

Keynote 3

Monday 9th November, 11.45 - 12.15

Building a culture of doctoral scholarship in architecture and design - A Belgian-Scandinavian case**Professor Halina Dunin-Woyseth**

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Dr. Halina Dunin-Woyseth is an architect and professor at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO). She is also professor at Sint-Lucas School of Architecture in Brussels, and Chair of The Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås. Since 1990 she has been the founding head of AHO's Doctoral Programme with over 40 Scandinavian and international PhD students. The Programme is opened to PhD students recruited from various "making" professions such as artists, designers, architects, planners, art and design educators and engineers. Her professional, teaching and research experience originated in Urban Design and Spatial Planning-related issues.

She has a broad teaching and research practice from Scandinavia and other countries. During the recent decade she has been mainly involved in issues of knowledge in the design professions. Since 1991 she has edited and co-edited the journal *Research Magazine*, which documents the development of this field of inquiry in the context of vocational and research education.

She has lectured extensively at the doctoral level and supervised PhD students in Norway and abroad. She has successfully served as a main doctoral supervisor for many PhD students as well as been external examiner at numerous public doctoral disputations in Norway and abroad. She has been commissioned as an evaluator by several research councils in Scandinavia and has also experience from assessing EU-funded research.

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Dr. Fredrik Nilsson, architect SAR/MSA, professor of Architectural Theory at Department for Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden. Nilsson is also Director of Research and Development at the architectural office White Arkitekter AB, and professor at Sint-Lucas School of Architecture, Brussels. He has taught and lectured at several of the schools for architecture and design in the Nordic countries, and written on especially contemporary architecture, architectural theory and the relation to philosophy.

Nilsson has studied the implementation of different philosophies in contemporary architectural practice with a special interest in the interaction between conceptual, theoretical thinking and practical design work. Later research also along two main lines: one focused on architectural knowledge, design theory and theory of science discussing the possibilities of producing knowledge through architectural practice; the other focused on implications of new technology for the practice and production of architecture as well as for the conceptual thinking in architecture.

The objective of this paper is to present how a strongly practice oriented school of architecture in Belgium has tackled the challenges of the European policies for establishing a doctoral level in the years 2006-2009. Some top-down activities of formal research education and some bottom-up initiatives by the PhD students and tutors will be presented and discussed. These developments can indicate that a new practice-based scholarship, initiated by the doctoral studies, is emerging at this institution.

The Bologna-Berlin policies recognized doctoral studies as the third cycle in European higher education. For Sint-Lucas School of Architecture it has meant to develop a new culture, a culture of research and doctoral scholarship. The intentions of the school were to develop experimental, practice-based concepts for this research. The process, started in spring 2006, built on four Research Training Sessions (RTS) intended to help primarily younger teachers without any research experience to define their research interests, based on their double practice as professionals and teachers of architecture. Furthermore, it was expected that their doctoral studies would be commenced based on a research proposal defined during the RTS series.

The authors, both with extensive experience from Scandinavian research education in architecture, spatial planning and design, and from research in the professional fields, were requested to develop one of the four RTSes. This RTS is called Forms & Processes of Knowledge and "...focuses on different forms of knowledge and how these forms originate. There is a specific focus on the forms of knowledge present in the domain of architecture and design, put in relation to other kinds of knowledge. Established modes and notions of scientific knowledge are discussed together with other ways of knowledge production" (1). Subsequently, they were offered positions as guest professors with responsibility to provide supervision to participants of the sessions. The RTS represents a meta-level of the research education, while the micro-level is being constituted by various forms of mentoring, like the traditional doctoral supervision of one PhD student by one supervisor, as well as the peer-learning in assignments and collaborations between PhD students.

The authors developed, besides "their own" RTS, an autonomous research education unit within the curriculum, since we through our collective learning process identified a need

to build a meta-level for the pedagogical concept. While the macro- and micro- levels rely on the traditional pedagogy of lectures and supervision in the doctoral studies, the meta-level is based on the assumption that in order to become an innovative researcher within post-academic sciences, (which practice-based research is a representative of) a young researcher should first strengthen their identity and master the craft of the traditional research (2) (3). In every profession its craft is constituted by certain professional skills and by critical attitude to quality of the professional results. Thus we offered to the doctoral students a series of workshops in "Scholarly Craft & Criticism". These workshops included assignments, presentations and critical discussions on e.g. recent doctoral theses, phases and requirements for producing a dissertation, research design of their projects, and philosophy of science for architects.

In April 2009 eight RTS-alumni, now doctoral students enrolled at various European institutions, organized a seminar documenting their growing epistemological awareness regarding practice-based doctoral scholarship. The seminar witnessed emergence of a community of research practice with potential to initiate a new profession-based scholarship.

The paper will present and discuss this autonomous research education unit within the emerging doctoral curriculum of the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture. It will also describe how the practice-based PhD students recognized the role of this unit in the process of their growing epistemological awareness and maturing as prospective design scholars. These presentations will be based on observations and documentations from research training activities during the four years of the RTS program (4), as well as the seminar held in April 2009 and on another one to be held in September 2009. The PhD students will through their assignments elaborate on whether and eventually how the research pedagogical assumption has proved to be adequate for their own learning process.

The value of this paper is the positioning of an epistemological-pedagogical stance with regard to research education for practitioners. Some opinions hold that practice-based researchers do not need epistemological and scholarly foundations in order to pursue practice-oriented research, and there are research educational programs with aims to "avoid verbal theorising or credential-seeking through reference to texts from other disciplines". (5) Our stance is that practice-based PhD students should be introduced to and trained in certain generic research skills. By that the professional doctorate will be trained

to contextualise and position their research as well as to be communicative and innovative in a broad professional field.

References

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2. Michael Gibbons et al., *The New Production of Knowledge. The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 149.
3. John Ziman, *Real Science. What It Is, and What It Means*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
4. See Halina Dunin-Woyseth & Fredrik Nilsson, "Thinking, Doing, Writing, Researching – The Brussels experiments in forms and processes of knowledge" in *Reflections +3. Research Training Sessions 2006*, ed. Nel Janssens et al. (Brussel-Gent: Sint-Lucas Architectuur, 2006); Halina Dunin-Woyseth & Fredrik Nilsson, "Some notes on practice-based architectural design research: Four 'arrows' of knowledge", in *Reflections +7. Research Training Sessions 2007*, ed. Arnaud Hendrickx et al. (Brussel-Gent: Sint-Lucas Architectuur, 2008); Halina Dunin-Woyseth & Fredrik Nilsson, "Visual thinking as bridge building – Testing a pedagogical concept, drawing some new insights", in *Reflections +9. Research Training Sessions 2008*, ed. Sarah Martens et al. (Brussel-Gent: Sint-Lucas Architectuur, 2009).
5. "RMIT Architecture - Reflective Practice Postgraduate Program", http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/Research/Invited_Postgrad.php (accessed June 29, 2009)