

Collateral Architecture

Architects routinely plan built environments as futures, as projections through representation; but also as speculations in the sense of investments in their realization as interiors, buildings and cities. Often, that work means planning intricate constructions that precede or make place for a building. Consider concrete formwork, or scaffolding. Formwork is the sometimes complex building that holds liquid until it cures as a solid. Scaffolding is similarly supportive of, but secondary to, architecture. These both might be thought of as kinds of “collateral architecture.” Like financial collateral, they are investments, placeholders, crucibles, interim structures. They are collateral in the true sense, and they have long histories.

Today we see other kinds of collateral architectures appear, tied up with new building technologies and new sensing technologies, but also changing finance and new programs in the built environment. Model apartment units, info pavilions, building facade mockups, pop-up retail — all of these are emerging now, and are reliant on embedded IoT devices, blockchain contracts, responsive envelopes. These reveal new sites, new construction methods, new media, and new kinds of use. Collateral architecture remains time-based, but it is also highly sensitive to its particular times.

This seminar will conduct work in both “read” and “write” modes. We will be discussing critical texts in architecture and computation, socio-economic treatises, and more. We will then respond with making exercises, to identify opportunities for new kinds of speculation, new investments in computational design. These can take form as devices, mappings, apps, interactions, data visualizations or other. The seminar’s collective research into collateral architectures will let students come away with ideas for new practices, new users or clients, new uses, and new experiences. Results will be exhibited or published as an investment in the future of our findings.



Infotower with 360° webcam system, BER Airport Construction Site, Kusus+Kusus Architekten