

03.31

# Jennifer Robinson + Christian Schmid:

## The Comparative Gesture

Monday, March 31, 2025, 12.00-1.30PM  
Room 1360, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

A discussion with Jennifer Robinson and Christian Schmid  
about their recent books on urban comparative research,  
with a particular focus on African cities.

Jennifer Robinson is Professor of Human Geography, University College London, UK. She is the author of *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (2006), a seminal work which developed a postcolonial critique of urban studies, and *Comparative Urbanism: Tactics for Global Urban Studies* (2023). The latter book proposes grounds for reformatting comparative urban practice and offers a wide range of tactics for researching global urban experiences. Her empirical research in South Africa examined the history of apartheid cities and the politics of post-apartheid city-visioning, while her comparative research has considered urban development politics in London, Shanghai and Johannesburg, and transnational circuits shaping African urbanization.

Christian Schmid is an urban researcher, geographer and sociologist, Professor of Sociology, Department of Architecture at ETH Zurich. He is a member of the International Network for Urban Research and Action (INURA). His research focuses on planetary urbanization, comparative urban analysis and theories of urbanization and of space. His recent books include *Vocabularies for an Urbanising Planet: Theory Building through Comparison* (ed. with Monika Streule), which rethinks cartography as an instrument for the analysis of urbanization processes (2023), and *Henri Lefebvre and the Theory of the Production of Space* (2022), a reconstruction of Lefebvre's theory of space and of the urban.