

OWN ACC IDENT

A CONFERENCE ON ACCIDENT DECEMBER 11-12 2009 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL of ARCHITECTURE BETTS AUDITORIUM

FRIDAY
12/11

6pm
KEYNOTE

JEFFREY
SCHNAPP
Founder/Director,
Stanford
Humanities Lab,
STANFORD
UNIVERSITY

THE
ACCIDENT
WAITING
TO HAPPEN

SATURDAY
12/12

10am
BEGINNING

Bridget
ALSDORF
PRINCETON
-
Guy
NORDENSON
PRINCETON
-
Eric
ROSENBERG
TUFTS

1pm
MIDDLES

Ross
HAMILTON
BARNARD
-
Eileen
REEVES
PRINCETON
-
Michael
WITMORE
UW MADISON

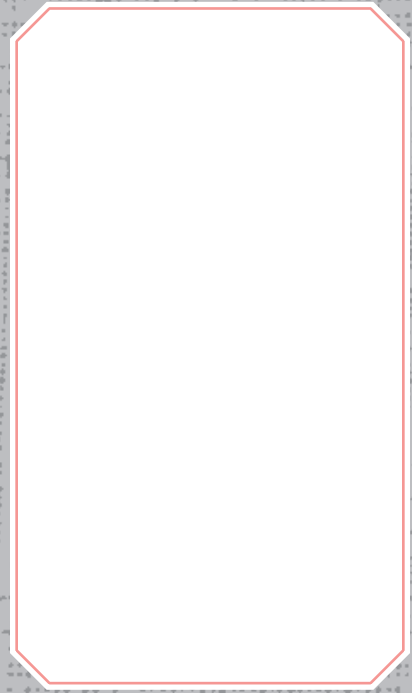
3:30pm
ENDING

Edward
EIGEN
PRINCETON
-
Ben
KAFKA
NYU
-
Andrew
ZAGO
SCI-ARC

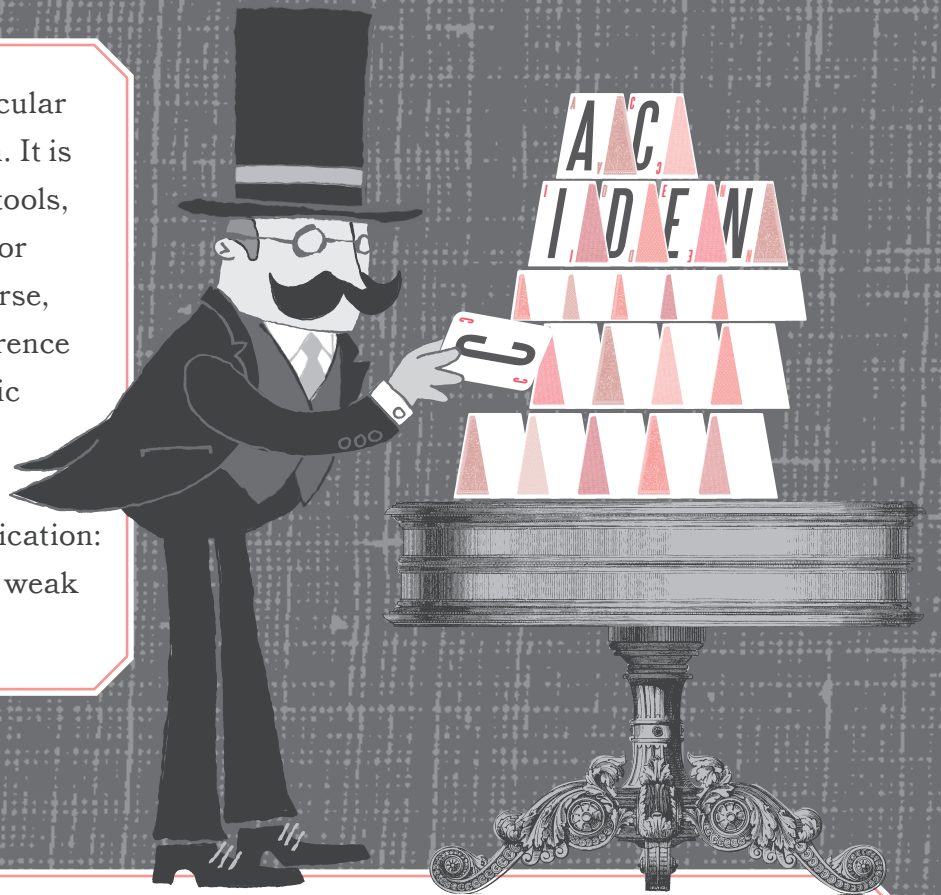
ORGANIZED BY
Edward EIGEN
with Tei CARPENTER

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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internet <http://soa.princeton.edu>.



This conference insists on accident as an irreducibly particular object for, and ineluctable feature of, research and design. It is worth remembering that one of the architect's most basic tools, the T-square (L. norma), is implicated in plotting what passes for "normal." The consequences of line drawing for narrative discourse, in which accidents matter crucially, is literally illustrated in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, the riotously non-straightforward logic of which is one certain source of inspiration. No less telling are architecture's metaphorical constructions, notably as they figure in Philip Sidney's *The Defense of Poesie*, his sense of tragic edification: "[Tragedy] teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilded roofs are built."



What is still closer to our concerns is Sidney's discussion of example and precept. He writes, "in his bare was" the historian "is so tied, not to what should be, but to what is, to the particular truth of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence." The philosopher, for his part, in his "bare rule," gives the precept for what should be, without showing why it is so. It is the poet, finally, who "coupleth the general notion with the particular example." Departing from the bare rule (norma), there is something about the "particular truth of things" that seems an intriguing place to enter a discussion of accident.

