

Secret Cities

Material Cultures and the Representation of Knowledge November 23, 2017

Lecture: Dr. Xenia Vytuleva (ZGW guest/ Columbia University, NY)

Introduction: Prof. Philip Ursprung (ETHZ/ZGW)

Respondent: Prof. Kenny Cupers (University of Basel)

Place & Time: ETH Zürich, RZ building, Clausiusstrasse 59, 8092 Zurich, Room F 21, 6.15-8pm



A secret city Sverdlovsk 44, located in the Urals Mountains, the image features a utopian "green-cycling" plan 1946, recently declassified.

How can we de-code secret cities? What is the urban logic of secret zones? How can material cultures contribute to the apparatus of secrecy? And finally, how do we read the powerful interlocking of secrecy, space and knowledge production? Dr. Xenia Vytuleva renders visible the phenomenon of secret cities during the Cold War, providing a close reading in philosophy of materials, extracting architectural formulas and tropes essential for the representation of strategic knowledge.

Xenia Vytuleva is an architecture historian, theorist and curator. Her scholarship is focused on new modes of preservation, governance by design and knowledge production, the intersection of architecture, art and politics. Before joining the team of Philosophy at the ETH Zurich, she was teaching at the Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation at Columbia University in New York. Vytuleva is currently working on the manuscripts "Secret Cities" and "Aesthetics of Uncertainty in Contemporary Artistic Practices" and a project entitled "North Trans-National, Towards the Integrated Knowledge".