

Scene and Sequence: On Cinematic Urbanisms

Theme

'Exposé'

In themselves, the pictures, the phases, the elements of the whole are innocent and indecipherable. The blow is struck only when the elements are juxtaposed into a sequential image... Only the film camera has solved the problem of doing this on a flat surface, but its undoubted ancestor in this capability is architecture.

Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'Montage and Architecture' (1938)

One day, I went to the school's director and said that we needed to study theatre, visual arts, film and everything else and combine that with architecture. He threw me out.

...

[Cinematic architecture] is a way of thinking that includes processes, change and time. If you start on a drawing board, you're starting from an object-based way of thinking about architecture. Using film and cinema is a way of breaking free from that.

Pascal Schöning, *Manifesto for a Cinematic Architecture* (2006)

For centuries, we see cities through the projective eyes of architecture. We see cities as composed through abstracted lines, outlined forms, constructible parts, countable units and scalable operatives. Beautifully gutted and examined from ideal angles, cities acquired objectivity, as object of study and as objectives of action. The design of cities, systematised through the so-called 'urbanism', thus expanded on the arrangements of these objects and operatives; and only thereafter, as René Descartes would have preferred, we fill up these empty urban forms with, or more precisely as, automatons of prescribed operations. Hubert Damisch considered this poignantly as the moment when cities, and us dwellers and shapers of cities, lost their ability to dream.

As a force of subversion, the intrusion of filmic observations and interventions on cities began to provoke and make visible what were deliberately omitted in earlier modes of urbanism. For over a century, possibilities of time-based or durational relations, narrative-driven investigations, immersive and subjective points of view of cities have opened up new, and complicated past, urban knowledge. From 'City Symphonies' of 1920s and 30s, post-war visions of 'Townscapes', 'Megacities' of 1980s and 90s to euphoric and dystopic speculations of post-humans in post-cities beyond the C21st, these are distinct landmarks in the confluence between cinematic constructs of cities and urbanism as discourses and in practice.

From the revolutionary root of 'cinema', i.e. the kineto-scope as the movement image, to avantgarde experiments in scene- and sequence-based architecture, cinematic urbanisms speculate the redundancy of the projective system, an argument to be debated in the symposium. We have invited speakers to unravel the interrogative and inventive detour the filmic has led in new design processes for cities. Drawing on a diverse range of opinions, 'cinematic urbanism' can be regarded as a way to restore cities as sites of productive dreaming where 'distractions' are turned into 'an immense and unexpected field of action,' as Walter Benjamin prophesied.

Programme

10:30 welcome and coffee

10:45 Introduction

Sarah Mills (Head of Architecture, Leeds School of Architecture)

Doreen Bernath (Leeds School of Architecture and AA London)

Grafted Scenes

11-1pm

talks and discussions moderated by Doreen Bernath

speakers:

Ayah Hatahet (MArch graduate, Leeds School of Architecture)

'Sentimental Cities'

Lingge Yang (Diploma School/MArch, AA London)

'Beyond Boundaries'

Tatjana Crossley (PhD graduate, AA London)

'The Constructed Gaze'

Henrietta Williams (Teaching Fellow and PhD Candidate, UCL Bartlett School of Architecture)

'Defining a Situated Video Practice and Pedagogy'

Mark Carey (Head of Cinematography, Northern Film School)

'Architecture and Location as Characters: The Cinematographer's Perspective'

Interval

1-2pm lunch + screening

Sequential Captures

2-4pm

talks and discussions moderated by Carla Molinari

speakers:

Carla Molinari (Senior Lecturer, Leeds School of Architecture)

'All Roads Lead to Rome: An urban journey through sequences'

Mohamad Hafeda (Senior Lecturer, Leeds School of Architecture, Founding Partner of Febrik)

'Filming as Negotiating Conflict'

Aude-Line Dulière (Unit Tutor AA London, Wheelwright Prize winner, Harvard GSD)

'Crafted Images: Materials, Means and Meanings in the Construction of Movie Sets'

Brendon Carlin, Maria Paez Gonzalez and Andrew Houston

(Founders and Directors of AAVS Tropicality, Unit Tutors at AA and RCA)

'Tropicality: Traces of a Struggle for *Home*'

Interval

4-5pm coffee + screening

Keynote Lectures

5-7pm

speakers:

François Penz (Professor and Head of Architecture, University of Cambridge)

'Cinema as Spatial Practice of Everyday Life'

Nic Clear (Professor and Head of Architecture, University of Huddersfield)

'Synthetic Spaces: The Moving Image in Teaching, Practice and Research'

Drinks 7pm

Talks and Speakers Information

François Penz

'Cinema as Spatial Practice of Everyday Life'

This talk advocates a form of cinematic-assisted imagination centering around the 'minor magic of everyday life' [after Lefebvre], a reflection on the complexity of architecture as experience and the need for a more humanistic-based approach. I will concentrate on my current research project 'A Cinematic Musée Imaginaire of Spatial Cultural Differences' [<https://www.cinemusespace.arct.cam.ac.uk>] that aims to generate a novel understanding of deeply rooted societal differences in the usage of architecture, experience of space and everyday domestic activities, using film examples from China & Japan versus Europe & USA.

Bio:

Professor François Penz is an architect by training and is currently the Head of the Department of Architecture in Cambridge. He directs a research group entitled DIGIS (Digital Studio for Research in Design, Visualisation and Communication), which over the course of the last two decades has been investigating the intersection of Architecture, Cinema, and Digitality, developing novel modes of investigation, in the belief that the moving image provides us with new perceptual equipment to grasp the complexity of architectural and urban phenomena. DIGIS focuses on new techniques, methodologies and potentialities of digital media in design-related disciplines and has over the years, developed into a unique international centre for practice-led creative experiment, with a thriving PhD and advanced research programme. He has written widely on the relationship between architecture and cinema - his most recent books being: *Cinematic Aided Design: an Everyday Life Approach to Architecture* (Routledge, 2017) and *Cinematic Urban Geographies* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2017).

Nic Clear

'Synthetic Spaces: The Moving Image in Teaching, Practice and Research'

This lecture will set out some of the founding interests of using film and animation in architecture, particularly the critique of traditional forms of orthography, and will look at how this has developed through various technological shifts and transformations. In particular the lecture will look in detail at two recent projects produced with Hyun Jun Park that have utilised very different approaches to the moving image. The *Chthonopolis* is a project for a subterranean post-singularity city for three million inhabitants which used a highly stylised form of animation to illustrate the utopian ambitions of the design proposal. While in *Synthetic Spaces*, 3D point cloud scan data is manipulated to develop images and animations to explore three familiar and iconic spaces in Huddersfield in unique and highly evocative ways. The ability to integrate and manipulate the time-based digital and real-world data create synthetic spatial models that exist between the virtual and the actual and combine the 'measured, the 'experienced' and even the 'practiced' in a way that no other form of spatial mapping is capable of.

bio:

Professor Nic Clear is an architect, writer and curator, and Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture and 3D Design at the University of Huddersfield. He is also Co-Director of the Advanced Virtual and Technological Architecture Research Group (AVATAR). He was previously Professor of

Architecture and Head of Department of Architecture and Landscape at University of Greenwich, and have taught at the Bartlett School of Architecture for over 20 years, in MArch and Masters in Architectural Design, as well as have taught across Europe, US and Canada. In 2015 he was the Inaugural Professor for Research in Visionary Cities at the Institute of Fine Arts in Vienna. He ran his own company, Clear Space, for many years before setting up the now-defunct General Lighting and Power whose work spanned pop promos, architecture, advertising campaigns and art installations. Having abandoned the 'corporate architectural complex', he now divides his time between teaching, writing fiction, performing, and making his own drawings and films.

Ayah Hatahet
'Sentimental Cities'

Films invoke immediate responses that drawings and writings cannot. Techniques of filming used in guiding viewers through architecture can shape particular emotional responses at a subconscious level. Such powerful triggers can in turn be used to interrogate the world around us. This talk explores the intimate yet critical relationship between film and city by presenting aspects of design and research projects based in Japan. Polemical issues of subtraction and division in the projects are further examined through cues from Gordon Matta-Clark, Keller Easterling and Giles Delueze. The projects conclude with open-ended architectural positions, revealing moments of the mundane through proposed scenes of the city, questioning alternative ways of inhabiting the city.

bio:

Ayah Hatchet recently graduated from the MArch programme at the Leeds School of Architecture with projects and thesis that focused on the urban landscape, its dissection, conflict and resolution as assemblages. Her MArch projects were exhibited in Japan as part of an ongoing collaborative research project 'Cinematic Commons' between participating institutions and creative professionals in Leeds, London, Mumbai, Mexico City and Tokyo. Ayah currently works for Wilde architects in Stockport.

Lingge Yang
'Beyond Boundaries'

This talk starts with a short film focusing on boundary conditions between the favela and the formal city in Rio de Janeiro which was developed as part of the design project in AA Diploma Unit 12 last year. The film is half live-shot and half animated, through which architectural spaces with narrations from different perspectives are unpacked and recreated. The talk then moves to more recent work this year of a project in AA Diploma Unit 3 that questions the system of contemporary CCTV surveillance equipped with Facial Recognition technology.

bio:

Lingge Yang completed RIBA Part 1 at the University of Sheffield. She then worked for one year at AHR in London before she joined AA Diploma School to continue her RIBA Part 2 study. Her installation design was shortlisted for RIBA's Open Call '*Beyond Borders*' in 2017, and her work was exhibited in the London Festival of Architecture of the same year. She has been developing her work by employing film and animation as both investigation and representation method.

Tatjana Crossley
'The Constructed Gaze'

Perception is in the eye of the beholder, so to speak. What I mean by this is: new experience of the world is processed through the lens of previous subjective experience. The accumulation of experience is what defines us as subjects perceiving the world. Psychologically, this begins with Lacanian notions of the body image, which then evolves each time it encounters new experience. However, this body image is stubborn to change since it does not necessarily reflect the reality of the body but rather serves as a reflection of the entire history of its development. In parallel, the society informs collective ways of perceiving. It creates constructed gazes that ultimately manipulate our subjectivity. New modes of perceiving have and are challenging the convention of linear perspective, which subverts the constructed gaze, as we know it, in order to produce richer narratives of the city and a better understanding of how it is actually experienced.

bio:

Tatjana Crossley has completed her PhD at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London. Her research focuses on the psychological and philosophical construction of body image as it relates to 'immersive' environments, which include virtual realities and the architectural spaces that test our sensory perception. She is examining how the design of space affects subjects within and their perception of 'self in space' and 'self to others'. Tatjana completed her Masters in Architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Bachelors in Architecture at Rice University and has practiced at the architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, San Francisco, developing the designs of high-rise buildings in China. She has always been interested in how to implement, amplify and manipulate subjective sensory experience in her designs, which has led her to her current PhD research.

Henrietta Williams
'Defining a Situated Video Practice and Pedagogy'

This talk presents the idea of a situated video practice that uses film as a form of critical spatial practice and a way to interrogate a specific site. By engaging with the social and the aesthetic in parallel, this practice provides both a tool for self-reflection and a form of theory of criticism. The film becomes an object, around which a conversation can start that relates the specifics of site to a larger network of contemporary social, cultural and political conditions.

bio:

Henrietta Williams has a visual filmic practice that explores urbanist theories; particularly considering ideas around fortress urbanism, security, and defense. She is currently working towards an LAHP funded PhD by design at the Bartlett, UCL, that critiques drone surveillance technologies and the history of the aerial viewpoint. The output of this research will comprise of a written thesis alongside video works. Henrietta was made a Teaching Fellow at the Bartlett in September 2017 and teaches on the MA Situated Practice. She now writes and co-ordinates a module called 'Mediated Environments' where students make video work that critically engages with the urban landscape.

Mark Carey

'Architecture and Location as Characters: The Cinematographer's Perspective'

Architecture and place are key elements in storytelling. A single frame can spur the imagination and create story in our thoughts. Cinema delivers around 24 of these frames a second. In a narrative form that is often character led, location can also play a pivotal role. In collaboration with artist Jasmina Cibic for over 10 years, this talk will show works that 'explore "soft power" – how political rhetoric is deployed through art and architecture'. Mark will reference films shot in Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Hous Lange and Hous Esters, Arne Jacobsen's Aarhus City Hall and recently exhibited at MoMA as part of 'Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia'. He will also draw on his collaboration with colleagues at VCA University of Melbourne on the soon to be released feature film 'Disclosure' and it's interaction with location as traumascape.

bio:

Mark Carey is Head of Cinematography at the Northern Film School, Leeds Beckett University. His international profile in the film industry spans from projects for Film Director Martin Scorsese ('The 50 Year Argument') and Oscar winner Alex Gibney ('Finding Fela!' & the BAFTA finalist 'We Steal Secrets: The Wikileaks Story'), to films exhibited at the 55th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia 2013, Maribor 2012 European Capital of Culture, Aarhus 2017 European Capital of Culture, BALTIC and MoMA continue his long-term collaboration with Artist Jasmina Cibic. He has been a cinematographer on films that premiered at Sundance Film Festival, Sheffield Documentary Festival and Toronto International Film Festival, been nominated for BAFTA and Aesthetica Arts Awards and won PrimeTime Emmy, Grierson, and the MAC International Arts awards. There have also been cinema releases, exhibitions in art galleries across the globe, and screenings on BBC, C4, HBO etc.

Carla Molinari

'All Roads Lead to Rome: An urban journey through sequences'

The concept of sequences - the idea to compose a series of spaces following a specific order - has been used in architecture for a long time as an important feature of buildings. However, the term starts to appear in the theory of architecture relatively late, after the invention of cinema. From Auguste Choisy's analysis of the Acropolis to Bernard Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts*, from Le Corbusier's promenade to Gordon Cullen's *Townscapes*, the concept of sequences has been used in architecture, although with different shades, as tool to design, analyse and interpret architectural and urban objects. This presentation will focus on three different researches, all based on the theoretical use of the concept of sequences in architecture, and all 'leading to Rome'. From the territorial scale of the Appian Way to the heart of Saint Peter's Basilica, the talk will investigate the urban dimensions of the Eternal City exploiting the relationship between cinema and architecture from different angles and perspectives.

bio:

Carla Molinari is currently Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the Leeds Beckett University and Honorary Associate of the University of Liverpool, conducting research on innovative interpretation of sequences and montage in architecture. Carla has a PhD in Theory and Critic of Architecture (University Sapienza of Rome) and she has published on cinema and architecture, on the conception of architectural space and on cultural regeneration. In 2016, she has been awarded the prestigious

British Academy Fellowship by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and in 2014 she was the recipient of the Best Young Critic of Architecture Prize (presS/Tletter, Venice).

Mohamad Hafeda

'Filming as Negotiating Conflict'

The talk explores filming as a bordering practice that negotiates and narrates sites of political-sectarian conflict. This process allows for the rethinking of binary positions including those between disciplines, spatial conditions, media and representations, and eventually the transformation of certain borders such as the divisive positions of dominant narratives.

bio:

Mohamad Hafeda is an artist, designer and a writer. He is a founding partner of Febrik, a collaborative platform for participatory art and design research working on issues of refuge and spatial rights. Hafeda is a senior lecturer in architecture at Leeds Beckett University. He holds a PhD degree in Architectural Design from the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. Hafeda is the author of *Negotiating Conflict in Lebanon: Bordering Practices in a Divided Beirut* (I.B. Tauris, 2019). He is the co-editor of *Narrating Beirut from its Borderlines* (Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2011), and Febrik's projects *Creative Refuge* (Tadween, 2014) and *Action of Street/Action of Room: A Directory of Public Actions* (Serpentine Galleries, 2016). Febrik collaborates with NGOs and cultural institutions. Their projects include residencies and exhibitions at the Serpentine Galleries, South London Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, Mosaic Rooms, and Architecture Biennale Rotterdam.

Aude-Line Dulière

'Crafted Images: Materials, Means and Meanings in the Construction of Movie Sets'

This exploration 'behind the scenes' reveals practices within the ecosystem of the movie industry. Through the production of spaces and ornamentation, questions on cultural references, value systems, labor and material flows emerge. Spaces are erected and deconstructed at a vertiginous pace to record short scenes that aim to last forever.

bio:

Aude-Line Dulière is an architect and currently teaches at the Architectural Association in London. She worked at David Chipperfield Architects between 2010-15 and has been part of the development team at Rotor Deconstruction in Brussels. She previously practiced on the construction and conception of movie sets across Europe. Her academic interests build on the dual nature of her experience and explores the relation between architecture and cinema. She is the recipient of the 2018 Wheelwright Prize, awarded by Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. Her proposal focuses on the potential re-use of material within the movie industry.

Brendon Carlin, Maria Paez Gonzalez and Andrew Houston
'Tropicality: Traces of a Struggle for *Home*'

Tropicality is a research project conducted as an experimental, two-week taught workshop and collaboration between filmmakers, architects and students that engage in ethnographic, anthropological and filmic readings of housing and 'home' in urban, *post*-colonial and *tropical* contexts. The programme has been running for four years, and has so far visited San Jose, Costa Rica; Saigon, Vietnam; Colombo, Sri Lanka and Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, Japan. Through interviews, films and drawings, the research investigates how the aesthetic, symbolic and ritualistic practices of the domestic space (house and neighbourhood) are entangled with the production of experience, individual/cultural identity and struggles for what we might call existential security, or *home*. Our inquiries stress the importance of *seeing* as a form of, and prerequisite to *projecting* in architecture.

bio:

Maria Paez Gonzalez is an architect, a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Arts and an Associate Partner at Foster+Partners. Brendon Carlin is a tutor, Unit Master and PhD candidate at the Architectural Association. Andrew Houston is a filmmaker and film theory scholar based out of New York City. All three are founders and co-directors of AAVS Tropicality since 2014.

screening:

Andreas Antonopoulos

'Visual Rhythm: From Still Photography to Narrative Film' (2018)

<https://vimeo.com/275818311>

12:37

When talking about films it is customary to refer to their storyline. For example, one might comment on how a film is about a particular historical period or that it has a romantic subject. But are films really only about their stories and the performances of the actors? And are the performances of the actors valued only because of the way they deliver their lines? In this article, film is approached as a kinetic medium and explored from a movement and formalistic perspective.

bio:

Andreas Antonopoulos studied film in Athens and Edinburgh and has worked as a Film and TV editor and directed short films with screenings in international film festivals. He has taught film in Napier Edinburgh University, Leeds Beckett University and University of West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago.

screening:

Lingge Yang

Beyond Boundaries (2018)

<https://vimeo.com/276141473>

05:41

screening:

Julian Rosefeldt

Stunned Man (Trilogy of Failure II) (2004)

<https://vimeo.com/63094716>

32:53

screening:

John Smith

The Girl Chewing Gum (1976)

<https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/john-smith-girl-chewing-gum>

11:37

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Links

<http://www.nicclear.com>

<http://www.nicclear.com/Architecture-and-The-Spaces-of-Digital-Filmmaking>

<https://www.arct.cam.ac.uk/people/architecture-hod@aha.cam.ac.uk>

<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/cinematic-geographies-of-battersea>

<http://henriettawilliams.com>

<https://www.feabrik.org>

<https://mosaicrooms.org/event/sewing-borders/>

<http://phd.aaschool.ac.uk/tatjana-crossley/>

<https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/2018/04/2018-wheelwright-prize-awarded-to-belgian-architect-aude-line-duliere/>

<https://www.aaschool.ac.uk/STUDY/VISITING/tropicality>

<https://m.facebook.com/aavstropicality/>

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