
Public PhD-defence 24.11.2023

Marcus Tang Merit defends the dissertation
Coordinating Inclusive Future Public Spaces in Architecture

The defence takes place the 24. November, at 10:00 in Aud. 5., Building 53, Philip de Langes Allé, 1435 København K
Zoom access: <https://kglakademi.zoom.us/j/64114290730>



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Agenda

- 10:00 Welcome and presentation of chairperson, Assessment Committee, supervisor and author
- 10:05 Marcus Tang Merit presents the dissertation
Coordinating Inclusive Future Public Spaces in Architecture
- 10:50 Short break
According to the 'Ministerial Order on the PhD Course of Study and the PhD Degree' the chairperson may invite the audience to contribute with short statements. Such intentions should be addressed to the chair of the Assessment Committee during the break.
- 11:00 Jeremy Myerson, Professor emeritus, The Royal College Art, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Kensington Gore, South Kensington, London, UK
- 11:30 Ole B. Jensen, Professor, Aalborg University, Centre for Mobility and Urban Studies, Aalborg, Denmark
- 12:00 Katrine Lotz, Associate professor, Institute of Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape, Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape, Copenhagen, Denmark (Chair of Assessment Committee)
- 12:30 Comments from the auditorium
The Assessment Committee evaluates and makes the concluding remarks

Assessment Committee

- Jeremy Myerson Professor emeritus, The Royal College Art, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Kensington Gore, South Kensington, London, UK
- Ole B. Jensen Professor, Centre for Mobility and Urban Studies, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark
- Katrine Lotz Associate professor, Institute of Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape, Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation. Copenhagen, Denmark
(Chair of Assessment Committee)

Principal Supervisor

- Jonna Majgaard Krarup Professor, Institute of Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape, Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation, Copenhagen, Denmark

The thesis is available to look through for interested persons at Royal Danish Academy Library, Danneskiold-Samsøes Allé 50, 1434 Copenhagen K.

Summary

Futures are a foundational part of our society as we are constantly confronted with utopian, mundane, and dystopian ideas about what might happen tomorrow or 100 years from now. Despite this, the field of sociological research which interests itself with futures is sparse and thinly spread, and no previous research has attempted to empirically address the role of futures in everyday architectural design processes. Futures, however, play an integral part of the architectural profession as practitioners are constantly imagining and disseminating a myriad of spatial futures to various stakeholders and publics. This has sparked the interest of this project which is to investigate how architects coordinate between multiple imagined futures in their design processes.

Related to this interest, the futures constructed by architecture strongly influences how we imagine the development of cities and public spaces. This begs the question of whose futures are being imagined, and who gets to inhabit such future public spaces. In Denmark a quarter of the population lives with a minor or major physical disability. Therefore, this dissertation is furthermore interested in understanding how this group of people are included by architects their design processes.

The dissertation is based on three journal articles. Methodologically and empirically, the dissertation is based on participatory ethnographic studies conducted at the office of Gottlieb Paludan Architects throughout the three years of the PhD project. Theoretically actor-network theory and anthropological studies of architectural design practices are central to the dissertation.

Article 1 is based on a qualitative interview study of 15 randomly selected Danish landscape architectural offices. It employs a grounded theory analysis to explore how Danish landscape architects understand and work with accessibility. The article furthermore explores how informants perceive of disabled users' spatial experiences, the importance of building regulations, and the social responsibilities of architecture.

Article 2 is based on ethnographic participatory fieldwork at Gottlieb Paludan Architects. Drawing on actor-network theory the article analyses the different types of presence, and lack thereof, which physically disabled users had in the design processes for a new concourse area for Ny Ellebjerg Station in Copenhagen. The article symmetrically engages with the human and non-human actors of architectural design processes and focuses on architectural devices' role in such processes.

Article 3 is based on the same empirical material as article 2. The article introduced a different focus, by asking how architects made use of flow studies, as a specific type of architectural device, to coordinate with the project client about the future of the Ny Ellebjerg Station concourse. Furthermore, the article analyses the inclusion and user representation of flow studies, and how this affected how architects at Gottlieb Paludan Architects chose to make use of the flow studies.

The dissertation bases many of its conclusions on the importance and analyses of architectural devices, which represent the many types of visual and tactile objects, drawings, illustrations, and visualizations which architects construct and employ in their design processes. Such devices are found to play a pivotal part in architects' ability to successfully coordinate the future of a project with external stakeholders. The dissertation furthermore finds that physically disabled users are currently present in design processes through architectural devices which focus almost exclusively on building regulations and other demands. Due to the importance of architectural devices, the dissertation therefore concludes that new types of architectural devices need to be constructed by architects to promote the coordination of inclusive future public spaces.

Dansk resumé

Fremtidsvisioner er et grundlæggende element i vores samfund og vi konfronteres konstant med utopiske, hverdagslige, eller dystopiske ideer om, hvad der kan ske i morgen eller om 100 år. På trods af dette er det sparsomt med sociologisk forskning der interesserer sig for fremtiden, og ingen hidtidig forskning har forsøgt sig med empiriske studier af fremtidens rolle i arkitektoniske designprocesser. Ikke desto mindre spiller fremtider en essentiel del af arkitektfaget, da praktiserende arkitekter konstant fremstiller og formidler et utal af fremtider for offentligheden og forskellige interessenter. Grundvidenskabeligt er dette projekt derfor interesseret i hvordan arkitekter koordinerer imellem forskellige fremtidsforestillinger i deres designprocesser.

I relation hertil, så influerer arkitektoniske fremtidsvisioner hvordan vi forestiller os udviklingen af byer og offentlige rum. Dette rejser et spørgsmål om hvis fremtidsvisioner man faktisk forestiller sig og hvem der inkluderes i sådanne fremtidige offentlige rum. I Danmark lever en fjerdedel af befolkningen med en mindre eller større fysisk funktionsnedsættelse. I forlængelse heraf er denne afhandling interesseret i at forstå, hvordan denne gruppe af personer bliver inkluderet i arkitekters designprocesser.

Afhandlingen er baseret på tre videnskabelige artikler. Metodisk og empirisk er afhandlingen baseret på et etnografiske studie foretaget på Gottlieb Paludan Architects kontor over ph.d.-projektets treårige periode. Teoretisk er afhandlingen inspireret af aktør-netværksteorien og tidligere antropologiske studier af arkitekters designprocesser.

Artikel 1 er baseret på en kvalitativ interviewundersøgelse af 15 tilfældigt udvalgte danske landskabsarkitektkontorer. Den anvender en grounded theory analyse til at undersøge, hvordan danske landskabsarkitekter forstår og arbejder med tilgængelighed. Artiklen undersøger yderligere, hvordan informanter opfatter funktionsnedsatte brugeres rumlige oplevelser, bygningsreglementet, og arkitekturens sociale ansvar.

Artikel 2 er baseret på et etnografisk feltstudie hos Gottlieb Paludan Architects. Med udgangspunkt i en udvidelse af Ny Ellebjerg Station og aktør-netværksteorien, analyserer artiklen tilstedeværelsen, eller mangel herpå, af fysisk funktionsnedsatte personer i arkitektoniske designprocesser. Metodisk forholder artiklen sig symmetrisk til de menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige aktører i designprocessen samt den rolle som arkitektoniske devices spiller heri.

Artikel 3 er baseret på det samme empiriske materiale som artikel 2. Artiklen introducerede et andet fokus ved at undersøge, hvordan arkitekter brugte flowstudier, som en specifik type arkitektonisk device, til at koordinere fremtiden for Ny Ellebjerg Station med kunden. Endvidere analyserer artiklen flowstudiers inklusion og repræsentativitet, og hvordan disse aspekter af flowstudierne påvirkede arkitekternes brug af flowstudierne.

Afhandlingen baserer mange af sine konklusioner på den centrale betydning af arkitektoniske devices. Sådanne devices repræsenterer de forskelligartede visuelle og taktile objekter, tegninger og visualiseringer, som arkitekter konstruerer og anvender i deres designprocesser. Sådanne devices har vist sig at spille en central rolle i arkitekters evne til at koordinere fremtiden for et projekt med eksterne interessenter. Afhandlingen finder endvidere, at fysisk handicappede brugere i øjeblikket er til stede i designprocesser gennem arkitektoniske devices, som næsten udelukkende fokuserer på bygningsreglementer og andre juridiske krav. Grundet betydningen af arkitektoniske devices konkluderer afhandlingen, at nye typer arkitektoniske devices skal konstrueres af arkitekter for bedre at fremme koordineringen af fremtidige inkluderende offentlige byrum.

