. The phrase is the famous mantra of Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee, the original director of the Auburn University Rural Studio and a figure many people identify as the father of the contemporary resurging interest in socially oriented architectural practice.

I carried the poster over to the register. "Oh!" the shop's overseer exclaimed. "Those are our most popular item, all the students just buy them right up." I wanted to carry the artifact home and contemplate its significance relative to the larger questions of my research. My project considered the political lives of architects through a detailed account of community design and design/build in American architectural education. In it, I worked to discover what motivated architects to take activist positions and why architects chose certain forms of action when faced with social and political challenges. When studying design/build as a genre of architectural activism, the phrase,

“Proceed and Be Bold!” had always irked me.¹ Perhaps it was the contrast between the action-oriented imperative—a heady confidence to jump up and immediately go to work on the world’s problems—and my own slow contemplative approach, which often found social and political life too complex to proceed anywhere but further into analysis. With the poster tucked under my arm, I thought vengefully about how I would make another poster myself in the same blocky text that would shout, “DON’T ACT. JUST THINK,” following Slavoj Žižek; “Don’t get caught into this pseudo-activist pressure,” he argues, his voice dripping with disdain, “‘*Do something.*’ ‘*Let’s do it.*’ No. The time is to think.”²

The poster sat tacked above my desk as I dove into archival documents, transcribed interviews, and analyzed observations collected during nearly two years of research across a myriad of institutions, regions, and eras. I kept glancing at the slogan—proceed and be bold, proceed and be bold—and wondering about the contrast between myself, tucked safely behind my desk, and the work of the “activist” architects about whom I wrote. The space between their dirty fingernails and triumphant attitudes and my own position as scholar and critic seemed wide.

1 This phrase is attributed to Samuel “Sambo” Mockbee and has been taken up as the mantra of the Auburn University Rural Studio. It has also been used extensively by the graphic artist Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. who lived and worked in Hale County, Alabama where the Rural Studio is located. Kennedy is the author of the above-mentioned poster.

2 Slavoj Žižek, “Don’t Act. Just Think,” *Big Think*, accessed February 25, 2015, <http://bigthink.com/videos/dont-act-just-think>.

Yet, as I moved more deeply into my work, I began to empathize with my studies’ subjects: architects and educators trying to forge new ways of being by placing architectural practice into unfamiliar contexts. I soon saw the line between the worlds of action and analysis blurred. As I listened to the words and followed the practices of program leaders and participants, it became clear that these designers had their own theories of history and their own critical positions on contemporary practice. I also saw design educators conducting research and critique in educational institutions, journals, and exhibition halls. As scholars have long pointed out, the practice of architecture encompasses much more than the design and erection of buildings.³ Accounts of design practice that too sharply distinguish practice from planning, or acting from thinking, tend to serve argumentative and symbolic purposes. They do not reflect the complex dynamics of the field.

Acknowledging this fact still leaves open this question: how do designers move from analyses of the world around them (including their understandings of history, the relationship between themselves and others and notions of ethics and responsibility) to forms of practice that they feel advance better futures? As scholars, we face a similar question: how can one move from critical analyses posed “outside” these practices to social justice agendas while acknowledging one’s own position within dynamics of power and privilege?

3 See for example, Dana Cuff, *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991).

Performing Theory: From Commercial Catharsis to Social Critique

Joe Crowdy, Kirti Durelle,
Hanan Kataw, Christos Kritikos,
Joanne Preston
University College London

The disciplinary distinction between architectural *theory* and architectural *practice* suggests a separation between two discrete activities: one conducted in the hermetic arena of academia, and another bound to the pragmatic commercial parameters and functional constraints of construction.

In some national contexts, this division is imposed: architects are forced to choose between academia or design, and cross-overs are discouraged. In principle, conflicts of interest are avoided by preserving the independence of academics and their output from the commercial market. In reality, this separation is impossible to maintain. These two strands are mutually dependent, entangled through varying degrees of reciprocal or exploitative exchange. It is important, therefore, to set out a more critical and nuanced analysis of this relationship, and to identify and assess the critical potential of theory as it is performed between the spaces of academia and commercial design today.

Exploiting the theoretical toolbox

A theory is exactly like a box of tools... It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless or the moment is inappropriate.¹

If theory must be useful beyond the point of its conception in order to survive, as Deleuze and Foucault

1 Gilles Deleuze, in M. Foucault and G. Deleuze, "Intellectuals and power," [1987] In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice : Selected Essays and Interviews*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 205-217.

argued in their 1987 conversation *Intellectuals and Power*, how is this utility or value defined? What are the conditions of its production, and which agendas does it serve?

In London, the Mayor encourages architects to move away from the production of “iconic” buildings and toward the design of “background” architecture that forms part of a wider, carefully constructed public realm.² This recommendation, which can be seen as a positive example of utilizing theory within the realm of policy making, accompanies an emerging trend toward architecture as “place-making”: a practice less focused on the formal tectonics of individual buildings, which embodies an increased awareness of various contextual factors. Accompanying this trend is a recognition of “local identity” as a malleable tool for developing the city’s now primary characteristic as a vessel for capital investment.

Extending beyond their traditional scope, architectural studios increasingly employ theory as a way to legitimize built work. Graduates are absorbed into the professional roles of “architectural interpreters,” “public realm consultants,” and “consultation consultants,” where they produce “area strategy reports,” “vision statements,” and “strategic site studies.” These reports claim to draw from academic research methodologies to give a “researched” analysis of potential development opportunities and constraints. Rarely is it clear how these conflicting factors have been reconciled in practice.

2 “London Housing Design Guide—Interim Edition”, London Development Agency (2010), 6.

While “place-making” may bring about new opportunities for creating links between academia and the practice of building, research undertaken in this context is problematic, since it is neither impartial nor aware of its bias. Chantal Mouffe’s description of a market where “artistic and cultural production play a central role in the process of capital valorization, and... artistic critique has become an important element of capitalist productivity,” could easily be applied to certain architectural practices.³ As an instrument of persuasion or appeasement, research is often commissioned by developers eager to disguise the political antagonisms inherent in their destruction of unprofitable forms of urban life. Theory is quickly stripped of any critical power, with potentially dangerous consequences.

Exposing antagonisms

In opposition to this commodified version of theory, deployed for financial gain, we argue for the role of the theorist in exposing political antagonisms. Following Mouffe, we reject the developer-friendly “liberal understanding of pluralism,” based on the false premise of universal consensus, in which a diverse multitude of politically neutralized perspectives and values exist harmoniously.⁴ In contrast, we

3 Chantal Mouffe, *Artistic activism and Agonistic Spaces*; Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods. Vol. 1, No. 2, (Summer 2007); <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html> [accessed 22/03/2016]

4 Ibid.

advocate for an approach in which theory is used to expose conflicts and provoke alternatives. For theory, in the words of Deleuze, “is by nature opposed to power.”⁵

Certain contemporary examples illustrate more radical approaches, where research is used in practice as political activism to influence policy and disrupt the status quo. Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée (Studio for Self-Managed Architecture) is a collective platform which conducts explorations, actions, and research in the city. It encourages residents to self-manage disused urban spaces, advocating for greater democracy and independence from top-down city-planning processes. These ‘micro-political’ efforts question the traditional involvement of actors in local economies, and disrupt established modes of urban governance.

In London, the group Architects for Social Housing (ASH) responds to the current threat posed to housing estate residents by regeneration projects. As a collective of volunteering multidisciplinary professionals, ASH supports communities that feel as though their interests are not being expressed by official representatives. Through protest, publications, and propaganda, they aim to initiate a cultural change in the architectural profession. Their labour is precarious by nature, and they operate on a pro-bono basis. The collective takes advantage of the free time, access to resources, and the privileges afforded to architects employed in commercial practices

(which sometimes produce the very regenerative schemes that ASH oppose).

Precarious positions

As students of history and theory, we review and engage with these different practices with some anxiety. Despite the increasing financial inaccessibility of UK higher education, and our own mounting personal debt, the university remains a relatively secure space from which we are able to contribute time and attention to shared critical ambitions. However, finding a stable position to produce critical research once outside the institution, whether it be within the compromised space of established industry, or on its precarious fringe, remains our key challenge.

5 Gilles Deleuze, “Intellectuals and Power,” 2007, p.208

Meeting in the Field

Curt Gambetta
Princeton University

Fieldwork looks outward and inward: at the unseen and foreign, or with fresh eyes at the familiar and canonized. It opens sedimented discourse and habit to the unpredictable universe of experience. At moments of disciplinary impasse and drift, experience brings into view alternative histories and new protagonists. Fieldwork's history is populated by moments of introspection: archeological documentation of classical ruins in Renaissance treatises, empirically driven surveys of architectural and natural antiquities during the Enlightenment, the integration of field reports by missionaries, merchants, and savants about "foreign cultures" into nineteenth century accounts of architecture's origins, and twentieth century concerns about the margins and ruins of modernity: vernacular architectures, industrial ruins, and "third world peripheries." Architects and historians continue to do fieldwork but are uneasy counterparts in disciplinary introspection: their roles and audiences remain distinct and increasingly divergent.

But historiography and practice meet in the field. Fieldwork leaves room for history in otherwise presentist concerns of practice, and for empirical observation of the present to shape inquiries into the past. The two crafts encounter others who also ask questions of an architectural past and present: guides, workers, interlocutors, and informants. Historiography is not sheltered from these other forms of work: in fieldwork, historiography and practice speculate together about architectural history and potential future trajectories. What roles and sites of contemporary fieldwork might these different practices share?

Fieldwork is historical. In conducting fieldwork, historians and critics counterpose theories and narratives of architectural history with first-hand observations about what is seen, felt and talked about. In doing so, its purveyors search for alternative histories and trajectories for architecture. For example, in his preparations for *A Concrete Atlantis*, Reyner Banham undertook field-based research about industrial architecture in Buffalo and the upper Midwest in order to document histories of modernism that were glossed over in the images and polemics of an earlier generation of modernist historians and architects. He traces their hydra-like trajectories in modernist publications, following their circulation from press photographs to object lessons. But Banham goes a step further, standing in the vantage point of photographs from modernist polemics and describing the ruined and abandoned landscapes he bears witness to in the 1980s.¹ In fieldwork, he retraces the real and imagined steps of an earlier history, only to mark out the trajectory of an alternative present, a new image.

*Fieldwork documents the unfinished.*² In taking account of the present, fieldwork is responsible to processes that are unfolding and indeterminate. It returns to its objects of study over considerable

spans of time, documenting moments of uncertainty and impasse in the construction and design of architecture and cities, noting a sense that things could have been or might still be different. Histories of use, for instance, describe processes of adaptation and design that are inherently open ended. Post-occupancy studies such as Philippe Boudon's study of Le Corbusier's housing project in Pessac account for modifications and changes to an original design and its modernist precepts and principles. What if attention to the unfinished shifted its focus from a sociology of use to an examination of processes of design? For instance, what if the field was the office, a terrain recently explored in Albena Yaneva's ethnography of OMA, or in Dana Cuff's earlier studies of architectural practice? Observation of practice sheds light on ideas that are left behind and moments of ethical or aesthetic frustration. What possibilities do they leave open?

Fieldwork is not just elsewhere. The location and content of the field changes constantly, but the idea that the field is located "elsewhere" is an enduring aspect of its ideology. Frequently, fieldwork establishes its area of study as a space apart from familiar spaces and accepted norms: a space out *there*, as opposed to the interior of the atelier or the office. Historically, the existence of an "outside" or "elsewhere" was made possible by epistemologies of colonialism and empire, an entanglement of knowledge and power whose lessons endure. But fieldwork's insistence on witnessing the world out there is joined by a growing sense that the world out there is no longer a space that is somehow distant

1 Hadas Steiner, "The Grain of the Image" in *Ineffably Urban: Imagining Buffalo*, ed. Miriam Paeslack (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 117-127.

2 João Biehl, "Ethnography in the Way of Theory," in *The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy*, eds. Veena Das, Michael D. Jackson, Arthur Kleinman, and Bhigurapati Singh (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 94-118.

from our own. What is distant is increasingly if virtually present and immediate. Moreover, following from an argument made by anthropologist George Marcus, the idea of an outsider/researcher who looks in on a “foreign” space is displaced by an existential sense that researcher and subject are equally “outside” of evermore complex and large-scale problems.³ Learning from Marcus’ astute observations about the changing conditions of fieldwork in anthropology, perhaps the object and field of architectural fieldwork has also changed. How might fieldwork adapt?

Fieldwork is collaborative. Fieldwork involves workers and different kinds of work, ranging from avowedly intellectual forms of expertise to mundane drudgery and intermediary actors. Seen as distributed rather than singular, knowledge production in fieldwork raises important questions about authorship, audiences, and sources of research. In many respects, fieldwork in architecture inherits a proprietary model of authorial claims to knowledge. Fieldwork in the Enlightenment was, for instance, motivated by intellectual competition and singular achievement, despite that its work was undertaken in collaboration with an array of site-based labor and local informants.⁴ The verification

of first hand experience was premium. *I saw this. I was there.* Though few if any remain motivated by authorial achievements of this order, the attachment of singular figures to wide-reaching research projects persists: think of the association drawn between Rem Koolhaas and research about Lagos, for instance. Instead, might we account for the intermediary figures and workers that underpin research projects such as this? How do translators, the designers, instrument manufacturers, site workers, and others shape a research agenda and its outcomes? Instead of disavowing the different forms of expertise and skill that contribute to fieldwork, why not imagine a more experimental, collaborative relationship to them?

3 George E. Marcus, “The Uses of Complicity in the Changing Mise-en-Scène of Anthropological Fieldwork,” *Representations*, (Summer 1997), 85-108.

4 Noah Heringman, *Sciences of Antiquity: Romantic Antiquarianism, Natural History, and Knowledge Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

No Is More

Jacob Moore

It is tempting to see architecture's asymmetries as symptomatic of the field's frictional bridging of science and the humanities. Unlike architects, doctors aren't expected to theorize their practice. Unlike architects, writers aren't asked to materialize their imaginations. Accordingly, as the editors acknowledge, "the" profession has been divided and subdivided in many ways, often precisely in order to accommodate specializations in this critical realm—a somewhat reductive formulation I've chosen out of many possibilities, ranging from "research" to "history" to "theory." Working outward from this seemingly conflicted quality within the profession, however, the asymmetries of critical practice here under analysis are clearly bound up in forces that reach well beyond it.

Historically, we might see this moment as simply an exposed point of inflection as "late" capital captures intellectual labor in our slow emergence from the so-called "post-critical." But of course, to abuse Latour and Tafuri in a manner characteristic of this point of inflection, we may have never even been critical in the first place. In large part, it is the aforementioned, over-determined division—between science and the humanities, practice and theory—that has facilitated these oversimplified classifications and marginalizations of critical practice within architecture. And it is therefore this division that now requires re-imagination. But instead of simply looking at it through the lens of architecture's own "internal" economies of labor, we must reimagine what architecture is and can be in relationship to the "external" asymmetries endemic

to an unevenly globalizing knowledge economy. Architecture houses intellectual capital. But architects are increasingly skipped over in these houses' design selection process in favor of actors without critical baggage—whether real or imagined. So it is incumbent on us to recast the relationships between architecture and capital, between inside and outside, between 'theory' and 'practice,' and regain a seat at the drafting table. But of course this is a bit of a catch-22, since it is precisely architecture's starved critical apparatuses that are the most well-positioned to actually *do* this work. So, what? We end where we began? It's a chilling *déjà vu* with plenty of revolutionary precedent.

If at all, the undoing of capital's hegemony is a script that will be written well beyond the bounds of this discipline. Though architecture can undoubtedly play a supporting role, our task is to prepare the way not as architects, but as members of something one might know as the global commons. Working backward from our catch-22, perhaps a bit of accelerationism is therefore in order: we might need asymmetrical economies of critical labor to first be a problem for *everyone* if they're ever to be a problem for no one. For my own work, which most frequently takes editorial and curatorial form, I currently have the good fortune to principally work from a university position that isn't subject to the precarity typically associated with the academy. This call to persevere, therefore, might fall on ears of those otherwise preoccupied, experiencing that much more common precarity. Arguably this is the parrhesia called for with this booklet—a

short circuit I simply feel unable to yet imagine. Therefore, as much as anything else, here I'm asking for help doing so.

One way or another, though, surely more prolonged, exposed, incisive, and aggressive criticism is better than the alternative. In my work, I make every effort to layer critically informed perspectives onto seemingly everyday objects, actions, and affects. In its proliferation, perhaps this kind of intellectual labor might continue to create new forms, reach new audiences, and permeate practice in ways heretofore unimaginable. And in doing so, critical labor in architecture might more and more bring outsiders in and push insiders out, until the boundary between traditional and critical practice is sufficiently blurred so as to remind us that the line that comprised it in the first place was, in fact, drawn. And it can therefore be redrawn, or even erased.

Deprofessionalizing
Architecture(al Theory):
The Case for Anti-Work Politics

Eric Wycoff Rogers

In his introduction to *Radical Thought in Italy*, Michael Hardt, drawing from Frederic Jameson, commented that a defining characteristic of US Left culture is that it theorizes without movements—that is, theory operates independently of practice. Standing in contrast to this, for Hardt, was the *Autonomia* movement, operating in what he calls “laboratory Italy”: a moment in the 1970’s of intense connection between theory and experimental practice on the Apennine Peninsula, wherein thinking and doing were intimately intertwined. Since then, there has been a pervasive division between theory and practice, with Left academics lacking the kind of connection to political activity that the extra-parliamentary Italian Left had. In spite of this absence, many seem to feel that architectural thought stands apart, perhaps because of its proximity to professional practice. The theory and history of architecture seems to attract thinkers who are not content to write in isolation from real, ongoing practices for whom the disciplinary field of architecture represents a true application for theory. Yet is the professionalized discipline of architecture as the object of study perhaps just a stand-in for non-existent political movements in the work of history-theory scholars? To investigate this claim’s truth value would enter into the philosophical vortex—bad strategy for a 1000 word piece (is it ever a good strategy to argue over truth?). In any case, *strategy* is precisely what is at question here. Toward this end, I’d like to return to the vibrant intellectual history that the *Autonomia* movement presents for us, precisely in order to try to find new strategic modes of doing theory and history today.

One fundamental aspect of the Autonomia's project was its intentional distance from professional work. The Autonomia movement was *not* a worker's movement. They were an *anti-work* movement. Whereas the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the existing trade unions represented the masses *as workers* first and foremost, the Autonomists sought another way—one in which their labor could “self-valorize” (*autovalorizzazione*) outside of exploitative waged relations. According to Sylvere Lotringer, liberation from work “generates mobility, nomadic work, social fluidity which in turn prepare the ground for renewed political struggles”¹, and the purpose of receding from paid work was in order to broaden the experimental, autonomous space existing outside of the market. This strategy extended to theory, too, with many of the most important intellectuals of that movement refusing to professionalize their theoretical work, holding down day jobs and engaging in mutual aid to survive, and producing important political writings in their spare time. This mode of doing theory is completely foreign to the way theory is produced in the academy today.

To be clear, the *conditions* of waged work were not uninteresting to the Autonomists. For them, being well-paid was a step toward working *less*. Valuing the labor of the worker brought that person closer to a place where they could refuse to do it, or at least do it as little as possible.

1 Sylvere Lotringer, “The Return of Politics”, *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007) pg. 10.

Importantly, non-work was not a struggle for more leisure time. As Paolo Virno explains in “Dreamers of a Successful Life”, “leisure time” is really the shift-after-the-shift in which one consumes commodities and rests for future waged productive activity.² As such, leisure itself is an aspect of a work-centric paradigm, and is entirely situated within the context of the “expanded reproduction” of capitalism. The real aspiration of reduced work, then, was self-valorization, or production for the common. Producing for oneself opened up a whole field of possible activities, independent of professionalization and commodification. Finding new ways to produce media, art, writing and intellectual work were all part of a new constellation of desire that was made possible by a social rejection of the work/leisure binary. Theorizing under these conditions, as many Autonomists did, allowed for a florescence of unique and liberated possibilities that would not have been possible from within the academy, where histories and theories were often fossilizing—neatly organizing thought and past events into archives, rather than generating contingent and empowering *tools* for the future.³

What's so striking about the Architecture Lobby is its refusal to fossilize knowledge in this way. While

2 Paolo Virno, “Dreamers of a Successful Life”, *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007) pg. 112-17.

3 The project of preventing these new, emergent values from re-entering the market through “primitive accumulation” is another set of considerations that cannot be explored here. The Autonomia theorists used the term “destructuration” to describe the strategy of protect mutually-valorized value from re-entering the market.

arising out of the academy, it strategically formulates a new basis upon which to *do* architecture. For many of us, this opens up very interesting questions about different, non-professionalized modes of architectural practice. Can we formulate and *do* urban/spatial practices that, existing outside of commodity relations, and that, therefore, do not perpetuate—as professionalized architecture seems incapable of avoiding—gentrification, displacement, “development”, and integration—in short, the expanded reproduction of capital?

Such a project would require new avenues for dreaming future possibilities for spatial practice. That is, what we need are new modes of doing theory, both inside and outside of the academy.⁴ It is possible, in fact, that experimentation with new modes of doing theory will precede experimentation

4 My recent work (is it work? I’ve refused to make it my job.) has been exploring the prospects for advancing discourse outside of the academy, particularly from within the new commune scene in San Francisco and elsewhere, where we have been using communal residences to host free lectures, discussions and collaborations. In the past year, we have hosted a full lecture series dedicated to exploring the issue of immanent urbanism (immanent-urbanisms.com), featuring lectures from prominent architectural scholars and practitioners, as well as panel presentations from a wide array of people whose work(?) uses urban space other than its designers intended. We have generally become an institutional nexus in San Francisco, connecting ideas with people eager to implement and/or live in a way that is informed by these ideas. Our collectives produce a certain degree of surplus, which we are seeking to invest(?) in impactful ways that even go beyond opening up our spaces to discussion, debate and learning. Recently, we have been working to set up a sort of ‘residency’ program, opening up residential space and sharing resources for writer-doers that we hope result in practice-connected intellectual projects and intellectually-informed practices.

with spatial practice, though both are necessary. Theorists and historians must figure out ways of producing living, breathing documents, and postulating different futures, including the requisite strategies for building these futures. This means *experimental histories*, partnerships with doers, new ways of generating *public discourse*, translating theory for wider publics, versioning intellectual works that address multiple, diverse audiences, and finding new channels of communication, that reach the margins that we ourselves proliferate.⁵ Moreover, we theorists need to think of innovative ways to fund ourselves as theorists, and how to support our friends and colleagues outside of commodifying our intellectual projects. These are tricky problems, but surely no trickier than reading Derrida.

The *doing* of these intellectual and spatial activities will require less work on the part of those who possess the relevant skills. Pragmatically, this would implicate the architecture school, as a producer of student debt, as a site of consideration, since the heavy debt load of graduates of architecture schools

5 Felix Guattari, in “The Proliferation of Margins”, explains that in contrast to the system-supporting “semi-tolerated, semi-encouraged, and co-opted protest” that “could well be an intrinsic part of the system”, “[o]ther forms of protest prove . . . to be much more dangerous to the extent that they threaten the essential relationships on which this system is based (the respect for work, for hierarchy, for State power, for the religion of consumption...)”. A certain constellation of “other types of marginalities” was, for Guattari, a fertile ground for the “molecular revolution” against the essential components of integrated global capitalism. Felix Guattari, “The Proliferation of Margins,” *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 108-111.

condemns them to a long life of work and very little else. This, in my mind, is equally important to the struggle over higher wages and better hours. In any case, these are only a few avenues upon which the Lobby, in its no-doubt crucial activities, can focus its efforts. Its success, ultimately, will rest in its ability to push beyond the limits that past labor organizations have been confronted. To succeed, the Lobby must seek to empower people to be much more than mere workers. I believe that experimental theory is indispensable to such a project. To the extent that we can *deprofessionalize* architecture, and the intellectual exploration of what is possible (theory), we will have our movement at last.

Back to Work!

Gevork Hartoonian

University of Canberra, Australia

At no point in contemporary history have the complexities involved in the production of architecture seemed as transparent as they do today. Dialectically, I should add that never before has architectural ideology operated as sophisticatedly as experienced today in the *silence* overshadowing the profound need for a historico-theoretical criticism of architecture's contemporaneity. This call to get "back to work" asks for critical reflections, research, and publications that will be effective if as a project it covers issues relating to the two by now separated realms of education and praxis. It should also consider and address architects, building industries, historians and critics, and many other groups who in one way or another contribute to the education and production of architecture.

From Filippo Brunelleschi's design for the dome of the Cathedral of Santa Maria de Fiore; to many modernists' simplistic assumption that architecture expresses its *Zeitgeist*; to Peter Eisenman's sophisticated and wilful theorization of architecture (and the reader might want to add other architects with their relevant contributions to my shortlist), today we are witnessing an increasing domination of architecture by a production and consumption system that has culminated in global capitalism. This historical phenomenon has been openly and sometimes diligently, rather than critically, unpacked, discussed in scholarly publications and in the daily newspapers of cosmopolitan cities around the world. If during the early decades of the last century technology and machine products were considered as comrades to the historical avant-garde's project of closing the schism between the abstract and

autonomous architecture of modernism and the everyday life of its citizens, by contrast now, architecture is contemplated and experienced as the ultimate commodity-image whilst sheltering the wide spectrum of the products of the present media driven consumer culture. Gone in this process of instrumentalization are those aspects of modernism—the project of social-housing, for instance—where the processes and the idea of providing affordable and decent living space for the masses (middle and lower classes) did indeed correspond to the ontological aspects of architecture; that is, constructing the conditions of life. There is a *collective* in architecture that should be re-thought in the context of a global system of mass production and consumption, digitally-disseminated images, and virtually-controlled public spheres.

Throughout history, many trades and industries have been involved in the production of architecture. Indeed, the chaos experienced at the construction site is the result of coming and going, and the replacement of one group of skilled and non-skilled labourers with another. Even though the industrialization of materials, techniques and skills has bit by bit distanced the art of building from its craft-based tradition, what is still operative in the production of architecture is the collective. In addition to its appropriation by masses, what makes film—the most *modern* artistry—a proper analogue for architecture, is the centrality of montage and tectonics to these two industries. Call it the *common*: montage in film and tectonics in architecture operate like double agents. What this means is that, what is *internal* to architecture and film is paradoxically what weaves

these two artworks into the *totality* produced by capitalism. Central to tectonics is the transgression of construction, charging the constructed form with excess; the latter a licence for architecture to enter into the domain of the prevailing culture. In this, and in the process of the preparation of the site, the transformation of material to materiality, and the embellishment of the constructed form with proper detailing, the tectonic plunges architecture further into the instrumental logic of capitalism and the prevailing culture of commodity fetishism. Such is the relationship between architecture and capitalism today: a gridlock, indeed, if we put aside the appeal to theory at work since the 1970s as a remedy for the crisis of architecture.

Trying to state the dialectical rapport between the real and its related subjectivity differently, Karl Marx suggested that humanity asks questions that can be solved. Interestingly enough, Le Corbusier wrote that the solution to a problem is implied in the question itself, if stated correctly. In the last chapter of *Towards an Architecture* (1923), the Swiss-French architect also posed the famous question, “architecture or revolution?” In retrospect, the architect’s decision to side with the art of building was a constructive choice; from his architecture of *purism* to the brutalism attributed to his later work, Le Corbusier tried to recode the *interiority* of architecture as capitalism moved from solving one set of problems, caused by its own internal contradictions, to another. To resist global capitalism at this point in history, when everything, including the logic and processes of instrumentalization, is coated with the

aesthetic of spectacle. Architects, critics, and historians should try to save the historicity of the art of building, tectonics in particular. Along this battle line, criticism should also be directed at academic institutions that, under the name of reform and the technocratic idea of transdisciplinarity, delete disciplines that are not profitable enough from their roster, or else cut history/theory courses to suit the curriculum to the demands of the technification of architecture as we enter to the dawn of digital reproducibility of the cultural.

Back to work—reimagining architecture's social role is a daunting task!

Instrumentalizing Research

Design Research or Research Design? The Value of History and Theory in Architecture

Brent Sturlaugson
University of Kentucky

“Too much time was given to lightweight assignments like research at the beginning of the semester, which didn’t leave enough time for design and production.” In this statement, submitted anonymously by an undergraduate architecture student at the conclusion of a third-year design studio, the labor of architectural history and theory is pitted against design. And in the end, as often happens in the studio setting, design not only rules but it rules with an iron fist, intolerant of its peers known as history and theory, or in this case, “research.”

In another anonymously submitted course evaluation, a fourth-year undergraduate architecture student wrote, “The encouragement of research helped my project tremendously, and by the end of the semester I felt like I was an expert on my subject.” Here, the labor of architectural history and theory is used to support design decisions. Contrary to the evaluation of the third-year student, “research,” in this instance, takes on a different character. While design still rules, it rules with a keen eye, aware of the instrumentality of its peers. These experiences, drawn from my first semester as a full-time faculty member, led me to question the role of history and theory in architecture in an environment that values design research. What is the relationship between research and design in architecture? How does architectural history and theory differ from design research?

In design studios, I value design research. At the beginning of the semester, students complete several weeks of analysis geared toward understanding the social, political, and environmental context

of the project. Beyond this, each week we discuss a selection of historical and theoretical texts intended to ground the design work in an intellectual framework. Alternatively, in history and theory seminars, I value research design. As much as we consider intellectual biographies and conceptual genealogies, we also focus on writing style, argument structure, and parallel narratives; in other words, matters of design. Like other disciplines, good research relies on good research design. However, architecture often loses sight of this premise, favoring instead the rising popularity of design research. How are the different modes of research in architecture valued? What are the implications of these different valuations?

These questions have come into focus in recent months as I struggle to find my position in the academic world. Before starting my current appointment teaching studios and seminars at a land-grant institution, I completed a degree in the history and theory of architecture. Prior to that, I worked for nearly ten years in architecture and urban design offices after receiving my professional degree in architecture, and only recently did I receive my license. A recent performance evaluation described my position in the field, saying, "His profile suggests that he envisions himself as an academic practitioner." Toggling between design and architectural history and theory, I embrace this portrayal for the fluidity it suggests between research and design. With these experiences, I approach teaching with a specific agenda attuned to the different labors implicated in architecture.

As labor, design research, unlike architectural history and theory, is easy to quantify. Its products are material and relate to a physical environment in tangible ways, however real or speculative. Arguably, the labor invested in these projects can be counted. In this respect, design research might be considered an entrepreneurial activity in which conventional forms of valuation are familiar. Architectural history and theory, on the other hand, elides such quantification. While the labor of research activities is often clear, the intellectual labor of synthesizing information could hardly be estimated. Research design, in this sense, finds fertile territory in architectural history and theory. In my own work, as an "academic practitioner," the distinction between research and design is fluid. Such fluidity between design research and research design, I suggest, might contribute to a more thorough understanding of value in architecture.

An Uncertain Limit Between History and Theory

Stefano Tornieri
University IUAV of Venice

In Italian architecture universities, the teaching of history continues to be an independent cause, since the figure of the architectural historian is well defined as being distinct from the architect. In Italy, the architects who have tried to unify the architectural project and history have spawned controversial and bizarre results (for instance, Portoghesi or Gabetti Isola). Starting from those foundations, Reyner Banham accused Italian architecture, and especially Ernesto Nathan Rogers, for pointless historicism, since Rogers defended the values and the necessity of history in modern design. Since then, Italian architects have found it difficult to detach from that kind of historic vision, and the figure of the historian has gradually assumed independence—even within the academy.

At the contemporary moment, the field of architecture continues to witness a separation between the architect and the historian. The historian purportedly knows and examines history by expanding and rebuilding the stories that reestablish an understanding of past events. On the contrary, the architect considers history an obstacle on the course toward new forms of creativity, or as a catalogue of traditional forms that need to be reconsidered or reconfigured. One reason for this separation might lay in the inability to re-think the work and the labor that the architectural historian does; until then, he struggles to find the necessities and motivations for his engaged study.

Instead, the historian in this context, living in a specifically humanistic environment, is relegated to isolation, with little impact on the world

of architectural practice or on the preservationist.¹ The history that is taught in Italian universities exclusively considers the narratives of past architecture, which is studied as a fixed scenario disconnected from contemporary conditions. This separation is vivid for another reason: in Italy, historians are often misunderstood as critics, even if they cannot understand architectural projects temporally. The impact of the labor of the historian in the field of architectural is therefore suppressed.

The historian, who is stuck in the archives and libraries reading texts, is not prone to a comparative or cross-reading of architectural works. The books of the best-known Italian architecture historians, such as Leonardo Benevolo, Francesco Dal Co, Manfredo Tafuri, or Marco Biraghi, do not consider visual analysis nor re-interpret pre-existing studies of architecture. Franco Purini, who is arguably one of the most important Italian architects, shocked the academy in 2005 by pledging to not teach history (the traditional and autonomous one, based on pure historic events) in architecture universities. Therefore, it is clear that the form of history that architects desire is the kind that can be engaged at the level of the project, and that can unify theory and history.

As architectural thinking has been gradually changing during the last decades with new

1 The architecture-preservationist and the historian are not to be confused, however. In Italy, the former is a far more valued professional (economically and socially) because he possesses a sort of “scientific knowledge” derived from the knowing about traditional architectural systems and the ability to “read” historical buildings with the aim of producing projects that are aware of and sensitive about pre-existence.

relationships between new media and the digital world, there are new potentials for theories of composition. The profligacy of the project in the notions of network, digital, new media, and environmental design seem to weaken traditional architectural form and invite new notions of composition. In the post-digital era, we’re witnessing a newly active form that reconceives the project and that works with history in order to find new starting points, allowing architects to find the base for a new mode of architectural composition. Some interesting design offices are emerging thanks to an investment in theory, including the work of Kersten Geers, David Van Severen, and Pier Vittorio Aureli. This attitude produces projects that seem to detach from the contemporary condition to position themselves in a kind of place without time—in a sort of suspended condition. In this sense, the project itself becomes a platform for investigating theories in which architecture is stimulated, overturned, and pushed to the extreme by theory.

Therefore, we are close to the end of the figure of the autonomous architectural historian in favor of the rise of a professional figure who is increasingly “hybrid.” He or she is the architect who works with history as a theoretical source that can be used to design projects or to communicate the ideas behind their works. This is one way of projectively reading history—both the history and theory of composition—as a tool for bolstering economic value and for strengthening the historian’s contemporary relevance.

Coffee Table Artefacts

Tobias Danielmeier

Otago Polytechnic

A considerable part of my work life tasks me to undertake research. I feel privileged when considering that I am paid to find out about cause and effect in architecture and design; specifically, I research how wineries work: good functional analysis leads presumably to better wineries. Yet my study—in an increasingly image-based culture of architectural practice—calls into question the context, value, and definition of architectural “research.”

When Galilee remarked “wine is sunlight held together by water,” winemaking and trading must have been much simpler than it is today. Over the years, the wine industry has matured and gradually developed into a global, highly technical business. In recent years, architecturally designed structures have become an industry hallmark that frequently serve as a backdrop to self-fulfilling, consumerist propaganda. Wine-architecture as a topic has become increasingly fashionable; nowadays almost every edition of inflight magazines covers the joyful fairy tale that is the winery.

The archetype of contemporary wine-architecture is Ricardo Bofill’s wine cellars for Château Lafitte-Rothschild. Coffee table publications focusing on tasting environments soon followed its publication.. Architects and architecture critics are not contributing to nor editing these publications, and architecture professionals appear not to be the target group, although an increasing number of Pritzker Prize medallists are adding wineries to their body of work, as a dedicated special A+U issue proves.

Winery design and publicity is often used to underpin wine industry values, that is, life-style

embellishment. Architecture's economic value for the wine industry is hence predominantly embedded in the imagery it is able to generate and not the functional exemplars. A significant number of barrel halls around the world are unsuitable for storage of wine; energy wastage due to positioning of storage tanks is a common problem. If you are considering building a winery yourself, there is not enough information to gain meaningful insights into programming, layouts, and climate conditions for the different winemaking stages and varietal wine types.

Do practicing architects have the luxury to analyse building types? What is the value of my research in effecting better design outputs? These are the questions I ask myself as a researcher. In New Zealand and Australia, "research" typically holds an economic function: research is business. Research funding here is allocated on the basis of quality and quantity of individual academic contributions and continuous publishing is an implicit requirement by tertiary institutions. Attracting external funding is relatively easy if it can be linked to advancements in the sciences and/or carries the potential to generate beneficial economic growth. This form of commodification is the norm. But while I regularly speak at industry conferences, I am not financed by the industry or subject to this monetization; I am fortunate that my research is not subject to such externalities. However, the other economic pull—cultural commodification—distorts my work.

Yet I am hopeful. Since form-giving and material application are only fractions of the true labor

of my work, I am confident that my research into performance and performativity of wineries may yet change the way they will be designed in future. New paradigms of what constitute good design and hence valuable research is an aim worth striving for.

Ambiguous Lands, Profitable Margins

Daniel Fernández Pascual
Goldsmiths University College of London

How should the ethical commitments of architectural practitioners and researchers change amid the enduring effects of what might now be considered—whether in relation to financial or environmental precarity—a kind of permanent “housing crisis”?

In September 2006, only a year after devastating Hurricane Katrina, one of the largest home insurance companies in the US changed its definition of “coastal area” from 1000 feet to one mile.¹ By extending the littoral zone over five times inland in the name of security, existing houses were moved closer to the water than they had ever been. State Farm Insurance dropped coverage of such properties, which automatically became stuck in a newly fabricated coastal strip. This post-disaster decision took advantage of the ambiguity embedded in the definition between natural and building land. It reclassified the taxonomy of space as if the houses on the waterfront had already been flooded. Furthermore, this action contested the *de jure* demarcation of the coast by implementing a different *de facto* line; a more convenient version, which pre-empted million-dollar compensations from being paid by the multinational company, if another Katrina was to strike local residents in the near future. Far from mitigating the collapse of coastal buildings through infrastructural engineering, this form of engineering reacting to insurance interests—

1 Sandra Fleishman, “Sea Change in Insurers’ Coastal Coverage,” *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2006, accessed April 19, 2016. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/29/AR2006122900626.html>

or ‘insurance-engineering’ of the coast—simply defined a zone, where inhabitants were not only at risk, but legally detached from any form of disaster relief provided by their home insurers.² At the same time, the decision to push the coastline further inland left thousands of policyholders in a new legal limbo of potential eviction and eventual loss of their mortgaged home. In the state of Alabama, State Farm Insurance decided not to renew coverage for about 2,600 policyholders.³

The economic value of those properties dropped as much as their protection coverage against disasters did. State Farm Insurance lost interest in securing houses that were *too far away* from the newly created safe ground. When insurers abandoned the coastal market, not only did they make mortgages go literally underwater, but they also invented a new definition of nature. Home insurance policies subsumed hurricane damage into wind damage and flood damage. They disconnect the effects of air from water as if they were two separate causes for insurable or uninsurable entities. The shoreline is not where the sea ends and the land begins, as Carl Schmitt long ago enunciated, nor is it the vertical threshold where land, water, and air meet. Bonnie McCay refers to the shoreline

2 The history of geo-engineering in the US started formally to be recorded in October 1950. Source: Nicholas C. Kraus (ed.), *History and Heritage of Coastal Engineering*. New York: ASCE, 1996. 514.

3 Garry Mitchell, “State Farm Won’t Renew 2,600 Policies in Alabama Beach Towns,” *Insurance Journal*, February 5, 2007, accessed April 19, 2016. <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southeast/2007/02/05/76560.htm>

as a liminal space, where the littoral becomes neither one thing nor the other, but stays transitory and permanently situated on the threshold.⁴ I would argue that the shoreline is a four-dimensional construct, ranging from the microscopic to macroeconomic scales that can serve as a tool to think of another form of production of space.

The conflict between US insurers and coastal dwellers about the precise definition of the coastline is a paradigmatic case of ambiguity: a new set of economic relations instrumentalized the demarcation of space. The liminal condition of being simultaneously part of the land and part of the sea constituted a powerful tool from which State Farm Insurance clearly benefitted. The definition of the margins of the coast depended on the profit margins of the company and vice versa. Margins, both in spatial and financial terms, are considered here as key components of ambiguity. Hence, there is a need for a conceptual framework to better understand the production of ambiguous space from the perspective of neoliberal speculation, and to detect opportunities for intervening in the making or unmaking of the built environment.

In this sense, Architectural Research is ethically accountable for understanding the implications of how building land is classified and reclassified, and how it affects the right to housing. The anthropological component of the act of building cannot be

4 Bonnie J. McCay, “The Littoral and the Liminal: Challenges to the Management of the Coastal and Marine Commons,” *Maritime Studies* 01 (2008): 7.

dissociated from its engineering side. In sum, architects building or demolishing structures, far from conducting an innocent exercise of the profession, cannot blindly legitimize inappropriate land deals and the precarization of rights. Instead, rather than learning how to follow planning policies, there is an urgency to learn from lobbies how to cheat and circumvent the law in order to apply architectural research as a form of counter-insurgency toward more humane scenarios. We are all responsible for designing our way out of the housing crisis.

The Pleasure's All Ours: Productive Trades Between Practice and Research

Adam Sharr, James Longfield,
Yasser Megahed, Kieran Connolly
Newcastle University

We're academic practitioners who have offered our expertise to clients as historians and conservation theorists. In particular, we've worked with a University client who's been evaluating a group of modernist structures that are part of its estate to make good decisions about alterations to a listed Gothic Revival building. We've brought academic knowledge to bear on our architectural judgment. In turn, our knowledge has been valued for the guiding logic it brings to projects and for providing a special credibility in negotiations with conservation authorities.

We want to reflect here on what we've gained as academics from also being practitioners. We practice through a design research consultancy named Design Office at Newcastle University in the UK. We use the fee income we get from projects to pay studentships that support fees and subsistence for PhD candidates. These doctoral students labor on the projects that the Office is hired to undertake. Work from those projects appears in their PhDs by Design, not as a literal catalogue of designs but instead by taking thematic cuts diagonally through the work. And our endeavors have been published as academic research. We will account for three research projects here that have emerged from the opportunities and frustrations of our practice.

The first research project is about valuing modernist heritage. Our University client owns a group of buildings constructed in the 1960s as part of an expansion of science in British universities. They have well-composed, if plain, façades characterized by strips of glazing and brown brick, and a subtle

layering of elements. Internally, they were built with simple finishes: fairfaced blockwork and exposed concrete structure with veneered solid-core doors and concrete or carpeted floors. Piecemeal adaptations have resulted in the painting of most surfaces and the introduction of suspended ceiling systems and surface-mounted plastic trunking. Neither the original structures nor their altered form fit the University's self-image. Asked to refurbish two foyers, our first proposal—to return to the original finishes—was rejected. Our second proposal, to use granite in place of concrete and oak in place of veneer, met with approval, the materials invoking ideas of quality and long history. Our detailing involved wrapping columns with oak strips—quoting from Aalto's wrapped columns which were themselves a quotation of Classical fluting—and a cabinet whose proportions were drawn from Corbusier's Unité in Marseilles. The original buildings were dismissible, it seemed to us, because of their 1960s values that appeared to reject history in favor of what was then imagined as a modern technological future. To ensure the contemporary acceptance of these buildings, we retrofitted them with a history—first, with materials suggesting longevity and second, by equipping the foyers with details referring to architectural history (specifically the history of modernism)—permitting modernism to become a valid subject of heritage.

The second research project emerged from briefing, progress, and 'VE' ('Value Engineering') meetings held with our institutional client. The internal project manager they allocated to our projects

was trained as a telephone engineer, a self-styled "practical man" with little patience for design. His boss, an architect who moved into estate management, also cultivated an impatience with visual matters. They also appointed a multinational project management firm to oversee design development. These actors preferred the discourse of efficient, profitable, and timely delivery, the value of process over product. Resulting discussions made us acutely conscious not just of their values but also our own: our design priorities, the legacies of our architectural training, and our rhetorical tropes. Our differences have played out around attitudes to technology, technological cultures, and specifically the 'techno-rational' culture where the priorities of development finance appear logically connected with systems thinking and management theory. An initial mapping of these attitudes became developed into the plan of a hypothetical city—"Practiceopolis"—which has since been inhabited with buildings and characters who embody the values we've encountered. A graphic novel is now in production, relocating our meetings to Practiceopolis and dramatizing them as conflicts between individuals and cultures. The result will caricature the values at work, rendering them explicit rather than implicit, helping us to work them through.

Our institutional client also yielded our third research. They have a standard specification for small projects in their estate. This includes a standard blue carpet tile, patterned ceiling tile, fluorescent batten fitting, vanilla paint, and plastic trunking. Chosen for maintenance purposes, because the relevant suppliers have pledged to keep these products in production,

we have fought against the extension of this standard specification to our own projects, primarily because of their visual qualities. This encouraged us to speculate about the wide range of default processes at work in architectural production. Not just in terms of BIM libraries and specification writing software linked to product literature, but specifically default as an attitude which produces space—desirable among project managers but anathema to architects. The research includes a cultural history of suspended ceiling systems using filed patents to review their development. It has also resulted in a re-working of Superstudio's famous collage "Life, Supersurface," removing its grid extending to infinity from the desert floor and retrofitting it instead as a suspended ceiling. A future aim is to design and construct a room experimenting with what might happen if the architect tries completely to sublimate their agency to defaults.

In five years of practice as Design Office, we've discovered that our distinctive expertise as academic practitioners has commercial value. Our clients have benefitted from the application of our knowledge. But we feel that we have benefitted more from the exchanges. As architects and researchers—from our luxurious position simultaneously inside and outside professional practice—we've been required to catch our own complacencies. We've been provoked by testing our ideas in the context of people who, if not always hostile to them, are often ambivalent. And the pleasure has been all ours.

Values of History and Theory

How to Redefine Architectural Value

Manuel Shvartzberg
Columbia University

Architectural history and theory since the nineteenth century has served two main purposes: to supply students with typological models from which they can pick and choose for their designs, and to enshrine the practice of architecture within a cultural legacy putatively distinct and metaphysically superior from that of “building,” thus elevating (usually white and male) architects above engineers, technicians, builders, construction workers, clients, and users.

In this scheme the value of architecture as a discipline is either purely instrumental and thus reproductive of existing definitions and actors (*types*), or purely declarative and performative, asserting its dominance in terms of de facto power relations or symbolic social capital—which, according to received wisdom, cannot be quantified as it resides in the metaphysical plane of cultural discourse.

Both these modes reinforce existing values instead of articulating new propositions. Typology reproduces values internally, generating disciplinary consensus and thus foreclosing what architecture is and can be; cultural discourse reproduces values externally, stabilizing its own social position vis-à-vis competing actors and disciplines.

Acting under this dualistic remit, the practice of history and theory misses the chance to articulate the various complex ways architecture can be a value-producing mechanism for society. The existing practice not only black-boxes what architects actually do, such as how they collaborate with others or how they orchestrate resources, but it diffuses the possibility to construct other kinds of architectural devices

constitutive of other values—social, environmental, political, sexual, economic, etc.

The post-avant-garde response to this state of affairs within architectural history and theory has been a double retreat: either to an empty celebration of hegemony (the “post-critical”) or toward positions of purely negative critique (hasn’t gone so well either). Another response has been the relentless pursuit of resistance through modes of activism that interface with architecture. While the latter will always be important and necessary, we can and should invent new models of historical-theoretical inquiry that open paths for and beyond the firewalls of resistance. We need new weapons to re-draw the line between action and reaction, to give us a better fighting chance.

To do so, the key is not to conceive of architectural history and theory as the mere recounting of the discipline’s previously self-ascribed achievements and values, but to open up the highly contentious and constructed history and theory of “value” itself. Value is an anthropological category—not an objective one—and is mediated by architecture just as much as any other techno-cultural practice.

In other words, value only exists in as much as it is theorized, re-enacted, invoked, performed, or exploited—which means our classrooms are effectively a crucial workshop for its fabrication, and extraction. Pursuing this approach would entail theorizing and historicizing the value-producing elements that constitute architecture, from its modes of representation and dissemination to its various mechanisms of coordination, collaboration,

and control; as well as the various impacts it has on and as part of capitalism. It means engaging with the ways architectural value is mined by non-architects, from builders to bankers, from children to cats, from drones to algorithms. It means conceptualizing labor beyond static typological significations (architect, builder, engineer, etc) to look at it more closely as a heterogeneous chain of skills, practices, and operations relating virtual design models, late-nights at the office, a building site’s materials, financial spreadsheets, love affairs, the requirements of procrastination, contractual arrangements, and the political-economic frameworks of urban development, among other things.

In this speculative approach, value is more closely followed and articulated as a historical and theoretical category with real effects in the world. Mapping it carefully as a heterogeneous cause and effect would give our students much sharper tools for agency than vague notions of ‘private profit’ or ‘public good’. It is not that these vague notions don’t also have real effects in the world, but it is our job to flesh them out, give them specificity and consistency, a history, turn them into more effective weapons.

This re-opens the terrain of struggle, but in another key. The real costs of architecture—environmental, social, economic, etc—can only be redressed by describing and calculating them effectively and posing alternative values to steer the architectural apparatus in another direction. Mapping value is about creating more penetrating and precise accounts of our profession in order to recognize the deep inequalities and inefficiencies in the AEC

industry as a whole, in order to change it. It means recognizing processes of class, race, gender, and age in perpetuating political and economic oppressions in the industry, whereby value structurally accrues in asymmetric and unjust ways. It also means engaging and transforming the technical-managerial practices that reproduce these inequalities every day.

These questions are about challenging both the means and the ends of our industry. They cannot be separated from cultural-theoretical questions about value, historical questions about privilege, oppression, and exploitation, and technical questions about how these systems actually work in our everyday lives. As such, the link between history, theory, and practice is one of the most important aspects determining our status quo, and it needs to be revised.

We must emancipate architectural value from the simplistic metrics of capital—we have so much more to offer.

Time after Time

Norihiko Tsuneishi
Columbia University

March 2011, a few days after the earthquake struck the Tōhoku region in Japan and a huge tsunami swallowed the lives of thousands and crippled the nuclear power plant, I was talking to Prof. U from Japan on a street in NYC. Lamenting my powerlessness as a naïve PhD student of architectural history to assist the disaster-stricken region, I made excuse after excuse to mask my incompetence—or simply, laziness—for not taking any action. Perhaps detecting this guilt, the professor offered me his words of wisdom, which was something along the lines of: “A disaster like this creates synchronic conditions. As intellectual laborers, let’s critically assess what kind of temporalities emerge from now on.” I didn’t know what he exactly meant then, to be honest, but his words gained more currency as time passed, and began making me think about how architecture, or its production, dovetails with the temporalization process. Although far from being a critical reflection, what follows is my attempt to understand architectural time, so to speak, seen through the moment of crisis.

The choice of the word “synchronic” was significant. Prof. U was attentive not to use words such as “primitive” and “archaic,” the terms that are often used by many, including architects, to characterize post-disaster conditions. Conjuring up static, fossilized, and timeless states, those familiar words distance, however unconsciously, the affected areas. It is as if those locales and their respective moments of crisis existed elsewhere—devoid of historical time—where, conveniently, anything could be built by anyone anytime; a true “primitive hut” would finally be possible, only *there*. In contrast, the

word synchronic suggests that those areas, despite the deadly aftermath, are always present, remaining very much part of the historical time that the world, greatly influenced by a capitalist economy, shares. What is more, the word synchronic in turn highlights the temporal unevenness built into the “normal” world, which manages to establish binaries that suggest a peculiar time-lag, such as *advanced* and *backward*, *developed* and *developing*, or the still enduring pair *city* and *country*, as if these were accepted socio-economic categories. Sustaining this hegemonic axis of time are, amongst others, various means of production, channels of distribution, networks of communication, techniques of governance. The catastrophe paralyzes these structures of the political-economic regime and, instead of returning us to the primitive origin, materially levels the temporal unevenness. This leveling results in revealing the synchronic conditions of not only the affected areas but also other seemingly distant locales, the conditions that had always been there but were hidden under the guise of normalcy.

Architecturally, this synchronicity was strongly felt when I was in Tokyo a month after the Tōhoku disaster. Strolling through a crowded station, I realized that many escalators were shut down and one third or more of the lights were turned off, with signs indicating that there was electricity saving due to the power shortage caused by the nuclear meltdown. These scenes externalized how Tokyo, with a population of just over 13 million, had hitherto relied on the power generated by the remote nuclear plant surrounded by sea and farmlands in a

town with the population of barely one thousand. By the same token, the life of the small town and its vicinity had been economically aided by government subsidies for hosting the nuclear power plant. This economic interdependence between the two locales had always been there but had been concealed behind a city/country divide. The earthquake shook this concealment. Disrupting the existing rhythm and pattern of life—urban or rural—the crippled nuclear plant on one end and the immobile escalators on the other marked the shared moment—in the form of crisis—as one of numerous synchronicities. After all, the “city and country” had always been a schizophrenic outcome of the very same hegemonic body.

Instead of another version of “aid-architecture,” we need a different critical engagement with architectural temporalizations. How does architecture reproduce the uneven temporalities, or, if at all possible, how could it reconfigure the unevenness? Characterizing the recovery efforts in affected areas of the Tōhoku region as “primordial” or “primitive,” as architects like Toyo Ito did, is a symptom of hegemonic belief in the unevenness, regardless of sincere humanitarian sentiments. Indeed, the disaster temporalization begins at the architectural offices with the labour time of their staff—many unpaid student interns and most drawing up their master’s ideas—disengaged from the principal’s own intimate, creative temporal expenditure. Or, if the project is “participatory,” it would produce another kind of labour time by the local constituents, constructing and living out the architects’ ideas. How and with what are those labour times exchanged, when those

“ideas” were materialized gratis and without recognition, the fame going only to the master? Here, there seems to be asymmetrical exchanges wherein certain times are devalued, others hyper-valued. These particular evaluations of labour-times participate in the making of the hegemonic unevenness of architectural productions: the unevenness that keeps producing, for instance, low-wage workers who are clearing up the aftermath of the disaster at the nuclear plant in exchange of their life at this very moment.

Today, in March 2016, a substantial amount of the architectural labour-time in Japan is being spent (and hopefully not wasted) on the Tokyo Summer Olympic 2020; at the same time, many earthquake-affected regions still require structural changes and the crippled nuclear plants keep generating pollution. The synchrony I experienced five years ago is vanishing, replaced by unevenness, more drastic than ever, between the hedonistic growth of the re-electrified city and the imminent death of the nuclear country town. As we all know by now from the fiasco of the Olympic Stadium, architecture is not innocent from this particular temporal binary. We cannot recreate the synchronic conditions, but a critique of architectural time is needed.

Is this provocation another version of my excuse for not taking any actions to this date? Perhaps. This time around, nevertheless, I put it into written words; my intellectual labour might one day synchronize my words and actions.

Nationalism as Price Tag? The Chronic History of Chinese Architecture

Yang Yang,
University of California, Los Angeles

The connection between history and practice in architecture is rarely a direct one. Perhaps this is the reason why NCARB's Architectural Registration Exam in the US dropped the questions of history and theory in 1978. According to NCARB's mission statement, the canceled history section was due to history being viewed as "unrelated and extraneous" knowledge for the day-to-day practitioner—assuming it would be taught and tested in school. Interestingly enough, the Architectural Society of China (ASC) developed China's Registered Architects Examination (RAE) in 1994 based on the NCARB earlier exam and registration procedures. In the Architectural Design Knowledge section of China's RAE, the questions cover both history of Chinese architecture and history of Western architecture from ancient times to the contemporary period. According to the exam outline, the history section tests the examinees' knowledge of key features and technological achievement in various stages of architectural development, as well as theories and works of the representative figures of modern architecture. Compared to other forms of knowledge tested in the exam—i.e., architectural regulations, material properties, and structural mechanics—history is understood to be *not* the tool for contemporary architectural practice, especially since the history of ancient Chinese wooden architecture has lost its validity confronting the rapid urbanization. So why does the architectural profession in China still consider history as a necessary body of knowledge for practitioners?

Let us look into some examination questions from an RAE test review study guide. Q1. What was

the tremendous architectural change that happened during the Song dynasty? A. The replacement of *Li-Fang* (block) system by *Jie-Shi* (street-market) system. The instruction explains, “The emerging commerce and handicraft at that period had fundamental impacts on the structure and layout of the city, which called for transformations in the volume and arrangement of buildings.” Q2. Which was the first experiment of “Chinese inherent form”? A. The design of Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s Mausoleum in 1925 by Chinese architect Lu Xianzhi, because “prior to Lu’s creative fusion of the configuration of Chinese Emperors’ Mausoleums and the rolling landscape in Nanjing, recurrences of Chinese form in modern times were mostly in foreign architects’ imitation works.” Q3. What was the thesis of “Liang-Chen’s Proposal of Beijing” in 1950? A. To build a new administrative district outside the historic city center. The note elaborates that the national capital planning proposed by progressive architects represented by Liang Sichen and Chen Zhanxiang was against the Soviet experts’ plan, which insisted on building upon the old town. The questions in China’s RAE imply the thick and entangled historical contexts of architecture: lifestyles, technological advancement, political hierarchy (represented by components such as *dougong* in official architecture), customs and local conditions (represented by multiple types of vernacular architecture), as well as influential socio-political events. Still, the key question is, why is the architect required to know these histories to be licensed to design a contemporary structure in China?

The answer: the study of history was a cultural product of modernization—a modernization that coercively began from a colonial past and made the nationalist sentiment a recurring difficulty in Chinese intellectuals’ cultural practice. Introducing Western methodologies such as archeology, fieldwork, anthropology, and historical analysis to Sinological studies, early Chinese architectural historians (represented by Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen who had overseas study experience) collated the genealogy of traditional Chinese architectural history into specific historical subjects—tectonics, typology, preservation, *Feng Shui*, biographies of master craftsmen, etc. In an article “Why Study Chinese Architecture?” Liang wrote, “When architects already equipped with scientific technology further gain knowledge and taste of our own nation, their creativity will be strengthened without knowing so, wherein lies the significance of studying Chinese architecture.”

Combining the heritage of traditional architecture with modern materials and technologies also became a perpetual desire of practicing architects in China and the introduction of history questions in China’s RAE indicates the desire for responding to history in a contemporary context. Particularly at the start of the 1990s when China was experiencing its second modernization after the Reform and Opening-up, this attempt to rebuild a connection with traditional architecture demonstrates the post-colonial anxiety of being modern and Chinese. In this sense, history studies are not just about historical knowledge but also about a sentiment of the

past, the experience of the journey about how we came into being, and the perdurance of a culture in its social change.

Architectural historians' work is twofold. On the one hand, it investigates archetypes and cultural origins that are, yet indemonstrably, illuminating for practitioners. As such, its value is imponderable because it is not in the interest of capitalism to account for it. On the other hand, architectural history is autonomously valued as an intellectual practice that confers power and politics. History is never about usefulness. Architectural historiography cannot provide concrete answers to the most pressing problems nor can it predict our future. However, the profound study of the architectural history of a nation can help inspect the culprit of the collective amnesia and restore the continuity and sympathy of its citizens' spatial experience.

In contemporary China, architects are unable to stay aloof from the grand discourse of nationalism. Lian Greenfeld, in her book *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth*, examined nationalism as the origin of Western capitalism. She argues that the capitalist societies in Europe, US, and Japan are all founded on their own nationalist spirit and desire for economic growth. Nationalism still dominates the social life in China and supports the cultural construction of the "Chinese dream" of state capitalism. If it is problematic for the architectural historian to find a position in capitalist circulation, if architectural history has to justify its existence in a professional

license exam, if we have to put a price tag on the historians' labor, then nationalism may help evaluate its "use" value.

Histories of Architecture for Whom or What?

Andrew Herscher
University of Michigan

“Critique ... should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in processes of conflict and confrontation, *essays in refusal*.”
—Michel Foucault, “Questions of Method”

“When you find a good fight, you get in it.”
—Monica Lewis-Patrick, co-founder of We the People of Detroit, citing Detroit Mayor Coleman Young

I recently received an invitation to participate on a panel at a conference entitled “Ecojustice and Activism.”¹ I was invited as a member of the We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective—a collaboration between community activists, community members, academics, artists, and designers doing research for use in a wide range of settings, from community organizing to legal and legislative work. Our collective has been particularly involved in documenting the social consequences of austerity policies in Detroit, focusing in particular on the racially uneven impact of those policies. In the invitation I received, I was specifically asked to respond to these questions: “How are you using institutional leverage as a way to produce knowledge for activist purposes, as a way to enable activist’s intervention in the terms necessitated by the activism (and not by the academy)? In other words, how do you see your role as an academic in solidarity with activist organizing?”

What struck me about these good questions was the way in which they presumed a division

1 The conference, which was thought-provoking, inspiring, and moving in equal measure, was hosted by the College of Education at Eastern Michigan University: <http://ecojusticeconference.weebly.com/>.

between the academy and activism—a division that the activist-academic or academic-activist could then negotiate, overcome, or strategically leverage. It's not that I think this division doesn't exist—of course it does. But it seems to me that this division exists in an almost entirely asymmetrical form. That is, the presumed division between academia and activism almost always seems to be apparent on only one of its sides, the side where academia looks across a divide it imagines between itself and activism and apprehends activism, with either fascination or disdain, as something different, something other.

In the increasingly corporatized university of neoliberalism, fascination seems a much more common response to activism than disdain—a fascination with spaces and practices exterior to, different from, and apparently more politically engaged than the spaces and practices contained within and recognized by the corporate university. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten discuss the dysfunctionality of that university as a site for collective political agency: “The very way in which academics think of themselves as workers interferes with effective political agency predicated on collective self-recognition and representation... Academic workers, as makers of worldly representations, also produce themselves as a productive force that is “usable in common” only in that the discourse of disciplinary knowledge is truly a social product. But typically that product appears under the sign of an individual author ... as if knowledge and the discursive instruments that

create it could be held in the academic's hand, as so many objects.”² Symbolic or actual identification with activism allows academics to supplement their ineffective political agency, but at the cost of deferring inquiry into why this agency requires supplementation in the first place.

The situation that led to the formation of the We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective was one in which activists looked at the academy but did not look across a border at a different, other world; instead, those activists saw a place occupied by potential or even actual fellow-travelers who could productively contribute to movement-based politics. In other words, while academics often regard activists as a different species—a regard that often produces possibilities for the supplementation of academic political agency through what Ingrid Hoofd calls “a hallucination of radical otherness for the Western intellectual”—in my experience activists often regard academics as allies who can effectively produce useful knowledge.³ Might the inability of academics to see themselves as activists see them be an outcome of what Gayatri Spivak calls the “sanctioned ignorance of the theoretical

2 Stefano Harney and Frederick Moten, “Doing Academic Work,” in *Chalk Lines: The Politics of Work in the Managed University*, ed. Randy Martin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 157.

3 Ingrid M. Hoofd, “The Accelerated University: Activist-Academic Alliances and the Simulation of Thought,” *Ephemera* 10:1 (2010). Hoofd critiques the way in which “the illusory status of radical alterity assigned to various forms of ‘non-Western’ or alter-globalist activist groups by these new university projects, masks these groups’ relative alterity in service of the speed-elite.”

elite”—an ignorance that would allow academics to translate their conflicted political agency into a far more tolerable or even enjoyable form of powerlessness?⁴

Perhaps more than many other academics, historians of “architecture”—whatever this over-determined word is enlisted to mean—seem to typically proceed in either blissful or agonized disregard of activist interpellations. I think that this might be because of the way in which the architectural historian’s professional identity seems to ricochet between commitments to the architectural profession and commitments to the academy, the one typically posed as the negation of or solution to the predicaments of the other. These ricochets yield a disciplinary itinerary often structured by professional anti-politics and the symbolic politics of academic positioning. Precluded or at least unprivileged in both cases is issue-based research in response to the imperatives of on-the-ground movements for political transformation and social change.

But, just like other academics, architectural historians have a choice. Do they want to see themselves as the academy sees them or as activism sees them? Do they want to recognize, support, and credit only peer-reviewed research, scholarly publications, communities formed by disciplines, public engagement in exhibitions and lectures, and knowledge that can be claimed as property by its authors? Or do they also want to recognize, support,

and credit militant research, the media of protest and resistance, communities formed by solidarities, public engagement through movement-based activism, and knowledge that wants to be free?

These questions do not line up along humanist distinctions between theory and practice or between thinking and doing and they do not presume that “academic” theory and thinking are in subordinate relationships to “activist” practice and doing. Neither are these questions prompts towards the urgent and immediate actions that Jacques Derrida has characterized as paradoxical accelerations of the very crises to which these actions are taken as responses.⁵ Instead, these questions might simply serve to direct attention to whom or what knowledge production—whether of architecture or anything else—finally serves.

4 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), x.

5 Jacques Derrida, “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)” trans. Catherine Porter and Philip Lewis, *Diacritics* 14:2 (1984).

Felipe Aravena is an architect and is currently enrolled in the MA in Architectural History Programme at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Pier Vittorio Aureli is Diploma Unit Master at the Architectural Association, the Davenport Visiting Professor at Yale School of Architecture, and the founder of Dogma.

Daniel Barber is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is also the Associate Chair of the Department of Architecture.

Christopher Barker is a PhD Candidate in the History and Theory of Architecture, Columbia University.

Kadambari Baxi is a Professor of Professional Practice for Barnard + Columbia Architecture at Barnard College and Columbia University, a founding member of *Who Builds Your Architecture?*, and has an architecture practice, Kadambari Baxi.

Nick Beech is a Lecturer in the History of London at Queen Mary University of London.

Joaquín Díez Canedo is an architect and is currently enrolled in the MA in Architectural History Programme at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Jordan Carver is a PhD Candidate in American Studies at New York University, a co-organizer of *Who Builds Your Architecture?*, and an editor of *The Avery Review*.

Aaron Cayer is a PhD Candidate in Architecture at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Lecturer of Architecture History and Theory at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Daniel Cobb is a PhD Student in Architecture History, Theory, and Criticism at MIT.

Kieran Connolly is an Associates of Design Office and PhD Candidates at Newcastle University, UK.

Joe Crowdy (UK) is currently a student in the MA Architectural History program at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Tobias Danielmeier is Academic Leader at Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand.

Peggy Deamer is the founder of The Architecture Lobby and Professor of Architecture at Yale University.

Laura Diamond Dixit is a PhD Candidate in Architecture History and Theory at Columbia University, is a co-organizer of *Who Builds Your Architecture?*, and a co-founder of the architectural collaborative *Kamara Projects*.

Kirti Durelle (FR) is currently a student in the MA Architectural History program at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Eva Hagberg Fisher is a PhD Candidate in Visual and Narrative Culture at the University of California, Berkeley and the author of hundreds of paid articles about architecture.

Gary Fox is a PhD student in Architecture History at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Fabrizio Gallanti is the founding partner of FIG Projects in Montréal, Canada.

Curt Gambetta is a PhD student in Architecture at Princeton University.

Anna Goodman recently completed her PhD in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and she is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Portland State University.

James Graham is the Director of Publications and a PhD Candidate at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation.

Gevork Hartoonian is Professor of the History and Theory of Architecture at the University of Canberra, Australia.

Andrew Herscher is an Associate Professor at the University of Michigan and member of the We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective.

Mark Jarzombek is Professor of the History and Theory of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Tahl Kaminer is Lecturer in Architectural Design and Theory at the University of Edinburgh.

Hanan Kataw (JO) is currently a student in the MA Architectural History program at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Anne Kockelkorn is a PhD student in Architecture at ETH Zurich.

Sben Korsh recently completed a MS in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley and is beginning a MPhil at the University of Hong Kong.

Christos Kritikos (GR) is currently a student in the MA Architectural History program at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Nadir Lahiji is the author of the most recent book entitled *Adventures With the Theory of the Baroque and French Philosophy* (Bloomsbury, 2016).

James Longfield is an Associate of Design Office and PhD Candidates at Newcastle University, UK.

Yasser Megahed is an Associate of Design Office and PhD Candidates at Newcastle University, UK.

Jacob Moore is a critic, curator, and editor in architecture. For more information, see jacobrmoore.com.

Joan Ockman is Distinguished Senior Fellow at University of Pennsylvania School of Design and Visiting Professor at Cooper Union School of Architecture.

Daniel Fernández Pascual is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths University of London.

Eric Peterson is a PhD student in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley.

Joanne Preston (UK) is currently a student in the MA Architectural History program at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Peg Rawes is Programme Director of the Masters in Architectural History at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Eric Wycoff Rogers is a writer and urban strategist, a core member of the Embassy Network, the curator of the Immanent Urbanism(s) series, the founder of the Wooster Square co-op, and a founding steward of the 'urban hacking' group Spontaneum.

Andreas Rumpfhuber is a licensed architect and theoretician at EXPANDED DESIGN in Vienna, Austria.

Susanne Schindler is an architect and writer focused on the intersection of policy and design in housing.

Jack Self is curator of the 2016 British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and Director of the REAL Foundation.

Adam Sharr is Professor of Architecture at Newcastle University, UK.

Manuel Shvartzberg is a PhD candidate in architectural history & theory and graduate fellow at the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University.

Brent Sturlaugson is a Lecturer in the College of Design at the University of Kentucky.

Meredith TenHoor is an Associate Professor at Pratt Institute and the editor of *Aggregate*.

Stefano Tornieri is a Lecturer of Architecture at the Università Iuav di Venezia.

Alessandro Toti is an architect and is currently enrolled in the MA in Architectural History Programme at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

Norihiko Tsuneishi is a PhD Candidate in Architecture History and Theory at Columbia University.

Tijana Vujosevic is Assistant Professor at the University of Western Australia.

Mabel O. Wilson is the Nancy and George E. Rupp Professor at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University, a founding member of *Who Builds Your Architecture?*, and has a transdisciplinary practice, Studio &.

Yang Yang is a PhD Candidate in Architecture at UCLA.

Asymmetric Labors:
The Economy of Architecture
in Theory and Practice

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Editors:
Aaron Cayer, Peggy Deamer, Sben Korsh,
Eric Peterson, Manuel Shvartzberg

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The scenes are familiar ones: the scribe of the gallery plaque, the bespeckled figure hurrying from the archive to the classroom, the designer reluctantly forced to write to make her tenure case, the turtlenecked critic summoned to embellish the panel at a biennale. As in many professions, the architectural historian or theorist comes in many forms. Unlike most professions, though, the figure must be made to explain herself. Not at all wed to art historical methodologies, nor interested in drawing connections between his intellectual project and built offerings, all the while refusing to identify as either a scientist or humanist. Who is this person? What is their work?

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