



Practices In Research

practice-based research journal for architecture

Explorations & Cartographies

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In Practice



In Practice explores the multiple ways in which architects can engage their professional practice in academic research and reciprocally.

In Practice seeks to open a space for architecture practices in research through the development of methodologies, conferences and publications.

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INTRODUCTION

Explorations & Cartographies

Practices in Research (PiR) is a series of online open access double-blind peer-reviewed publications and research seminars and conferences for practice based research in architecture and related disciplines.

PiR explores the ways in which these practices engage or relate to research. It addresses the mechanisms and the frameworks that confer consistence and coherence to a practice. PiR provides a space for practices to interrogate the world, and for the world to interrogate the practices in return.

For PiR, the practice is thus never reduced to being the simplistic illustration of a theory. PiR aims at research in which the practice is essential as a subject (practice-based), as a modality (practice-led) or as a sounding board (bridging practice and research). The contributions are expected to stay in very close contact with the practice. Inversely, they are not limited to the presentation or documentation of a practice. The contributions take a step beyond the practice in the way they present, explore, reveal a question or reflection in the field of architecture.

PiR also searches for creative forms of communication, questioning the dominating hierarchy between text and image. In the framework of PiR, visual and written narrations can relate to each other in multiple ways. Images can be more than illustrations, and text can be more than an explanation. Hence, the provided template is to be considered as a toolbox or set of rules, which can be used creatively.

Explorations and Cartographies

1580s, «to investigate, examine,» a back-formation from exploration, or else from French explorer (16c.), from Latin explorare «investigate, search out, examine, explore,» said to be originally a hunters' term meaning «set up a loud cry,» from ex «out» (see ex-) + plorare «to weep, cry.» Compare deplore. De Vaan notes modern sources that consider «the ancient explanation, ... that the verb explorare originally meant 'to scout the hunting area for game by means of shouting'» to be «not unlikely.» Second element also is explained as «to make to flow,» from pluere «to flow.» Meaning «to go to a country or place in quest of discoveries» is first attested 1610s.

(Source : www.etymonline.com)

“Cartography, the art and science of graphically representing a geographical area, usually on a flat surface such as a map or chart. It may involve the superimposition of political, cultural, or other nongeographical divisions onto the representation of a geographical area.”

(source : www.brittanica.com)

This journal contains selected and double-blind peer reviewed articles by authors who contributed to the *Practices in Research* conference that was held at CIVA in Brussels on October 27th 2021. For the conference, they were invited to participate to either one of the two following tracks.

Explorations was open to any proposal by the contributors, following the ambitions of PiR#02 – *Tour d’Horizon* (published in May 2021). As the etymology suggests, exploration may be a process of discovery which is fueled by expression (*plorare*), addressing the inquiry of forms of communication. Exploration may also be about the unveiling of inner dispositions and mechanics (*pluere*). This is about close observation, articulations, and in-depth reflection.

Cartographies was an invitation to investigate the practices and the related research as a territory. Reflection on architectural practices is often carried from the outside: the realized works and available material are seen as an autonomous given, subject to interpretation and speculation. When considering things from the inside, however, things appear differently for several reasons.

First, an architectural practice is a loosely defined field consisting of and embedded in a network of actions, reflections, urgencies, interests, and observations, which are difficult to trace from the outside. The practice is motivated by exhibitions, books, travels, muses, theories, and references. Parallel practices play a role too. Exploring the

boundaries of such a field is a welcome step towards a state of affairs, somehow similar to a practice's state of the art.

Second, architectural designs relate to other projects inside the same practice, to thoughts, to theories. A genealogy is to be traced: familiarities, influences, differences, articulations, antagonisms, and juxtapositions. This can happen from the outside, by the observation of the available objects and documentation, or from the inside from the point of view of the designer.

Third, and this is maybe something happening on another level, the modalities of the interactions between theory and practice in the research and the practice can also be traced in these field. This is maybe about overlaps, distinctions, methods, subjects, strategies.

The space of a practice, as a comprehensive and multiple whole, can be considered as a temporal geography. According to Ptolemy, geography is “a representation in pictures of the whole known world together with the phenomena which are contained therein.” As practices develop through time, temporality is probably a necessary dimension of such geography.

For *Cartographies*, contributors were invited to provide a visual representation of their practice as a whole. These representations were expected to be given the form of a document or container supporting the diversity of its content. This content is made of projects, references, experiences, readings, and in general anything relevant

to the practice. The cartographic nature of the document reveals the genealogies, the relationships, the ruptures. The format itself was flat and unitary, as the idea is to enable the contemplation of the practice as a simultaneous whole. The dimensions however are free: it could be 118,9 x 84,1 cm or 6 x 6 m or even 0.30 x 15 m.

The conference consisted of a series of short presentations followed by a moderated debate with the participants and panel members.

After the conference, the editorial committee invited the contributors to develop their abstract to be published in the third issue of *Practices in Research* following a double-blind peer reviewing process. Each contribution was reviewed by two members of the scientific committee of invited experts. Anonymity¹ was strictly maintained and all information in the paper that identifies the author was removed. The anonymity of the reviewers was also ensured. The reviewers investigate the scientific rigor, the artistic quality, and the clarity of communication of the contribution. The reviews also included an open comment on the contribution.

Following this review process, five contributions out of ten were approved for publication. They are the work of practicing architects who are teaching or researching at five different institutions.

1 The editorial board acknowledges that the work of the involved practices may benefit from public recognition in the professional or cultural field through prizes, exhibitions, lectures, etc. The anonymity of the contribution does not address the practice itself but the authors of the contribution



Illustration from the call for contributions
"L'Ermitage", BE, AHA - © Aurélie Hachez Architectes, 2018

Thibaut Barrault and Cyril Pressacco are teaching at EAV&T Paris Est and ENSA Normandie, while being the partners of the architecture office Barrault-Pressacco in Paris. Their work reflects their in-depth interest for extremely refined yet low-tech construction methods, addressing materials such as natural stone and hempcrete.

Floris De Bruyn, Philippe De Berlangeer and Frederick Verschueren are the partners of GAFPA architecture office. Floris is teaching at KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture and researching at KU Leuven Department of Architecture. Their contribution addresses “primary structures”, their architecture design studio, which relates closely and expands the topics at the heart of their practice at GAFPA.

Salvator-John Liotta is a partner of the architecture office Laps Architecture in Paris. He teaches and researches at ULB Faculty of Architecture La Cambre-Horta. His contribution reflects on the experimental and reflexive nature of a series of smaller scale pavilion projects inside the office, in the midst of the constraints inherent to larger scale projects.

Virginie Pigeon is a landscape architect, partner of Pigeon Ochej landscape architecture office. She is teaching and researching at ULiège Faculty of Architecture and currently in the final stage of her PhD. Her research embraces creative and operational cartographic techniques, which relate to history and theory of cartography and are simultaneously grounded in her practice as a landscape architect.

Stijn Cools is a partner of aNNo architecture office. He is teaching at KU Leuven Faculty of Engineering Sciences and researching at KU Leuven Department of Architecture. aNNo challenges the conservation approach of heritage and historic sites. The contribution focuses on one specific project and unfolds the practice as a whole in a rigorous cartographic (or archaeological) way.

Additionally, two participants of the conference in the *Cartographies* track were invited directly by the editors to publish a mostly visual account of their contribution to the conference (no peer review), because of the originality of its format.

Els Van Meerbeeck, who is teaching at KU Leuven Faculty of Engineering Sciences and researching at KU Leuven Department of Architecture, is a partner of the architecture office Carton123. She created an animated hand drawing exploring and identifying the space of the architecture office Carton123 with the mental space of their designing practice.

Tom Finch is a partner of the architecture office Morales Finch. He presented an exhibition of posters, books, artworks, references and extracts from his practice at Morales Finch. The exhibition and his presentation invited to consider a designing practice grounded in the consciousness of its intrinsically unfinished nature and its entanglement with a rich referential universe oscillating between architecture, art and industrial design.

We want to thank the authors of the journal, the contributors to the conference and the members of the Scientific Committee for their committed participation. Both conference and journal are forming a dynamic platform of exchange for a network of practicing architects who are either academic or professional researchers, and who share a genuine interest for the critical investigation of the discipline and the positive curiosity for its diversity.

The editors

Benoît Vandebulcke, Harold Fallon and Benoît Burquel



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