

Photography as Visual Urbanism (Aachen, 31 Jan – 1 Feb 19)

RWTH Aachen University, Haus Königshügel Melatener Str. 31, 52074 Aachen, Jan 31–Feb 1, 2019

Registration deadline: Jan 18, 2019

Ela Kacel

Photography as Visual Urbanism: Memory, Research, Mediation

In recent years, visual urbanism has emerged as a new research field. Being aware of the photography's potentials and constraints in practice (such as photographic objectification) and being critical of street photography, researchers using critical visual methodologies in anthropology (Banks 2001; Pink 2007), cultural studies (Lister and Wells, 2000), sociology (Holliday 2001), and cultural geography (Rose 2012) have underlined the importance of reflexivity and questioned the uncritical use of both cameras and images. Yet, until now, a discussion of incorporating visual research methods into the knowledge of architectural design and urban planning has been very minimal. While researchers in other disciplines have already suggested possibilities for new visual methodologies, researchers in architecture and urban planning have not undertaken similar approaches in their disciplines yet.

In this conference, we aim to generate a new cross-disciplinary dialogue between theoreticians and practitioners of urbanism and photography in order to develop new collaborative methods for research on the visual, sensory and performative dimensions of urbanism through photography. Our aim is to reveal, that the practice of architecture and urbanism departs from a hybrid state in which memory, research and mediation are bound together in a specific operative mode. Photography, as a means of visual and performative urban practice, can be connected to the acts of remembering, of investigating or of planning. The main research questions to discuss during the conference are: What can architects, urban planners and designers learn from photographers and visual artists and vice versa? How might research methodologies of photographers and visual artists help us challenge existing research methodologies in urbanism and urban studies? How can we define a new common ground between making photography and the practices of designing / making / living urban spaces?

Organized by Prof. Axel Sowa (Department of Architectural Theory, RWTH Aachen University)

and Dr. Ela Kacel (Faculty of Architecture and Design, Bahcesehir University, Istanbul)

Venue: RWTH Aachen University
Haus Königshügel

Melatener Str. 31 52074 Aachen

PROGRAM

January 31, 2019

9:00-9:30 Registration

9:30-9:50 Welcome and opening of the conference

9:50-11:30 Panel 1. Constructing memories

Discussant/Chair: David Bate (University of Westminster, London)

Nicholas Boyarsky, The Ephemeral Imagination: The postcard and the construction of urban memory

Birgit Schillak-Hammers, Pictures of Berlin: Construction and conservation of a 1920s metropolis

Ela Kaçel, Self-positioning of Migrants and Photographers via Self-images in Metropolises

11:30-12:00 Q&A and Discussion

14:00-16:00 Panel 2. Photography as artistic urban research

Discussant/Chair: Sophie Wolfrum (Janson+Wolfrum Architektur+Stadt)

Elisabeth Neudörfl, Photographer's Dilemma: „Good“ photography vs. „good“ architecture

Bettina Lockemann, Exploring the Urban Space: Methods for visual urban research

Davide Deriu, 'Slowness of the Gaze': On Gabriele Basilico's city portraits

16:00-16:40 Q&A and Discussion

16:40-17:00 Coffee break

17:00-18:00 Keynote speech

Mary N. Woods (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY)

The City Has Memory: Images of ruin and redevelopment in post-independence and neoliberal Mumbai

18:00 Artist talk: Archeology of an Era: Socialist Modernism

Roman Bezjak in conversation with Axel Sowa

February 1, 2019

9:30-10:30 Keynote speech

Alexa Färber (University of Vienna)

Traces of the Future: Circulating urban development through city photobooks

10:30-10:50 Coffee break

10:50-12:30 Panel 3. Mediated photography

Discussant/Chair: Agnes Förster (RWTH Aachen University)

Clare Melhuish, Re-framing the Postcolonial Gaze: CGIs and the transformation of urban space in Doha, Qatar

Markus Lanz, Brasília: Photographing against the image

Lard Buurman, Capturing the City

12:30-13:00 Q&A and Discussion

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:00 Closing Panel. Photography as visual urbanism

Podium discussion

Moderator: Axel Sowa (RWTH Aachen University)

Participants:

David Bate

Sophie Wolfrum

Agnes Förster

Roman Bezjak

16:00-16:30 Closing of the conference

Reference:

CONF: Photography as Visual Urbanism (Aachen, 31 Jan – 1 Feb 19). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 16, 2019
(accessed Dec 18, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/19926>>.