

Learning Structures

Tom Holert, Anna-Maria Meister

The panel with Tom Holert and Anna-Maria Meister inaugurated the conference *Architectures of Education* at Nottingham Contemporary, 8-9 November 2019. This event was a three-day programme with presentations, workshops, keynotes and screening reflecting on cultures and architectures of education today, and speculate about what futures may lay on the horizons of knowledge production. Tom Holert talked about 1967 Rice Design Fete, and Anna-Maria Meister looked at the case-studies identified by the Radical Pedagogies project based at Princeton University.

Tom Holert

Educationalising or Failing the City? The 1967 Rice Design Fete

The post-war era, and particularly the decades following the launch of the “Sputnik” on October 4, 1957, was marked by an exceptional expansion of education on all scales. Determined by Cold War geopolitical concerns and further invigorated by the structural adaptations necessary to accommodate the changes in technology and industrial

production (as well as the advent of the “knowledge economy”), the educational sector received considerable subsidies to allow for the increase of skilled workforce and techno-scientific competitiveness. Among the effects of this educational turn on a grand (and, arguably, global) scale was an unprecedented intensification of the planning and construction of educational facilities (schools, universities, libraries, community centres, etc.) and the introduction of new types of learning environments and curricula. Departing from the proposals for an educationalised urban climate presented by Cedric Price and Robert Venturi to the participants of the 1967 Rice Design Fete in Houston, the talk will attend to the infrastructural thinking that entered the discussion of education, politics, and planning around 1970.

Anna-Maria Meister

Radicalism and Institutions

Radical Pedagogies is a long-term international collaborative research project investigating experiments in architecture education in the 1960s and 1970s. But how does the entanglement of pedagogical institutions play out with the very attempts to undo them? This talk will investigate multiple strategies and frictions between radicalism and institutionalism: how if one wants to change architecture education at its root (radix) negotiates the built-in conservatism and inertia of the very institutions of said education. As diverse as the case studies, the answers will be multiple, demonstrating architecture’s potential for redefining not just itself, but society at large—as well as its failures in doing so.

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