EVENTS

FILM
The Human Scale
Mon 30 Oct, 7.30pm
Life in a mega city is both enchanting and problematic. Danish architect and Professor Jan Gehl documents how modern cities repel human interaction. In The Human Scale he argues that we can build cities in a way that takes the human need for inclusion and intimacy into account.
Followed by post-show discussion with architect and Professor Peter Clegg, and Marion Milne, Bath-based Emmy-nominated Director and film maker.
Event kindly supported by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

SPECIAL EVENT
Robin Hood Gardens Remembered
Fri 3 Nov, 6.30pm-8pm
An evening considering the much debated demolition of Alison and Peter Smithson’s Robin Hood Gardens in London, a social housing offering scheduled for demolition. How will Robin Hood Gardens be remembered once it’s gone? For further details about this event please see edgearts.org

SYMPOSIUM
Alison and Peter Smithson: Ideas, Impact, Architecture
Sat 4 Nov, 10.30am-5pm
Featuring leading international architects, artists and thinkers this symposium investigates the legacy and impact of British architectural pioneers Alison and Peter Smithson across urbanism, habitation and education. Speakers include Simon Smithson and Peter Salter (2017 RIBA award winner and project architect for A+PS), Assemble, Christine Boyer, David Turnbull, Keith Bradley, Juliet Bidgood, Dr Amy Frost (Bath Preservation Trust) and more. This event is designed to appeal to audiences with a specialist or broad interest. For the full symposium programme and schedule see edgearts.org. £45 (including lunch and refreshments)
Event kindly supported by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
Parallel (of Life and) Architecture invites three ‘duos’ of architects, artists and designers to respond to the legacy of Alison and Peter Smithson (A+PS), their relationship with the avant-garde and architecture as a ‘direct result of a way of life.’

Echoing the methods and collaborative processes during their breakthrough phase as architects in 1950s Britain, the resulting commissions offer insight into their research and creative practice. Assemble & Simon Terrill, Warren & Mosley, The Decorators & GOIG each take key developments in the Smithsons’ oeuvre as creative departure points including: calculations for collective planning (Scales of association 1954); temporary structures (Patio and Pavilion 1956); and historiographical approaches (Urban Decoration, Milan Triennale 1968).

Echoing the methods and collaborative processes of A+PS during their breakthrough phase as architects in 1950s Britain, the resulting commissions offer insight into their research and creative practice. Assemble and Simon Terrill, Warren & Mosley, The Decorators and GOIG each take key developments in the Smithsons’ oeuvre as creative departure points including: calculations for collective planning (Scales of association 1954); temporary structures (Patio and Pavilion 1956); and historiographical approaches (Transformations of the city, Milan Triennale 1968).

Seen collectively the exhibition highlights the Smithsons’ impact and lasting relevance as radical thinkers. Though concerned with how we lived then, their ideas continue to influence how we live now and undoubtedly will in the future.

The exhibition’s title is taken from the ground-breaking exhibition Parallel of Life and Art, staged in 1953 at the ICA, London by the Smithsons, artist photographer Nigel Henderson and sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi.

Alison Smithson (1928-1993)
Peter Smithson (1923-2003)

Peter Smithson was born in Stockton-On-Tees. He studied architecture at Durham University but with the advent of WW2, joined the army as an engineer. He met Alison Gill when he returned to University after the war—when they both completed their architecture degrees. After initially working for London County Council on various post-war building projects, they established their own architectural practice in 1950.

Brutalism and architectural developments
Alison and Peter Smithson’s Hunstanton School in Norfolk (1947-54), is the first building that was identified as heralding a new style which critic Reyner Banham described as ‘New Brutalism.’ The etymology of ‘Brutalism’ is traced to the French béton brut – ‘raw concrete’. The Smithsons’ Brutalist style was characterized by a focus on low-cost materials and a modular design with consideration for their inhabitants and facilitation of communities. Le Corbusier’s aesthetic as seen in Unité d’Habitation in Marseille, 1952, clearly influenced the Smithsons’ approach. A particular characteristic is the nation of designing the internal ‘street’, which informed Smithson’s ‘streets-in-the-skies’ so characteristic of social housing projects in the 1960s and 70s.

Following The Hunstanton school was The Economist Building (1959-64), the Garden Building at St Hilda’s College in Oxford (1967-70), and finally Robin Hood Gardens (1966-72). Robin Hood Gardens was the Smithsons’ first opportunity to put their ideas for a new type of social housing into practice. They were driven to facilitate social interaction and reduce, the ill-effects of an increasingly motorized world, yet the development was quickly subject to vandalism, with many living in poverty.

The Smithsons and the University of Bath
Alison and Peter Smithson designed many buildings on the University of Bath campus. They admired the original 1960s design of the University of Bath by RMJM Architects and saw their additions as ‘mat-building’, stating that the campus was like a fabric laying on the sloping landscape of the hillside. The Smithsons’ designs include: Amenity Building (6 West South) 1978-85, The Arts Theatre now Edge Theatre 1980-90, the entrance to University Hall, 1983, and The Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering building (6 East) 1980-88, was designed to carry students arriving on campus up to its heart on the Parade.

The Smithsons and Bath, Walks within the Walls
During the 1960s-70s Bath was a city experiencing immense change through the large-scale demolition of its historic architecture. The City of Bath Act 1969 (1969) saw the city’s historic architecture be protected for the first time as a statutory list. The City of Bath Act 1999 (1980) extended this protection and the City of Bath Authority was established to care for the historic environment. The Smithsons and Bath, Walks within the Walls produced during the 1960s-70s Bath was a city experiencing immense change through the large-scale demolition of its historic architecture. The City of Bath Act 1969 (1969) saw the city’s historic architecture be protected for the first time as a statutory list. The City of Bath Act 1999 (1980) extended this protection and the City of Bath Authority was established to care for the historic environment. The Smithsons and Bath, Walks within the Walls produced during the 1960s-70s Bath was a city experiencing immense change through the large-scale demolition of its historic architecture. The City of Bath Act 1969 (1969) saw the city’s historic architecture be protected for the first time as a statutory list. The City of Bath Act 1999 (1980) extended this protection and the City of Bath Authority was established to care for the historic environment.

Timeline
1947-54 Hunstanton School in Norfolk
1949 Alison and Peter Smithson marry
1950 A+PS established own architectural practice
1953 Parallal of Life and Art, ICA in 1952
1956 This is tomorrow exhibition at the ICA, including Patio and Pavilion
1966-72 Robin Hood Gardens
1968 XVth Milan Triennale, Transformation of the city
1969 Bath: Walks within the Walls produced
1980-88 6 East, University of Bath

Associated Exhibition: Please visit Past Present, Future: Bath and the Smithsons at the Museum of Bath Architecture until 26 November 2017. This original and fascinating exhibition brings together models of University of Bath and further showcases how Bath inspired the work of Alison and Peter Smithson.

1949
Alison and Peter Smithson marry
1950 A+PS established own architectural practice
1953 Parallal of Life and Art, ICA in 1952
1956 This is tomorrow exhibition at the ICA, including Patio and Pavilion
1966-72 Robin Hood Gardens
1968 XVth Milan Triennale, Transformation of the city
1969 Bath: Walks within the Walls produced
1980-88 6 East, University of Bath

Associated Exhibition: Please visit Past Present, Future: Bath and the Smithsons at the Museum of Bath Architecture until 26 November 2017. This original and fascinating exhibition brings together models of University of Bath and further showcases how Bath inspired the work of Alison and Peter Smithson.