

**Space, language & cognition:
Perspectives on architecture and urban design**

9.11.2021, ZHAW Winterthur



Call for Papers

Space has always been an obsession for architecture, not least how to conceptualize and to express it in language to non-architects. While there is no doubt that the discipline of architecture is based on the production of space, discord exists on what architectural/urban space is and what qualities are associated to it; on how it can be designed and how it could/should be perceived. Architects are specialists on space, but their knowledge is more tacit in form and hard to communicate by words. While architects' discourse has been rather circular and self-contained, and the gained knowledge partially obliterated by the many changes of style and interests of architectural discourse, cognitive sciences and in particular cognitive linguistics have brought forward in the last decades a huge number of studies on the spatial nature of our thinking and of language. These findings have only seldomly been discussed by architects and are still encountered with suspicion by the latter, not least because of their tendency to quantify this knowledge and experience. While architects want to speak about quality, the sciences here seem rather to talk about quantitative analyses.

With this conference we aim to discuss with experts from the fields of cognitive sciences how space can be conceptualized and communicated, and how these findings can be integrated into architecture and its teaching. This calls for a bridge between architecture and the cognitive sciences and for the question how this bridge should span between the two shores and on a secular spatial "void".

The morning session will be dedicated to language and to how human beings conceptualize space through their expressions. Based on the relationship of thought and language, space plays the role of a mediator between these two, as both are built upon space and the localization of human beings in space. Particular attention will be dedicated to metaphors as these are mediating elements often used in architecture and urban design, to communicate ideas, intentions but also spatial situation but also important triggers for creativity.

The afternoon session will be dedicated to spatial cognition and architecture. How can spatial cognition be applied in architectural research? What methods exist to tie the disciplines together? The focus will be on interdisciplinary methods related to spatial thinking.

Program:

Morning, Space & language

Johannes Binotto (HSLU)
Rosario Caballero Rodríguez (UCLM)
Heiko Hausendorf (UZH)
Thora Tenbrink (Bangor University)

Moderation: Andri Gerber (ZHAW)

Afternoon, Spatial cognition

Ruth Dalton (Lancaster University)
Kerstin Sailer (University College London)
Sofia Psarra (University College London)
Christoph Hölscher (ETH Zürich)

Moderation: Beatrix Emo (ZHAW)

Two speaker-positions will be selected through an open call. Interested scholars can apply by sending a one-page abstract and a short CV by the 15.9.2021 to the following email address: spacelanguageandcognition@zhaw.ch.

Organization: Beatrix Emo, Andri Gerber, Institute Urban Landscape, ZHAW Winterthur