

# O oblasti v arhitekturi #3

Poststrukturalistična in  
psihoanalitična perspektiva

25. in 26. september 2019,  
Ljubljana

# On Power in Architecture #3

A Psychoanalytical and  
Poststructuralist Perspective

25 and 26 September 2019,  
Ljubljana

predavajo

**Andrew  
Nadir  
Elke  
Robert  
Douglas**

speakers

**Ballantyne  
Lahiji  
Krasny  
Pfaller  
Spencer**

# Aim

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After focusing on the materialistic and the phenomenological philosophical perspective, the third and last edition of the symposia series *On Power in Architecture* focuses on the psychoanalytical and poststructuralist perspective of reflecting on the relation between power and architecture. The third international symposium will bring together renowned philosophers and theorists who will think about the specific intertwinement between power and architecture in contemporary neoliberalism.

Andrew Ballantyne, Elke Krasny, Nadir Lahiji, Robert Pfaller, and Douglas Spencer will talk about micropolitics and architecture, phantasmagoria and capitalist pleasure, iconic shifts in architecture in the 1980s and '90s, the intertwinement of postmodernist aesthetics and neoliberalism, and the possibilities of an alternative view of power in architecture as the power of capital and the power for capital.

The programme will be in English. Entry is free of charge.

# Programme

Pre-event

**Wednesday, 25 September 2019**  
**Faculty of Architecture**

**Discussion:**  
**Architecture and Ideology**

18:00

Andrew Ballantyne, Nadir Lahiji, Elke Krasny, and Robert Pfaller will discuss the complex relationship between architecture and ideology. Moderated by Mateja Kurir.

**Thursday, 26 September 2019**  
**10:00–16:00, MAO**

**Symposium:**  
**On Power in Architecture #3**

10:00–10:15

Opening remarks by Mateja Kurir, *The Architecture of Neoliberal Destruction*

10:15–11:00

Andrew Ballantyne, *Micropolitics and Architecture*

11:00–11:45

Elke Krasny, *Iconic Moves: Regeneration + Reproduction*

11:45–12:30

Nadir Lahiji: *Phantasmagoria of the "One Divided in Two": Architecture and the Capitalist Enjoyment*

12:30–13:15

Discussion

13:15–14:00

Break

14:00–14:45

Robert Pfaller, *Postmodern Aesthetics and Neoliberal Politics: A Relationship between Ornament and Crime*

14:45–15:30

Douglas Spencer, *Architecture and the Subject of Capital: A Critique of Symptomatology and Spectacle*

15.30–16.00

Discussion

# Abstracts

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Andrew Ballantyne

## **MICROPOLITICS AND ARCHITECTURE**

Politics is interpersonal relations; it originates as a word at the scale of the city – the polis – at a time when the city was the state. Governments take decisions about infrastructure and commission buildings that can represent or dissimulate the power of the state. At a smaller scale, we have the politics of the workplace or the family, which are worked out in tensions and alliances, rivalries and murders – the stuff of drama, comedy, and tragedy. The Royal Houses of Thebes and Atreus – Oedipus and Orestes – enact intensely things that go on more mildly in our own homes – the walls and rooms make meetings and separations at the domestic scale, which can be seen translated to the scale of the city, with its streets and markets. Within the individual's unconscious there is micropolitics, which informs our moods and inclinations. In moving across the different scales, from molecular to molar, unconscious assemblages to the psychology of crowds, we cross thresholds of architectural awareness. We can think of some buildings as autonomous objects, but only by not noticing that they are always political through and through, linked into infrastructures and housing micropolitical organisms that are already crowds within themselves.

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Elke Krasny

## **ICONIC MOVES: REGENERATION + REPRODUCTION**

Urban change throughout the 1980s and 1990s was marked by processes of deindustrialization. Cities, and entire regions, suffered a decline in productive industrial activity. As factories or plants closed down, a new type of architecture

moved in with style. Urban regeneration was premised on the promise of the icon or the landmark. Ranging from corporate headquarters to museums, universities to football stadiums, opera houses to convention centres, markets to airports, architecture served the global economy by promoting iconic experiences. How is such experience produced, and, most importantly, how is it reproduced on the daily level?

This lecture examines such iconic moves in architecture as they complexly interconnect urban regeneration and daily reproduction. Looking at the effective and affective dimensions of such iconic moves of architecture under neoliberal capitalism, we raise the questions what urban regeneration means and how it is maintained through reproduction. Focusing on the material dimension of architecture, the economy of production and the economy of reproduction are considered as equally relevant.

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Nadir Lahiji

## **PHANTASMAGORIA OF THE “ONE DIVIDED IN TWO”: ARCHITECTURE AND THE CAPITALIST ENJOYMENT**

Contemporary capitalism has opened a new world of *Phantasmagoria* in which the Subject is *re-enchanted*. Under this reactionary re-enchancement the human sensorium is *anaestheticized* and the Subject is depoliticized only to be subjected to a “surplus-*jouissance*” in the service of capitalist profit. Contemporary architecture has become an instrument in generating this surplus-*jouissance*. Taking the Marxist-Benjaminian-Psychoanalytical conceptual structure for my critique, this presentation will scrutinize this state of architecture by subjecting its “dreamworld” to a critical examination under the notion of *Phantasmagoria* – defined here, in psychoanalytical terms, as the ideological “structure of fantasy”. Under this notion, it will be argued that the *subjectivization* of architectural agency to the *capitalist enjoyment* is already an accomplished fact. The presentation will conclude by arguing that architecture must stand against the postmodern Re-Enchantment by returning, once again, to the Enlightenment Project of Disenchantment.

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Robert Pfaller

## **POSTMODERN AESTHETICS AND NEOLIBERAL POLITICS: A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORNAMENT AND CRIME**

In the light of the dramatically increased social inequality due to the neoliberal politics of austerity and privatization, postmodernity appears (as I have argued in my recent book *Erwachsenensprache*) as the ideological superstructure to this development. Its programmatic relativism, the constant “folklorisation” of the Other (that has been remarked, for instance, by Nicolas Bourriaud), and the reduction of the adult citizen to a notoriously sensitive complainer (that only has, as Slavoj Žižek pointed out, the right to complain, but no other civil right whatsoever) are the political and ethical counterparts to the economic privatization of public goods and spaces.

This raises a number of questions about postmodernity as a style in architecture: is this nothing but the expression of this ideology, or does it have at least a kind of relative aesthetic autonomy? Is the return of the ornament promoted by architectural postmodernity an obvious political crime, or is there a kind of innocence to it? How strong are the ties that link architectural form to ideological imagination and political reality? In order to answer these questions, I want to closely examine the reasons that led one of the founding fathers of modernity, Adolf Loos, to the famous equation between “ornament and crime”.

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Douglas Spencer

## **ARCHITECTURE AND THE SUBJECT OF CAPITAL: A CRITIQUE OF SYMPTOMATICS AND SPECTACLE**

Conceptions of architecture as spectacle or symptom, respectively, the legacies of Guy Debord’s situationism and Fredric Jameson’s Marxian formalism, still serve as default modes for the operation of architectural critique. Under-theorized in terms of the relationship between the political and the economic, over-invested in moralizing denouncements of the iconic, and premised on stagist, technologically

determinist, and financially fixated accounts of capitalist development, a critique of such models and methods themselves is overdue. This paper draws upon alternative and heterodox understandings of capital in order to rethink the part played by architecture in its contemporary operation. Drawing upon the work of Ellen Meiksins Wood, Moishe Postone, and Etienne Balibar, it explores the potential for an alternative optic on the power of architecture as a power of, and for, capital.

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## Authors

### **ANDREW BALLANTYNE**

is professor of architecture at Newcastle University, UK. He became an architect and then a writer. His books include *Architecture Theory: A Reader in Philosophy and Culture*, *Deleuze and Guattari for Architects*, *Key Buildings from Prehistory to the Present*, *Rural and Urban: Architecture Between Two Cultures*, and *Architecture: A Very Short Introduction*.

**ELKE KRASNY** is a cultural theorist, curator and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her scholarship connects critical practices in architecture, urbanism, and contemporary art to questions of memory, ecology, economy, and labour. Recently she co-edited *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*. Her exhibition *Hands-on Urbanism: The Right to Green* was shown at the 2012 Venice Biennale of Architecture.

**NADIR LAHIJI** is an architect and critical theorist. His publications include: *An Architecture Manifesto:*

*Critical Reason and Theories of a Failed Practice*, *Can Architecture Be an Emancipatory Project: Dialogues on Architecture and the Left*, *The Missed Encounter of Radical Philosophy with Architecture*, and *The Architecture of Phantasmagoria: Specters of the City*.

**ROBERT PFALLER** is a philosopher and professor at the University of Art and Industrial Design in Linz, Austria. His publications include: *On the Pleasure Principle in Culture: Illusions without Owners*, *Interpassivity: The Aesthetics of Delegated Enjoyment*, *Erwachsenensprache: Über ihr Verschwinden aus Politik und Kultur*.

**DOUGLAS SPENCER** is associate professor and director of graduate education at Iowa State University's Department of Architecture. The author of *The Architecture of Neoliberalism*, his work critically theorizes the relationship between architecture, landscape, and the production of subjectivity.

## **O oblasti v arhitekturi #3**

mednarodni simpozij

26. september 2019

10.00–16.00

MAO, Ljubljana

preddogodek

25. september 2019, 18.00

Fakulteta za arhitekturo,  
Ljubljana

### **organizacija**

Društvo Igor Zabel za kulturo in teorijo

### **koncept**

Mateja Kurir

### **partnerji**

MAO – Muzej za arhitekturo  
in oblikovanje  
Fakulteta za arhitekturo Univerze v  
Ljubljani  
ERSTE sklad

### **prizorišči**

Fakulteta za arhitekturo,  
Zoisova c. 12, Ljubljana  
MAO – Muzej za arhitekturo in  
oblikovanje, Grad Fužine, Pot na  
Fužine 2, Ljubljana

### **prevod v slovenščino**

Nataša Velikonja

### **jezikovni pregled**

Inge Pangos

### **oblikovanje**

Ivian Kan Mujezinović / Ee

[www.igorzabel.org](http://www.igorzabel.org)

**DRUŠTVO**  
**IGOR ZABEL**  
**ZA KULTURO**  
**IN TEORIJU**



Univerza v Ljubljani  
Fakulteta za arhitekturo



## **On Power in Architecture #3**

International Symposium

26 September 2019

10:00–16:00

MAO, Ljubljana

Pre-event

25 September 2019, 18:00

Faculty of Architecture,  
Ljubljana

### **Organizer**

Igor Zabel Association of Culture  
and Theory, Ljubljana

### **Concept**

Mateja Kurir

### **Partners**

MAO – Museum of Architecture  
and Design, Ljubljana  
Faculty of Architecture, University of  
Ljubljana  
ERSTE Foundation

### **Venues**

Faculty of Architecture,  
Zoisova c. 12, Ljubljana  
MAO – Museum of Architecture  
and Design, Grad Fužine,  
Pot na Fužine 2, Ljubljana

### **Proofreading**

Jana Renée Wilcoxon

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Ivian Kan Mujezinović / Ee

**IGOR ZABEL**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
**FOR CULTURE**  
**AND THEORY**