Field Studies – Doctoral Colloquium (Princeton, 2-3 Mar 19)

Princeton University, Mar 2–03, 2019
Deadline: Nov 15, 2018

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We are excited to share with you our Call for Proposals for Field Studies, a doctoral student workshop hosted by the PhD program in History and Theory of Architecture at Princeton University. The workshop will be held at Princeton University's School of Architecture in March 2-3, 2019. The deadline for the submission of position statements is November 15, 2018 by end of day.

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History and Theory of Architecture | Princeton University | School of Architecture

The state of the discipline, or as this inquiry more specifically terms it, the field, is currently undergoing a crisis of identity. Despite having increased in visibility in recent decades, the disciplinary position of Architectural History and Theory (AHT) is experiencing the adverse side effect of a rampantly expanded field: a loose center. Disoriented by numerous "turns" (the critical, the post-critical, the technological, the semiotic, the curatorial, the environmental, to name only a few), many doctoral programs in AHT currently operate in a disciplinary fog that hinders rather than enables fruitful discussion. Correspondingly, other disciplines often seem unclear as to AHT's object of study, a response that symptomatically mirrors the field's unchecked embrace of external subjects and methodologies.

States of crisis, however, always carry with them dynamic potential. The uneasy coexistence of multiple disciplinary valences affords us the opportunity, not to tidy up the field's past or constrain its present, but to discuss if and what commonalities exist as it stands, and how we might leverage them to create cohesion among scholars. We believe that, following these shifts, our field is primed for transformative action, a change, or perhaps just a conversation. Accordingly, Field Studies follows from the progressive plurality of disciplinary syntheses across academic fields and asks a deceivingly simple question: What is the future for Architectural History and Theory? Underneath that question lies a more complex one: What is Architectural History and Theory? What constitutes its field?

Echoing its current state, responses to this question are radically diverse. Calls to solidify the existing boundaries of the field, to halt the dilution of our collective expertise, meet propositions to expand the field even further. Claims to the specificity of AHT encounter the belief that the path to influencing other fields is through an inward reflection on our own disciplinary core, distilling what is distinct about our methods: that it is not simply what we look at but how we look at it. Others argue that the discipline never had a core, and that the very notion of a field is retrograde.

Propositions to constrain the scope of AHT clash with those voices that argue for a reinvention of the field through its exerted influence on other disciplines and vice-versa, forming new trans-disciplinary methodologies in the process. Still others believe that the factions already forming within AHT should become formalized as smaller specialized fields, following the precedent set by other disciplines within the academy. As a backdrop to all these propositions we must likewise consider the economy of the academy itself, and our position within it.

One way to move ahead, to take stock of the contemporary condition while looking to the past and projecting a future, is to compile a critical self-portrait, an ethology of the field. Far from becoming a "therapy session," or a staid conference, Field Studies will consist of a series of workshops among peers––colleagues in AHT and adjacent fields––spread out over the course of a weekend, striving to identify the dynamics, the processes, the extensions, the disciplinary interdependencies and instabilities, and the morphology of our collective field. Three distinct yet interrelated workshops will each center around a specific problematic:

Framework—the structure of the field; a set of tacit or unwritten rules that determine possibilities and potentialities; includes various dimensions (institutional, economic, political, cultural, etc.)

Position—the nodes of the field; the extent of agency each position possesses relative to others; locations that determine a field of view and the range of actualities and potentialities within it.

Method—the processes within the field; the specific, operative means of scholarly production; adaptation or adherence to former methodologies.

Each of these elements are also viewed as constituent parts of the Field, the subject of the final roundtable which will synthesize the results of the workshops while plotting a possible continuation of the conversation.

:: Submission Guidelines ::
CV (include full name, affiliation, address, and email)
Position Statement (individual proposal or statement of intent reflecting on the problematic posed by the CfP, 500-1500 words)
All documents to be submitted as .pdf

:: Timeline and Selection Process ::
All documents should be submitted by November 15, 2018 to fieldstudies@princeton.edu

Selections will be made by the organizing committee and a note of acceptance will be given by the end of November, 2018.

Contributors will have to prepare and submit a working paper (2,500 - 4,000 words) by January 15, 2019. The working paper may take the form of a theoretical proposition, a historically derived analysis, or contemporary polemic. Documents, upon review and acceptance, will be pre-circulated to workshop participants at least two weeks before the workshop on March 2-3, 2019.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions prior to the submission deadline.

:: Travel and Financial Support ::
Limited funds are available to offset the costs of travel and accommodation, to be distributed on a case-by-case basis.

Reference:
ANN: Field Studies – Doctoral Colloquium (Princeton, 2-3 Mar 19). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 4, 2018 (accessed Nov 22, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/19115>.