5TH INTERNATIONAL PHD SEMINAR

Urbanism & Urbanization | Leuven 1-3 October 2009

Transcending the discipline. Urbanism & Urbanization as receptors of multiple practices, discourses and realities

<u>Call for papers</u>

The international U&U seminar invites PhD work which addresses the discipline of urbanism, and encourages contributions that highlight its trans-disciplinary nature. Urbanism is grounded in various practices, discourses and realities with respect to the city. The seminar will focus on multiple approaches – from historic enquiry to project-led analysis – and cover a wide range of spaces and scales – from territories to neighborhoods, from landscapes to cityscapes. The seminar seeks contributions that address innovative practices or research and [re]define urbanism as a trans-disciplinary field.

The increasing importance of territorial urbanization processes has added new analytical techniques to the vocabulary of urbanism, including a [re]new[ed] focus on landscape. Likewise, infrastructure has reappeared as a primary dimension of urbanism, due to the increasing importance of networks in structuring the territory. Nodes in the network are strategic locations for urban projects. Both dimensions, landscape and infrastructure, continue to gain importance. World-wide, recent socio-economic and ecological transformations bring sustainability and environmental concerns to the fore. Such issues as the management of natural resources and water, new patterns and modes of mobility all necessitate the trans-disciplinary repositioning of urbanism.

Furthermore, urbanism requires a [re]positioning vis-à-vis its historical Western biases. Urbanism is more and more informed by anthropological or sociological approaches in general and by postcolonial theory in particular. As many parts of the world are presently embroiled in the process of urbanization and modernization, the discipline needs to think through alternative modes of urbanization and non-western paths of modernization.

This plurality of the process of modernization is not limited to the non-western context. New narratives make visible 'other modern traditions' within which infrastructure, housing, real estate development, business location, agriculture, governance, material culture, technology, rather than architecture or urbanism per se, are the leading agents in the urbanization process. Models and concepts used in these disciplines convey alternative views on urbanity, urban form or regional development that further [re]define urbanisms trans-disciplinary character.

The importance of landscape and infrastructure and the impact of 'other' traditions and contexts on urbanism and urbanization are but a few examples of how urbanism as a discipline continuously acts as a receptor of new practices and discourses, adapting to ever-changing urban realities. This edition of the U&U seminar aims to draw the contours of this trans-disciplinary repositioning of urbanism, transcending accepted definitions.

Contributions will be organized in thematic sessions and workshops with dedicated respondents. Invited speakers will address key issues and themes in the trans-disciplinary repositioning of urbanism. The first confirmed keynote speaker is prof. Antoine Picon of Harvard University Graduate School of Design. A selection of seminar contributions will be published as a theme issue of the 'Urban Fascicles OSA' publication series. Therefore, there is a preference for previously unpublished material.

<u>Abstract guidelines</u>

Contributions reflecting on the seminar theme and/or related subthemes are welcome. Send an abstract of 400 words maximum by email to: <u>uu@asro.kuleuven.be</u> before 3 April 2009. For additional information, see <u>www.uu2009.be</u>.

Please include the following information:
Full name, affiliation, e-mail-address, thesis supervisor, approximate date for thesis defense.
Indicate if you intend to submit a full paper (4000-8000 words) or a shorter workshop paper (typically for researchers in the early stages of their PhD discussing research question, thesis set up).