

# A QUESTION OF TIME

IN SEARCH OF TEMPORAL STRATEGIES  
FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSITION



COLLOQUE

26 & 27. 09. 2024  
9am - 8pm

KEYNOTES

. Pierre Caye  
26.09, 9am

. Antoine Picon  
26.09, 7pm

. Stéphane Bonzani  
27.09, 9am

Atomium construction site for Expo 58  
in Brussels, 1957, André and Jean Polak  
(architects), André Waterkeyn (engineer),  
Atomium archives.

Cité de  
l'architecture  
et du  
patrimoine

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# A QUESTION OF TIME

## IN SEARCH OF TEMPORAL STRATEGIES FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSITION

In architecture, space occupies a central place; sometimes to the detriment of time, which is too often neglected, even though it is a key factor for thinking about ecological, social and economic transition. Given the urgency of climate change, this symposium puts the question of time at the heart of the debate, as an essential element of architectural, urban, and territorial projects. Reconsidering our discipline through the factor of time will enable us to reconsider architecture in relation to the temporal dynamics in which it is embedded, offering an indispensable condition for modifying its circumstances and mechanisms.

Historian Marvin Trachtenberg has emphasized that temporality is an epistemic condition that silently affects all production and experience of the built environment. In his book *Building-in-Time*, he outlines the modalities of building with and in time that took place in the Renaissance, in a period before the radical overturn of the human relationship to time. Indeed, mechanized, measurable and quantifiable time is a legacy of this first modernity, and oriented towards progress. German sociologist and political scientist Hartmut Rosa develops precisely this aspect in his book *Acceleration: a Social Critique of Time*, showing how the question of temporality is becoming increasingly apparent in the subsequent crises of modernity that we are currently experiencing or enduring at an accelerated pace. If the question of time becomes more central in our contemporary debate, how do environmental problems reintroduce temporality into architectural practice?

The exponential depletion of resources and the polluting character of the building industry confront us with the limits of continuous progress. Time is no longer conceivable in its linear progression, but should be addressed in a renewed manner. The dynamics that have hitherto governed the world – ‘the tempest of progress’, to borrow a phrase from Walter Benjamin’s *Angel of History* – have not stopped dragging us towards a future that risks turning into a catastrophe. Isn’t the introduction of ‘counter-time’ essential if we are to break out of the trajectories we’ve embarked upon? Are these the premises of a future that will – by force of circumstances – be radically different? Refusing to remain passive in the face of this accelerating process, this conference proposes to think from now on about time and temporalities that determine the course of things. It calls for more resilient, more inclusive counter-dynamics, and explores ways of establishing greater resonance with the world.

### ACCELERATION / DECELERATION

If we consider time as a dynamic vector for action, it seems that strategies of acceleration or deceleration offer counter-dynamics at an architectural, urban, and territorial scale, in response to trajectories that are putting the Earth in crisis. Accelerating or decelerating corresponds to a divide between those who support technological progress and those who distrust it. How do these temporal counter-dynamics manifest themselves, and what exactly do they propose? What kind of operational and aesthetic levers are mobilized?

**Acceleration** would aim – in the face of urgency – at the transition towards high technology and production efficiency, and the management of renewable resources and energy *on a global scale*. The mode of action would be to precipitate the current dynamics in order to move with great speed – before or after decline – towards a renewal, employing all available technical means for founding a more ecological world. Creative destruction plays a key role in this posture of radical renewal.

**Deceleration** would tend towards sobriety and the circular economy, relying on local and natural systems, and even on the archaic as a source and resource for a possible rebirth *on a local scale*. The mode of action would be to take a step aside and build counter-dynamics, places of resistance, places of sustainable materiality, places of new societal forms. Bottom-up movements, self-governance and self-construction would be part of this strategy, which seeks to create a new form of resonance with a world in crisis.

These two opposing strategies, which at first glance seem irreconcilable, do they not have a common vector in their ultimate goal, namely the introduction of ‘counter-times’ and ‘counter-spaces’ into the dynamics that currently govern the world in order to make it more sustainable?

A ‘*contretemps*’ (hitch, setback) is an event, a circumstance that runs counter to what was expected. In music, the French expression ‘*contretemps*’ signifies the ‘action of attacking a sound on a weak beat’ (offbeat, syncope), followed by a brief silence. What if this ‘unfortunate hitch’, this attack ‘on a weak beat’, enabled us to engage in this brief moment of suspension a turning point to initiate a transition, a sort of *reset*?

In this conference, we are interested in visions that establish, on an architectural, urban, and territorial scale, a different relationship between man and nature, the urban and the rural, architecture and matter, duration, and sustainability, by reconsidering time as a key factor for the transition. What about this underlying time, barely perceptible, barely touchable, which nonetheless determines the relationship that architecture establishes with the world? What tools do architects have at their disposal to ‘manipulate’ time, or to intervene in the temporalities of matter? What are architects’ strategies for dealing with the temporal dynamics that govern cities, territories and even the world as a whole, and how can they be countered? What should be accelerated or decelerated, by using which kind of means and finally: to what ends?

Rethinking our disciplines in terms of time and not just space is a challenge that concerns all scales (buildings, cities, landscapes, territories). The magnitude of the challenge calls for openness to other disciplines: history, the arts, philosophy, economics, literature, sociology, and anthropology. Many synergies could thus be developed between researchers from different international research laboratories. Given the scale of the problem, don’t we need to look at things from different angles, and fundamentally reconsider the way in which time shapes space?

26 SEPTEMBRE 2024

## LONGUE DURÉE/URGENCE LONGUE DURÉE/EMERGENCY

- 9:00** accueil/reception  
**9:30** introduction de **Pierre Caye**/introduction by Pierre Caye  
**10:00** café/coffee

### LONGUE DURÉE

Penser et agir avec le temps long, les temporalités qui transcendent l'individu : transgénérationnelles et autre-  
qu'humaines.

Thinking and acting in the long term, with temporalities that transcend the individual: transgenerational and other-than-human.

- 10:20** **Luc Baboulet**, Pour une géohistoire architecturale  
**10:40** **Olivier Gaudin**, Hériter contre le temps. Sens critique et culture historique  
**11:00** **Sebastian Carcamo**, Can built environment be harmless?  
**11:20** **Xiaojun Zhang & Peter W. Ferretto**, Instants and Durée: A Transitional Timestamp of the Resilient Villages and Cities  
**11:40** **Hélène Marcoz**, Paysages changeants (vidéo)  
**11:50** café/coffee  
**12:00** table ronde/round table  
animation : Susanne Stacher & Cauê Capille  
**12:40** déjeuner/lunch

### URGENCE/EMERGENCY

Réponses à l'inopérativité des agendas politiques. Prises de position dans un horizon temporel conflictuel pour des transitions sociétales et environnementales.

Responding to the inoperativeness of political agendas. Taking a stance on societal and environmental transitions in a conflicting timeframe.

- 14:00** **Alain Guez**, Quelle plasticité chronotopique pour un monde habitable ?  
**14:20** **Ingrid Taillandier & Emilie Gascon**, Intensification du chemin de l'eau  
**15:40** **Mathieu Mercuriali**, Le grand tour ou la Méditerranée comme territoire d'anticipation  
**16:00** **Marc Armengaud**, Contre toute attente  
**16:20** **Alejandro Campos Uribe**, The Density of Time (vidéo)  
**16:30** café/coffee  
**16:50** table ronde/round table  
animation : Florian Hertweck & Véronique Patteeuw  
**17:30** **Véronique Patteeuw & Léa-Catherine Szacka in conversation with Emmanuelle Chiapone-Piriou**, Book presentation « It's About Time »  
**18:00** pause/break  
**19:00** conférence d'**Antoine Picon**/keynote lecture by Antoine Picon  
**20:00** dîner-cocktail/cocktail dinner

27 SEPTEMBRE 2024

## CYCLES/TRANSITOIRE CYCLES/TRANSITORY

- 9:00** accueil/reception  
**9:30** introduction de **Stéphane Bonzani**/introduction by Stéphane Bonzani  
**10:00** café/coffee

### CYCLES

Le temps comme ensemble de processus et de rythmes avec lesquels agir. La multiplicité, la répétitivité et les dérèglements temporels comme leviers stratégiques..

Time as processes and rhythms to work with. Multiplicity, repetitiveness and temporal disruption as strategic opportunities.

- 10:20** **Marija Maric**, Beyond Before and After: Repair as a Habitual Practice  
**10:40** **Matthias Armengaud**, Jachère urbaine  
**11:00** **Louis Destombes**, Economie circulaire, ou comment tourner de plus en plus vite  
**11:20** **Jean-Pierre Chupin**, Du cycle de vie anachronique des analogies biologiques  
**11:40** **Philippe Rizzotti**, Enjeux contemporains de l'architecture face à la quantification carbone  
**12:00** **Cécile Regnault & Olivia Lockhart**, Saisonnalité des matériaux bio- et géosourcés (vidéo)  
**12:10** café/coffee  
**12:20** table ronde/round table  
animation : Paolo Amaldi & David Malaud  
**13:00** déjeuner/lunch

### TRANSITOIRE/TRANSITORY

Ce qui ne dure pas. Le temps comme motif d'incertitudes et de ruptures. Le temps dans son caractère transitoire, fragmenté et fragmentant. Inachèvements, suspensions, contingences pour et dans l'architecture.

What doesn't last. Time as a source of uncertainty and disruption. Time as transitory, fragmented and fragmenting. Inachievements, suspensions, contingencies for and in architecture.

- 14:30** **Tristan Denis**, Architectures hétérochroniques  
**14:50** **Adria Daraban**, Fragmentary Temporalities  
**15:10** **Ayesha Safraz**, Temporal Territories: Shifting Urbanisms in the Anthropocene  
**15:30** **Carlotta Darò**, Le temps suspendu de la salle d'attente  
**15:50** **Marc-Antoine Durand**, La critique à contretemps de l'histoire  
**16:15** **Mathieu Berteloot**, Le temps de construire (vidéo)  
**16:25** café/coffee  
**16:40** table ronde/round table  
animation : Véronique Patteeuw & Susanne Stacher  
**17:30** pause/break  
**19:00** conclusion du colloque/end of the conference

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FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSITION

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- **Susanne Stacher**  
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- **Tristan Denis**  
PHD candidate ENSA Versailles /  
CY Cergy Paris Université

## COLLOQUE

26 & 27. 09. 2024  
9am - 8pm

Auditorium  
of the Cité de  
l'architecture  
et du  
patrimoine

Entrance About,  
7 avenue Albert  
de Mun

PARIS