

Fellows



Eve Blau

IFK_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. May 2003 bis 30. June 2003

Eve Blau

PROJECT TITLE

"Under the Sign of Transparency": Twentieth-century Discourses on Architectural Space, the City, and Modern Subjectivity

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Part of a larger investigation of modern architecture, media, and the city, this project is concerned with the significance of "transparency" as both a formal property of modern architecture and a critical concept in the theoretical discourses of modernism in the 20th century. As a concept or signifier, transparency is notoriously unstable. Throughout the last century the term was appropriated in a broad range of architectural and urban discourses to describe an equally wide range of distinct (and often seemingly unrelated) visual, spatial, and material phenomena, as well as a broad compass of social, political, and psychological states and conditions.

In all its architectural manifestations, it would seem, transparency during this period was conceived both dialectically and instrumentally – as encompassing an inherent cognitive contradiction (between knowledge and experience) within architecture itself, and at the same time as holding its opposite – opacity or obscurity – suspended within it. Transparency thus has operated as a means of simultaneously providing and withholding information, giving and blocking access, manifesting depth and reflectivity, material and virtual presence, form and formlessness.

The purpose of the study is to engage the full theoretical, ideological, and formal complexity of transparency as a critical concept in 20th century discourses on Modernism. One of the principal objectives of this work is to examine the unexplored role played by the mass media: photography, film, electronic, and digital imagery, in conceptualizing "transparency" in architecture.

CV

Publications

U. a. The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919-1934 (1999); gem. mit Monika Platzer (Hg.): Mythos Großstadt. Architektur und Stadtbaukunst in Zentraleuropa 1890-1937 (1999); gem. mit Renate Banik-Schweitzer: Urban Form: Städtebau in der postfordistischen Gesellschaft (2003)