Rethinking site as field, field notes, observations and practices

Citation for published version:

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):
10.1017/S1359135512000073

Link:
Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer

Document Version:
Early version, also known as pre-print

Published In:
Architecture Research Quarterly

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Aiming to introduce some key issues of field-work: what is the 'field'? Comment on nature of academic conference as an experience. Learning from the field.

The keynote speakers at the November 2009 conference had collectively and in dialogue during the two days, enabled a deeper focus of this "work": of practice, secretion, openness, limit, hybridity, reconstitution, adjacency, documentary from Columbia. The lingering register of Alan’s presentation set the subsequent keynote presentation up as an unexpectedly rich dialogue, where questions blurred into the beginning of Can Altay’s contribution. Can, an architect based in Turkey, who works across the boundaries of architecture, art, urbanism, practice, and research, is an explorer of spatial practices, and acts as what he has termed, a spatial anthropologist. The responsive discussion with Alan was focused on the idea of tools and practices in the urban context, of working with the overlooked and understanding the generative potential of a carefully crafted observational output which might activate and perhaps change some aspect of the complex condition of the contemporary, contested public urban domain. He described his aims as exploring limits, tools and methodologies of existing modes and traditions of practice in the city.

The opening presentation of a conference has capacity to act as an intellectual and ethical compass. Andrea Kahn, Founding Principal of consulting practice, designCONTENT, New York, and adjunct Professor of Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Columbia University, delivered this and set a clear tone which established some critical direction in the opening conference lecture of Field/Work. While revising her particular work as a contribution editor of the journal Matters: Design Concepts, Historical Strategies and genealogies (with Carol Brinton, 1995), she traced the on how we apprehend site, how we delineate boundaries, how we understand identity, scale, site, and actions of and as site construction. The critical motif that she offered and elicited was from John Dewey’s work, quoting and revisiting, “Thinking as a kind of the activities of the mind.” This observed and centered the conference’s described intentions: perhaps a tangled question, a saturated, thick concept which might be in danger of leading to a thin discourse if basic questions are overlooked. With rich seminars, and text and visual questions, what are the values that guide us? What values guide site and fieldwork activity in art of Architecture, or even define and discipline the disciplinary field? To what end and by whose benefit are these activities undertaken?

One starting point in the summary plenary session was to recall the origin of the conference theme and the articulation of the field/work activity in and of Architecture, or even defining field work? The lingering of constructed images through sound and voice are achieved with a close and practised relationship with particular tools - the microphone, recording equipment, and an implicit relationship with the subject: person and place. Oral fieldwork is a slow, yet open process, and an opening up of questions of storage of the gathered material, and the openness of dissemination resonated with Andrea’s opening question of the ethics of benefit and one. The lingering spirit of Alan’s presentation on the subsequent keynote presentation was an unexpectedly rich dialogue, where questions burned into the beginning of Can Altay’s contribution. Can, an architect based in Turkey, who works across the boundaries of architecture, urbanism, practice, and research, is an explorer of spatial practices, and acts as what he has termed, a spatial anthropologist. The responsive discussion with Alan was focused on the idea of tools and practices in the urban context, of working with the overlooked and understanding the generative potential of a carefully crafted observational output which might activate and perhaps change some aspect of the complex condition of the contemporary, contested public urban domain. He described his aims as exploring limits, tools and methodologies of existing modes and traditions of practice in the city.

The keynote speakers at the November 2009 conference had collectively and in dialogue during the two days, enabled a deeper focus of this "work": of practice, secretion, openness, limit, hybridity, reconstitution, adjacency, documentary from Columbia. The lingering register of Alan’s presentation set the subsequent keynote presentation up as an unexpectedly rich dialogue, where questions blurred into the beginning of Can Altay’s contribution. Can, an architect based in Turkey, who works across the boundaries of architecture, art, urbanism, practice, and research, is an explorer of spatial practices, and acts as what he has termed, a spatial anthropologist. The responsive discussion with Alan was focused on the idea of tools and practices in the urban context, of working with the overlooked and understanding the generative potential of a carefully crafted observational output which might activate and perhaps change some aspect of the complex condition of the contemporary, contested public urban domain. He described his aims as exploring limits, tools and methodologies of existing modes and traditions of practice in the city.

The opening presentation of a conference has capacity to act as an intellectual and ethical compass. Andrea Kahn, Founding Principal of consulting practice, designCONTENT, New York, and adjunct Professor of Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Columbia University, delivered this and set a clear tone which established some critical direction in the opening conference lecture of Field/Work. While revising her particular work as a contribution editor of the journal Matters: Design Concepts, Historical Strategies and genealogies (with Carol Brinton, 1995), she traced the on how we apprehend site, how we delineate boundaries, how we understand identity, scale, site, and actions of and as site construction. The critical motif that she offered and elicited was from John Dewey’s work, quoting and revisiting, “Thinking as a kind of the activities of the mind.” This observed and centered the conference’s described intentions: perhaps a tangled question, a saturated, thick concept which might be in danger of leading to a thin discourse if basic questions are overlooked. With rich seminars, and text and visual questions, what are the values that guide us? What values guide site and fieldwork activity in art of Architecture, or even define and discipline the disciplinary field? To what end and by whose benefit are these activities undertaken?

The keynote speakers at the November 2009 conference had collectively and in dialogue during the two days, enabled a deeper focus of this "work": of practice, secretion, openness, limit, hybridity, reconstitution, adjacency, documentary from Columbia. The lingering register of Alan’s presentation set the subsequent keynote presentation up as an unexpectedly rich dialogue, where questions blurred into the beginning of Can Altay’s contribution. Can, an architect based in Turkey, who works across the boundaries of architecture, art, urbanism, practice, and research, is an explorer of spatial practices, and acts as what he has termed, a spatial anthropologist. The responsive discussion with Alan was focused on the idea of tools and practices in the urban context, of working with the overlooked and understanding the generative potential of a carefully crafted observational output which might activate and perhaps change some aspect of the complex condition of the contemporary, contested public urban domain. He described his aims as exploring limits, tools and methodologies of existing modes and traditions of practice in the city.

The keynote speakers at the November 2009 conference had collectively and in dialogue during the two days, enabled a deeper focus of this "work": of practice, secretion, openness, limit, hybridity, reconstitution, adjacency, documentary from Columbia. The lingering register of Alan’s presentation set the subsequent keynote presentation up as an unexpectedly rich dialogue, where questions blurred into the beginning of Can Altay’s contribution. Can, an architect based in Turkey, who works across the boundaries of architecture, art, urbanism, practice, and research, is an explorer of spatial practices, and acts as what he has termed, a spatial anthropologist. The responsive discussion with Alan was focused on the idea of tools and practices in the urban context, of working with the overlooked and understanding the generative potential of a carefully crafted observational output which might activate and perhaps change some aspect of the complex condition of the contemporary, contested public urban domain. He described his aims as exploring limits, tools and methodologies of existing modes and traditions of practice in the city.