

An interdisciplinary five year joint project in
Architecture & Philosophy

4th Summer School
Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik
March 25-29, 2019

Around 1800/2000

Aesthetics at the Threshold

The 2019 summer school Around 1800/2000 – Aesthetics at the Threshold addresses the changing concepts of aesthetics of architecture. With *Aesthetica*, published in 1750, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten founded aesthetics as a philosophical discipline. He conceived aesthetics as a tripartite reflection a) on sensual experience, b) on the concept of beauty, and c) the theory of arts. Focusing mainly on the arts, aesthetics established a new field of knowledge characterized by dialectics between sense and sensibility, perception and artifacts. As a mainly material, functional, and constructive cultural technique concerned with everyday practice, architecture didn't fit the concept of aesthetics that was seen for a long time as being epitomized by the arts, such as painting, literature, sculpture, dance, and music. However, in the wake of the French revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the advancements of the sciences, the cultural force field around 1800 started to change to a degree that architecture slowly moved from a peripheral position toward the center of aesthetic discourse. Described by Emil Kaufmann as "revolutionary architects", French architects Étienne-Louis Boullée and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux began to extend the concept of structure to spatial expression and the concept of beauty to that of the sublime. Yet, around the year 2000, with the advent of digital technologies, the change of the world order in the wake of the fall of the Berlin wall, globalization processes, and population growth, aesthetics and architecture again underwent major changes. With the beginning of the Anthropocene, the build environment and more particularly architecture found itself in the center of the search for viable concepts for the future. Themes concerning locality, ethnic diversity, gender, posthumanity, sustainability, and media became essential parts of aesthetics. What are the challenging tasks of aesthetics in regard to architecture? What is architecture's role in rethinking aesthetics today? What is the status of the concept of building art? Can architecture take a leading role in the shaping of 21st century modern culture, or do we have to consent with Bruno Latour that architecture so far hasn't been modern at all? Does "modernity" in its true humanist and aesthetic conception still lie ahead of us?

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This summer school is open to graduate students in all stages of their studies. Students will be asked to read texts in advance, present presentations about a topic which will be agreed upon with the course directors, and actively participate in the meetings. The students will also take part in a supervised two hours research project in Dubrovnik. Findings of this research will be later analyzed at the classroom.