ON HAVING AGENCY

A discussion on the role of the architect & the urban planner, in a context of social change and a strive for a more sustainable and public way of living.

Speakers:
13:30 - 14:30
Torsten Schröder
David Reat
Jenny Forslund
Marie Kraft
Madeleine Eriksson
Ana Betancour

13:30 - 15:30
Student and Public Q&A

Wednesday 30 May
UMA Theatre
13:30 - 15:30

Moderator:
Carlotta Novella
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About the UMA Roundtable

Do architects have agency in the local (and globally)?

Current economic and political changes in Sweden and Europe have created a challenge for the contemporary professional to define which is the role they would like to have in the ever changing society. Is the “job” of the architect fundamentally the one of problem solver, neutral agent, or instead of facilitator, who through a set of skills and a duty towards the public good can initiate change in communities and cities?

Going from local scale socially engaged ideas, looking at how public spaces could evolve into a stable civic infrastructure for all, to the large scale research on a more effective way to interpret and enact sustainability in architectural design (and urban design), we will discuss these issues together, around a table!

The UMA 2018 Round-table is an horizontal conversation where speakers, students and public are equal in sharing the role of initiators and participants.

This event is our opportunity, as students and staff, to frame questions we have been asking throughout the past year, encompassing themes such as sustainable participatory practices, public space, spaces in common and constructed with and for the community, urban and rural development in the context of current political changes on a local and a global context.

Speakers

Torsten Schröder is currently Assistant Professor at the Chair of Architectural Design and Engineering at the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). His key research interests are sustainability, resilience and circular economy within architecture and cities. Torsten’s interdisciplinary ‘theory in practice’ approach helps identify new opportunities and analyses how architects, engineers, clients and others apply the concept of sustainability to their design projects, in their studios and on-site. Drawing on Science and Technology Studies (STS), he shifts attention to the ways design challenges are framed, knowledge is produced, design strategies assembled and how controversies and conflicting priorities are settled. Torsten graduated in the Architectural Department of the University of the Arts Berlin and in 2014, he obtained his PhD in the Cities Programme, Department of Sociology, at the London School of Economics and Political Science, winning the prestigious RIBA PhD research award in 2015. In March 2015 he was appointed as Assistant Professor at TU/e in the Department of the Built Environment. From 2000 to 2006, he worked for Rem Koolhaas / Office for Metropolitan Architecture as an architect and project leader on projects in the USA, Germany, South Korea and China.

David Reat is a practicing architect; and is the Director of Postgraduate Studies, at the Department of Architecture in the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, UK. After studying at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow; he has worked in the offices of James Stirling, Michael Wilford & Partners on the British Embassy in Berlin and The Lowry in Salford (amongst others); and for Enric Miralles Benedetta Tagliabue RMJM on the New Scottish Parliament Buildings in Edinburgh, Scotland. In addition to his responsibilities as Part 2 Director, David is the Year Director for the Honours Year (Y4) in the architecture course at Strathclyde, lecturer in Cultural Studies (Architectural History & Theory) across all 5 years and is presently in the final year of his PhD, which is an investigation into the representation of the city in Science Fiction film.

Jenny Forslund is the manager for a participant project called Ålidhem Ägar, which is financed by the Swedish Art Council. The project is part of the cultural programme at Klossen, a Cultural Centre located next to Ålidhem Centrum. The target group for the project is children and young adults at Ålidhem. The goal is to offer creative meeting places where the target groups can create, engage in activities together and spend time in a group.

Marie Kraft is an architect, urban researcher and multidisciplinary artist. Born in Sweden, she lives and works between France, Italy and Sweden. She studied architecture at Ecole d’architecture Paris La Seine, theatre and cinema at Sorbonne University and she holds a Master in Urban research at Ecole des Hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris. Her practice is developed between artistic interventions, social engagement and urban development. She was a cultural project manager at the Swedish Institute in Paris 1994-2017. Since 2018 she is a lecturer at Umeå school of architecture and she is been involved in education of children, professional architects, urban planners and real estate holders. Her current research focuses on reuse of urban heritage and its relation to urban regeneration.

Madeleine Eriksson is a researcher and academic based in Umeå. Her research has evolved around two different but related themes; the representations of the rural and the urban with focus on the northern periphery and urban regeneration, and the disciplining of labour migrants to the Swedish forest berry industry. One important element in her research is the study of representations of ‘the other’ in relation to, discourses of globalisation, new forms of mobility and different social categories such as gender, race and class. Her research also focuses on the inseparability of economic processes from the political, social, historical, and geographic contexts which give them meaning and which may contribute to, or resist, geographies of uneven development. Madeleine Eriksson is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Geography and Economic History at Umeå University.

Ana Betancour is a RIBA qualified Architect, rector and a Professor of Architecture at UMA/ School of Architecture, Umeå University, Sweden. Former professor in Urban Design at Chalmers University of Technology. She founded A + URL/ Architecture + Urban Research Laboratory, and the architectural practice Urban + Architecture Agency. Her work spans between art, architecture and urbanism and investigates alternative ways to operate and catalyse change within global transformations affecting cities today. Her research and design projects focus on planning for sustainable futures, participation, and cultural agencies. She is involved as partner and coordinator in different international programs and is part of a growing network of research projects in Europe, Africa and Latin America. She was director of the Masters of Architecture and Urban Design, Chalmers, and Director of Programme board, School of Architecture, KTH/ Stockholm, and the head of Exhibitions at the Swedish Museum of Architecture. Ana held positions at various international institutions, UCL and UEL/ London, and she is widely published, exhibited, and is a member of various reference groups, networks and organisations, nationally and internationally.