

Session at EAHN 2020 (Edinburgh, 10–13 Jun 20)

Edinburgh, Jun 10–13, 2020

Deadline: Sep 20, 2019

Jennifer Dyck

Splitting Cultures/New Dialogues: Research in Architectural History and Theory

Round table session

Chairs: Brigitte Sölch and Carsten Ruhl

It is obvious that research in architectural history and theory is currently splitted into different academic cultures, namely art history and architectural theory. Of course, this was not always the case. Up to the second half of the 20th century art historians had a great impact on contemporary architectural debates and substantially contributed to theoretical issues. Simultaneously, authors trained both as architects and art historians guaranteed a constant flow between historical narratives and design practice, or even advocated the autonomy of architecture. In late 20th century these productive intersections between art history, architectural history and architectural theory came to an end. Art history widely withdrew from contemporary debates on architecture and theoretical production, whereas architectural theory claimed the status of an autonomous non-historic discipline. We argue that this led to a paradox situation. In the 60s, in a time of political turmoils, theory substantially contributed to a critical discussion on widely accepted historical narratives hereby uncovering their political ideologies. Historical consciousness was fundamental to institutional critique and to debates on architecture as art, politics and theory. Since the 90s this totally changed. Philosophy remained part of both disciplines. But whereas the iconic turn came to play a vital role in art history, which began to understand itself also as "Bildwissenschaften", architectural theory became part of post-critical debates and was defined as projective thinking. Furthermore, great parts of theoretical thinking turned into a legitimation strategy for architectural positions, aesthetic preferences and architectural design practice. On the other hand architectural history no longer played an important role within art history. While theory was increasingly regarded as mere speculation, not seeing that some of art history's most important contributions were exactly this, speculation. By consequence, the many attempts that had been made to differentiate between history and theory caused a great number of contradictions and misunderstandings rather than clarifying disciplinary boundaries.

Departing from this situation our round table is conceived as a twofold dialogue: It welcomes reflections on the historical, institutional and political reasons of the above mentioned split and contributions opening up a new dialogue between architectural history, theory and practice. This includes questions such as: What role do institutions and different genres of „writing“ play for the intensity and diversity but also the reinforced interruption of the dialogue? To what extent is cri-

tique already part of the „economy of attention“ and what does it mean to be critical? How far can history be understood (again) as critical practice?

Each discussant will have 10 minutes to present a position. Abstracts for round table debates should summarize the position to be taken in the discussion.

Please submit your proposal in English of no more than 300 words by September 20, 2019 to Carsten Ruhl (ruhl@kunst.uni-frankfurt.de) and Brigitte Sölch (brigitte.soelch@abk-stuttgart.de) as follows:

- Title of the paper, or discussion position
- Your name
- Your professional affiliation
- A short curriculum vitae (maximum of two pages)
- A mailing address, email address and telephone number

Please note: Papers may not have been previously published, nor presented in public. Only one submission per author will be accepted by EAHN 2020. Each speaker is expected to fund his or her own registration, travel and expenses to Edinburgh.

European Architectural History Network Edinburgh 2020 (10-13 June 2020)

<https://eahn2020.eca.ed.ac.uk/>

Reference:

CFP: Session at EAHN 2020 (Edinburgh, 10-13 Jun 20). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 9, 2019 (accessed Mar 19, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/20991>>.