Originally developed in linguistics, the structuralist approach was introduced as a scientific method in anthropology and other human sciences in the 1950s and later. In the 1960s and 70s the double category of primary and secondary structure (language and parole) that is essential to Structuralism, in which the primary structure's system of rules determines how the secondary elements are placed in relation to one another, also advanced to a leading ideology in the field of architecture and urban planning. From its development in Holland and within the Team 10 circle of architects, Structuralism in architecture quickly spread worldwide. Almost all the step-by-step movements of the 1960s can be related to Structuralism, and in retrospect many research projects and theoretical approaches from this period can be characterized as structuralist. Although initially aimed at developing more humane environmental structures, the primary structure's system of rules determines how the secondary elements are placed in relation to one another, also advanced to a leading ideology in architecture.

Since the early 1990s we have been witnessing a revival of structuralist tendencies in architecture. In a parallel development, interest in the stepwise aspects of the structuralist currents of the 1960s has also increased. Whereas the Structuralism of the 1970s emphasized limits to complexity that were insurmountable at the time, today there is much to suggest that the return to this apparently unfinished project is causally connected to information technology, which has opened up new possibilities for dealing with complexity. There is talk of Neo-Structuralism. The digital impact of this is enormous, with its huge increase of complexity in the primary structures: away from simple grids to complex, irregular structures, with algorithmic design far exceeding the horizons of the old Structuralism. The question arises as to whether primary and secondary structures should be understood today as being in a state of complex interactions with one another which could be described through algorithms.

This further development and the current interest in design methods based on rules (ARCH+ 189) makes structuralism today one of the most productive and comprehensive approaches for the organization and design of the built environment. At the same time it provides the systemic and meta-theoretical background for all disciplines involved in the production of space. In its digital reappearance however, structuralism often shows a naïve, technocratic belief in progress and feasibility in as much as it claims to be able to solve the demands for individualization in a mass society solely by numerical methods of planning and production technology.

Today’s digital Structuralism will probably only be able to bring us closer to the solution of the still unresolved issue of housing a mass society while simultaneously respecting man’s individuality if there is also a utopian synthesis of all relevant aspects, including psychological, social and socio-political. The question of the sustainability of the structuralist approach in the future will probably boil down to whether its humanization (its individuality) will be sought within the system (i.e. in the course of perfecting the numerical-technological mastery of the composition), or whether system-independent elements can be drawn upon for solving the problem.

Tomáš Valena
Thursday 19 Nov 09

13.00 Registration
14.00 Introduction Prof Dr Tomáš Valena (HM Munich)

Section 1
Structuralism and Architecture
14.40 Ruth Baumeister / Prof Dr Herman van Bergeijk Discovery of the Driving Forces behind Dutch Structuralism Prof Dr Joaquim Medin Wombarg 9.30 Intersecting Topologies and Structuralism: Foundational Questions and Methodologies Dr Assael Al-Regan Explorations in Built-Building: Kuwait Urban Critique Anna Koskonnor Verstaalführung von Architekten: Freie Universität Berlin 1963-1976 15.50 Coffee break

16.20 Dr Michael Hecker Structure / Structural Proinstanz und Merkmale der ‘strukturalistischen’ Stimmung der kursiv markierten Prägung in Westdeutschland Prof Dr Andri Gerber 17.00 Dr Georgs Teyssot Freie Universität Berlin 1963-1979

19.00 Chair: Special guest: Bernhard Langer Arnulf Lüchinger (Haymarket)

Friday 20 Nov 09


12.30 Andjaj Hrausky Structuralism in Slovenia Dr Drs. 13.30 Dr Istvan Szosi Letakusural és Megjelenés special guest: Prof Dr Daniil Stahl (HM Munich)

15.30 Coffee break

16.40 Public lectures Structuralism Reloaded! Prof Dr Hermin Hertzberger (Amsterdam) Open Systems Prof Wimj Mevius (Mevius Rotterdam) Plug-in Prof Dr Jorg Clausen (TU Bozen) structural, material, digital Zum strukturnalistischen Denken in der Architektur 18.30 Round table with the speakers Chair: Nikolaus Kuhnert (ARCH +)

Saturday 21 Nov 09

9.00 Registration
10.00 Section 2 – Neo-Structuralism with a Digital Character Prof Fabian Schwartz (Zurich) Algorithmic Design – Werkzeug oder Weltbild? Dr Reinhard Albig Generalizing Planar Methods kon-Strukturalistische Werkzeuge im 21. Jahrhundert Prof Ulrich Binderhaus Parametrische Entscheidungsprozesse im Stadtwesen 11.10 Coffee break


12.30 Prof Bernd Krusel / Prof Christopher Dell Vom Panoptikum nach der digitalen Welt: Vom Rhythmus der Tipps und Tricks als Zukunft des Stimmungsstrukturalismus Markus Stengel Der strukturalistische Ansatz und die Raumstadt Schwebende Städte für eine globalisierte Gesellschaft 12.30 Lunch

14.00 Prof Bernd Kniess / Prof Christopher Dell Vom Panoptikum nach der digitalen Welt: Vom Rhythmus der Tipps und Tricks als Zukunft des Stimmungsstrukturalismus Markus Stengel Der strukturalistische Ansatz und die Raumstadt Schwebende Städte für eine globalisierte Gesellschaft 12.30 Lunch

15.30 Chair: Dr. Georg von Hutsch (ETH Zurich)

16.40 Round table with the speakers of the section 2 Special guest: Prof Daniil Stahl (HM Munich)

18.00 Coffee break

18.10 Public lectures Structuralism Reloaded! Prof Dr Hermin Hertzberger (Amsterdam) Open Systems Prof Wimj Mevius (Mevius Rotterdam) Plug-in Prof Dr Jorg Clausen (TU Bozen) structural, material, digital Zum strukturnalistischen Denken in der Architektur 18.30 Round table with the speakers Chair: Nikolaus Kuhnert (ARCH +)

Saturday 22 Nov 09

9.00 Registration
10.00 Section 3 – Neo-Structuralism with a Digital Character Keynote Prof Dr Doris Thut (HM Munich)

11.10 Lunch

12.50 Lunch

13.30 Prof Bernd Kniess / Prof Christopher Dell Vom Panoptikum nach der digitalen Welt: Vom Rhythmus der Tipps und Tricks als Zukunft des Stimmungsstrukturalismus Markus Stengel Der strukturalistische Ansatz und die Raumstadt Schwebende Städte für eine globalisierte Gesellschaft 12.30 Lunch

14.00 Prof Bernd Kniess / Prof Christopher Dell Vom Panoptikum nach der digitalen Welt: Vom Rhythmus der Tipps und Tricks als Zukunft des Stimmungsstrukturalismus Markus Stengel Der strukturalistische Ansatz und die Raumstadt Schwebende Städte für eine globalisierte Gesellschaft 12.30 Lunch

15.30 Chair: Dr. Georg von Hutsch (ETH Zurich)

16.40 Round table with the speakers of the section 3 Special guest: Prof Daniil Stahl (HM Munich)

18.00 Coffee break

18.10 Public lectures Structuralism Reloaded! Prof Dr Hermin Hertzberger (Amsterdam) Open Systems Prof Wimj Mevius (Mevius Rotterdam) Plug-in Prof Dr Jorg Clausen (TU Bozen) structural, material, digital Zum strukturnalistischen Denken in der Architektur 18.30 Round table with the speakers Chair: Nikolaus Kuhnert (ARCH +)

19.00 Symposium fee Early bird (until 5 Nov 2009) Regular: 60 € whole symposium (incl.: 2 x lunch, drinks and booklet) 55 € half day 30 € one day Reduced (students and partner institutions with verification) 50 € whole symposium (incl.: 2 x lunch, drinks and booklet) Labor registration 40 € whole symposium 35 € half day 20 € one day