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

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Global Architectural Theory in an Age of Complexity

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• Author(s) Name:
Joseph Godlewski

• University or Company Affiliation:
Syracuse University

• Abstract (300 words):
Architectural theory needs to be reimagined in order to adequately prepare students for contemporary global practice. Intractable problems indeed exist, however, without equipping critically-thinking practitioners, the discipline and practice of architecture will continue to decline in significance. One of the issues which haunts contemporary architectural theory is its lack of gender and racial diversity. While architectural historians have, for decades, examined Western and non-Western traditions in an attempt to create a more “global” history of architecture, architectural theory has lagged behind. Existing theory anthologies remain Euro-American in scope and resistant to the rich array of people and trends shaping architecture today. Similarly, conventional “introductions” are inadequate in exposing students to the complexity and heterogeneity of architecture. This paper argues that current pedagogical tools and models for teaching students about architectural theory are insufficient in an age of complexity. It suggests alternative readings of the architectural theory canon in order to, following Diana Agrest, challenge the “system of architecture” established during the Renaissance. It then posits
the idea of “global architectural theory” as a possible remedy to this quandary. It asks, “what texts does one include in a “global” architectural theory anthology? What is excluded?” This paper is therefore posed a speculative first step in imagining a more inclusive theory of architecture, and one which aspires to equip students for an age of complexity.

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