

Architecture, Evidence and Evidentiality (Architectural Theory Review)

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Call for Papers:

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Conceptually, evidence differs from material, matter and content for its relationship with a problem. Evidence offers proof in support of a position, a fact or a path of inquiry, or it provokes one to search out a question that relates the newly known to the established. This is as true for architectural historians correcting chronologies, repopulating narratives or recasting contexts as it is for critics and theoreticians of architecture bringing new questions or perspectives to bear upon architectural works and themes.

Material, matter and content that is not yet framed by a problem may not be evidence as such, but it is nonetheless latently evidential. The field of proof and provocations against which architecture is defined as an institution, discourse, profession, technique or otherwise is evidence for the question of what architecture is, shaping its edges (or arguing their porosity), and determining relationships between architecture and other fields. Making for the presence or absence of evidence, the term 'evidentiality' describes the various historical, philosophical, legal, social and political contexts in which forms of proof acquire 'objective', demonstrative and moral value. The evidentiary potency, usefulness and value of material, tangible and otherwise, is therefore—like the border between latent and actual evidentiality—constantly under revision.

Whereas the material and matter of architecture one way or another shape architectural practice, culture and discourse, evidence has a subject. Evidence of what? For what? Evidence is clearly associated with reason (and reasoned proof), but it is also, easily, the stuff of debate, dispute and doubt. In contrast with what might seem to be architecture's most obvious issues, as defined by media and by debate within and beyond architectural culture, the consideration of evidence, in relation to problems in the knowledge and conceptualisation of architecture, and in and of itself, is more likely to be the stuff of cloistered debate on scholarly methods and fine-grained historical analysis: the cost of bricks, the contents of libraries, corridors shared, drawings lost and found, telling words uttered carelessly. But evidence comes into play whenever someone thinks to check on some grandiose and uncorroborated claim made for architecture or by the everyday uncertainty at stake in design methods, quantity surveys, post-occupancy surveys and other recipes for making architectural 'facts' on the ground. What counts as evidence can be the basis for expertise as well as the nearly always taken for granted.

This issue of ATR will consider matters of evidence for architecture where they reflect (as theory

and criticism) on architecture's limits, content and extra-architectural relationships and (as history) the shape of its past and its relation to the present. It will reflect upon evidence and (coming as much the same thing) what counts as evidence in all manner of transactions in architectural culture. By treating moments in which a heightened awareness of the evidentiary value of the material tabled as proof or provocation has an impact on architecture, be it significant or subtle, immediate or remote, ATR opens evidence and the theme of evidentiality to review.

In particular, we invite papers that take a piece or body of evidence as their object of review, exploring and exploding the matters at stake in seeing something as evidence in particular. We encourage contributions that explore connections between architecture, evidence and evidentiality in relation to architecture history, theory, criticism and practice. Papers investigating categories of evidence and modes of evidentiality that establish or problematize relations between these domains of activity are particularly welcome.

As an additional thematic for authors to ponder, this call for papers invites submissions that consider the idea and meanings of 'a crisis state' as part of architecture's social imaginary and litmus of its contestability. What fields of evidence come to bear upon architecture in moments and matters of crisis? And how does architecture figure in those moments, as evidence?

Completed manuscripts should be submitted to Architectural Theory Review by the 17th of September, 2012, via the journal's website:

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13264826.asp>

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Reference:

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