

**LOUISIANA LAB:  
REALDANIA DIALOGUE  
ON ARCHITECTURE**

**THE LOUISIANA  
RESPONSE: NEW  
SENSITIVITY IN  
CONTEMPORARY  
ARCHITECTURE**

**LOUISIANA** MUSEUM  
OF  
MODERN  
ART

**LOUISIANA  
COPENHAGEN  
DENMARK  
21/22 SEP 2011**

# NEW SENSITIVITY IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

## The Louisiana Response: New Sensitivity in Contemporary Architecture

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**Symposium at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art  
Copenhagen — Denmark  
21/22 September 2011**

It is our great pleasure to invite you to join us at the inaugural edition of The Louisiana Response, a new biennial symposium focusing on contemporary architecture and spatial thinking. This ambitious event brings together a constellation of high-profile international professionals from an inspiring and wide field of disciplines to discuss urgent agendas in contemporary society.

Funded by Realdania, the event will take place on 21/22 September in the famous Boathouse of the Louisiana Museum on the shores of the Öresund, north of Copenhagen.

As a biennial event, the symposium aims to form a discourse that will develop over the years; a discourse that can stimulate and contribute to innovative thinking, addressing emergent contemporary issues in architecture, spatial production, politics and social matters. The Louisiana Response is a closed format, accessible by invitation only, and there will be no audience. The aim is to create the best possible conditions for a generous exchange of ideas, engaged dialogue and discussions. The event will be followed up by web-broadcasting that will be disseminated internationally.

Please see below for more detailed information on the symposium and its proposed programme.

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## A new sensitivity in contemporary architecture: towards engagement, generosity and awareness of responsibility

In architectural circles across the world, a new focus is emerging where the emblematic buildings of the star architects are no longer the centre of attention. This is because they cannot contribute to the discussions and dialogues of the progressive architectural milieu. This iconic architecture has often been conceived globally and subjectively, attempting to offer a universal answer to a place-specific question. But the new focus is not about answers, or about form, particular construction methods or materials, as such. The change can be found in a move towards a kind of *dual awareness* – in thinking as well as in practice. The challenges and themes to which architects are relating in their work are global, while the solutions will always be context-dependent and specific.

An Earth that is both limited and delimited has appeared on the horizon – from wherever we stand – and this has an influence on our responses to carbon emissions, new forms of energy, urban transformations, demographic patterns, etc. Even the mines are being exhausted: today, for example, there is more copper above ground than below it, and this will make old buildings the copper mines of the future. When we discuss the vast political power wielded by the energy sector, we talk more and more about ‘the project of the commons’ – that is, about strategies for how shared resources are to be managed in relation not only to the natural but also to the constructed environment. Awareness of global factors like these provides the incentive to give the architectural project its ultra-specific character.

This ultimately means that sustainability equals responsibility. There is no point in building a sustainable city far from the main traffic arteries, for how are the materials and the people to get there? What will it cost in resources, economic and human? These are the questions that should be asked in light of the ‘cradle-to-cradle’ principle, where every little detail is part of a larger system and therefore always has meaning. And of course, it is not just a matter of consumption and resources; it is also about welfare, sociality, identity, power structures etc. As the French architect Jean-Philippe Vassal has stated: ‘We should not automatically build something only because someone has asked us to do so; otherwise, we turn into pure service men.’

## Sustainable thinking

Before we come to the answers, the right questions have to be asked. Does it make sense to cable and pipeline half of Africa so that remote villages can have their share of the infrastructure? Does it make sense to relocate just under a million Parisians so that the dreary suburban projects can be torn down? Does it make sense to think in terms of postmodern urban planning strategies in cultures that have no lived historical experience of modernism as we know it in the West? This may sound like asceticism or even moralizing, but it doesn’t need to be. The Danish architect Bjarke Ingels talks about a ‘hedonistic sustainability’, urging us to think in terms of bigger contexts, of the kind of food chains where an input becomes an output in the next link.

The incentive to plunge in and act in a specific place, in a specific situation, at a specific time and with specific people, originates in a collective global sense that everything we do is bound up with everything else. We could say that we are building in response to a larger, complex system that shapes the experiential horizon in an age typified by communication, information flow and interaction.

This is a perspective that is firmly rooted in action, a kind of ‘activism through design’. We create value, and the value is in the actual method of conversion – that is, the way in which we do something. We are working our way out from under the meta-values and the master plans because thinking and doing are becoming one and the same. And this takes confidence, engagement, generosity and awareness of our own responsibility.

Today, we are thus seeing a sensitization of architectural practice, which means that

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we can operate with a far higher degree of complexity and diversity than is possible with universal solutions. Architecture is being interpreted with old familiar materials and construction methods, and there is a renewed feeling for the detail of the craftsmanship that has not been experienced since industrialization. Bernard Rudofsky's book *Architecture without Architects* has seen yet another revival recently because of its playing down of the 'authorial' in favour of the vernacular. The new focus is on a hands-on experience where the gap between the conception and the physical design is bridged through attempts to avoid preconceived norms. It should thus also become possible to work with a sense of responsibility that has not been externalized into a dogmatic programme, but is instead tied to the actions of the user. We could call this 'felt action': that is, you understand what it is you are doing in relation to a much wider context with which you are emotionally connected.

## Panels with an invited, participatory audience: a lived network

The aim of the symposium is to explore and reflect on some of the above ideas, and to do so in a closed forum with about 50 participants who are active in the fields of architecture, art, philosophy, sociology, cultural geography etc.

The symposium has been conceived, in response to a number of current world events and situations, as a polyphonic voice that can exert influence. All contributions and discussions are seen as 'active components' in the discourse shaping the values of our society. For that reason, there will not be a long succession of keynote speakers on the one hand and a large group of passive listeners on the other; rather, there will be exchanges of knowledge based on dialogue, intimacy, process, generosity and engagement.

The symposium will take as its starting point three panels, each with one moderator, where each panellist will contribute a short presentation (10–15 minutes) on a given, defined issue. These may take the form of a speech, a work presentation or an experiment. After this, all the participants in the symposium can contribute to the panel discussion under the guidance of the moderator.

**Editorial Board:** Director of the Louisiana museum Poul Erik Tøjner, curator Kjeld Kjeldsen, architect Bjarke Ingels, artist Olafur Eliasson, director of Realdania Hans Peter Svendler, director of DAC Kent Martinussen, architect Kjeld Vindum.

The programme has been arranged by the organizer of the symposium, Marianne Krogh Jensen, PhD.

## Where and when

The symposium will take place at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, north of Copenhagen. We will meet in the Museum's Boathouse, on the shore of the Øresund, which will house all the necessary facilities and is conducive to an intimacy that can support a sensitive and productive space for dialogue. The museum will provide refreshments in the course of the panel discussions and will also offer dinners.

In the course of their stay at the Louisiana Museum, all participants will have the opportunity to see the museum's major architectural exhibition 'Living', about the new movements and paths that are shifting the frontiers of architecture. 'Living', filling half the museum's total exhibition space, asks the question 'How does The Good Life look today?' The exhibition, which opened on 1 June, will close a few days after the symposium.

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**Expected arrival:** Wednesday 21 September 2011, late afternoon

**Expected departure:** Friday 23 September 2011, morning

## **Documentation**

The symposium discussions will be recorded on video. Later, subject to the approval of the participants, these recordings will be made available on the internet. In addition, the various events will be transcribed and edited so that the reflections and conclusions of the symposium can be documented in book form.

## **Registration**

RSVP no later than July 15th 2011 to [bv@louisiana.dk](mailto:bv@louisiana.dk) or +45 88435082

*All questions can be directed to the organizer of the symposium Marianne Krogh Jensen at [mail@mariannekrogh.net](mailto:mail@mariannekrogh.net) with cc to Poul Erik Tøjner's PA, Agnete Braad, [ab@louisiana.dk](mailto:ab@louisiana.dk).*

We look forward to welcoming you to take part in the  
shaping of the  
Louisiana Response to Contemporary Architecture.

Yours sincerely  
Poul Erik Tøjner and Marianne Krogh Jensen

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## Programme

### Wednesday 21 September 2011

- 17:00-19:00 Early arrivals have the opportunity to visit the museum's major architectural exhibition 'Living' which investigates concepts of home and new modes of life through architectural, social and cultural looks at the world today.
- 19:00 Tapas  
Welcome Speech by Poul Erik Tøjner / Marianne Krogh Jensen
- 20:30 Coffee  
Introductory lecture by Sarat Maharaj

### Thursday 22 September 2011

- 9:00-9:30 Coffee  
A short presentation of programme and panels by Tom Eccles who is director of Bard College's Center for Curatorial Studies in New York. Tom Eccles will be linking the various talks and discussions inside and outside the panels throughout the day.
- 9:30-11:30 **Panel 1: Global & Local: Ecological relations beyond Utopia**  
Presentations and discussions on notions of doubt and reflexivity in working with space, on the interconnectedness of global challenges and local actions, on perspectives on surplus, and on local platforms as intersections of natural and civilizational forces.
- Minsuk Cho**  
Architect, Mass Studies, Seoul
- Bijoy Jain**  
Architect, Studio Mumbai Architects, Mumbai
- Bjarke Ingels**  
Architect, BIG, Copenhagen/New York
- Ilka & Andreas Ruby**  
Architectural historians, Berlin
- François Roche**  
Architect, R&Sie(n), Paris
- Moderator: Hans Ulrich Obrist**  
Codirector of Exhibitions and Programmes and  
Director of International Projects, Serpentine Gallery, London
- 11:45-13:00 Lunch
- 13:30-15:30 **Panel 2: Vibrant Space**  
Presentations and discussions on the distribution of diversity, on the active participation of non-human forces in events, on emotions as co-producers, and on the compassionate element of design.

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**Sarat Maharaj**

Research Professor, Goldsmiths College, London,  
and Professor of Visual Art and Knowledge Systems, Lund

**Olafur Eliasson**

Artist, Berlin/Copenhagen

**Ann Lislegaard**

Artist, New York/Copenhagen

**Helen & Hard**

Architects, Oslo

**Lene Tranberg**

Architect, Lundgaard & Tranberg, Copenhagen

**Anne Lacaton**

Architect, Lacaton & Vassal Architectes, Paris

**Moderator: Daniel Birnbaum**

Director, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

15:30-16:00 Break

16:00-18:00 **Panel 3: Design as Activism**

Presentations and discussions on engagement, on explication, on active value-shaping as space-producing method, and on the motivational force of collectivity.

**Alfredo Brillembourg & Hubert Klumpner**

Urban-Think Tank / Caracas, Chair of Urban Design ETH, Zurich

**Molly Nesbit**

Professor of Art, Vassar College, New York

**Kjetil Thorsen**

Architect, Snøhetta, Oslo

**Hiroshi Sambuichi**

Architect, Naoshima

**Dorte Mandrup**

Architect, Copenhagen

**Moderator: Stefano Boeri**

Architect and editor, Milan

18:00-20:00 Break  
Optional: A guided tour of the museum's exhibition 'Living'.

20:00 Dinner  
Bonfire on beach (if weather allows)

23:00 Transportation to hotel

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## Confirmed participants:

**Alex H. Lee**

Architect, Hiroshi Sambuichi Architects, Naoshima

**Alfredo Brillembourg & Hubert Klumpner**

Urban-Think Tank / Caracas, Chair of Urban Design ETH, Zürich

**Anders Byriel**

Director, Kvadrat, Denmark

**Ann Lislegaard**

Artist, New York/Copenhagen

**Anne Lacaton**

Architect, Lacaton & Vassal Architectes, Paris

**Arno Brandlhuber**

Architect, Brandlhuber+, Berlin

**Bart Lootsma**

Professor of Theory of Architecture,  
Leopold Franzens Universität, Innsbruck

**Bijoy Jain**

Architect, Studio Mumbai Architects, Mumbai

**Bjarke Ingels**

Architect, BIG, Copenhagen/New York

**Carson Chan**

Co-director, PROGRAM  
- initiative for art + architecture collaborations, Berlin

**Carsten Thau**

Professor of the Theory and History of Architecture,  
School of Architecture, Copenhagen

**Dan Stubbergaard**

Architect, Cobe, Copenhagen

**Daniel Birnbaum**

Director, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

**Dorte Mandrup**

Architect, Copenhagen

**Eve Blau**

Adjunct Professor of the History of Architecture,  
Harvard University, Cambridge

**Francois Roche**

Architect, R&Sie(n), Paris

**Hans Peter Svendler**

Director, Realdania, Copenhagen

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## Confirmed participants:

**Hans Ulrich Obrist**

Codirector of Exhibitions and Programmes and  
Director of International Projects, Serpentine Gallery, London

**Hiroshi Sambuichi**

Architect, Naoshima

**Ilka & Andreas Ruby**

Architectural historians, Berlin

**Karsten Ifversen**

Architectural critic, Copenhagen

**Kent Martinussen**

Director, DAC, Copenhagen

**Kjeld Kjeldsen**

Curator, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen

**Kjeld Vindum**

Architect, Copenhagen

**Kjetil Thorsen**

Architect, Snøhetta, Oslo

**Kresse Wesling**

Environmental entrepreneur, Bournemouth

**Lene Tranberg**

Architect, Lundgaard & Tranberg, Copenhagen

**Marcus Miessen**

Architect, Studio Miessen, Berlin

**Marianne Krogh Jensen**

Art historian, Copenhagen

**Mathias Schuler**

Engineer, Transsolar, Stuttgart

**Mette Ramsgaard Thomsen**

Professor at Center for IT and Architecture (CITA),  
School of Architecture, Copenhagen

**Minsuk Cho**

Architect, Mass Studies, Seoul

**Molly Nesbit**

Professor of Art, Vassar College, New York

**Olafur Eliasson**

Artist, Berlin/Copenhagen

**Poul Erik Tøjner**

Director, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen

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Confirmed participants:

**Reinhard Kropf**

Architect, Helen & Hard, Oslo

**Sarat Maharaj**

Research Professor, Goldsmiths College, London,  
and Professor of Visual Art and Knowledge systems, Lund

**Siv Helene Stangeland**

Architect, Helen & Hard, Oslo

**Stefano Boeri**

Architect and Editor, Milano

**Thomas Demand**

Artist, Berlin

**Titiana Bilbao**

Architect, Mexico City

**Tom Eccles**

Director, Bard College's Center for Curatorial Studies, New York

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