ALISON AND PETER SMITHSON: IDEAS, IMPACT, ARCHITECTURE

A SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM INVESTIGATING THE LEGACY OF BRITISH ARCHITECTURAL PIONEERS ALISON AND PETER SMITHSON

Featuring leading international architects, artists and thinkers this symposium investigates the legacy and impact of British architectural pioneers Alison and Peter Smithson across urbanism, habitation and education.

Alison and Peter Smithson saw architecture as a direct result of a way of life, responsive to the demands of contemporary living. This approach permeated their designs for the University of Bath including the University theatre (1990) in which this symposium will take place.



09:45

Refreshments / Registration

10.15

WELCOME/HOUSEKEEPING Jamie Eastman, Director of Arts, University of Bath

10.30 - 10.45

FIRST THOUGHTS / IN CONVERSATION

Peter Clegg, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios Simon & other Smithsons

10.45 - 12.00

SEMINAR 1: IDEAS

Sources of inspiration: from the monument to the ordinary Chair: Jamie Eastman, Director of Arts, University of Bath Panel: Dr Amy Frost, Bath Preservation Trust Juliet Bidgood, Architect/Urbanist Simon Terrill, Artist Ana Ábalos Ramos, Co-director, Abalosllopis Architects

12.00 - 12.45

INTERLUDE 1: NOT QUITE ARCHITECTURE

M. Christine Boyer, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor, School of Architecture at Princeton University Jane Hall, Founding member of Assemble

12.45 - 14.00

WESTON STUDIO: LUNCH EDGE GALLERIES' GALLERY 1: EVERYDAY MOVES: AN EXPERIMENTAL MOVEMENT EVENT. Warren & Mosley and Crewe

14.00 - 15.15

SEMINAR 2: ARCHITECTURE

Perspectives on built and un-built projects Chair: David Turnbull, Director, ATOPIA Panel: Peter Salter, Architect Jonathan Mosley, Associate Professor of Architecture, UWE David Casino, Architect Fouad Samara, Principal, Fouad Samara Architects

15:15 - 15.30

INTERLUDE 2: NOT QUITE ARCHITECTURE

WALKS WITHIN THE WALLS

Martin Gledhill, Senior Teaching Fellow, 4th Year Studio Leader, University of Bath

15.30 - 16.00

WESTON STUDIO: **TEA BREAK** EDGE GALLERIES: **Pol Esteve** from Catalan design studio **GOIG** introduces Transformations of the City

16.00 – 17.15

SEMINAR 3: IMPACT*

The Smithsons influence on a generation of Bath students

Chair: Peter Clegg, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios Panel: Keith Bradley, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios Gerard Maccreanor, Founding Director, Maccreanor Lavington Architects Stephen Bates, Founding Partner, Sergison Bates Architects Vicky Smith, Architect and Artist

17.15 – 17.30 / Close

CLOSING THOUGHTS/PLENARY

DRINKS

WELCOME BY JAMIE EASTMAN, DIRECTOR OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BATH

FIRST THOUGHTS / IN CONVERSATION

Peter Clegg, Simon & other Smithsons

Peter Clegg taught alongside Peter Smithson at Bath University in the mid 1980s and this symposium is, in many ways, a celebration of those years. We will begin the day with an informal conversation with Simon Smithson about the way his parents' approach to Art and Architecture - writing and teaching - manifested itself within the family context and how that influenced their own work and that of their children.

SEMINAR 1: IDEAS

Sources of inspiration: from the monument to the ordinary

Chair: Jamie Eastman, Director of Arts, University of Bath

Dr Amy Frost, Bath Preservation Trust

The inspiration that Alison and Peter Smithson took from history is vital to their work and sits at the centre of their connection to Bath and one of its most famous residents. The romance of William Beckford's Fonthill led to the experimentation of ideas at the Upper Lawn Solar Pavillion, while the lessons learnt from historic Bath informed the new architecture the Smithsons created in the city. Through these Bath connections this talk will introduce to today's discussions the importance of how ideas from the past influenced the present in the work of the Smithsons.

Juliet Bidgood, Architect/Urbanist

The Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne first arrived in Britain in 1947, to meet 'in rustication' in Bridgwater, Somerset. At this pivotal sixth meeting, they aimed to see if they could still work together in the altered post war world and began to look to the 'younger generation' to renew their mission - setting the scene for Team 10. My talk will explore how Team 10 emerged both in relation to and in reaction to CIAM and how in this context the Smithsons developed their distinct position.

Simon Terrill, Artist

"You never know when a ruin, even a bit of wall, may come in handy"¹

At a time when Robin Hood Gardens, the Smithsons' vision for social housing in East London, is hovering on the perilous edge of both being and destruction, this presentation looks towards some of the architectural duo's key ideas that were of influence during the making of The Ostrich and the Kipper exhibition (a collaboration between Assemble and Simon Terrill, in the spirit of the Smithson's workings with Eduardo Paolozzi and Nigel Henderson). What might it mean to interpret the "as found" as a mode of production? And what can be made of that which is left behind?

1. Alison Smithson, 'A lyrical Architecture Appropriate to the City full of Holes', 1977, Alison and Peter Smithson Archive, University of Harvard.

Ana Ábalos Ramos, Co-director, Abalosllopis Architects

A Christmas invitation for collective renewal: Exhibitions provided Alison and Peter Smithson with a medium to freely create experimental constructions to convey their thoughts. Specifically, the Christmas series of exhibitions staged between 1976 and 1981 are cumulative parts of a single research project which gave them the opportunity to explore and try out a form of receptive architecture which was a vehicle for a renewed 'art of inhabitation'.

INTERLUDE 1: NOT QUITE ARCHITECTURE

M. Christine Boyer, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor, School of Architecture at Princeton University

Jane Hall, Founding Member of Assemble

A conversation between M. Christine Boyer and Jane Hall based on a number of questions that Boyer's recent book 'Not Quite Architecture' prompts. The questions will explore the theme of other architectures, alternative types of practice, contexts and dialogues that the Smithsons were engaged with, including Jane Hall's and M Christine Boyer's own experiences of researching in the Smithsons' archives.

EVERYDAY MOVES: AN EXPERIMENTAL INTERDISCIPLINARY MOVEMENT EVENT BY WARREN & MOSLEY

Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley with Charlotte Crewe

LOCATION: Edge galleries' Gallery 1

'Everyday Moves' is an experimental event exploring the inter-corporeal rhythms between bodies, objects and architectural space. Dancers respond to 'A Nodding Acquaintance', a new installation by Warren & Mosley, using a range of gestures, postures and behaviour associated with the street and its social choreographies. This pedestrian movement will test and expand ideas around social relations and the dynamics of the group.

SEMINAR 2: ARCHITECTURE

Perspectives on built and un-built projects

Chair: David Turnbull, Director, ATOPIA

Peter Salter, Architect

Weather Register - an approach to architecture, developed as the result of a student review held at Kirby Hall with Alison and Peter Smithson as critics.

Jonathan Mosley, Associate Professor of Architecture, UWE

'Very Like Minds' - The presentation will explore the Smithsons' (1953) 'invention of an architecture that is structured by notions of association', interlacing their ideas with literature, spatial installation, imaginary and built form.

David Casino, Architect

The Smithsons developed a topographic thinking of their own consisting of a particular skill, a special ability, to define how buildings could be settled on a particular site by manipulating both the surface and the section of the ground. The attraction of the Smithsons by the processes of artificial configuration of the territory would boost the development of their grounding strategies: those that form the appropriation of certain artificial shapes of the local landscape, encouraged an operative instinct that underlays latent throughout all their projects, giving rise to a personal understanding of the ground plane as a support topographically configurable and subject to be shaped by notches and incisions with the aim of defining a mediating layer between the architecture and its context.

Fouad Samara, Principal, Fouad Samara Architects

The Smithsons' were simultaneously perceptive students of human habitats and of their architectural heritage. Their aim was to create an original, relevant, and authentic architecture; void of any stylistic preoccupations; and underpinned by a rigorous design process seen as a 'liberator' from the formulaic International Style that Ciam and the Modern Movement had arrived at. Their last completed built work, Building 6 East at the University of Bath along with 'Conglomerate Ordering', the theoretical position they had developed in tandem to it, embody that crusade. A crusade that, through the writings, projects, and buildings, is a process of research and of teaching – of establishing a tradition of relevant and authentic architecture as they had understood in Le Corbusier's call in Vers une Architecture.

INTERLUDE 2: NOT QUITE ARCHITECTURE

Martin Gledhill, Senior Teaching Fellow, 4th Year Studio Leader, University of Bath

Walks within the walls

Peter Smithson's enchanting Walks Within the Walls is as much a guide for the imagination as it is for the feet. Having recently completed all the walks, I found myself moving through this 'live shell' in his playfully astute company, with Ruskin not far behind. The Walks form an important part of the canon of Bath architectural guides, not only to impart architectural lessons but as a reminder of the contemplative potential of walking, allowing us to notice and thereby engaging with the city afresh - "to see what there is to see one has to walk".

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE CITY

LOCATION: Edge galleries'

In the afternoon tea break Pol Esteve from Catalan design studio GOIG will introduce Transformations of the City.

SEMINAR 3: IMPACT

The Smithsons influence on a generation of Bath students

Chair: Peter Clegg, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Keith Bradley, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios *P+S Words*

Gerard Maccreanor, Founding Director, Maccreanor Lavington Architects

A rug with frayed edges

Stephen Bates, Founding Partner, Sergison Bates Architects

My contribution to the Symposium on the ideas and impact of the Smithsons is made from the context of practice and the experience of building. The Upper Lawn pavilion, built by Alison and Peter Smithson and restored by our office in 2004, exemplifies some of the characteristics that may be considered as the legacy of the "New Brutalist experiment". The consonance of architectural ideas with the emotional aspects of everyday life, unconnected with notions of beauty and aesthetics, and an engagement with the memorability of images are some of these aspects. They are indicative of an attitude to practice and the making of buildings that has influenced contemporary practice and informed our work and teaching practice.

Vicky Smith, Architect and Artist

I knew the Smithsons when I was a young architect and was greatly influenced by them, especially Alison. Her creative expression was multilayered, moving freely between designing buildings, writing novels and making Christmas cards. She was interested in how people decorated their spaces and considered that a large part of an architect's job was to make appropriate settings for people to inhabit. She explored this theme in her exhibition "24 Doors to Christmas". In this talk, I will look briefly at Alison's working practice, on her legacy as a teacher and mentor and will include some personal reminiscences about staying at their house in London in the 1970s and 80s.

CLOSING THOUGHTS/PLENARY

Current Exhibition in Edge Galleries:

Parallel (of Life and) Architecture, 11am - 5pm

Echoing the methods and collaborative processes of Alison and Peter Smithson during their breakthrough phase as architects in 1950s Britain, this exhibition features three 'duos' of architects, artists and designers - Assemble and Simon Terrill, Warren & Mosley, The Decorators and GOIG - offering insight into the Smithon's research and creative practice. Especially for the symposium two of the works will be animated by the artists during the day's programme (as per timings indicated). In addition, take a moment to enjoy photographs taken by Alison and Peter Smithson during their time at the University found in the adjacent Resource Room, alongside other reference materials.

ALISON AND PETER SMITHSON: IDEAS, IMPACT, ARCHITECTURE An introduction to our speakers



Dr Amy Frost, Bath Preservation Trust

Dr Amy Frost is the Senior Curator of Bath Preservation Trust, covering the Museum of Bath Architecture, Beckford's Tower & Museum, No.1 Royal Crescent, and the Herschel Museum of Astronomy. She specialises in British architecture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and is an expert on the life and aesthetics of the British collector and writer William Beckford (1760-1844). Amy is also a part-time Teaching Fellow at the University of Bath, School of Architecture. She recently curated the exhibition Past, Present, Future: Bath and the Smithsons at the Museum of Bath Architecture and has contributed a chapter on Upper Lawn Solar Pavilion by Alison and Peter Smithson to the forthcoming book Fonthill Recovered: A Cultural History (UCL Press May 2018).



Ana Ábalos Ramos, Co-director, Abalosllopis Architects

Ana holds a professional master's degree (2004) and an international PhD in Architecture (2016) (Universitat Politécnica de València, Spain) with her thesis 'A&P Smithson: The Transient and the Permanent'. She is currently a lecturer in architecture at CEU Cardenal Herrera University (Spain), and previously at Pennsylvania State University (USA), USAT (Peru) and UPV (Spain). She combines teaching and research with her professional work as an architect and partner in the Abalosllopis Architects studio which has received critical acclaim for both its built works and award-winning entries in international competitions.



David Casino, PhD Architect, ETSA Madrid

David is a lecturer in Architectural Projects at ETSA Madrid and at Universidad Europea de Madrid. He is also founding partner of ZZA, an award-winning architecture office whose work has been published internationally and recognized with the Architecture Prize in the 11th Spanish Architecture and Urbanism Biennial Award, along with several other prizes such as the ar+d Award for Emerging Architecture 2011 (Highly Commended Project) and Ugo Rivolta European Architecture Awards 2011 (Progetto Segnalato). His PhD in Architecture (cum laude, awarded with International Honours) focuses on 'Ground-notations' as an essential topic in the work of Alison and Peter Smithson.



Professor David Turnbull, Cooper Union, ATOPIA Innovation

A Professor of Architecture with more than 25 years of experience in Design Education Internationally. His academic career started in 1989 at The Architectural Association in London while he was working in the office of James Stirling, Michael Wilford and Associates, leading major projects in Spain, Japan and Singapore. His academic appointments since 1990 include the Eero Saarinen Visiting Professorship in Architecture at Yale University, and Visiting Professorships at the University of Toronto, Canada, Columbia University's GSAPP in New York, & Cornell University. He was Professor of Architecture at the University of Bath in the UK from 2000-2005 and from 2012-13, Visiting Professor of Design & Innovation at The African University of Science & Technology, a Nelson Mandela Institution, in Abuja, Nigeria. He has been a Professor of Architecture at The Cooper Union in New York since 2006.



Fouad Samara, Principal, Fouad Samara Architects

Fouad studied architecture at the University of Bath and completed his BArch there in 1995 where he wrote his dissertation on the Smithson's building for the School of Architecture and Civil Engineering at Bath, Building 6 East. Fouad had also presented a paper, Toujour Vers Une Architecture, at the A+PS Symposium in October 1994, and later contributed to Modernism Without Rhetoric, published by Academy Editions in 1997, and edited by Helena Webster. Having worked in Montreal and London, Fouad set up practice in Beirut in 1997, with recently completed works such as Modulofts in Beirut, and the Centre for Arabic Studies & Intercultural Dialogue (CASID) at the University of Balamand where Fouad taught 2014-16.



Gerard Maccreanor, Founding Director, Maccreanor Lavington

Gerard graduated in Architecture with First Class Honours at The University of Bath in 1986. In the early nineties, along with Richard Lavington, he went on to establish Maccreanor Lavington, an award-winning architectural practice with offices in London and Rotterdam. A pioneer in low energy, low carbon and sustainable residential design, Gerard Maccreanor has particular experience of dense, large scale mixed-use regeneration schemes and recently led the design for a collection of innovative townhouses, 'Futurehomes', at Elephant Park in London. Gerard is involved with several Design Review Panels and has taught at many Schools of Architecture, including the Bartlett, Westminster, Canterbury, Bath and Belfast, as well as The Technical University of Delft and The Stockholm School of Architecture.

ALISON AND PETER SMITHSON: IDEAS, IMPACT, ARCHITECTURE An introduction to our speakers



Jamie Eastman, Director of Arts, University of Bath

Holding responsibility for the University's arts interests, Jamie Eastman joined Bath in 2016. He has an accomplished career in arts and culture programming, with particular specialism in the phenomenon of contemporary art centres in the UK. Jamie devised the current architecture season at The Edge, which this symposium is part of, instigating two major exhibition presentations, The Brutalist Playground and Parallel (of Life and) Architecture in the process. The latter serves as a testament to the ideas of Alison and Peter Smithson and high esteem with which the duo are regarded in avant garde circles to this day. Jamie has also held senior positions at the ICA (London), Arnolfini (Bristol) and Lancaster University.



Jane Hall, Founding member of Assemble

Jane Hall studied architecture at King's College Cambridge and the Royal College of Art. She is a founding member of the architecture collective Assemble who won the Turner Prize in 2015. In addition, Jane was the inaugural recipient of the British Council's Lina Bo Bardi Fellowship (2013), which she used to develop research on new models of practice inspired by the influential Brazilian Modernist architect Lina Bo Bardi. She is currently a PhD candidate at the RCA where her research examines the role of activism and consequent emergence of alternative design practices in Brazilian. Her work on public space, occupation and collective action has been published in Blueprint magazine and The Architectural Review.



Juliet Bidgood, Urban Design Consultant, Curator of 70th anniversary meeting of CIAM at Bridgwater Arts Centre Juliet is an architect/urbanist, who works at a range of scales from the tactical to the material. She is interested in the relationship between architecture and urbanism and in architecture as a dynamic practice that engages with social and economic systems. Her work is informed by action research projects that aim to bring a sense of enquiry into the everyday. Recent projects include CIAM6, Cities Re-imagined an exhibition, conference and events programme in Bridgwater, Somerset and Glastonbury Instant City an ongoing research project with students from the Central Saint Martin's Spatial Practices Programme. She teaches architecture and urban design at the Welsh School of Architecture. She is an RIBA Client Adviser and was a Senior Adviser at CABE and a CABE Enabler. She currently chairs a Housing Excellence Design Review Panel for the SWDRP. As a founding partner of muf Architecture/Art she created a shared body of work that has been widely published including the monograph 'This is what we do'.



Keith Bradley, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Keith joined the practice in 1987, made Partner in 1995, and set up the London Studio in 1998. He has led many of FCBStudios award-winning projects, including 2008 RIBA Stirling Prize winner Accordia, a housing project in Cambridge, and Manchester School of Art, shortlisted for the Prize in 2014. His recent work encompasses major urban regeneration mixed-use schemes throughout the UK, together with public museums, galleries, academic institutions and major university projects in London, Manchester and Belfast. Keith is a Chair of the CABE National Design Review Panel and Oxford Design Review Panel. He is guest lecturer at various schools of architecture, and a regular speaker at national and international conferences.



Professor M.Christine Boyer, Princeton University, author of Not Quite Architecture

M. Christine Boyer is William R. Kenan Jr. Professor at the School of Architecture, Princeton University. She is author of Not Quite Architecture – writing around Alison and Peter Smithson (MIT Press, 2017), Le Corbusier Homme de Lettres (Princeton Architecture Press, 2010), CyberCities: Visual Perception in the Age of Electronic Communication (Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments (MIT Press, 1994), Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style 1850-1890 (Rizzoli, 1985), and Dreaming the Rational City: the myth of city planning 1890-1945 (MIT Press, 1983). Boyer received her PhD. and Masters in City Planning from MIT. She holds an MS in Computer and Information Science from University of Pennsylvania, Moore School of Electrical Engineering. She has written many articles and lectured widely on the topic of urbanism in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.



Martin Gledhill, Senior Teaching Fellow, 4th Year Studio Leader, University of Bath

Martin Gledhill qualified at the University of Bath under the influence of Michael Brawne, Peter Smithson and Patrick Hodgkinson. For 25 years he worked as a practising architect prior to joining the academic team at Bath. For the past nine years he has led the BSc Architecture Year 4 Design Studio. In 2014 he completed an MA in Jungian and Post Jungian Studies and is now developing his dissertation topic 'The Tower - Myth and Fiction' as a PhD and hopefully a book will emerge that examines Jung and Architecture.



Professor Peter Clegg, Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Peter Clegg established the practice with Richard Feilden in 1978. Regarded as a pioneer in environmental design, he has nearly 40 years' experience in low energy architecture and is active in research, design and education. Peter works primarily in the education and cultural sectors. He has led projects at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, London's Southbank Centre, Brighton Dome and the Leventis Gallery in Cyprus. His involvement in schools and higher education projects includes a new School of Engineering in Toronto and an Academy in Bangladesh. He is Chair of the RIBA research awards and the SWDRP, holds a professorship at Bath University, chaired the RIBA Awards Panel 2013/14, and in 2010 was made a Royal Designer for Industry.



Peter Salter, Architect & Project Architect for A&PS

Peter Salter is currently Professor of Architecture at Cardiff University, and has just completed a project for four houses at Walmer Yard in West London. Before completing his studies at the AA School of Architecture, where he gained an Honours Diploma, he worked part-time for Alison & Peter Smithson on the refurbishment of the Economist Building, and the 2nd Arts Building at Bath University. After seven years as Head of School at UEL, he returned to the AA to teach, before deciding to undertake an MSc course in Historic Building Conservation at Bath University where he also taught Fourth Year masters students.



Simon Terrill, Artist

Simon Terrill's work is a photographic and performance-based engagement with groups, communities, crowds - and the spaces they occupy. As well as sculpture, video, drawing and installation work, his practice often takes the form of large-scale stage-managed events in his ongoing Crowd Theory project. In 2008 Terrill was awarded the Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship. Recent exhibitions include; Nouns of Assembly, Sutton Gallery Melbourne (2016), South of the River: Crowd Theory, National Portrait Gallery London (2016), Crowd Theory Thamesmead, The Link Thamesmead (2017) and The Brutalist Playground, a collaboration with Assemble, Edge Gallery Bath (2017).



Stephen Bates, Founding Partner, Sergison Bates Architects

Stephen Bates was born in 1964 and is a founding partner of Sergison Bates Architects. Established in 1996, the practice was awarded the Heinrich Tessenow Gold Medal and the Erich Schelling Medal for Architecture in 2006 and their work was exhibited at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2008 and 2012. Stephen has taught at a number of schools of architecture, including the Architectural Association in London, ETH in Zurich, EPFL in Lausanne, the Oslo School of Architecture and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Since 2009 he has been Professor of Urbanism and Housing at TU München.



Vicky Smith, Architect and Artist

Vicky Smith is an architect and artist. She trained at the University of Cambridge and practiced in Bristol and Bath, working for the Architecture Shop before it became Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios. She freelanced for the Smithsons and worked with Sebire Allsopp and DEGW. She taught architecture at North East London Polytechnic, Bath and Cambridge Universities, and, until recently, ran a web design agency specializing in architectural walks. As a visual artist she practices across many disciplines, media and materials, at present exploring the use of felted merino fibre as a fine art medium. She currently has work on exhibition at the University of Kent.



Warren & Mosley

Sophie Warren is an artist and Jonathan Mosley is an architect and Associate Professor of Architecture at University of the West of England, Bristol. Their collaborative work creates physical and imaginary architectural settings for occupation and negotiation by participants, generating a social choreography of movement, encounter and gesture. Previous projects include: Rogue Game (with Can Altay) a series of hybrid games forming solo exhibitions at Firstite, Colchester (2015), Spike Island, Bristol (2012), Casco, Utrecht (2011) and event at The Showroom, London (2010); commission Doing Things Separately Together for Arnolfini, Bristol (2014); event series Utopian talkshow line-up at Santrallstanbul, Istanbul (2014), Moderna Museet, Malmo (2014), Eastside Projects, Birmingham (2013); publication 'Beyond Utopia' (Berlin: Errant Bodies Press, 2012) presenting a provocative planning application for an imaginary architectural vertical common for the City of London. In 2016 they were Institut français laureates at the Cité internationale des arts and are now artists in residence at the French Communist Party Headquarters, Paris designed by Oscar Niemeyer developing their forthcoming project Architecture of We. Celebrated architects Alison and Peter Smithson came to Bath in the 1970s when Peter was invited to teach architecture at the University. Peter quickly developed an enthusiasm for his surroundings, publishing the pamphlet Bath: Walks Within the Walls in 1971. Their legacy remains on the campus at the University of Bath, including the 6East Building (until recently home of the Dept of Architecture and Civil Engineering) and theatre at The Edge venue.

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