THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO OPENS NEW DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE’S PRESENT AND PAST

Chatter: Architecture Talks Back Highlights How Contemporary Architects Choose and Adapt New Technologies to Produce Work in Conversation with History

CHICAGO – The Art Institute of Chicago announces a groundbreaking exhibition featuring five ultra-current practitioners alongside works from its vast collection of architecture and design in Chatter: Architecture Talks Back, on view in the Architecture and Design galleries in the museum’s Modern Wing from April 11, 2015, through July 12, 2015.

The exhibition focuses on the creative process of architectural firms Bureau Spectacular, Erin Besler, Fake Industries Architectural Agonism, Formlessfinder, and John Szot Studio and highlights how they conceive new designs and ideas that reflect upon and expand the legacy of their field.

Neville Bryan Assistant Curator of Architecture and Design Karen Kice conceived the exhibition to explore the perpetual conversation between present and past in architecture: “Technology has profoundly influenced society and the discipline of architecture, yet even as contemporary architects experiment with new methods and media, their work is not divorced from history; they reference, reimagine, and build from the history of the field.”
Chatter: Architecture Talks Back argues that the architectural past is recombined and re-conveyed with modern punctuation. Chatter is the way in which contemporary conversations are created. Chatter can be critical; it can rely on and question the history of architecture. Technology impacts the way architects communicate their ideas, and in these conversations, social media, like Instagram and Twitter, serve not only as outlets for communication but provide a framework for how architects’ work is produced and presented.

This exhibition looks to inspire audiences to understand how new ideas in architecture develop, what context stimulates the open-ended dialogue, and how contemporary society has influenced communication. Using a range of representational methods and formats, from drawings done by hand to those enabled by robots, from graphic novels to digital simulations, the works on view embrace both age-old and cutting-edge technologies invite the audience to engage with the architectonic timeline.

The architects featured in this exhibition exemplify how chatter can be linked to current practices in architecture. Jimenez Lai of Bureau Spectacular is both consumer and producer as he references architectural history to develop a “mash-up” of ideas that open up and re-theorize architecture. Erin Besler questions the immediate acceptance of new technologies and seeks to investigate the gaps that exist in her discipline, probing issues of drawing and translation in architecture.

Experimentation and speculation underpin John Szot’s practice through his production of digital videos that simulate possibilities for architecture to draw on overlooked social contexts. The process and mission of Formlessfinder challenges how architecture is conceived, experienced, and understood, yet also depends on the same fetishizing of form undertaken by previous generations of architects. Fake Industries Architectural Agonism relies on copies to re-present work through a critical lens, recombining existing ideas and fragments of information to construct new relationships among them.

Although the term chatter might imply insignificant rumblings, this exhibition explores how it can designate the way information accumulates today to foster productive and creative conversations.
The rear gallery (283) offers visitors a chance to explore the multitude of ways in which architecture can be communicated. Iker Gil, Director of the design publication Mas Context, conceived this section to look at the active qualities of chatter—from being constant to satirical—to spark conversations about the field of architecture, our cities, and their citizens. The projects presented in this space were produced by a range of practitioners worldwide: Ecosistema Urbano; over,under and pinkcomma; Mimi Zeiger and Neil Donnelly with the School of Visual Arts Summer Design Writing and Research Intensive; Koldo Lus Arana (Klaus); Project_ with Sarah Hirschman; 300.000km/s with Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona; Luis Urculo; and Christopher Baker. This space will house two Chatter Chats, roundtable conversations within the gallery space on April 11, 2015, and May 16, 2015.

**Exhibition-Related Events**

**Chatter Chat: Talking Back**
April 11, 2015
2:00pm-4:00pm
Gallery 283
Free and open to the public with museum admission.

_Talking Back_ projects on the future of architecture not simply by looking back at history but by engaging it in productive conversation. Fully embracing the double entendre of the act of “talking back”, this Chatter Chat invites architects from the exhibition to frame their work relative to history, encouraging them to act as both successor (harkening back to their predecessors) as well as instigator (talking back to their predecessors). This roundtable discussion will be moderated by Kelly Bair, Director, Central Standard Office of Design.

**Teen Workshop: Chatter – Design, Writing, and Art**
April 18, 2015
11:00am-4:00pm
Ryan Education Center
$10 per member; $12 per nonmember; Registration required.
Get inspired in the museum and imagine how you can tell your story in the digital age through art and architecture. Work with a teaching artist to design multimedia artworks that speak to your audience. To learn more about this program, visit our Teen Programs page at [http://www.artic.edu/learn/teens](http://www.artic.edu/learn/teens) or email teens@artic.edu.

**Chatter Chat: Communication**
May 16, 2015
2:00pm-4:00pm
Gallery 283
Free and open to the public with museum admission.

_Communication_ looks at the productive ways in which architecture can be communicated. This Chatter Chat invites architects from the exhibition to expand on this concept through their work, in a roundtable discussion moderated by Iker Gil, Director, Mas Context.
Support for the exhibition and the catalogue is provided by John H. and Neville Bryan, Celia and David Hilliard, the Butler-VanderLinden Family Fund for Architecture and Design, the Architecture and Design Committee Fund, and the Architecture & Design Society.

Images:
Erin Besler. Diamond plans at 1% and 100% speed from *Low Fidelity*, 2012. © Erin Besler.

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