

PhD Architecture Panel

SEED PGR Conference, 22 May 2018, The University of Manchester

Panel Title

Multiple Directions in Architectural Research

Description

What is common among a bank branch, an urban development project, an armored military vehicle, and a building project? And, how do they tell us different stories about our relations to architectural and urban space? Instead of asking ‘what is architecture?’, this panel aims to open a conversation on the different modes of collecting actors, agencies, associations, and technologies that continuously make and remake architecture and urban space. The presentations explore how the specificity of each object of study necessitates its own methodological toolkit in order to navigate through the landscapes of architecture and urbanism that we encounter.

Participants

- Amy Hanley, presenter (2nd year PhD Architecture)
Branching: Tracing Movements in The Physical Space of Banking
- Garrett Wolf, presenter (3rd year PhD Architecture)
Co-production of Everyday life in Tashkent
- Brett Mommersteeg, presenter (2nd year PhD Architecture)
Inside an Architectural Project, or how to follow a building-in-the-making
- Fadi Shayya, presenter (2nd year PhD Architecture)
Inscribing the Urban in Technical Objects
- Dr. Łukasz Stanek, panel chair (Senior Lecturer in Architecture)

Details

Time: 1:00 – 2:20

Place: Manchester Meeting Place & Barnes Wallis Building

Inquiries: email conference committee at pgrconferenceseed@manchester.ac.uk

Branching: Tracing Movements in The Physical Space of Banking

Amy Hanley, candidate in PhD Architecture (3rd year)

Abstract

The bank branch is a physical node that makes visible the flow of money. When dealing with a bank building, architectural studies commonly tend to focus on plan function, its morphology and the visual characteristics of the bank elevation, to tell an evolutionary story of consolidation into a recognisable and stable building type. Architecture's classifications of a bank type hinged on its capacity to securely contain and order societies' banking practice. The architecture bank types decline in the mid-nineties, was described by identifying how the highly differentiated functions of the bank plan would be superseded by a new spatial logic of a digital network. Yet, if we study bank branches at the level of their mundane routine operations today, if we explore contemporary practices of banking, we will be able to shed new light at the contemporary 'facets' and changing speeds of development of this architecture type. In a space between the traditional image of the bank branch as a site of treasure and the seamless digital transaction. The contemporary bank branch is made up of an assembly of diverse practices, devices, documents, people, technologies, materials and rules that all negotiate multiple modes of monetary transaction in a dynamic and networked way. Drawing on an ANT-inspired ethnographic study of the daily practices of banking in several banks branched networks in the UK. The presentation will contribute to a better understanding of the little-studied but commonly-held building type, the bank branch, and its role in shaping architectures typological theory, at the very moment when its movement, its 'branching' has fallen between the gaps made by the global jump from physical to a digital discourse about banking.

Keywords

Bank branch, ethnography, socio-technical arrangement, digital, ANT, building type

Co-production of Everyday life in Tashkent

Garrett Wolf, candidate for PhD Architecture (3rd year)

Abstract

This research looks at the co-production of urban space and urban everyday life in Tashkent, Uzbekistan since an architectural culture change, roughly coinciding with the post-earthquake (1966) period, to the present. Specifically, this work analyzes the links between modernization and urbanization as Uzbekistan transitioned from the Soviet Union, into independence, and over the history of independence, to explain the periods/processes of urban change, demodernization and urban development. These changes and their effects on urbanization can be seen in the physical change in Tashkent as well as in changes in everyday life. This research explores these changes through analyzing how urban everyday life in Tashkent interacted and interacts with architecture and urban space. In these differing spaces we can see how co-productions have changed over time, and specifically how these relations manifest in material space and practice. In this way we can use architecture to observe these relationships and their changes at a manageable scale, which can then inform us about changes at the level of the urban. By tracing these processes, and the resulting material and social changes we can better understand the recent history of Uzbekistan and the role of and connections between modernization (demodernization) and urbanization.

Keywords

Modernization, demodernization, co-production, everyday life, Tashkent

Inside an Architectural Project, or how to follow a building-in-the-making

Brett Mommersteeg, candidate in PhD Architecture (2nd year)

Abstract

From the outside, buildings seem to appear in our cities magically. But what happens when we go inside this process? What sort of logic does the building-in-the-making take? What experiences, processes and actors do we encounter? Through the prism of Factory, an ongoing architectural project in Manchester designed by OMA, this talk will quickly take us inside a project in order to reflect on how we can study it. It will explore how following the making of Factory, as a complex and evolving set of relations, requires a flexible, multi-sited ethnographic approach as the development of the design travels to different sites and kinds of practices, and taking on different kinds of forms. Tracing the movements of design development not only creates epistemological difficulties for the researcher, but also foregrounds another scenography of architecture, reassembling it differently.

Keywords

Multi-sited approach, Building-in-the-making, Factory, Building Project

Inscribing the Urban in Technical Objects

Fadi Shayya, candidate for PhD Architecture (2nd year)

Abstract

How does military vehicular technology capture urban space? What kinds of associations hold armored vehicles, soldiers, and the urban together? And, how are the concerns of the military mediated through technology? This short talk attempts to answer these questions that are missing from academic discussions of militarization. It addresses the urbanization—or making urban—of military technology rather than the militarization—or making military—of urban areas. Through a pragmatist approach and ANT-inspired methodology, the research traces and translates technical data from patents and patent applications on the Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles employed by the U.S. military in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars upon the increasing threat of improvised explosives devices (IEDs). Preliminary analysis shows how specific understandings of the urban are inscribed in these vehicles, transforming them from mere transportation machines to become protective architectures for soldiers, missions, and themselves.

Keywords

Urban, armored military vehicles, technology, ANT, patents, inscription, translation, MRAP