

DESIGN_SPACE

Technicities and the Built Environment

Online Conversation
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Organised and moderated by
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The term ‘design space’ implies that the particular space of possibilities within any evolving system always has a sort of transformative ‘elbow room’ for things to unfold. Yet such space of possibilities for future evolutions is itself designed depending on the system’s past evolution. In this regard, it can be understood as an enabling constraint for auto-affective systems to emerge in path-dependent ways.

This event is intended to facilitate a collective exchange aimed at adumbrating, defining, problematising what this strange design space could do; where it may be located; how it might be employed for engendering transformative becomings. We would like to interrogate especially the ways in which designed spaces — understood as a multiplicity of environmentally-constructed and embodied technicities — may be related to generating this systemic ‘design space’.

The event is built around the four complementary domains, as the first step towards a comprehensive (book) project:

The first one emphasises INFORMATIONAL TECHNICALITIES. If anything designed can simultaneously ground us and move us (without even the need of actually moving us), it is because design technicalities deal, above all, with information. Understanding information not as data but as the production, consumption, and dissemination of meaning (what is affectively relevant and significant to an individual), then we can approach design technicalities as fundamentally informational. Consequently, if information is the only thing that escapes natural laws and allows the cosmos to individuate further, then we will examine how designing is

a unique chance in having a (negentropic) say.

The second domain centres on (SYM)BIOTIC TECHNICALITIES. We will explore how notions of design space have changed (ontologically) in relation to minor perspectives of biology such as that of Maturana and Varela, later extended by Lynn Margulis that have forged a radically different notion of life. Life in this discourse does not start with pre-formed life (objects, structures, policies, institutions, individuals) but emerges via constant co-evolution. Considering ontology means a serious consideration of how design itself designs our very own ways of being. We would interrogate how this multi-sited approach to emergence has progressively and perceptibly influenced modes of

design, conceptualised in terms of relationality.

The TECHNICALITIES OF RADICAL EMPIRICISM will force us to rethink subjectivity, especially under the ingrained substantive conceptions. It will address a post-Darwinian theory of sensibility where our receptive faculties are themselves the result of design. As Guattari put it, 'One creates new modalities of subjectivity in the same way that an artist creates new forms from the palette'. The heteropoietic ontopower sustained by ubiquitous transversal processes implies an evolution that exceeds natural means, where habits shape habitats that in turn shape habits. By connecting the somatic and the social, transindividuation avoids the pitfalls of both genetic determinism and

social constructivism.

The fourth domain centres on MINOR TECHNICALITIES. We will problematise and interrogate the question that theorists as Mabel Wilson and Alice Grandoin have raised: 'Who is designing, determining, or creating spaces of possibilities?'; who gets to be charged with creating spaces of empowerment, and whom are they (dis)empowering. Based on Achille Mbembe's notion that the fostering of some forms of life is always lined by the extinction of others, this domain interrogates possibilities to deterritorialise (i.e. decolonise and queer) the space of possibility given with those hierarchising assemblages that make up the present.