

## Theory's History 196X-199X (Brussels, 8-10 Feb 17)

Brussels, Feb 8-10, 2017

Registration deadline: Jan 1, 2017

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Theory's History, 196X-199X.

Challenges in the Historiography of Architectural Knowledge

In recent international literature addressing the history of 20th century architectural theory, the year 1968 is indicated as a decisive moment, giving rise to a 'new' architectural theory. From that moment onwards, emphasis was no longer placed on the aesthetics of architecture, but on its critical potential. Yet, according to some scholars, this intensification of theory was short-lived. A presence of coexisting and even contradictory paradigms derived from very different epistemic domains (anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, social sciences, etc.) led to a setback of theory, resulting in an end-of-theory atmosphere in the 1990s.

It is not a coincidence that the so called death of architectural theory concurred with the upsurge of anthologies on architectural theory that collect and classify referential texts. Instead of burying theory, these anthologies had an additional effect, namely to institutionalise it. In other words, they offered both closure to a past period and also defined the locus of a next period of theorisation, invoking a 'historical turn'. At the same time architectural discourses, and especially architectural historiography, were engaging with new theoretical fields such as gender studies or postcolonial studies, giving rise to a continued production of theoretically informed books and articles.

This conference discusses the methodological challenges that come along with this historical gaze towards theory, by focusing on the concrete processes in which knowledge is involved. By screening the unspoken rules of engagement that the accounts of post-war architectural theory have agreed to and distributed, speakers will point at dominant assumptions, biases and absences. While anthologies inevitably narrate history with rough meshes, we believe it is time to search for those versions of theory formation that have slipped through these nets of historiography, in order to question the nature of theory and the challenges it poses to historians. How do you do historical research on something as intangible as theory, or in a broadened sense, the knowledge of architecture?

Speakers in this conference are in other words not only interested in what theorists and practicing architects were arguing for, but also how, why and where they did so. Looking at case-studies, the singular and 'minor' expressions of theory, the local discourses and the different formative contexts (e.g. education, publication culture) will be subjected to careful scrutiny.

This two-day conference brings together both young and established scholars from every discipline that is able to engage with these topics. Confirmed keynotes are Joan Ockman, Ákos

Moravánszky and Lukasz Stanek.

The online registration for the Theory's History Conference is now open through our website: [architecture.kuleuven.be/theoryshistory/](http://architecture.kuleuven.be/theoryshistory/).

Please note that early conference registration will only be available through January 1st 2017.

For questions, contact [theoryshistory@kuleuven.be](mailto:theoryshistory@kuleuven.be).

Session programme (tentative):

#### WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY

17h00 Introduction

17h30 Keynote lecture by Lukasz Stanek

#### THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY

08h30 Sessions 1

A. Theory over Time (chaired by Tom Avermaete)

B. Thinking the Social (chaired by Hilde Heynen)

C. The Density of the Moment (chaired by Fredie Floré)

11h30 Keynote lecture by Ákos Moravánszky

13h30 Sessions 2

A. Mechanisms of Distortion (chaired by Janina Gosseye)

B. The State as Producer of Theory (chaired by Lukasz Stanek)

C. Mediating Theory (chaired by Nelson Mota)

16h30 Sessions 3

A. Leaning on Philosophy (chaired by Filip Mattens)

B. Geopolitics of Theory (chaired by Ákos Moravánszky)

C. Elective Affinities (chaired by Rajesh Heynickx)

#### FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY

08h30 Sessions 4

A. The Figure of the Theorist (chaired by Maarten Delbeke)

C. Educational Settings: Classes & Labs (chaired by Joan Ockman)

11h30 Sessions 5

A. Looking for Knowledge (chaired by Yves Schoonjans)

B. Projected and Practiced Theory (chaired by Ricardo Agarez)

C. The Logic of Seriality (chaired by Hélène Janniére)

14h30 Sessions 6

A. Challenging Hegemonies (chaired by Teresa Stoppani)

B. Thinking through Projects (chaired by André Loeckx)

C. Permanence of the Spoken Word (chaired by David Vanderburgh)

17h30 Keynote lecture by Joan Ockman

This conference is kindly supported by:

University of Leuven, Department of Architecture / University of Ghent / FWO - Research Foundation Flanders / KVAB - Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts

Reference:

CONF: Theory's History 196X-199X (Brussels, 8-10 Feb 17). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 3, 2016 (accessed Jul 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/14300>>.