

A R E N A

DR_SoM

Design Research, Series on Method

Antwerp, Belgium

28-29 May 2015

session 3

the empathic turn

Design takes a central role in the creation, comprehension and development of architecture. The designed artefact acts as an epistemic object, embodying various kinds of knowledge. Through spatial structure and expression, the designed building mirrors and constructs society and culture. The act of designing provokes a future-oriented state of mind, an inquiry-based mental mode of imagination and creation, resulting in spatial articulation, aiming at anticipating and influencing societal change.

Empathy: "The quality or power of projecting one's personality into or mentally identifying oneself with an object of contemplation, and so fully understanding or appreciating it." (Oxford English Dictionary)

The ARENA DR_SoM group invites in an open call 10 to 15 architectural design researchers to share with peers their experiences regarding their empathic relationship, *through design*, with the conceived/real world. This will not be done in a theoretical way, but instead based on the presentation of own design work of current research.

keynotes

Alessandro Ayuso

(University of Westminster)

***Body Agents:
Empathic figures in design.***



Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen

(Yale School of Architecture)

***Architecture and Empathy in the
20th Century***



Third keynote

to be confirmed



A R E N A

an event organized by ARENA, international network for architectural research, and the Henry van de Velde Research Group, Faculty of Design Sciences,

 University
of Antwerp

about the Antwerp session

In design research, designerly thinking meets embedded knowledge. This mode is generating new insights and bringing forth new possibilities which could not be thought of otherwise. However, if the artefact is embodying knowledge, *what does it know?* What does the designer attribute the artefact to know? And if the design proposal of the designing researcher mirrors society and culture, *what then can (s)he see*, once becoming part of the imaginary world of the “looking” glass, which (s)he created. Design is a future-oriented state of mind, aiming towards change. Thereby, it is the *means* to induce change which is designed, not the change in itself. However, can the act of design also reveal the *desire* for change to which it *hopes* to lead ?

The Antwerp session of the DR_SoM series focusses on paradigmatic and methodological affinities between architectural design research and qualitative research, to be found for instance in its inductive character and the lateral position of theory, its emphasis on visual analysis, its interpretative nature, its attention to social processes, and its inescapable cultural and ethical normative framing.

More precisely, the Antwerp session will focus on those moments in which the architectural designing researcher is deliberately adopting the act of designing to induce and reach an empathic stance towards his object of study.

Given the multi- and transdisciplinary nature of architectural design, the seminar is an occasion and invitation for cross-links and knowledge exchange on methodology between disciplines and research communities. Therefore, researchers from other disciplines, focusing on the topic of this session, are welcome to attend the sessions and join the debate.

about the project

Design research, a large umbrella

In design research the research process is highly typified by the role and position of the act of designing, by the design proposal (an object, a building, an urban project, a landscape), by the specific capacities and fascinations of the researcher, by the profile of stakeholders, by the audience, by the research environment, by contextual references, and by the mutual interaction of these factors. As a result, architectural design research acts as a large umbrella, covering multiple approaches and addressing distinct audiences.

Design Research, Series on Method

After some decades of experimentation and ontological dissent, design research has come of age. At the same time, due to the amount of parameters, paradigms and perspectives that directs its conduct, design research is a multiple concept, a catch-all term in need of clarification and discrimination.

‘Design Research, Series on Method’ (DR_SOM) consists of a series of research seminars and workshops, based on the rationale that discerning common and distinctive features in the broad scope of approaches covered by the epithet “design research”, will contribute to a better understanding of its specific capacities. The identification of particularities and coherence between themes, tools, strategies and discourse will be helpful to be more precise in writing research proposals, to allow for identifying appropriate peers, resulting in a more accurate assessment of the outcome, and, eventually, to inspire for future endeavours. At last, a better comprehension of design research as an academic field and culture will contribute to a better communication, interaction and exchange with other research disciplines and communities. It will reveal its capability for inter- and trans-disciplinary research, and its capacity for offering new approaches to pending issues.

The seminars

In each meeting, DR_SOM sequentially focuses on a specific approach, and looks for common ground and distinctive qualities and conditions. It is a two day event consisting of workshops where early stage PhD design researchers, selected on either representativeness or originality in approach towards the theme, interact with a panel of senior researchers and an audience of peers. There are no parallel sessions, the number of participants is limited to 30 persons, discussing 10 to 15 projects.

Proposals, registration, publication

The DR_SoM seminar will take place on Thursday 28 and Friday 29 May 2015. There will be no parallel sessions. There is no registration fee; however, the number of participants will be limited to 30, of whom a maximum of 13 researchers can present their research. For each presentation, a timeslot of 45' provides plenty of time for presentation and discussion. Discussions will be held as a round-table debate.

Coffee and a light lunch are offered by the organization. All participants are invited for dinner on Thursday. Registration for dinner at 40€.

Candidates who wish to present their research send an abstract (max 1 page, pdf) to **johan.dewalsche@uantwerpen.be** before 17 April 2015. Selections will be made by the scientific committee, and communicated on 24 April 2015.

Full papers are not required as we recognize work in progress. On the contrary, participants are invited to write a paper afterwards, for publication in a booklet dedicated to this DR_SoM session.

Further information can be found at http://www.arena-architecture.eu/news/dr_som-antwerp-2015-may-28-29/

preliminary programme

from	till	28 May 2015	from	till	29 May 2015
9:00	9:30	welcome			
9:30	12:00	presentations	9:00	12:00	presentations
12:00	12:40	keynote 1	12:00	12:40	keynote 3
		lunch			lunch
14:00	18:00	presentations	14:00	15:30	plenary reflection
18:00	19:00	keynote 2		15:30	end
20:00		dinner			

venue

information will follow soon, please check the website

enquiries

For enquiries on the seminar, submission and participation, please e-mail johan.dewalsche@uantwerpen.be

For enquiries on the venue, please e-mail nina.peeten@uantwerpen.be

DR_SoM scientific committee

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