

Invitation to BSA Seminar

Design and 'the Social': Mapping new Approaches to Inequality in Design

Tuesday 7 February 2017, 1.30pm-6.30pm

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Keynote Speaker:

Dr Lucy Kimbell, Director of the Innovations Insights Hub,
University of the Arts London

With contributions from:

Prof Mike Savage, Co-Director of the International Inequalities
Institute, LSE and Dr Adam Kaasa, Director of Theatrum Mundi,
LSE

Event Outline

'Design' is a term that is gaining momentum in social science research, with new works engaging with the term emerging in anthropology (Gunn et al 2015), cultural studies (Kimbell 2011; McRobbie 2016), science and technology studies (Farias & Wilkie 2016) and philosophy (Parsons 2015). These important works explore how actors operate in wider cultural and economic fields. Seemingly missing from this picture is a critical engagement with the ways in which designers theorise, engage with, and act upon notions of 'the social' and how these may challenge or reaffirm (social) 'inequality'. Designers are tasked with speculating about future ways of living and therefore engage in 'sociological' practices, putting a range of 'classificatory systems' (Tyler 2015) to work to make sense *of* and design *for* people. 'Classing' people as part of this commercial and 'sociological work' is not only socially intentional, but consequential. It can, therefore, reaffirm or challenge 'inequality' beyond the notions of 'class' and 'capital' (Bourdieu 1986). This event looks to map out the contemporary social science research and thinking into design to explore how designers operate as social theorists, actors and activists. It aims to engage with the current and politically pressing inequality debate while negotiating the specificities of design as a profession that is both creative and commercial. This seminar will present a range of compelling papers from a wide range of disciplines to discuss the following questions: In what ways do designers operate on and engage with 'the social'? What kinds of concepts emerge in relation to (social) inequalities when we look at different design processes? How can engaging with design practices broaden the discussion of inequality? The two sessions will be chaired by Prof Angela McRobbie, Professor of Communications, Goldsmiths College and Dr Liz Moor, Senior Lecturer in Media and Communications, Goldsmiths College.

Registration

BSA Member Registration £10, Non-Member Registration £25. Registration link:
<https://portal.britsoc.co.uk/public/event/eventBooking.aspx?id=EVT10618>