

A few of you have expressed that they were already waiting for the next newsletter. We are glad to hear that there is a demand; it makes us feel «useful». The reason for our slowdown was simply influenza, fortunately not the A virus subtype H1N1. We are nonetheless incubated with a critical attitude towards global phenomena, social erosion as well as concentration risks, uprooting and rerouting. Our third newsletter accompanies us into summer on the Northern hemisphere, a period of hopefully slower rhythms for many of you.

The Network Editor

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Cultural studies in architecture : More reflections on term and notion

jw. In issue 00 of this newsletter we were dealing with term (signifying) and notion (signified) of CSA. Since the place of first institutional attempts to practice CSA – the ETH Zurich, and the place of the association's foundation, the University of Zurich – are still rooted in a German tongue tradition, we start from the German tongue notions. They were and still are woven into the English tongue concepts of CS(A).

Diverging singulars, unifying plural

In German the expression Cultural Studies exists in a singular and a plural word: *Kulturwissenschaft* and *Kulturwissenschaften*. In the www the first occurs approximately twice than the latter. *Kulturwissenschaften* is actually a kind of new cover for the traditional humanities, so to speak the emperor's new clothes. The renaming of established disciplines is mostly a reaction to political and economic constraints, the career of the CS-terminology being similar to the career of the word «sustainability». But as the rhetoric power of a novel metaphor decreases in time, so decreases the persuasiveness of

any strategic renaming.

Therefore let us consider the *Cultural Studies* or *Kulturwissenschaft* (a singular!) which has been formed in the late 1950s as a meta- and even anti-discipline. The origins are in the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, in existence from 1964 to 2002. It is explicitly bound with a multiperspectival approach, mostly of constructivist, discourse analytical nature which is, according to national or linguistic realms, biased towards either cultural anthropology, cultural semiotics, or cultural sociology.

Deconstructive and discourse analytical approaches are always critical approaches, directed towards solutions and subject to transdisciplinary reasoning. According to the historiographers this is the first genuinely postmodern scientific project. It is an answer to the discrepancies between the new cultural problems and the old tools offered by traditional disciplines.¹

1. Rolf Lindner, *Die Stunde der Cultural Studies*. WUV, Wien 2000.

Although distinct from phenomenology, cultural studies are concerned with the life-worlds of people, of popular culture and of everyday life. Along with discourse critical approaches realism, phenomenology and aesthetics are entering the stage of CS. Cultural Studies is opposed to the idea of «orderly innovation» on the contemporary opportunist excellence agenda of many universities and research institutions. Innovation is critical in the old sense of the word *crisis*, signifying a judgement, not abstinence, and *discrimen*, denoting the moment of insecurity, never in the stage of the final settlement of knowledge, but of constantly starting anew to ask questions.²

Trajectory of a notion

When consulting the WWW in November 2008 you were able to find the term «cultural studies in architecture» quite often, in majority in close relation to the ETH Wohnforum—Centre for Cultural Studies in Architecture at the ETH Architecture Department. More than nine out of ten findings related to this institution, since then replaced by the name ETH CASE.

Yet the emergence of a term in the form of an institution or a scientific brand does not tell us too much about what it wraps in substantial terms. We should bear in mind that the same term never covers the same meanings respectively notion, both over time and from place to place. This must particularly be the case, if CS(A) is a super- and anti-disciplinary project.

Mark Lucarelli used the term CSA in his book on the politics of planning about < multi-directional > scholar Lewis Mumford.

According to Lucarelli, Mumford

«created his own particular synthesis: an interdisciplinary approach that drew from developments in the social sciences and cultural criticism. Although he is best

known as a student of cities, Mumford was a surprisingly comprehensive writer. His books and articles cover topics from art, architecture, and literature to sociology and the history of technology. [...] Mumford united the study of technology and society with cultural studies in architecture and literature because he had become convinced at an early point in his career that an interdisciplinary approach could best address the crises that afflicted Western civilization in the modern era.»³

Is CSA an umbrella term for a personality who escapes all disciplinary attributes? At least Lucarelli's CS «in architecture and literature» mark an epistemological bridge that reflects very much the intention of the initiators of IACSA.

The oldest occurrence of CSA as an explicitly use term known to us comes from humanities professor Lucy Ferrari. She had succeeded her late husband Olivio Ferrari as director of Virginia Tech's Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA) in Riva San Vitale (Switzerland). She reports the use of the term already in 1967 at the Virginia Tech. It was first present with a variation cultural studies «for architects», but also in exactly the way we name CSA today. Lucy Ferrari wrote in 2004:

«Olivio once said < they [the architecture students] look yet they do not see >. Our task, our goal, was to help our students learn to see.

Through travel and through a course I developed, Cultural Studies in Architecture, we helped them write about their daily experiences, the people they encountered and the architecture of the cities and villages that they visited.»⁴

Forty years of CSA practice have to be honoured, even if it is allowed and necessary to vary a term's notions over and over. We may

2. See Ludwik Fleck's idea of processual nature of knowledge, presented by Johannes Fehr, *Vielstimmigkeit und der wissenschaftliche Umgang damit. Ansätze zu einer Fleck'schen Philologie*. In Rainer Egloff (ed), *Tatsache – Denkstil – Kontroverse: Auseinandersetzungen mit Ludwik Fleck*, p. 33-45. Collegium Helveticum 1, Zürich 2005.

3. Mark Lucarelli, *Lewis Mumford and the ecological region. The politics of planning*, p.17. Guilford Press, New York 1995.

4. Lucy Ferrari, Foreword to Cathi House, Lucy Ferrari and James P. Warfield, *Mediterranean villages. An architectural journey*, p.6. Images Publishing, Victoria 2004.

particularly appreciate the invitation to consider its perceptual capacities, conceiving *sight* as a cultural effort, *phenomenology* as a tool to be practiced, and *reflexive description* to be trained. ◀

The CSA Quotation Guide, continued

« If building truly is a symptom of culture, the state of Western civilisation does not look very promising, despite the fact that in might have been a very good idea. [This is said to have been Mahatma Gandhi's answer when he was asked for his opinion of Western civilisation.] (...) Mild utopianism is about simple things, but it becomes difficult in a time of programmatic oblivion. It is about decent houses, about ruins and sprouts, about bars and streets, about people who speak when spoken to despite being taught to distrust the strangers. »

From Pauline von Bonsdorff, *The human habitat. Aesthetic and axiological perspectives*. Gummerus, Jyväskylä 1998, 336s.

« The bunker¹ was emblematic of an administration that had unconstitutionally closed City Hall Park to all but mayorally sanctioned public spectacle, blockaded bridges to kill a cab protest, barricaded midtown crosswalks to regulate pedestrians and yanked the homeless out of shelter beds on the coldest night of the year to enforce ancient bench warrants for open beer can violations.²

The media generally viewed the fascistic bullying of squeegee men, panhandlers, cabbies, street vendors and welfare recipients as a small price to pay for the triumphs of having brought Disney (the ultimate imprimatur of suburban safety) to Times Square and tourism back to New York. »

1. Emergency Command Center of New York's mayor 1994-2001 Rudolph W. Giuliani. Note by the editor.
2. Wayne Barrett, *Rudy! An Investigative Biography of Rudolph Giuliani*, New York 2000, p. 6. Note by the author.

From Mike Davis, *Dead cities and other tales*. New York Press, New York 2002.

News and announcements

Architectones II, July 3-5

Round tables, discussions and installations on the theme of sound and architecture. Participants will include Seth Cluett, CRESSON, Raviv Ganchrow, Edwin van der Heide, Rahma Khazam, Claudia Martinho, Colin Ripley, Sam Auinger, Thomas Ankersmit. Royal Saltworks of Arc et Senans, France, 3-5 July.

www.architectones.net or contact Rahma Khazam rahmak@wanadoo.fr ◀

Bauhaus City – Get on Site! July 22-31

International Summer School at the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau-Rosslau

The Bauhaus buildings are the key markers of the radical modernization Dessau underwent during the first decades of the twentieth century. Today the classically modern Bauhaus buildings draw the city's attention once again. They were restored in line with landmark regulations and the city is keen use the brand «Bauhaus City» to

raise its profile. Yet the concept of «Bauhaus City» is complex. The city's identity is made-up of both internal contradictions as well as expectations placed on it from the outside. The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation invites students and young professionals from various disciplines to use an interdisciplinary approach to investigate this unique and fascinating place. The sites to explore include the Housing Estate Dessau-Törten, the Employment Office, the Bauhaus building, the Master Houses and the Kornhaus.

Workshops will be given by:

INTERBORO, New York

MUF, London

Michael Zinganel, Graz

Wochenklausur, Wien

Kuehn Malvezzi, Berlin

Rimini Protokoll.

A series of open-air lectures will take place at the various sites and the event will be the talk of the town.

<http://www.bauhauscity-summer-school.de/bauhaus-summer-school2009-application.pdf>

Deadline: 30 June 2009 ◀

Ethics and the Built Environment, September 9-11

The first Ethics and the Built Environment Conference, Ethics of Building, was held in the Lake District of England in 1999. Ten years later, the scene has changed. There is widespread recognition of professional responsibilities to confront environmental issues – not just climate change – and the last year or so has brought a radical shift in the economic and social contexts of building and construction.

The field has also developed through new books that take an avowedly ethical stance on design and the built environment, including *The Ethical Architect* (Tom Spector), *Ethics and the Built Environment* (edited by Warwick Fox), *Understanding Sustainable Architecture* (Terry Williamson, Antony Radford and Helen Bennetts), and *Architecture and its Ethical Dilemmas* (edited by Nicholas Ray). Warwick Fox, who convened the 1999 conference, has published his *Theory of General Ethics*, an ethics that explicitly embraces the built environment.

This 2009 conference aims to be an informed interdisciplinary forum in which to (1) continue the debate on the ethical dimensions of the built environment in all its forms, (2) celebrate and critique what has been achieved in the last decade, (3) contribute significantly towards establishing an agenda for the development of a coherent subdiscipline of ethics in the built environment, and (4) propose some new approaches to the kinds of questions that arise when we contemplate the ethics of the built environment.

Ethics and the Built Environment 2009 is a joint venture between the University of Adelaide, Australia, School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Urban Design and the University of Nottingham, UK, School of the Built Environment. The conference will be held at the School of the Built Environment, the University of Nottingham. Information and contact at <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ebe2009>. ◀

Thanks to all who have sent us quotation proposals. More quotations are welcome, that indicate unknown publications and activities.

IACSA – the organisation

IACSA is an association according to Swiss law, founded on September 17th, 2008. In practical terms and pragmatically the association has three levels:

(I) *A Founding Advisors' Board,*

A group of personalities from different disciplines whose names stand for the field of Cultural Studies in Architecture.

(II) *A Working Board,*

Which is open for everyone interested and willing to contribute to build the network.

(III) *A Network Editor,*

Who maintains and stimulates exchange and prepares the information management. Justin Winkler, who is presently given the task of network editor, is professor for human geography.

IACSA's Founding Advisors' Board, Working Board and informational members by May 20th, 2009, in percent:

female	47
male	52

Countries (percent of members):

CH	34.5
DE	28.3
FR	9.0
UK	7.6
FI	6.2
AT	5.5
SE	4.1
IT	1.4
BE, FL, JP, NL, US	<1

How to register as a member

If you sense that the idea of IACSA covers the field of your interest you are welcome to participate as a member of the Working Board. Simply write to

iacsa@mobileculturestudies.com

an informal demand. You will get an electronic version of the bylaws the electronic registration form presented below. You are free to ask any question concerning IACSA which we will answer within the bounds of our capacities.

Founding Advisors' Board members (in alphabetic order)

Pauline von Bonsdorff, FI; Ingrid Breckner, DE; Catharina Dyrssen, SE;
Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch, AT; Angela McRobbie, UK; Colette Pétonnet, FR.

Network Editor

Justin Winkler, CH