Architectural Fantasies (London, 13-15 Jun 17)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, Jun 13–15, 2017
Deadline: Jan 26, 2017

Marie Collier

Fantasy in Reality: Architecture, Representation, Reproduction

From the capriccios of Piranesi and Canaletto to Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International, Archigram's drawings in the 1970s, and contemporary video game architecture, architectural fantasies have been produced and reproduced for centuries. On the one hand, architectural fantasies stir the imagination, represent future possibilities, and utopian dreams, on the other, they reflect and reproduce political ideologies, societal aspirations and anxieties. Though by definition, fantasy relates to that outside reality, or beyond possibility, the examples listed above engage directly with reality and they exist as realised projects in the form of architectural representations – on paper, as models, as reproductions or as digital files.

This symposium aims to consider the intersection of fantasy and reality by examining a broad range of architectural production from the middle ages to the present day across different cultures and media. It invites explorations of the often blurred lines, or tensions between fantasy and reality in architecture and its representation. This could include, the consideration of fantasy architecture in all its multi-media forms as 'realised', looking at the ways in which built projects are rendered fantastic through representation and reproduction, or the ways in which fantasy architecture engages with reality by highlighting society's aspirations or anxieties.

Architectural fantasies created in drawings, paintings, computer renders, etchings, photographs and films and three dimensional examples in models, pavilions, or virtual reality will be considered, along with built structures, as vital forms of architectural production that both reflect and produce reality. How does the production of architectural fantasies relate to reality and attempt to shape it? How do representations of architecture construct or perpetuate fantasies of the built environment? How have architects, city planners and/or politicians and rulers used architecture to reinforce fantastical notions of reality? What is the role of the mass media in the production and dissemination of architectural fantasies in popular culture? In what ways do representations of built or soon to be built projects contribute to the construction of fantasy? The conference seeks to address these questions and more.

Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Unbuildable architecture
- Architecture as symbol
- The use and abuse of digital renderings and 3D modeling in contemporary architecture
- Architectural photography and the construction of mediated views of architecture

- The reproduction of architecture in mass media
- Architecture in film and theatre sets
- Paper architecture
- Architectural models for built and un-built architecture, models as tools for teaching,
- The Pavilion as a test bed for architecture, and/or as an expression of National mythology
- Dolls houses and play houses, or other examples of architecture and play
- Architecture and taste, class, and consumption
- Futurism, historicism, utopisanism and distopianism
- Representations of architecture in popular culture

The first day of the symposium, 13 June will be an opportunity for the participants to visit architectural collections in London. This will be followed by presentations of papers on 14 and 15 June.

Proposals are welcome from postgraduate, early-career and established researchers working in all relevant disciplines. Please send a title and an abstract of no more than 300 words together with a short CV and 100 word biography to Marie Collier (marie.collier@courtauld.ac.uk) by Thursday 26 January 2017. Successful candidates will be notified in mid-February. Papers should not exceed 20 minutes in length.

Partial funding may be available to cover some travel costs.

Reference:

CFP: Architectural Fantasies (London, 13-15 Jun 17). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 12, 2017 (accessed Nov 7, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/14477>.