Inversion of Content and Context in Architecture Photography

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How can the act of photography of architecture (not necessarily architectural photography), uncover and intensify such relationships, thereby transcending the utilitarian-documentational aspect of the medium?

My continuing research places particular emphasis on the degree to which human intervention has incised natural landscapes, and, at the same time, how elements of pure or derived nature have penetrated into the human realm. Through my practice as an architectural, landscape—and for the last two decades architectural—photographer, I have strove to develop a visual language where the separation between the content (man-made structure) and context (natural or urban) is blurred, and the relationship between the two inverted. Architecture is treated as an element of its environment; at the same time, the context is immersed in and filtered through architecture. The continuum between content and context in the photography of architecture represents an area of research that has been scarcely explored and is as relevant as ever, especially since discussions around architecture are increasingly framed by an over-saturation of imagery (of a very particular kind).

About the speaker

Erieta Attali has been an Adjunct Professor of Architectural Photography at Columbia GSAPP since 2001. She has also worked as a visiting professor at universities such as the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in Copenhagen, Mackenzie University in Sao Paulo, the Catholic University in Santiago de Chile, Architectural Association in London, RMIT in Melbourne, University of Tokyo and others. Attali studied photography at Goldsmiths, University of London, she continued her studies as a visiting scholar at Columbia GSAPP with a support of Fulbright Foundation, and Waseda University, Tokyo. She has a Ph.D. from RMIT University, School of Architecture and Design, Australia.

Attali began her photographic career in 1993 as a landscape and archeology photographer. For over ten years she photographed excavation sites and archeological findings specializing in the documentation of ancient tombs using the use of UV and IR radiation. During this period, Attali worked in various museums in Greece, Turkey, Italy, France and UK. Her corpus of archeological work includes thousands of photographs produced for scientific documentation and archeological publications.

In parallel with her past work as an archeology photographer, she photographed landscapes in different parts of the world. Her pictures have been published and exhibited internationally. Her work has been supported by prestigious institutions, such as Fulbright, Japan Foundation, Graham Foundation, Stryker's Foundation, Norwegian Embassy in Copenhagen, Danish Arts Council, Chilean Ministry of Culture culminating in numerous exhibitions and publications. During the past 20 years, Attali has been preoccupied primarily with architectural photography, both as a profession and as a fine art photographer. Her architectural work expands from Europe to Americas and from Asia to Australia.