

Dwelling, Walking, Falling: an international conference on the Experience of Everyday Space

How do we experience space? How do we navigate and inhabit the city?

The conference Dwelling, Walking, Falling addresses the social, political and psychoanalytical modes through which we encounter and interact with urban space. The focus will be on the individual and collective experiences of architecture and urbanism, and the ways in which these experiences operate at the levels of everyday reality as well as imagination and fantasy. In order to develop a set of more accurate tools with which to approach this psycho-social nexus, we will let ourselves be guided by experimental practices and theories in the fields of twentieth- and twenty-first century art and architecture, engaging with the role of play, desire and fear within urban and architectural experience, focusing on liminal states such as sleepwalking or getting lost, and mapping out relations between falling bodies, urban decay, or abandoned spaces.

This inter-disciplinary conference will bring together art historians, architecture historians and geographers. Speakers will include: Simon Baker (Nottingham University), Steven Gartside (Manchester Metropolitan University), Susan Laxton (Columbia University, New York), David Lomas (University of Manchester), James Meyer (Emory University, Georgia), Arnauld Pierre (Université Paris IV-Sorbonne), Steve Pile (Open University), David Pinder (Queen Mary, London) Judith Rodenbeck (Sarah Lawrence College, New York), Frances Tracey (University College London), Eyal Weizman (Goldsmiths College, London) (to be confirmed) and Richard Williams (Edinburgh University).

The conference will coincide with the new exhibition Subversive Spaces: Surrealism and Contemporary Art at the Whitworth Art Gallery, which employs space as a rubric in order to trace some of the most vital legacies of surrealism in the work of a number of leading contemporary artists. The exhibition focuses on the domestic interior and the city street, two spaces that are fundamental to the surrealist imaginary and that resonate with contemporary art practice.

Organized by Anna Dezeuze and Samantha Lackey.