

SYMPOSIUM

One Meter Above Ground – Climate and Territory Viewed from the Perspective of the République Géniale

Kunstmuseum Bern, August 23–25, 2018, during République Géniale, August 17 – November 11, 2018

ABSTRACTS

Michel Collet

«Théorie et pratique des Extérieurs. Dans le cadre du Cycle Robert Filliou, De la République Géniale»

Sources of the Poïpoï Project—movement, space, temporality, attitude and context. An interview with Joachim Pfeufer.

Felicity D. Scott – Keynote lecture

«A Straighter Kind of Hip»

In the wake of Haight-Ashbury's legendary Summer of Love in 1967 and in the midst of the ongoing US-led war in Indochina, California hippies did not only head back-to-the-land when seeking to experiment with alternative environments and forms of life. In June 1970 a disillusioned group from the Bay Area rented a vacant six-story industrial warehouse in downtown San Francisco and founded Project One as an urban commune of architects, artists, filmmakers, musicians, craftspeople, and, in turn, video and media collectives and computer programmers. Like other aspects of the counterculture, Project One was haunted both by war and technologies born of the Space Race, and it served as an intense environment—at once architectural, social, and informatic—for negotiating communal ways of life and the networks to which they gave rise. Focusing on Resource One—a group of computer programmers—along with the media collective Optic Nerve, this lecture will trace how Project One served, for a short while, as a key spatial node within the emerging communication networks of the 1970s.

Philip Ursprung

«At the Edge of the Volcano: Java and the Future City»

With a population of 140 million on an area three times the size of Switzerland, the Indonesian island of Java is one of the most densely populated areas of the world. Besides the metropolitan area of Jakarta and Bandung with 40 million inhabitants, the island is covered by an urban fabric that can be defined as *desakota*, a juxtaposition of urban and agricultural dwelling (from Indonesian *desa*: village, and *kota*: city). The only interruption of this man-made fabric are the 45 volcanoes of the island, many of them active. They form holes in the fabric of the future allow to locate the contours of what is not known. The paper refers to a research project conducted since 2015 at Future Cities Laboratory in Singapore.

Charlotte Malterre-Barthes

«Territories of Grain. Politics, Space, and the Global Food System»

852 million people worldwide go hungry. Paradoxically, every year the record for grain harvests is broken. Looking ahead to the coming season, global wheat production is anticipated to reach 744 million tons in 2018. Such an accumulation of food stocks clashes with poor population's ability to access affordable food in growing metropolis of the world, a discrepancy emphasized by the crises of 2008 and 2011, when high food prices combined with shortcomings of political systems to trigger social unrest, most acutely in urban centers. Dramatic and visible, such manifestations of popular discontent confirm the global importance of food in the face of current urbanization and global economy.

Wulf Böer

«Air-conditioning Architecture, 1911–1958. On the Emergence of the Controlled Environment»

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the rapidly growing air-conditioning industry modernized the built environment in the United States, literally, from within: Air was no longer perceived as a natural resource but as a compound product and transformed into an actively configurable material with synthetic qualities. A wide range of scientists and planners speculated upon a future world of machine-made air, a collective vision nothing short of an aerial utopia. Architects collaborated with engineers to make the controlled environment a technological reality within a highly rationalized building economy, thereby redefining concepts of architectural design. Ultimately new forms of interior activity emerged, drawing the human organism in a distinct relationship with architecture; a process that resulted in buildings that were, and mostly still are, completely dependent upon a technological regime and the constant supply with energy.

Sascha Roesler

«The City as Indoor. Architecture after Comfort»

It is one of the central implications of our research to conceive of the contemporary city as the new thermal indoor of societies. In my presentation I will refer to the city as a mesh of super-imposed microclimates. The growing demand to design microclimates deliberately on a urban scale has resulted in recent years in a methodology that systematically incorporates the thermal experiences of users and inhabitants. Vasilikou and Nikolopoulou speak of «the assessment of (...) thermal sensation of users through 'microclimatic walks'.» In my presentation I will highlight the conceptual precursors of such a microclimatological methodology. They are to be found in the fields of architecture and landscape architecture of the early 1960s.

Mary Ellen Carroll

«The Difficulty with a Tree», lecture-performance

Architecture is inherently a political act. The built environment, policy and law and the visible and non-visible forms of infrastructure are unsuspecting materials that can be utilized in the making of, and as the work of art. A performance will be made on, and with the use of these frequencies and works that expand the meaning— to make architecture as landscape perform in this epoch of the political.