Ethics and Politics of Material in Architecture (Florence, 11-12 Jul 19)

Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai, Via dei Servi 51, Jul 11–12, 2019

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Ethics and Politics of Material in Architecture
Workshop

Organized by Hana Gründler, Albert Kirchengast, Achim Reese, Katharine Stahlbuhk

Not only formal aspects such as style and ornament, but also the materials themselves should be regarded as carriers of meaning in architecture. Raw materials are processed into construction materials that play more than merely a practical or constructive role, and can be demonstrative of power or unity, for example. The way in which materials are able to acquire symbolic, ideological, and political dimensions (which in each case is linked with specific ontological implications) is an integral part of material cultures, and is a recurring theme in the history of building.

Today – although based on different theoretical premises – there is increasing talk again of the agency of materials. Against the background of current debates around the 'material turn' and 'new materialism', in which 'matter' is thought to elude an objectifying, technologizing grasp, architecture is beginning to readdress the question of an 'ethics of the material' as well as of the role of the subject and the cultural dimension of this discourse, and hence not least of the political dimension of architectural design.

This workshop initiated by the research group 'Ethics & Architecture' sets out to discuss, to critically reflect on, and to interrogate the relations between material and architecture. Among other things, this involves the investigation of why the material aspects of our culture are presently the object of such great interest. What traditions is this preceded by, and how, historically, have these been 'materialized' in concepts and objects? What expansions, negations, modifications, or contaminations has the knowledge of a material – and the significance attributed to this – undergone? What are the contexts and circumstances that determine the breaks and continuities in our material consciousness?

PROGRAM

Thursday, 11 July 2019

14:00 – 14:30
Introduction

Matter and Medium

14:30 – 15:15
Nathalie Bredella (Berlin)
Titanium: Material Cultures During the Digital Turn

15:15 – 16:00
Florin Gstöhl (Bern)
O. R. Salvisberg (1882 – 1940) and the Meaning of Materials. Architectural Modernism and its Differentiated Use of Materials

Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:15
Ole W. Fischer (Salt Lake City)
Grey Matter(s)? Building the Specific Out of the Generic

Coffee Break

Living architectures?

17:30 – 18:45
Rachel Armstrong, Rolf Hughes (Newcastle)
Rituals of Haunting: The Eco-Materiality of Living Architecture

21:00
Site Visit: Railway Station Firenze SMN (for speakers)

Friday, 12 July 2019

Essence and Appearance

10:00 – 10:45
Thomas Bo Jensen (Aarhus)
Pure Form – Impure Associations

10:45 – 11:30
Vitale Zanchettin (Venice)
Raffaello, materia e retorica della costruzione

Coffee Break

Substantializing Memory

12:00 – 12:45

Agata Pietrasik (Berlin)
Material Memory: Ethics and Aesthetics for Post-war Uses of Granite

12:45 – 13:30
Ralph Ghoche (New York)
A Conquest from Below: Porphyry and the Monument to Thomas Bugeaud in French Algiers

Lunch Break

The Material of Politics

15:00 – 15:45
Gabriella Cianciolo, Pia Kastenmeier (Florence)
The Materials of Ancient and Modern Pompeii. Bricks and Concrete Between False Myths and (Un)Sustainability

15:45 – 16:30
Hannah Rose Feniak (New York)
Putting Up a Façade: Rationalizing Modernism with Recourse to Brick in Late-Francoist Spain

Coffee Break

17:00 – 18:00
Final Discussion

VENUE
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Reference:

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