



EAAE Newsletter

Architecture, Reason and "the Passions" The quality of empathy in research, education, and design

EAAE/AEEA architectural theory workshop #6
Paris, November 2012
D. Vanderburgh and C. Younès, EAAE Theory Network

The heart has its own reason which reason does not know.
B. Pascal, *Pensées* (1670)

Does the heart indeed have "its own reason which reason does not know"? Are then reason and emotion sealed off from one another, each struggling for dominion? Recent work in many disciplines suggests another reading, showing their intimate interdependency and implying an altogether different way of considering how architectural design fits into the human project.



Much is made of reason's role in architecture, while the affective is relegated to the reception of works, or at worst to some sort of unknowable creative spirit. One might argue instead that emotion is a condition of possibility for the existence of reason itself. The austere scaffolding of symbolic operations appears constantly troubled by the shifting mass of what were once known as "the passions". But these latter may not be, as is often affirmed, embarrassing or dangerous forces to be contained. Maybe they are, instead, indispensable faculties that enable those others that we associate with reason: discernment, rigor, consistency. Indeed, research in human development and cognition tends to show that without emotion we cannot make choices, adopt strategies, or even identify the goals that reason helps us to pursue. In contradistinction to the idea of "cold reason", it seems that the very ability to reason is rooted in empathy, that is, the capacity to "feel the feelings" of some other living being. Reason, one might say, is "hot" or it is not.

The goal of this workshop is to gather together a small number of researchers in architecture, philosophy and neighbouring disciplines, in order to work toward a possible re-framing of the sources, processes and products of architectural theory. The organizers and invited scholars will engage in intensive work with selected participants in a round-table format. All selected participants are expected to produce a paper and to be prepared to comment on those of the others. The workshop will be bilingual (English/French).

Potential participants are requested to submit an abstract in English or French (500 words max.) and a short cv to: david.vanderburgh@uclouvain.be and cyounes@clermont-fd.archi.fr on or before February 15, 2012.



Lifelong Learning Programme



Calendar:

Abstract (500 words) + cv : February 15, 2012
Notification of acceptance : March 1, 2012
Draft papers due (15p. max., + illust.): April 30, 2012
Comments on papers : July 15, 2012
Revised papers due : September 15, 2012
Workshop : November 16-17, 2012
Proceedings published : December, 2012

07-10 June, 2012



EAAE/ARCC 2012
Cities in transformation
Research & Design
*Ideas, Methods,
Techniques, Tools,
Examples*
[More information](#)
Milano, Italy

31 May - 3 June,
2012



European Architectural History Network
Second International Meeting

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Brussels, Belgium

31 March - 1 April,
2012



EAAE
Council Meeting
Copenhagen,
Denmark