

Transcending Architecture: Aesthetics and Ethics of the Numinous

Interdisciplinary Symposium, **6-8 October 2011**

School of Architecture and Planning

The Catholic University of America

www.sacred-space.net/symposium

Overview

Architecture is called to do a lot more than to guarantee the public health, safety and welfare of building users. In fact, the promise of architecture begins fulfillment when such expectations have been met *and* transcended. At its highest, architecture has the ability to turn geometric proportions into shivers, stone into tears, rituals into revelation, light into grace, space into contemplation, and time into divine presence. A transcending architecture disappears in the very act of delivering us into the awesome and timeless nonspace of the holy. Louis Kahn called it the 'immeasurable', Le Corbusier the 'ineffable', and Rudolf Otto the 'numinous'.

In an age obsessed with speed, consumerism, technology, immediacy, and quantity, an architecture that transcends constitutes a radical and risky act of love and compassion born out of a spiritual and cultural awakening. By providing us with a respite, such environments afford us the rare opportunity to re-discover our bearings and, in so doing, frame our existential condition within the larger matters of life and the divine. If there was a time when such an architecture was necessary, it is undoubtedly today!

This symposium will thus consider the aesthetics and ethics that move us from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the profane to the sacred. Far from avoiding the charged issues of subjectivity, culture and intangibility, we will examine the phenomenological, symbolic, and designerly ways in which the holy gets fixed and transmitted through architecture. A remarkable group of presenters will provide attendees with ample opportunities for intellectual, spiritual, and professional growth.

AIA CE credits will be available for partial or full symposium attendance.

Speakers

Confirmed speakers include (organized by last name in alphabetical order):

Thomas Barrie, AIA (Architecture, North Carolina State University)

Karla Britton (Architecture, Yale University)

Michael Crosbie, AIA (Editor, Faith & Form)

Karsten Harries (Philosophy, Yale University)

Lindsay Jones (Center for the Study of Religion, Ohio State University)

Rebeca Krinke (Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota)

Juhani Pallasmaa, Honorary FAIA (Pallasmaa Architects, Helsinki, Finland)

Travis Price, AIA (Travis Price Architects)

Suzane Reatig, FAIA (Suzane Reatig Architecture)

Kevin Seasoltz (Theology, Saint John's School of Theology-Seminary)

Maged Senbel (Community and Regional Planning, Univ of British Columbia)
Michael Sheridan (Social Work, Catholic University of America)
Duncan G. Stroik (Duncan G. Stroik Architect)
Sue Ann Taylor (Anthropology, American University)
Richard S. Vosko, Honorary AIA (Richard S. Vosko Consultants)
Thomas Walton (Architecture, US General Services Administration)
Mark E. Wedig (Theology/Liturgy, Barry University)

Preliminary Schedule (as of 7/18/2011)

Thursday 6 October	
4:00	Reception/Registration opens
6:00	Karla Britton <i>Dwelling and the Indeterminate</i>
7:30	Symposium Reception
Friday 7 October	
8:30	Reception/Registration opens
9:30	Rebecca Krinke <i>Intending, Restoring, Transforming: Investigating Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation</i>
11:00	Short Break
11:15	Kevin Seasoltz TBD
1:00	Lunch Break
2:30	Architecture Panel <i>Creating the Numinous: The Transcendent Role of Architecture and the Arts</i>
	Michael Crosbie (chair)
	Travis Price
	Suzane Reatig
	Duncan Stroik
	Richard Vosko
4:30	Break
5:45	Thomas Walton <i>Reflections</i>
6:00	Juhani Pallasmaa <i>The Sacred in Architecture</i>
7:30	School Reception
Saturday 8 October	
8:30	Reception/Registration opens
9:30	Maged Senbel <i>Transcending Excess Through Spiritual Praxis: From Bioregional To Reverential Urbanism</i>
11:00	Short Break
11:15	Lindsay Jones <i>Architectural Catalysts to Contemplation: Unexplored Alliances between Ancient Monuments and Religious Sensibilities</i>
1:00	Lunch Break
2:30	Ton Barrie <i>The Domestic and the Numinous in Sacred Architecture</i>
4:00	Short Break
4:15	Interdisciplinary Panel
	(chair)
	Michael Sheridan
	Sue Ann Taylor
	Mark E. Wedig
5:45	Short Break
6:00	Karsten Harries <i>Transcending Aesthetics: Architecture and the Sacred</i>
7:30	Parting words

Registration

All those interested in attending the symposium are welcome to do so *free of charge*. However, given the large number of people that are expected to participate, symposium attendees are *required* to register in order to guarantee seat accommodation.

In order to register, please email us your **full name, affiliation, and symposium time-blocks** (i.e., *Thursday PM, Friday or Saturday and AM and/or PM block, keynote lecture(s), or full program*) you are planning to attend. Please, submit a request for only those periods when you are really going to be present. We will process requests on a first come first serve basis until space is gone, starting on **June 20, 2011**.

Address your registration request to Symposium director Julio Bermudez at bermudez@cua.edu We will issue you an e-registration document that will grant you access to the auditorium during the event.

Note: **AIA CE credits** will be available for partial or full symposium participation

Venue

Transcending Architecture is a symposium organized and hosted by the School of Architecture and Planning and supported in part by the Walton Fund for studies of sacred space in architecture. It will take place CROUGH Hall on The Catholic University of America campus in Washington DC. CUA is located in the north-east of the District of Columbia and easily accessible by car or metro (red line stop: Brookland-CUA). Despite of being in an urban environment, the CUA campus has a peaceful atmosphere with plenty of space, green lawns, manicured vegetation and flowers, beautiful old and new buildings, and the remarkable Basilica of the National Shrine, a center of pilgrimage for Catholics.

The symposium is one of the events celebrating the 100th anniversary of the architecture program at CUA, one of the oldest in the United States. Since the lectures will be at the comfortable Koubek auditorium and receptions held in other places within the architecture building, attendees will have a chance to see the School of Architecture and Planning in full activity. We expect that students and faculty from the school and around campus will attend this event.

Early October is a great place to be in Washington, DC. Foliage colors are beginning to turn yet temperatures remain mild: low 70s during the day and 50s at night. We are not recommending any particular accommodations for people coming from out of town. The DC area has a large and varied supply of places to stay. Easy metro and driving access to the CUA campus allows for a very large number of hotel choices.

Contact Information

For specific information or issues not covered in the website, address your inquiry to Symposium director

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Thank you for your interest. We hope you plan to join us in October!

Thanks to

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