• Paper / Proposal Title:
Creating the continuous present: From extant buildings to future places

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
Creating the continuous present: Extant buildings and future places

In the English language, the present (perfect) continuous tense refers to an action that began at some point in the past and continues to the present (“they have been building”). This paper explores how qualities of buildings may continue, from one to another, through a chain of material and structural reference across shifting contexts: a chain of reference whereby buildings act as mechanisms for knowledge exchange, architectural innovation, and the development of social networks. Based on data gathered during an ongoing, ethnographic study of ‘design-build’ or ‘live project’ education (wherein students plan and construct buildings alongside their professors and others), this paper considers how participants in university-level, design-build projects engage with, assess, and integrate architecture across time and place.
Through drawing on instances of social interaction that happen in design meetings and educational reviews, together with images of existing buildings and renderings of possible futures, we see how discourse works with the visual to index both the materiality of previous construction and the possibility of prospective intervention. In effect, this paper explores how, in the context of architectural practice, references to meaningful precedents ensures that history is carried into the future: heritage moves through structures but also through what people say. This paper contributes to architectural research and knowledge through considering how particular buildings of the past and present may work on multiple levels: as sources of reference, pedagogic devices, and as ‘real’ and speculative prompts for future transformations of location and community.

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

**Arlene Oak** is Associate Professor of Material Culture & Design studies in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta, Canada. She has a background in studio-based design (BDes), the History of Design & Material Culture (MA, RCA/V&A), and Social & Political Sciences (PhD, University of Cambridge). Her research is focused on how language (particularly conversation) relates to the creation, mediation, and consumption of the material world with current research (with collaborators Dr. Claire Nicholas and/or Prof. Peter Lloyd) focusing on architecture education and professional practice, the presentation of design and architecture on TV, and the performance of unconscious (gender) bias in design education. Methods and approaches associated with ethnography and forms of micro-sociological discourse analysis are used in her work to better understand how people communicate and explain the decisions they make about the material world, and also to explore how participants in design engage with multimodality (materials, objects, gestures, actions) during creative practice. Arlene has studied and taught in the UK and Canada, and has papers published in, for example, the *Journal of Design History*, *Design Studies*, *Co-Design*, *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, and *Discourse & Society*.

**Nicholas, Claire** is Assistant Professor of Textiles and Material Culture in the Department of Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She holds a PhD in socio-cultural anthropology from Princeton University, a DEA from EHESS (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris), and has completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. Dr. Nicholas employs primarily ethnographic and historical methods in the study of Moroccan textile craft and North American design education. Her research focuses on the ethnography of craft and design process, pedagogy, and the everyday practices (and politics) of making and interpreting material and visual culture. Her current book project examines socio-economic development and “traditional” textile artisans in Morocco. Together with Dr. Arlene Oak, she also conducts research on the
social dimensions of design and collaborative pedagogies in design education with “real world” applications, including healthcare contexts and the built environment. She has conducted fieldwork in Morocco and across North America in contexts ranging from artisanal textile workshops to university architecture studios.