



Architecture: Aesthetics of Sustainability 26-27.01 2024 International Conference

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS_

AESTHETICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

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HOW TO DO (SUSTAINABLE) THINGS WITH AESTHETICS, IN ARCHITECTURE?

ALESSANDRO ARMANDO POLITECNICO DI TORINO

I will attempt to raise a few critical questions that challenge what I consider to be the problematic relationship between architectural design and the aesthetic dimension of sustainability.

Architecture as a "sustainable cultural technique". We define architecture as a 'technique' because it transforms material space: this would be the first definition I would give of the 'technical' character of architecture. But if I dwell for a moment on the *thing* that is transformed by architecture, the definition of 'material space' would inevitably have to be extended to something more articulated, such as a 'socio-material space-time'.

Durability and sustainability. What is sustainable about permanence and therefore unsustainable about change? Why does the continual crumbling of the surface of space-time always frighten us? We tend to think of *durability* – understood as the quality of being long-lasting – as if it were a positive quality. Is durability sustainable? Is architecture sustainable as lasting?

How can we use aesthetic concepts? According to the hypothesis proposed in this call, the "concept of sustainability" can "lend itself to the use of experience", animating our lives from within through aesthetics. Let us now assume that we can not only perceive sustainability, but also aesthetically conceive it and thus be animated by it, to the extent that we can empirically (i.e. 'within experience') use this 'aesthetic concept' of sustainability. What happens between our aesthetic perception/concept of sustainability and our act/use of aesthetic thinking? What have we made of this thinking?

ASSOC. PROF. DR. ALESSANDRO ARMANDO, architect and PhD, is Associate Professor at the Politecnico di Torino - Department of Architecture and Design. Since 2016 he has been a member of the board of the DASP doctoral programme at the same Politecnico. He is founder and member of the editorial board of *Ardeth* magazine; member of the advisory board of the "Architecture" series - *Manifestolibri*; member of the scientific committee of SCIENZA NUOVA - Italian Institute for Advanced Studies in Torino "Umberto Eco". He was a visiting scholar at the *Collège des Humanités* - EPFL Lausanne (February - June 2017) and Simon Visiting Professor at the *Manchester Architecture Research Group* - University of Manchester (January - February 2022). In his professional practice as an architect, he has been a partner of *DAR Architettura* in Turin since 2013.

THE WILL TO SUSTAINABILITY OR THE IMPROBABLE AESTHETICS OF PERFORMANCE

CHRISTIAN BAUER HBK SAAR

In the name of "creative destruction" (Joseph Schumpeter), a tremendous amount of planetary wear and tear is taking place, both economically and ecologically. From a sustainability perspective, this creates the problem of scarcity of resources in the long term.

The aim of the lecture is to show that this perspective on scarcity is one-sided and overlooks the fact that mankind's productive expenditure has also produced an overabundance of waste, most of which is consigned to the "underworld".

Following Jörg Gleiter's reflections on an "aesthetics of permanence" based on Aldo Rossi, (I) those products of expenditure that last "forever" should be considered: radioactive waste. More attention should be paid to these uchronic relics of human activity in terms of building culture. To be discussed is (II) Bazon Brock's proposal for "cathedrals for nuclear waste". These architectures are based on the

idea of "eternity containment". This idea requires an aesthetic of permanence in its design, so that the continued existence of the human species can be ensured through a sacrum signaling. Finally, (III) the everyday rites that can be assigned to the uchronic architectures of this type of cathedral must be dealt with. Elaborate rites de passages are required to cast a spell over the deadly power.

PROF. DR. PHIL. CHRISTIAN BAUER studied German philology, philosophy and political science in Würzburg and Cologne and was awarded Dr. phil. at the Bergische University Wuppertal in 2008. He is a Professor of Design History and Design Theory since 2019 and Rector of Saarbrücken University of Fine Arts since 2021. Christian is a member of the Sustainability Expert Team of the Saarland Ministry for the Environment, Climate, Mobility, Agriculture and Consumer Protection. His research focuses mainly on design ethics, ethics of sustainability and shaping public interests. His latest publication is: *Ethik für Designer* (2023, Stuttgart: av edition).

SUSTAINABILITY AS A RELATION BETWEEN PERCEIVABLE AND NON-PERCEIVABLE

ANDREA CANCLINI LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

The presentation addresses the relationship between the perceivable and the non-perceivable, emphasising that these two dimensions are closely linked and not ontologically separable; through the exploration of the nature of being and its relationship with reality, it points out how its complexity is composed of multiple properties in relation to each other: the complexity of reality is a combination of its perceivable properties and their non-perceivable relationships.

Turning to disciplinary considerations, it is stressed that sustainability is located in this complex of relations of a dual nature, the value of which can only be understood by taking into account the necessary perceivable relations, the project, its micro-singularity typical of each being, and the non-perceivable ones, i.e. the set of its macro-relations with the world.

If the world is not our product, our project, but a datum in which we are immersed, it is necessary to explore how the project and its sustainability face the difficulty of overcoming the dimension of passivity, how this can be done by recalling both the existing disciplinary relationship between philosophy and science and the importance of not separating these two cultures, and how the same relationship is original in architecture, starting from its very name, which from the beginning contains this potential relationship between *arche* and *techne*.

DR. ANDREA CANCLINI is currently Lecturer in Architecture Humanities at the School of Architecture at Lancaster University, former Lecturer at Politecnico di Milano, and Visiting Professor at the Beirut Arab University. He participated in international activities, symposia and conferences, organised a session at the EAHN 2022, appointed as Head of the Scientific Committee for the celebration of the 70th of the VII CIAM in Bergamo 2019 and published articles, book chapters and peer-reviewed texts on his main research topic, the cultural basis of modern and contemporary architectural criticism.

APOCALYPSE AND UTOPIA: 7 THESES ON THE AESTHETICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

JÖRG H. GLEITER TU BERLIN

PROF. DR.-ING. HABIL. JÖRG H. GLEITER is an architect and since 2012 Professor of Architectural Theory at the Technical University Berlin. 2008-12 he held the position of

professor of aesthetics at Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy. Gleiter held various visiting professorships, in recent years at Waseda University, Brown University, Politecnico di Torino, and Politecnico di Milano. His main research interests are critical theory of sustainability, critical theory of ornament, architecture philosophy and semiotics. Among his books are *gleiters universum. architektur* (2023, Berlin: DEJAVU); *Architekturtheorie zur Einführung* (2022, Hamburg: Junius), *Ornament Today. Digital, Material, Structural* (2012, Bolzano: Bozen University Press) and *Friedrich Nietzsche und die Architektur* (2009, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann)

AGAINST SUSTAINABILITY

BRANKO MITROVIĆ NTNU TRONDHEIM

Recent Norwegian debates about the ugliness of contemporary architecture have resulted in a massive use of narratives about sustainability in order to justify aesthetic failures of architectural works. The problem of aesthetic deficiency of modernist architecture has been known since the 1970s at least, but in Norway it is only in recent years that the problem has become an object of a wide public debate. This is largely a result of the activities of a movement called *Arkitekturopprøret*, their yearly architectural “horror award”. The architecture profession has mostly reacted with elitist dismissal to such initiative and narratives about sustainability have played a major role in architects’ reactions. The paper is intended to analyse this form of architects’ verbal behaviour and place it in its historical context.

PROF. DR. PHIL. BRANKO MITROVIĆ is employed as a Professor of Architectural History and Theory at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway. He received his PhDs in Architecture and Philosophy and works actively in both fields. He is the author (or co-author) of ten books and has been the recipient of the Humboldt-Forschungspreis.

ARCHITECTURE AND TEMPORAL ECOLOGY

LUDGER SCHWARTE KUNSTAKADEMIE DÜSSELDORF

The architecture that dominates today is one of the main causes of climate change. In total, more than 70 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions come from cities. Climate change must therefore be tackled primarily in urban centres. Much depends on the ecological reorganization of the way cities are built. There are a lot of technologies, new and old, that could slow down climate change. These are technical solutions for ecological architecture. But not a change in lifestyle. No change in the relationship to what is not human, to what cannot be produced, and to what human life depends on. The importance of architecture for people's way of life can be visualized by considering what must be in place before a person can breathe, use the limbs of their body in a coordinated manner, continuously perceive the things around them and intentionally influence them. What must be in place before people can live together. Every way of life presupposes an environment and shapes it. What is the environment? What does it mean to build in a sustainable way? My contribution attempts to show that the environment is not only spatial, but also temporal. And that the idea of sustainability is therefore questionable insofar as it aims to maintain the current environmental conditions in the long term. The more successfully such sustainability is architecturally enforced and applied, the fewer surprises there will be, both good and bad; and next to no environment. With a few conceptual imports from the theory of time and from aesthetics, durability and sustainability can be more easily be disentangled.

PROF. DR. LUDGER SCHWARTE is Professor of Philosophy at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, after having taught as an assistant professor of image theory at the University of Basel (2006-2009) and as a professor of aesthetics at the Zurich University of Arts (2009). He studied

philosophy, literature and political sciences in Münster, Berlin and Paris and received his PhD in philosophy at the Freie Universität Berlin in 1997 and habilitation in philosophy at the Freie Universität Berlin in 2007. He was a visiting scholar at the university Paris 8, at the GACVS (Washington), at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (Paris), at the university of Abidjan, at Columbia University (New York), at the EHESS (Paris) and at the IKKM (Weimar). Areas of specialisation are aesthetics, political philosophy, philosophy of culture, ontology, history of science. His books include: *Die Regeln der Intuition. Kunstphilosophie nach Adorno, Heidegger und Wittgenstein* (2000, München: W. Fink), *Philosophie der Architektur* (2009, München: W. Fink), *Vom Urteilen* (2012, Berlin: Merve), *Piktrale Evidenz* (2015, Paderborn: W. Fink), *Notate für eine künftige Kunst* (2016, Berlin: Merve) und *Denken in Farbe* (2020, Berlin: August).

THE INFORMED MEMBRANE. THE TECHNO-AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF ARCHITECTURE

AARON SPRECHER TECHNION HAIFA

The notion of architectural performance is more than ever associated with the ability of a given system to exchange information with its environment. Such a perception of architecture marks a shift from a mere contemplation of nature to deploying operations that would ensure the conditions for its emergence and sustainability. Here, the architectural objects contribute to what anthropologist Andre Leroi-Gourhan calls an “interposed membrane” that mediates between the human and its milieu. One of the consequences of such mediation is the emergence of an architecture that French philosopher Gilbert Simondon qualifies as “techno-aesthetic,” both acting on and reacting to its environment. Simondon’s theory on techno-aesthetics considers the architectural object as an interface in charge of communicating and controlling its environment. Both technical and affective, this interface calls for redefining the notions of architectural representation, tooling, and materiality in the age of sustainability.

ASSOC. PROF. AARON SPRECHER is an Associate Professor at the Technion Faculty of Architecture, where he leads the Material Topology Research Laboratory (www.mtrl.tech). MTRL is a transdisciplinary research group that works in the field of the digital humanities at the intersection of design computation and fabrication, history and theory. In parallel, he is co-founder and partner of Open Source Architecture (www.o-s-a.com), a research collaborative in design, architecture, engineering, and media research. Aaron Sprecher is co-editor of *Architecture in Formation—On the Nature of Information in Digital Architecture* (2013, London: Taylor and Francis) and *Instabilities and Potentialities* (2019, London: Taylor and Francis).

WHAT IS CATHEDRAL THINKING?

CLINTON VERDONSCHOT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

The prospect of climate catastrophe requires us to submit all aspects of human social reproduction to radical re-evaluation. One such aspect is the way human beings set goals for themselves, or: practical rationality. A proposal for reconceiving practical rationality is sometimes proffered under the name ‘cathedral-thinking’ (Thunberg 2019; Krznaric 2020; see also Rees 2010), however we lack a convincing account of it. How do we engage in cathedral-thinking? How do we do it correctly? I will argue that the most important account of cathedral-thinking (Krznaric 2020, chap. 6) is not truly an alternative to climate-destructive practical rationality. It also cannot truly explain why precisely the building of cathedrals should model a redemptive form of practical rationality. That second failure provides a clue to the first. By exploring the salient features of cathedral-building, I arrive at a more promising proposal that re-evaluates practical rationality. Cathedral-building was collective, open-ended, and imaginative

in nature. Our practical reasoning must incorporate these aspects. However, doing so is itself already an endeavour that is collective, open-ended, and imaginative. In other words, it is more than can be accomplished in a single essay by a single person. I will, however, end with an example of a practice that I believe is lighting the way forward: direct action against anthropogenic, destructive climate change.

DR. CLINTON PETER VERDONSCHOT is an academic philosopher and critical theorist, who works on topics at the intersection of aesthetics, political philosophy, and ethics. Verdonschot's pronouns are he/him. He graduated from the University of Essex with a dissertation on personal autonomy and its aesthetic preconditions. Currently, he is a lecturer in practical philosophy at Utrecht University's Ethics Institute, where he also coordinates the minor programme in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. In addition, he is a board member of the Dutch Society for Aesthetics, as well as co-editor-in-chief for *Aesthetic Investigations*.

PROGRAM_

JANUARY 26

15:00 **Jörg H. Gleiter** – Opening remark

PANEL 1 Moderation: Sandra Meireis

15:30 **Aaron Sprecher**, Technion Haifa KEYNOTE LECTURE

16:00 **Ludger Schwarte**, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf

16:30 **Alessandro Armando**, Politecnico di Torino

17:00 Discussion

18:00 Presentation of **Khōrein: Journal for Architecture and Philosophy**

with Petar Bojanic, Snezana Vesnic (University of Belgrade), Zorica Mejdo (TU Berlin) and guests Peter Eisenman (Yale University), Sarah Whiting (GSD Harvard), Ludger Schwarte (Kunstakademie Düsseldorf)

JANUARY 27

PANEL 2 Moderation: Gyöngyvér Györffy

10:00 **Christian Bauer**, HBKsaar KEYNOTE LECTURE

10:30 **Branko Mitrovic**, NTNU Trondheim

11:00 **Clinton Verdonschot**, Utrecht University

11:30 Discussion

PANEL 3 Moderation: Lidia Gasperoni

13:30 **Andrea Canclini**, Lancaster University KEYNOTE LECTURE

14:00 **Jörg H. Gleiter**, TU Berlin

14:30 Discussion with students

LOCATION_



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