

Jonathan Hale

Tuesday 23th October 5:30-7:00pm Library
(Department of Architecture)

Architecture and Embodiment: From the Prehuman to the Posthuman

To be human - and hence to be embodied - is to be already extended into the world, into what Maurice Merleau-Ponty memorably labeled the 'flesh' of the world: a liminal realm where it is impossible to say categorically what belongs to the self and what belongs to the environment. Merleau-Ponty's notion of an intertwining of the body and its perceptual field is based on the fact that we must inevitably perceive the world through the medium of the experiencing body. In perceptual terms this means that it is impossible to make a meaningful distinction between our experience of the objects (and spaces) around us and our experience of the body itself in the act of experiencing.

This paper provides a brief survey of recent thinking on the relationship between architecture and embodiment - and in particular on the body's prosthetic relationship with technology. By considering these questions within the framework of current evolutionary, cognitive and neuropsychological theory, the paper tries to draw out some of the more significant implications of human embodiment for making and thinking about architecture today.

Jonathan Hale is an architect, Associate Professor & Reader in Architectural Theory at the University of Nottingham. Deputy Head of the Architecture + Urbanism Research Division, and Course Director for the interdisciplinary MA in Architecture and Critical Theory, research interests include: architectural theory and criticism; Phenomenology and the philosophy of technology; the relationship between architecture and the body; digital media in museums and architectural exhibitions. Coordinator for the Department's Architectural Humanities Research Group (AHRG) and founder and a steering group member of the international subject network: Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA).

All welcome.

