
David Cotterrell: THAAP - 08.11.15

Date: 8th November 2015

David will present his paper, 'Empathy and Risk' at the 6th International THAAP Conference 2015 on 08 November at 43-G, Gulberg-III, Lahore, Pakistan.

The Trust or History, Art and Architecture of Pakistan, Series of Conferences began, in 2010, with Historiography of Architecture in Pakistan and the Region. The conference has grown in scope and depth; celebrated scholars from around the world have been invited to contribute to a wider dialogue, which is relevant and timely to undertake within Pakistan. It is time to revisit the opportunities, issues and problems of writing history in general and Pakistan in particular. This year's conference is brought together under the theme, 'The People's History of Pakistan'

David's paper introduces the themes and concerns that are motivating a wider research project and a new body of work:

Empathy and Risk (Abstract)

Late C20th historians suggested that the linear narrative of passive communities being defined and led by dynamic individuals was illusory. It was suggested that localism could be used to consider that the same moment had a different significance depending on the nation, county, town, tribe or family that you lived within. This offered the tantalizing promise of a potentially infinite pluralist contradiction of narratives.

The paper seeks to consider the staged challenges to pluralism within contemporary histories that are occurring prior to the descent into the polarised engagement of military forces. Where risk has been identified, and measures are variably employed as responsive protocols, a situation of distancing occurs most obviously between the observer and the subject, but also between the perceptions of different observers. This paper will seek to explore the contradictory nature of mutually exclusive versions of truth, the way in which risk can be a catalyst to the creation of partial truths and the possibility of the loss of pluralist narratives as communities and individuals are denied access to each others vantage points.

The various and progressive acceptance of limitation of movement, compound walls, the frame of the armoured car, the company of security personnel and the adherence to defensive protocols, all contextualise environments and its communities as posing a threat. While engagement may well be maintained, potentially the nature of the communication and awareness of alternate perspectives is fundamentally challenged by the behavioural shift that has been displayed.

The paper will discuss the relationship between the mitigation of risk and loss of empathetic engagement. Perhaps this issue is of greatest relevance in contemporary areas of tension where a delicate balance between the maintenance of consent and the tolerance of risk to civilian, governmental and NGO representatives must be maintained.

Location: 43-G, Gulberg-III, Lahore, Pakistan

Date and Time: Sunday November 8 Afternoon Session: 14.50 - 18.30

Further information: Full conference program and associated events.



Credit: Razaq Vance (2015)