

## **Architectural Ethnography or On The Architect's filter in using Ethnography**

Paola Briata - Gennaro Postiglione

'Architectural ethnography' has increasingly been a focus of attention thanks to studies by Albená Yaneva and practices and research carried out by Momoyo Kaijima with her Atelier Bow Wow. Starting from these well-known examples, this essay reviews the literature related to ethnography when used by architects, planners, and researchers interested in forms, materiality, and uses of space in everyday life. This review is then used to define, through convergences and distances, a specific positioning we have been assuming while conducting research and teaching design-based courses. This path has led to further reflections on knowledge processes in architectural ethnography and to a tentative (and open) checklist to express our positioning in teaching.

The generative value of representation is very clear: drawings, photos and texts dialogue in a tension aimed at telling a story of something that before the process was not visible. A situated knowledge producing thick descriptions and imaginaries is performed. The visualisation could be seen as a form of thick description with a synthetic and generative value.

At the same time, the mainstream view on the innovative aspects of architectural ethnography is challenged by a reflection on how much 'tradition' (in a positive sense) is apparent in this recent stream of research, given that good architects (and planners) education and training has always been, in some way 'ethnographic'.

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Img. C01  
Collective  
outdoor  
livingroom  
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