

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Academic Year 2020—21
April 2021

INTRODUCTION

Under the auspices of the Graduate School of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment (Delft University of Technology), the Department of Architecture invites PhD dissertation proposals to help expand its doctoral portfolio. We invite all interested academic and/or professional candidates who are qualified to pursue PhD-level research work aligned with the Department's research agenda.

The research program of the Department consists of 10 Research Lines, and offers a rich and challenging environment that provides rewarding research experience. The Department's research program is guided by a group of diverse critically acclaimed scholars, leading professional academics and internationally acknowledged architects (involved as professors of (design) practice). The research program facilitates in-depth, independent research work that relates to the major themes of the research portfolio as well as to its educational activities.

For the new round of PhD candidacies, the Department will accept and consider proposals that will contribute to its existing research portfolio, based on four specific and pre-defined topics. The successful candidates will be expected to contribute innovative, leading-edge research work to the Department of Architecture and its research portfolio.

THE 'X AGENDAS FOR ARCHITECTURE' RESEARCH PROGRAM

Under the heading 'X Agendas for Architecture', the Department of Architecture's research program consists of 10 Research Lines, which are: 'Architecture and the City'; 'Borders & Territories'; 'Situated Architecture'; 'Global Housing'; 'Architecture, Culture and Modernity'; 'Digital Culture'; 'Ecologies of Architecture'; 'History'; 'Architectural Pedagogies' and 'Design Research'. The research carried out by the Department of Architecture distinguishes itself by a focus on architecture as a *cultural field of expertise*, a field in which making and thinking are inextricably linked. The research programme regards the architectural project as the junction where a complex combination of cultural, social, artistic, material, functional, economic and ecological factors is articulated as a concrete spatial proposal. The research groups within the program can be distinguished by their focus on a *particular aspect of architectural expertise* that is relevant in addressing contemporary societal and scientific questions, involving both theory and practice.

PHD PROJECTS

For this round of an Open Call for PhD Proposals, the Department has outlined four research topics, each constituting a potential contribution to its research portfolio.

PhD Trajectory #01,

Design, Regulation and Resilience: The Architecture of Cooperative Housing

The ongoing financialization of housing and the resulting growing socio-economic inequality in European cities calls for political, socio-spatial and aesthetic alternatives for the production and stewardship of housing. One of these alternatives is the social entrepreneurship fundamental to cooperative housing companies. Cooperatives function within a capitalist housing market, yet dedicate themselves to a non-speculative mode of operation. This hybrid nature allows for the high socio-spatial qualities of buildings as well as for cooperatives' self-sustaining financial mode of operation. However, the relation between the political economy that supports cooperative housing and the specific urban and architectural agency of cooperative housing is under-researched.

While historic in orientation, this PhD trajectory seeks to understand the drivers of cooperative initiatives, to articulate the qualities of its aesthetic and economic resilience, and formulate recommendations for their political support. A first research goal is to understand the aesthetic and regulatory resilience of the cooperative model as it emerged and developed during the 20th and 21st century: in other words, the interdependence of the regulatory and financial conditions that sustain it, and the urban model and architectural form through which it materializes. A second goal of this PhD is to understand how and why the financial and regulatory conditions of cooperative housing take effect over several building life-cycles and how that affinity of *longue durée* and the capacity to overcome political and economic upheaval allow for particular types of architectural innovation and socio-spatial qualities. The case studies of this PhD are Amsterdam and Zurich.

METHOD AND APPROACH

To understand the interplay of regulatory conditions and architectural agency over time, this PhD requires a transdisciplinary plurality of research methods drawn from the fields of architectural history, housing governance and urban ethnography. First, the historical inquiry will allow to understand the conditions for the birth of cooperative housing regulation at the beginning of the 20th century in Amsterdam and Zurich and to define key moments of regulatory and societal change over the course of the 20th and 21st century. In a parallel second step, the qualitative social inquiry, urban ethnography and typo-morphological analysis will allow to choose of a series of architectural projects emblematic to those regulatory shifts and societal changes and analyse their socio-spatial qualities. In a third step, a transdisciplinary micro-historical analysis will allow to situate the chosen housing projects within their regulatory conditions over time – and thus, unravel their drivers and modalities of resilience as recommendations for future practice.

The candidate will be supervised by prof. Marja Elsinga and dr. Anne Kockelkorn.



PhD Trajectory #02,

Conflict Mediations

This PhD position is directed at proposals investigating the potential and agency of architectural and artistic representation, achieved through various media tools, to perform a systematic analysis and critique of the spatial conflicts. The position calls for research proposals that will

embrace the media/mediation relation-scape and use it as a method to advance related theory and agency of architectural design, with the particular interest in exposing the dynamics of conflicts and related power hierarchies.

In this sense, the interpretation of the concept of mediation can be extended by focusing on two aspects: (1) mediation as a process of absorbing and internalising conflicts, with the specific aim to make the effects of conflict tangible and the fertile ground for artistic production; and (2) the role of the medium in the general overview of architectural and artistic practices. It is expected then that the research proposals would produce innovative reflections that evolve around the medium with which conflicts are assessed and internalized into architectural and artistic work, for instance by concentrating on film, public sonic space, photography, interactive digital archives, storytelling, etcetera. Thus, mediating stands for making a distinction between different types of media in the process of the artistic internalization of conflicts, taking into account their technical specificities, methods of representation, the ways they engage with the audience, and so on.

The selected PhD project will be a continuation of the ‘CONFLICT MEDIATIONS’ initiative started within the Borders & Territories research group, led by Associate Professor Marc Schoonderbeek, and the “TRANSURBICIDE” research project, led by Assistant Professor Aleksandar Staničić, who will also form the core of the mentor team. The call will favor the following types of research: (1) the investigation of an innovative theoretical construction of architecture developed within the field of media studies; 2) the potential and agency of architectural and artistic production to expose, critique and resolve spatial conflicts; 3) the technicity and operational methods of various media tools; and, 4) the mediating capacity of these tools to engage with various disciplines and empower multiple—and often underrepresented—actors.

The PhD candidate will be supervised by dr. Marc Schoonderbeek and dr. Aleksandar Staničić.



PhD Trajectory #03,

The Business of Architecture

Since the foundation of industrial capitalism architects and their firms have been active participants in a market economy. Beyond state patronage, the practice of architecture has been a business activity as much as a creative and technical process. The intellectual arguments attempting to categorise architectural practice into either art or science over the last two centuries have often overlooked this fact, enabling a false distinction to emerge between the architect’s scholarly and artistic responsibilities, and the less-highly regarded but necessary skills involved in running a practice, such as: financial acumen, knowledge of legal and planning structures, building relationships with clients and developers, and working on site. As a result, the canonical history of architecture has often disregarded the latter in favour of the former, rather than seeing these two facets of practice as symbiotic and mutually influential.

The Architecture, Culture and Modernity research line are seeking PhD candidates investigating historical topics that explore the changing ‘business’ of architecture; namely, the processes, people and products through which architecture practices engage with the systems underpinning a market economy. Founded on case studies from any geographical region, the candidates should propose research projects that deal with (at least) one of the following thematic areas:

Processes: the ways that architecture firms have worked within the legal, financial and political systems that surround architectural practice in a capitalist economy (at any stage in its development), and how these systems influence modes of practice. E.g. the design implications of working within real estate markets; how changing modes of

financing affect design innovations and approaches; the way complex planning systems and legal restrictions have influenced the form and function of architecture firms.

People: the complex interactions between architects, financiers, developers, governments, corporations and clients, and the extent to which these have shifted in the context of different political economic paradigms e.g. within the neoliberal context of private-public partnerships and the lack of a welfare state programme.

Products: the urban, architectural and interior environments and objects that have emerged specifically as a result of, and an instrument of, the advancement of capitalism over the last two centuries. These might include industrial, financial and business centres; commercial architecture (such as office buildings, shopping centres, hotels, etc.); and interior worlds of such structures, such as the design of shops and workplaces.

The PhD candidate will be supervised by prof. Daniel Rosbottom and dr. Amy Thomas.



PhD Trajectory #04,

Governing the Global South: Material and Population Flows of Cold War Era Designs

This call dovetails the research agenda of the ‘Global Housing’ research group, with the Department of Urbanism of the same school. Interested candidates are invited to look upon the design and urbanization governance campaigns in the Global South during the Cold War era, and to reflect on the human and material flows connected to this governance framework, in order to ask the question of how these campaigns and their resulting spatial-material configurations have impacted current urban conditions in the Global South. Key aspects of this period of rapid urban expansion linger on in our time, and must be understood from a historical analysis that could be combined with research methods from disciplinary fields such as sociology, environmental studies, spatial planning, political sciences, and science and technology studies. The research goal is to uncover the anthropogenic impact of this historic wave of urbanization resonating with contemporary issues of equity and sustainability.

While relying extensively on architecture, planning and engineering expertise, Cold War era governance campaigns in the Global South leveraged the scope and technology of these disciplines. Such campaigns were enhanced by either Soviet or US economic aid programs, which relied on a focus on industrial-led expansion in predominantly urban areas of the Global South. This focus put new pressures not only on anthropogenic landscapes, but also on unexplored landscapes of resource extraction. This urbanization wave entailed massive internal population displacements and migrations from poor to rich areas in the affected countries, with the consequent growth of metropolitan areas. How did these campaigns, which redefined the scale of modern architecture, planning and territorial intervention, interact with the governance systems, decolonization processes, and geopolitical strategies of the Cold War? What have been lingering effects of these campaigns in today’s urbanization?

Other than underscoring people flows, a fundamental component of the PhD research project would be to track the flow of building materials, concrete in particular. As a global phenomenon, the concrete industry crucially supported the built-up of national programs of redistribution and welfare in the Global South during this time. A special emphasis on the political and symbolic economy of reinforced concrete, including geopolitical issues of technology transfer, would therefore be of great interest. Selected case studies could potentially examine the fate of cities, landscapes, and natural resources, as well as the very fate of modernism within those intensive building campaigns. They could do so by looking into the conception and evolution of architecture, housing and infrastructure designs driven by geopolitical technology strategy in the Global South.

The PhD candidate will be supervised by dr. Roberto Rocco and dr. Vanessa Grossman.

GENERAL INFORMATION PhD RESEARCH PROJECTS

All four PhD candidates will conduct scholarly research and other related activities. The candidates will be fully integrated into the Department of Architecture's research staff, working closely with the respective members of the Research Lines. Each research group will provide a collaborative platform for gaining extensive experience and skills for independent research work.

The successful candidates must be able to:

- 1) situate the dissertation within the Department of Architecture's research interests;
- 2) illustrate clearly the hypothesis and the theoretical framework the dissertation seeks to explicate;
- 3) demonstrate the proposed dissertation's value and contribution to the existing discourse;
- 4) elaborate on the ambition of the research work.

The PhD track will commence with academic hospitality for an 18 months period, with a Go No Go review after 12 months. The review panel of both external and internal jurors will evaluate the research work for its scientific quality and will evaluate the development of the candidate. When both aspects are deemed satisfactory, the track will be extended for an additional period of 2,5 years. We expect completion of a PhD thesis in approximately four years in total. The Department of Architecture's will appoint the promoter, co-promoter as well as daily supervisor (as indicated in this brief). Please note that TU Delft does not provide financial support and that the candidate has to demonstrate the availability of funding to sustain her/himself during the PhD research. However, the Department of Architecture, in cooperation with the faculty's Graduate School and Valorisation Centre, will fully and actively support applications of accepted candidates with respect to external funding.

All specific conditions will be determined according to the TU Delft's Doctorate Regulations and the Graduate School rules, to be found on:

<https://www.tudelft.nl/bk/onderzoek/graduate-school-a-be/>

Additional Graduate School requirements are described online:

<https://www.tudelft.nl/en/education/programmes/phd/fees-and-funding/>

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Cover letter (one A4 or US Letter page)

The applicant should elaborate on the personal motivations, interests, and aspirations behind pursuing a PhD degree and describe the qualifications. The applicant should explicitly argue how the proposal is closely aligned with the Department's research interests. Specify the area of focus and elaborate on how the applicant's research proposal pertains to this area.

Full CV

The CV should contain comprehensive chronological information on your academic and professional experience, as well as any pertinent record of publication. (Do not include any information prior to the first year of your university-level education.)

The CV should also include the names and contact information of three referents or recommenders. Also mention in which capacity they are familiar with your qualifications and capabilities (e.g. teacher, employer, colleague, etc.). Do not enclose any letters of reference or recommendation in the proposal package. We will contact your referents/recommenders directly.

Research Précis

The précis should include the following:

I. **Provisional Title:** this should form a general introduction to the project, framing it conceptually and/or thematically.

II. **Abstract:** Short summary (300-500 words), including keywords.

III. **Question(s)/Hypothesis, Aims and Goals:** Clearly and succinctly spell out the question(s) or hypothesis that drive your research and carefully articulate the aims and ambitions of your proposed study.

IV. **Preliminary outline:** describe the overall intended structure of the PhD research and explain how it will address your question(s)/hypothesis.

V. **Disciplinary Approach:** Introduce your research methodology and position it in its larger disciplinary (or cross/or inter/or trans-disciplinary) framework.

VI. **Research significance:** Explain why this research is relevant and original, and explain its overall contribution to the discourse of architecture. In addition, carefully position the proposed research within the framework of the B&T research program.

VII. **Preliminary Annotated Bibliography:** Distinguish primary and secondary literature.

VIII. **Addendum:** (e.g. letter of Motivation, portfolio-type information) This can include anything you find relevant to advancing a clear picture of yourself as a potential PhD candidate – an example might be a published text.

Document Length: The first draft research should be limited to +/- 2500 words (exclusive bibliography & addendum).

SUBMISSION SPECIFICATIONS

All the above-mentioned items must be consolidated in one PDF file of no more than 30 pages and 20 MB. Please name the PDF file as: *Lastname_keyword.pdf* (e.g. Smith_Neomodern.pdf).

SUBMISSION

The deadline for submission is 1 June 2021, 12PM.

QUESTIONS & PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

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Research Nestor of the Department of Architecture

SELECTION PROCESS

The senior members of the research program and representatives of the departmental research council will first screen the proposals for qualification. After the initial screening, the reviewers will assemble a short list of candidates and invite them for a presentation. Based on the results, the involved research staff and a representative of the departmental research council will decide whether they will accept the selected candidate as a PhD or not. In certain cases, the Department of Architecture may ask the candidate to answer additional questions and revise the proposal for a follow-up meeting before a decision is made.

SCHEDULE

Invitation:	10 April 2021
Submission:	01 June 2021
Interview and Presentation:	16 June 2021
Notification of Acceptance:	23 June 2021
Start of Research Work:	September 2021 (subject to meeting our GS requirements)
Go/NoGo Review:	September 2022
Completion:	September 2025

WEB:

For further information on the Department of Architecture's research program:
<https://www.tudelft.nl/bk/onderzoek/onderzoek-bij-bouwkunde/architecture>

For further information about the Graduate School A+BE:
<http://phd.bk.tudelft.nl/>