

Dialectic VII, Issue: Architecture and Citizenship

Deadline: Jun 1, 2018

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Dialectic VII: Architecture and Citizenship – Decolonizing Architectural Pedagogy

Dialectic VII invites reflection on the challenges of training architects for global citizenship. In recent decades, design programs in affluent and globally dominant cultures, from Japan to United States, Belgium to Dubai have developed traveling studios that place students face to face with global others. Some of these efforts reproduce the priorities of professional practice for innovation, efficiency and market viability. Others, including design-build programs in poor communities, emphasize affective experience and tactical approaches. Still others are represented as simple cultural exposure by which design students collect experiences towards open-ended results. Some of these educational forays aim to educate future designers as global citizens rather than mere passive corporate cogs within the international marketplace. However, the idea of global citizenship is complicated by the fact that the globe is a profoundly anti-democratic space, one in which international architects are some of the few granted mobility and voice. Is the very idea of "global citizenship" then an oxymoron?

Just as thorny aspect of this pedagogic ambition is the need for decolonizing architectural pedagogy. Despite absorption of women, colored and queer voices, desire to reach out to the destitute, non-moderns, and difference, the studio culture still brings everything back to Western and capitalist modes of governance and being in the world. Decolonization of education is a wide ranging ethical project spanning numerous disciplines, with the goal of recovering power for different ways of knowing and being, discredited by the universalist truth claims of Western system of knowledge. In our discipline, history of world architecture is one domain that is attempting to relieve architectural pedagogy from Euro-US centric frameworks of imagining architecture. This highly myopic and narrow imagination is sustained by the myth of the neutral expert—that despite being thoroughly debunked by postcolonial critiques of development—persists in our field with a stubborn tenacity.

To bring this project to architecture requires that we take a hard look at architectural pedagogy's placement within Cartesian epistemology. What of the cleft Descartes put between mind, matter and spirit that made the world inert and an abstract proposition, and hence available for exploitation? What of the inability of sustainability efforts and green architecture to unshackle themselves from the foundational framework responsible for the near destruction of the planet? This may require more than the deployment of feminist, race and queer theory (all also squarely Cartesian). This may mean pushing these theoretical accomplishments further and open them to the wisdom of non-anthropocentric, in fact cosmocentric epistemologies of indigenous and folk cultures, so thoroughly discredited by dominant scientific thinking. What would architectural pedagogy and

praxis look like if they became porous to perspectives based on systems of knowledge that have no place in current corporate design culture? What would its products and value system look like if it created a dialogue between Cartesian feminism, race and queer theory and their non-Cartesian practices? How do we inculcate an ethos of lateral learning in our curricula without reducing the dominated cultural knowledge to our preexisting frameworks? How can "citizen" architects exploit these openings towards more equitable and sustainable futures? Does this make the idea of "global citizenship" viable or does it still remain an untenable ideal?

In Dialectic VII, we seek submissions that address both global citizenship training and the types of architectural practices it might ultimately promote. We want to better understand what happens when design practitioners and students are thrust from the comfortable realm of expertise into a space of compromise, accountability and ethics. What architectural practices already exist outside simple cost/wage structures? What practices are already open to lateral learning? What sustainability efforts successfully unshackle themselves from the technological rationality responsible for the planet's global problems? How do ritual, reciprocity, volunteerism, prayer, bribery, nepotism, sacrifice, generosity, and other extra-capitalist practices infiltrate the supposedly neutral territories of architectural knowledge? As architects move from one global location to another, what productive lessons are learned from the differently modern people they encounter? Can one learn to be a global citizen without leaving one's "home" country? What role might architectural "practices without practice," such as public history, preservation, curatorial work, discourse and research play in broadening our horizons beyond capitalist vision of architecture? In considering these questions, we invite scholars to allow careful observation of lived phenomenon to drive analysis.

Dialectic VII invites articles, field notes, reports, maps, and image essays on architectural citizenship and its entanglement with the decolonization of architectural pedagogy and practice. The editors value critical statements and model practices. We hope to include instructive case studies and exciting examples of professional practice. Possible contributions may also include mapping of ongoing debates across the world, and reviews of books, journals, exhibitions and new media. Please send abstracts of 350 words and short CVs to Shundana Yusuf shundana@arch.utah.edu, Anna Goodman good7@pdx.edu, Ole W. Fischer fischer@arch.utah.edu and B.D. Wortham-Galvin bdworth@clemsun.edu by June 1st, 2018.

Accepted authors will be notified by June 15th. Photo essays with 6-8 images and full papers of 2500-3500 words must be submitted by August 15, 2018, (including visual material, endnotes, and permissions for illustrations) to undergo an external peer-review process. This issue of Dialectic is expected to be out in print by Fall 2019.

Requirements:

Abstract (350 words)

Short CV

Reference:

CFP: Dialectic VII, Issue: Architecture and Citizenship. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 22, 2018 (accessed Apr 8, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/17905>>.