



The Architect and the Public
On George Baird's Contribution
to Architecture

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Habitat

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“The old binaries that we, ‘the theory generation,’ used to fight about—theory versus history, formalism versus realism, autonomy versus social engagement, culture versus media, critical versus post-critical—seem quite flat and dry. There is much more volume now, more layering, more color, though, perhaps, less depth. George Baird can claim to have been one of the few to usher in this new imbrication of design research and a kind of ‘theory-in-the-making.’”

K. Michael Hays

Is architecture indeed a public matter? What makes it public? What agency does the architect have to empower architecture's publics?

The Architect and the Public presents a range of original perspectives on the Canadian architect George Baird's theoretical work in connection with his teaching and design practice. Working across several media and cultural contexts, Baird played a significant role in the debate on architecture's meaning and appearance in light of the cultural and disciplinary changes that happened in the second half of the twentieth century in North America and beyond. This volume spans more than fifty years to construct the first collective critical reflection on his contribution to architectural discourse, in particular to the theory of the public in architecture and urbanism. Assembling previously unpublished archival material, essays, and interviews representing an intergenerational group of voices, the book includes contributions by Pier Vittorio Aureli, Marc Baraness, Joseph Bedford, Adrian Blackwell, Andrew Choptiany, Scott Colman, Peter Eisenman, Kenneth Frampton, K. Michael Hays, Hans Ibelings, Bruce Kuwabara, Lars Lerup, Louis Martin, John van Nostrand, Joan Ockman, Michael Piper, Richard M. Sommer, Hans Teerds, and Mirko Zardini.

The distinct intellectual paths of these nineteen contributors converge on Baird's career as an example of the architect's public engagement in contemporary society.