

## Materiality and Construction (Cambridge MA, 14 Nov 09)

Elli Mosayebi

MATERIALITY AND CONSTRUCTION.

FIVE POSITIONS IN CONTEMPORARY SWISS ARCHITECTURE

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, Gund Hall, Piper Auditorium

48 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

Saturday, November 14th 2009, 10am – 6pm

Open and free to the public

to register, please send an email to

[swissarchsymposium@gsd.harvard.edu](mailto:swissarchsymposium@gsd.harvard.edu)

Co-Convenors

Dr. Ole W. Fischer

Elli Mosayebi

Even within a global world there persist local forms of knowledge and practices that lead to differentiation, this may seem obvious. Yet what does this mean for the theory and practice of architecture? Like the fine arts, architecture shows a long record of supranational periodization. And with the prevalence of modern architecture the discipline became a true agent of Western culture on a global scale. On the other hand local agents including the networks of clients, as well as legal, technologic and economic factors, combined with the collaboration of builders and craftsmen, shape local specificities which are enhanced by the dominance of certain "ideas" or "topics", such as "construction" and "materiality" for contemporary Swiss architecture.

Today with the dissolution of national borders (within Western societies) and the emergence of a global market for architectural design we would like to re-address the ideological framework of the "National" challenging what terms such as "Swiss" or "American" mean with respect to (the discipline of) architecture and the built work? How are these preconceived notions of National differences related to architectural thinking? - From our observations there are alternative ways to pose an architectural "question" or "theme" that precede the actual design work

and building production, something like an (implicit) idea of architectural action. In this case it would be possible to identify different "theories of practice" (similar to Le Corbusier's "l'art de produire"). As an example, the emphasis on construction, materiality and sensual effect differs from diagrammatic and parametric design methods. Both result in alternating concepts for teaching and research.

In order to challenge this working hypothesis on various "theories of practice" and their relation to the contested terrain of the "National" we bring together practitioners and educators from Switzerland and the US to open a dialogue on parallels and differences of the production, reflection and education of architecture.

#### Schedule

Saturday, November 14, 2009

10:00

Welcome

Mohsen Mostavafi, Dean Harvard GSD, Cambridge

Pascal Marmier, Director and Consul, Consulate-swissnex Boston

Opening remarks

Ole W. Fischer, Harvard GSD, RISD, Elli Mosayebi, ETH Zürich

11:00

Marcel Meili, ETH Zürich:

"Thinking Production"

Respondent Mark Jarzombek, MIT, Cambridge

Discussion

12:00

Inès Lamunière, EPF Lausanne:

"Thick Space"

Respondent Michael Meredith, Harvard GSD, Cambridge

Discussion

Lunch Break

14:00

Daniel Niggli, ETH Zürich

"Both-and"

Respondent Danieller Etzler, Harvard GSD, Cambridge

Discussion

15:00

Dieter Dietz, EPF Lausanne:

"Marking Space"

Respondent Ingeborg Rocker, Harvard GSD, Cambridge  
Discussion

Coffee Break

16:15

Harry Gugger, EPF Lausanne:

"From Designer back to Planner / Producer.

Expanding the Sphere of Influence"

Respondent Hashim Sarkis, Harvard GSD, Cambridge

Discussion

17:15

Conclusion

Apéro offered by the Consulate-swissnex Boston

Acknowledgements:

Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council

Swissnex Boston, Consulate of Switzerland

Harvard University, Graduate School of Design

Harvard European Design Circle

GSD Culture Club

Reference:

CONF: Materiality and Construction (Cambridge MA, 14 Nov 09). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 5, 2009 (accessed Sep 9, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/31992>>.