

December 10, 2013

ANNUAL REPORT OF STS-CH, 2013 (JANUARY – DECEMBER)

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1. EVENTS OF STS-CH IN 2013

1.1 WORKSHOP: STS TURNS AESTHETIC: ARCHITECTURE - DESIGN AND THE FINE ARTS AS EPISTEMIC CULTURES IN THE MAKING.

Thursday 7 November and Friday 8 November 2013,
ETH Zurich.

Organisation: Priska Gisler, Monika Kurath, Anna Flach, Drilona Shehu, Monica Gaspar.

This workshop focused on how STS methods and approaches can be used to analyse architecture, art and design as well as their specific practices. Furthermore, a particular emphasis was placed on the question, how the methodological and conceptual tools could be shaped to give consideration to the specific aesthetic understandings and situations of knowledge production in these fields. Thus, the workshop also considered cultural studies perspectives from within the analysed disciplines. A last discussion topic was on institutional transformations and their impact on knowledge production and the education of aesthetic practices. Therefore, the aim of this workshop was threefold: First, it discussed how aesthetic practices in architecture, design and the fine arts have been conceptualized by STS analyses. Second, it asked what STS might learn from methodologies of artistic disciplines and third, it discussed some of the consequences of institutional changes in those fields.

1.2 STS SEMINAR. MARC AUDÉTAT.

The STS Seminar started activities in 2013. It consists of a network of doctoral students, researchers and teachers interested in science and technology studies around Lausanne. It is open to any individual interested. It aims first at coordinating the events organised within the University of Lausanne and in neighbouring institutions. It announces the public events to all and allows participants to organise dedicated events according to their needs, especially around those of doctoral students. Typically, it is advertising the STS events of the *Science – Society Interface* (ISS-Unil), of the *Observatoire Science, Politique et Société* (OSPS-Unil), of the *Fondation Verdan – Musée de la main* (Unil-CHUV), of the *Institut d'histoire de la médecine et de la santé publique* (IHMSP-Unil). It has created linkages with the Seminar in Digital humanities of the recently created *Laboratoire des humanités digitales* (LADHUL-Unil) and of the *Digital humanities laboratory* (DH-Lab EPFL), and with the « Sciences Citoyennes » initiative of public debates organised by the *Science education and history of science* professorship at the University of Geneva. Based on the success of the doctoral workshop « Les non-dits de la théorie » organised by STS-CH in 2011, the Seminar will organise annually a doctoral day to allow participants to exchange on STS methods and theory.

1.3 MEETING EASST COUNCIL & NATIONAL STS ASSOCIATIONS (LONDON, NOVEMBER 25, 2013)

On invitation by the president of the European Association for the Studies of Science and Technology (EASST), different representatives of national associations affiliated with the social study of science met at Westminster University, London, on November 25th of this year. The meeting provided occasion to discuss the current situation of this field, meet old and new colleagues and further develop ongoing international collaborations.

2. EVENTS IN 2014 (REALIZED AND PROJECTED)

These events will feature in more detail in next year's Annual Report.

2.1 EDITORIAL PROJECT *TECNOSCIENZE*

As requested by the Italian journal *Tecnoscienze*, STS-CH will establish a cartography of existing institutions and ongoing research in the domain of the social studies of science in Switzerland. Not only will this survey allow to promote Swiss science and technology studies abroad, but will also help the scholars working in this field in Switzerland to connect and collaborate more easily. The publication is set for Autumn 2014.

2.2 SWISS STS MEETING 2014: COLLECTING, ORGANIZING, TRADING BIG DATA

Thursday 20 February, Friday 21 February, Saturday 22 February 2014.

University of Lausanne.

Organization : Marc Audétat, Emilie Bovet, Nolwenn Buehler, Gabriel Dorthe, Olivier Glassey, Christel Gumy, Alain Kaufmann, Jelena Martinovic, Martina Merz, Francesco Panese, Vincent Pidoux, Michael Posse, Nicholas Stücklin.

The meeting is devoted to the subject of big data, of scientific projects based on the production, management and analysis of very large quantities of data. Creating biobanks, statistical processing of behavior and ways of life of large cohorts, computerized modeling of cerebral functioning or human genome sequencing are research practices that a priori seem to bear witness to new ways of doing science. They raise novel questions as to their impact and the concrete applications they promise both in social and sanitary politics as well as in the development of new technologies. This meeting attempts to scrutinize the notion of big and its effects (conceptual, rhetoric and practical) in the human and life sciences through two lines of thought: Does the processing of large quantities of data give way to more reliable, useful, efficient, convincing and implementable explanations or does it generate new problems? How do the fabrication modes and tools of big data differ from the ones employed in the production of atlases, encyclopedias, censuses or other collections of information in the 19th and 20th centuries? In short, the meeting will analyze the effects of big data in human and life sciences as well as in the development of new technologies from a historical, ethnographical and critical perspective. Experts with various backgrounds will address the impact, application, promises and controversies related to them.

This meeting will also be the occasion for STS-CH to hold its general meeting (probably on Friday 21 February).

3. COMMUNICATION

3.1 Website

The STS-CH website has yet again moved and is now hosted by SAGW, using « Magnolia » software (<http://www.sagw.ch/de/sagw.html>). The website is being updated and refreshed. Ideally, it should move toward something more dynamic, where scholars could easily reach each other on this

platform and expand their social and academical network and interest.

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3.2 Mailing List and members

The mailing list is a vital tool of communication for the network of STS scholars across the country and beyond. The list has now a total of about 250 subscribers. STS-CH has received 6 new members this year, and currently counts 110 members.

3.3 General Assembly 2013

Because STS-CH is organizing a big meeting in Lausanne in Feb 20-22 2014, the board decided to postpone its yearly General Assembly (usually held at the end of the year) to Feb 20, 2014, in order to benefit from the presence of a large number of delegates, and to attract new members.

3.4 Change of presidency and correspondence address, board members

On the last General Assembly on October 25, 2012, Prof. Dr. Martina Merz (Lucerne) resigned from the presidency of STS-CH. Dr. Emilie Bovet and Graduate Assistant Nicholas Stücklin (both Lausanne) presented their joint candidacy as co-presidents and were elected unanimously by the board. With this change of presidency, the correspondence address of STS-CH is moved to the University of Lausanne:

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On the General Assembly of Oct 25, 2012, Olivier Glassey (Lausanne) and Mario Kaiser (Basel) resigned from the board. Vincent Pidoux (Lausanne) was elected new member of the board.