



Exploring fieldwork:

A critical consideration of empirical methods and habits-of-mind in design research

Tutors: Thomas Binder (course responsible), Joachim Halse, Marias Hellström (Malmö University) & Andrea Kahn (Columbia University)

General description: The course addresses the 'field' or site of 'method' in design-led research. Broadly, we are interested in exploring the back-and-forth interaction of research intentions and practices as these shape research outcomes (knowledge production).

Through close readings and tentative 'in situ' field observations the course will tackle the interplay between ontology and method, or 'habits of mind' and design research practice. In the course, we will critically explore and consider forms of observation, documentation and operationalization; principles such as deduction and induction; hypothesis and facts; causality and emergence etc. Specific emphasis will be placed on empiricisms or forms of empirical research as compared to research including different forms of interference or experimentation in field situations.

The aim of the course is to investigate how ideas of empirical work and methodological standards associated with neighbouring fields might be applied to design research questions as well as to design research processes. By interrogating design research 'habits of mind' or the disciplining of thought through training and education, the goal is to generate questions concerning trans- and interdisciplinary work, divisions between various fields of knowledge, and methods used for the production of empirical 'facts'. An inquiry into these issues will enable the doctoral students to position themselves ontologically and methodologically relative to their own research practices, and articulate a standpoint of their own.

The course is organized as a collaboration between the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation, The Swedish Design Faculty for design Research and Research Education, and ResArc – The Swedish Research School in Architecture. The course welcomes doctoral students from different fields of design and architectural research, including research in the arts, currently engaged in research activities that involve field work or site explorations.

Course structure: The course will consist of one workshop during the spring semester of 2015, one workshop and one seminar during the autumn semester 2015. The first workshop will be dedicated to working *on the field* through close reading and in-depth group discussion of literature as a means to critically frame experimental field work; the second to working *in the field*, experimentation and additional reading; and the third to doctoral presentations.

Each workshop will include a fieldwork exercise specifically structured to highlight the dynamic interface between research intentions, engaged research practices, and specific research outcomes. The



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final seminar provides students the opportunity to directly apply concepts and questions addressed in the workshops to their own doctoral research.

The learning approach will foreground the intimate combination of practice and theory by asking participants to critically reflect on their own research 'habits of mind'.

Short presentation of lecturers:

Thomas Binder, associate Professor at the Royal Danish Academy of fine Arts, School of Design, co-author of *(Re-) searching the Digital Bauhaus* (Springer 2008), *Rehearsing the Future* (Danish Design School Press, 2010), *Design Research through Practice* (Morgan Kaufman, 2011) and *Design Things* (MIT press, 2011)

Joachim Halse, associate professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design, co-author of *Rehearsing the Future* (Danish Design School Press, 2010).

Maria Hellström Reimer, professor in design theory, Malmö University, School of Arts and Communication, contributor to among other books Jorgensen & Keenan (2012) *Urban Wildscapes* (Routledge); Thörn *et. al.* (2011) *Space for Urban Alternatives? Christiania 1971-2011* (gidlunds). and co-author of *Land Use Poetics* (SLU, 2011)

Andrea Kahn, associate professor, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; author of *Constellations: Constructing Urban Design Practices* (2007), *Site Matters: Design Concepts, Histories and Strategies* (with Carol Burns, 2005) and *Drawing/Building/Text: Essays in Architectural Theory* (1991).

ECTS: 7,5 (3-3+1,5)

Important dates:

Workshop 1: April 7-10, 2015

Workshop 2: August 18-21, 2015

Closing seminar: Ultimo October, 2015

Registration date: January 31., 2015

Contact person: Thomas Binder, tbi@kadk.dk