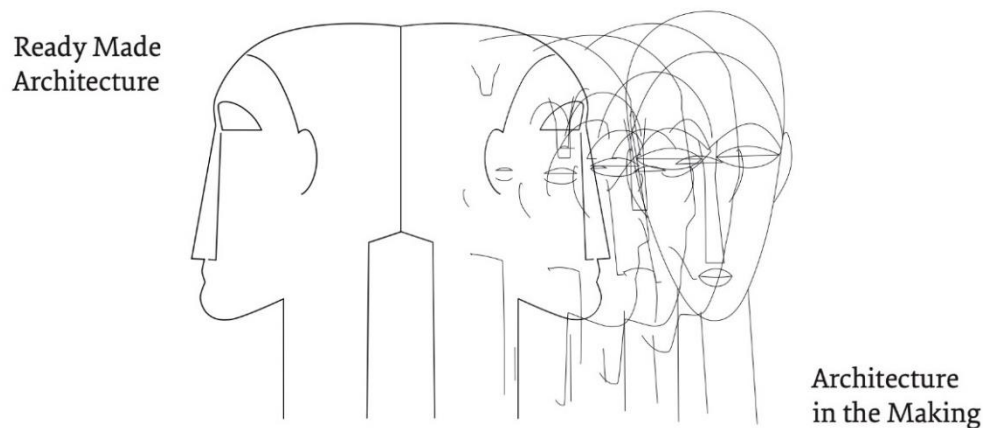


Call for Participants

Thinkers for Architecture - DIALOGUE 1:

FOUCAULT/MERLEAU-PONTY/LATOUR

Manchester, April 24-27, 2023



Research Workshop Convened by:

Gordana Fontana-Giusti (University of Kent)

Jonathan Hale (University of Nottingham)

Albena Yaneva (University of Manchester)

The thought of Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Bruno Latour has greatly contributed to the advance of research scholarship in the field of architecture. As part of a hugely influential strand of French intellectual history that spans Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Phenomenology and contemporary Actor-Network Theory, the links between these three thinkers are many and vital, and yet in detail remain largely unexplored. Their work has rarely been discussed together, ‘in dialogue’, or across empirical examples and case studies drawn from architectural and urban research. This workshop provides an opportunity for such a dialogue, convened by the authors of three volumes in the *Thinkers for Architects* book series published by Routledge/Taylor&Francis: *Foucault for Architects* (Gordana Fontana-Giusti); *Merleau-Ponty for Architects* (Jonathan Hale); and *Latour for Architects* (Albena Yaneva). It offers a unique opportunity for young researchers to ‘think with’ these leading theorists of the last 100 years and to harvest applied knowledge for their ongoing research projects.

Content

The workshop provides a theoretical introduction to the key ideas of these three seminal thinkers, as well as a practical intervention in the form of a series of potential ‘dialogues’ between previously disconnected discourses. It can be contextualised within the growing dissatisfaction in the field of humanities research with the traditional readings of a single author only (or a single paradigm) and the typical inability of this ‘one reading/one author’ approach to adequately address the topical problems of contemporary architectural and urban life. Foucault, Merleau-Ponty and Latour have each, in their own distinctive ways, offered new tools for rethinking our understanding of fundamental themes in the history of knowledge, such as the nature of bodily subjectivity and the constitution of the ‘social self’; the relations between spatiality, knowledge, and political power; the blurring of boundaries between the natural and the cultural, the human and the technical, the actor and the network. One of the main objectives of this event is to provide a forum to draw out previously unexplored synergies between these three related sets of concepts.

We particularly welcome applications from PhD candidates in the history and theory of architecture, urbanism, and urban planning, as well as other academics or design practitioners with expertise in the relevant areas. While we expect the majority of participants to be architectural historians and theorists, we also invite applications from doctoral candidates and early career scholars in adjacent disciplines such as human geography, design studies, urban anthropology, philosophy, science and technology studies, and the arts, while being open to any disciplinary affiliations.

The workshop will consolidate the theoretical knowledge of researchers and will animate their methodological and field-specific creativity. It is hoped that this first *Thinkers’ Dialogue* can also invite experimentation within and between some of the key concepts set out by each thinker (i.e. the *apparatus* in Foucault; *embodiment* in Merleau-Ponty, or *the actor-network* in Latour, etc) and turn them into inventive field devices that can be applied within ongoing and future projects. The workshop is a great opportunity to jump-start a research project or advance knowledge on an existing one in a supportive environment as well as gaining new insights and benefiting from peer analysis, constructive critique and debate. It will provide emerging scholars with new concepts, tools, and methods for their own research while also offering a unique opportunity to stage an inspiring dialogue with these three influential thinkers through the lens of many lively empirical projects in the field.

Learning outcome

In this course, participants will:

- Become familiar with the work of Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Bruno Latour, and recent translations of their work into architectural scholarship.
- Develop an epistemic sensibility attentive to the spatial and material implications and applications of the key concepts of these three thinkers – as well as the potential for productive interactions between them.
- Learn from different inventive uses of these thinkers by the three convenors of the course, alongside discussion of other researchers’ ongoing projects.

Research outcome

Each participant will have the opportunity to develop their research position as proposed in their original ‘Expression of Interest’, to address a specific methodological or theoretical problem and construct a new piece of writing based on original empirics that will contribute in some way to their current ongoing research project. This text will be considered for publication as a book-chapter in the first volume of a new book series to be published by Routledge/Taylor and Francis, edited by – and with new contributions from – the three convenors.

Format

A maximum of thirty participants will be selected to attend the residential workshop/‘retreat’. The morning sessions will be structured around three parallel sessions, with smaller groups of 10 participants dedicated to a specific thinker (or exploring the linkages between a pair of thinkers); participants will rotate sessions each morning. The afternoon sessions will include discussions around specific topics, short writing exercises based on prior reading of the three thinkers’ volumes, or group tasks. The days will end with a plenary session where results from the morning and the afternoon sessions will be presented and discussed, and the links between emerging themes will be explored; they might take the form of keynote presentations by the three convenors followed by plenary discussion.

Admission

The Workshop will be held in Manchester, UK and hosted by the Manchester Architecture Research Group [MARG] at the University of Manchester. The participation fee is £320, including a welcome dinner, sandwich lunches, specific workshop materials and access to e-pub versions of the 3 books. Participants are expected to organize and pay for their own travel and accommodation. Nevertheless, we are happy to assist you with planning your stay. Some discounts and bursaries may be available if you apply early and for those suffering from particular financial hardship.

Application documents

Send an email to thinkersdialogues1@icloud.com with the following attachments:

1. A short ‘Expression of Interest’ providing an outline of your current research/PhD project, tracing connections with the theme of the *Dialogue* and explaining your motivation [<1000 words]. If you are a PhD student, please, include the name(s) of the supervisor(s).
2. Curriculum Vitae, detailing education, professional experience, publications, awards, and working languages, as well as any other relevant information.

Application deadline: **9 December 2022.**

Prerequisites

Formal prerequisite knowledge

It will be necessary for participants to have a basic knowledge of the three thinkers and willingness to learn more and discover further theoretical and methodological connections among these thinkers through the proposed *Dialogue*.

We are looking for students who have methodological queries and specific questions to the three thinkers.

We also welcome researchers who have interesting empirics that can be analysed with the conceptual tools of the three thinkers.

Recommended previous knowledge

Some previous experience of ‘thinking with’ Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty or Bruno Latour’s social theories would be appreciated, although not indispensable.

Credits: This workshop will quality for 5 credits or 2.5 ECTS points



Image credits:

The double-faced Janus: illustration by Alexandra Arènes (*Latour for Architects*, p. 25)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty: <http://www.philosophical-investigations.org/Users/PerigGouanvic>, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Michel Foucault: Brazilian National Archives, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Bruno Latour: ©Archive: Bruno Latour