

## The Making of Architects (Special Issue of Architectural Theory Review)

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Call for Papers:

The Making of Architects: Knowledge Production and Legitimation in Education, Professional Practice and International Networks, a special issue of Architectural Theory Review (to be published as Volume 19, Number 1, March 2014)

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The figure of the architect and the practice of architecture have gained increasing attention over the last two decades – both in the media and the public as well as in cross-disciplinary academic debates. The figure of the ‘global architect’ is only the most obvious symbol of a deeper restructuring that has changed the system of architectural production. Processes of commodification, economization and financialization, which have affected urban space and urban development, have made architecture a primary vehicle of urban restructuring. At the same time the scope of action of architects is increasingly limited by profit ratio and risk-minimizing strategies of real estate investment as well as diversified forms of governance and regulation.

Along with these structural transformations, the preoccupation with the autonomy of architecture, which guided postmodern and poststructuralist architectural theory in the 1980s and early 1990s, has lost its appeal. It is the dependence of architectural practice on political and economic factors, which has become a topic of inquiry for architectural theory as well as cross-disciplinary investigations. Individual architects, schools and professional associations are preoccupied with the discipline’s diminishing legitimation and strive to save the architects’ field of action. For one part, these struggles for legitimation are obviously targeting legal and economic issues, such as professional accreditation, remuneration agreements etc. For the other part, however, these struggles for legitimation are played out in the field of social and cultural production as struggles for symbolic capital and visibility, for maintaining authority or for preserving an exclusive body of knowledge.

However, one might argue that these struggles are anything but new. Rather, as Robert Gutman has once noted there is no other major profession that is ‘so often seized with worry about its own future as is architecture’ (1977: 55). The reasons are obvious and well known: No other profession has been – and is to this day – torn between practice and theory, between art and technol-

ogy and between autonomy and heteronomy in the way architecture has been. Struggles for legitimation have been constitutive for the discipline. In fact, the narrative of the heroic artist-architect and its contemporary variant, the celebrity or star architect, can be read in terms of self-legitimizing strategies of, both, individuals and the profession as collective.

This issue of ATR will review the figure of the architect and reflect upon practices of knowledge production as well as strategies of legitimation in architecture across cultures. It will consider how becoming an architect is – beyond gaining expert knowledge – also a matter of values and beliefs, how architects legitimate their doings and how this system of meaning is translated into the formation of international networks.

In 1991, Dana Cuff published her widely received study 'Architecture: The Story of Practice' focusing on architect's 'everyday lives, their situated actions, as well as what they say and the meanings they construct' (5). She shows that this 'culture of practice' does not just originate in knowledge acquired in professional education, but also in routinized actions based on commonplace experience through various stages of an architect's education and career. By looking closely at what architects indeed do, she offers insights into what appears to be 'real' or 'self-evident' to architects and what it means to turn from a layperson into an architect. Cuff also reflects upon strategies of legitimation, that is, on practices that justify an existing, but questionable reality, such as the field of architecture.

Today, many of the questions raised and discussed by Cuff twenty years ago are still vital: How do architects make their work and the products of their work plausible to the society they live in? What strategies do they apply to become 'visible'? Architects act in different media and languages; they create material and immaterial products, such as buildings, images, texts and narratives to give meaning to the world and they form international networks of cooperation. How do architects negotiate with people, things, values and institutions when they design? What kinds of cultural frameworks and implicit ideas influence the practice of architects?

By approaching the practices of knowledge production and strategies of legitimation in architecture from a socio-cultural perspective, we wish to recognize the multitude of ways in which 'architects become architects' and then act and make their doing meaningful to themselves and to the public. Drawing on Cuff's 'The Making of an Architect' (chapter 4) as a key text we are interested in contributions that pay reference to Cuff's findings and review them from a contemporary viewpoint and a broad range of theoretical approaches. Of interest are continuities and discontinuities in architectural education and professional practice and insights that can be gained by contrasting the North American and European experience with other cultural contexts. In particular, we invite empirically rich, insightful papers from the fields of sociology, art history, anthropology, science and technology studies and architectural theory.

The deadline for the submission of completed manuscripts to Architectural Theory Review is the 19th of August, 2013. Please submit the manuscripts via the journal's website:

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ratr>

The keynote text is available as an electronic copy from the editors (for the email addresses see below). All texts selected for publication will be subject to a double blind peer review process.

When uploading your manuscript please indicate that you are applying for this special issue (vol. 19.1) as there are two CFPs circulated simultaneously.

Manuscript submission guidelines are available at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=ratr20&page=instructions>

Queries regarding the special issue should be directed to Monika Grubbauer (grubbauer@stadt-forschung.tu-darmstadt.de) and Silke Steets (steets@ifs.tu-darmstadt.de).

#### Literature

Cuff, D. (1991): *Architecture: The Story of Practice*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Gutman, R. (1977): *Architecture: The Entrepreneurial Profession*. *Progressive Architecture* 58.5, 55–58.

#### Reference:

CFP: The Making of Architects (Special Issue of *Architectural Theory Review*). In: ArtHist.net, May 6, 2013 (accessed Apr 20, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/5274>>.