

Species of Theses and Other Pieces

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Issue Editors

Meike Schalk, Torsten Lange, Andreas Putz,
Tijana Stevanović, Elena Markus

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This journal is published bianually (in spring and autumn) and printed editions are available for annual subscription directly from the publisher. The retail price for an annual subscription to the print issue incl. shipment within Germany is 75,00 € and for international purchases 85,00 €. The electronic version is available free of charge (Open Access).

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Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.de>

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Dimensions. Journal of Architectural Knowledge

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The initial funding to this journal is provided by the Department of Architecture at the TUM School of Engineering and Design in Munich, Germany. Additional funding for this issue is provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Free State of Bavaria under the Excellence Strategy of the Federal Government and the Länder, as well as by the Technical University of Munich – Institute for Advanced Study.

First published by 2022 transcript Verlag, Bielefeld

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Cover layout: Uta Graff, Technical University of Munich

Copy-editing: Elena Markus, Technical University of Munich

Proofreading: Lisa Goodrum, London

Typeset: Fabius Kossack (Studio Fabius Kossack), Berlin

Printed by Majuskel Medienproduktion GmbH, Wetzlar

ISSN 2747-5085

eISSN 2747-5093

Print-ISBN 978-3-8376-5920-7

PDF-ISBN 978-3-8394-5920-1

Printed on permanent acid-free text paper.

Editorial

Meike Schalk, Torsten Lange, Andreas Putz, Tijana Stevanović, Elena Markus


This issue entitled »Species of Theses and Other Pieces« is concerned with practice-oriented research. It responds to the growing interest in questions concerning architectural practice and the forms of representation that such research efforts can take. The issue began with the international doctoral workshop »Approaching Research Practice in Architecture: Five Questions« on October 8–9, 2020, followed by five further course modules for early career researchers between December 2020 and April 2021, and consequently concluded with this publication.

For this issue, consisting of 21 contributions, we have invited the participants and guest speakers from the course to contribute works about or for, and reflections through, a format; meaning a genre, form, style, media, or mode of representation for practice-oriented research and its implication for knowledge creation in architecture. With practice-oriented research we approach the broad field of artistic research, research by design, practice-based and practice-led approaches, research through practice, mixed-mode research, and broadly, practice-oriented methods and methodologies that have come to enter long-established architectural research areas such as history and theory, heritage studies, technology, and urban and rural studies among others.

The international doctoral workshop that began the program was a joint venture between the BauHow5 Alliance¹ and ResArc, the Swedish research school in architecture. We are indebted to Martin Luce and Yolande Schnei-

¹ BauHow5 Partners are The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment of the University College London, the School of Architecture of Chalmers University of Technology, the Department of Architecture of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, the

Corresponding authors: Meike Schalk (Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden/Technical University of Munich - Institute for Advanced Study, Germany), Torsten Lange (Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland), Andreas Putz, Elena Markus (Technical University of Munich, Germany), Tijana Stevanović (Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden); meike.schalk@arch.kth.se; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1744-6776>; torsten.lange@hslu.ch; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5737-0876>; putz@tum.de; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7612-9893>; elena.markus@tum.de; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6119-4270>; tijana.stevanovic@arch.kth.se; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0697-846X>

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der of TU Munich, and Frank van der Hoeven of TU Delft for inspiring the idea for an open digital platform for doctoral education, which was launched by the partners and offered to all interested research students in architecture across institutions and national borders. This initiative fell precisely at the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and made the program a useful and desirable opportunity for doctoral students to meet once a month for two days online to exchange research and connect. Following this, not only did doctoral researchers from the partner universities sign up, but so did participants from other institutions in Europe, South Africa, Syria, and Lebanon. This broadened geographical reach was particularly valuable for us to expand and diversify our range of topics, methods, and methodology, and our view on the histories, theories, and ways of regarding research ethics.

»Approaching Research Practice: Five Questions« was organized online at TUM with keynote addresses from the faculty of the partner universities and a guest. It included talks by Isabelle Doucet (CTH) on »Thinking and Writing Through Practices«, Momoyo Kaijima (ETHZ) on »Architectural Ethnography«, Jane Rendell (UCL) on »Practicing Ethics«, and Bryony Roberts (WIP – Work in Progress | Women in Practice design collective, New York) on »Expanding Modes of Practice«. Participants were asked to address one or more of the five research questions that all pointed at a component that theses traditionally develop, such as:

- A research interest: What do I want to know and why?
- Paths for learning: What do I need to know to pursue my research?
- Practical knowledge: What do I know through my practice and experience?
- Knowledge in a field: What is already known about my topic?
- Relevance: What would the effects of my intervention be?

The five research questions posed to everyone at the beginning of the doctoral program were repeatedly addressed in each module. The answers to these questions are implicitly provided by the authors in the resultant essays.

We wish to thank all of the amazing presenters and the chairs of the eight workshop sessions: Ute Besenecker; Irina Davidovici; Dietrich Erben; Janina Gosseye; Carola Hein; Tanja Herdt; Jonathan Hill; Ulrika Karlsson; Emma

Nilsson; Christina Pech; Barbara Penner; Hilde Remoy; Amy Thomas, and Miloš N. Mladenović for his input into the participant-organized session on mobility, as well as the panelists in the concluding conversation on current doctoral research: Benedikt Boucsein; Isabelle Doucet; Jonathan Hill; Hannah Le Roux; Sophia Psarra, and Alain Thierstein.

The conference was the first module of the doctoral program, followed by a second module on methods using the example of oral history, with talks by Janina Gosseye, Hannah Le Roux, and Jennifer Mack; module three was on histories of research by design with Ole W. Fischer, Jonathan Hill, and Helena Mattsson; module four was on theoretical positionings with Tom Avermaate, Hélène Frichot, and Peg Rawes, module five was on ethics with Nishat Awan, Aya Musmar, and David Roberts, and module six was on modes of representation of practice-oriented research with readings of distinguished dissertations by Martin Ávila, Emma Cheadle, Nicholas Drofiak, and Mohamad Hafeda, and discussions with the authors.

The research training program and this resulting publication was made possible through the TUM Department of Architecture, KTH ABE School and School of Architecture, and above all through the generous support of the TUM Institute for Advanced Study's Anna Boyksen Fellowship. Thank you!²

This issue would not have been at all possible without the invaluable advice of colleagues: Matthias Ballestrem; Anders Bergström; Camillo Boano; Katarina Bonnevier; Benedikt Boucsein; Marianna Charitonidou; Emma Cheadle; Kathrin Dörfler; Isabelle Doucet; Dietrich Erben; Catharina Gabrielsson; Katja Grillner; Susanne Hauser; Klaske Havik; Maria Hellström Reimer; Sophie Hochhäusl; Ebba Högström; Janna Holmstedt; Heidi Kajita Svenningsen; Irene Kelly; Behzad Khosravi Noori; David Kiss; Daniel Koch; Elke Krasny; Mona Livholts; Daniel Lohmann; Ferdinand Ludwig; Charlotte Malterre-Barthes; Helena Mattsson; Ramia Mazé; Anna-Maria Meister; Torsten Meyer; Kryzstof Nawratek; Anna Maria Orrù; Julieanna Preston; Sophia Psarra; Patrícia Joao Reis; Karin Reisinger; Svava Riesto; Jonas Runberger; Gabrielle Schaad; Susanne Schindler; Gerhard Schubert; Rainer Schützeichel; Dubravka Sekulić; Jan Silberberger; Erik Stenberg; Alain Thierstein; Taguhi Torosyan; Stephanie van der Voorde; Christiane Weber;

² Thank you also to the focus group around the Anna Boyksen Fellowship »Rethinking Patterns of (In)equity and Diversity in Architecture« including the chairs and professorships of Benedikt Boucsein (host), Dietrich Erben, and Uta Graff at TUM, and Paula-Irene Villa Braslavsky at Ludwig Maximilian University, in Munich.

Ines Weizman; Stefanie Wuschitz; Malin Zimm, and Daniel Zwangleitner. Great thanks to you all! Last and not least we thank *Dimensions. Journal of Architectural Knowledge's* main editors, Uta Graff, Ferdinand Ludwig, and Katharina Voigt for their patience!