



Invitation

PhD Symposium: “Images of Desire”

3 May 2016, Stockholm

“Images of Desire” is a PhD symposium hosted by the KTH School of Architecture and supported by the Swedish School of Architectural Research, ResArc.

Architecture’s relation to the image has shifted radically in recent years. Under present modes of “distributed,” “cognitive,” “neoliberal,” or “late” capitalism, architecture has become just one part of a real-estate infrastructure that is largely regulated by the internal procurement protocols of large-scale construction firms and the desire-inducing strategies of marketing agencies. Much of the traditional graphic communication associated with architectural labor has been turned into marketing material: plans are reproduced in coffee-table books, photographs of architects at work are used in advertisements. The rendered image of a building now actively manages both the design process and occupancy: as the primary product sold to the consumer buying “off the plan,” space is experienced through images, before and even after occupancy, as residents scramble to bring gentrified fictions to life via their daily routines and presentation of self.

The increasing importance of the architectural image has enormous ethical, practical and political implications for the architectural discipline, which need to be addressed by architectural theory, history, criticism and design research. How can practices of image production in architecture (rendered, montaged, or other) be retooled to produce progressive, emancipatory or critical change? How can we use the architectural image to strengthen architecture’s relation to “the social”? What can we learn from studies of civil imagination, image culture, alternate practices of image production, and postcapitalist aesthetics undertaken in other fields?

Programme

The symposium is student-organized, with the support of supervisors. The ambition is to provide a forum wherein we can (i) share current work and our thoughts on the theme; (ii) discuss and share relevant theoretical and practical references; (iii) set up possible co-writing opportunities and discuss the possibility of together co-authoring a publication on the topic; (iv) discuss the possibility of organizing a larger conference on this theme; (v) invite a guest lecturer to speak to the theme; (vi) invite local practitioners to make links to the Stockholm context; and (vii) catch up on each others' research. These eight points form the basis for a draft programme, which is open to suggestions (see overleaf).

The first part of the symposium (10.30-16.30 on the 3rd of May), will be hosted by the gallery "Forum för Arkitektur" (FFAR) at Ringvägen 141 in Stockholm. The second part of the symposium, the panel discussion (18.30-20.30 on the 3rd of May) comprises a panel discussion which will be hosted by ABF-huset at Sveavägen 41.

Schedule for 3 May 2016

<u>WHEN?</u>	<u>WHAT?</u>	<u>WHERE?</u>
10.30-11.00	<u>Welcome</u>	FFAR
11.00-12.00	<u>Literature seminar</u>	FFAR
12.00-13.00	<u>Lunch</u> (Self-funded)	TBC
13.15-15.15	<u>Short presentations</u>	FFAR
15.15-16.15	<u>Discussion of future publication</u>	FFAR
16.15-16.30	<u>Discussion of future conference and wrap up</u>	FFAR
16.30-18.30	<u>Break</u>	
18.30-20.30	Panel discussion: "<u>Images of Desire: How Lifestyle Replaced Architecture</u>" with <u>Rory Hyde of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London</u>	ABF-Huset
21.00	<u>Dinner</u> (Self-funded)	TBC

Short Presentations

All participants in the symposium will be asked to prepare and deliver a short (10-minute) presentation addressing the topic of "the image" in architecture in light of their PhD research. This can be quite informal, and does not need to be submitted in advance.

Literature seminar

Part of the aim of the symposium is to together compile a bibliography of relevant existing literature. As such, all participants are asked to bring one book or article which they feel is relevant to the topic and be prepared to briefly introduce their colleagues to the text.

Theorists we have discussed as relevant—i.e., whose work we might like to discuss—include:

- Stephen Duncombe, *Dream: re-imagining progressive politics in an age of fantasy* (2004)
- Ariella Azoulay, including *Civil imagination: a political ontology of photography* (2012)
- Ed Dimendberg, including *Film noir and the spaces of modernity* (2004)
- Susan Buck-Morss, including *Dreamworld and catastrophe : the passing of mass utopia in East and West* (2000) and *The dialectics of seeing : Walter Benjamin and the Arcades project* (1989)
- Mark Fisher, including *Capitalist realism: is there no alternative?* (2009) and *Ghosts of my life: writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures* (2014)
- Owen Hatherley, including *Militant modernism* (2009), *A new kind of bleak : journeys through urban Britain* (2012), and in particular his latest book *The Ministry of Nostalgia* (2016)

Panel Discussion “Images of Desire: How Lifestyle Replaced Architecture”

Stockholm is awash with advertising promising visions of a happy, mindful, sustainable, and successful life... If you buy into the real-estate dream. Rather than sound plans, precise detailing, formal eloquence, or long-term affordability, architecture is increasingly sold to clients, governments and inhabitants on the basis of glossy visualizations and lifestyle branding. What are the implications of architecture’s obsession with its own image? What kind of life are we really being promised, and at what cost? Finally, can practices of image production in architecture be retooled to produce progressive, emancipatory, and even radical change?

Svensk Standard, with the support of the Swedish Schools of Architectural Research (ResArc) and Critical Studies in Architecture at the KTH School of Architecture, presents a panel which, over the course of 120 minutes, will attempt to get to the bottom of “how lifestyle replaced architecture” and what must be done.

We are delighted to announce that Rory Hyde, curator of contemporary architecture and urbanism at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, adjunct senior research fellow of the University of Melbourne, and author of the book *Future Practice: Conversations from the Edge of Architecture* will be joining us, along with two Stockholm-based architects (to be confirmed).

Travel

This event has the support of ResArc. Travel and accommodation is to be organized by students through the ResArc coordinator at their institution.

RSVP

To give us an idea of numbers, please let us know if you are planning to attend before the end of the week (by the 29th of April 2016) by sending an email to helen.runting@arch.kth.se.