



Practices In Research

practice-based research journal for architecture

First Steps And False Alarms

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In Practice explores the multiple ways in which architects can engage their professional practice in academic research and reciprocally. In Practice seeks to open a space for architecture practices in research through the development of methodologies, conferences and publications.

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In Practice

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INTRODUCTION

First Steps and False Alarms

This first publication is a project of the interuniversity research group In Practice, initiated by Harold Fallon (KU Leuven) and Benoît Vandenbulcke (ULiège). ‘In Practice’ invites practicing architects to explore the multiple ways in which architects can engage the professional practice in academic research and reciprocally. ‘Practices in Research #01 - First Steps and False Alarms’ contains four contributions. A first cautious step, to start an explorative journey. This first publication is the result of invited contributions by Virginie Pigeon, a landscape architect teaching and researching at ULiège Faculty of Architecture, and by Tomas Ooms, Steven Schenk and Johannes Berry, all three architects teaching and researching at KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture.

The invitation call stated a main objective. “The publication explores the ways in which practices are engaged in research. The contribution may explore internal processes at work in the practice, situate the practice amongst peers, explore external subjects through the practice – and vice-ver-

sa. In *Practices in Research*, practices interrogate the world, and the world interrogates the practices in return.”

Then, it drew two consequences. “The practice is thus never reduced to an illustration of a theory. *Practices in Research* aims at research projects in which the practice is an essential resource, subject or modality. As such, the contributions are expected to stay in very close contact with the practice. Inversely, the research is not the presentation of a practice itself. The contributions take a step beyond the practice in the way they present, explore, reveal a question in the field of architecture.”

The seminar was programmed in May. Due to sanitary reasons, it was not before July that an online seminar could be organised, and before October that the publication could be completed. Each contribution has been double-blind peer-reviewed by two anonymous reviewers who had the faculty to read the revised version if wished. The scientific committee was composed of practising academics, including four different practices and four universities.

The album ‘*First Steps & False Alarms*’ (Kilgour, 1995) assembles recordings from the artist’s home tape archive, proposing to discover his creative starting points, his explorations and experiments from a period of five years, shaping a musical personality. Similarly, ‘*Practices in Research #01*’ does not make a priori assumptions about distinctions between realisations from the practice and theoretical reflections. As such it is an experimentation: it poses questions and situations, it proposes answers and actions.

An example. The call did not mention any formal requirements except a maximum amount of words and a limitation to 11 pages. The contributors did not strictly write articles, but rather created publishable artefacts in the sense that text, visual documents and layout were carefully crafted to convey the content of their proposals. After the reviews, they were asked to 'translate' these artefacts following an imposed template. However flexible, this questioned the nature of such artefacts. Is their form an essential part of it? What role play the visual elements in regard of text? What happens if we consider these publications as artefacts rather than as texts to which images are added? What interactions appear between such designed objects and the design practice itself?

'Practices in Research #01 – First Steps and False Alarms' opens a field for exploration. During this journey, false alarms will undoubtedly ring from times to times. Nevertheless, it is maybe not that much about these hypothetical false alarms, but about these first steps. It is about the boldness of taking actions and the rigor to discuss the results with an audience, which modifies perception and understanding, imagination and capacity. It is about gems to be discovered, a fertile ground to be established for these reflexive architects. It also nourishes the debate about practice and research.

The editorial board

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