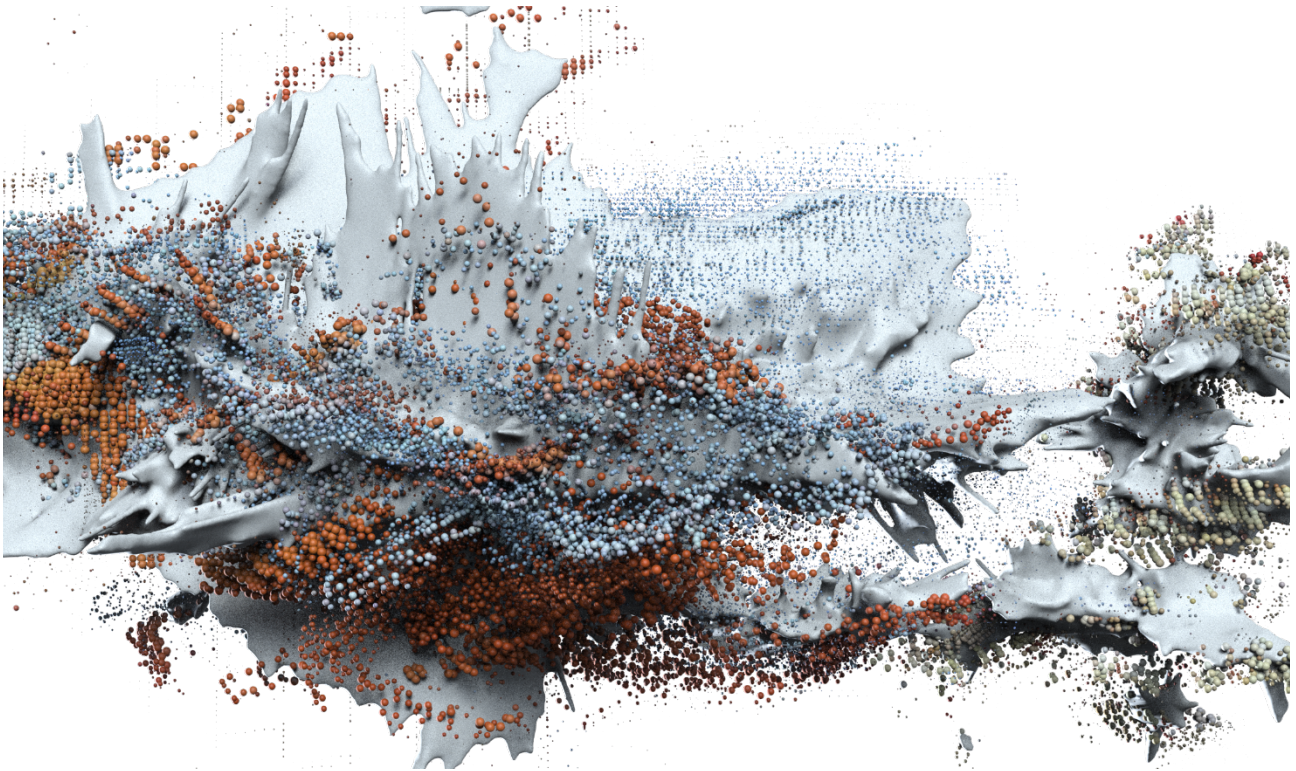


Open call

TRAITS of Postdigital Neobaroque

International conference, 8th-9th December 2022, Obergurgl, Austria



Tropic Spectacle @ Ars Electronica (2021)

‘Face it - the Digital Revolution is over.’

(Nicholas Negroponte, *Beyond Digital*, 1998)

Organised by the research group **PDNB**. Funded by the FWF-PEEK (Austrian Science Fund, Programme for Arts-based Research), led by Prof. Marjan Colletti at the Department for Experimental Architecture, Universität Innsbruck, Austria.

In his 1992 book *Neo-baroque: A Sign of the Times* Italian semiologist Omar Calabrese suggested that the post-modern 1980s were infused with a pervasive *neo-baroque* spirit of ‘instability, polydimensionality, and change’, which could be witnessed in the production and consumption of art and science, architecture and literature, entertainment and media. In the 2000 essay *The Aesthetics of Failure: “Post-Digital” Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music* sonic artist Kim Cascone coined the term *post-digital*. Reflecting (in particular in electronic music) about the aesthetics of failure of the time beyond the digital revolution. Twenty/thirty years later, ‘some post-modern ideas of complexity and indeterminacy have been revived, and powerfully vindicated by today’s new science of computation’ (Mario Carpo, *The Alternative Science of Computation*, 2019) potentially bringing *neobaroque* and *postdigital* traits closer together. Both, the *postdigital* and the *neobaroque* are fertile fields of scholarly research and artistic production that have increasingly been adopted by multiple disciplines, whereby independently and never in combination with each other. Surprisingly so. Firstly, because design-research has become increasingly inter- and transdisciplinary. Secondly, because since the beginning, the notion of the ‘baroque’ has been a keyword in digital architectural theory and design. Therefore, two main questions arise: What are *postdigital neobaroque* traits? Further, what theoretical and aesthetical framework for architectural theory and design would the interlinking of *neobaroque* and *postdigital* suggest?

This call asks contributors to reflect upon the described interlinkage between the two terms and to find individual, open interpretations. Research has shown that there is no agreement on a common aesthetic canon given by the *neobaroque* and the *postdigital* paradigms: in architecture, for example, one post-digital trajectory aims at static, simple, 2D flat collages, whilst the other points to dynamic, complex, 4D animated computational systems. The conference addresses the latter and hopes to create a platform for like-minded theorists and artists to exchange ideas and visions and to discover each other’s work. The aim is to collect a broad spectrum of contributions to trigger a discourse on contemporary design and theory. Submissions by multidisciplinary teams and collaborations are strongly encouraged. All work should deal with explicit examples and should include references to contemporary *neobaroque postdigital* aesthetics and ethics.

The conference engages with the following questions that may but do not have to be answered:

- How do we break dichotomies in describing phenomena of a transition from *digital* to *postdigital*?
- How do we distinguish between the use of digital *tools/methods* and a *digitalised society*? Hence, is the use of digital *tools* conditional to the use of *postdigital aesthetics*?
- Is there a *neobaroque* and/or *postdigital* aesthetic/form that exists independently from historic references (the baroque, the digital)? Can we discuss a *neobaroque* aesthetic outside postmodern systems of referencing?
- Is the *neobaroque* similarly inherent to *postdigital* architectural theory and design of the 2010s and 2020s as the *baroque* was to digital architectural theory and design of the 1990s and 2000s?

Submission types:

Projects:

The call specifically asks for design work that extends the *neobaroque* concept of thought towards *postdigital* traits and vice versa, artistically illustrates theoretical ideas from this discourse and describes/operates on thresholds between the *neobaroque* and the *postdigital*. Project submissions are not limited to the presentation of design works per se, but can also include speculative experiments, theoretical arguments, mission statements, observations, multi-media (incl. AR/VR/MR) installations, or provocative artefacts. They will be discussed and showcased in an onsite exhibition.

Theories:

Contributors are invited to use the stated questions as a starting point for their reflections. If particularly suitable examples are found, then the contribution may be based on a *comparative formal analysis* of either built or designed architectural projects, art, literary works, performances, or video pieces — highlighting differences and/or similarities. This method is at the core of the theoretical side of the research project. Since the Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin famously described, in *Principles of Art History* (1915), the formal differences between the Baroque and the Renaissance.

Discussions will meet in the following conference spaces:

- The Grotto: materials, fabrication, interiorities.
- The Garden: nature, landscape, biodiversity, biotech.
- The Theatre: experience, media, entertainment, spectacle.
- The Palace: politics, economics, power.
- The Piazza: urbanity, public and civic spaces, exteriorities.
- The Boudoir: the body, gender studies, medicine, bionics.

Both project and theoretical contributions can refer to any of the above-listed questions or spaces, but are invited to indicate at least one aimed conference space.

Submission format: All submissions must provide an abstract of a maximum of 500 words (excl. references) and can be accompanied by up to three images or movie links if applicable. Submissions should be sent via email by **3rd April 2022** to: traits2022-pdnb@uibk.ac.at

The email should contain a single Microsoft Word file (.docx) with all images and links embedded. Abstracts must be submitted blinded including no information that can be used to identify the author(s). Please indicate your name and affiliation in the email's body only. Please also indicate which submission type, format, and conference space you aim to contribute to. Potential contributors will be notified and asked to submit the full paper. More details concerning the presentation format and length will be provided at a later stage.

- Important dates:** Abstract submission: **8th April 2022 (extended Deadline)**
Notification of abstract acceptance: 1st May 2022
Full paper submission: 3rd July 2022
Registration: 16th October 2022
Project Exhibition: 7th-10th December 2022
Conference: 8th-9th December 2022
- Web:** https://www.uibk.ac.at/projects/postdigital_neobaroque/
https://www.uibk.ac.at/projects/postdigital_neobaroque/traits-conference.html
- Submission formats:** *Full papers:* 4000 words + figures
Work-in-progress papers: 2000 words + figures
Projects: 500 words + images
Films: 500 words + film (for films over 5 minutes please prepare a teaser)
Posters: 500 words + poster (undergrad./grad. students only, no PhDs)
- Conference format:** The conference will be held in person, pending further sanitary measures. It is planned to visit the faculty of architecture and allow much time for discussions. More information concerning the venue can be found here:
<https://www.uibk.ac.at/uz-obergurgl/>
- Contact:** traits2022-pdnb@uibk.ac.at
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6020 Innsbruck (Austria)
- Scientific committee:** Univ.-Prof. Dipl.Ing. Marjan Colletti, Dott. MArch PhD
Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Peter Massin
Dipl.-Ing. Theresa Uitz BSc BA
Andreas Körner BSc MArch
(to be extended)