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Afterword: What Does Society Look Like?*

Lorens Holm

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ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE

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non-commercial re-use,
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If you want to know what society looks like, look at our cities: look at their distribution of spaces and artifacts; look at their scales, intensities, and densities. Look at how they curate events. *Architecture & Collective Life* will explore the relations that bind people and environments into settlements, and settlements into civilizations. In *The Politics* Aristotle argued that the city has a particular form because public life has a particular form. Vitruvius' account of the primitive hut is as much about the emergence of society as it is about the emergence of architecture. Today, new media and digital technologies are creating new forms of association, which are shifting the locus of political life; and it is now no longer possible for Hannah Arendt, reading Aristotle, to so neatly equate the city with politics. This discourse is urgent. The postwar public realm is under pressure from market-led ideologies and development practices. The damage we are doing to the environment, and the way identity politics has shifted the tenor of public debate, raise questions from seemingly opposite corners about our capacities to organize for thoughtful collective action.

We are interested in how the individual and the collective are constructed and reproduced in public and private life, at different scales, in different disciplines, with the intention of keeping these

categories as open as possible to different areas of thought and action. We would like to know how collectives are constructed around labor, power, authority, authorship, events, times, places, non-places, otherness, ecology, technology, media, the zeitgeist, ideologies, consciousness, origins, histories, beauty, housing, and campfires. As a vehicle of the AHRA, we are particularly keen to explore the contributions of architecture to this process. We also are interested in the roles of research, the humanities, and the University – the institution with a social mandate for intellectual culture and education – in building forms of collective intelligence and collective life.

Architecture & Collective Life will constitute an inclusive and critical discourse with a broad interdisciplinary base in the liberal arts and sciences, with a programme of debates and round table discussions and exhibitions, public lectures, film screenings, and paper sessions. We invite theorists, practitioners, and community activists within and outwith academe in charities, public agencies and institutions, to present proposals for individual papers and paper sessions. We intend to use this conference as a forum for thinking out loud and in public, with the openness, commitment, and criticality that we expect to find in the University.