

ensaplv 19-20 octobre

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An exploration of dynamics among space, gender and sexuality

When : October 19th-20th 2017

Where : Ecole Nationale d'architecture Paris La Villette (ENSAPLV) Amphi II

Deadline : May 30th 2017

Presentation

This conference intends to study the dynamics between space, gender and sexuality - space being understood here both in its social and personal dimensions and as a material and formal framework.

While social constructions of gender and sexual identities produce spaces (whether designed or constructed, represented or imagined, public or private), spaces themselves re-produce these identities, often based on heteronormed and patriarchal criteria.

Social and spatial studies - especially within Anglophone academic research - highlighted this potential of revelation and production of definitions and practices. Spaces, genders and sexualities thus appear as processes, whose subversive potential rivals their normative capacity.

Queer and gender studies have called into question the mechanisms of production of knowledge, narration and representation, by highlighting their universalistic pretension. They have developed new methodologies and epistemologies that allow us to face and embrace the subjective component of practices, including the academic research. In the case of spatial production, the top-down dynamics can be reversed, and the involved actors' roles can be called into question. Is the design process always an ordering and normalizing framework, or is a queer spatiality possible - and how?

It is therefore not meaningless to study the relations between spaces, genders and sexualities within the framework of a school of architecture: it is a matter of openly raising questions that seem latent to us. It is also an invitation addressed to people from outside the architecture - and sometimes tight between them - to come and exchange their thoughts on this shared theme.

Without pretentiousness to exhaustiveness, this conference will therefore favour a transdisciplinary approach. By reflecting the variety of academic disciplines (geography, philosophy, sociology, anthropology...), practices (urban planning, architecture, development...) and lecturers (researchers, project stakeholders, collectives, associations...), the objective will be to confront disciplinary fields, tools and scales of analysis allowing an investigation of the sexualised space, by analogy with the sexualised body.

The approach of the conference will also be multi-scalar. From the scale of the bodies to the transnational scale, through those of the city, the neighbourhood or the building, each of them seems relevant and complementary to us. In the same way, we consider that the study of spaces and practices is inseparable from an analysis of the production processes that generate them. The thread of the conference thus proposes to integrate the upstream as well as the downstream of spaces in order to understand its gendered, queer and sexualised dimensions.

We propose the following non-exhaustive tracks to guide the paper proposals:

§1: Languages and representations

§2: Appropriations and re-appropriations

§3: Intimacy, domesticity and habitat

§4: Transnationalities, expatriations, emigrations

§5: Institutional policies: beyond gender mainstreaming

§6: Professions and spatialities: “feminization” or becoming queer?

§1 - Languages and Representations

Queer and gender studies, as well as feminist and LGBTQ+ movements, have long worked on language as a form of gendered and sexualised representation and normalisation. How can the issue of language and representation relate to the sexualised characteristics of space? Do the architectural language and the representations of space and in the space reveal the same permanence of dominant masculinity and heteronormativity?

§2 - Appropriations and re-appropriations

Genders and sexualities produce counter-cultural imaginaries, practices and knowledges that permeate space production. Through innovative or re-creative actions or uses, public spaces are diverted and appropriated by and for certain sexualities. From the scale of the city to that of the bodies themselves, how does space become a performative instrument? Which forms of gendered, queer and sexualised presences in the public space take on a political significance?

§3 - Intimacy, domesticity and habitat

The prism of genders and sexualities makes it possible to analyse individual or collective practices that invent spaces of intimacy, but also aspire to be able to emerge from them. Distinguishing between habitat and domestic space makes it possible to include spaces designed to promote intimacy, as well as those which are diverting in this direction, including within public spaces. How do makers of the space apprehend this notion? How are spaces for private use (whether private or public) arranged, distinguished from others? How are their boundaries drawn and to which claims do they correspond?

§4 - Transnationality, expatriations, emigrations

The migratory experience can be read under the filter of gender and sexualities at different scales: by creating new frontier spatialities, but also through the systems of adaptation that express themselves in everyday spaces. How does the commonality of gender or sexual orientation, become a resource for the creation of spaces and ways of using them, within the country of destination or during the migration route? How does sexuality affect transnational mobility and its consequences at local scales?

§5 - Institutional policies: beyond gender mainstreaming

Through policies and regulatory or executive measures, such as gender mainstreaming, institutions of several metropolitan areas, particularly in Europe, seek to echo gender claims. But through gender mainstreaming affecting public spaces, this recognition remains problematic. For example, the security problem is crucial: in conjunction with a more informed design, focusing on lighting or visibility, urban policies often propose a securitarian idea based on the concept of public order, according to which women are considered as potential victims. How can we overcome this binary conception, which instrumentalizes women and leaves aside homosexualities, transsexualities, and other communities considered for their gender or sexualities? How to comprehend the impact of urban gender policies?

§6 - Professions and Spatialities: “feminization” or becoming queer?

A process reported as “feminization” affects several professions dealing with the production of spaces: a growing number of women seem to have access to domains previously considered “masculine”. Which are the limits of this phenomenon, in terms of the renewal of practices (coming out of a sexist and heteronormative view of spaces) but also of recognition (jobs or remunerations that are still unequal)? Can we think of surpassing this binary vision to anticipate the queer becoming of space?

Deadlines

Participation in this conference is open to students, PhD students and researchers, but also to collectives, activists, architects, designers, planners, etc.

Interested persons should send their paper proposal by e-mail (max. 3000 signs) to [<espaces.gsq@gmail.com>](mailto:espaces.gsq@gmail.com) before May 30th, 2017.

The colloquium will take place on Thursday 19 and Friday 20 October 2017 at the École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Paris La Villette (ENSAPLV) and will alternate speeches and round tables.

Organization

This conference is organized by a collective of students and PhD students based at the the École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Paris-La Villette (ENSAPLV) in collaboration with two research groups: the LAA (Laboratoire Architecture et Anthropologie), UMR 7218 LAVUE CNRS, and the AHTTEP (Architecture, Histoire, Transport, Territoire, Patrimoine), UMR 3329 AUSser CNRS.

Members:

Giulia Custodi, doctoral student (ENSAPLV-Université de Paris-I Panthéon Sorbonne / Università Alma Mater, Bologna);

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