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JENNIFER JOHUNG

6 PM | CENTRE SPACE | JOHN A. RUSSELL BUILDING



VITAL DEPENDENCIES: ARCHITECTURE, PERFORMANCE, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY


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SYNOPSIS | The field of architecture has recently incorporated performance-oriented vocabularies and systems, so that buildings are no longer only conceived as objects, but are designed and constructed according to what they do, or how they perform in response to their users' needs. Expanding upon its incorporation into the visual arts, performance links up with contemporary architecture in order to theorize as well as to configure a process of live material interactions between structures and bodies. But what happens when performative architecture aligns with advances in biotechnology in order to produce living habitats out of organically alive tissues? What kind of alternative living structures and conditions are proposed when cells and tissue cultures are synthesized, excised and recombined in order to grow architectural surfaces and spaces? A burgeoning range of experiments in synthetic fabrication is now in conversation with biomimetic and breeding architectures that, in turn, seek to generate biological systems of development. As these architectural and techno-scientific practices converge, the encounters and exchanges between various scales of living matter challenge us to re-determine the boundaries between the spaces, sites, surfaces and skins of our built environment and of our own living bodies.

BIO | Jennifer Johung is Associate Professor of Contemporary Art and Architectural History at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. She is the author of *Replacing Home: From Primordial Hut to Digital Network in Contemporary Art* (University of Minnesota, 2012), and the co-editor of *Landscapes of Mobility: Culture, Politics and Placemaking* (Ashgate, 2013). She has published articles on topics ranging from performance, visual, and urban studies to bio art and biotechnology, in the journals such as *Leonardo* and *Theory, Culture, and Society*. Her newest book: *Vital Dependencies: Biological Art, Architecture, and the Forming of Life* is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press. In addition to her research, she also curates exhibitions, most recently in New York and Perth, Australia.

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