

Cautious Encounters?

Architecture and Urban Design/Planning meet Environmental Humanities.

1. Panelists

Cecilia Åsberg, Professor of Gender Nature Culture, Linköping University, and Guest Professor of STS, Gender and Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden.

Isabelle Doucet (panel organiser), Professor of Theory and History of Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden.

Hélène Frichot, Professor of Architecture and Philosophy, The University of Melbourne, Australia.

Elke Krasny, Professor for Art and Education. Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria.

Jonathan Metzger, Professor of Urban and Regional Studies, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden.

2. Abstract

This conversation brings to the table an interdisciplinary group of scholars who, from their respective subject fields and experiences, can offer critical reflections on the potentials and challenges of intensified exchanges between the environmental humanities on the one hand and architecture and urban design/planning on the other. Where the environmental humanities, using approaches from the cultural sciences and humanities, offer much-needed critical environmental knowledge and perspectives, architecture and urban design/planning can offer intellectual, creative, and experimental spatial test grounds.

For disciplines and professions connected to the built environment, where sustainability has largely become seen as the norm, the environmental humanities offer an important perspective that adds to technological innovation also new social, cultural, and critical sensibilities, deemed necessary for imagining, and realizing, sustainable futures. Creativity and imagination seem to be particularly valued in the promoting of new ways of collaborating across science and humanities, creative arts and technology.

This panel will focus on architecture and urban design/planning, where creative critical potential has proven to thrive in the critical environmental imaginations emerging from academia, professional design practice, and education (design studio and humanities). The panel intends to explore what makes the encounter between architecture and the environmental humanities potentially productive; to discuss possible common grounds as much as important divergences; and to explore shared concepts, practices, and approaches. In doing so, the panel has the ambition to discuss the opportunities, challenges, affinities, and differences that can support, or possibly also hamper, dialogues between architectural and urban design and the environmental humanities. The participants in this conversation will reflect on such questions drawing from their respective experiences as scholars, educators, and curators in the fields of architectural theory and history, philosophy, urban and regional planning, architectural design, cultural studies, and gender and environmental studies.