

Architectural research and the digital world

EAAE/ARCC Conference

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The Architectural Research Centers Consortium

**EAAE / ARCC 2008
CHANGES OF PARADIGMS IN
THE BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF
ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH**

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The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
School of Architecture



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ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH AND THE DIGITAL WORLD

INTRODUCTION

Shortly before his death, Bruno Zevi wrote an article in Lotus International stating that the digital world represented the greatest change in conditions and the greatest potential revolution in architecture since the Renaissance.

Today it is clear that digitalisation has opened a path leading to new forms of representation and new opportunities with regard to developing and handling highly complex spatial and surface forms. But digitalisation has also made new interactive forms of communication possible which could give the architect a new role and a new social position – thereby supporting the claim that architecture and architects are now facing a revolution which is as radical as the Renaissance.

The question is whether we who are involved in architectural research have managed to understand these new conditions and help the potential revolution on its way – and this is the main topic of this research conference.

Another aspect of digitalisation is the revolution in communication forms and control systems with global effects to which it has led. We have created a form of global simultaneity: we can control financial transactions in new ways, and we can control globally divided production processes in ways which have meant that some phenomena and processes apparently only exist in the virtual world, and that both financial issues and culture are released from the geographical spaces with which we normally associate them in our understanding of the world. This constitutes a radical change in the contextual frameworks in which we normally place architecture and architectural production.

Even though this will probably be challenged by some people, it is nonetheless still possible to claim that architecture only exists in an analogue world – that architecture as space and materiality in relation to human senses and bodies does not take shape as architecture until it has been completed. This makes the question of the relationship between the digital and the analogue worlds a central issue for architectural research.

This is not an obscure and overlooked field: many of the theorists of globalisation have stressed that the processes of globalisation and the digital world do not acquire real meaning until they ‘touch the ground’ – that the necessary infrastructure belongs to the analogue world, and that the messages transmitted in the digital networks are produced in the analogue world. In other words, that the digital world and the analogue world are closely interwoven.

However, some of the theorists of globalisation and digitalisation have pointed out that understanding and awareness of this interwoven relationship constitute one of the major problems facing researchers. There is a tendency among both researchers and commentators to place themselves either in the digital world or in the analogue world – but rarely do they focus on the vital meeting between these two worlds, regarding the way in which the two worlds interact and determine/deform each other’s logic.

We believe that this dilemma also applies to the full range of architectural research from understanding the city to understanding buildings as spaces and carriers of meaning, as well as to the artistic and controlling processes of production.

There is a well established, influential form of research focusing on architecture as an analogue phenomenon – and often as a phenomenon attached to a certain locality. And there is also now a considerable amount of research dealing with architecture and the digital world – dealing with new methods and tools, and with the virtual world as an independent source of meaning.

However, there is no corresponding body of research focusing on the interface, the meeting and the transformation point between the digital and analogue worlds.

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THEME

We hereby extend an invitation to all architectural researchers whose research has focused on the importance of the relationship between the digital and analogue worlds.

- Either as their main point of focus, or as a sub-aspect of their work
- Either focusing on methodological aspects, or on artistic aspects
- On all scales of architectural research, from towns to buildings
- Focusing on methods and issues originating in the major global challenges arising from population growth, urban growth or climatic changes to which the architectural agenda has a contribution to make.

Contextual issues acquire new meanings at this interface – or else they lose their meaning. In the words of Saskisa Sassen, the term 'local' does not mean local in a traditional sense but 'a microenvironment with a global span'. Traditional institutional geographical hierarchies co-exist with the collapse of hierarchies. Images are distributed so rapidly and in so many different contexts that the authority of the architectural image is undermined and must be replaced. Real estate is a situated global liquid – rapid global financial speculations have changed the role played by the building in a range of social structures.

CONFERENCE VENUE & ACCOMODATIONS

The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture is the host institution for this conference. More specific information regarding the conference venue, accommodations, and registration costs will be forthcoming.

See websites: www.eaae.be • www.arccweb.org

ABSTRACT / PAPER SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- The paper review for this conference will be conducted in two stages. The first stage of the review will involve a blind peer review of the brief abstract. Successful review at this stage will result in an invitation to submit a full paper for peer review.
- Submit a 500-word (maximum) abstract to be received no later than midnight (EST) **3 December 2007**. Images (two maximum, 72 dpi) may be included as part of the abstract if they enhance the text and are an integral element of the abstract. Abstracts should be well written, clearly organized and compelling. All abstracts must be submitted in electronic form. The abstract shall be submitted for blind peer review, with identification of the author/s and contact information on a separate cover page. Abstracts and papers must be in English.
- Results of the first stage selection process will be conveyed at all submitters by **11 January 2008**
- Multiple abstracts dealing with different issues may be submitted by a single author (maximum 3 by any author). The abstract/s should not bear any markings or include any information that would allow the review committee to identify the author. The authorship automatically appended to word-processing files should be deleted before submitting an abstract. An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to each submitter via e-mail.
- Digital copy of the abstract (as an attachment in MS Word) must be e-mailed to pia.davidsen@karch.dk on or before 12 midnight (EST) of **3 December 2007**.
- Final papers should not exceed 5,000 words and must be submitted for peer review in digital form by 29 February 2008, formatting and more specific details will be issued in the future. Notification of paper acceptance with reviewer's comments and concerns will be conveyed to all submitters by **18 April 2008**.

PROCEEDINGS

A digital and hard copy version of the proceedings will be developed after the conference.