SUMMARY OF ASAE 2009
-Communicating Architecture -

The participants of the ASAE09 are some of the leading names within contemporary architecture that have great influence in various fields of culture and society.
Many of them are teaching at world-leading schools and also run their own successful practices.
Their opinions are internationally highly respected and also intriguing, creative and avant-garde, and therefore an important part of this year's symposium.
ASAE 2009 brought up the importance of how to communicate architecture today.
The series of inspiring lectures and discussions focused on innovative ways of communicating architecture to the public, the responsibility of an architect to communicate his/hers work using the new medias that exists today.
The panel members came from many different fields, architects, designers, bloggers and journalists, and they all had one interest in common: the field of architecture
Discussions within a panel consisting of people from different backgrounds brought on various aspects on this theme, but everybody agreed on one thing: The importance of how to choose new medias in the future, how to keep up with a evolving world of media, and how to rethink our ways of communicating architecture today.

Following the previous years' seminar discussions concerning the relation between architecture and communication, the ASAE 09 was about structures of a series of questions:
-How do we communicate the built product?
-How can we communicate differently within office/school/to the public?
-What means of communication do we use?
-How do we use new medias?
- What are the risks and advantages of the trend towards a more visual system of communication?

The panel consisted of:
Professor Sir Peter Cook
Professor Thom Mayne
Professor Hernan Diaz Alonso
Professor Florencia Pita
Professor Odile Decq
Professor Drura Parrish
Journalist and chief editor Daniel Golling
Arch. Megumi Matsubara
Journalist Geoff Manaugh
Professor David Garcia
Professor Abelardo Gonzalez

Moderator: Arch. Morten Lund

Summary of the lectures
The symposium was opened with a speech by Anders Axelsson who gave a brief introduction to the history of the university and also spoke about the much anticipated and hopefully aspiring future of the architecture school, made possible by Professor Abelardo Gonzalez and his broad network of friends and colleagues from all over the world. Professor Abelardo Gonzalez then introduced the theme of ASAE09 and spoke briefly about how Architecture now is communicated through a wider range of media than ever. He also emphasized the essential work by the people behind the media and architects' role in this matter. He then presented the upcoming lectures for the two following days.

As a co-founder and arranger of the ASAE since 2003 and with an experience of almost half a decade of architecture, Professor Sir Peter Cook initiated the symposium and set the standard of further discussions. He stresses the fact that we as architects need to see us as communicators and consider what we want to express with our architecture.
Sir Peter Cook argued that exhibitions are excellent as a way of communicating. They make the architect more free to experiment and set the ambience and concept. If the presentation sets the standard and spirit, how do we really want to present it then?
He clearly demonstrated this matter by showing a short film of one of his own work, Soak City, from CRAB-Studio, where he sets up a scenario of a possible future. In this way he questions the society,

reflects and sets a concept quite clear in a way that any viewer can understand and take a stand, a very interesting example regarding the subject.

Next in line was the architect and artist Megumi Matsubara. She is a former student of Prof. Sir Peter Cook and founder of With Assistant, an interdisciplinary studio in Tokyo, and is known for her experimental architecture beyond norms and limitations. As her own projects many times deal with the questioning of what is architecture/art and what is not. Questioning concept and abstraction, the importance to control the communication is of even more importance.
She brought up a discussion of alternative ways of expressing architecture and art, and new ways of seeing architecture. Through installations, poetry and getting people to interact in her projects she's expressing her ideas and questions on architecture.

Professor Odile Decq is the principal of École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris, and runs her own office ODBC together with Benoit Cornette. She showed some projects from the last couple of years and spoke about the relationship between the human body and the object/structure.

Professor David Garcia continued the discussion by showing own examples of innovative ways of presenting architecture and reaching out to readers with less experience of architecture.
His MAP-project is an information-folder of specific projects, presented as a map, in a humorous and intelligent way. Since it is only released in stores a few times a year, it is almost like an event, something to collect and read wherever, whenever, however, letting you think over and analyze in your own speed. It takes architecture out of its exclusive and conservative shell, and brings it to the streets and bookstores, available in a democratic way to the public.

Geoff Manaugh, founder of BLDGBLOG (Building Blog), spoke about the great importance and influence that blogs has in today's society. What Geoff Manaugh focused on is the development of the 21st century's new media forms, and how they influence our society and architecture. With an interest in architecture and design and a blog that has received great response among architects and others. With a successful blog he represents a new generation of communicating architecture, design and politics. Not only is he a fulltime blog-journalist, but has also held workshops at architecture schools about communicating architecture in new ways, for example through spreading flyers, filmmaking etc. He represents a new generation and gives a new way of making architecture accessible.

Professor Thom Mayne spoke about his studio, Morphosis, and how they successfully have communicated their avant-garde, bounder breaking architecture. As a member of the Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and founder of SCI-ARC, he is well aware of the importance of how to communicate avant-garde architecture. He stressed the fact that it is difficult to convince people of experimental architecture, and because of that we need to learn how to communicate it even more clearly and convincingly to prove that it is and can be built as the architecture of today's society.

Following the path of experimental architecture, Professor Hernan Diaz Alonso, founder of the award-winning studio Xefirotarch, is one of the most influential architects in the area of avant-garde architecture today. He showed some of the projects (that he proudly describes as grotesque) from his studio, and continued arguing the fact that it is architecture. He is working a lot with animation and active architecture, which sometimes is criticised as unrealistic. We should rather ask ourselves what is and who decides what architecture is?

Professor Florencia Pita is teaching at SCI-ARC and is the founder of FPmod. She works within the field of architecture, industrial design, furniture design, and jewellery design. Florencia Pita showed her recent installation with inspiration from Alice in Wonderland. With new digital tools and the effect of ornamentation and images she presented an installation of organic forms and brought up the essence of ornamentation in architecture.

Professor Drura Parrish chose to explain the course of a project, from concept to built project, and how the communication between all parts within a project is organized. As the architect needs to communicate within many different areas and professions during the process, it is essential to know the role of all participants, and how to communicate with these to be able to get a finished result.

Journalist and chief editor of Forum Aid, Daniel Golling, spoke about the role of the journalist in architecture. He spoke about the relationship between journalists and architects and the need to improve it to achieve a good environment for both parts. He stressed the great public interest, but also

that the lack of information from architects themselves obstructs the possibilities to understand the news and progress within architecture today.

Conclusion of the panel discussion
In the following discussion moderated by Morten Lund, the topic of innovative ways of communicating was brought up. Many agreed that the digital revolution has changed the premises of what architecture is and can be, and in that way we also need to change our ways of communicating if we want to keep up.
What was also brought up was the discussion about "paper architecture". As the discussion went on the debate came to focus on the issue of being the "paper architect" or the "digital architect" and how we as architects can use the new medias.

Professor Hernan Diaz Alonso meant that all architects design with the intention to construct, and professor Thom Mayne underlined the importance of will and ambition. He stressed the fact that these two factors come before reality, and that this is something for young architects to remember.

Professor David Garcia and professor Drura Parrish both agreed on these facts, and urged the students to be more creative and ingenious in our design, because in the process it will be adjusted by the reality.

Professor Thom Mayne talked about when ones work is rejected due to obsolete critique or critique of it being unrealistic. He reminded that some day all "paper architects" will have their, [quote] "f*ck-you-moment". It is very important for themselves and the rest of the design world that this moment exists, to demonstrate that the experimental architecture does not have to stay on paper. It can be made to exist in reality if there is a will to change conventional architecture.

The discussion of "paper architecture" continued, and how communication could support that type of architecture.
Geoff Manaugh explained that the progress in experimental architecture of today is also connected to the digital revolution. So why should not the presentation and communication also follow this revolution? He suggested not only the impact of blogs, YouTube and the Internet, and was also very fascinated with the film- and computer game industry. These two worlds communicate the environment in a more profound and imaginary way than the traditional presentation. He asked what would happen if you could bring Hollywood and architecture together, and how this would develop the future of both industries.

Morten Lund finally summarized the discussion by thanking the panel and other participants. He finalized by underlining the importance of the role of the architect in the communication between different participants in a project and new ways of communication that was presented during the symposium.