

SATURDAY, MAY 29, 2021

8:30 - 10:30 (EDT)

# DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION

## EMBODIED WORKS & WORDS

### PRESENTATIONS

5

SESSION #

#### **Paper Masks: Imagined Theaters of Architectural Drawing**

Michael Chapman, University of Newcastle, NSW

#### **The Palace and the Plaza: A Post-War Convergence in Seeking Performative Spaces**

Marcela Aragüez, IE School of Architecture and Design, Madrid-Segovia

#### **Theatres of Architectural Imagination Performed in Bruno Schultz's Poetic Prose**

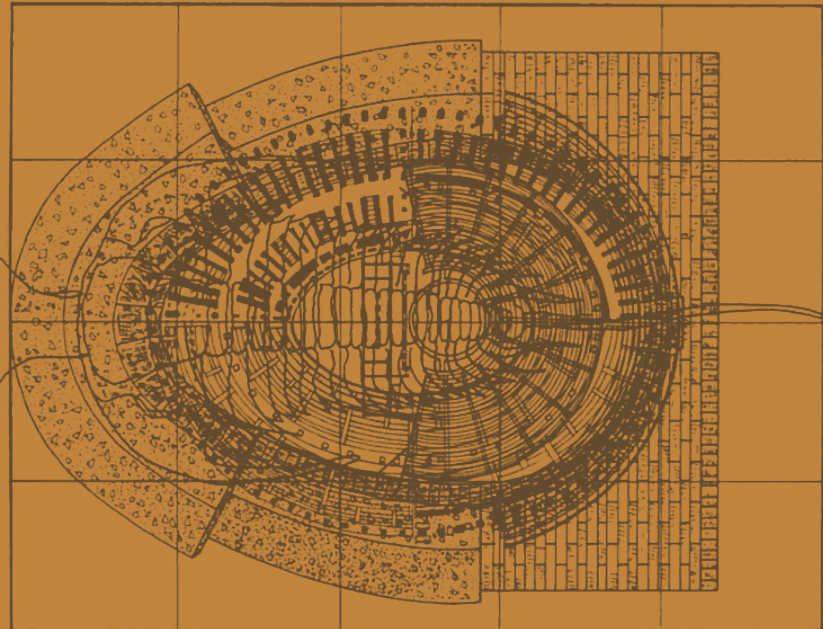
Anca Matyiku, McGill University

#### **The Dramatization of Architecture: On the Drawings of Álvaro Siza**

João Miguel Couto Duarte, Lusíada University of Lisbon

### MODERATOR

Sam Ridgway, University of Adelaide



### WORLD

#### **Paper Masks: Imagined Theaters of Architectural Drawing**

Michael Chapman, University of Newcastle, NSW

Recent scholarship has demonstrated the importance of architectural drawing in reshaping architectural practice from the 1970s on, particularly in the context of North America and Europe which is not surprising as both have strong and vibrant cultures of performing arts that underwent radical reappraisal in the same time period. This paper explores the theater from within the specific context of speculative architectural drawing, and specifically in the context of North America from the mid 1980s. Drawing in this period, in a number of practices, took on a specific performative dimension, which challenged the orthodoxies of commercial practice and the capitalist realities of the period that often constricted imagination and invention. In this sense, the theater offered a particular mode of both spatial and theoretical escape, where architecture could be reformulated from within the realms of imagination, memory and action, and the drawing could provide a residual record of these encounters. This drawn record was not only architectural, but obliquely political.

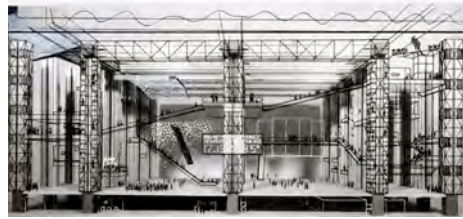
This paper will look at two drawn theater projects which open on to issues of the imagination directly. The first is the three proposals for theatres in John Hejduk's Berlin Masque project (1983), which provide both a programmatic and performative blueprint for an architecture of theatricality and its form and materiality. The second is Douglas Darden's Night School (1993), which interrogates classical notions of the theatre through a complex layering of architectural memory, intersecting in both plan and section. In both examples, the mode of architectural drawing opens up specific notions of theatricality and the imagination, which have lasting implications for both architecture and its broader political context.

**Michael Chapman** is professor of architecture at the School of Architecture and Built Environment at the University of Newcastle in Australia. His research concerns the theory and politics of architecture, with an emphasis on the domains of drawings, art theory, critical theory, avant-garde studies and modernism. He has won numerous awards for his teaching, research and creative practice. In 2010, he was part of a team awarded an ARC Discovery Grant, and in 2012 he was awarded the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship by the Board of Architects in NSW. Michael remains deeply committed to creative practice as research. His creative work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including at the Venice Biennale, Federation Square, the State Library of NSW and the Museum of Melbourne.

## ACTION

**The Palace and the Plaza:****A Post-War Convergence in Seeking Performative Spaces**

Marcela Aragüez, IE School of Architecture and Design, Madrid-Segovia



The Fun Palace.<sup>1</sup>



The Festival Plaza.<sup>2</sup>

In 1975, Arata Isozaki acknowledged ‘being more than little flustered’ upon discovering that a few years before the conception of the Festival Plaza – the main public space of Expo’70 held at Osaka in that year, and which he designed and realized in collaboration with his mentor Kenzō Tange – Cedric Price had already been experimenting with analogous ideas for the Fun Palace in London, a building for leisure co-designed with theatre director Joan Littlewood. Certainly, the material similarities between the buildings are easy enough to grasp. Both projects make use of a space-frame structure to which movable and replaceable elements would be attached. Both make use of light and sound equipment, all to be controlled by a cybernetic system to process users’ information and modify the setting accordingly. But more importantly, they seem to be connected by a common concern of including performative variations and interactions between visitors and built elements in an attempt to foster action within a controlled environment.

Drawing upon unpublished material from the archives of Price in Montreal and of Isozaki in Tokyo, in this talk I address the overlooked parallelisms between the Fun Palace and the Festival Plaza. I argue that a great deal of the advancements in the production of interactive spaces for leisure at the time was influenced by earlier developments in experimental artistic circles in both countries. In particular, the generation of theories and practices around the notion of *environment* in the West, and of *kankyō* in Japan, would lead to the conception of a supposedly participatory architecture intended to liberate itself from the constrictions on its permanence. By looking into the role these conceptual roots played in the design process of both buildings, I aim to portray a cross-cultural understanding in the design of post-war performative spaces, and their contribution in the architectural and urban thinking of that period.

1. Reproduced in Samantha Hardingham and Cedric Price, Cedric Price Works 1952-2003 (London, Montreal, © 2016: AA, CCA).

2. Image courtesy of the Misa Shin Gallery, Tokyo.

**Dr. Marcela Aragüez** is Assistant Professor and Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies in Architecture at IE University. She received her PhD in Architectural History & Theory at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, where she also received a MSc in Spatial Design (UCL Turner Prize for best dissertation). Marcela’s research focus lies in the understanding of design processes behind the production of adaptable architecture, with an emphasis on cross-cultural post war practices. She has recently coordinated the joint research project ‘The Culture of Water’ in collaboration with the Kyoto Institute of Technology in Japan and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland. She is a licensed architect with professional experience in Spain and Switzerland. Marcela has lectured widely in the UK, Switzerland, Japan, France and Spain and her work has been acknowledged by grants and awards from institutions such as the Japan Foundation, Sasakawa Foundation, Canon Foundation and the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.



## ACTION

**The Dramatization of Architecture: On the Drawings of Álvaro Siza**

João Miguel Couto Duarte, Lusíada University of Lisbon

In a series of drawings for the Museum for Two Picassos – an imagined pavilion that was to be located in Madrid and that was designed to exhibit Pablo Picasso’s (1881 - 1973) “Guernica”, painted in 1937, and “Pregnant Woman”, a sculpture from 1950 – Álvaro Siza Vieira (b. 1933) populates the space with several figures in apparent motion. These bodies do not imitate everyday life, nor do they seem to perform a choreography. They are strange figures, transfigured bodies that wander through the space displaying unusual gestures – the gazes reveal astonishment and alienation; the positioning of the bodies accentuates their singular existences. Perhaps all these figures are Álvaro Siza himself, at once one and diverse, who thus moves within his thoughts unfolded in multiple characters. The spaces of the pavilion galleries appear distorted, too. The pavilion becomes another body engaging in the movement that animates the figures populating it. In these bodies – the pavilion and the figures – one can justly identify a kind of dramatization, which presents to the observer a preview of the architecture that is being imagined. The architecture is staged, by presenting it inhabited in this way. A representation is constituted within representation itself. The experience of space is dramatized.

This text aims to discuss the importance of this approach to architecture and drawing in Álvaro Siza’s design thought. The presence of human figures has long been a constant in Álvaro Siza’s design drawings. However, it is possible to recognize a transformation in the way that these figures relate to architecture: a passive contemplation gives way to a poetic confrontation with space, which is architecture’s ultimate ambition, by means of which architecture will result in a meaningful frame for everyday events. With these figures, Álvaro Siza puts his thought into action, anticipating what will be the theatre of the world.

**Dr. João Miguel Couto Duarte** (1966) is a Lisbon born Portuguese architect practicing since 1990 and an assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at Lusíada University of Lisbon where he has been teaching since 1991. The relationship between architectural representation – drawing and models – and design practice has long been his main research field. He is a research fellow at Design, Architecture and Territory Research Centre (CITAD) at Lusíada University of Lisbon and coordinator of RPs “Drawing Siza” [dS]. “Aires Mateus: Matter in Reverse” (2017), directed by Henrique Pina, is his debut in film production. “Body-Buildings” (2020), also directed by Henrique Pina and produced by João, is now completed. João holds a degree in architecture from Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Lisbon (1990), a MSc in Art Theories from Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon (2005) and a PhD in Architecture from Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon (2016).

## MEMORY

**Theatres of Architectural Imagination Performed in Bruno Schulz's Poetic Prose**

Anca Matyiku, McGill University

What if the act of imagining architectural space were performed in language, as a quasi-theatrical play that mines language for its philological depth and the stratified memory accrued in storytelling, myth, and literary artifacts? What if words—as well as the things they are meant to designate—could be cast to perform unlikely roles, thus constructing architectural images that bring forth the texture of language as a medium onto itself? And what if in this restless theatre of architectural representation that is performed in language, the reader-architect becomes an engaged actor in the making of the architectural image?

This paper examines architectural representation in the prose of Bruno Schulz, in order to observe how Schulz constructs his architectural images by enlisting language to perform theatrically. I show that by calling on a layered imaginary, Schulz's images perform a dual movement of drawing from the depths of a cultural memory and projecting creative possibilities toward the future. I show that Schulz solicits words to perform momentary roles that promiscuously cross taxonomies of representation, loosening language from its referential duties and thereby augmenting its poetic currency as a medium onto itself. Furthermore, I show that in the playful theatrics of his prose, Schulz's architectural images both condense and proliferate such that they precipitate multiple possibilities of interpretation, thus enticing the architect-reader to take on a participatory role in construing the architectural image.

My aim is to present how architectural images thus constructed are able to convey architectural knowledge that evades visual forms of representation—including multi-sensory and atmospheric qualities of space, and the kind of place-specific knowledge that is implicit and elusive. I show also how Schulz's prose performs architectural images that preserve the subtle yet salient complexities of human questions, desires, and predicaments that can be self-contradictory or irreconcilable. I show that ultimately, this theatrical performance in language engages these forms of architectural knowledge to activate the imagination and propel creative action.

**Anca Matyiku's** research combines an interdisciplinary creative practice with academic scholarship in the history and theory of architecture. Her academic work focuses on the design process that leads to architecture, investigating how literary language operates as a medium for thinking through questions of place and architectural representation. Anca is the co-founder of MOTE, a research-creation practice that explores how fiction, myth, and material temperaments participate to architectural inquiry. Her research has been part of several exhibitions and conferences including the 2012 Venice Biennale of Architecture, and it has been most recently published in *Reading Architecture: Literary Imagination and Architectural Experience* (Routledge, 2018), *Scroope: The Cambridge Architecture Journal*, and *Writingplace Journal*. Anca holds a Bachelor of Architectural Studies from University of Waterloo, a Masters of Architecture from University of Manitoba, in Canada, and is completing her Ph.D. in the History and Theory of Architecture at McGill University.