

# ALTERATION

Wednesday August 31 – Friday September 2

## *Theories Strategies Works*

How does architecture as a discipline think about alteration? Is our theory and method for confronting the existing sufficient? How can the ambition and engagement in alteration design be raised? This three-day symposium examines strategies and tools relating to alteration - the reconfiguring of existing environments in the pursuit of architectural creativity, social resilience and sustainable agendas. The event is organised by KTH School of Architecture and supported by the Swedish Schools of Architecture Strong Research Environment "Architecture in the Making". It is lead by Tim Anstey (*Architecture and Authorship*, Black Dog Publishing 2007) and Catharina Gabrielsson (*Att Göra Skillnad* [To Make a Difference], Axl Books, 2007).

In post-industrial societies clusters of problems in the built environment revolve around the question of alteration. Around 90% of Swedish building construction in the coming ten years will reconfigure existing building stock. Whether these actions relate to the monumental or the mundane, to museums or factories, to social housing or infrastructure, architects' core activities are increasingly concerned with alteration. But in stark contrast, educational, practice and procurement structures in architecture and the building industry are still mortgaged to the logic of new construction. Architecture is still defined generally in terms of "the design of new forms" and architectural agency remains tied to ideas of original intention and authorship. The seminar creates a forum between academia and practice to discuss alteration in three afternoon sessions themed around *theories*, *strategies* and *works*.

Sessions run from 13.00 to 17.00 on Wednesday August 31, Thursday September 1, and Friday September 2.

*Alteration* forms part of the Masters level orientation course in history, theory and technology autumn 2011 at KTH School of Architecture.



KTH Architecture and  
the Built Environment



## Session 1 – Theories

**Place:** Moderna Museet, Auditoriet  
**Time:** Wednesday August 31, 13.00 – 17.00  
**Status:** Open seminar, compulsory for students attending courses A5201A and A4201A

Session 1 (theories) considers how alteration challenges existing structures in and of architecture. Implying revised notions of authorship (how architecture is read and architectural process is owned), and of the temporal (the ‘permanence’ of architecture confronted with the ‘impermanence’ of occupancy), alteration opens up for re-thinking architecture in terms of indeterminacy.

**Chair:** Catharina Gabrielsson (KTH, Konstfack)

13.00 Student Registration  
13.15 Introduction  
13.30 Meike Schalk (KTH), "Relational aesthetics and institutional change"  
14.00 Thordis Arrhenius (AHO), "Preservation and Protest: Counter culture and Heritage in 1970s Sweden"  
14.30 Jonathan Metzger (KTH), "Messing with territorial subjectivities: negotiating the (quasi) subject of place"  
15.00 Pause  
15.30 Panel discussion  
16.00 Simon Sadler (UCLA Davis), "Architecture – A Hermeneutics of Alteration?"

Lucia Allais is Assistant Professor in Architecture at Princeton University. She specializes in the intellectual and political history of architecture, with particular focus on the international institutions and global practices of the 20th Century. Using as a case study the moving of the temples at Abu Simbel in Egypt, her talk discusses the change in architecture as a media implicit in radical projects of preservation and alteration.

Tim Anstey is Director of Research at KTH School of Architecture and Vice-Director of the Swedish Schools of Architecture Strong Research Environment "Architecture in the Making". His research interests lie at the intersection of architectural history, technology and theory, with a particular emphasis on the development of the architectural profession.

Thordis Arrhenius is an architect and Professor of Architectural History and Conservation at AHO and a founding member of the Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS). Her book *The Fragile Monument: On Conservation and Modernity* will be published Spring 2012. Using as an example the events around 'Almbråket' in Stockholm, Thordis will discuss the relation between theory, politics and action that characterized the developing notion of heritage in 1970s Western societies.

Arno Brandlhuber is the founder of Brandlhuber+. He holds the chair of architecture and urban research at the Academy of Fine Arts, Nuremberg and directs the nomadic masters program a42.org. He is co-founder of the public seminar Akademie c/o, currently researching the spatial production of the Berlin Republic. Arno will discuss a series of alteration projects in the city in relation to the politics of existing environments.

Ellen Braae is Professor in Landscape Architecture at The University of Copenhagen and a founding partner of the landscape practices Berg & Braae and Metropos. Her research investigates urban and landscape theory, large scale design theory, preservation and transformation of the urban landscape. Her talk draws on her forthcoming book *Design as Intervention: On the Transformation of Ruinous Industrial Landscapes*, focusing on the current paradigm of transformation within landscape architecture and urbanism.

Mark Cousins is Director of Histories and Theory at the Architectural Association and is a founding member and Senior Fellow of the London Consortium. He is now Guest Professor at South-Eastern University, Nanjing. He will discuss the notion of the architectural work in relation to the writing practice of editing.

## Session 2 – Strategies

**Place:** Moderna Museet, Auditoriet  
**Time:** Thursday September 1, 13.00 – 17.00  
**Status:** Open seminar, compulsory for students attending courses A5201A and A4201A

Session 2 (strategies) poses the question how do we ‘see’ the past and the existing; and of what is at stake, what will be changed, in projects of alteration. As well as grasping the specificity of the physical object, in alteration projects it is crucial to map the forces of cultural expectation present in the various representations and mediations of the existing: to record both the building as a physical ‘fact’ and as a cultural artefact constructed over time.

**Chair:** Tim Anstey (KTH)

13.00 Student Registration  
13.15 Introduction  
13.30 Ellen Braae (University of Copenhagen), "Design as intervention"  
14.00 Suzanne Ewing (University of Edinburgh), "Alter(c)ations"  
14.30 Roger Spetz (Spetz Holst/KTH), "Caricature–the potential of subjective readings"  
15.00 Pause  
15.30 Panel discussion  
16.00 Alexander Schwarz (David Chipperfield Architects), "Strategies and seeing – Neues Museum, from ruin to museum"

Suzanne Ewing is Senior Lecturer in Architectural Design and Theory, and Director of the Master of Architecture Programme at the University of Edinburgh. Her work aims to articulate histories, methodologies and current practices of field/site work, investigated in *Architecture and Field/Work* (eds. Ewing, McGowan, Speed, Bernie) as published by Routledge in 2011. Her talk considers how the creative practice of architectural field/work offers a means for addressing existing environments.

Catharina Gabrielsson is Head of Research at Konstfack and teaches architecture and urban theory at KTH School of Architecture. Her two year postdoctoral research project, dealing with notions of 'beginning' in architecture is currently being compiled into a book manuscript. Her research interests include the exchange between emerging social movements and architecture, regarded as a complex composition of materials, practices, words, emotions and imaginations.

Jonathan Metzger is Assistant Professor at the Department of Urban Planning and Environment at KTH. His research focusses on the uses and definitions of knowledge in spatial planning and development practice. He uses a range of research fields to discuss and and problematise the notion of 'place'.

## Session 3 – Works

**Place:** Moderna Museet, Auditoriet  
**Time:** Friday September 2, 13.00 – 17.00  
**Status:** Open seminar, compulsory for students attending courses A5201A and A4201A

Alteration creates something of a crisis for the category of the architectural work. Session 3 (works) attempts to discuss that crisis through contributions that problematise ‘work’ in architecture – as noun or verb – through history and in contemporary practice. What quirks does the notion of the architectural work entail? What new areas of creativity are opened up through a redefinition of the relation between ‘working’ and ‘altering’?

**Chair:** Thordis Arrhenius (AHO)

13.00 Student Registration  
13.15 Introduction  
13.30 Lucia Allais (University of Princeton), "Integrities: The International Salvage of Abu Simbel"  
14.00 Mark Cousins (Architectural Association), "Editing vs. Design"  
14.30 Ippolito Laparelli and James Westcott, (OMA), "OMA\*AMO: preservation samples"  
15.00 Pause  
15.30 Panel discussion  
16.00 Arno Brandlhuber (Brandlhuber+), "Berlin Standards"

Ippolito Laparelli is an Associate at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) and its creative think-tank AMO. Since 2009, Ippolito has been leading the transformation and strategic programmatic research for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice. In 2010 he co-curated "Cronocaos", OMA's exhibition at the 2010 Architectural Venice Biennale. With James Westcott he will talk about how OMA articulate preservation action as part of a non-conservative architectural practice.

Simon Sadler is Professor of Architectural and Urban History at the University of California, Davis. His books on the history of late-twentieth-century vanguard architecture include *Archigram: Architecture without Architecture* (MIT Press, 2005) and *The Situationist City* (MIT Press, 1998). His talk visits the practice of alteration as an ideological question.

Meike Schalk is an architect and researcher. She teaches at KTH School of Architecture and practices between architecture and art, focusing on projects involving the participation of communities and institutions. Based on a case study of the Tempelhofer Freiheit (Tempelhof freedom) project in Berlin she discusses the potential of relational aesthetics and spatial praxis between art and architecture for transforming the discipline of architecture and urban planning.

Alexander Schwarz is Design director of David Chipperfield Architects, Berlin. He discusses the fundamental reconfigurations of design thinking that were required to complete the the Neues Museum project, won in competition in 1997 by David Chipperfield Architects with Julian Harrap.

Roger Spetz runs the architectural practice Spetz & Holst Arkitekter with Max Holst and is Associate Professor in Advanced Design at the KTH School of Architecture. His book *Inclusive Aesthetics*, a collection of essays and lectures is published in autumn 2011. His paper considers how experience is refracted through various events and episodes, per definition subjective and emotional, and examines the hidden potential in such unreflective personal experiences.

James Westcott is an editor and researcher within the Office of Metropolitan Architecture, OMA, and its creative think-tank AMO. With Ippolito Laparelli he will talk about how OMA articulate preservation action as part of an non-conservative architectural practice, with particular reference their work at the Cronocaos exhibition at the 2010 Architectural Venice Biennale.