CALL FOR PAPERS

THE HUMAN IN ARCHITECTURE AND PHILOSOPHY: TOWARDS AN ARCHITECTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
20 JULY – 23 JULY 2015
BAMBERG, GERMANY

Architecture and Philosophy
International conference
July 20-23, 2016 Bamberg, Germany

The Human in
Architecture and Philosophy

Human beings normally live in buildings – structures built specifically for this function. This raises interesting questions. Why do we build dwellings (such as the ones we do)? And for whom do architects build houses? These questions view the same phenomenon from two different perspectives: architecture can tell us something about the human condition (in general or in a particular culture) and we can derive insights about architecture from our understanding of human beings.

This topic is inspired by two observations and two related questions:

1) Many architects, contemporary and historical, claim to focus on the needs of human beings. The resulting architecture, however, often does not meet the needs and desires of the people who live there. For whom should architecture actually build?

2) Architecture, traditionally, has played a negligible role in our philosophical understanding of human beings (as also for our sociological, psychological, and other anthropological analyses). Although it has always been generally acknowledged that human beings need built dwelling places, more careful analysis of this need is surely necessary. What does it say about human beings that they depend upon the buildings they construct for their own habitation?

These observations point to a deficit both in philosophical analysis and in the practical application of philosophy of architecture. A more systematic analysis of both areas could contribute to a better understanding of human beings and to future architectural endeavour better satisfying the needs and wishes of human beings.

The 3rd International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture International Conference seeks to answers these questions (and to pose some new ones) by bringing together architecture and philosophy with a variety of other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, civil engineering, design, law, and psychology.

Philosophers are far from having reached a consensus about the question as to what human beings are. Kant thought this the philosophical question par excellence and that upon which all other questions hang. Philosophers do not even agree on how to put this question. Are questions about human beings not already presupposing an outdated essentialism? Whatever one's metaphysical position might be, it does seem that this obstinate philosophical-anthropological question remains. Even rejecting the question is, in a way, to acknowledge that it is a philosophical problem.

Human beings normally spend a significant proportion of their lives in buildings. Architecture, and the built environment in a wider sense, is therefore of great importance in any adequate philosophical anthropology.

When we look at the history of architecture, we find very different (and often fascinating) answers to Kant's question; answers that are implicitly given by the way in which architects and non-architects build or have built. They present an 'architectural anthropology' often containing insights beyond philosophy.

It is also remarkable how dramatically much architecture often fails to provide an adequate architectural anthropology. Very basic needs and desires of inhabitants have not always been satisfied. Some architects and builders seem to ignore what human beings are really like.

Although architects are generally aware of this challenge, and many claim to pay much attention to the needs of the human being, there are hardly any practical systematic endeavors aimed at finding out what these human needs are. Most architects operate with a rather vague anthropology and few have attempted to articulate their position within their own writings. To overcome the problem of unsubstantiated, and possibly incorrect, assumptions about human needs, and in order that architecture might relate the better to the human being, we need a developed and theoretically self-aware architectural anthropology.

That there has been little in the way of cross-disciplinary encounter between philosophy and architecture is part of the problem. Such encounter would contribute to architecture and urban planning better adapted to human beings and would also deepen our understanding of ourselves as beings who build. The built environment is of great importance for the well-being both of the individual and of society.

This conference addresses the challenge of this encounter in seeking a

mutual answer, or at least approach, to the questions of for whom we build and what it is we should be building.

PROSPECTS

We aim to attract architects and philosophers. It is envisaged that architecture be approached through the means, methods, and models of analytical (Western) philosophy with a particular focus on (philosophical) anthropology. Scholars from across the humanities and social sciences (including, but not limited to, sociology, psychology, anthropology, civil engineering, theology, art history, and design) who are interested in the topic are also welcome.

keynotes
(confirmed)

Karsten Harries · Roger Scruton · Mari Hvattum ·
Andres Lepik · Angelika Krebs · Nicholas Ray

POSSIBLE TOPICS WHICH PAPERS MIGHT ADDRESS:

I. IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ARCHITECTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIES:

- What are the implicit or explicit assumptions about the human being inherent in buildings or architectural styles? (eg: van Eyck's Orphanage, Koolhaas CCTV-Tower, Zumthors thermal bath, etc.)
- Comparison of the architectural anthropology of different buildings, styles, and cultures
- What are, or were, the range of expectations (needs and desires) of human beings with regard to architecture: synchronically through history and diachronically in different cultural settings?
- Can philosophy assist in the development of a better architectural anthropology?
- Would architects build differently if they changed their assumptions about what humans are?
- The effect of digital architecture on implicit anthropology.

II. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND THEIR ANTHROPOLOGICAL RELEVANCE:

- The architectural anthropology of cultures without dwellings (such as nomadic societies)
- Architectural anthropology in art, literature, and film (for example, the architecture of different species in The Lord of the Rings)

III. CLASSIC TEXTS REVISITED:

- What assumptions about the human being can be found in the classic texts on architecture (for example Alberti, Semper, Koolhaas, etc.)?
- What have philosophers of anthropology written about architecture?
- Building and planning regulations and their implicit assumptions about humans.

IV. ARCHITECTURE AS A SOURCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN BEINGS:

- Do architects know anything about human beings which philosophy should take more seriously?
- Can philosophy find new insights into the human condition through buildings (both internationally notable and otherwise)?
- What does the fact that human beings have to live with and within architecture mean for them?
- Can building be regarded as a primary activity of human beings?
- Evolutionary perspectives on architecture and its interdependence on human beings.

V. IDEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE:

- Politics and architecture (e.g. the MoMa exhibition 'small scale – big change' presented 'New Architectures of Social Engagement'. What about 'human scale – big change?') (e.g. implicit racism or discrimination in architecture).
- Architecture creating new types of human being (e.g. Bauhaus and the 'new human being' (der neue Mensch)).
- Would architects build differently if they changed their assumptions about the human being?

SUBMISSION

The 2016 conference of the International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture invites papers which probe these questions, re-draw the assumptions behind them or ask new ones. It welcomes architects and philosophers willing to scrutinize extant (inter)disciplinary boundaries and consensus on these questions and issues. The conference celebrates

attempts to operate at the intersection of both disciplines, and promotes work ready to give philosophical anthropology and concrete architect(ure)s serious consideration alike.

Authors are invited to submit a 250-300 word abstract by Monday February 1, 2016. Please submit your abstract to isparchitecture@gmail.com. The abstract should be prepared for blind review and formatted as a RTF file. Please also provide a short CV. Submissions should be in English, and presentations will be held in English. A selection of papers will be published in *Architecture Philosophy*.

DATE AND LOCATION
- 9am Wednesday 20 July to 9pm Friday 22 July + day trip on Saturday 23 July
- City of Bamberg, Bavaria, Germany is a world-heritage site located near to Nuremberg and home to the University of Bamberg and the Villa Concordia Künstlerhaus.

TIMETABLE
Monday 1 February: deadline for abstracts
Thursday 31 March: notice of acceptance
May: circulation of conference program

ORGANISING COMMITTEE
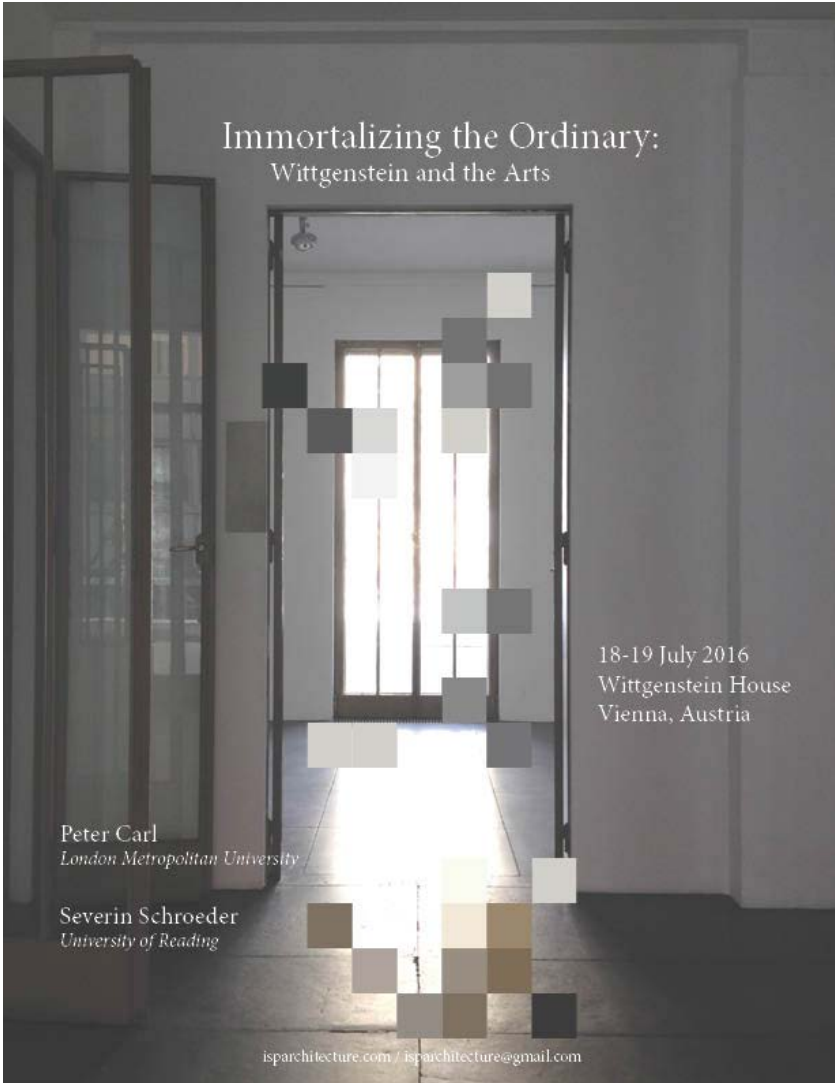Professor Christian Illies
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Immortalizing the Ordinary:
Wittgenstein and the Arts

18-19 July 2016
Wittgenstein House
Vienna, Austria

Peter Carl
London Metropolitan University

Severin Schroeder
University of Reading

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Wittgenstein famously argues against metaphysical claims, or those explanations he describes as having gone beyond both the limits of language and of our ability to comprehend. The boundaries of architecture's language, typically set by our historians, theorists, and practitioners, would by extension also teeter into the non-sensical on crossing the threshold of comprehension. Given the possibility of non-sense in architecture discourse, this call for papers asks that architecture's language be scrutinized according to the loosely analytic method of later Wittgenstein. For many lay person, perhaps even lay architect, would claim there is discourse that is either setting new limits to our language surrounding building or falling into non-sense. Perhaps there is value in delineating what the boundaries of sense in architecture are?

The position against metaphysics, often referred to in the standard reading as the anti-metaphysical critique, suggests that Wittgenstein would reject all of architecture theory. Yet, a sweeping rejection seems too drastic, even for Wittgenstein. Given that theoretical work has successfully resonated with us, its audience, evidenced by the fact that we in turn shape building informed by theoretical work, not all theoretical reflection would appear to be meaningless. On closer reading, it is clear that Wittgenstein suggests that some forms of reflection do fall outside of his metaphysical critique, suggesting further still that only some forms of theory are contested by his non-sense claim.

Compounding the matter within the case of architecture, Wittgenstein defines architecture in such a manner as to suggest that it is defined beyond its physical reality, or metaphysically. He states,

66 HOW CAN ARCHITECTURE BE BOTH IMMORTALIZED AND ORDINARY? **99**

"architecture immortalizes and glorifies." Precisely what is immortalized and glorified is necessarily an idea about a thing, or a notion attributed to the building, as opposed to a physical characteristic embodied within it.

Assuming there is no contradiction with Wittgenstein's anti-metaphysical critique and architecture theory broadly speaking, the paradox of Wittgenstein's writing and his definition of architecture becomes clear. His anti-metaphysical critique values the immediacy of the present and the tangibility of what is physically verifiable, yet he defines architecture as immortalizing and glorifying. How can we understand architecture as both ordinary and immortal? How can architecture maintain its understandings and narratives with the everyday while simultaneously reaching a status of immortality and glorification?

The two-day symposium set at the Wittgenstein House in Vienna looks to bring to architects and designers' attention the potential significance of Wittgenstein's method of investigation to their work, in terms of both understanding architecture and excelling at its practice. The possibilities for explanation are broad and interdisciplinary, and as such, participants are asked only to narrow their focus to the building, the city, or tectonic exercises. Participants are also asked not to limit their discussion to either aesthetics or to ethics, as for Wittgenstein, "aesthetics and ethics are one and the same."

Organized by Dr. Carolyn A. Fahey. For any questions regarding the call for papers, event, or post-event publication, please email the organizer at carfahey[at]gmail.com.

Abstracts are due by 01 April 2016 to isparchitecture[at]gmail.com. Abstracts should be no less than 200 words and no more than 500 words.

Authors of accepted abstract submissions will be notified by 01 May 2015 for participation in the symposium. Symposium participants are then invited to submit full papers for a special issue of *Architecture Philosophy*. Full paper submissions will be double-blind peer reviewed and, if accepted, published in the special issue.

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