

The  
Values of  
Architecture

&

The  
Economy  
of Culture

June 12-14, 2019

The University Of Queensland  
Brisbane City Campus  
293 Queen St  
Brisbane City QLD 4000



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA



*The Values of Architecture and the Economy of Culture Conference* is a part of the research project “Is Architecture Art? A history of concepts, categories and recent practices,” funded by the Australian Research Council and The University of Queensland’s Architecture Theory Criticism History Research Centre (ATCH), in partnership with Ghent University.

<https://isarchitectureart.com/>

Day 1      Wednesday June 12, 2019

5.00 - 6.00 PM      *Drinks and Canapes*  
Book launch: *Trading between Architecture and Art*

6.00 - 7.30 PM      Keynote by Andrea Phillips

# Day 2

# Thursday June 13, 2019

Session 1 Chair: Cameron Bruhn	10.30 - 11.15 AM	John Macarthur and Susan Holden Introduction Paper
	11.15 - 11.35 AM	Ashley Paine The Price is Wright: Re-thinking Value in the Fragments of Frank Lloyd Wright's Architecture
	11.35 - 11.55 AM	Jordan Kauffman Architectural Representations, the Art Market, and Architecture's History
	11.55 - 12.15 PM	Antony Moulis Le Corbusier on Exhibit: Architectural Works in the Cultural Economy of Art
	12.15 - 12.55 PM	Discussion
	12.55 - 2.00 PM	<i>Lunch</i>
Session 2 Chair: Angela Goddard	2.00 - 2.20 PM	Susan Holden and Rosemary Willink Value on Display: Robin Hood Gardens and the Curation of Architecture in the Cultural Economy
	2.20 - 2.40 PM	Bart Decroos and Lara Schrijver "Value comes from Outside": The Social Object of KANAL-Centre Pompidou
	2.40 - 3.00 PM	Wouter Davidts and Anton Pereira Rodriguez Architecture and the Debasing of an Art Collection: O.M.A. Rem Koolhaas and the New Collection Presentation at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam
	3.00 - 3.40 PM	Discussion
Session 3 Chair: Sandra Kaji-O'Grady	3.40 - 3.55 PM	<i>Afternoon Tea</i>
	3.55 - 4.15 PM	Ari Seligmann Antagonistic Coexistence of Values in the Machinations of a Metabolist Monument
	4.15 - 4.35 PM	Kirsty Volz and Alex Brown Heritage and Activism in the Post-Political City: Sydney's Sirius Building
	4.35 - 5.00 PM	Discussion
	5.00 - 6.00 PM	<i>Drinks and Canapes</i>
	6.00 - 7.30 PM	Keynote by Daniel M. Abramson

# Day 3

# Friday June 14, 2019

Session 4 Chair: Andrea Phillips	10.30 - 10.50 AM	Elke Couchez Play Therapy or Montessori Terror?: Valuing Ignorance in Post-War Architecture Education
	10.50 - 11.10 AM	John Macarthur and Deborah van der Plaats Wireless Architecture: Robert Cummings' Early Radio Broadcasts
	11.10 - 11.30 AM	Hamish Lonergan Meme, Memory or Critic: Explaining the Popularity of Brutalism and Post-Modernism on Social Media
	11.30 - 12.10 AM	Discussion
	12.10 - 1.30 PM	<i>Lunch</i>
Session 5 Chair: Tom O'Regan	1.30 - 1.50 PM	Adrian Athique and Douglas Hill The Spatial Politics of the Multiplex Cinema in India
	1.50 - 2.10 PM	Kate Brehme The City as a Site of Cultural-Economic Transaction through the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art
	2.10 - 2.30 PM	Discussion
	2.30 - 3.00 PM	<i>Afternoon Tea</i>
Session 6 Chair: Roland Bleiker	3.00 - 3.20 PM	Courtney R. Thompson Architectural Deception and the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montréal
	3.20 - 3.40 PM	Naomi Stead and Maryam Gusheh Architecture and Civic Agency: Materialising Governance in the City of Sydney 'City Projects'
	3.40 - 4.00 PM	Discussion
	4.00 - 4.30 PM	<i>Final Remarks</i>



# Keynotes

---

## Neverminding

Andrea Phillips

The question ‘is architecture art?’ is underscored by an assumed categorical division supported by social constructions of value; constructions that are shaped enthusiastically and ideologically through capitalist economics. In this presentation I will attempt to pick apart the historicity of value in an Anglo-centric capitalised context, drawing attention to the relatability of value formation and form categorisation as intertwined and indispensable tools in the securitisation of power, as well as the fact of other value-forms that exist outside of ‘architecture’ and ‘art’. Using the humble form of the British Community Arts Centre and its transformation over the post-war period into an art- and architecture value creator par excellence, I will argue for the reframing of value through re-valuation, trans-valuation and even de-valuation within the prism of affective, reputational and fiscal economic mechanisms. At one side to all this, hovering in many violently disenfranchised forms, are the modes of living that start from a different place; where value is an inessential character, or, at least, one that forms part of a peaceful ecology of neverminding.

**Andrea Phillips** is BALTIC Professor and Director of BxNU Research Institute, Northumbria University & BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. Andrea lectures and writes about the economic and social construction of public value within contemporary art, the manipulation of forms of participation and the potential of forms of political, architectural and social reorganization within artistic and curatorial culture.

Her forthcoming book *Contemporary Art and the Production of Inequality* will bring together discussions on the politics of public administration and management with recent analyses of arts institutions, alongside debates on value (public and private) informed by research into the political functions of the art market and personal experience of organizing, lobbying, and governing contemporary arts institutions, arts education institutions, and working directly with artists.

# Obsolescence

Daniel M. Abramson

Where does the idea come from that architecture can become obsolete, suddenly lose its value and utility, and so become expendable in a short period of time? This talk traces the origins of the idea of architectural obsolescence to early-twentieth-century American financial district demolitions, tax policies, and decaying cities. In mid-century, many architects worldwide responded to obsolescence positively by embracing ephemerality and short-life buildings. Others, however, sought to revalue the obsolete and reinstate permanence, for example, through an invigorated preservationism, concrete brutalism, and ecological design. The idea of obsolescence thus gave way in the 1970s to sustainability, today's dominant paradigm for conceptualizing and managing change in the built environment, conserving rather than expending existing resources.

**Daniel M. Abramson** is professor of architectural history and director of architectural studies at Boston University. His research focuses upon matters of economics, society, and architecture from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. He is the author of three monographs, most recently *Obsolescence: An Architectural History*, as well as being co-editor of *Governing By Design: Architecture, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century* with the Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative, of which he is also a founding director. Current work includes projects on the American welfare state, and on evidence and narrative in architectural history.



# Session 1

---

**Cameron Bruhn**

Session Chair

# The Price is Wright: Re-thinking Value in the Fragments of Frank Lloyd Wright's Architecture

Ashley Paine

When Frank Lloyd Wright died in a Phoenix hospital in 1959, his body was taken back to his hometown of Spring Green, Wisconsin, and buried in the family graveyard. There Wright lay at rest until 1985 when, in fulfilment of the dying wishes of his third wife Olgivanna, his body was hastily dug up, secretly cremated, and his ashes brought back to Arizona to be buried at Taliesin West. While fascinating questions about the details and legality of these macabre events lie beyond the scope of this paper, the pilfering of Wright's corporeal remains presents a curious parallel to the fate of a surprising number of his architectural works at the end of their useful lives: broken up, moved and sold to public and private interests around the world. Shockingly, many buildings have been cannibalised even during their useful lives—their valuable furniture, windows, light fittings, and other detachable items harvested for financial gain. In economic terms, the owners of these Wright-designed buildings have effectively liquidated their assets and, in doing so, helped to establish a market for original architectural fragments and building features. Indeed, it seems that Wright's work is more commercially valuable today in part than in whole: a 2018 Sotheby's auction saw iconic windows from the Coonley Playhouse, completed by Wright in 1912, achieve as much as US \$200,000 apiece. Given such recent market prices, the monetary value of Wright's work can be determined with some precision. What, however, can be said of the architectural and cultural value of such disembodied and decontextualised fragments, not to mention, those building skeletons left behind?

Against an economic backdrop of fragmentation and profiteering, this paper will examine the value(s) of Wright's buildings' remains held in museums and gallery collections around the world. In particular, it looks at what values are destroyed by the processes of fragmentation, collection and display. (As Thordis Arrhenius has shown, the collection and preservation of architecture by museums is inextricable from their destruction). And, rather than simply extracting value, it asks if these museological acts of grave-robbing actually create new or different kinds of value in the museum?

**Ashley Paine** is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Queensland. His recent research and publications have examined topics as diverse as the history of striped façades, the collection and reconstruction of architecture in museums, contemporary pavilions, and the posthumously built works of Frank Lloyd Wright. He has contributed to journals including, *AA Files*, *ARQ*, *The Architectural Review*, and *Interstices*, and is co-author of the book, *Pavilion Proposition: Nine Points on an Architectural Phenomenon*. Paine is also a practicing architect, and co-founder of Brisbane-based practice, PHAB Architects.

# Architectural Representations, the Art Market, and Architecture's History

Jordan Kauffman

During the 1970s and 1980s a unique economic condition arose in which conceptual architectural tools were sold in the art market. Both architectural drawings and models were shown and hung on walls, like traditional art, and were displayed at some of the foremost art galleries in the world.

Architectural drawings attained autonomy from the architectural process and were perceived as aesthetic artifacts in and of themselves. They were “art gallery art” (Ada Louis Huxtable) and “documents . . . and creations in their own right” (Paul Goldberger). The press, private collectors, galleries, individuals interested in art, and museums all focused their efforts on drawings. Ultimately, they became understood as primary documents of architecture's history.

At the same time, architectural models began to be theorized as having value in themselves, as “generat[ing] their own truth” (Arthur Drexler) and as having “an artistic or conceptual existence ... independent of the project they represented” (Peter Eisenman). However, unlike drawings, publications, the press, and the public largely ignored models in the sale shows that were mounted. In fact, only institutions already concerned with architecture appreciated them and collected them. Thus, while they were sometimes understood as autonomous objects within architecture, they resisted it outside of the discipline and never fully emerged as a form of aesthetic art in their own right.

This paper investigates what effected the perception of these objects and why certain architectural tools did or did not cross disciplinary boundaries based on those perceptions. It brings together archival images of sale exhibitions, oral histories conducted with collectors and gallery owners, and critical responses to exhibitions in the press to reveal how these events impacted the perception and understanding of architectural drawings and models.

**Jordan Kauffman** is an architectural historian whose work spans from the Renaissance to the late twentieth century. He is a research affiliate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and research fellow in the history, theory, and criticism of architecture at Monash University. His book, *Drawing on Architecture, The Object of Lines, 1970-1990* was recently published by the MIT Press (2018), and his writing has been published widely in journals such as the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, the *Journal of Architectural Education*, *Architecture Theory Review*, *Livraisons d'histoire de l'architecture*, and *Log*.

# Le Corbusier on Exhibit: Architectural Works in the Cultural Economy of Art

Antony Moulis

As a major figure of international modernism the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier has been the subject of considerable critical attention, not only during his lifetime but also since, to the extent that he has become the world's most studied 20th century architect. His work has an undeniable currency. Over the last decade, the number of articles on Le Corbusier in architecture and design periodicals rivals the number devoted to the discussion of contemporary star-architects, such as Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid. Le Corbusier's work is also taken up in the cultural economy of art. This is not simply for the reason that the architect self-identified as an artist, practicing daily (by his own account) from the 1930s through to his death in 1965. It is also for the fact that Le Corbusier's work of architecture themselves became subject to the economy of art – appropriated into artistic works and its settings and acted as a staging point for art. The later phenomena will be discussed across a set of episodes beginning with the work of British Surrealist artist, Christopher Wood and his portrayal of the Villa Savoye in 1930, while the famous building was still under construction, all the way to the present and the installation, “Flooded Modernity”, by Danish artist Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen, shown at the 2018 Floating Art Festival, Vejle, Denmark, in which a reconstructed section of the same villa, built at a 1:1 scale, is seen sunken into a fjord. What these episodes reveal is changing values in the cultural economy of art and the means by which architecture is claimed for it – specifically in the construction exhibitions and events that, in turn, have repercussions on the socio-cultural capital of architecture.

**Antony Moulis** is Associate Professor and Director of the ATCH Research Centre in the School of Architecture at The University of Queensland. He has expertise on the work of Swiss-French architect, Le Corbusier and recently co-edited *Le Corbusier: Critical Concepts in Architecture* (Routledge, 2018) a 4-volume anthology of writings on the architect. His architectural writing and research spans professional and academic journals and includes critical commentary on contemporary architecture.



## Session 2

---

Angela Goddard

Session Chair

# Value on Display: Robin Hood Gardens and the Curation of Architecture in the Cultural Economy

Susan Holden & Rosemary Willink

In 2017 the Victoria and Albert Museum announced it would acquire a three-storey section of the Robin Hood Gardens housing estate by Alison and Peter Smithson (completed 1972) in the wake of its demolition for a higher density residential development, and after two failed attempts to list the Brutalist icon. The acquisition was also the impetus for the V&A's special contribution to the 2018 Venice Biennale *Robin Hood Gardens: A Ruin in Reverse*, acknowledging the controversy surrounding its demolition and acquisition, and changing the frameworks through which its cultural value is understood: from in-situ heritage to collected artefact. The confrontation of heritage and property value is a familiar and often intractable one in the contemporary city, and by collecting a fragment of Robin Hood Gardens the V&A offers one way to mitigate the loss of the building. The acquisition was also motivated in part by the V&A's planned expansion into the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London—a new cultural, educational and innovation precinct—where the fragment, along with other large-scale architectural works, will be on public display. This paper considers the acquisition of the Robin Hood Gardens fragment by the V&A as a situation in which the question of value is itself on display. It aims to highlight the complexities associated with articulating architecture's cultural value through established frameworks such as those of heritage and museums, but also through new frameworks of value that have been developed through the theorisation of the cultural economy, and how such frameworks are creating new contexts for the collection and curation of architecture. It will focus particularly on new iterations of the contest between intrinsic and exchange value that have long determined the theorisation of cultural value and are re-emerging in contemporary debates. Will the Robin Hood Gardens fragment become a relic of the failure of heritage frameworks, or a prop for a new creative industries precinct, and what is at stake for architecture in this contest?

**Susan Holden** is an Architect and Senior Lecturer at the University of Queensland. Her research deals broadly with historical and theoretic aspects of architecture as a subject of culture. Her research on architecture and art has considered historical cases such as the post-WWII synthesis of the arts and the competition to design the Centre Pompidou, to contemporary developments in practice including the proliferation of pavilion architecture. She has published in a range of journals including *Journal of Architecture*, *Leonardo* and *AA Files*, and contributes to the professional journal *Architecture Australia*.

**Rosemary Willink** is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Architecture at the University of Queensland and part of the ARC Discovery Project “Is Architecture Art? A history of categories, concepts and recent practices.” With prior experience working in cultural institutions in Australia, Europe and the United Kingdom, Willink’s research focuses on how museums and galleries collect, curate and commission architecture. Her qualifications include a Masters of Contemporary Art from Sotheby’s Institute and a Bachelor of Music Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts.

# “Value comes from Outside”: The Social Object of KANAL-Centre Pompidou

Bart Decroos & Lara Schrijver

The question of value in architecture is closely related to the status that is permitted to the physical object of the building. Within much of twentieth-century social constructivism, the object was merely a blank screen to project meaning onto: values were constructed through human subjectivity, with the physical world as a passive substance underneath. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the social sciences are seeing a renewed interest in matter as an actor within networks of value production, recognising its active role. Broadly termed the ‘materialist turn’, these developments emphasise object-mediated relations and non-human agency, paying close attention to the mutual relationships between humans and their environment. As the Italian philosopher Maurizio Ferraris writes on the *unamendability* of the world, reality may propose refusals to our conceptual schemes. Instead, Ferraris develops a theory of ‘documentality’, in which he argues that values are not mere abstract social constructions produced by a collective intentionality, but always reliant on the *affordance* of an object. Additionally, the American philosopher Graham Harman proposes an ‘object-oriented ontology’ as a social theory that emphasises objects rather than subjects.

This paper addresses these theories through the KANAL-Centre Pompidou in Brussels, examining the role of the architectural object in the production of values. This ongoing project for a new museum of modern and contemporary art will be realised in the iconic modernist Citroën garage along the canal. The paper situates the building itself at the center of the project’s value production, which affords and resists the (sometimes contradictory) motives and agendas of the different parties involved. To do so, the paper expands Harman’s object-oriented ontology with Ferraris’ notion of ‘social objects’, thus providing a conceptual framework for social analysis from the building’s point of view. In doing so, the analysis stands in contrast to the popular method of actor-network theory, which account for a non-human agency but dissolve materiality into relational effects.

Within this conceptual framework, the paper analyses the KANAL project through the 'symbioses' between the physical building and the different parties involved. From this perspective, the KANAL project assumes three appearances: on a political level, KANAL appears as an economic object, where site conditions and iconic architecture become arguments in a financial logic; on a curatorial level, KANAL appears as a political object, where the layout, aesthetics and spatial qualities of the building produce a discourse on public space and the city; and on an architectural level, the traces of the building's industrial heritage help construct the museum's cultural identity. Nevertheless, the specific architectural conditions of the building seem to resist being determined by these discourses: the physical experience of the building escapes the dominant logics at work in the project. As such, the KANAL project offers a compelling case study to examine both the appropriation and resistance of architecture in an economy of culture, as well as to develop a conceptual framework for a social analysis from a building's point of view.

**Bart Decroos** is an architect, researcher and editor based in Brussels. He is currently a PhD candidate (fellowship of the Research Foundation Flanders FWO) at the Henry van de Velde Research Group of the University of Antwerp, with a focus on the 'materialist turn' in contemporary architectural theory and design. He is a member of the editorial board of *OASE Journal for Architecture* and writes for various architecture magazines.

**Lara Schrijver** is Professor in Architecture at the University of Antwerp, Faculty of Design Sciences. Prior to Antwerp, she taught at Delft University of Technology and the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture. She is editor of the *KNOB Bulletin* and has served as editor for *Footprint* journal and *OASE*. Her book *Radical Games* was published in 2009, and in 2016 she co-edited the volume *Autonomous Architecture in Flanders*.

# Architecture and The Debasing of an Art Collection: O.M.A. Rem Koolhaas and the New Collection Presentation at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Wouter Davidts & Anton Pereira Rodriguez

On 16 December 2017 the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam unveiled the new presentation of the collection in the basement space of the museum's newest wing, the so-called baththub designed by Dutch architect Mels Crowwel that opened in 2012. Whereas the space was used in the previous five years for temporary exhibitions, former Stedelijk director Beatrix Ruf decided to flip the script by withdrawing the collection from the A.W. Weissman building of 1895 and granting it a radically new presentation in the almost 12,000-square-foot expanse of the basement gallery. For the new presentation Ruf hired Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, for whom it must have been a dream come through. To this day his office O.M.A. has not received any substantial cultural commissions – let alone a museum – in his home country, or his native city Amsterdam. Most painfully was the selection of the mediocre design of Mels Crowwel over theirs in the architecture competition for the latest extension. Designing the collection presentation was moreover nothing short of a homecoming of sorts for Koolhaas: between the age of 12 and 18, he would visit regularly, going as far as to say that his “entire aesthetic sensibility” was determined by the Stedelijk, which became his university of sorts. Building upon the museum's legacy of challenging the public role of culture and museums via experimental displays, Koolhaas and co-designer Federico Martelli of AMO (the research-focused division of architectural practice OMA), devised a display system of thin steel walls that – not unlike the present-day omni-presence of screens – allow visitors to browse through the volunary mix of 700 modern and contemporary art and design works from its permanent collection. A local newspaper fittingly headlined that the Stedelijk turned “looking at art into googling,” whereas another described it as “a presentation for instagramming millennials.” Aaron Betsky, writing for *The Architect Magazine*, damned it as “the basest form of architecture,” decrying that Koolhaas made a mess out of a great art collection. For Betsky Stedelijk Base exemplified “the hubris of architects who think that they are something they are not,” that is, a collection conservators and exhibition designers at once. In this paper we will analyse Stedelijk BASE in relation to the larger historical framework of museological experimentation by the Stedelijk Museum and the role and value attributed to architecture within it.

**Wouter Davidts** is partner investigator of the ARC funded project 'Is Architecture Art?' and teaches at the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning and the Department of Art, Music and Theatre Studies, Ghent University. He has published widely on the museum, contemporary art and architecture, including *Triple Bond* (2017), *Luc Deleu – T.O.P. office: Urban Space* (co-edited with Stefaan Vervoort and Guy Châtel) (2012) and *The Fall of the Studio* (2009). With Mihnea Mircan and Philip Metten, he curated *The Corner Show*, Extra City Antwerp, 2015.

**Anton Pereira Rodriguez** studied architecture at the LUCA School of Arts (KU Leuven) and holds a MA degree in Art History at Ghent University. In 2016-2017 he was enrolled in an exchange program with the Freie Universität Berlin. In 2017 he did an internship at the curatorial office of Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. Currently he works as a teaching assistant in the department of Architecture & Urban Planning and the department of Art, Music and Theatre Sciences at Ghent University, where he is preparing his PhD dissertation on the notions of place in the artworks of Jan Vercruyse, Guillaume Bijl and Didier Vermeiren.



## Session 3

---

**Sandra Kaji-O'Grady**

Session Chair

# Antagonistic Coexistence of Values in the Machinations of a Metabolist Monument

Ari Seligmann

This paper uses the Nakagin Capsule Tower (1972) and continuing debates over its demise to explore the intersections of architecture with competing values, cultures and economies. The building was planned with anticipated lifespans, but in 2006 while the architect, Kisho Kurokawa, advanced capsule regeneration plans (developed since 1998) and the private property owner was preparing a speculative replacement building, Docomomo Japan listed the prominent Metabolist exemplar as a modern architectural heritage site. Machinations have evolved, and by mid-2018 the new property owners were plotting demolition and redevelopment while supporters petitioned the Tokyo Governor for protection. Over the years, the Tower usage has also evolved from a short-term stay business focus to encapsulate core machinations of the broader cultural economy, diversifying occupation and preoccupations. Today the aging building is providing cheap creative spaces, facilitating tourism, and offering contexts and content for a host of media productions.

The Tower crystalized Metabolist ideals concerning technology and transformation, and its perpetuation is cocooned in contested valuations as different stakeholders wrestle over architectural, human, cultural, financial and safety contentions. As demonstrated in evaluations of press and media coverage the Tower is a fulcrum for passionate negotiation of architectural “heritage” with assumed cultural values, a lightning rod for frictions between private and “public” interests, and a catalyst for congealing communities and conjuring collective values. In the context of ambitions for the building and antagonistic coexistences in the debates over its evolution, this paper focuses on recent “experimental preservation” efforts by the Nakagin Capsule Tower Preservation and Restoration Project (2014-) to stimulate audiences for architecture and raise public consciousness and support for maintaining the Tower, as well as the evolving imagery that has been used to stimulate imaginations of the building. Nakagin Capsule Tower is a decaying icon in a sea of Tokyo’s rapid urban transformations and an iconoclastic example of alternative architectural ambitions. Its contentious current condition illuminates the negotiation of values for architectural (re)presentation, preservation and transformation, as well as quandaries with maintaining architectural objects and ideas that were designed for metabolic change.

**Ari Seligmann** is a critic, historian and designer engaged in studies of contemporary Japanese architecture and urbanism, and relations between architecture and media. He is Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Monash University Architecture Department and Critical Practices Research Lab contributor. He regularly lectures and publishes on the historiography and representations of Japanese architecture, including the recent Japanese Modern Architecture 1920-2015, Developments and Dialogues (2016). Current research examines the multimedia exploration of architectural ideas through the work of Ryoji Suzuki and the contributions of postwar Japanese architectural photographers.

# Heritage and Activism in the Post-Political City: Sydney's Sirius Building

Kirsty Volz & Alex Brown

The NSW government is currently in negotiations with two developers about the sale of 36-50 Cumberland Street, The Rocks. The site is currently occupied by an empty, late 1970s brutalist, social housing apartment complex designed by Tao Goefers, known as Sirius. The fate of the building has paralleled stories from London of postwar brutalist, public housing apartment buildings that have also faced demolition. While their brutalist style grabbed the attention of journalists, politicians and the public, the destruction of these buildings have become a physical signal for the end of post-war socialism and the rise of neo-liberalism. While heritage has been at the centre of a campaign to preserve Sirius, the fight to save it has been underpinned by housing affordability and the demise of egalitarian approaches to planning. This paper does not aim to further existing debates about the heritage merits (or not) of postwar brutalism. The case for saving Sirius highlights that heritage legislation is used, often as the only avenue for dispute, by communities to defend social values against neo-liberal planning policies that are increasingly designed to benefit individuals. In the post-political city, heritage has become central to activism that promotes equal access to the city.

**Kirsty Volz** is a PhD candidate within the ATCH group at the University of Queensland. Her thesis discusses the built works of Queensland's early women architects, focusing on the work of interwar architect and ceramist, Nell McCredie. Her research on interior design and scenography has been published in the *IDEA Journal*, *TEXT Journal*, *Lilith: a feminist history*, and the *International Journal of Interior Architecture and Spatial Design*, for which she is also an associate editor. Her work has also been included in edited books *Undesign critical practices at the intersection of art and design* (2018) and *Occupation: ruin, repudiation, revolution: constructed space conceptualized* (2015).

**Alex Brown** is an architect and a senior lecturer in the Department of Architecture at MADA. Her research explores twentieth-century and contemporary art-architecture relationships, as well as architecture and radicality from the 1960s onwards. Her current research focuses on commissioned content in architectural exhibitions as a form of alternative practice. Alex's writing has been published in both architecture and art journals, including *Cultural Studies Review*, *Lucida* and the *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*. She has also contributed chapters to the edited books *On Discomfort: Moments in a Modern History of Architectural Culture* (2017) and *Spaces of Justice: Peripheries, Passages, Appropriations* (2017).



## Session 4

---

**Andrea Phillips**

Session Chair

# Play Therapy or Montessori Terror? Valuing Ignorance in Post-War Architecture Education

Elke Couchez

This paper investigates how the values of architecture were negotiated on the level of architectural education in the late 1950s and 60s. It looks at the work of Paul Ritter (1925-2010), an eccentric and provocative Jewish émigré architect, who taught at the Nottingham school of Architecture from 1945 till 1964 and was appointed as head of the City of Perth's (Western Australia) newly formed Department of Planning in 1965. This paper makes a genealogy of the concept of childhood creativity in his multifaceted work – ranging from the 1959 *Child's Eye View* exhibition to his books on planning, child-rearing and architectural education.

The purpose of tracking these lineages is to study how the concept of childhood was located in a changing institutional climate. By comparing Ritter's texts to educational reports produced by professional bodies, institutional reformers and students in the UK and Australia, we will come to a better understanding of the educational climate of the late 1950s and 1960s. This paper will show that the application of childhood theories in architecture education aimed at putting pressure on traditional architectural teaching methods and curricula and that it had the critical function of rebalancing the value of expertise in the understanding and agency of the built environment.

**Elke Couchez** studied Fine Arts (Sint-Lucas Academy, Ghent) and Art History (KU Leuven) and defended her PhD “Gestures make Arguments. Performing Architectural Theory in the Studio and the Classroom 196x-199x” in June 2018 at the KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture. As of October 2018, she works as a post-doctoral fellow on the project “Is Architecture Art?” at the University of Queensland’s *Centre for Architecture, Theory, Criticism and History*. Her work has been published in the journals *Image&Narrative*, *Paedagogica Historica* and *History of Intellectual Culture* and in several magazines for contemporary art.

# Wireless Architecture: Robert Cummings' Early Radio Broadcasts

John Macarthur & Deborah van der Plaats

Broadcast radio began in the late 1920s and early 1930s and quickly gained an educative mission that spanned from schools, to adult education on specific topics, to the building of civic values in the public as a whole. Robert Cummings, architect and aspiring university teacher, heard broadcasts on architecture from his teachers at the Architectural Association in London, and emulated these on his return to Australia in 1930. The paper puts Cummings' architecture talks on the Australian Broadcasting Commission from 1933 to 1937 in the context of architecture on the wireless in the UK and Australia, and the kind of talking and listening that wireless architecture required. For Cummings as a proponent of architectural modernism the wireless was not only a medium for education, its technological novelty made it an object lesson in the experience of modernisation.

**John Macarthur** FAHA, is Professor of Architecture at the University of Queensland where he teaches history, theory and design. He was the founding Director of the research centre for Architecture, Theory, Criticism and History (ATCH) and remains an active member of the Centre. His research on the intellectual history of architecture has focused on the conceptual framework of the relation of architecture and the visual arts from the Picturesque to the present.

**Deborah van der Plaats** is a Senior Research Fellow and Manager of the Architecture Theory Criticism History Research Centre (ATCH) at the School of Architecture, University of Queensland (Australia). Her research examines the architecture of nineteenth and twentieth century Australia and its intersection with theories of artistic agency, climate, place, migration and race. Writing histories of Queensland architecture is also a focus within her work. Recent publications include *Hot Modernism Queensland Architecture 1945-1975* (edited with Macarthur, Gosseye and Wilson: Artifice, 2015) and *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History Methods in Architecture* (edited with Gosseye and Stead, Princeton Architectural Press, 2019, in press).

# Meme, Memory or Critic: Explaining the Popularity of Brutalism and Post-Modernism on Social Media

Hamish Lonergan

In the last decade, Brutalism and Postmodernism have been the focus of public engagement on a level rare for architecture in our civic culture. Even more surprising is their popularity on social media accounts like *FuckYeahBrutalism* (FYB). Discussions of online Brutalism as nostalgic or as a meme emphasise its individualised, democratic appeal. Neither explanation is wholly convincing: most social media users lack detailed knowledge of Brutalism's political context, while its seriousness defies meme humour. Instead, online popularity should be interpreted through the longer history of Brutalism in broad- and narrow-cast media, on television and in academic publications, associated with a series of key critics. Even on social media, figures like FYB's Michael Abrahamson continue to act as critics online. This places brutalism within academic debates on amateur online writing and whether it can be criticism, made more pronounced on image-based social media. While this seems to undermine narratives of democracy online—with taste controlled by critics as in traditional media—what emerges is a different kind of equality. Figures like Abrahamson provide a link from education and academia to the wider architecture community and the general public. Repeated exposure to high-quality, curated images of Brutalism and Postmodernism helps the public develop the necessary visual acuity to begin to recognise the worth and specific qualities of this architecture; a refined taste we are beginning to see reflected back into developments in academia and grassroots conservation campaigns. Underpinning this discussion is the empirical aesthetics of David Hume, and his startling notion that the greatest recommendation for a critic is their popular acclaim. It is only by recognising and following good critics that we can approach a standard of taste, and begin to make our own aesthetic judgments.

**Hamish Lonergan** is a recent Master of Architecture graduate from the University of Queensland (UQ), where he was awarded the QIA Medallion. Since graduating, he has presented his research—on architecture, taste, social media and aesthetics—at UQ and at the ETH in Zurich, his work has been published in Australian journals, and was assistant curator of the exhibition *Don Watson: a civil servant* (2018). His professional work at Cox Architecture focuses on public architecture and planning.



# Session 5

---

Tom O'Regan

Session Chair

# The Spatial Politics of the Multiplex Cinema in India

Adrian Athique & Douglas Hill

This paper will explore the phenomenon of the multiplex cinema in India in the 21st Century. Drawing upon interviews with architects, patrons and operators, we seek to demonstrate how the multiplex operates as both a spectacular and functional architectural form, one that is marked by a clear intent to intervene in the production of space in India. It is critically important that the multiplex cinema has been deployed in India with the considered intent of managing the problem of the urban crowd, while also marking a step change in the commodification of public space and public culture. As part of this larger process, the architectural and infrastructural manifestations of urban renewal in India have been guided by a consistent, if not entirely coherent, desire to impose new forms of urban politics. With this in mind, this paper explores the physical configuration of new leisure architectures in the wider context of the politics of public space in India. Drawing upon fieldwork in six Indian cities, we present an argument that illustrates how the arrival of the multiplex transformed the nature of cinema as public space. In referencing the cultural geography of urban leisure, this paper suggests that the multiplex must be considered alongside the other spaces to which it is configured: new residential and retail complexes, suburban transport links and country clubs. As an architectural form, it must also be considered alongside the spaces *against* which it is configured: the bazaar, the pavement and the urban slum. From this perspective, we argue that the development of multiplex theatres in India cannot be easily separated from both the ideological forces and physical works that lead to their construction and determine their use and value.

**Adrian Athique** is Associate Professor of Cultural Studies at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities. His work focuses on the sociology of media and culture, with an empirical focus upon Asia. Adrian is author of a number of books, including *The Multiplex in India* (2010, with Douglas Hill), *Indian Media* (2012), *Digital Media and Society* (2013), *Transnational Audiences* (2016) and the edited collections *The Indian Media Economy* (2018, 2 Vols) and *Digital Transactions in Asia* (2019).

**Douglas Hill** is senior lecturer in development studies at the University of Otago. His work focuses upon the political economy of development in South Asia, including urban renewal programmes, transboundary water issues and rural food security. Dr. Hill has published widely in cultural geography, Asian Studies and Political science.

# Transforming the City as a Site of Cultural-economic Transaction through the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art

Kate Brehme

Responding to the theme of Historical Fabric and Environments, this paper discusses the role of the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art as both an object of and contributor to a twinned cultural-economic process of globalisation of the cultural sphere. The Biennale was founded in 1996 at a time of immense and rapid urban development in Berlin, a period of time when the interim use of empty buildings by cultural actors was still affordable and unbureaucratic. Forging an identity as a biennale “in dialogue with the city” the Berlin Biennale began as a grassroots contemporary arts festival that made use of such empty buildings in order to provide space for contemporary art and contribute to the building of a new identity for the city that ran counter to neoliberalist official city branding at the time. I argue, that in doing so, the Biennale staked its claim in the growing international landscape of city biennales and until today has benefited from the experience economy by festivalising once forgotten, everyday urban spaces in both positive and negative ways: On one hand, the continued existence of the Berlin Biennale demonstrates a societal desire to celebrate the aesthetic and historical values of architecture for their ability to inspire innovative and sensorial contemporary art works for an individualised and often intimate experience. On the other hand, the Biennale also illustrates the pitfalls of the oversimplification and spectacularisation of architecture for mainstream audiences. These conflicting tendencies are caused by the same mechanism: a globalisation of the cultural sphere. The Berlin Biennale’s use of the built environment, transforms the city into a space of transaction where symbolic and real capital are traded as part of the consumption of contemporary art and architecture.

**Kate Brehme** is an Australian independent curator, researcher and arts educator based in Berlin. She is a DFG funded Doctoral Fellow at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at Technical University Berlin where she is completing her dissertation on the history of the Berlin Biennale and its relationship with urban space. She has worked internationally on a variety of projects, exhibitions and events and runs Contemporary Art Exchange, a curatorial platform for international projects, exhibitions and events exploring place and cultural identity, disability and socially engaged practices. Kate is also a lecturer for the NODE Center for Curatorial Studies and the Piet Zwart Institute's Masters in Arts Education.



## Session 6

---

**Roland Bleiker**

Session Chair

# Architectural Deception and the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal

Courtney R. Thompson

*The Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949-1951* also known as the Massey Commission or Report, laid the foundation and/or provided cause for further development of, and support for the establishment of Canadian culture. This culture desired to evolve from its colonial origins and resist absorption from American influence.

In a section of the Report titled “Forces of Geography” an immediate sense of the parameters of Canadian identity and its relationship to land and community were established. The land, and Canadians’ relationship to it, was vital for the nation’s socioeconomic and cultural capital. The products and activities of Indigenous Peoples were assessed for their benefit and contribution to the nation’s cultural production in the Report. It is worth noting the amendment of The Indian Act occurred the same year as the publication of the Massey Commission. Included in the amendments were the removal of the potlatch ban among other previously legislated cultural celebrations; celebrations that constituted, produced and exchanged a substantial amount of objects of fine craftsmanship, gathered Indigenous voices and piqued Settler desire. This confluence of policy and assessment of cultural production developed simultaneous to the public’s growing interest in the government’s (mis)management of Indigenous Peoples. This paper will examine this “growing interest” as fully realized in the creation, design, reception and legacy of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montréal. The Pavilion was an architectural deception, a foil for Canada’s recognition of diversity and rhetoric around respect for cultural livelihood, especially policy headed by the Branch of Indian Affairs.

**Courtney R. Thompson** is a PhD candidate in The Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba in Canada; she is a guest on Treaty One land, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dene, Dakota and Oji-Cree, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Her dissertation examines questions of governmental strategies and their sociocultural impact on architecture and design for Indigenous and Settler relations in Canada. She has an MA in Art History, Theory & Criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA in Applied Linguistics from The University of Calgary.

# Architecture and Civic Agency: Materialising Governance in the City of Sydney ‘City Projects’

Maryam Gusheh & Naomi Stead

Over the past decade the local government authority at the City of Sydney (CoS) has emerged as the most ardent champion of contemporary architectural design in the city. This has been most spectacularly evidenced in the so-called ‘City Projects’ – a series of award-winning small-scale public buildings in inner Sydney, including the Prince Alfred Park Pool (2013); the Burton Street Tabernacle (2013); and the East Sydney Early Learning Centre (2017). Led by independent mayor Clover Moore, the current city government assigns significant value to architecture, explicitly using architectural commissions as a tool for galvanizing local culture and identity.

This is evidenced in various ways. First, in the City projects architectural knowledge and creative processes have been activated well beyond the traditional limits of professional services – architects have been engaged at various levels of urban governance including strategic policy, project management and client liaison. Second, the coupling of architectural projects with significant public programs and community services has rendered architecture as productive, if not the necessary infrastructure for civic culture. Third, new procurement processes have championed emerging young practices, endorsing their architectural brand while betting on, and basking in, the capital of their escalating profile. Here, architecture has been called upon to materialize governance, to render it more tangible, to make it manifest in the lives of the people.

The City Projects are remarkable in many ways, but for our purposes here, they are particularly notable for their mediation between varying attitudes to urban renewal – which are often divergent, or at odds. Top-down civic design here meets bottom-up subjective engagement with the city, popular acclaim and community endorsement is matched by professional accolades, and art value is rendered synonymous with social and economic wellbeing. It is this double agency that is the focus of this paper. We will suggest that the successful integration of the architecture and the city in this case relies on adaptive reuse and the deliberate continuation of existing building stock, urban grain, material forms, and patterns of use. We will argue that this engagement with urban heritage and its lived memory has, in this case, been pivotal to the civic agency of contemporary architectural design, and its value as a tool for local governance and a matter of local culture.

**Maryam Gusheh** is Associate Professor at Monash University. Maryam has an extensive teaching record in architectural design and history. She entered academia from a background in practice and continues to engage with the profession as a critic and collaborator. As a researcher, Maryam aims to ascertain ways in which global architectural trends are developed in local contexts and are, in the process, uniquely transformed. Her focus is on the inventive translations of modern and contemporary architectural ideas as they move between the dominant centres of modernist thought and the marginal, yet robust, sites of modernist practice.

**Naomi Stead** is Professor and Head of Department in Architecture at Monash University; Adjunct Professor in Architecture at the University of Queensland; and current President of the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand. Her research interests lie in architecture's cultures of re/production, mediation, and reception. She is a widely-published architecture critic, and was the leader of the ARC Linkage project 'Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architecture Profession: Women, Work and Leadership,' which led to the co-founding (with Justine Clark and others) of *Parlour*, an activist group advocating for greater gender equity in architecture.









