CRITICAL PRACTICE IN AN AGE OF COMPLEXITY - AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITIQUE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Choreographies of Spatial Labour as Critical Spatial Practice

• Format:
Pre-recorded video presentation + Skype participation

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• Abstract (300 words):
Critical spatial practices, as defined by Jane Rendell, are “‘reflective’ rather than objectifying and take into account their own procedures and methods,” and operate in “a more expanded field than architectural” practice typically includes (Rendell 2011, 20-21). Rendell further argues that “interdisciplinary research calls into question the ideological apparatus that structures the terms and methods of specific disciplinary practices... [it] question[s] dominant processes that seek to control intellectual and creative production, and instead generate[s] new resistant forms and modes of knowledge and understanding” (Rendell 2007, 1-2). Working between discourses and practices of architecture, installation and performance, I argue that ‘performances challenge’ (McKenzie 2001) and that performative spatial practices can be leveraged to critique, crack open and productively undo foreclosed architectural objects and reveal their methods of production. Performances practices, such as the choreographies of spatial labour explored through the creative work Intern[ed], reveal hidden cycles of making and unmaking, mechanisms of invisibility, and architectures that themselves are
used politically, in an uneven distribution of the sensible (Rancière 2004), to hide from view disenfranchised populations. Through a narrative that accompanies video excerpts of the performed and installed work, this presentation will interrogate performativities latent within architectural drawings and texts, rehearse a theory of spatial labour—of making and unmaking space—in relation to the work of performance artists such as Yvonne Rainer, and articulate the value that performance practices contribute towards a critical spatial practice.


• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Beth Weinstein (M.Arch Columbia, BFA Hons. Syracuse) works at the seam between architecture and performance, across scales from drawing to installation, to interventions in galleries, urban and landscape spaces, around critical issues of climate change, public space and politics. Her work has been awarded the Young Architect’s Award (Arch’l League of NY), included in the recent Arizona Biennial and recognized through artist residencies at Bundanon Trust (NSW, AUS), the Casa de Velázquez (Madrid), and the Cité International des Arts (Paris). Her research on collaborations between architects and choreographers formed the Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham exhibition (2011) which toured to universities in the USA and Europe. She has contributed chapters to Architecture as a Performing Art (2011), Disappearing Stage: Reflections on the 2011 Prague Quadrennial (2011), The Routledge Companion to Scenography (2017) and Performing Architectures (2018). She co-chairs PSI’s Performance+Design Working Group and has served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Architectural Education and Theatre and Performance Design Journal. She has lectured internationally, taught at RPI, Columbia, Pratt, Parsons and ESA (Paris) and is Associate Professor at University of Arizona.