

# GENEROSITY

An international conference to be held at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, Wales, UK, from 27-29 June 2018

GENEROSITY is associated with the act of giving or sharing more than is necessary, with gifting, with bravery, with notions of a benefactor and a recipient, and with a quality of being plentiful or expansive. From an architectural perspective, interpretations are many and various. Alberto Pérez-Gómez writes of *poiesis* in architecture as 'signifying the sort of technical making proper to humans: a poetic making in the sense that it always aimed at *more* than preserving life.' Eileen Grey is more explicit, stating that 'a house is not a machine-à-habiter. It is man's [...] continuation, his spreading out, his spiritual emanation.' George Bataille, meanwhile, suggests that 'everything conspires to obscure the basic movement that tends to restore wealth to its function, to gift-giving, to squandering without reciprocation...'

From a stance of celebrating and questioning architecture's potential for generosity, this call for papers invites academics and creative practitioners to explore ways in which architecture aspires to, or may be expected to, give more than is necessary. This could be considered within the current economic context of austerity or within the broader historic context of a discipline often working in frameworks focused on cost and quantitative measurement. Reflections are welcomed which critically examine themes of GENEROSITY as related to architecture and related fields, whether they be from a conceptual or theoretical position, embedded in everyday processes and expectations of practice, or from considerations of procurement, regulation, and policy. Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

## Generosity and Delight

Architects have long argued that good design demands qualitative as well as quantitative appreciation, and goes beyond the scale of a space or materials specifications etc. With time, attitudes to measuring value and good practice are re-articulated and new forms of generosity arise. This theme calls for papers that explore how the concept of generosity is achieved and how it changes in the built environment, whether this be through an exploration of new forms of communicative value, design of ornament, or other, alternative means of measuring such a construct.

## Generosity and Procurement

The Artistic Directors for the 16th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice (2018) have announced that the festival will be concerned with 'generosity, thoughtfulness and a desire to engage'. Meanwhile, the British Council call for proposals (2017) questioned: "How can British architecture demonstrate 'generosity and thoughtfulness' towards its users, citizens and the public?" If the state of the built environment is governed by developer' appetites and procurement processes, how might generosity be better embedded in the commissioning, delivery or ownership of architecture and public space?

## Generosity and Participation

In the vacuum of public sector inactivity, architects (among others) have been called upon to support community-led development, regeneration and invention. Such projects often follow unconventional programmes, and redefine the role of the architect – as facilitator, mediator or advisor. Papers are invited which critique the opportunities, risks and implications of generosity in co-production and participatory design.

## Generosity of Spirit

Architecture is regularly criticised for being elitist, and overly focussed on a tiny fraction of the global population. Architects like Dominic Stevens and Alejandro Aravena have exploited the facility to share open-access information over the internet, providing housing designs or templates as freely available, open-source resources. While it is unclear what impact these 'gifts' will have on the global housing crisis, they are indicative of a generosity of spirit that has potential to reach the furthest corners of the planet. We invite papers that explore issues of ownership in design, or that identify and evaluate architecture or designers working outside of established boundaries or conventional definitions.

## Generation Generosity

Against a backdrop of socio-political uncertainty, many young practitioners are responding directly to civic and social issues through self-initiated projects and research. Debates around architectural education, the value of practice based learning and the impact of tuition fees have contributed to a surge in self-directed projects amongst young practitioners. Such projects are often nimble, independently instigated and exploratory. We invite papers from postgraduates, young creative practitioners, tutors, and early career academics, to celebrate ideas that represent communality, reciprocal care and giving.

## Confirmed keynote speakers are:

**Professor Martin Bressani**, Sir William C. MacDonald Chair and Director of McGill University's School of Architecture, Montreal

**Daisy Froud**  
Architects of Change (AOC), London, UK

**Alastair Parvin**  
Co-founder of WikiHouse Foundation, and a member of strategic design group 00

**Dr Chris L. Smith**  
Associate Professor in Architectural Design and Technê, University of Sydney

**Nathalie Weadick**  
Director, Irish Architecture Foundation

**Opening address at drinks reception; Sophie Howe** Wales' Future Generations Commissioner for The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, with opening remarks from AM Vaughan Gething

**Abstracts of 300 words** for a 20 minute presentation, a 3-minute film, or a workshop are invited on any topic related to themes of Generosity in architecture or related fields, and should be submitted for refereeing by **15 January 2018** to the email [generosity@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:generosity@cardiff.ac.uk), using the template provided on the website. We invite contributions from academics and creative practitioners. Authors will be notified of selection by 12 February 2018. Following previous WSA conference publications *Primitive*, *Quality*, and *Economy*, we aim to publish an edited book of selected papers following the conference as well as a selection of papers in the Cambridge University Press journal *Architecture Research Quarterly*.

A drinks reception will be held at the Senedd, Cardiff Bay, on the night of Wednesday 27 June and a conference dinner on Thursday 28 June. These will be included in the conference fee of £295 sterling. A reduced fee of £260 applies if payment is received by 31 March 2018.

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Generosity is the fourth in a series of academic conferences held at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University, following *Primitive*, *Quality* and *Economy*, and is organised by Dr Mhairi McVicar, Dr Ed Green, Dr Charles Drozynski, Michael Corr, Professor Stephen Kite, and Zoe Berman. For more information, contact **Helen Monks** at [generosity@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:generosity@cardiff.ac.uk). 300 word abstracts should be submitted by **15 January 2018** to [generosity@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:generosity@cardiff.ac.uk) using the template on the website. Registration will open on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and additional information can be found on the conference website <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/conferences/generosity>