



**Art Academy
of Latvia**

(BUILDING) NEW PERSPECTIVES

through practice-led research in Art, Design and Architecture

International symposium hosted by
the Institute of Contemporary Art, Design and
Architecture (LMDA) of the Art Academy of Latvia
9-11 November 2022, Riga, Latvia

Gathering a multifaceted mix of interdisciplinary contributions to practice-led research from art, design and architecture, this symposium invites abstracts of papers and projects that investigate how distinct perspectives can undermine traditional binary divides – be it the ones established between subject and object, urban and rural, living and non-living, architecture and users, algorithmic governmentality and its ethical dimensions or other binaries we are accustomed to.

Providing a platform for established or alternative practice-based methodologies, the symposium will explore how can research address the need for criticality to ultimately result in a more differentiated discursive landscape, especially in the face of actual emergencies.

Among other issues, the symposium will raise the questions crucial for research communities in our sight. Adopting a self-reflective stance – what are the (post)digital and the (post)human frameworks from which we conduct our research? What can be strategies that support the change of mindset needed for critical redirection of a practice, speculating on perspectival changes urgently needed? How do the constellations envisioned by practice-based research in the context of crisis construct meaning and even become political actors through spatial activism? The symposium's three main tracks will address these issues from within the fields of art, design and architecture, ultimately aiming at the creation of an open-ended discursive space between the disciplines.

Symposium Chairs:
Dr. **Dietmar Köring**, Dr. **Eva Sommeregger**

Scientific Committee: PhD **Liene Jākobsone**,
Dina Suhanova, **Māra Traumane**

OPEN CALL

Thematic sessions of the symposium

Session 1: **Building Assemblies: (post)digital and (post)human frameworks**

Wim Wenders' *If Buildings could talk* is a cinematic installation that portrays Sanaa's Rolex Learning Center. The work examines how buildings communicate with the humans who inhabit them: in the installation's film, Wenders gives the Rolex Learning Center its own voice in the form of a female voice-over that narrates from the building's perspective. Similar to Wenders's piece of work, we look at changes in perspective. 'Building', understood both as a noun and as a verb, thus standing for the building, and for the practice of building, represents one research matter that will be in focus. 'Buildings', understood in this sense, thus go way beyond what may be reduced to the built environment. We depart from the assumption that 'buildings' are not only extensions of the human body, following Sigmund Freud's prosthesis theory, but non-hierarchical constellations that involve inert, online and living matters – in sync with assemblage theory after Gilles Deleuze/Felix Guattari and Manuel DeLanda. This conference track will discuss works embracing the variety of phenomena dealing with this change of perspective.

Keynote speaker: **Liss Christine Werner**, architect, teacher and researcher, architecture office *Tactile Architecture*.



Session 2: (Re)Building the practice: New mindsets and tools

Historically, design – both expert and diffuse – has been complicit in causing and perpetuating unsustainability. According to the concept of ontological designing, theorized by Anne-Marie Willis, we have designed ourselves into this condition, and change, as stated by Tony Fry, is only possible through redirection of the entire practice. Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby claim that design can only be either critical or affirmative of the existing, hence the redirection requires being deliberately critical toward the current status-quo. But what is the new direction? How can we design, discuss and agree on the future? Who's future are we considering and what values is it based on?

This track aims at exploring ways of visioning and interrogating future options through various design and artistic practices. It welcomes constructive future plans as well as radical speculations that are aimed at challenging the mainstream indifferent mindset.

Keynote speaker: **Julijonas Urbonas**, artist, designer and researcher, Associate Professor in the Vilnius Academy of Arts.

Session 3: Building on crisis: emerging spatial practices in times of urgency

Space is always political. Spatial activism, temporary interventions and socially engaged approaches have the capacity to influence or affect the 'social' or the 'political' – Melanie Dodd opened her editorial *Spatial Practices. Modes of Action and Engagement with the City* with these statements. Recent geopolitical events shattered our fundamentals urging the civil society for swift collective and individual actions. Various kinds of social activities emerged as a reaction – public space became the platform to encourage change and protest, but also showed solidarity striving to mitigate crises and solve urgent human needs.

As a result, the urban space is electrified and charged through despair, implicating new rules and carrying out unprecedented spatial interferences. Thus within the track, we are looking to collect spatial and social practices (provocative, contingent, purposeful, temporary or planned) that have emerged as an urgent response to crises and collective disasters.

Keynote speaker: **Michelle Teran**, educator, artist and researcher, professor of social practice research at the Willem de Kooning Academie in Rotterdam.

As a fourth part, the symposium will feature a supplementary session **Debates on Landscapes and Identities** held as a part of the State Research Program project "Landscapes of Identities: History, Culture, and Environment" (IDEUM).

The deadline for submitting abstracts of max of 300 words is **30 June 2022**. To submit the abstract, please email your submission to eva.sommeregger@lma.lv with the subject line: "Open Call Building New Perspectives SURNAME_ POSITION TITLE". Documents must be in *MS Word* format. Please include five keywords, a short biography (80 words maximum) and the track you would like to participate. Applicants will receive confirmation of their participation no later than 30 August.

20 minutes of presentation time will be allocated to each symposium speaker. The working language of the symposium will be English. A peer-reviewed digital and printed publication featuring selected symposium entries will be published in Spring 2023.

The symposium is organized with the support of the project of the Latvian Council of Science State Research Programme „Landscapes of Identities: History, Culture, and Environment” (IDEUM), No. VPP-LETONIKA-2021/1-0008.

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