arq (2019), **23.4**, 299. © The Author(s), 2020. Published by Cambridge University Press.
doi: 10.1017/S1359135520000044

Situated knowledges in architecture

'Sites are *made*, not *given*', reflects Oren Lieberman in this issue of **arq** (pp. 365–376). They involve 'complex entanglement[s]' between 'a variety of participants' – people, things, processes, institutions, cultural discourses – 'and their predilictions'. Lieberman invokes Donna Haraway's idea of 'situated knowledges': 'a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world' sensitive to how standpoints are constructed, and how contingent they are, while simultaneously not accepting that everything is a matter of opinion. What, Lieberman asks, are 'the modes, the frameworks, the scores, the choreographies through which we might think and [...] practice' in particular physical, social, cultural, and political situations?

The papers collected here pursue this question. Matthew Butcher's speculative designs for 'The Bang Bang House' and 'The Measure House' (pp. 310–330) seek alternative ways of conceptualising climate: imagining situated responses to time, weather, and the path of the sun in terms of embodiment, performance, and softness. Jing Xie examines *zaojing*, or lantern ceilings in early China (pp. 349–363), which were understood in their time and place as both signifiers of social rank and magical fire protection devices. Fittingly for our December issue, Ana Ábalos Ramos examines Alison and Peter Smithson's Christmas exhibitions – specifically the idea of the carnival masque as a test bed of ideas – imagined as a form of situated knowledge (pp. 331–348). Through these events, she reflects, the Smithsons 'turned the spotlight on people, on appropriation possibilities, on layers of occupation and [...] the arts of inhabitation', emphasising 'architecture able to respond to different moments and different patterns of occupancy'.

Following a recent period which has questioned the value of architectural theory in our field, academics and practitioners seem to be engaging once again with ideas of architectural knowledge – prompted (arguably) by the urgent response required to human-made climate change, and the end of Francis Fukayama's 'end of history'. Lately, a series of events have inquired into our disciplinary foundations, including: 'Architectural Theory Now?' at the University of Pennyslvania; the symposium series 'This Thing Called Theory', most recently convened at the Architectural Association; and 'Theory's Curriculum' organised out of Virginia Tech, Syracuse University, The University of Toronto, and others. The first two events are reviewed here. As Jane McAllister and Ali AlYousefi's commentaries highlight, both events emphasised situated knowledges in architecture in terms of site, social life, politics, and culture. Indeed, the important question of situated knowledges is something to which, no doubt, future papers in **arq** will return.

THE EDITORS

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1359135520000044 Published online by Cambridge University Press