Introduction

When Georg Lukács ended his “Theory of the Novel” with the famous sentence: “The voyage is over, the travel begins.” He acknowledges that at the moment of defeat: the voyage of a particular revolutionary experience is over, but the true travel, the work of beginning again, is just starting. And indeed, now that the current economic crisis acts as late capitalism’s moment of truth architects should ask again what it means to be modern. Right now we live in our society of fear a completely paradoxical moment of modernization which is driven by nostalgia on every level. Yet we are absolutely disinterested in the past, in our true history of modern experiments. Nostalgia means today that we are living permanently in a form of denail (“a nostalgia of the future” as Fredric Jameson once called it), while what we have to face today is the essential question what “modern” could mean. How we as architects could help create conditions of “situated freedom” now that globalization is total, and neoliberalism has no answers to confront the disasters it created on the level of the city, the landscape and humanity as a whole.

Billions of public money are spend today saving the world free market who once advocated that we are no longer in need of a state. Suddenly the role of the public

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1 As Quoted in “How to begin from the beginning”, Slavoy Zizek in New left review nr 57, May/June 2009.
institutions has regained importance. The current economic crisis acts as capitalism’s moment of truth: it suddenly unveils the ordinary fetishized real structure of society. The bad news is that both the Left and the Right in our 21st century have no theory left. Reality as found is now all that counts, and functions as the perfect alibi to get away with murder. This addiction to extreme realism, both on the Left and Right, demands a new theory. A theory not only as a system of ideas intended to reflect, but – as in the Greek meaning of *theoria* – to speculate and contemplate – to develop a view.

Excavating the real is no longer enough. Merely having all the resources and facts available doesn’t mean, of itself, that they produce interesting answers. Intellectuals, artists, architects and other producers of cultural capital can no longer live the permanent myth of rhetorical and aesthetic poetry without being able to relate to the social and political problems of the world. To speak with Michel Foucault: we have to defend society more than ever today. We are in need of new forms of governmentality. Or in other words - as the Berlage Institute has stated in the policy plan for 2009 plus – “we are in need of New Forms of Welfare: new forms of coherence and synthesis that are able to frame private interest within a shared social, political and cultural project for the city.”

What we need is a new theory able to pose urgent questions for the future that develops speculative models and ideas: asks what it could mean to be Modern today within the very domain of praxis.

**Theoretical framework**

Through an extensive series of Projective Theory seminars, interviews and lectures by Berlage faculty and invited guest professors over the period of two years, the following three main dimensions of “Reality Demands a Theory”, and their specific issues, as documented in the three extensive readers (see below) will be researched and discussed: 1) The World Today. What is Welfare?, 2) The Complexity of our Times. Issues and Opportunities, 3) What could it mean to be Modern Today? Reflections on Politics and Aesthetics.

While last year special attention was paid to “New Forms of Welfare”, “The Biopolitics of Scale”, “Decolonizing Architecture”, “The State of Nature”, “The Quasi Object” and “New Towns from the Cold War Era to neoliberal Reality”, this year’s curriculum will focus upon “The Other Image. The Politics of Appearance”, “Modernity and its Discontents”, “The Subversion of Architecture. The Architecture of Subversion”, “After the self-managed city? Urbanism in Yugoslavia and the post socialist condition” and in the 2nd Term two other seminars will start; one with Chantal Mouffe and Marcus Miessen on Radical Democracy and aesthetic practices and another one on Migration is in preparation.

Roemer van Toorn, Sept 2009.
FIRST TERM

The Other Image
The Politics of Appearance
Series of lectures and seminars with George Baird (29, 30 September), Ed Dimendberg (12, 13 November), Andreas Ruby 3, 4 November

If the visual keeps us from seeing (because it prefers that we decode, that we decipher, that we “read”), the image always challenges us to carry out a montage with others, with some other. Because in the image, as in democracy, there is “free play”, unfinished pieces, gaps, openings.

Serge Daney

There are philosophers and critics who make extremely negative pronouncements about visual culture. Images are deceiving and corrupt. They can be interpreted in multiple ways and therefore are not capable of telling the truth. Therefore we would do better, according to Paul Virilio, to concentrate on the word. In short, despite the enormous influence visual culture has in metropolitan life, and the pleasure and the significance we all derive from our image culture, many theorists prefer to renounce the image instead of taking its complex nature serious. With the public lectures and seminars on “The Other Image. The Politics of appearance” the Projective Theory program hopes to present an intelligence of sight that looks further than the unnuanced dominant discourse of consumerism, corruption, deception, and the ethical failure of the image. Instead of disqualifying our visual culture all together – as the classical left used to practice in the safe heaven of academia – we like to investigate what other images have been and could be created to do justice to the polyrhythmic, nonsynchronous, layered spatiality of our urban culture. What we need are “ethetical images”, imaginations, sensual experiences and even dreams, that are not created by medi savy experts, and then handed down to the rest of us to watch, consume, and believe, but instead images that are open-ended: setting stages to ask questions and leaving silence to formulate new answers. And instead of covering over or replace reality by an overscripted maze of infotainment, they shoudl perform and amplify possible truh and be recognizable.

1) Making the Invisible Visible
One unique aspect of film and photography is that the latent social anxieties and aspirations of urban space can be excellent registered and unpacked by the means of visual culture. According to Siegfried Krakauer “Film renders visible what we did not, or perhaps could not, see before its advent. It effectively assists us in discovering the material world with its psychophysical correspondences. We literally redeem this world from its dormant state, its state of virtual non-existence, by endeavoring to experience it through the camera. And we are free to experience it because we are fragmented. The cinema can be described as a medium particulary equipped to promote the redemption of physical reality. Its imagery permits us, for the first time, to take away with us the objects and occurences that comprise the flow of material life.”

2) Remaking the Image
Not only can architects learn from photography and film how to understand the political, cultural and poetic implication of a space, what kind of theatre of
effects and atmospheres they are creating, but also what alternative and critical routes do exist in film and photography remaking the image of representation; the one of the private and public sphere. Now that more and more images loose their meaning in the continual flux of advertisements and television we have to go beyond the synthesized and publicity many images produce. We have to remake the image now that the image is in crisis. We have to look for other kinds of representations and ethical spectacles in architecture by engaging the political; another idea of democracy.

Roemer van Toorn

Public lectures and seminars this Winter Term:


Ed Dimendberg: This Will Kill That?: Media Facades and Reflective Architecture
Architectural media facades today develop with ever greater sophistication thanks to transformations in digital media and building technology. Distinctions among buildings, signage, culture, advertising, and surveillance, long porous, are rapidly disappearing in contemporary practice as modernist and postmodernist theoretical paradigms reveal their limits. Display screens supplement traditional windows, pictures change, spatial exteriority and interiority prove ever more inextricable. Meanwhile, a new generation of iconoclasts seeks to limit the spread of images to the surface of architecture and reassert the non-visual, above all tactility, as a respite from the guises of spectacle. What lessons can be drawn from moving images and recent productive examples of their incorporation into the built environment so as to identify modes of reflection, contemplation, and dwelling which are cognitively robust and promote urban knowledge?

Andreas Ruby: Strategies of Estrangement
The concept of estrangement (German: Verfremdung) was introduced in the late 1920s by German dramatist Bertolt Brecht in his 'Theory of Epic Theater' as a means to counter the traditional concept of 'empathy' (German: Einfühlung) that had formed the dramatic purpose of theater since Aristotle. 'To estrange a character or action means first and foremost to strip it of anything that appears evident, familiar and understandable about it and to arouse curiosity and astonishment about it instead.' This estrangement was to cause critical reflection by the viewer of what he or she sees on stage, rather than passively empathizing with the fate of the play’s heroes. Ultimately, Brecht understood estrangement as an artistic technique to symbolically counter the effects of alienation (German: Entfremdung) which, according to Marx, characterized the default mode of relationships between the late capitalist individual and his or her physical and social environment. A lot of contemporary architecture seems to inscribe itself in this lineage by using various atmospheric, narrative or formal scenarios to estrange the familiar appearance of a program. I will discuss various strategies of estrangement, not only from architecture but also from contemporary art, advertising, music videos and popular music.

Selected readings from Reader 2, 3 and 3a The Other Image. The Politics of Appearance.
Modernity and its Discontent

Architecture (op)positions revisited

Series of lectures and seminar with Roemer van Toorn
14 oct, 18 nov, 2 dec, 6 Jan, 13 Jan, 20 Jan, 27 Jan

We have moved from a linear, bipolar and dialectical understanding of society (a naive idea of a transparency, neutrality and functionality) towards a kind of ideology of opacity, where the development of the mass media and the diffusion of systems of communication is not “automatically” generating more transparency, helping to develop a more enlightened, self-conscious and emancipated ’transparent’ society, but it maintains instead a diversity of viewpoints which render societies more complex, often in favor of a chaos that is beneficial for late-capitalism and its multinationals. We have learned the art of living in a world characterized by ambiguity and flux but the disappearance of politics and ethics, the one of democracy, is what’s the problem. The current crisis of reality demands that we begin from the beginning again: look up and rethink history again, from the necessary perspective to redefine what modern could mean. What ever happened to Modernity and what is its definition throughout its recent history? And how did architecture relate to these developments of Modernity and took (op)position will be analysed and discussed, including the role of the material object of architecture itself.

Selected readings from Reader 1, 2 and 3c.
The Subversion of Architecture?
The Architecture of Subversion

Is there such a thing as activist architecture?
Series of lectures and seminar with Lieven Decauter
14 oct, 11 nov, 18 nov, 2 dec, 6 Jan, 13 Jan, 20 Jan, 27 Jan

The point of departure will be the power of architecture as the hypostasis of power: architecture has always been the infrastructure and the face of power. From this arises a feeling of ambivalence, even hostility, towards architecture: from the storming of the Bastille to the attack of the Twin Towers. These are acts of revolution or terrorism. Is there such a thing as 'good subversion' of architecture? Starting from the problems of activist art we will look for examples of activist architecture. To investigate this in a concrete manner we will take 2 case studies: the group 'Stalker' and 'Decolonizing architecture'. I hope we (meaning you) will come up with more examples. The ultimate question is: Does this para-architecture represent a (sym)pathetic marginal form of (pseudo)political action? Or is it an alternative to infra-architecture in the age of hyper-architecture?

Selected readings from Reader 3b.
After the Self-Managed City?
Urbanism in Yugoslavia and the Post-Socialist Condition.
Gal Kirn & Lukasz Stanek, in collaboration with Dubravka Sekulić
28 November, Symposium, Jan van Eyck Academie, Berlage Institute

This symposium investigates the European urban condition after the welfare state by focusing on the transformations of urbanism in Yugoslavia. Playing a historically ambivalent role during the Cold War, Yugoslavia will be investigated as a vortex of two tendencies which condition the current production of European space: the liberalization of the urban economies in the former socialist countries in the East and the deconstruction of the welfare state in the West.

The contemporary post-socialist urban condition will be investigated as constituted by ruptures, continuities and persistences between three paradigms of urban development specific to three phases in Yugoslav political history: the “centralized city”, “self-managed city”, and the currently dominant paradigm of urban management.

The main question posed by this symposium is whether the replacement of the “self-managed city” by the current normativity of urban management can be interrupted and superseded. In other words: just as the Yugoslav experience could not be inscribed into the polarity of the Cold War, its project of a “right to the city” might, perhaps, challenge today’s consensus between the West and the East concerning the spectacle and commodification as models of urban space.

The participants include: Dafne Berc + Luciano Basauri - Zagreb, Eve Blau - Boston, USA; Emil Jurcan – Pula, Croatia; Gal Kirn – Amsterdam/ Ljubljana; Lev Kreft - Ljubljana, Slovenia; Vedran Mimica – Rotterdam, Netherlands; Maroje Mrduljaš - Zagreb, Croatia; Milan Rakita - Belgrade, Serbia; Dubravka Sekulić – Maastricht/ Belgrade; Lukasz Stanek – Rotterdam/ Zurich.

Selected readings from Reader 3c.

The Berlage Institute faculty and students can go to Maastricht by bus.
Projective Theory related programs

FIRST TERM

**Dutch Modern Architecture. An Introduction**
Lectures and seminar with Roemer van Toorn

A series of three to four lectures on Dutch architecture. Starting with the godfather of Modern Architecture Hendrik Petrus Berlage His position has been compared with that of Wagner in Austria, Behrens in Germany and Saarinen in Finland all of them architects who managed to shake off historical styles and give architecture a rational basis. But here the lecture series will not stop, other architects such as Van Eesteren, Maaskant, Rietveld, Van Eyck, Hertzberger, the **Superdutch**, Koolhaas and today’s most contemporary architecture in the Netherlands will be introduced and critically reviewed.

Special reader: Understanding the Netherlands

**The Berlage Conversations**
Program run by Roemer van Toorn and a devoted team of first and second year participants.

Provocative and challenging debates with with Berlage Faculty and invited lecturers and studio professors. These conversations do not only document the range of issues the Berlage Institutes researches as a whole, but they also address issues which are relevant for the debate related to Reality Demands A Theory. Furthermore these conversations look for differences and continuities between the different research studios and the relevant issues which are at stake. These conversations will include a session where all studio professors are present to debate their research.

**Post Graduate Advanced Seminars (P.A.S.)**
23 September, Vedran Mimica, Roemer van Toorn, Salomon Frausto, Mick Morssink, and Joachim Declerk

A series of **introductionary lectures** fine tuned for the first year:
- Postgraduate Research at Berlage Institute, Vedran Mimica
- Projective Theory = ?, an introduction, Roemer van Toorn
- Reading/Writing/Arithmetic: Forming Architectural Thought, Salomon Fraustro
- C.A.R.D. Joachim Declerck
- Graphic Design, Mick Morssink
- The Library, Danny Bosten

**Situated Transnationalism and our Virtual Reality (1st and 2nd year)**
- Bert Mulder, Democracy: architectures of media and dialogue, date 10 October.
- Leonard Blussé, East – West relations (2nd Term)
SECOND TERM (in preparation)

**Inside Berlage**

Lectures and seminars with Thomas A. P. Van Leeuwen

“Inside Berlage” is the sequel to the “About Berlage” series. Maintaining the frame work of “exploring the Netherlands” as we have done in preceding years, from now on we will concentrate more on the theory, history and practice as it was taught to Berlage and his circle and to the early Modernists. We will explore classical Academic teaching, from Palladio to Guadet as well as the different architectural variations on the theories of evolutionary or “organic” development, from Semper to Wright. “Inside Berlage” seeks to compare contemporary styles of design to the academic or “Ecole des Beaux-Arts” approaches. This introduction might inspire students to explore different ways to explore the problem of design. A field trip to the Ecole in Paris will be considered.

**Aesthetics as a Form of Politics**

In many projective practices, such as in architecture, art, music, and film we see that they embrace the concept of heterogeneity. These heterogeneous constructions often do not escape what I once described as ‘fresh conservatism’. They construct conflicts full of contradiction that bring about a lot of heterogeneous combinations that are, as Jacques Rancière has observed, in the end a-political. Rancière distinguishes four typologies of this construction of heterogeneity in contemporary arts, which also applies for the architectural practice. For example, one way of bringing together heterogeneous elements as antagonistic elements is the joke. Yet another way would be a collection, whereby all the parts exist next to each other without hierarchical distinction, as in the book FARMAX or the Dutch pavilion in Hannover. Or the way that some recent artworks try to engage a heterogeneous public to communicate with each other through active participation, as for example with the D-Tower by NOX, without the initiator having to take the responsibility of choosing a position. And, as a fourth aspect of ‘fresh conservatism’, the use of mystery not with a confrontational effect but as a familiar strangeness or affirmative analogy, like the Schaulager Museum in Basel designed by Herzog & De Meuron, a prototypical house as drawn by a child. Of course in different ways, in all these examples, we can discover attention to complex beauty, while heterogeneous elements are unnecessarily combined into an antagonism. According to Rancière, these four heterogeneous ways of working create a new form of consensus. Every collective situation is objectified and therefore no longer makes a difference, no secrets are unlocked or new possibilities opened, neither it lends itself to a polemic about our controversial reality. We have lost sight of the fact that a system replete with heterogeneity can also raise certain urgent matters without consensus, without already wanting or being able to provide the ultimate answer. The coexistence of juxtapositions – fascination and aversion, emptiness and love, freedom and consumption – can also be a starting point for the establishment of new connections. It is not a question of the things themselves (the form) but of what happens between and through these things.

Lecture and seminar in preparation with Chantal Mouffe, and Markus Miessen

Other lectures and seminars to be confirmed later this year.
READERS Projective Theory
Content Outline

Reader One (updated)
1) The World Today. What is Welfare?

A) Chapter One “What is Welfare?” is all about the Welfare state, different Welfare models, and includes an articles on the prospects of democracy and the space of history. In this chapter several specialist such as Clarke, Giddens, Hirst, Esping Anders, Pinch, Leonard, Hobsbawn and for instance an article by Castoriadis are collected.

B) In Chapter Two “The World Today” scholars such as Harvey, Lash, Urry, Zizek, Fukuyama, Beck, Therborn, Boltanski, Chaipello, Debray and Davis not only explain how late-capitalism came into existence and what its different live stages have been, but also discuss what the consequences are of late-capitalism and especially what neo-liberalism means for humanity living in the global city. The first subchapter of this part is about neoliberalism and disorganized capital. The second subchapter is about the history of modernity, how it revolutionized over time, from the printing press (Debray) to the concept of work (Braziliation of Work) by Beck. In subchapter three Davis, Harvey and Koolhaas discuss the right to the city.

Reader Two (updated)
2) The Complexity of our Times. Issues and Opportunities.

A) In the first chapter “The Nation-state, Denationalization and Globalization” we find articles by Sassen, Negri, Foucault, Balibar, Boltanski, De Cauter, Learmans and others on globalization, the idea of the state, and the nation.

B) For some the nation-state is an outdated concept, instead thinkers like Negri see chances from within our “Empire”; which is also the title of this chapter 2.

C) With “Cosmopolitism” schapter 3 discusses the idea of a cosmopolitan world. Ulrich Beck in debate with Chantal Mouffe. How is power enacted in today’s world?

D) Through the concept of biopolitics – in chapter 4 - Foucault, Negri, Wallenstein and others explain how systems of power have advanced all the way to the scale of our biological life (biopower).

E) Chapter 5 addresses the issue of “population” with a text by Laclau and others.

F) Chapter 6 “Migration” discusses “the clash of civilizations”; in fact opposes this idea of neoliberalism as developed by Huntington. Balibar and Said defend an idea of community based on the co-habitation (co-existence) of many cultures.
G) Chapter 7 “Rethinking Design” rethinks – based on our global cultural industry – what an object (and design is today) in our global age where the classical idea of the object seems to have died. Latour and Lash take us on a wild tour.

H) Chapter 8 “Visual Culture” start to rethink the role of the image and the one of the spectacle in our global age. There are problems but also possibilities within globalization as discussed in the above mentioned 7 chapters.

Reader Three (new)

A) One Chapter deals with the question “What does it mean to be modern today?” A highly complicated question, one that cannot be ignored given the current status quo and permanent creative destruction of capitalism. Negri, Hardt, Sennett, Held, Habermas, Boltanski, Virno and Beck discuss the issue from the perspective of democracy and other observations.

B) In the second chapter “Aesthetics as a Form of Politics” you find several thoughts on the concept of the political and the aesthetic revolution as sketched out by Ranciere, Mouffe, Hirst, Benjamin, Beck, Miessen and Van Toorn.

C) With Chapter five we can discuss the current (op)positions in art and architecture. This chapter documents text by: Michael Hays, Bob Somol, Sarah Whiting, Roemer van Toorn, Michael Speaks, Peter Eisenman, Nicolas Bourriaud, Claire Bishop, Keller Easterling, Latour, Hickey, Speaks, Shu, and Van Dijk.


Reader Three (A)
3a) The Other Image, The Politics of Appearance

In “The Other Image, The Politics of Appearance” the role and (critical) importance of our visual culture will be discussed by both practitioners and scholars in the field. In this chapter you find texts by Serge Dany, Michael Fried, Walter Benjamin, George Baird, Ed Dimendberg, Andres Ruby, Michael Speaks, Roemer van Toorn, Martin Jay, Jeff Wall, Liz Wells, Michael Speaks, Gilles Deleuze and for instance Abigail Soloon Godeau.
Reader Three (b)
3b) After the Self-managed City.

After the Self-managed City” investigates the European urban Condition after the Welfare State by focusing on the transformations of urbanism in Yugoslavia. The chapter includes texts by Vedran Mimica, Slavoy Zizek, and Branka Likic Brboric.

Reader Three (c)
3c) After the Self-managed City.

After the Self-managed City” investigates the European urban Condition after the Welfare State by focusing on the transformations of urbanism in Yugoslavia. The chapter includes texts by Vedran Mimica, Slavoy Zizek, and Branka Likic Brboric.

Reader Three (d)
3d) The subversion of Architecture? The Architecture of Subversion! Is there such a thing as Activist Architecture?

A series of lectures and seminars by Lieven De Cauter. The point of departure will be the power of architecture as the hypostasis of power: architecture has always been the infrastructure and the face of power. From this arises a feeling of ambivalence, even hostility towards architecture: from the storming of the Bastille to the attack on the twin towers. But these are acts of revolution or terrorism. Is there such a thing as ‘good subversion’ of architecture? Starting from the problems of activist art, we will look for examples of activist architecture. To investigate this in a concrete manner, we will take two case studies: the group Stalker and Decolonizing architecture. I hope we (meaning you) will come up with more examples. The ultimate question is: ‘does this para-architecture represent a (sym)pathetic marginal form of (pseudo)political action? Or is it an alternative to infra-architecture in the age of hyper-architecture?’

A second theme, if there is time, could be the concept of State of Nature. We will start from climate change as permanent catastrophe and the archipelago of capsules as basic figure of our spatial world order and the state of exception (state of emergency). We will discuss the concept of Camp vs. Heterotopia, to return to the concept of State of Nature as a way to understand our new world order. It is about a fascination that running deep in the lust economy of our time (reality tv as psychotic games, as a war of everybody against everybody) and it is in another way a return of thanatopolitics. We will try and reread Hobbes, Rousseau, Agamben, Foucault and Schmitt in the light of the emergencies of our dualized world. The case could be a project on prison islands.

With text by Bran Holmes, Lieven de Cauter, Peter Lang on Stalker, Rudi Learmans, Foucault, Decolonizing Architecture and several others.