

INTRO.: WHAT IS THEORY?

Tu./Th. Aug. 29 / 31

Required Readings:

- * Gelernter, M. Sources of Architectural Form, pp.1-18 (website) (NA2750 .G435)
Questions to think about: What are the five main types of arch'l theories described by Gelernter (be prepared to know and discuss each one)?
- * Nesbitt, K., ed. Theorizing a new agenda for architecture : an anthology of architectural theory 1965-1995. (1996) intro., pp.16-21 (NA680 .T45)
Questions to think about: What are the four types of theory, according to Nesbitt? What is the general purpose of architectural theory? What are the five subject matters of theory? What is some of the possible "content" for theory?
- Hearn, Fil. Ideas that Shape Buildings (MS) preface, pp.5-6
Questions to think about: How does Hearn define theory? How is it different from the others?
- * Speaks, Michael, "After Theory," Architectural Record (June 2005): 72-75; also:
- Responses in "Letters," Architectural Record (Aug. 2005): 19
Questions to think about: What was/is the great debate in architectural schools described in these readings? Can you have architecture without "theory"? What "kind" of theory is Speaks criticizing? Who are the main proponents? What alternatives is he in favor of? How do the "Letters" critique or support Speaks' position?
Also: Speaks, "Intelligence After Theory," Perspecta 38 (2006) pp.101-6; and Lavin, "Uses and Abuses of Theory," Progressive Arch. (Aug. 1990) pp.113-5; with responses by Kipnis & Hays in Nov. 1990
- * Baird, G. "Criticality and its Discontents," Harvard Design Magazine n.21 (Fall 2004/Winter 2005): 1-6. *Questions to think about:* What does Baird say about Speaks, Somol, etc.c? Why has architecture moved from "critical practice" to "projective practice"? What is the difference between the two?
- Sykes, A.K. "Introduction," Constructing a New Agenda. Architectural Theory 1993-2009 (2010), pp.14-25 *Questions to think about:* How does Sykes define theory? What is critical theory? What happened to theory around 1990? What are important theory trends now?
- Wigley, "Flash Theory," in J. Graham, 2000+ The Urgencies of Arch'l Theory (2015), pp.264-281. *Questions to think about:* What is role of theory in 2015?

Recommended:

- Johnson, P.A. The theory of architecture : concepts, themes, and practices (1994) pp.30-31; also pp.30-46, skim pp.1-73 (website) (NA2500 .J65)
Questions to think about: Distinguish the varied ideas and etymology of "theory" presented. Skim p.1-73 for ideas on how the theory relates to practice, criticism, history, myth, utopia...
- Linder, M. "Architectural Theory is no Discipline," in Strategies in Arch'l Thinking eds. Whiteman, Kipnis (1992) pp.167-8 (website) (NA2500 .S83)
Questions to think about: How does Linder want to define theory? Is architectural theory more than just an attempt to make architecture theoretical? Should we borrow from other disciplines to muse about architecture? How can we connect theory and practice more?
- Stephens, S. "Assessing the State of Architectural Criticism in Today's Press," Architectural Record (Mar. 1998): 64-69. (Website)
Questions to think about: What is "wrong" with architectural criticism today (in 1998)? How is "criticism" different from "theory"? How does this article link up to the Speaks article?
- Gelernter, M. Sources of Architectural Form, Ch.1 = pp.19-35 (NA2750 .G435)
Questions to think about: What is the main paradox about theory and its relation to architecture? What are the three primary theories of creative production? What are the three main types of cognitive thought?
- Kruft, W.J. "Intro.: What is Architectural Theory?" in A History of Arch'l Theory (1994) *Questions to think about:* How does Kruft define theory?

Abbreviations: * = Most important reading!! Pay particular attention!
(Website) = on website, access at class website: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-341
(Blackboard) = article avail. On course Blackboard site
TBA = "To be announced"

