

AA

30.05.19 | 14:00 - 17:30

theory and histories
this thing called theory

Mark Cousins
Lorens Holm
Joel McKim
Mark Morris

Doreen Bernath
Teresa Stoppani

ThisThingCalledTheory www.thisthingcalledtheory.com
Architectural Humanities Research Association www.ahra-architecture.org

Theory and Histories

‘This Thing Called Theory’ open school event

Architectural Association School of Architecture 

& Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) [www.ahra-architecture.org]

When: 30.05.2019 14:00 - 17:30

Where: The Barrel Vault, Architectural Association School of Architecture
36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES

Event Organisers

Doreen Bernath and Teresa Stoppani, *ThisThingCalledTheory* [www.thisthingcalledtheory.com]

Guest Speakers

Mark Cousins (AA)

Lorens Holm (U Dundee, AHRA)

Joel McKim (Birkbeck)

Mark Morris (AA)

Theory and Histories

open school event

Stemming from the Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) 2015 conference, the ‘This Thing Called Theory’ series explores the status of theory in architecture, proposing theory as a form of architectural practice that opposes the instrumentalization of its use.

After *Making Theories* (2017) [www.aaschool.ac.uk/VIDEO/lecture.php?ID=3652] and *Double Crossing* (2018) [www.aaschool.ac.uk/VIDEO/lecture.php?ID=3875], the third event in the series, *Theory and Histories*, proposes a discussion on the current proliferation of architectural history narratives, and of the different ways of constructing, curating and communicating them.

By looking at architectural history from within the established discipline (Mark Cousins) and current practices (Joel McKim), as well as from an ambiguous “outside” of critical readings (Lorens Holm) and ironical takes (Mark Morris), ‘This Thing Called Theory’ stakes the claim for theory to perform the critical (destructive) role of questioning and challenging today’s many ‘new canonical’ histories. As they fill the past, again and anew, with the ‘the presence of the now’ (Walter Benjamin’s “*Jetztzeit*”), new histories are already affecting and performing new projects of architecture.

Speakers

Mark Cousins (AA) is Head of History & Theory Studies at the AA. His Friday Lectures at the AA ran for 30 years, attracting a wide audience of architects and artists. He is currently transforming the lectures into books.

Lorens Holm (Dundee, AHRA) is Reader in Architecture and Director of the Geddes Institute for Urban Research at the University of Dundee. At Dundee he runs the Rooms+Cities design research unit, which uses architectural theory to open up a space for designing new forms of city and social life.

Joel McKim (Birkbeck) is Senior Lecturer in Digital Media and Culture at Birkbeck, University of London, where he is the Director of the Vasari Research Centre for Art and Technology and co-director of the MA Digital Media. He is currently a Visiting Fellow at the V&A Research Institute.

Mark Morris (AA) is Head of Teaching and Learning at the AA and works on diverse curricular objectives across the School as well as teaching History & Theory Studies.

Doreen Bernath (AA HTS, Leeds Beckett) is Senior Lecturer in Architecture at Leeds Beckett University, HTS lecturer at the AA, and a co-editor of RIBA’s *The Journal of Architecture*. She directs the AA Budapest Visiting School ‘The Uncommon Walk’.

Teresa Stoppani (AA HTS, AHRA) is HTS lecturer at the AA and a co-editor of RIBA’s *The Journal of Architecture*. She is the instigator of the architecture research collective ThisThingCalledTheory.

Theory and Histories

Programme

14:00 – 14:20

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome – Costandis Kizis (AHRA AA representative)

Research and the AHRA – Lorens Holm (AHRA Steering Group)

This Thing Called Theory – Doreen Bernath (AA)

Theory and Histories – Teresa Stoppani (AA, AHRA)

14:20 – 16.20

Speakers Presentations

Mark Cousins (AA)

Architectural Categories and Architectural Periods

In today's society there are no general ways, so how does one write about pluralism when it is just a question of point of view? As architectural historians, we do not have the resources, so we operate by case studies - and the history of ideas does no better, just substituting ideas for other ideas. This talk proposes a critique of established schemata in the history of art and architecture.

Joel McKim (Birkbeck)

A Near History of Digital Architecture: Responses at Ground Zero

We have only just reached the point of being able to historicize and contextualize the emergence of digital design within architecture. This talk will consider the recent history of digital architecture from the vantage point of one key moment in its emergence – the process of rebuilding at Ground Zero in post-9/11 New York – considering whether in these algorithmically-driven practices we can find the forms of politically and historically engaged “creative memory” advocated by Deleuze.

Lorens Holm (Dundee)

We Are All Statesmen – We All Love the Smell of Napalm in the Morning

This talk will sketch out an ethical/moral position for architecture with respect to the damage we are doing to the environment, distinguishing ethical duty and practical duty. Both are necessary but, paradoxically, they work against each other. The fact that, as the developer's weapon, architecture is the chief agent of that damage, only complicates things. The talk traces a line of thinking on space, politics and the togetherness of people, and proposes a kind of scholarly research that is about understanding the human world through a critical reading of its artefacts.

Mark Morris (AA)

What's So Funny About Architectural History

This talk looks at architectural history through various cartoon representations drawn for newspapers, and looking also at the role of cartoons in architectural education.

16:20 – 16:30

Break

16:30 – 17:30

Questions and Conversations

The event is open to members of the public, staff and students.