

THE OBSERVERS  
OBSERVED:  
ARCHITECTURE ALTHOUGH  
OF ETHNOLOGY

# Ethnography in Architectural Education and Research

Dirk van den Heuvel  
(TU Delft, Het Nieuwe Instituut)

To put together the programme for our annual conference has always been exciting and challenging. Part of the process is to formulate the thematic and call for papers, to review the incoming proposals of colleagues, design the session panels, and invite special guests and keynote speakers. For the eighth edition of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre Conference, the question of ethnography in architecture was quite a natural choice in hindsight. It emerged from educational concerns at our university in Delft, just as it ties in with new archival research projects at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam around questions of decolonising our heritage and architectural collection, and socio-ecological concepts in the current architecture and urbanism discourse. The conference also naturally builds on earlier projects realised by the Jaap Bakema Study Centre, TU Delft and Het Nieuwe Instituut, including the exhibitions 'Structuralism' of 2014 and 'Habitat: Expanding Architecture' of 2018.

The ethnographical gaze is firmly inscribed in the traditions of both Delft and Rotterdam through the legacies of Team 10 and the Forum group, it is the obvious thing to state here. The teachings of Aldo van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger, just as those of Bakema and –much lesser-known– Joop Hardy, have had an indelible influence on the formation of generations of students. Hertzberger, for instance, was a professor from 1970 until 1999 and would tirelessly introduce the students to his proposal for a humanist world culture, in which architects would work towards a relational and social idea of the built environment. Such a proposition for a relational understanding of architecture and its inhabitants was already made by Bakema in 1951 in the circles of CIAM, when he talked about the rebuilding of the European cities in

the aftermath of the Second World War, and which was inspired by the pre-war ideals of De Stijl movement and Dutch Functionalism.

*Musée Imaginaire* – the term comes from André Malraux – was used as one of the unifying concepts for this new, idealist world culture, to move beyond nationalism and eurocentrism, even when an exoticist interest and orientalist fascination clearly speak from this post-war ideal of multiculturalism. Bakema, Van Eyck, Hardy, and Hertzberger formed the board of Forum in the years 1959–1963 as is well-known, together with Gert Boon, Dick Apon, and Jurriaan Schrofer, and in the pages of the journal, just as in the teachings of its editors, this *Musée Imaginaire* appeared as an almost purely visual language that could only be explained or recounted through poetry, as in the case of the ‘Day and Night’ issue compiled by Hardy, which presented a sheer visual documentation of the city with a contribution by Lucebert, the Dutch poet-painter, or the issue on ‘Door and Window’ in which a quote from The Pillow Book connected the vast selection of images.

Such a *Musée Imaginaire*, almost as a surrealist machine of free visual association, served as a didactic tool. With its vast geographical and cultural references, Hertzberger’s lectures served as such an inspirational tool – also for me being a TU Delft alumnus, this is a vivid memory. His lectures would take you from everyday street scenes in Amsterdam neighbourhoods to his visits to the famous, collective tulou housing in Fujian, China. Perhaps they were romanticising harsh socio-political realities, yet at the same time they also opened up a profound understanding of urban space as the outcome of human appropriation and interaction. Hertzberger’s private collection of photos, which formed the basis of these lectures, is one of the recent and special acquisitions of Het Nieuwe Instituut, after he had already generously donated his office archive. Other archives with a strong ethnographic aspect and which should be mentioned here, include the one of Herman Haan, who served as a guide to North Africa and the Dogon region for many Dutch architects, including Aldo and Hannie van Eyck. Haan’s archive was saved and donated

to the institute by Piet Vollaard in 1997. Joop van Stigt, student and assistant to Van Eyck, donated an additional set of slides of Haan’s work and travels. Van Stigt’s own archive also entered the national collection in 2014, donated by the family, including his work and connections in Mali.

To only focus on the archives of architects of Dutch Structuralism when it comes to ethnography and architecture is probably too limited a perspective. Since modern architecture was born from and within a colonial reality, one could point to many more archives that are kept in the depots of Het Nieuwe Instituut, with Berlage’s drawings and photos of his famous trip to Indonesia, then the Dutch East Indies, as one of the more iconic assets, and also perhaps problematic in that sense. The special quality of the archives related to Dutch Structuralism lies in the fact that here a project is formulated for a new social and relational paradigm, in which the encounter with the other and others, and the enabling of such encounters is at the core of a possible reconceptualisation of architecture itself.

The didactic aspect of ethnographic investigation and methods is also a driver behind today’s interest in the interdisciplinary traffic between architecture and ethnography. During our preparations for the conference Nelson Mota spoke of ‘sensitising’ the students to social and relational issues of and in architectural design, while Marie Stender mentioned the need to be able to constantly ‘shift’ perspective and position as a designer, and also as a researcher. However, more than a photographic, associative visual language of a *Musée Imaginaire*, the focus today is often on drawing tools, to combine analysis and projection. The architectural drawing is not any longer exclusively about the designation of material and spatial structure, but also includes the traces and objects of everyday use and patterns, both real and potential.

Since the interest in ethnography today has become so prevalent, some have started speaking of an ‘ethnographic turn’ in architecture. From the many publications in the field, I wanted to highlight the ARCH+

issue devoted to *Architektur Ethnografie* of 2020 and compiled by Andreas Kalpakci, Momoyo Kaijima and Laurent Stalder, which was based on their curatorial work for the Japanese pavilion at the Venice biennale of 2018. Next to painting the broad ramifications of ethnographic thinking in architecture, the drawing is celebrated here as a motor for new architectural approaches, not in the least because of Momoyo Kaijima's role, who with her office Atelier Bow Wow pioneered the architectural drawing to understand not only the formation of the built environment but in particular the interactive uses and appropriations by its inhabitants.

The conference would not be possible without the help of many people. It was organised by a working committee, which included my colleagues Nelson Mota and Vanessa Grossman who work with me in the Dwelling chair and develop the special Global Housing programme, postdoc researcher Alejandro Campos Uribe, and PhD-candidates Rohan Varma and Fatma Tanis, who is also the coordinator of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre. The Advisory Board and its members Tom Avermaete, Hetty Berens, Maristella Casciato, Carola Hein, and Georg Vrachliotis helped and supported the committee throughout the reviewing and selection process. In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone for their work, just as I want to express my gratitude to the participants, the authors of the papers included in these proceedings, and to the two involved institutions, the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of TU Delft, and Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, who enable the work of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

24.11.2021

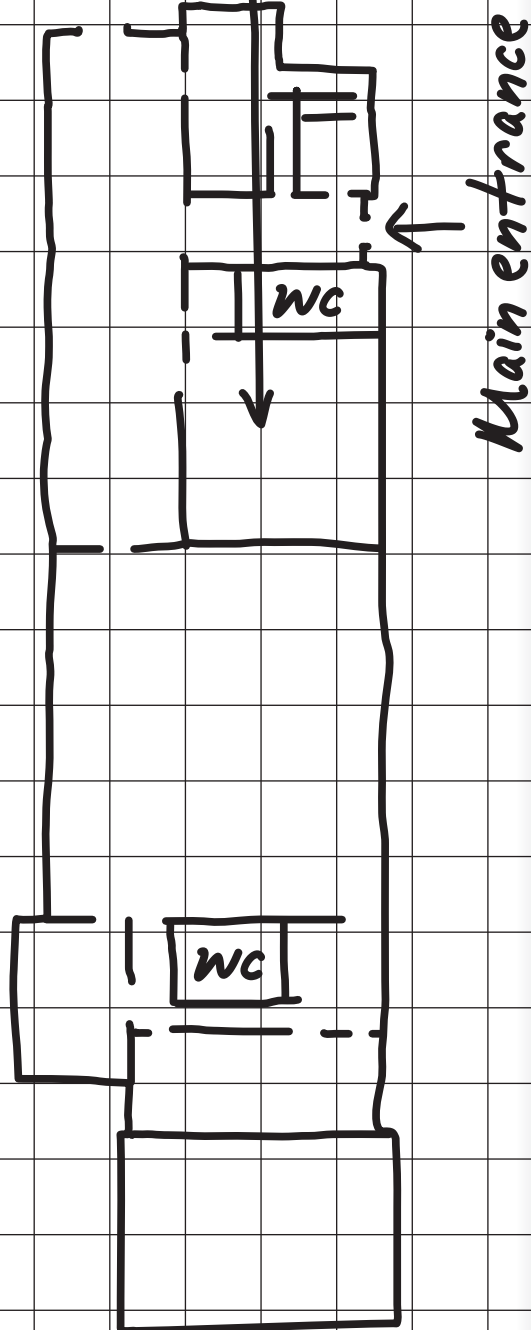
10.00–17.00  
Machinehal,  
Het Vakwerkhuis

Professor  
Snijdersstraat 2  
Delft

17.30–19.30  
Oost Serre,  
TU Delft

Julianalaan 134  
Delft

Machinehal



10.00  
Doors open

10.30  
Opening words

Dirk van den Heuvel  
(TU Delft, Het Nieuwe Instituut)

10.45–12.30  
Ethnographic  
Methods  
in Architecture

Moderated by Alejandro Campos Uribe  
(TU Delft)

*Redeeming Ethnography by Enshrining  
the Philosophy of Ubuntu in the Study  
of Batswana Indigenous Architecture*

George Sedupane  
(North West University),  
Simeon Materechera  
(Indigenous Knowledge Systems Centre)

*Companion Practices:  
Interpreting Sites of Troubled Histories  
through Architecture and Ethnography*

Shanti Sumartojo and Naomi Stead  
(Monash University)

*Building on Ethnography, for Architecture:  
Private Hospitality and the Making  
of a 'Home' (France, 2019–2021)*

Stéphanie Dadour  
(École Nationale Supérieure  
d'Architecture Paris-Malaquais)

*Reversing Ethnography:  
Decolonising Methodologies  
for the Observer*

Yue Mao  
(Leibniz-Institute for Regional Geography)

12.30–13.30  
Lunch

13.30–15.00  
Dwelling and  
Patterns of  
Habitation

Moderated by Nelson Mota  
(TU Delft)

*Urbanism Justice as a Research Agenda:  
A Positioning on Critical Ethnography  
and Emancipatory Architecture*  
Jeroen Stevens  
(KU Leuven)

*Architectural Ethnography and Pragmatic  
Alliances with the Yanomami People*  
Thiago Magri Benucci  
(Associação Escola da Cidade)

*Architecture in the Service  
of Ethnography:  
Habitation, Ethnography, and  
the Region (France 1941–1945)*  
Gregory Elias Cartelli  
(Princeton University)

*Listening to Corridor Chatters  
in High-Rise Social Housing*  
Claire Bosmans  
(KU Leuven)

15.00–15.30  
Coffee Break

15.30–17.00  
Material Culture

Moderated by Fatma Tanis  
(TU Delft, Het Nieuwe Instituut)

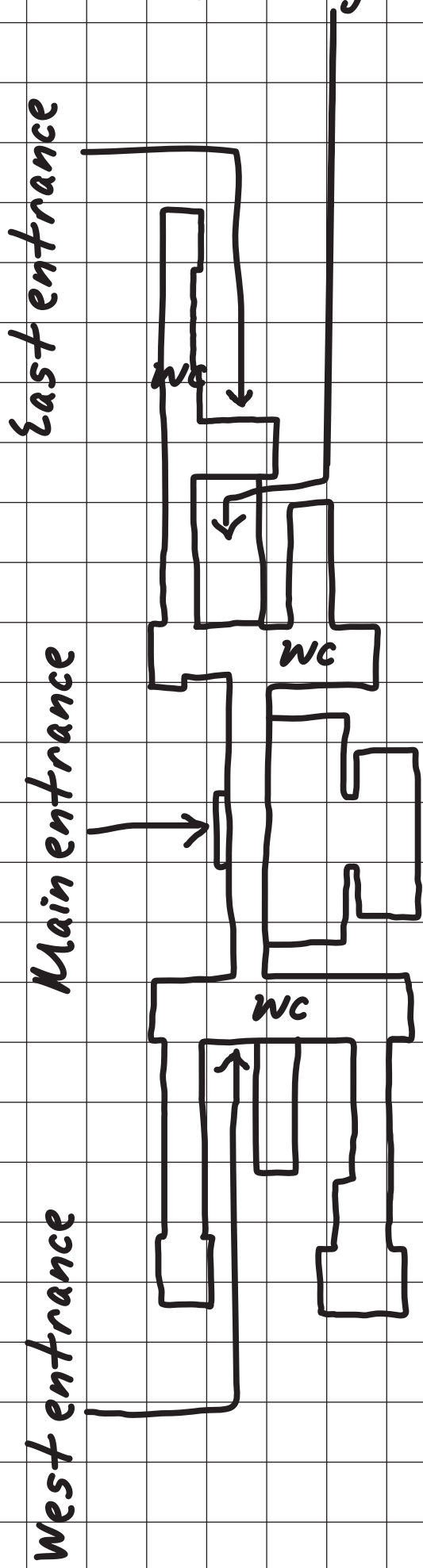
*Place-Based Pedagogies  
and Participatory Action Research  
at Former Second World War  
Confinement (Internment) Landscapes*  
Desirée Valadares  
(UC Berkeley)

*Manifestation of Socio-Cultural  
Identities in the Architectural Vocabulary  
of Assam's Tea Landscape*  
Barsha Amarendra  
(Indian Institute of Technology)

*Making the Self through Mud:  
An Ethnography of Training in Stabilised  
Mud Construction in South India*  
Curt Gambetta  
(Cornell University)

*Insider Ethnography:  
Research Methods for Engaging  
with Soft Spatial Practices*  
Amina Kaskar  
(University of the Witwatersrand)

# Oostserre/Orange Hall



17.30–18.00

## Drinks

Oost Serre/ Orange Hall, TU Delft

18.00–19.30

## BK Talks on Ethnography and Architectural Education

With Dick van Gameren (TU Delft),  
Stéphanie Dadour (École nationale  
supérieure d'architecture Paris-Malaquais),  
Aina Landsverk Hagen (Oslo Metropolitan  
University), Klaske Havik (TU Delft),  
Leeke Reinders (TU Delft), Aurélie Griveaux,  
and Sascha Roesler (Università della  
Svizzera Italiana)

Chaired by Nelson Mota and  
Vanessa Grossman (TU Delft)

25.11.2021

9.30–21.00

Auditorium

Het Nieuwe Instituut

Museumpark 25

Rotterdam



09.30  
Doors open

09.45–11.15  
(Re-)Claiming  
the City

Moderated by Dirk van den Heuvel  
(TU Delft, Het Nieuwe Instituut)

*Observing the Architectural  
Stigma of Ugliness:  
The Cases of Albania and Galicia*  
Maria Novas  
(Universidad de Sevilla),  
Dorina Pllumbi  
(TU Delft)

*Julian Beinart's 'Patterns of  
the Street' and Pancho Guedes's  
'1001 Doors of Caniços':  
Icono-Ethnography in Architectural  
and Urban Research from 1960s Africa*  
Silvia Balzan  
(University of Basel)

*Bridging to Disrupt:  
On Transformative Dialogues and  
Exchanges of Site-Based Interactions*  
Aina Landsverk Hagen  
(Oslo Metropolitan University),  
Jenny Osuldsen  
(Norwegian University of Life Sciences)

*Displaying the Event:  
The Architectures of Pop-Up Urbanisms*  
Pedro Pitarch  
(Polytechnic University of Madrid)

11.15–11.30  
Coffee Break

11.30–12.30  
Intermezzo:  
Archival Interactions

*(Resequencing) The Logic of the  
Tillema Collection*  
Paoletta Holst and Paolo Patelli  
(Research Center for Material Culture,  
Leiden)

*Selections from the Collection*  
Alejandro Campos Uribe  
(TU Delft),  
Suzanne Mulder  
(Het Nieuwe Instituut)

12.30–13.30  
Lunch

13.30–15.30  
Architecture  
and Activism

Moderated by Rohan Varma (TU Delft)

*A Guide for 'Stand-up' Activism:  
Performing a Counter-mapped  
Isometric Drawing*  
Socrates Stratis  
(University of Cyprus)

*Neither Planning nor Improvising:  
Articulação Territorial as a Mode  
of Producing and Caring for the City*  
Bruna Ferreira Montuori  
(Royal College of Arts)

*Connecting to the Archive  
of Weeksville:  
The Pratt Weeksville Archive*  
Jeffrey Hogrefe and Scott Ruff  
(Pratt Institute)

*'Asked (Rather than Observed)':  
Relocating Agency in and through  
Ethnography*  
Ignacio G. Galán  
(Barnard College)

**18.00–19.30**  
**Buffet**

*Building Ethnographies:  
Towards a Decolonial Study of  
Architectures of Indigenous Autonomy*  
Tania Gutierrez-Monroy  
(McGill University)

**19.30–21.00**  
**Keynote Lectures**  
Moderated by Dirk van den Heuvel  
(TU Delft, Het Nieuwe Instituut)

**15.30–16.00**  
**Coffee Break**

*Ethnography in the Hands of Architects*  
Marie Stender  
(Aalborg University)

**16.00–17.30**  
**Architectural  
Representation**

*The Vernacular as Counterimage:  
Why Modernism Needed Ethnography*  
Hilde Heynen  
(KU Leuven)

Moderated by Vanessa Grossman (TU Delft)

*Re-enchantment of the World  
Soviet Modernisms and Durabilities  
of Colonial Pasts*  
Oxana Gourinovitch  
(RWTH Aachen University)

*Santiago Babylon:  
Spaces of Immigration and Sex Work  
in Downtown Santiago de Chile*  
José Abasalo Llaría  
(Universidad Politécnica de Madrid),  
Félix Reigada  
(Universidad de las Américas)

*Popular Refractions:  
Lina Bo Bardi and Marilena Chaui  
at the Crisis of the National-Popular  
in the Re-democratisation of Brazil*  
Frederico Vergueiro Costa  
(University of Campinas)

*Of Tuna and Men:  
Ethnography, Fishing and Architecture*  
Diego Inglez de Souza  
(University of São Paulo)

## Ethnography in the Hands of Architects

Marie Stender (Aalborg University)

There have always been overlapping interests between architecture and ethnography: ethnographers have studied local building techniques, and socio-spatial organisation of villages and longhouses around the world, and architects have sought inspiration in so-called vernacular architecture. Recently the two disciplines have however moved closer, experimenting with new ways of collaborating and combining approaches. Not just in places with 'architecture without architects', but also in the big cities, public spaces, institutions, workplaces and residential neighbourhoods that most architects are more familiar with. They have come together around 'architecture with architects', one could say. The focus of this keynote address is such new ways of combining approaches in these contexts.

Marie Stender is an anthropologist and senior researcher in the Department of the Built Environment at Aalborg University, Denmark. She is the head of the research group Transformation of Housing and Places, the Vice Chairman of the Board at the Danish Town Planning Institute and the founder and project manager of the Nordic Research Network for Architectural Anthropology. Her research focus on architectural anthropology, disadvantaged neighborhoods, urban life, place-making, social sustainability, and the relationship between social life and built environments. Stender has organised PhD courses in Architectural Anthropology and she has edited the new Routledge anthology Architectural Anthropology – Exploring Lived Space. The book prompts architects and anthropologists to think and act together and includes a broad range of examples on how the two disciplines can be combined in new and productive ways.

# The Vernacular as Counterimage: Why Modernism Needed Ethnography

Hilde Heynen (KU Leuven)

In the postwar period, it became increasingly clear that architectural modernism was not really able to charm the masses and to become popularly adopted. Modernist architects blamed commercialism, which embraced kitsch and pseudo-styles rather than the purity of avant-garde aesthetics. Searching for a way out of this dilemma, many architects became interested in vernacular architecture, which they saw as a more authentic version of an 'architecture for the people'. Especially the vernacular of non-industrialised people was of interest to them – hence the need to study this folk culture through ethnography.

Hilde Heynen is a professor of architectural theory at the University of Leuven, Belgium. Her research focuses on issues of modernity, modernism and gender in architecture. In *Architecture and Modernity. A Critique* (MIT Press, 1999) she investigated the relationship between architecture, modernity and dwelling. She also engaged with the intersection between architecture and gender studies, resulting in the volume *Negotiating Domesticity* (co-edited with Gulsum Baydar, Routledge, 2005). She co-edited the 2012 *Sage Handbook of Architectural Theory* (with Greig Crysler and Stephen Cairns). More recently she published an intellectual biography of Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (Bloomsbury, 2019; Sandstein, 2019).

## Conference organising team:

Dirk van den Heuvel  
(convenor of the conference, and  
head of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre)

Fatma Tanis  
(coordinator of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre)  
Sun Ah Hwang  
(student-assistant TU Delft)

## Organising committee TU Delft:

Alejandro Campos Uribe  
Nelson Mota  
Rohan Varma  
Vanessa Grossman

## Academic advisory board:

Tom Avermaete (ETH Zurich)  
Hetty Berens (Het Nieuwe Instituut)  
Maristella Casciato (Getty Research Institute)  
Carola Heir (TU Delft)  
Georg Vrachliotis (TU Delft)

## Graphic design:

Ronja Andersen

# Eighth Annual Conference of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre

Het Nieuwe  
Instituut

architecture  
design  
digital culture



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