

Cold War Architecture and its Ghosts

Ines Weizman



This course introduces students to the history of Cold War architecture and its urbanisms. It seeks to show how opposed political ideologies determined architecture both at the level of the city and its cultural production. The political confrontation was played out as an aggressive competition between East and West – nothing less than an ‘arms race’ of avenues, housing estates, public functions and tall towers, each boasting for the industrial might and the ideological staunchness of the respective sides. On the one hand, the two-fold dynamic provided a clear and continuous impulse for new design. On the other, the logics of the communist ‘revolutionary society’ continuously charged the political meaning of that race.

The course will also discuss various architectural practices in the Eastern Bloc where groups of architects otherwise employed in state run architectural collectives, or as staff in architecture schools were meeting in private houses – kitchens as they later liked to tell – to produce the kind of drawings that meant to challenge the ‘stifling’ standardized language of Soviet architecture, and to introduce ‘culture’, understood largely as national and religious tradition, into an architectural articulation of allegories, legends, and postmodern contextualization.

Lastly, the course will also discuss how after the collapse of the communist regime an imaginary geography has been put in place by which socialist architecture was culturally produced as an ‘other’ – a foreign invasion into the ‘native’, traditional city.

Course Outline:

- Session 1: **Within or Against. Rethinking the Soviet Experience.****
- Session 2: **Post-War Reconstruction and the urban Choreography of a non-existing Revolution.****
- Session 3: **A World divided, or the Cold War architectural Arms Race in Berlin.****
- Session 4: **Spaceship Earth. The Landscape of the ideological Spectacle.****
- Session 5: **Architect Dissidents, or *The Man who flew into Space from his Apartment.*****
- Session 6: **A Promise yet to come. The late socialist housing Project.****
- Session 7: **Critique without Memory. Memory without Critique.****
- Session 8: **Archival Architects. The Architecture of Re-enactment.****

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Ines Weizman was trained as an architect at the Bauhaus University Weimar and the Ecole d'Architecture de Belleville in Paris. She did graduate work at Cambridge University and completed her PhD at the Architectural Association in 2004. Since then she taught at the Berlage Institute of Architecture in Rotterdam, Department of Politics Goldsmiths College London. Since 2005 she directs the MA Cities Design and Urban Cultures at London Metropolitan University. Recent projects include "Celltexts. Books and other works" produced in prison." (with Eyal Weizman) <http://celltexts.org/> Together with Andreas Thiele she is designing a Re-enactment of Adolf Loos' House for Josephine Baker in Paris. <http://bakerhouse.org> This project was inspired by an invitation to Ordos 100 for which curator Ai Wei Wei and architects office Herzog & De Meuron invited one hundred architects to build villas in Ordos, Inner Mongolia China.

