



Hypothèses

**Constructing worlds:  
experiencing utopias**

**20 sept. 2017**

## Presentifying fiction at the Great German Art Exhibition: Architectural utopia in the Third Reich

Pictorial rendering of built environment often stems from utopian imagination: it can overcome the discrepancies between plans and constructions, surmount inconsistencies between design and actuality, and bridge the gap between prediction and fulfillment, both ideal and real. Most importantly, architectural representation allows political regimes to re-envision distant past and summon the shape of the world to come. Focusing on four oil paintings of the Great German Stadium by Otto Albert Hirth (1899-1969) presented in 1942 and 1943 at the Great German Art Exhibition in Munich, I will argue that one of the most important functions of architectural representation in the Third Reich was to intervene in the public's experience of time and history. Although Albert Speer's project for the largest stadium in the world has never made it beyond the foundation and excavation stages, Hirth depicts the megalomaniac structure as-built and in-use, exemplifying the National Socialist concern with the mythopoeic and generative potential of the utopian imagination. This paper demonstrates how the genre of architectural fantasy was mobilized by the painter to revise the past and substitute fiction for future during a pivotal historical moment when the defeat of the German troops at the battle for Stalingrad had marked the regime's imminent demise.

Evgeniya Makarova is a fully-funded PhD candidate in Art History & Communication Studies at McGill University. Her doctoral research focuses on the conformist and officially supported art of the National Socialist Germany. She studies the representations of architectural utopias and ruins in the Third Reich, interrogating the ways images presented at the Great German Art Exhibition (1937-1944) have been mobilized by the National Socialist state to articulate, promote and implement the ideologically-aligned conceptions of space, time and history. Drawing on theories of sensory perception, cognition, and communication, Makarova is dedicated to developing new ways of critically engaging with the sensitive or 'difficult' material heritage, such as the visual artifacts of the European totalitarian regimes.



Otto Albert Hirth, *Great German Stadium II*, n.d., oil on canvas, Great German Art Exhibition 1942.



Bruce Alonzo Goff, *Gene and Nancy Bavinger House: South Elevation Showing Suspension Bridge over Ravine*, 1950/51.

## The Continuous Present and Queer Spatial Sensibility: The Architectural Drawings of Bruce Goff's *Bavinger House* and *Space Study Institute*

American architect Bruce Goff (1904 -1982) was known for his highly original and idiosyncratic buildings. Recognized as an original yet historically and geographically marginalized practitioner of organic architecture, Goff's design philosophy of a 'continuous present' to be experienced in – and through – architecture was derived from his reading of the queer modernist writer Gertrude Stein. While Goff's biography and history have been examined in detail, a queer genealogy of his design philosophy through Stein remains unexamined. This paper proposes that through a visual analysis of Goff's drawings of his iconic *Bavinger House* (1950) and of the unrealized and unbuildable *Space Study Institute* (1956) that his interpretation of Stein's idea of a 'continuous present' can be read as encompassing a queer sensibility, if not a queer aesthetic. This research paper traces a queer genealogy through Stein's essay *Composition as Explanation*, Sara Ahmed's concept of a queer phenomenology of orientation, and José Esteban Muñoz ideas of a queer futurity to consider the Goff's XSarchitecture and his design philosophy of the 'continuous present' as a potential utopia.

Damien Smith is currently a third-year Master's student at Concordia University. He holds a BA Hons. in Studio and Art History from the University of Guelph. Smith is a practicing artist and has exhibited in exhibitions throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and the United Kingdom. His work is held in the collections of the Print and Drawing Council of Canada, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and at The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. He is the recipient of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec - Research/Creation Grant (2008) for studio practice in drawing. Smith's current MA research is supported through the Faculty of Fine Arts Fellowship (2014-15) and the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Master's Scholarship (SSHRC) for 2015-16.

## Présidence de séance | Chair : Christina Contandriopoulos

Christina Contandriopoulos est professeure au département d'histoire de l'art de l'UQAM. Ses recherches et son enseignement portent sur l'histoire de l'architecture et des villes au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'utopie et les techniques de représentation du territoire. Elle a dirigé l'anthologie *Architectural Theory 1871-2005* (en collaboration avec Harry Mallgrave, Blackwell-Wiley, 2008) et le *Companion to 19<sup>th</sup>-C. Architecture* (en collaboration avec Martin Bressani, Wiley, 2017).

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