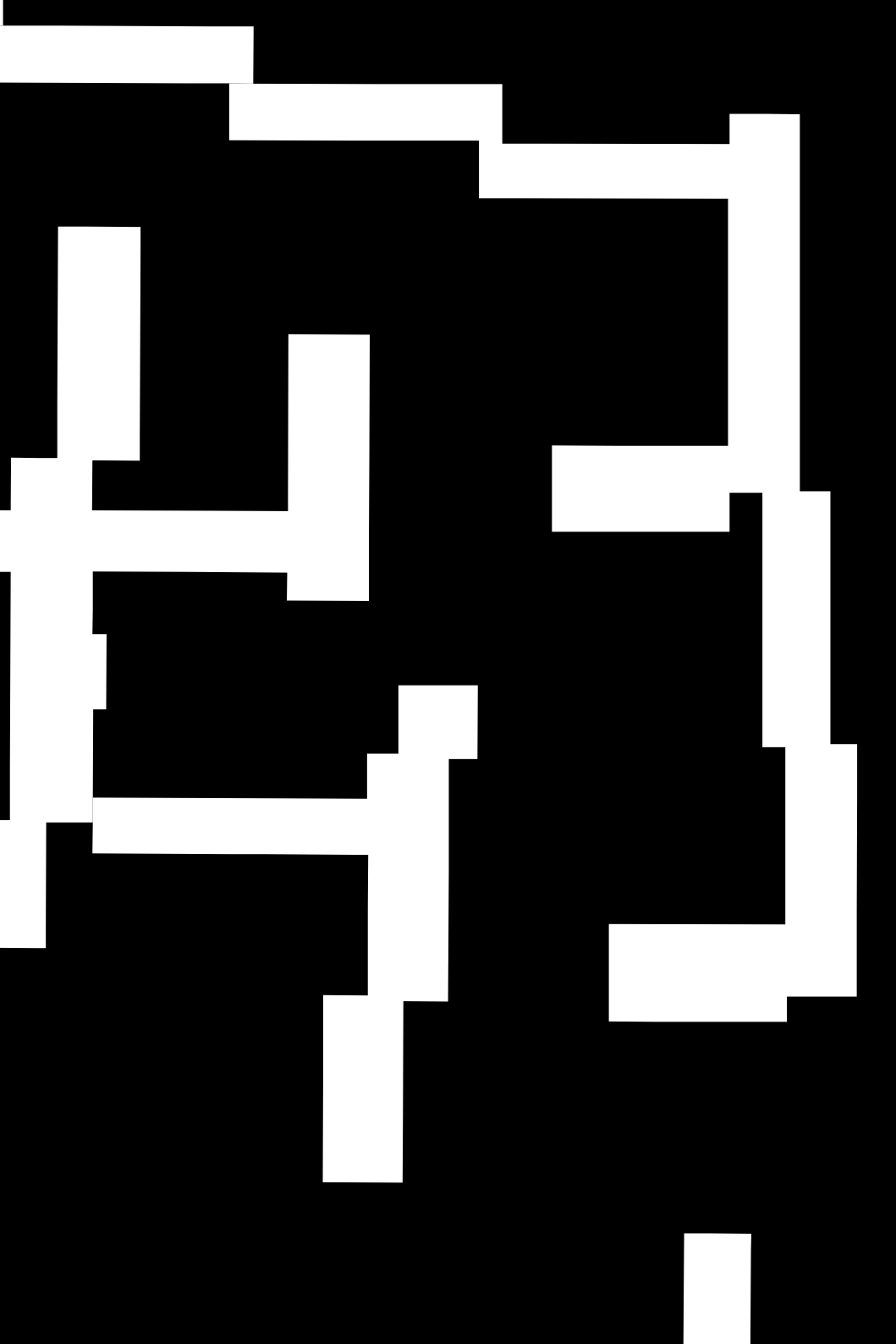


**EAHNN**  
**AU**  
**RS**



# **European Architectural History Network**

**9<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference  
June 17 – 21, 2026**

**Aarhus  
Book of Abstracts**

**European Architectural History Network**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference**  
**Book of Abstracts**

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Danish Arts  
Foundation



**AARHUS**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Department of Art History, Aesthetics & Culture and Museology  
School of Communication and Culture  
Aarhus University

<https://cc.au.dk/en/art-history-aesthetics-culture-and-museology>

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# Prologue

# Aarhus: The Past in the Present

Panagiotis Farantatos & Kasper Lægning  
*General Chairs of EAHN Aarhus 2026*



Aarhus Theater. Architect: Hack Kampmann. The Royal Danish Library, Digital collections.

“We need history because we need rest: a pause to rest our consciousness, so that the possibility of a consciousness may remain – as the seat not only of thought, but of practical reason, affording full latitude for action...”

Patrick Boucheron<sup>1</sup>

Situated on the eastern coast of the Jutland peninsula, Aarhus traces its origins to an early Viking Age trade settlement established in the 8th century, in the delta of the river Aros, from which the city derives its name. Today, Aarhus stands as Denmark’s second-largest city, a major container port, and a dynamic site of rapid urban transformation, particularly in its harbor area.

The medieval street network remains preserved in the city’s Latin Quarter, where key landmarks such as the Brick Gothic Aarhus Cathedral – the tallest and longest in Denmark – and the Church of Our Lady, home to Scandinavia’s oldest preserved stone structure, continue to shape the city’s skyline. The urban fabric is further enriched by well-preserved Renaissance merchant houses, Classicist buildings, and colorful 17th-century timber-framed structures.



Aarhus Cathedral c. 1900. Photographer: Peter Lars Elfelt.

By the late 19th century, Aarhus had evolved into Jutland’s primary urban center, whose newfound identity benefited from Hack Kampmann’s projects, which blended Art Nouveau with National Romanticism. The 20th century marked Aarhus as a site for modernist experimentation, particularly in social housing and public institutions, such as the Functionalist Town Hall by Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller, and the Aarhus University campus, designed by Kay Fisker, C. F. Møller, Povl Stegmann, and C. Th. Sørensen. The postwar era addressed the needs of a growing urban population through housing and infrastructure projects, exemplified by the brutalist works of Friis & Moltke and the ambitious Gellerup Plan. The partnership of Kjær & Richter perpetuated this moderate modernism with new means. In recognition of its wider impact, one

1 ‘Of what is History capable?’, Inaugural Lecture delivered on Thursday 17 December 2015. Translated by Liz Libbrecht. Paris: Collège de France, 2018.

of the founding partners, Johan Richter, was named honorary fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1989.



Aarhus Town Hall. Architects: Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller. The Royal Danish Library, Digital Collection.

In the 1980s in general, however, little was built in Aarhus, due to the general economic downturn, yet from a solid base in the city, the architectural office of Inger and Johannes Exner made headlines with its innovative restoration philosophy, which came to life in projects such as Koldinghus Castle. Moreover, the couple has been the most prolific modernist church architects by far in Denmark to date, and in and around Aarhus one easily comes across many of their creations. Additionally, other striking modernist church buildings, by architects such as Jacob Blegvad, Paul Niepoort, and Leopold Teschl, can be found in the vicinity of Aarhus.

Meanwhile, architectural creativity also found an outlet in the culture of architectural drawing. Thus, the late Svein Tønsager of the Aarhus School of Architecture was the center of a network that made Aarhus an attractive destination for renowned architects and theorists such as Sverre Fehn, Zaha Hadid, John Hejduk, Léon Krier, Daniel Libeskind, Wolf Prix, Michael Sorkin, Peter Wilson, and Lebbeus Woods. Also in the 1980s and 1990s, benefiting from the agency of art historian Lise Bek, architectural and spatial analysis became a main component in the curriculum of Art History at Aarhus University. This legacy is alive and well, encompassing research in architecture from the Middle Ages to the present, and it provides an ideal setting for the activities of the EAHN.

The 21st century has introduced large-scale urban regeneration projects, including significant investments in Aarhus Harbor and Aarhus Ø, alongside the development of pedestrian and green corridors. When, from 2005 through 2015, the Aarhus River, which had been paved over to make way for the automobile from the 1930s onwards, was unearthed, it not only signaled a new approach sensitive to history and ecology alike, but also heralded the impact of landscape urbanism on Danish urbanistic thinking. Just like the new Town Hall was a beacon of a time when modernism and optimism went hand in hand, the recovered river has become a symbol of urban regeneration in the present.

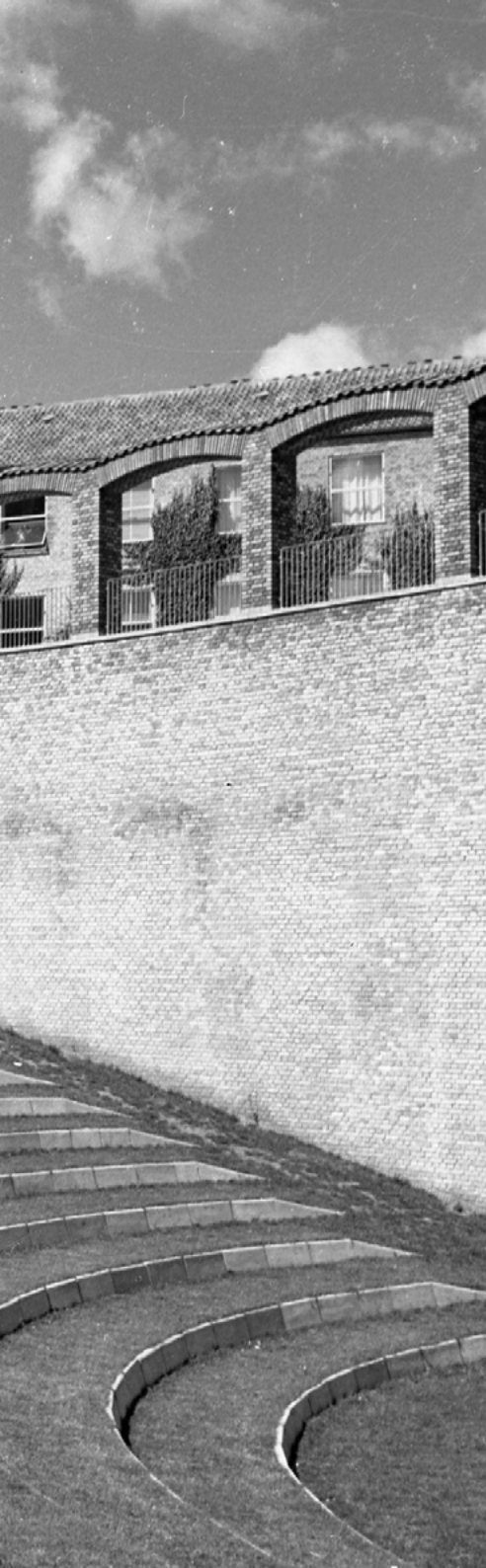


Aarhus River. Arkitekturbilleder.dk. Photographer: Andreas Trier Mørch. Creative Commons License: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 Denmark

Aarhus is home to Aarhus University, one of the largest educational institutions in the Nordic countries, a vibrant School of Architecture, an Art Academy, and several prestigious museums. These include the contemporary art museum ARoS, Den Gamle By (The Old Town) – one of the pioneering open-air museums – and the Moesgaard Museum, which houses ethnographic and archaeological collections. The surrounding region offers a diverse architectural and historical landscape, from Neolithic passage graves and dolmen structures to Renaissance and Baroque manors, Legoland, expansive social housing projects, and notable modernist and contemporary works by architects such as Jørn Utzon, Dorte Mandrup, Alvar Aalto, and Steven Holl. In addition, one encounters spatial and architectural works by visual artists such as Per Kirkeby, Ingvar Cronhammar, and Olafur Eliasson (and soon by James Turrell).

Negotiating the local and the generic, the introvert and the global, Aarhus presents an ideal setting for discussing architectural histories, as the outer boundaries of architecture and its histories are continually redefined. As technological, cultural, and territorial boundaries are transgressed and contested, and with planetary boundaries simultaneously expanded and consumed, the outer boundaries of architectural history are likewise reset, expanding in temporal and cultural span and diversity, registering the past in the present as a projection of the future.





**Welcome to Aarhus**



# Program & Map

# Condensed Program

## Wednesday

**June 17**

10.00–17.00	Registration
11.00–15.00	Special Interest Group Meetings
13.00–15.00	EAHN Business Meeting
15.30–17.00	Book Launches
17.00–17.30	Coffee Break
17.30–19.00	Opening Ceremony and Keynote Lecture: Ellen Braae
19.00–20.00	Welcome Drinks

## Thursday

**June 18**

09.00–17.00	Registration
10.00–12.00	Morning Sessions
12.00–13.00	Lunch Break
13.00–15.00	Afternoon Sessions
15.00–15.30	Coffee Break
15.30–17.30	EAHN Roundtable
17.30–18.00	Coffee Break
18.00–19.00	Keynote Lecture: Itohan Osayimwese
19.00–20.00	Drinks

**Friday****June 19**

09.00–17.00	Registration
10.00–12.00	Morning Sessions
12.00–13.00	Lunch Break
13.00–15.00	Afternoon Sessions
15.00–15.30	Coffee Break
15.30–19.00	City Tours
19.00–22.00	Reception at the Aarhus School of Architecture
20.30	Conference Dinner (optional)

**Saturday****June 20**

09.00–10.00	Registration
10.00–12.00	Morning Sessions
12.00–13.00	Lunch Break
13.00–15.00	Afternoon Sessions
15.00–16.00	Coffee Break
16.00–18.30	Keynote Lecture: Mario Carpo and Closing Ceremony
18.30–20.00	Farewell Drinks

**Sunday****June 21**

08.00–19.00	Post-Conference Tours
-------------	-----------------------

- 10.00–17.00      **On-Site Registration, Coffee and Snacks**  
Stakladen, building 1423 - 111
- 11.00–15.00      **Special Interest Group Meetings (Parallel Sessions)**
- 11.00–15.00      SIG: Building Word Image (Including lunch)  
Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125
- 13.00–15.00      SIG: Children Matter  
Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122
- 13.00–15.00      SIG: Gender in Architecture, Landscape and Urban Design  
M2.4, building 1420 - 226
- 12.00–15.00      SIG: Histories in Conflict  
M1, building 1427 - 149
- 13.00–15.00      SIG: Migration and Architecture  
Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132
- 13.00–15.00      SIG: On Housing  
M1.1, building 1421 - 118
- 11.00–13.00      SIG: On Vanished Buildings  
Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122
- 13.00–15.00      SIG: Postmodernism  
M2.3, building 1420 - 228
- 11.00–12.30      SIG: The Connective Histories of the Eastern Mediterranean  
M2.3, building 1420 - 228
- 11.00–13.00      SIG: Urban Representations  
Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132

13.00–15.00

## **EAHN Business Meeting**

Faculty Club, building 1421 - 218

15.30–17.00

## **Book Launches (Parallel Sessions)**

### **Room**

**Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122**

15.30–17.00

“Dictionary Politics” - Mari Lending (AHO) and Kostas Tsiambaos (NTUA) in conversation with Hugh Campbell (University College Dublin)

*Provenance in Architecture. A Dictionary* (Hatje Cantz, 2025). Edited by Uwe Fleckner & Mari Lending.

*The Architect and the Animal* (The MIT Press, 2025). Edited by Kostas Tsiambaos.

### **Room**

**Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132**

15.30–16.15

Gregorio Astengo (IE University) and Davide Spina (HKU) in conversation with Claire Zimmerman (University of Toronto) and Chelsea Spencer (Columbia University).

*Real Estate. Histories of Architecture and Capital* (gta Verlag, 2026). Edited by Gregorio Astengo & Davide Spina.

16.15–17.00

Florian Urban (Glasgow School of Art) in conversation with Megha Chand Inglis (The Bartlett, University College London)

*Form Follows Fuel - 14 Buildings from Antiquity to the Oil Age* (Routledge, 2025). By Florian Urban & Barnabas Calder.

### **Room**

**Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125**

15.30–16.15

Lori Brown (Syracuse University) and Karen Burns (The University of Melbourne) in conversation with Alex Brown (Monash University), Hannah Le Roux (University of Sheffield), and Samia Rab Kirchner (Morgan State University).

*Bloomsbury Global Encyclopedia of Women in Architecture, 1960–2020* (Bloomsbury, 2025/2026). Edited by Lori Brown & Karen Burns.

16.15–17.00 Anne Hultzsch (ETH Zurich) and Sol Pérez Martínez (ETH Zurich) in conversation with Isabelle Doucet (University of Sheffield).

*Women Writing Architecture 1700–1900: Expanding Histories* (gta Verlag, 2025). Edited by Anne Hultzsch & Sol Pérez Martínez.

**Room M1.1, building 1421 - 118**

15.30–17.00 Spyros Papapetros (Princeton University)

*Magic Architecture: The Story of Human Housing by Frederick Kiesler*. Edited by Spyros Papapetros & Gerd Zillner.

16.15–17.00 Martin Søberg (Royal Danish Academy) and Angela Gigliotti (Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences) in conversation with Rebecca Carrai (KU Leuven) and Fabio Gigone (ETH Zurich)

*Magasin for Bygningskunst og Kultur no. 11: Kay Fisker* (2026). Edited by Martin Søberg & Angela Gigliotti.

**Room M1, building 1427 - 149**

15.30–16.15 Beatriz Colomina (Princeton University) in conversation with Guillermo S. Arsuaga (Princeton University).

*Sick Architecture* (The MIT Press, 2025). Edited by Beatriz Colomina.

16.15–17.00 Beatriz Colomina (Princeton University) in conversation with Mark Wigley (Columbia University)

*We the Bacteria: Notes Toward Biotic Architecture* (Lars Müller Publishers, 2025). Edited by Beatriz Colomina & Mark Wigley.

- Room** **M2, building 1427 - 246**
- 15.30–17.00 Lucia Pérez Moreno (University of Zaragoza), Hilde Heynen (KU Leuven) and Nora Wendl (The University of New Mexico) in conversation.
- Architecture & Feminist Critical Theory: Selected Writings by Hilde Heynen* (Leuven University Press, 2025). Edited by Lucia Pérez Moreno.
- Almost Nothing. Reclaiming Edith Farnsworth* (University of Illinois Press, 2025). By Nora Wendl.
- Room** **Faculty Club, building 1421 - 218**
- 15.30–16.15 Caroline Maniaque (ENSA Normandie) in conversation with Tim Benton (Open University, Emeritus)
- Mai 68: Parole à l'architecture* (Éditions de la Villette, 2026). Edited by Caroline Maniaque, Eleonore Marantz, & Jean-Louis Violeau.
- 16.15–17.00 Carmen M. Enss (Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)
- Cartographies of Catastrophes: Disaster Documentation and Reconstruction Plans in Europe, 1821—Present* (Leuven University Press, 2025). Edited by Laura Demeter, Carmen M. Enss, Piotr Kisiel, & Carol Ludwig.
- 17.00–17.30 **Coffee Break**  
**Stakladen, building 1423 - 111**
- 17.30–19.00 **Opening Ceremony and Keynote Lecture: Ellen Braae**  
**Aula, building 1412**
- 19.00–20.00 **Welcome Drinks**  
**Vandrehallen, building 1410**

09.00–17.00

## **On-Site Registration**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

10.00–12.00

## **Morning Sessions**

Animal, Industry, and Labor: Towards an Architectural History of Intensive Animal Farming

Track A | M1, building 1427 - 149

Between Mental Health and Punishment. From the Convent to the Asylum

Track B | Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125

The Ceiling

Track C | Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122

Building Science: The City as a Site and Object of Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Period

Track D | Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 -132

Self(Hi)Stories: The “I” in Architectural Historiography (Roundtable)

Track E | M2, building 1427 - 246

12.00–13.00

## **Lunch Break**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

13.00–15.00

## Afternoon Sessions

Displaying Gardens, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture: Exhibition Cultures 1850-1950

Track A | M1, building 1427 - 149

Women's Collective Organizing in Architecture: From the Grassroots to the Global, 1960-2020 (Roundtable)

Track B | Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125

Architectural Histories and Practices and the Aerial Spatial Revolution

Track C | Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122

The Book, The Self, and the City: Architectural Histories of Guidebooks and Urban Idealizations

Track D | Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132

The 21st Century History of Architecture Theory

Track E | M2, building 1427 - 246

15.00–15.30

## Coffee Break

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

15.30–17.30

**EAHN Roundtable:** Teaching Architectural Histories in the Age of Global Crisis

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

17.30–18.00

## Coffee Break

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

18.00–19.00

**Keynote Lecture:** Itohan Osayimwese

Aula, building 1412

19.00–20.00

## Drinks

Vandrehallen, building 1410

09.00–17.00

## **On-Site Registration**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

10.00–12.00

## **Morning Sessions**

Plantation Worlds, Plantation Architectures

Track A | M1, building 1427 - 149

Disability x Architectural Production: Bodily Diversity in the Construction of the Built Environment

Track B | Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125

On Thresholds and Junctions – Reading Transport Architecture across Scales

Track C | Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122

'Character' in Global Encounters with Architecture, c. 1700-1900

Track D | Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 13

Rendering and Architectural Knowledge

Track E | M2, building 1427 - 246

12.00–13.00

## **Lunch Break**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

13.00–15.00

## **Afternoon Sessions**

Architectural Objects of Colonial Consumption: The Material and Visual Worlds of Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, and Other Hot Beverages

Track A | M1, building 1427 - 149

Caring for Aging

Track B | Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125

Frontiers: Kinetics of Expulsion, Expansion, and Contestation  
Track C | Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122

Religious Enlightenment(s): Spirituality and Space in the Long  
Eighteenth Century  
Track D | Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132

Excavating the Landfill: Towards an Environmental History of  
Architecture's Waste  
Track E | M2, building 1427 - 246

15.00–15.30

### **Coffee Break**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

15.30–19.00

### **City Tours**

- Traces of 'Aros' in the Middle Ages
- Classical Aarhus
- Hack Kampmann, National Romanticism and Urban Planning in Aarhus around 1900
- In the Footsteps of Kay Fisker and C.F. Møller
- Modern and Contemporary Aarhus

19.00–22.00

### **Reception at the Aarhus School of Architecture**

Exners Plads 7, 8000 Aarhus

20.30

### **Conference Dinner** (optional)

GODS, Karen Wegeners Gade 8, 8000 Aarhus C

09.00–10.00

## **On-Site Registration**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

10.00–12.00

## **Morning Sessions**

Stilled Lives: Living Materials and their Architectural Afterlives in Premodern Buildings

Track A | M1, building 1427 - 149

Learning from Collaboration – On the Many People who Worked Together to Create the Welfare States' Building Boom

Track B | Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125

Transimperial Contact Zones and Collision Space in Southeast Asia

Track C | Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122

Materials and Techniques on the Move

Track D | Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132

Transmedia Architecture Archive: Historical Knowledge in the AI Era (Roundtable)

Track E | M2, building 1427 - 246

12.00–13.00

## **Lunch Break**

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

13.00–15.00

## Afternoon Sessions

Water as an Ecological Mediator in Architecture: Tracing Connections from Antiquity to the Modern Age

Track A | M1, building 1427 - 149

Privacy, the Private, and Architecture

Track B | Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422 - 125

Notes on the Underground. Politics, Aesthetics, and Ecologies of the Subterranean

Track C | Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422 - 122

The Reception of Gothic Architecture in Italy, 13.00–17.00: Disapproval, Indifference, Appreciation?

Track D | Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422 - 132

AH meets AI (Roundtable by Architectural Histories)

Track E | M2, building 1427 - 246

15.00–16.00

## Coffee Break

Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

16.00–18.30

## Keynote Lecture: Mario Carpo and Closing Ceremony

+ Summations

+ *Architectural Histories Awards*

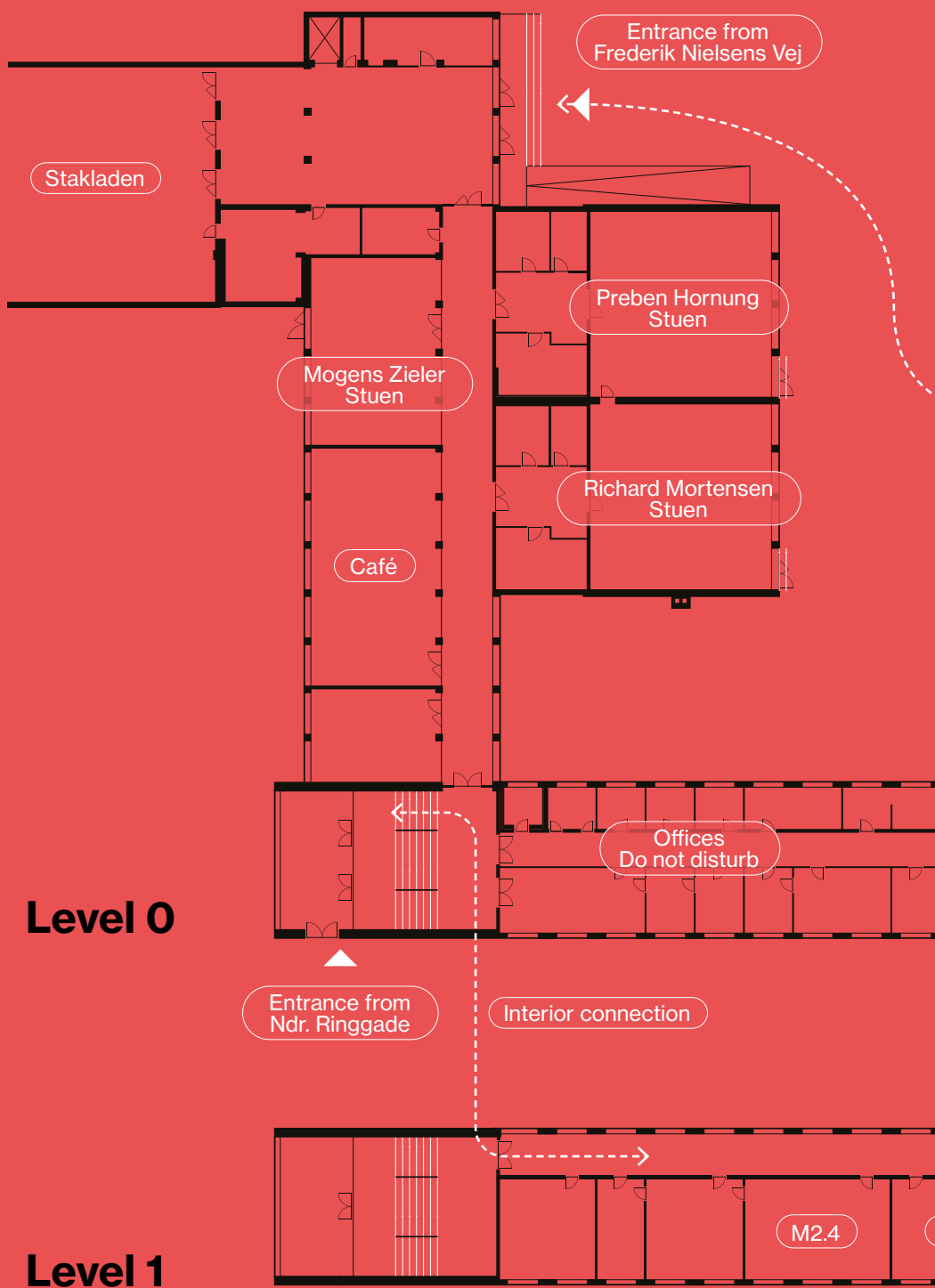
+ Next Conference and Looking Ahead

Aula, building 1412

18.30–20.00

## Farewell Drinks

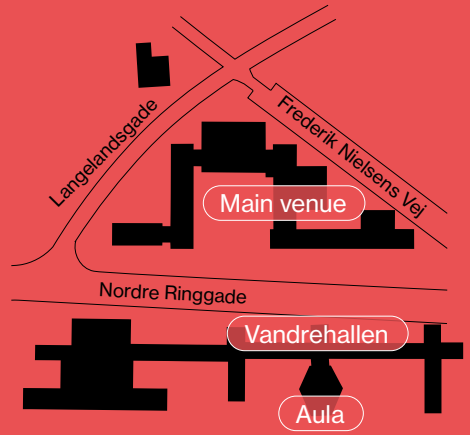
Vandrehallen, building 1410



**Level 0**

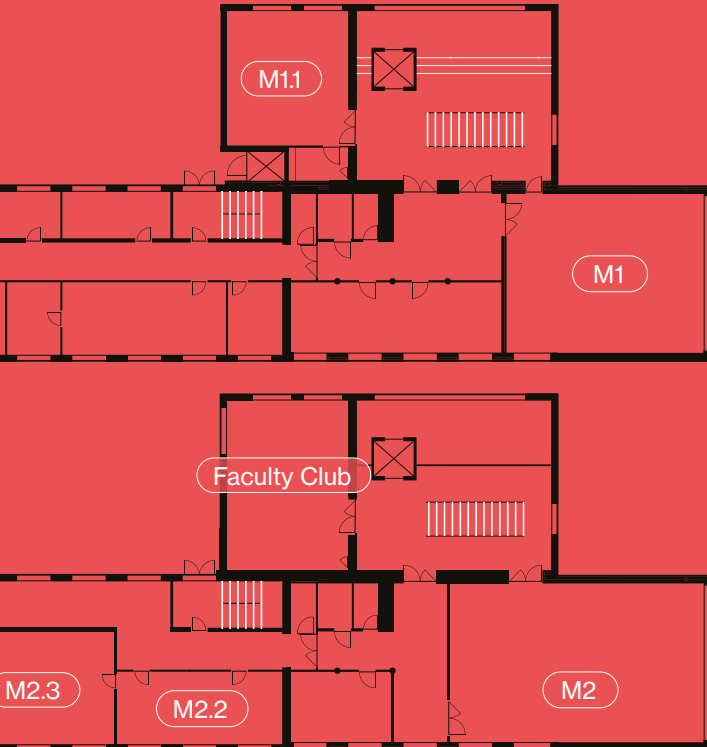
**Level 1**

# Map Main venue



Exterior connection

Entrance from  
Frederik Nielsens Vej





# Keynotes

# Ellen Braae

Wednesday, June 17



Photo by Ida Wang

Since 2009 full Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, where she leads the research group *Landscape Architecture and Urbanism*. Her research focuses on 20th-century urban landscapes and open spaces, exploring their historical formation, cultural significance, and ongoing transformation. Bridging design practice and the humanities, she examines how modern landscapes – especially post-industrial, and welfare-state environments – can be preserved, adapted, and regenerated as key resources for future urban development. Alongside her academic work, she is actively engaged in contemporary landscape architecture and urban development practice, participating both as a competition team member and as a jury member in national and international contexts. She has published widely, including *Beauty Redeemed: Recycling Post-Industrial Landscapes* (2015); the *Routledge Research Companion to Landscape Architecture* (2018, co-edited with Steiner); *Den Grønne Kulturarv* (2019); *Urban Planning in the Nordic World* (2022); and *Architecture and Welfare: Scandinavian Perspectives* (2025, co-edited with Arrhenius and Ruud). ORCID: 0000-0003-1516-2507

# **Landscape, Welfare and Heritage — Nordic Perspectives**

**In the Nordic countries, welfare has long held a defining cultural and political role. In the post-war decades, architecture and planning were central to materialising welfare-state ideals – both as physical frameworks and as organisational systems shaping “the good life.” The outcomes of this expansive urbanisation continue to structure everyday environments, meaning that future development will largely have to unfold within this inherited spatial and material framework. This prompts critical questions about how such environments foregrounding landscape as a key social and ecological medium are understood: as cultural heritage, as evolving systems, and as lived landscapes. Characterised by horizontality, openness, and integrated green structures, the post-war fabric foregrounds landscape as a key spatial, social and ecological medium. Taking the Nordic – and particularly Danish – context as its point of departure, the keynote will revisit and critically nuance dominant narratives of post-war welfare (landscape) architecture, challenging enduring myths while engaging ongoing reinterpretations. Held within Aarhus University Campus, the talk also reflects on its growing recognition as cultural heritage. Landscape and welfare thus serve as lenses for understanding both past ambitions and future possibilities.**

# Itohan Osayimwese

Thursday, June 18



Department Chair and Professor of the History of Art and Architecture at Brown University. Her research focuses on the relationship between political ideologies and the built environment in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Anglo-Caribbean, and Central Europe between 1750 and 1950. She is the author of *Africa's Buildings: Architecture and the Displacement of Cultural Heritage* (Princeton University, 2025) and *Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany* (Pittsburgh, 2017); editor of *German Colonialism in Africa and its Legacies: Architecture, Art, Urbanism, and Visual Culture* (Bloomsbury, 2023); and co-editor of *Routledge Companion to Critical Approaches in Race and Architecture* (Bloomsbury, 2025). The winner of the 2020 Schelling Foundation Prize for Architectural Theory, Osayimwese's research has been funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Canadian Center for Architecture, Gerda Henkel Foundation, Graham Foundation for the Fine Arts, and National Endowment for the Humanities, among others. Her current research explores Western expropriation of Africa's architectural heritage; the problem of translation in the historiography of African architecture; and migration, property, and emancipation in the Anglo-Caribbean. Osayimwese received a Ph.D. in the history and theory of architecture from The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

# **On Writing Archival and Material Absences in Architectural History**

**This lecture considers how architectural historians can approach their work when archives and material traces of the built environment are absent or hidden. Taking case studies from a field that contends regularly with this problem – Africanist architectural history – I explore speculative history and critical fabulation as pathways for writing “otherwise-possible” histories not only when our conventional methods fail, but also as an intentional alternative to the linear, univocal, synthesizing narratives that we take as our norm.**

# Mario Carpo

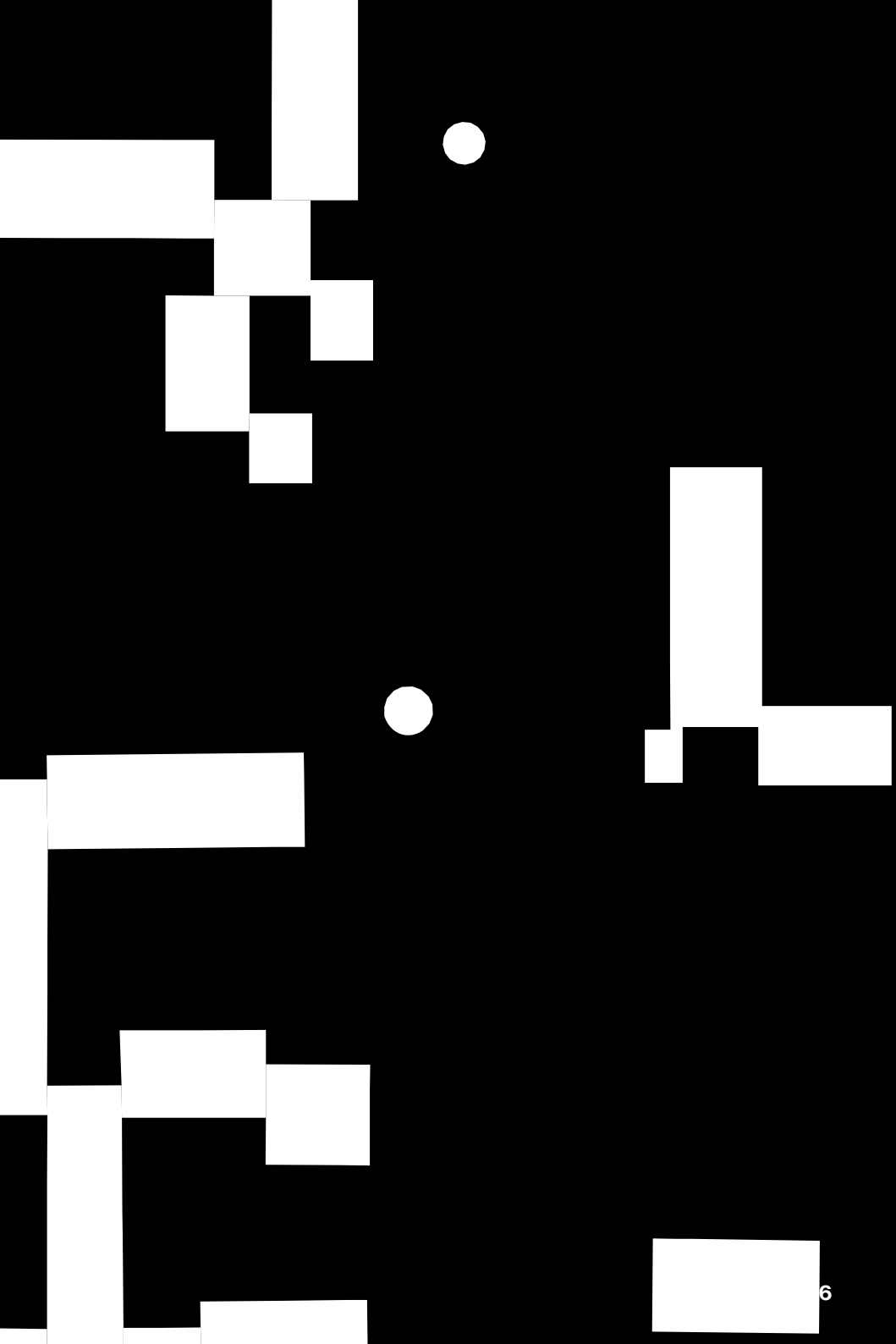
Saturday, June 20



Reyner Banham Professor of Architectural Theory and History, the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London; Gao Feng Professor (part-time), College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai. Mario Carpo, Guggenheim Fellow in 2022-23, was the Head of the Study Centre at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal from 2002 to 2006, Vincent Scully Visiting Professor of Architectural History at the Yale School of Architecture from 2010 to 2014, Senior Scholar in Residence at the Getty Research Institute (2000-2001); Resident at the American Academy in Rome (2004), etc. Mr. Carpo's research and publications focus on the history of early modern architecture and on the theory and criticism of contemporary design and technology. His award-winning *Architecture in the Age of Printing* (MIT Press, 2001) has been translated into several languages. His most recent books are *The Alphabet and the Algorithm* (2011); *The Second Digital Turn: Design Beyond Intelligence* (2017); and *Beyond Digital. Design and Automation at the End of Modernity* (2023), all published by the MIT Press.

# Generative AI and the Revival of Creative Imitation in the Visual Arts

Generative AI does not create new images out of thin air; it generates images that have a “certain something” in common with a selection of images we have fed into it. This selection, often called a dataset, can be generic or custom-made; either way, Generative AI automates the imitation and replication of some of its common visual features. In the past, these common visual features used to be called a style. Imitation and styles were for centuries the backbone of the classical tradition in European art, but both terms were de facto banned by 20th-century modernism. Reference to precedent in modernist art, when acknowledged, was generally reframed as collage, citation, intertextuality, assemblage, or pastiche. But none of these terms describes the technical logic of today’s Generative AI. As the rise of Generative AI is bringing the practice of stylistic imitation back to our design schools and to the design professions, we urgently need to learn again what imitation is, how it works, what it does, and how we can deal with it today, in critical and creative terms.



# Paper Sessions & Round- tables

# Thematic Tracks

## A **Domesticating Life** M1

- **Animal, Industry, and Labor: Towards an Architectural History of Intensive Animal Farming**
- **Displaying Gardens, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture: Exhibition Cultures 1850-1950**
- **Plantation Worlds, Plantation Architectures**
- **Architectural Objects of Colonial Consumption: The Material and Visual Worlds of Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, and Other Hot Beverages**
- **Stilled Lives: Living Materials and their Architectural Afterlives in Premodern Buildings**
- **Water as an Ecological Mediator in Architecture: Tracing Connections from Antiquity to the Modern Age**

## B **Diversity and the Collective** Mogens Zieler Stuen

- **Between Mental Health and Punishment. From the Convent to the Asylum**
- **Women's Collective Organizing in Architecture: From the Grassroots to the Global, 1960-2020**
- **Disability x Architectural Production: Bodily Diversity in the Construction of the Built Environment**
- **Caring for Aging**
- **Learning from Collaboration – On the Many People who Worked Together to Create the Welfare States' Building Boom**
- **Privacy, the Private, and Architecture**

## **C Edges/Interfaces**

### Richard Mortensen Stuen

- **The Ceiling**
- **Architectural Histories and Practices and the Aerial Spatial Revolution**
- **On Thresholds and Junctions – Reading Transport Architecture across Scales**
- **Frontiers: Kinetics of Expulsion, Expansion, and Contestation**
- **Transimperial Contact Zones and Collision Space in Southeast Asia**
- **Notes on the Underground. Politics, Aesthetics, and Ecologies of the Subterranean**

## **D Worlds of Knowledge**

### Preben Hornung Stuen

- **Building Science: The City as a Site and Object of Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Period**
- **The Book, The Self, and the City: Architectural Histories of Guidebooks and Urban Idealizations**
- **‘Character’ in Global Encounters with Architecture, c. 1700-1900**
- **Religious Enlightenment Spirituality and Space in the Long Eighteenth Century**
- **Materials and Techniques on the Move**
- **The Reception of Gothic Architecture in Italy, 13.00–1700: Disapproval, Indifference, Appreciation?**

## **E Histories for the Present**

### M2

- **Self(Hi)stories: The “I” in Architectural Historiography**
- **The 21st Century History of Architecture Theory**
- **Transmedia Architecture Archive: Historical Knowledge in the AI Era**
- **Rendering and Architectural Knowledge**
- **Excavating the Landfill: Towards an Environmental History of Architecture’s Waste**
- **AH meets AI (Roundtable by Architectural Histories)**

# Session Overview

## 65 **Animal, Industry, and Labor: Towards an Architectural History of Intensive Animal Farming**

Session chairs: Sofia Nannini, Politecnico di Torino; Victor Muñoz Sanz, TU Delft  
Track A | Domesticating Life | Thursday 10.00–12.00 | M1, building 1427-149

### 67 | **Disrupting infrastructures: The role of environmental actors in constructing the cattle industry in twentieth century Katanga, Belgian Congo**

Elene Vernaeve  
*Ghent University*

### 69 | **“The Chicken of Tomorrow” and the Farm of the World**

Dalal Musaed Alsayer  
*Kuwait University*

### 70 | **Holstein cows on synthetic meadows. Spatial analysis of domestic-productive units for livestock farming developed by the Instituto Nacional de Colonización in A Chaira (Galicia, Spain), 1956-1975**

Antonio Giráldez López  
*Universidade de Santiago de Compostela*

### 71 | **High-rise Pigs and Poultry Mines – Architecture between progress and improvisation in the GDR’s intensive animal production industry**

Christina Katharina May  
*Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*

### 72 | **Milking the Cow: Dairy Production in Postcolonial India**

Priyanka Sen  
*Cornell University*

## 73 **Between Mental Health and Punishment. From the Convent to the Asylum**

Session chairs: Elisa Boeri, Politecnico di Milano ; Francesca Mattei, Roma Tre University  
Track B | Diversity and the Collective | Thursday 10.00–12.00 | Mogens Zieler Stuen

### 75 | **The Domesticated Woman: Discipline and community at the Casa delle Zitelle Gasparine in Padova**

Mariapaola Michelotto  
*IUAV Venice / ETH Zurich*

### 76 | **The Archive of Obsession: Women’s Reformatories as Diagnostic Space**

Tara Bissett  
*University of Waterloo*

### 77 | **Relations not Models: Nicole Sonolet’s Hospitals for the ASM 13 in Paris**

Meredith TenHoor  
*Pratt Institute*

78 | **“Inside that High Wall.” Giovanni Michelucci and the Design of Places of Social Exclusion**  
Ilaria Cattabriga  
*University of Bologna; Lorenzo Mingardi/University of Florence*

80 | **The Exposure of Psychiatric Conditions in Italy Through the Media in the late 1960s**  
Ana Tostões  
*IST Técnico Lisboa*  
Michela Pilotti  
*Politecnico di Milano*  
Francesca Giudetti  
*Politecnico di Milano*

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## 82 The Ceiling

Session chairs: Mari Hvattum, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design  
Track C | Edges/Interfaces | Thursday 10.00–12.00 | Richard Mortensen Stuen

84 | **‘Under an Open Sky’: Gunnar Asplund, Ivar Tengbom and the Mediterranean**  
Anna Bortolozzi  
*Stockholm University*

85 | **Aalto’s Sensoria**  
Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen  
*Yale School of Architecture*

86 | **Portable Skies – The Ceiling as Displaced Fragment in William Randolph Hearst’s Collecting Practices**  
Louise Vanhee  
*Ghent University*

87 | **Cheap, Quick and Easy: Don Brown, Armstrong® World Industries and the Ceiling for Everywhere**  
Kieran Connolly  
*University of Newcastle*

88 | **Petals and Smells: the office ceiling responds to climate change.**  
Hugh Campbell  
*University College Dublin*

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## 89 Building Science: The City as a Site and Object of Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Period

Session chairs: Christine Beese, Ruhr Universität Bochum; Nicole Falconi Müller, Ruhr Universität Bochum  
Track D | Worlds of Knowledge | Thursday 10.00–12.00 | Preben Hornung Stuen

91 | **Terraqueous cities: the early modern art of governing water**  
Davide Martino  
*Université Libre de Bruxelles*

92 | **Johan Daniel Berlin – Architect of Urban Enlightenment**  
Giedrė Jarulaitienė  
*Independent Scholar / Drammen Municipality*

**94 Roundtable: Self(Hi)stories: the “I” in Architectural Historiography**

Session chairs: Daria Ricchi, Oxford Brookes University, NYU London; Vanessa Grossman, Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania

Track E | Histories for the Present | Thursday 10.00–12.00 | M2, building 1427-246

96 | **Love Lives and “Historical Drag”: Performance Art as Embodied Architectural History**

Nora Wendl

*University of New Mexico*

98 | **Food, Home, and Diaspora: Herstories of Shanghai’s Workers’ New Village in Zhang Yiwei’s Fiction (1990s–2000s)**

Yangfan Zhang

*KU Leuven*

99 | **What Exclusion Protects: Ambivalence and the First Person in Architectural Historiography**

Guillermo S. Arsuaga

*Princeton University*

100 | **In the Presence of Others: Notes on Collaborative Architectural History**

Curt Gambetta

*Dartmouth College*

101 | **Reflections on Narrating the Arctic**

Elisa Dainese

*Georgia Institute of Technology*

102 | **I and “Eye” in Anthony Vidler’s incomplete Autobiography**

Spyros Papapetros

*Princeton University*

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**103 Displaying Gardens, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture: Exhibition Cultures 1850–1950**

Session chairs: Catharina Nolin, Stockholm University; Elin Bergman, Stockholm University

Track A | Domesticating Life | Thursday 13.00–15.00 | M1, building 1427-149

105 | **Engineering and Exhibiting an Aesthetic Infrastructure in the Park at the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1867**

Amy F. Ogata

*University of Southern California*

106 | **Reviving Empire: Displaying Persian Heritage and Nationhood at International Exhibitions (1851–1935)**

Mojgan Aghaei Meybodi

*The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University*

107 | **From 'Public Parks and Gardens' to 'Landscapes of Work and Leisure': the development of mid 20th century landscape architecture in Britain told through four exhibitions**

Joy Burgess

*University of Liverpool School of Architecture*

Luca Csepely-Knorr

*University of Liverpool School of Architecture*

109 | **Greenwashing the Francoist Regime: The Garden Exhibition at the 2nd IFLA International Conference in Madrid, 1950**

Marta García Carbonero

*School of Architecture, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*

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## 110 | **Roundtable: Women's Collective Organizing in Architecture: From the Grassroots to the Global, 1960-2020**

Session chairs: Lori A. Brown, Syracuse University; Karen Burns, University of Melbourne

Track B | Diversity and the Collective | Thursday 13.00–15.00 | Mogens Zieler Stuen

112 | **Collective Action of Feminist Architects in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s**

Sonja Hnilica

*Technische Universität Dresden*

113 | **What Remains of FOPA? The Fragile Nature of Feminist Organising in Architecture**

Bettina Nagler

*University of Kassel*

114 | **The Architecture of Refuge: Housing, Supporting and empowering women**

Isabelle Doucet

*University of Sheffield*

115 | **'It's About Our lives': A Manifesto by Women Building Forum**

Helena Mattson

*KTH School of Architecture*

116 | **The feminist architecture of Italian Collectives (1978-1999)**

Chiara Ingresso; University of Campania; ; With Antonia Marano

*University of Campania*

117 | **Feminist Protesting? On Women's Grassroots Organisations in Dutch Architecture**

María Novas-Ferradás; ETH; With Lidewij Tummers, *Tussen Ruimte*, and Setarah Noorani,

*Nieuwe Instituut*

119 | **A Coalition of Women, Wives and Mothers: Alternative Feminisms**

Lillian Chee

*National University Singapore*

With Dorothy Tang, Chaewon Ahn, Rachel Fong, and Pari Sen Biswas

*National University Singapore*

121 | **Agents & allies, opportunism and trust: the fast and slow of action on equity**

Justine Clark

*Parlour NGO*

122 | **Archiving the Gap: The oral history of 'Vrouwen en wonen'**

Bart Decross

*University of Antwerp*

123 | **'The Work Is Mysterious and Important': Teaching, Doing and Revisiting Architectural Histories with Collectives**

Alex Brown

*Monash University*

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## 124 **Architectural Histories and Practices and the Aerial Spatial Revolution**

Session chairs: Katrin Albrecht, Eastern Switzerland University OST; Angela Gigliotti, Eastern Switzerland University OST; Lisa Henicz, Eastern Switzerland University OST  
Track C | Edges/Interfaces | Thursday 13.00–15.00 | Richard Mortensen Stuen

126 | **This Aerial Life: On the Role of Popular Culture Images in the Spatial Reconceptualization of the City, 1880-1930**

Luis Miguel Lus Arana

*Universidad de Zaragoza*

127 | **Counter-Constructions: Rotterdam and Sabena Passenger Helicopter Network, 1953-1966**

Simon Rabyński

*TU Eindhoven / University of Toronto*

128 | **EROS Center: U.S. Architectures of Aerial Data and Ecological**

Hilary Huckins-Weidner

*University of Michigan*

130 | **Fields of Vision: Norwegian Photogrammetry Projects in East Africa**

Maryia Rusak

*KIT – Karlsruhe Institute of Technology*

131 | **The Flying Foremen: How Computers, Soldiers, and Cameras Built the Munich Olympic Roofs**

Giulia Boller

*ETH Zurich*

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## 132 **The Book, the Self and the City: Architectural Histories of Guidebooks and Urban Idealizations**

Session chairs: Gregorio Astengo, IE University; Linda Stagni, ETH Zurich  
Track D | Worlds of Knowledge | Thursday 13.00–15.00 | Preben Hornung Stuen

134 | **Mobilizing Ancient Ruins, Automobiles, and International Tourism in 1970s Turkey: Ruinenstädte Rund um Kuşadası**

Basak Eren

*Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania*

135 | **Toward cultural (mass) tourism. Cross-cultural perceptions of Granada, the 'Oasis of Andalucía'**

Claudia Hopkins

*University of Edinburgh*

136 | **Panorama Guidebooks and the Colonial Idealization of the City: New York and Lima in 1830s London**

Gonzalo Munoz-Vera  
*Virginia Tech*

137 | **Brisbane for Beginners**

Andrew Leach  
*Queensland University of Technology*

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**138 The 21st Century History of Architecture Theory**

Session chairs: Joseph Bedford, Virginia Tech; Alex Maymind, University of Minnesota  
Track E | Histories for the Present | Thursday 13.00–15.00 | M2, building 1427-246

140 | **Theory and/or History**

Peggy Deamer  
*Yale University*

141 | **The Tectonic Image: Building a Critical Context for Post-Internet Architecture.**

David Turturo  
*Texas Tech University, Huckabee College of Architecture*

142 | **Political Theory: Aesthetics and Architecture after 9/11**

Reinhold Martin  
*Columbia University*

143 | **Tafari and the Tafari Left and Right: Eclectic Legacies of Marxism in 21st-Century Theory of Architecture**

Alessandro Toti  
*University of Westminster*

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**144 Roundtable: Teaching Architectural Histories in the Age of Global Crisis Organized by the EAHN executive committee.**

Chairs: Léa-Catherine Szacka, EAHN Vice-President, University of Manchester; Fatma Tanış, EAHN Communications Lead, TU Delft

Participants: Florian Urban, Glasgow School of Art; Hannah le Roux, University of Sheffield; Maarten Delbeke, ETH Zurich; Stephanie Dadour, ENSA Paris-Malaquais; Andrew Leach, University of Sydney; Mary McLeod, Columbia University  
Thursday 15.30–17.30 | Stakladen, building 1423 - 111

**147 Plantation Worlds, Plantation Architectures**

Session chairs: Will Davis, Università della Svizzera italiana; Rixt Woudstra, University of Amsterdam

Track A | Domesticating Life | Friday 10.00–12.00 | M1, building 1427-149

**149 | Binding Plants and Empires: Ropewalks in Plantation Worlds**

Christy Anderson

*University of Toronto*

**150 | Building Materials as Trading Commodities: The Malabar Tea Plantation in West Java**

Erika Astuti

*Bandung Institute of Technology*

**151 | The Exclusive Share of the Slave: Transatlantic Habilitation and the French Plantation after Abolition (1848 -1860)**

Elena M'Bouroukounda

*Columbia University GSAPP*

**152 | Undoing the Plantationocene: Gardens, Gossip and GriGri in the Seychelles Archipelago**

Hélène Frichot

*University of Melbourne*

**153 | Afropolitanizing the Plantation: Land, Labor, and Earthmaking in Central Kenya**

Kenny Cupers

*University of Basel*

**154 Disability × Architectural Production: Bodily Diversity in the Construction of the Built Environment**

Session chairs: Megha Chand Inglis, The Bartlett, University College London; Nina Vollenbröker, The Bartlett, University College London

Track B | Diversity and the Collective | Friday 10.00–12.00 | Mogens Zieler Stuen

**156 | 'Sit Down Jobs': Disabled veterans and window making in Crittall's new factory at Silver End (1926)**

Katie Lloyd Thomas

*Newcastle University*

**157 | Handmade Modernism: Concealed Disabilities, Vulnerability, and Materiality in 1960s East Pakistan**

Fatema Tasmia

*Boston University*

**159 | The Architecture of Occupational Therapy: George Edward Barton's Consolation House**

James Graham

*California College of the Arts*

160 | **Caring for Buildings while Being in Care: Norwegian Patients with Rheumatism Navigating Treatment Abroad**

Anna Ulrikke Andersen  
*Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

161 | **(Un) Productive Spatialisations**

Helen Stratford  
*Sheffield Hallam University*

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**162 On Thresholds and Junctions**

**– Reading Transport Architecture across Scales**

Session chairs: Johan Lagae, Ghent University; Monika Motylińska, Leibniz Institute IRS  
Track C | Edges/Interfaces | Friday 10.00–12.00 | Richard Mortensen Stuen

164 | **Platform Cinema: Newsreel Theaters as Transport Architecture**

Craig Buckley  
*Department of the History of Art, Yale University*

165 | **Domestic Boundaries and Public Interfaces: Reading Railway Architecture in Colonial Zimbabwe**

Nicole Elsie Nonhanhla Sithole  
*Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge*

166 | **What to do with the motorway overpass: learning from London's Westway**

Richard Williams  
*Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh*

167 | **“A Road to Oil”: Surgut Road-Building Trust and the Transport Architectures of Siberian Petroleum Extraction, 1980–1991**

Ksenia Litvinenko  
*Leibniz Institute for Society and Space (IRS)*

168 | **Surface Tensions: Park Station and Extractive Railway Infrastructures in South Africa**

Meghan Ho-Tong  
*School of Architecture, Planning & Geomatics, University of Cape Town*

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**169 ‘Character’ in Global Encounters with Architecture, c. 1700–1900**

Session chairs: Sigrid de Jong, ETH Zurich; Nikos Magouliotis, ETH Zurich; Dominik Müller, ETH Zurich  
Track D | Worlds of Knowledge | Friday 10.00–12.00 | Preben Hornung Stuen

171 | **Slavers’ Ionic**

Mark Crinson  
*Birkbeck College, University of London*

172 | **Symbol, Character, Folklore: Leo von Klenze’s Reconstruction of the Tuscan Temple**

Maur Dessauvage  
*Columbia University*  
Marco Salazar-Valle  
*Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania*

**176 Rendering and Architectural Knowledge**

Session chairs: Lutz Robbers, Department of Architecture, Jade University, Oldenburg; Roy Kozlovsky, David Azrieli School of Architecture, Tel Aviv University  
Track E | Histories for the Present | Friday 10.00–12.00 | M2, building 1427-246

178 | **Rendering Desire: Helmut Jacoby, Foster Associates, and the Politics of the Image in a Pre-digital Context**

Gabriel Hernández  
*Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*

180 | **Rendering Probabilities: On the Nuclear Legacy of Architectural Photorealism**

Uri Wegman  
*Université libre de Bruxelles*  
Eliyahu Keller  
*Technion IIT — Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning*

182 | **Digital Affects: Venice Biennale and the Emotional Impact of Renderings on Architectural Knowledge**

Ines Tolic  
*University of Bologna*

184 | **Synthetic Memory: Digital Excavations of Zaha Hadid's Pre-Digital Renderings**

Laura Nica  
*University of Westminster*

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**185 Architectural Objects of Colonial Consumption: The Material and Visual Worlds of Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, and Other Stimulants**

Session chairs: Laura Hindelang, University of Bern; Anne Hultsch, ETH Zurich  
Track A | Domesticating Life | Friday 13.00–15.00 | M1, building 1427-149

187 | **Inca Women Drinking: Painted Vessels and Spaces for Female Authority in the Early Modern Andes**

Stella Nair  
*University of California Los Angeles*

188 | **Roasting Beans and Sipping Hot Spiced Concoctions: The Case of the Chocolate Kitchens and the Royal Apartments of Hampton Court in the Late Seventeenth Century**

Panagiotis Doudesis  
*Independent Scholar*

189 | **From Multisensory Experience to the Museum Display of Glory Days: The Peregrination of a Teacup from China, through the Ottoman Empire, Vienna, to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth**

Anna Myjak-Pycia  
*ETH Zurich*

190 | **Materiality of Colonial Resistance: Cacao, Architectural Ceramics, and Spatial Practice in 18th-Century Mexican Convents**

Carina-Nathalia Madonna Visconti-Paff  
*Sapienza Università di Roma*

191 | **Sweet Surfaces: Colored Sugar, Porcelain Imagery, and the Architecture of Colonial Consumption**

Stella Rossikopoulou Pappa  
*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

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**192 Caring for Aging**

Session chairs: Michael Asgaard Andersen, Royal Danish Academy; Solmaz Sadeghi, Royal Danish Academy

Track B | Diversity and the Collective | Friday 13.00–15.00 | Mogens Zieler Stuen

194 | **Housing for Seniors: From Welfare State Models to Socialization of Care in Flanders**

Hilde Heynen

*KU Leuven*

195 | **Fehn and Grung's Økern Home for the Elderly (1950–55): Living Arrangements and Sensory Spatial Experience**

Espen Johnsen  
*University of Oslo*

196 | **Autonomy and Care in Elderly Housing in Zurich**

Irina Davidovici  
*gta Archive, ETH Zurich*

197 | **Intrinsic Care: Ageing in a High-Density City**

Esther Lorenz  
*School of Architecture, University of Virginia*

198 | **Dwelling in a Social(ist) Media Environment**

Weihong Bao  
*Department of Film and Media, UC Berkeley*

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**200 Frontiers: Kinetics of Expulsion, Expansion, and Contestation**

Elif Kaymaz, Middle East Technical University; Emine Esra Nalbant, Binghamton University  
Track C | Edges/Interfaces | Friday 13.00–15.00 | Richard Mortensen Stuen

202 | **Sea Power at the Frontier: Ottoman Fortresses and the Politics of the Eastern Mediterranean, 1715–1821**

Dilek Özkan-Pantazis  
*The Cyprus Institute*

203 | **The littoral as a Laboratory: Making Frontiers of Risk in the coastal Bengal Delta, 1960s–1990s**

Pritam Dey  
*University of California Los Angeles*

204 | **Architecture for Diplomacy: Wet Boundaries of Evros/Maritza/Meriç River**

Asya Ece Uzmay

*Cornell University*

205 | **The Architecture of the Frontier: Earth, Empire, and the Militarization of Southern Algeria**

Dana Salama

*University of Michigan Ann-Arbor*

207 | **The Highest Frontier: Capanna Margherita and the Limits of Habitability**

An Tairan

*ETH Zurich*

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## 208 **Religious Enlightenment: Spirituality and Space in the Long Eighteenth Century**

Session chair: Demetra Vogiatzaki, gta/ETH Zurich

Track D | Worlds of Knowledge | Friday 13.00–15.00 | Preben Hornung Stuen

210 | **Argue like it's 1599? The rebuilding of St. Galler Landkirchen and Catholic Enlightenment**

Maarten Delbeke

*gta/ETH Zurich*

211 | **Enlightenment Ecologies in the Bavarian Rococo Church**

Michael Yonan

*University of California, Davis*

212 | **God, Guns, and Governance: Spirituality in the Schimmelmann Chapel**

Natalie Patricia Körner

*Royal Danish Academy*

Bastian Felter Vaucanson

*University of Copenhagen*

213 | **Piety, Prestige, and Provincial Authority: Âyân Religious Architecture in Western Anatolia, c. 1700–1850**

Ahmet Erdem Tozoglu

*Istanbul Technical University*

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## 215 **Excavating the Landfill: Towards an Environmental History of Architecture's Waste**

Session chairs: Kim Förster, University of Manchester; Adam Przywara, University of Basel

Track E | Histories for the Present | Friday 13.00–15.00 | M2, building 1427-246

217 | **Making Ground: Waste and the Materiality of Urban Expansion in Interwar Helsinki**

Ella Müller

*Department of History, European University Institute*

218 | **Bricks and Waste Clay Pits in the Rupel Region as Reciprocal Landfills of Belgium's Regime of Cheap Urbanisation**

Tom Broes

*Ghent University / Vrije Universiteit Brussel / Université Libre de Bruxelles*

219 | **The Hidden Landfills of Architectural Whiteness: Titanium Dioxide Production and Accumulated Injustice in Kerala, India**

Kshitija Mruthyunjaya

*University of Manchester*

221 | **Reading the Landfill from the Stockpile: The NYC Clean Soil Bank**

Amelyn Ng

*GSAPP, Columbia University*

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**223 Stilled Lives: Living Materials and their Architectural Afterlives in Premodern Buildings**

Session chairs: Costanza Beltrami, Stockholm University; Saida Bondini, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

Track A | Domesticating Life | Saturday 10.00–12.00 | M1, building 1427-149

**225 | From Pietre Spugne to Calcareous Tufa: A Geoarchitectural Investigation Into the Materiality of Florentine Grottoes**

Galaad Van Daele

*ETH Zurich*

**226 | Pregnant Trees and Nursing Mothers: The Ontologies of Timber From Antiquity to the Renaissance**

Berrin Terim

*Clemson University*

**227 | From Living Bamboo to Living Structures: Material Vitality across Assembly and Use in Premodern Bamboo Houses**

Jiayue Hao (speaker); Hiroyuki Shinohara (co-author)

*School of Architecture, the Chinese University of Hong Kong*

**229 | “All the Island is a City, and All the City an Island”: Suakin’s Coral Architecture Under Ottoman Rule**

Alican Taylan

*Cornell University*

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**230 Learning from Collaboration – On the Many People who Worked Together to Create the Welfare States’ Building Boom**

Session chairs: Henriette Steiner, University of Copenhagen; Maximilian Sternberg, University of Cambridge

Track B | Diversity and the Collective | Saturday 10.00–12.00 | Mogens Zieler Stuen

**232 | Building Municipal Welfare: Politically Motivated Collaborations for Rozzano’s Educational Infrastructure (c.1950–1970)**

Elettra Carnelli

*ZHAW – ETH Zurich*

**233 | Collaborations on the building site: Landscapers and the negotiation of professional identities, power and class in 1960s Denmark**

Svava Riesto

*University of Copenhagen*

**234 | Decolonizing Collaboration**

Łukasz Stanek

*University of Michigan*

235 | **Organizing Collaboration: The Open Schools**

Meike Schalk

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology*

236 | **DIY Modernity: Bottom-up Collaboration in the Soviet Mass Housing Program**

Ekaterina Mizrokhi

*Newnham College - University of Cambridge*

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**237 Transimperial Contact Zones and Collision Space in Southeast Asia**

Session chairs: Robin Hartanto Honggare, National University of Singapore; Amy Y.T. Chang, Harvard University

Track C | Edges/Interfaces | Saturday 10.00–12.00 | Richard Mortensen Stuen

239 | **Dutch Batavia's Chinese Hospital: A Diasporic Locus and the Colonial Imaginary**

Sim Hinman Wan

*Texas Tech University*

240 | **Fortifying 'empire': Buildings, materiality and transimperial contestations in early modern Southeast Asia (1600-1800)**

Marie Ngjam

*University of Oslo*

241 | **Sovereign Facades: Museum Architecture and the Transimperial Production of Colonial Time and Territory**

Lawrence Chua

*Syracuse University*

242 | **Changing Architectural Geographies of a Colonial Enterprise: KPM in Sydney and Singapore**

Amanda Achmadi

*University of Melbourne*

Paul Walker

*University of Melbourne*

244 | **Transimperial and Transwar Perspectives on Radio Architecture in Japan and Southeast Asia**

Carolyn Birdsall

*University of Amsterdam*

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**245 Materials and Techniques on the Move**

Session chairs: Caterina Cardamone, Vrije Universiteit Brussel; Lorenzo Vigotti, Università di Bologna

Track D | Worlds of Knowledge | Saturday 10.00–12.00 | Preben Hornung Stuen

247 | **Sailing Stones: The Practice of Stereotomy Across the Medieval Mediterranean**

Sara Galletti

*Duke University*

248 | **The Stones of Perugia in the Renaissance**

Anna Rebecca Sartore

*Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz, Universiteit Gent*

250 | **Like a house of cards: building materials in the Renaissance renovation of the Convent of Christ in Tomar (Portugal)**

Gabriel Pereira

*Universidade de Coimbra*

251 | **Admiring, Importing, Reinventing: Cultural Imaginaries, Material Circulations, and Design Practices of Imported Marbles and Stones in England (c. 1650-1750)**

Giovanni Santucci

*Università di Pisa*

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## 253 **Roundtable: Transmedia Architecture Archive: Historical Knowledge in the AI Era**

Session chairs: Dirk van den Heuvel, TU Delft; Eytan Mann, TU Delft

Track E | Histories for the Present | Saturday 10.00–12.00 | M2, building 1427-246

255 | **Unfolding the Archive: New Dimensions of Access to Born-digital Architecture Collections**

Ania Molenda

*Nieuwe Instituut*

256 | **The Intelligence of Loss in the Archive**

Anna-Maria Meister

*KIT Karlsruhe, saai Archive / Kunsthistorisches Institute in Florence (Max Planck Institute)*

257 | **On Historical Archives and “Synthetic Memories”**

Ana Miljacki

*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

258 | **Queering the architectural archive: AI-assisted data collecting, hybrid prototyping, and web scraping lost traces in architectural history**

Lucas de Mello Reitz

*IAB — Brazil's Institute of Architects*

260 | **Architectural Ware: Another Archive of Digitalized Architectural Production is Here**

Joshua Silver

*Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, saai Archive*

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## 261 **Water as Ecological Mediator in Architecture: Tracing Connections from Antiquity to the Modern Age**

Session chairs: Martina Frank, Ca' Foscari University of Venice; Myriam Pilutti Namer, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Track A | Domesticating Life | Saturday 13.00–15.00 | M1, building 1427-149

263 | **Cultural Landscapes in Flux: Menderes (Maeander) River as a Living Mediator – Initiator, Generator, Transformer and Re-Constructor – of Landscape and Built Environment**

Gökhan Okumuş

*METU, Middle East Technical University*

A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz; METU, Middle East Technical University; With Gerdy Verschuure-Stuip

*TU Delft*

265 | **Publicly Accessible Clean, Flowing Water at Rome's Late Antique Charity Centers**

Gregor Kalas

*University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

266 | **Water and Space in Western Monastic Architecture (7th-18th Centuries)**

Gianmarco Guidarelli

*University of Padua*

267 | **Soil, water, and mobility in Renaissance Venice**

David Karmon

*College of the Holy Cross*

268 | **Caring for Sea Country: Yuin Nation's Pursuit of Native Title**

Jennifer Ferng

*University of Sydney*

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**269 Privacy, the Private, and Architecture**

Session chairs: Nuno Grancho, University of Copenhagen / ISCTE-IUL

Track B | Diversity and the Collective | Saturday 13.00–15.00 | Mogens Zieler Stuen

272 | **Privacy Codified. Domestic Space, Typology, and Social Hierarchy from Serlio's Book VI to the Fuggerei in Early Modern Europe**

Theodora Giovanazzi

*EPFL*

273 | **Social reform's uneasy intimacy. The hammock and collective institutions in nineteenth-century France**

Oliver Brax

*The Bartlett, University College London*

274 | **Bringing the separate together: Gottlieb Bingesbøll's Psychiatric Hospitals and Prison Projects**

Peter Thule Kristensen

*The Royal Danish Academy — Schools of; Architecture, Design and Conservation/University of Copenhagen*

275 | **The No-Go Zones and the No-Man's Lands**

Pari Riahi

*College of Humanities and Fine Arts, University of Massachusetts Amherst*

276 | **Boredom, Disprivacy, and Domesticity: From the (Cracked) Picture Window to Instagram**

Andreea Mihalache

*Richard McMahan School of Architecture Clemson University*

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**277 Notes from the Underground: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ecologies of the Subterranean**

Session chairs: Silvia Balzan, University of Manchester; Giulia Scotti, ETH Zurich

Track C | Edges/Interfaces | Saturday 13.00–15.00 | Richard Mortensen Stuen

279 | **Cold Cellar, Warm Cellar, Cold War(m) Cellar**

Frans Saraste

*Aalto University*

280 | **Nowhere to Go but Down: GECUS and Subterranean Urbanism**

Sarah Nichols

*EPFL*

281 | **Mountains of Gold. Undergrounds of Swiss Banks in the Alps, 1937–1945**

Ludo Groen

*TU Delft*

282 | **The Geological Clouds: Furnaces and Servers, Limestone and Data**

Jia Weng

*University of Tennessee*

283 | **Toxic Thresholds of a Subterranean Palimpsest: Extractive ecologies, slow violence and the question of care**

Sabina Favaro (Speaker)

*Wits Mining Institute*

Sasha Tamlyn Naidu (Co-author)

*University of Copenhagen*

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**284 The Reception of Gothic Architecture in Italy, 13.00–1700: Disapproval, Indifference, Appreciation?**

Session chairs: Gianluca Belli, Università degli Studi di Firenze; Pieter Martens, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Track D | Worlds of Knowledge | Saturday 13.00–15.00 | Preben Hornung Stuen

286 | **Flemish influences on the furnishings of Florentine residences during the Renaissance**

Claudia Tripodi

*Università degli Studi di Firenze*

287 | **Architectural dialogues in Hans Memling's Last Judgment Triptych**

Alicia Rojas Costa

*Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

288 | **Bringing the Brussels cityscape to Italy around 1500: Pietrino de Villa and his artistic commissions for the church of Sant'Agostino in Chieri**

Philip Muijtjens

*Université catholique de Louvain*

289 | **Material consistency and gothic legacy in the baroque renovation project of San Martino al Cimino (1646-1653)**

Giordano Ocelli

*Bibliotheca Hertziana — Max Planck Institute for Art History*

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**290 Roundtable: AH meets AI**

Chairs: Markus Lähteenmäki (Architectural Histories); Min Kyung Lee (Architectural Histories); Participants: Claire Zimmerman (JSAH / University of Toronto); Anna-Maria Meister (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology / Kunsthistorisches Institute in Florence); Łukasz Stanek (University of Michigan); Richard J. Williams (University of Edinburgh); Laura Nica (University of Westminster)

Track E | Histories for the Present | Saturday 13.00–15.00 | M2, building 1427-246

# Thursday

# June 18

# Animal, Industry, and Labor: Towards an Architectural History of Intensive Animal Farming

## Session chairs:

Sofia Nannini, Politecnico di Torino  
Victor Muñoz Sanz, TU Delft

Animal based products are everywhere: on our supermarket shelves, in our skin-care routines, or in the shoes we wear. Yet the scale and quality of the places where those products come from are far from our collective imagination or set in some form of idealized countryside. Industrial livestock farming is a pervasive planetary phenomenon. Scientists warn us that factory farming crucially contributes to the climate emergency: the breath and flatulence of cows warm the planet; monocultures of animal feed crops drive deforestation, biodiversity loss, and challenge the livelihoods of many; overcrowding increases zoonotic risks to human and non-human health. At the same time, in Europe and beyond, farmers are protesting in defense of what they consider their culture and mission to feed the world.

Caught in the middle, the lives and deaths of billions of non-human animals annually continue occurring in buildings which are little known, if not wholly invisible. Somehow, the history of these buildings, with their layouts and technologies, is also opaque and often disregarded by architectural historiography, with a few exceptions (Garric 2014; Alsayer 2021). Conversely, since Sigfried Giedion's *Mechanization Takes Command* (1948), many studies have focused on the architectural, urban, and social history of the slaughterhouse and of the packing industry (Cronon 1991; Vialles 1994; Young Lee 2008; Pachirat 2013; Pacyga 2015).

From sixteenth-century Palladian villas to today's concentrated feeding operations, Western architecture has evolved along the entanglements between humans and domesticated animals – mostly cattle, pigs, poultry, and horses. How do we conceptualize an *architecture* of animal farming – when we are dealing with a blend of technologies, animal bodies, ideal abstractions, and dirty realities? The

architectural history of intensive animal farming is scattered among different geographies, actors, and institutions – and it is often a history without architects. Who has designed these spaces since the industrial revolution – architects, engineers, veterinary doctors, agrarian experts, or also the animals themselves? Which zootechanical elements or typologies date back to pre-industrial times and attest to a *longue durée* of rural and farming practices? What was the architectural impact of the animal welfare debate, sparked in the 1960s with the publication of *Animal Machines* by Ruth Harrison (1964)?

While animal farming and its environmental impact has been the object of attention in anthropology, geography, STS, environmental humanities, and the arts, investigating this architecture and its paradoxical and multifaceted global histories is now more urgent than ever (Schrepfer & Scranton 2004; Blanchette 2020; Piazzesi 2023; Wadiwel 2023). This session welcomes case studies on the architectural history of animal farming at a global scale, with a preference for papers that present original archival investigations and that shed light on the industrialization of rural practices that occurred in the past three centuries. Key questions we would like to address in this session include, but are not limited to: what are the models, technologies, building materials that most contributed to the industrialization of animal agriculture? What have been the key institutions, companies, professional figures, and geographies in this history? To what extent have farming practices been technologies and instruments of Western colonialism (Fischer 2015; Specht 2019)? How have societal and cultural ideas on ‘the animal’ and welfare influenced the architecture of industrialized farming? What has been the role of human and non-human labor in the spatialization of factory farming?

With this session we aim at increasing our knowledge and awareness on animal farming, in order to promote a deeper understanding of the Anthropocene and its alternative definitions – most notably, the *Thanatocene*, or the era of massive global death (Bonneuil/Fressoz 2016). If the future is closely dependent on our capacity of historical analysis, research into the history of industrial farming may suggest new modes of positive and responsible coexistence and allow the architecture discipline to participate in the search for more livable other worlds.

Garric, Jean-Philippe. 2014. *Vers une agriculture: Architecture des constructions agricoles (1789-1950)*. Bruxelles: Mardaga.

Young Lee, Paula. 2008. *Meat, Modernity and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*. University of New Hampshire Press.

## **Disrupting infrastructures: The role of environmental actors in constructing the cattle industry in twentieth century Katanga, Belgian Congo**

Elene Vernaeve  
*Ghent University*

This paper examines attempts to establish a viable cattle industry in Katanga during the Belgian colonial period, especially the role of environmental factors. Securing enough land was never an issue for cattle companies in Belgian Congo. They were granted vast concessions, ranging from 10.000 to 300.000 hectares. The real challenges emerged once construction and operational activities began. As colonial companies pressed further into the highlands of Katanga they tried to control the space and more-than-human species inhabiting it. In the early years of the Belgian colonial period, the creation of farming complexes was marked by material constraints, limited knowledge of the local environment, and the influence of more-than-human actors with whom the companies had to share the land.

The infrastructural development of these cattle companies was meant to showcase the progress of European civilisation and the domination over the 'unknown' environment. While veterinarians and agrarian experts wrote reports and manuals outlining the creation of the 'ideal' farm, implementing these models in practice proved far more difficult. While the plans required adaptation to soil quality and seasonal conditions, more-than-human actors repeatedly undermined these models. Insects emerged as transformative actors: locusts decimated pastures, while termites compromised ranching infrastructure. These ecological actors surpassed colonial control mechanisms and continuously reshaped human decisions, business trajectories, and spatial occupation. I argue that the relationship between activities of cattle businesses and the environment was both innovative and destructive, with creative problem-solving on both sides. Drawing on documents from the colonial department of agronomy (specifically entomology) and veterinary science, monthly rapports from cattle companies, and interviews conducted during fieldwork in 2026, this paper considers the application of scientific knowledge to the local situation on the ground, attempts to control space, and the adaptation of the landscape for new large-scale economic activities. It demonstrates that the development of cattle farming infrastructure was not simply a top-down imposition of

colonial power, but a contested and dynamic process shaped by the interactions of multispecies actors and an ongoing dialogue with the ecological reality.

## **“The Chicken of Tomorrow” and the Farm of the World**

Dalal Musaed Alsayer  
*Kuwait University*

In the summer of 1945, the USDA and the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company sponsored the “Chicken of Tomorrow” contest with the aim of breeding the ultimate edible commercial chicken. Three years later, on June 24, 1948, the winner was announced: a red-feathered New Hampshire-California Cornish hybrid bred by Charles Van Tress of California. The runner-up was a purebred White Plymouth Rocks bred by Henry Saglio of Connecticut. It was Saglio’s second place chicken that would ultimately change the global poultry industry. He partnered with Nelson Rockefeller’s International Basic Economy Corporation (IBEC) to develop hybridized chickens for commercial production and mass consumption to feed the “basic economies” of the so-called Third World. The easily transportable chicken became part of the global campaign, operating in 23 countries and by 1966, having sold 2.5 billion eggs globally. At the same time, US development agencies also established rural models across the world. It is the meeting of the chicken and rurality that is the center of this paper. Using IBEC farms modeled after Saglio’s Arbor Acres under the Rural Life Institute (RLI) in Lebanon, this paper examines the implications of breeding a nutritiously-dense, genetically-stable, easily-reproduced and commercialized “universal” chicken that aimed to transcend geography and climate. With home economic programs, chicken-breeding programs, and agricultural-based models, the RLI focused on championing rural life as the building block for modernization in Lebanon, Turkey, and Syria. In the same manner that “Hotels and Highways” were vehicles for modernization, the chicken farm in Lebanon aimed to introduce “universal” architecture, diets, customs, and practices (Adalet, 2018, Stanford Univ. Press). Using archival and published material, this paper explores how the “Chicken of the Tomorrow” became the Farm of the World, attempting to overcome geography, climate, and genetics in the name of abundance and security.

## **Holstein cows on synthetic meadows. Spatial analysis of domestic-productive units for livestock farming developed by the Instituto Nacional de Colonización in A Chaira (Galicia, Spain), 1956-1975**

Antonio Giráldez López

*Universidade de Santiago de Compostela*

The Instituto Nacional de Colonización, a public institution established by Franco's regime, was tasked with developing agricultural modernisation projects across Spain, linked to new productive settlements. The landscapes experienced a complete transformation, creating a new synthetic landscape where architecture, rural centres, and agricultural land adhered to protocols institutionally established. Of more than three hundred new settlements, only one is solely dedicated to livestock farming, and its architectural features and territorial distribution make it particularly distinctive. The colonisation of Tierra Llana (Galicia) stands out as an exceptional case within Franco's colonisation programme. Its predominantly livestock-focused nature and its division into isolated domestic-productive units distinguish it architecturally, infrastructurally, and in terms of productivity from the typical compact urban form associated with colonisation architecture. The architectural intervention aimed to respond to the regime's goal of maximising productivity by replacing a subsistence economy with an intensive agro-industrial economy through new architectural models. The domestic-productive units were a synthetic reinterpretation of peasant housing adapted to a new rural settler who had to modernise his ways of working, his animal species, and his machinery as a requirement of the colonisation project. This research examines the architectural changes of the productive matrix before, during, and after colonisation in Tierra Llana. The domestic-productive unit – comprising both the home and workplace of nuclear settler families – serves as the central focus of the analysis and is extended to collective elements – Cooperative Centres – to assess, more than fifty years after the project's completion, what continuities and shifts remain in this synthetic landscape. The work of the Instituto Nacional de Colonización involved the development of an alternative modernity, where technology, genetics, and ideology progressed in tandem with new architectural and urban forms specifically designed to support a national project. Understanding the evolution of architectures and spaces created for animals will help us better comprehend the role that non-human animals have played within this complex territorial infrastructure.

## **High-rise Pigs and Poultry Mines – Architecture between progress and improvisation in the GDR's intensive animal production industry**

Christina Katharina May  
*Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*

The “pig high-rise” was the world's first example of architecture designed for intensive pig production. Built in 1969/1970 near the East German village of Maasdorf, it used prefabricated construction methods and automated processes. The Maasdorf facility also produced new pig breeds, such as the “Leicoma”, which are now sold under the ‘endangered livestock breeds’ label. The high-rise building was part of a program to increase the production of consumer goods in the GDR, following a resolution of the fifth party conference of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) in 1958. With the support of Soviet scientists, new farming buildings were created or existing structures were reused. This not only contrasted with traditional farming methods, but also with the concept of modern food production facilities. Immediately following the SED's resolution, a former potash mine in Morsleben was used to farm poultry from 1959 until 1984. From the 1970s onwards, farming took place alongside the storage of radioactive waste in the mines. These two case studies are used in the talk to analyze the conception of building or reusing spaces for farming and breeding facilities in the GDR. The facilities are examined beyond their institutional and scientific contexts, focusing on the bodily concepts of the animals. Using a systemic planning method, the architecture of the prefabricated buildings and reused structures controlled the actions of both the animals and the workers, who were part of a cybernetic system. The modification processes, and reactions to failures and outbreaks, reveal differences between the alleged controlled system of the high-rise building and the layouts for reusing building structures. Overall, the innovative or improvised architecture used for producing socialist animals raises questions about its place in the history of enhancing performance.

## Milking the Cow: Dairy Production in Postcolonial India

Priyanka Sen  
*Cornell University*

After India's independence in 1947, South Asia experienced a range of critical events that shaped the subcontinent's decolonized nation-building process, through intertwined histories of violent partitions and wars, mass displacement and migration, and climate crisis-induced famine, bringing basic human rights like food and shelter to the forefront of conflict. At the nexus of this, international aid regimes clamored to participate in benevolent projects to facilitate rural "rehabilitation and productivity," assisting in the production of food nutrients, including milk in various forms (powder and liquid). Launched in India in 1970, "Operation Flood," also known as the White Revolution, became a central piece of state intervention, creating the National Dairy Development Board that facilitated farmer cooperatives and dairy facilities across India to capitalize and exploit milk production. In addition to making the nonhuman cow a productive member in both rural and urban postcolonial settings in India, the dairy board was also charged with ensuring that families would be able to feed themselves as part of a larger family planning effort, particularly in times of crises that induced famine. This paper interrogates the architectural ramifications of intensive cow farming and related infrastructures and aims to resituate the animal in the architectural archive as a crucial part of India's built environment's history. Through the examination of correspondences, reports, and photographs, a larger ethic around the conceptualization of the sacred cow as productive nonhuman in the postcolonial context of India emerges as a complicated history entangled in religion, humanitarian aid, and western ideologies of modernity and progress. The paper seeks to answer questions such as: how did the building of these dairy facilities in urban city centers change the migration patterns of these rural animals? What role did the sacred cow as object play in the making of these dairy facilities and ethic of making a productive nonhuman? How was the cow's labor standardized in this dairy production and how was the built environment infrastructure designed to exploit it?

# Between Mental Health and Punishment. From the Convent to the Asylum

## Session chairs:

Elisa Boeri, Politecnico di Milano

Francesca Mattei, Roma Tre University

This session aims to critically and comparatively examine the evolution of the design and urban history of psychiatric care facilities, from the initial interventions involving the adaptation and transformation of existing structures (such as monasteries, prisons, etc.), to the systematic design of new buildings and urban systems, which began with the socio-political dynamics of the Enlightenment and continued into the contemporary era. Since the Middle Ages, society has sought to isolate and conceal those considered “different” from established norms, a matter that has been addressed over time through various practices, both architectural and procedural. These range from the domestic care of madness to confinement aimed at managing public order issues; from the hospitals built in the Islamic world for the care of the sick (the Bimaristan), where the peacefulness of the place contributed to the treatment of the mind, to psychiatric institutions that have become political devices helping to control various forms of (political and civil) disobedience.

Architectural structures designed to confine “the other” do not always originate with this specific function. This is evident, for instance, in conventional buildings, which commonly also accommodated the indigent, pregnant women without families and chronic or psychiatric patients, thus highlighting the overlap between the concepts of ‘confinement’ and ‘exclusion’. In Western contexts, these spaces frequently emerge through the repurposing of buildings initially intended for other functions, as illustrated by Het Dolhuys in Haarlem, which began as a leper hospital and later became a lunatic asylum in the 16th century. On other occasions, their histories are far older, such as that of the Bethlem Royal Hospital in Bromley (London), founded in 1247, though subsequently relocated and transformed. These institutions are often situated on the periphery of cities, isolated and relegated to the margins, or otherwise located outside city walls - examples of which include Beth-

lem Royal Hospital itself, as well as the Hospital of San Vincenzo in Prato, Milan, one of the earliest asylums in Italy (second half of the 15th century). Starting from the 17th century, and with greater emphasis between the 18th and 20th centuries, there was a systematic experimentation with the topic of asylum space and the moral rehabilitation of the mentally ill. This development occurred in parallel with shifts in European and non-European political and social landscapes, as well as advancements in medical and scientific studies (such as the emergence of occupational therapies like ergotherapy and the reformist movement led by Philippe Pinel, director of the Bicêtre in Paris). Consequently, there was a growing focus on the built environment dedicated to the treatment of mental illnesses. In the 19th century, the circulation of architectural models for asylums revolved around well-defined typologies, ranging from the radial model (e.g., the Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum in Exeter) to the widely adopted pavilion hospital layout (from the Norwich Pauper Asylum to the San Niccolò Asylum in Siena). In this context, architecture also began to play a role in classifying and separating various degrees of mental illness.

The papers in this session explore and analyse questions such as: how does the design of specialized institutions – ranging from early modern “houses” to post-war hospitals – mediate the tension between providing care and enforcing social or carceral control? In what ways have architects attempted to “de-carceralize” institutional spaces by prioritizing human relationships, nature, and the dissolution of physical boundaries? What role did media – including investigative journalism, photography, and film – play in exposing institutional violence and shifting the public perception of the asylum from a place of healing to one of punishment? How have specific institutions for women historically functioned as spaces for both the confinement of “irregular” individuals and the emergence of unexpected models of communal autonomy? carceralize” institutional spaces by prioritizing human relationships, nature, and the dissolution of physical boundaries? What role did media – including investigative journalism, photography, and film – play in exposing institutional violence and shifting the public perception of the asylum from a place of healing to one of punishment? How have specific institutions for women historically functioned as spaces for both the confinement of “irregular” individuals and the emergence of unexpected models of communal autonomy?

## **The Domesticated Woman: Discipline and community at the Casa delle Zitelle Gasparine in Padova**

Mariapaola Michelotto  
*IUAV Venice / ETH Zurich*

At the turn of the 16th century, when the Counter-Reformation was redefining the principles of Catholicism in Italy, solutions were sought to isolate those women who could not, or would not, accept the role of wife and domestic carer, and were therefore deemed mentally unstable or socially dangerous: prostitutes, unmarried women, malmaritate, convertite, poor girls, women victims of violence. Several new institutions were established which offered an alternative to familial or religious life. They were mostly called case (houses), highlighting their domestic nature as compared to convents. On one side, they were charged with a clearly correctional scope: irregular women would be admitted for a limited time, during which they would be re-educated and eventually reintegrated into society. On the other, they offered the possibility to escape the overarching patriarchy and obtain a certain economic and managerial autonomy from the male figure. In this sense, they fostered the creation of an unprecedented model of domestic life, subject to strict rules but inevitably convivial. Drawing from Monica Chojnacka and Sherrill Cohen's seminal works, the paper will examine the organisational structure and the development of domestic life in the Casa delle Zitelle Gasparine, a Paduan institution founded in 1598 by the family of Francesco Gasparini to shelter young women at risk. Through archival research, the aim is to unveil how this peculiar form of communal living influenced the development of social relationships and spatial hierarchies in the Casa. Such an analysis will contribute to enrich the studies on gender and the early modern history of correctional institutions, shedding light on a specific temporal and spatial context where coercive reformatory attempts led to the emergence of a progressive care system, where irregular women, despite being considered social outcasts, were given the tools to advocate for the administration of their own life.

## The Archive of Obsession: Women's Reformatories as Diagnostic Space

Tara Bissett

*University of Waterloo*

The power of penal reform architecture lay in its indeterminacy (Foucault, 1995; Evans, 1982). Women's industrial reformatories in North America were built on a contradiction: they promised rehabilitation while extending custody through training, routine, and supervision. What kind of institution is a reformatory when the claim to care is structurally inseparable from detention? This paper argues that reformatories' turn to medicalisation in the early twentieth century laundered that contradiction. Once the institution was framed as diagnostic, custody no longer needed to justify itself as rehabilitation.

Reformatories were paradoxical sites. These institutions confined “wayward” women whose experiments in sexual freedom became grounds for incarceration (Hartman, 2020). Within that coercive setting, Superintendent Katherine Bement Davis produced some of the earliest institutional studies of women's sexuality and psychology, decades before the Kinsey reports. She drew directly on tests administered to inmates through the Rockefeller funded Bureau of Social Hygiene at Bedford Hills Reformatory, showing how confinement was converted into research (Davis and Weidensall, 1916; Davis, 1929). Carceral reform thus operated simultaneously as an epistemic project and a carceral one.

After 1900, the reformatory's laboratory functions made diagnosis central to its operations. Psychiatric screening and medical testing were built into intake and classification, shifting authority from reform through training to custody through psychological assessment. Record-making became a technology of control. The result was an obsessive archive of institutional knowledge, including intake forms, behavioural notes, medical exams, and case files that tracked sexual histories as diagnostic evidence. In practice, these records turned “aberrant” psychologies into administrative categories, justifying labels such as feeble-mindedness or neurosis that marked some women as beyond reform. By exploring women's reformatories as triage space, this paper shows how sex studies, women's psychiatry, and carceral design converged to reshape incarceration and the categories through which women were understood.

## Relations not Models: Nicole Sonolet's Hospitals for the ASM 13 in Paris

Meredith TenHoor  
*Pratt Institute*

Two mental hospitals built in postwar France, designed by the architect Nicole Sonolet, ambitiously attempted to allow patients to use the space of the hospital as a tool in healing. Built for the Association de Santé Mentale of the 13th Arrondissement (ASM 13), one of the most active and innovative early practitioners of community-based care in France, both the peri-urban Eau Vive hospital (Soisy-sur-Seine, 1958-62), and the urban Center for Mental Health for the ASM 13 (Paris, 1972-8) were important architectural prototypes of France's program of "sectorization" of mental health care. They established Sonolet as an expert consulted by midcentury hospital architects worldwide. I have described the architecture of l'Eau Vive elsewhere, discussing how it emerged as a key example of the architecture of the institutional psychotherapy movement, and how it inspired more well-known figures in the postwar reform of mental health, such as Félix Guattari. Here, I discuss how both l'Eau Vive and the Center for Mental Health were used by doctors and patients, and how they relate to Sonolet's theories of care, which she developed in articles on social housing and the architecture of mental health, but also in unpublished texts. Given that Sonolet's ideas were taken up by others who had a profound influence on de-carceralizing mental health care in the 20th century France, but that her buildings are little-known today, how can we understand the ways that Sonolet's built work contributed to creating a new typology for the twentieth century asylum? Further, what is the relationship between theories of care and buildings that institute it, both in historiography and practice?

## **“Inside that High Wall.” Giovanni Michelucci and the Design of Places of Social Exclusion**

Ilaria Cattabriga  
*University of Bologna*

Lorenzo Mingardi  
*University of Florence*

Throughout his life, Giovanni Michelucci (1891-1990) focused his work on the pursuit of quality in architectural space, which he considered to be a primary factor in the creative process. According to Michelucci, the “architectural space” is the element that most influences human life and well-being and should not be understood in terms of metric dimensions, but rather in terms of the character that “small or large spaces assume in relation to the organism of which they are part, their specific function, and their relationship with the surrounding environment.” Starting from this assumption, a space designed in the interests of humans cannot, in Michelucci’s view, be confined to an enclosure; it cannot be limited to the perimeter of a room, a hall, or a street, but must possess the magical power to transcend boundaries, dissolve walls, and establish a direct relationship with the outside world, with nature. But this liberating effect can only be produced where and when the space is truly designed in the total and vital interest of man. On the opposite, where space is designed to put through people, to control their lives and behavior – as was specifically the case of mental hospitals, but also, more generally, of institutions such as prisons, hospitals, schools, and boarding schools – then the space becomes an instrument of coercion and reduction of personality, generating feelings of deprivation of freedom, segregation, and humiliation that end up provoking subtle or overt reactions against authority, power, and ultimately society as a whole. Through the analysis of unpublished documents kept at the Michelucci Foundation in Fiesole (especially excerpts of university lectures and correspondence with many magistrates, doctors, and psychologists with whom Michelucci was in contact) and in the Historical Archives of Florence – the city for which he designed and built prison facilities (Solicciano, 1990) and produced numerous writings on the former San Salvi Asylum – and through interviews to workers and hosts, this contribution aims to highlight how the architect conceived the design of spaces for places of social exclusion as an opportunity for genuine collaboration with those who experienced

those spaces daily. The architect was able progressively to develop and implement his reflections on human freedom in the city, which he had begun as early as the 1930s. This purpose aims at demonstrating how Michelucci's design considered the relationships between humans and built environment, to define the main features of an "architecture able to welcome", masterfully translated in the project of Sollicciano's "Giardino degli incontri". This was achieved by studying the dynamics between the preexisting prison and the new addition of the garden and meeting rooms, and among the different parts of the project, severely offering the indispensable to its own functioning, and definitely let the project continue its efficient life across the decades. Michelucci possessed and transmitted the human dimension of architecture that took into account all the disciplines that regulated reality, to him only in this way space could be read and composed in relation to the urban context. The construction of the city thus became the construction of relationships or their "shaping" according to principles disconnected from formal matrices. The project for Sollicciano embodies the idea that the shape of the city becomes dictated by the 'solidification' of flows, connections, visual relationships, the different life plans that relate planimetrically and altimetrically to form a physical and conceptual continuity, between the space of the outside and that of the internal. This putting the relationships and their dialogue at the base of the project, changes also the usual vision of the form, no longer obtained by conditioning of culture, power or style, but built by the physical realization of all the immaterial components that contribute to define it. The city is variable, as its development is driven by variables: the relations necessary to form it; the city is assimilated to the building and the building to the city in a reciprocity that expresses the pulsation of a life that seems to be the origin, the measure and the purpose of every question. The aim of the project was no longer the result but the way to get to the result and its relevance for the urban reality.

## The Exposure of Psychiatric Conditions in Italy Through the Media in the late 1960s

Ana Tostões

*IST Tecnico Lisboa*

Michela Pilotti

*Politecnico di Milano*

Francesca Giudetti

*Politecnico di Milano*

The first investigations into the conditions of patients and psychiatric institutions in Italy emerged in the 1960s, often taking the form of journalistic inquiries widely disseminated through national television and newspapers. These reports fostered a climate of denunciation and controversy, coupled with a growing desire for reform. Central to these critiques was the objectification of patients by institutions ostensibly tasked with their care – a dynamic that revolutionary psychiatrist Franco Basaglia (1924-1980) sought to challenge by restoring patients' human and social roles through direct communication with caregivers. On December 30th, 1968, the RAI weekly program TV7 aired *I giardini di Abele*, the first in-depth television reportage on psychiatric conditions, produced by Sergio Zavoli (1923-2020). The documentary focused on the Gorizia asylum, inaugurated in November 1962 and then directed by Basaglia. From the outset, Zavoli highlighted the marginal nature of such facilities – walled off and relegated to the urban periphery, as if hidden from society and real life. Through footage of general and departmental assemblies, the program captured the intense debates surrounding the harsh treatments inflicted on patients. Following this broadcast, the asylum began opening its doors to the city, welcoming young scholars interested in studying prejudice and expanding the conversation into university classrooms occupied by student movements. That same year, photographers Carla Cerati (1926-2016) and the recently deceased Gianni Berengo Gardin (1930-2025) were granted access to the asylums of Gorizia, Parma, and Florence. Their photographs served not only as testimony and denunciation of institutional violence but also visually articulated two central themes of Basaglia's work: the body and the institution. The latter, especially through Gardin's trained architectural eye, was examined via its mechanisms – walls, thresholds,

grates – and through its interactions with the body, documenting how individuals related to spaces and their furnishings. The result culminated a year later in the publication *Morire di classe*, edited by Basaglia and his wife Franca Ongaro (1928–2005), published by Einaudi. This proposal aims to shed light on the role of media not only as instruments of social critique but also as tool for redefining the psychiatric institution itself, making visible its architectural mechanisms of control and exclusion. The argument is that this transition, focused in the 1968’ “Annus mirabilis” marks a turning point year in architectural thought and practice, as well as in society and artistic creation. This crucial shift from the image of the asylum as a place of care to its public perception as a punitive and dehumanizing space will be analysed in deep and critically way.

# The Ceiling

**Session chair:**

Mari Hvattum, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

A ceiling is the upper interior surface of a room. Sometimes simply the underside of the floor or roof above, other times an independent membrane, the ceiling has an ambiguous tectonic status. Miming structure but rarely structural and often with an unobvious materiality, ceilings offer an unsurpassed field for representation, play, mimicry and metamorphosis. This session explores the richness and ambiguities of the ceiling – an architectural element charged, so says Gottfried Semper, with the task of overcoming “the oppressive feeling evoked by any separation between us and the open sky.”

The ceiling has a unique position among the elements of architecture. While other bits of buildings – floors, walls, windows, doors – are busy fulfilling their practical functions, distributing people, practices and objects as occasion requires, the ceiling is given over to something else altogether. In modern architecture, that “something else” is often pure technical performance, with ventilation, acoustical devices, and lighting densely packed into the ceiling’s suspended grid. Historically, the ceiling has taken on a far wider range of tasks. It announces the purpose of the room; the dreams and aspirations of the patron; the spiritual horizon within which the building belongs. In the ceiling of the royal tombs of Uganda the carefully aligned reed rings hung from the outer roof speak simultaneously of the identity of past kings and the cosmic order of the world. In Egyptian burial chambers, the ceiling embodies a miniature firmament through which the soul may travel, while in Chinese temples, the central dome forms a “sky-well” connecting heaven and earth.

Looking for papers that explore the meaning, making, and materiality of ceilings, the session is open to scholarship on any place or period. Of particular interest is the migration and metamorphosis of ceiling motifs across cultures and periods, for instance the way the coffered ceiling was translated into a multitude of hybrid materialities in the late middle ages onwards, or the way the Arabic muqarna ceiling

changed its materials and construction principles when transferred from the Middle East and Northern Africa, to Spain and beyond. Or indeed; the reimagining of the ceiling in post-war architecture, when architects like Louis Kahn swore that he “did not want to die under a false ceiling.” While “staring at the ceiling” is often taken to represent lethargy, loss, and idle longing, it can also – as this session sets out to show – give unexpected insights into the built world and beyond.

## **'Under an Open Sky': Gunnar Asplund, Ivar Tengbom and the Mediterranean**

Anna Bortolozzi  
*Stockholm University*

In the early 1920s, Gunnar Asplund and Ivar Tengbom – two of the most prominent figures in the Nordic Classicism architectural movement – became fascinated by the idea of designing an assembly hall 'under an open sky'. At the Scandia cinema, which opened in 1923, Asplund created a night sky adorned with stars. In the Stockholm Music Hall, inaugurated in 1926, Tengbom created a bright, cloudless summer sky.

Since the Renaissance, Western architects have developed various solutions for designing ceilings that resemble an open sky. These solutions included wooden coffers painted blue, frescoed vaults, and canvases featuring illusionistic skies with flying creatures. However, Asplund and Lewerentz did not draw on this tradition. Instead, they took inspiration from the squares and classical ruins they had visited in the Mediterranean, particularly in Sicily.

The materials and techniques they used to recreate the experience of an open southern sky in their northern, roofed buildings were original and unconventional. Asplund suspended dozens of glowing bulb lamps at different heights under a dark barrel vault. Tengbom stretched a canvas canopy across the room with invisible threads.

This paper explores the concept of rooms 'under an open sky' through the atmospheric designs of Asplund and Tengbom for the Scandia cinema and Stockholm Music Hall. Unfortunately, these unique ceilings were destroyed beyond repair during the 20th century to make way for modern lighting and sound systems. However, information about their creation, sources and original appearance can be found in architects' project drawings, black-and-white photographs and archival records.

## Aalto's Sensoria

Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen

*Yale School of Architecture*

The paper explores how Alvar Aalto used ceilings to modulate human experience, emotions and behavior through various architectural assemblages and ultimately to craft immersive “sensoria” – multi-sensory spatial environments with physical, biological, social, and cultural significance culminating in sensuous identification.

I trace Aalto's interest in the ceiling's architectural potential to his 1923 visit to Stockholm when he saw Gunnar Asplund's Skandia Cinema with its distinctive blue ceiling with stars shortly after the building's opening. Subsequently, Aalto started to use ceilings in his own architecture in multifaceted ways: to solve functional problems, such as how to bring daylight and control the acoustical conditions; to govern spatial atmosphere and transitions; to create cultural associations; and as a site of formal, material, and artistic experimentation.

I will begin my talk with an analysis of the loggia of Muurame Church (1924), which Aalto copied from Fra Angelico's Cortona altarpiece with the goal of turning the spatial transition from an outdoor to interior space into an experiential, anticipatory event with religious meaning. I will proceed to discuss his early studies for the reading room and auditorium ceilings for Viipuri library (1933-38) in which he analyzed, respectively, the impact of rays of light and waves of sound on the experiencing subject and how the ceiling treatments of some of his major public commissions the 1950s, such as Vuoksenniska Church (1956-58) used sculpting as a means to solve functional problems (e.g. how to divide and illuminate the space) and to amplify the religious meaning of space. I will conclude with an analysis of two of Aalto's late works, Finlandia House (1975) and Essen Opera House (1959-1983), which coordinated surface treatments of their walls and ceilings to maximize not only acoustic performance but to amplify spatial immersion and identification with the performative act.

## **Portable Skies – The Ceiling as Displaced Fragment in William Randolph Hearst’s Collecting Practices**

Louise Vanhee  
*Ghent University*

In the early twentieth century, as European cities underwent rapid urban transformation and aristocratic estates faced financial decline, large-scale dismantlement of historic buildings flooded the market with architectural fragments. While elements like wooden paneling, columns, and doorframes were more readily traded and reused, ceilings – often the most ornate and symbolically charged elements of interior architecture – posed unique challenges due to their scale and structural complexity. Yet it was these difficulties that made William Randolph Hearst’s collecting practices so remarkable. Unlike most collectors, Hearst acquired ceilings in extraordinary quantity and variety, envisioning their reuse not as isolated decoration but as part of a comprehensive architectural reassembly.

This paper starts by examining Hearst’s practice of collecting ceiling fragments through the lens of “Album #92 – Ceilings: Spanish, Moorish, English, German & Miscellaneous Countries,” housed in the William Randolph Hearst Archives. The album compiled by Hearst’s staff catalogues over forty ceilings, complete with photographs, provenance notes, and acquisition records, offering insight into the logistical and symbolic dimensions of his collecting. It reveals how ceilings were imagined as ‘portable skies’ – surfaces that could be lifted from their original contexts and reinstalled to evoke grandeur, staged historicism, and curated eclecticism.

Next, the paper will focus on a select number of ceiling fragments that were implemented at Hearst Castle by drawing on archival materials from both Hearst archives and those of his personal architect Julia Morgan. It considers how these ceiling fragments were adapted, recontextualized, and integrated into new architectural narratives, and how their reuse reflects broader patterns of cultural translation and material migration. In doing so, the paper contributes to a growing scholarship on the reuse of architectural fragments and positions the ceiling as a site of meaning-making – not only in its original setting, but also in its afterlife as a curated, displaced, and reimagined horizon.

## **Cheap, Quick and Easy: Don Brown, Armstrong® World Industries and the Ceiling for Everywhere**

Kieran Connoly  
*University of Newcastle*

This paper concerns two especially important contributors to the history of the ceiling: Don Brown and Armstrong® World Industries. Both, in various ways, have contributed to the design and global proliferation of contemporary suspended ceiling systems, propelling them to such ubiquity that Louis Kahn is alleged to have professed his desire ‘not to die under a false ceiling’ as this call for papers acknowledges.

At around the same time as Brown was refining how different parts of the ceiling grid could be assembled, Armstrong® were busy refining what would become the ‘industry standard’ suspended ceiling system: the Armstrong® ‘Acoustical Fire Guard’ comprising a modular lay-in grid, acoustic tiles, light fittings, ventilation grilles and unparalleled fire protection underwritten by a prestigious ‘Underwriters Laboratories’ UL Mark.

Together, Brown and Armstrong® exemplified modernist architecture’s embrace of industrial culture, transforming the ceiling plane into a pure expression of modular efficiency. Their innovations democratised a technology that had previously been dominated by ‘one-off’ bespoke installations, making use of standardised components and accessible installation methods. While Kahn’s distaste for false ceilings reflected high modernism’s material purism, this paper argues that Armstrong® and Brown’s contribution to the history of the ceiling has – for better and for worse – proved more enduring, and, therefore, is worthy of scholarly attention not normally reserved for those associated with mass-market, commercial building systems.

## **Petals and Smells: the office ceiling responds to climate change.**

Hugh Campbell

*University College Dublin*

The ceiling smells. This is the first thing noticed by visitors to Herzog & deMeuron's new zero-carbon Hortus building in Basel. In this reinvention of commercial office space, the floors are made of a solid assembly of structural timbers infilled with rammed earth, dug directly from the site. The ground is reconstituted above. Among the project's innovations, this is perhaps the most disconcerting, with crafted construction displacing a layering of highly refined and standardised components.

A few years previously, for Bloomberg HQ in London - the 'most sustainable office building in the world' - Foster&Partners developed a bespoke suspended ceiling, a continuous membrane of sculpted aluminium petals incorporating cooling, lighting and acoustics. Between these two expensive and self-consciously innovative projects we are witnessing the reinvention of the commercial office ceiling in response to climate change. If Bloomberg offers the ultimate technical optimisation of the suspended soffit - ubiquitous since the mid-twentieth century, Hortus proposes a volte-face towards simple solidity.

This paper will explore how the imperatives of carbon reduction are prompting a reappraisal of the modern logic of ceiling construction. The separation of structure and soffit provided a plenum layered with networks of service conduits guaranteeing stability, comfort and a range of operational norms within the office space.

This logic established an ordered realm above, a register of our everyday dependence on distributed, carbon-intensive, resources. As this dependence is gradually dismantled, the components and composition of the ceiling are, necessarily, to the forefront of change. The required standard floor to ceiling heights - a frequently cited rationale for demolition - are being abandoned in favour of adaptive reuse. In new developments, the question of how structure, surfaces and services combine to produce floors and ceilings is alive again. Until recently invisible, ceilings are being seen anew, indexes of the post-carbon age.

# Building Science: The City as a Site and Object of Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Period

## Session chairs:

Christine Beese, Ruhr Universität Bochum

Nicole Falconi Müller, Ruhr Universität Bochum

In the early modern period, cities served both as settings for and subjects of knowledge production. At the intersection of theory and practice, and of written and embodied knowledge, artisans and artists, mathematicians and philosophers, court scribes, and administrative officials developed methods and techniques to adapt urban space and its administration to new technical and social demands. Actors from diverse institutional, social, and cultural backgrounds contributed to the emergence of an urban fabric and civic administration shaped by their knowledge production. Objects, instruments, and materials of local, regional, and even global origin were as integral to this process as images, stories, and narratives.

Numerous scholars have explored the situatedness of knowledge production (Livingstone, Shapin), the relationship between craft and academic knowledge (Smith, Bertucci), and the relationship between architecture and natural science (Galison, Gerbino). Scholars have also considered the significance of instruments (Bennett, Dupré), objects (Findlen, Bertoloni Meli), and maps (Ballon, Friedman) for the production and (global) circulation of knowledge, as well as the relationship between urban space and knowledge (Sennett, De Munck, Long).

The presentations in this section build on this body of literature and explore the development and dissemination of knowledge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In their introduction, Christine Beese and Nicole Falconi examine the role of surgeons and architects in establishing state-run health and education systems in Uppsala and Barcelona. Davide Martino's presentation examines how increased water demand led to the development of technical expertise and the

institutionalisation of municipal hydraulic offices in Augsburg and Amsterdam. Giedrė Jarulaitienė analyses the role of the architect Johan Daniel Berlin in the construction of key educational institutions in Trondheim during the Enlightenment, while Marc Nötges highlights the epistemic potential of early modern cityscapes (so called ‘capricci’) as models of thought.

Based on these case studies, the section aims to shed light on the city as a contact zone, and as both a subject and an object in the making, circulation, implementation, and institutionalisation of knowledge in the early modern period.

## Terraqueous cities: the early modern art of governing water

Davide Martino

*Université Libre de Bruxelles*

In 1682, Grand-Duke Cosimo III de' Medici sent the draughtsman Pietro Guerrini on a tour of Europe to observe and report 'what other nations have [...] of mechanical operations, buildings, machines, and instruments for the government and management of waters, whether running or still'. His instructions included specific mention of Augsburg and Amsterdam: focusing on these two cities, as well as on Guerrini's native Florence, this paper argues that we should understand early modern cities as terraqueous sites.

Founded on seashores or riverbanks, and prospering thanks to water power as well as waterborne transport, premodern cities were zones of contact between land and water. Their terraqueous character required constant interventions in the liquid environment, which in turn called for the training, employment, and deployment of hydraulic experts. This is evident not only from the point of view of hydraulic experts themselves, but also from that of travellers like Guerrini, visiting cities and commenting on both their hydraulic infrastructure and the experts who designed and constructed it.

Reframing cities as terraqueous underscores the centrality of urban centres to the creation, implementation, and dissemination of knowledge about water. The establishment of specialised municipal hydraulic offices, an early modern phenomenon, both required the availability of knowledge and the people who held it, and led to the elaboration of more knowledge and the training of more experts. This paper thus contributes to an emerging body of environmental historical scholarship analysing the implications of past attempts to control the environment. As early modern cities increasingly sought to govern water, they relied on and generated knowledge about it. Simultaneously, they also created structures and systems which have shaped our (lack of) understanding for and interaction with urban waters down to the present day.

## Johan Daniel Berlin – Architect of Urban Enlightenment

Giedrė Jarulaitienė

*Independent Scholar / Drammen Municipality*

In the 18th century, Trondheim was a city in transition, shaped by the scientific ambitions and cultural impulses of the Enlightenment. At the center of this transformation stood Johan Daniel Berlin who helped shape both the intellectual and physical landscape of the city.

J. D. Berlin was born in Memel, educated in Mitau and Copenhagen. In 1737 he settled in Trondheim, where he served as municipal fire chief, inspector of the city's first waterworks, and was among the founding members of the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters. An inventory after his death revealed a rich collection of scientific instruments and architectural books. It is known that Berlin produced the first proposal for a Latin School in Trondheim, designed to house not only the academic institution, but also an observatory.

It was widely acknowledged that the Gustavianum in Uppsala inspired J. D. Berlin's school building (Lexow, 1982, p. 117; Guttormsen, 1987, p. 64). However, this study seeks to provide a broader perspective by highlighting other, less expected examples of scientific institutions that helped shape the townscapes of early modern Europe. These range from Academia Petrina in Mitau, designed by Severin Jensen - court architect to the Duke of Courland - to the Vienna University Observatory, designed by astronomer Maximilian Hell, who visited J. D. Berlin in 1768.

In the 18th century, observatories were commonly constructed on the rooftops of academic institutions in many forms: rectangular or polygonal structures, multilayered towers, or twostorey roof extensions. Long before the problem of light pollution, urban rooftops offered suitable conditions of height, openness, and stability for astronomical observation. In this way, they became both functional instruments of science and prominent visual markers of Enlightenment in the social and architectural fabric of European towns.

## Imagined cities, model worlds: Fiction, knowledge and the early modern city

Marc Nötges

*TU Kaiserslautern*

The architectural capriccio, as invented in the early modern period, opens up a complex field of tension between representation, fiction and knowledge production. Drawing on model theory as developed since the 1960s, the capriccio can be understood as a model-like practice: it recontextualizes real architectures by embedding them in new emotive and narrative frameworks, while at the same time synthesizing them with imaginary buildings into hypothetical urban spaces. In this way, it generates speculative knowledge about the city that transcends mere documentation. The capriccio thus functions not only as a pictorial genre but also as an epistemic instrument mediating between architecture, painting and urban knowledge.

By translating built architecture into a fabric of fictitious structures, the capriccio simultaneously points to the model-like character of architecture itself: the built city appears as a projection space for social order, political utopias and cultural affiliations. In this double sense (image as model and architecture as model), urban spaces become epistemic contact zones in which transdisciplinary forms of knowledge intersect: aesthetic representation, political imagination, historical memory and urban speculation.

The paper examines capricci as urban knowledge models that oscillate between empirical reference and fictional construction. They reveal how, in the early modern period, the city functioned both as an object and as a laboratory of transdisciplinary knowledge production and how in its artistic representation, the utopian dimension of architecture as a societal task was articulated.

## Roundtable: Self(Hi)stories: the “I” in Architectural Historiography

### Chairs

Daria Ricchi, Oxford Brookes University, NYU London

Vanessa Grossman, Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania

First-person narration in architectural history offers an intimate mode of engagement that bridges past and present, foregrounding personal insights, emotions, and reflections often absent from third-person accounts. By grounding historical analysis in lived experience, this approach humanizes architectural history and challenges its reliance on detached abstraction. Yet the use of the first person also raises critical questions about subjectivity, bias, and the risk of eclipsing broader historical frameworks. This roundtable invites reflection on the role of first-person narration in architectural historiography, with particular attention to feminist and queer perspectives that foreground emotion, identity, and positionality – distinguishing the conventional academic “I” from a more explicitly subjective and embodied voice.

First-person travelogues played a foundational role in the construction of European world histories, particularly during the colonization of the “New World.” Informed by colonial ideologies, these narratives engaged with natural landscapes and the built environment while drawing on Indigenous knowledge – perspectives that were often marginalized, distorted, or erased in the final texts. By the late eighteenth century, the rise of modern historiography marked a methodological shift, aligning historical writing with the empirical frameworks of the natural sciences. Historians increasingly adopted third-person narration to present evidence as neutral and systematic, distancing the authorial voice and reinforcing the divide between memoir – rooted in subjective experience – and history – positioned as objective, analytical discourse.

In the nineteenth century, European historians of architectural styles, deeply shaped by racial biases, produced histories that excluded marginalized voices. As historical fiction gained popularity, the first-person voice remained closely asso-

ciated with fictionalization. In the twentieth century, thinkers such as Paul Ricœur underscored the importance of preserving a clear distinction between verifiable history and imaginative fiction. Early twentieth-century avant-garde movements began to blur the boundaries between artistic expression and historical narration, further unsettling established notions of historical objectivity. The concept of the “death of the author” continued this destabilization by challenging assumptions of objective truth in writing, including historical texts. In 1987, Pierre Nora published *Ego-histoire*, marking the first explicit use of the first-person pronoun by a historian to reflect on personal subjectivity in historical writing. That same decade also witnessed the emergence of Carlo Ginzburg’s microhistories, demonstrating how individual, seemingly marginal narratives could illuminate broader historical truths, elevating the personal to History with a capital “H.”

Feminist scholars, such as Donna Haraway, have influenced contemporary architectural thought and historiography by introducing concepts like “situated knowledge” and embodied experience. These ideas emphasize the partial and positional nature of all knowledge, challenging traditional narratives that have historically excluded personal identity and emotion. This perspective has informed approaches where autobiography and architectural history intersect, as seen in works exploring modernism and women in architecture, such as Eva Hagberg’s *When Eero Met His Match* (2022). The growing prominence of first-person narratives in urban and architectural histories is also evident in works like *Remaking Beijing* (2005), Jane Rendell’s “The Siting of Writing and the Writing of Sites” (2017), and AbdouMalik Simone’s *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South* (2018). These examples demonstrate how personal narration in architectural discourse can offer fresh insights, showing how feminist and subjective perspectives illuminate broader, more complex narratives of space and urban development.

This roundtable invites contributions spanning diverse historical periods and geographies, examining how first-person narration – foregrounded through feminist, intersectional, and queer frameworks – can connect individual experience with collective memory in architectural history. We welcome papers that engage with the emotional, political, and methodological dimensions of this approach, while also addressing the tensions between subjectivity and historical representation in contemporary contexts.

## Love Lives and “Historical Drag”: Performance Art as Embodied Architectural History

Nora Wendl

*University of New Mexico*

What are the implications of using one's own body and subjectivity as the interface for interpreting architectural history, particularly when it concerns the lives of queer and Black individuals, bodies whose spatial histories have historically been structurally suppressed? In this paper, I will focus on the performance art of Gerard & Kelly, Marisa Williamson, and Jimmy Robert, which each use embodied first-person narration to reclaim spatial agency in modernist and plantation architecture. Gerard & Kelly's *Modern Living* (2016 – ) occurs in modern houses with queer histories – Philip Johnson's Glass House (New Canaan, Connecticut, 1949), Eileen Gray's E-1027 (Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France, 1929), R.M. Schindler House (West Hollywood, California, 1922), and Edith Farnsworth House (Mies van der Rohe, Plano, Illinois, 1951). In *Modern Living*, the artists and their dancers create a choreographed and spoken “score” on site that combines movement and speaking – blending their own personal intimate histories with excerpts from inhabitants' memoirs. As intimate histories are spoken aloud, the embodied experience of love becomes central to how these houses are narrated and historicized, and the flexible use of “I” allows both anonymity and speculation on the lives lived in these houses. Marisa Williamson unsettles the history of Sally Hemings – the enslaved mother of six of Thomas Jefferson's children – in her project *Slave to a Narrative* (2013) in which she performs as Hemings at Monticello in a practice she calls both “inhabiting” and “historical drag,” inspired by Octavia Butler's novel *Kindred* (1979), in which a woman travels back in time to save an ancestor. Williamson performs Hemings' right to agency in this plantation architecture – as both specific place and symbol – and turns the viewer into an accomplice in her “Unofficial Guide,” asking them to answer questions like “Why am I uncomfortable?” Shifting narrative-making to the tour-goer acknowledges who bears and continues institutional narratives about architectural history – the public, whose “I” joins into this dialogue about how architectural history is framed and authored. And, finally, Jimmy Robert's *Imitation of Lives* (2017), which features three performers creating a “live collage” at Johnson's Glass House that merges dance, poetry, and music. Referencing the life of Harlem Renaissance cabaret singer Jimmie Daniels, who was once Johnson's lover, it includes spoken lyrics by Josephine Baker, and texts by Audre Lorde, Marguerite Duras, and others.

Such performances of subjectivity enliven and bring to the surface suppressed architectural histories, embodying them on-site while also complicating traditional historical methodologies. As a white cis woman, researcher, writer and artist who engages feminist archival practices in transforming histories of the built and unbuilt environment, I continue to learn from queer and Black artists including those whose works are studied here and are, to my mind, central to reframing our understanding of architectural historiography.

## Food, Home, and Diaspora: Herstories of Shanghai's Workers' New Village in Zhang Yiwei's. Fiction (1990s-2000s)

Yangfan Zhang  
*KU Leuven*

Workers' New Village, a quintessential housing model in Maoist-era Shanghai, has faded into oblivion since the reform of the 1990s. Officials, planners, and even historians have largely dismissed these neighborhoods in favor of narratives celebrating pre-1949 cosmopolitanism and post-reform urban modernization. Yet, despite redevelopment and demographic upheavals, the new villages remain one of the city's largest residential forms. Their histories, however, are rarely told from within the home.

In contrast, writer Zhang Yiwei – a “third-generation new village resident” – offers first-person depictions of workers' new village experiences that complicate official omissions. These self-articulated herstories use “home” as a lens to portray the diasporic trajectories of working-class families amid radical social changes in post-reform Shanghai. By foregrounding domestic culinary practices such as banquets, meals, and family kitchens in her semi-autobiographical novel *Feast of the Folk* (2015), this study explores how Zhang's stories construct an intimate counter-narrative of the workers' new village, shifting it from a symbolic socio-spatial institution to an embodied, affective practice of homemaking.

Methodologically, this study adopts a visual-spatial (re)telling of Zhang Yiwei's stories to reflect on the topography of food rituals and kinship relations across dispersed new village spaces. Mapping traces familial gatherings and dispersal, revealing the spatial restructuring of formerly enclosed new village neighborhoods and the emotional geographies of home dynamics. Drawing reimagines a series of cooking and dining scenes, spatializing how food-related practices mediate embodied experiences, family interactions, and domestic layout. Together, these techniques mobilize fiction as a form of critical spatial practice, where subjective experience and personal narration disrupt conventional architectural historiography and open space for emotional, intuitive, and culturally situated forms of knowledge.

## What Exclusion Protects: Ambivalence and the First Person in Architectural Historiography

Guillermo S. Arsuaga  
*Princeton University*

Architectural history has long resisted first-person narration. The question is what that resistance has produced beyond the exclusions it is now criticized for. Recent feminist, postcolonial and critical race scholarship has rightly challenged the resistance as gatekeeping, showing that the ostensibly objective historian was a particular subject whose particularities concealed. But gatekeeping does not exhaust the account. The discipline's suspicion of the personal carried genuine intellectual substance: Tafuri's critique of operative criticism (1968), for instance, rendered situated approaches collapsible into the ideological distortions it opposed, foreclosing personal narration as a side effect of a genuine methodological demand. The same frameworks that dismantled one form of false neutrality installed another. This paper proposes that the discipline's resistance conceals a second operation it has not adequately theorized. The same mechanisms excluding personal knowledge from academic circulation may have simultaneously kept epistemologies maintained through communal transmission and deliberate opacity beyond the extractive reach of the academy. What did not meet the bar of "proper" historical evidence could not be appropriated, instrumentalized or stripped of its situated character. The exclusion was not protective in intention. It may have been protective in effect. Reading the discipline's shifting stance (from Tafuri's demand for rigorous materialist history through Haraway's situated knowledges (1988) to recent calls for decolonial and reparative historiography) the paper traces a persistent ambivalence that none of these positions has fully resolved. Klein's revaluation of ambivalence (1935), from pathological sign to the capacity for holding contradictory recognitions without splitting them apart, provides a model for the problem at stake. The discipline simultaneously excludes and protects. The turn toward inclusion simultaneously recovers and risks extraction. Glissant's insistence on a right to opacity (1990) and the theorization of fugitive knowledge mark the ethical coordinates for this tension. This ambivalence, rather than an obstacle, becomes the precondition for historiographical approaches that engage situated knowledge without claiming the right to render it transparent.

## In the Presence of Others: Notes on Collaborative Architectural History

Curt Gambetta

*Dartmouth College*

One of the ways that architectural historians and critics assert their presence in the writing of architectural history is through the narration of fieldwork, or firsthand observation. This paper will use an example of fieldwork in architectural history to demonstrate that first person narration is undergirded by collaboration and dialogic practices of knowledge making. It focuses on Reyner Banham's fieldwork in historical industrial architecture with professor and architect Beverly Foit Albert and their students at the University at Buffalo during the 1970s, much of which informed Banham's single-authored book *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture* (1986). In *A Concrete Atlantis*, Banham referred to himself in the first person, holding firm to a narrative approach that he once called a "rhetoric of presence," namely the historian's own. By attending to oral histories and archival evidence of their fieldwork, my remarks will illustrate the intensely collaborative nature of their research process, which went largely unmentioned in *Concrete Atlantis*.

Drawing from this example and parallel instances of collaboration in anthropological fieldwork and writing, this roundtable presentation will examine how historical narration is shaped by structural inequities between the historian-observer and those that support their work, as well as efforts to redress them. Because collaborators and others who are present in the research process are frequently effaced by single-authored historical writing, it will argue for recognition of their contributions in a much wider range of narrative practices and modes. Thus, while it will speculate on potential approaches to collaborative architectural history, the paper contends that such practices can already be witnessed in histories of knowledge making, despite their erasure or marginalization in archivally centered histories and normative history writing. In place of a 'rhetoric of presence,' the paper will propose an 'ethics of co-presence' in historical writing and narration.

## Reflections on Narrating the Arctic

Elisa Dainese

*Georgia Institute of Technology*

This presentation investigates Indigenous testimonies' role in reconstituting the history of postwar architecture in the Arctic. For millennia, Indigenous Peoples have lived in the Arctic holding a fundamental knowledge base of the lands and waters of their homelands. After the Second World War, in the race for control and resources, European, North American, and Russian governments claimed the Arctic Indigenous territory, erased the Indigenous access to lands and waterscapes, and denied Indigenous rights to self-determination. National plans assimilated local communities, developed designs for new towns for Southern workers, and built infrastructures for resource extraction. In existing scholarship postwar architecture in the Arctic is generally presented as the prerogative of design professionals, governmental clients, and administrators who built on “empty” lands. Imported Southern models are celebrated as technological experiments in North America and Nordic Europe, or the product of the policies of Soviet collectivization and economic centralization in the Russian North. Would we obtain a different history of post-war architecture, if we were to consider the modern model from the perspective of the Iñupiaq storytellers of Northwest Alaska, the Sámi reindeer herders in Sápmi, or the Chukchi sea hunters in Uelen, Russia?

This paper examines the ways in which Indigenous situated realities, epistemologies, and temporal trajectories possess the energy to reorient current histories of the Arctic when repositioned at the centre of the narrative. New methodological frameworks include employing reflexivity on the ways in which positionalities and relations within qualitative research “affect” knowledge production. Finally, the presentation investigates shifts to ideas of co-creation, practices of co-authorship, and the implementation of community-driven patterns as the basis for a reoriented history of architecture.

## I and “Eye” in Anthony Vidler’s incomplete Autobiography

Spyros Papapetros  
*Princeton University*

A few months before his passing in October 2023, Anthony Vidler embarked on the writing of an *Autobiography*, narrating his childhood in England in the midst of War World Two, as well as his first encounters with architecture and its written histories. Vidler inserted fragments of this *Autobiography* in his final book manuscript *Architecture After the Rain*, assembled between 2018 and 2023 and left unfinished at the time of his death. Written in italics and interspersed throughout the book manuscript as prefatory notes to its chapters, these autobiographical excerpts are connected to, yet separate from, the descriptions of texts, buildings, and events that make up the rest of the book’s content recounting modern architecture post 1945 through Vidler’s personal encounters with some of its protagonists in Britain. After he became the Dean of the School of Architecture at Cooper Union in 2001, Vidler delivered a number of lunchtime talks about his life and work to students and faculty—the first of them entitled “A Short Life in Architecture.” In these lectures, the speaker refers to himself either in the first or third person as “A” or “he” in the present tense. The alternation in voice is maintained in these autobiographical descriptions, allowing the historian to step in and out of the space of his own narrative. The fragments start with memories of Vidler’s birthplace and his childhood in Essex during WWII, as well as the war’s spatial imprint on the ruined buildings of London. In the manner of an intellectual biography, these autobiographical notes not only recount personal events, they also comment on the people, ideas, and issues that were central to the architectural historian’s career—from the branding of Brutalism to the afterlife of Surrealism and the emergence of postmodernism and deconstruction. It is hard to separate the autobiographical from the properly historical parts of the manuscript, a phenomenon that corroborates not only Vidler’s own description of books like *The Architectural Uncanny*, as his “autobiography,” but also corroborate a point, made recently by Mark Wigley a propos Vidler’s oeuvre, that “autobiography is historiography.”

# Displaying Gardens, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture: Exhibition Cultures 1850–1950

## Session chairs:

Catharina Nolin, Stockholm University

Elin Bergman, Stockholm University

Exhibitions and public installations of different scales have since the late 1700s been an established and important medium to exhibit, present, and display innovative industrial and engineering inventions as well as arts and architecture, all contributions forming a contemporary snapshot of the period's most advanced developments and ideals in different fields (Greenhalgh, 2011; Bremmer, 2015). The emergence of large international exhibitions during the mid nineteenth century developed an exhibition culture that drew large audiences, which in turn lead to great exposure of the exhibited objects on-site and the exhibition phenomena as such (Ekström, 1994; Filipová, 2015). Furthermore, the widespread reports in newspapers and magazines expanded the impact of the exhibitions, through which the objects, innovations, and ideals thereby reached further in time and space than the actual ephemeral event of the exhibition.

The scholarly investigation of exhibition cultures has to a great extent focused on industrial innovations, the exhibitions as an area to represent ideas about national identity, and exhibitions in relation to other mediums of representations in general (Smeds, 1996). The field of design and architecture was an important part of the exhibited content, and even though the display of examples of gardens, landscapes, and architecture to some extent has been researched, there are more themes to discover and develop further (Maloney, 2012, Rydell, 2018). The exhibitions were important for various reasons. For the individual designer and for firms, the exhibitions provided an arena to present their work and to attract customers and expand their professional networks. During the period 1850-1950 women gardeners, landscape architects, and architects entered the professional arena and

participated frequently in exhibitions alongside other (male) professionals both as individual designers and in collaborative projects (Boussahba-Bravard & Rogers, 2018; Nolin, 2024).

The over-arching purpose of the session is to contribute to that cause and deepen the understanding on how elements of our designed surroundings have been presented to a wider audience 1850-1950, with emphasis on content and presentation. We therefore welcome papers from scholars working on exhibitions, exhibition practices, and exhibited objects in a broad sense within the fields of horticulture, garden and landscape design, and architecture. Paper proposals are encouraged to deal with – but are not limited to – themes concerning *sites* (e.g. exhibition spaces, three-dimensional installations), *techniques* (e.g. drawings, plans, photographs, models, horticultural displays), *pedagogy* (e.g. presentation, propaganda, distribution of new developments), *actors* (e.g. exhibition directors and committees, designers), *social aspects* (e.g. exhibitions as sites of social intermingle between different social groups, gender relations, representation, and professionalisation processes), *historiography of exhibitions* (e.g. exhibition history and practices, politics of exhibitions) and *methodologies* on how to research ephemeral phenomena such as exhibitions, temporary installations and exhibited objects of different kinds.

## **Engineering and Exhibiting an Aesthetic Infrastructure in the Park at the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1867**

Amy F. Ogata

*University of Southern California*

International expositions have always embraced natural elements, from the trees inside the Crystal Palace to the forest at the center of Expo 2025. But the spectacle of the landscaped park begins at the 1867 Exposition universelle held in Paris, often recognized for its oval-shaped metal building that architectural historians have long championed for its adventurous construction. The surrounding park embellished with planted gardens, pavilions, kiosks, and attractions, has rarely been studied beyond the individual spectacles it contained, or more often as an extension of the surrounding city projects (Limado, Shapiro). In this paper, I argue that the 1867 park on the Champ de Mars, divided into four contiguous quadrants, was an industrial artifact of its own and one that offered a new way of imagining what Jean Darcel, one of its creators, called “the architecture of gardens.” Instead of understanding the park in contrast to the central pavilion, I will suggest how the picturesque landscape created on the arid land was engineered as a dense exhibition of products.

Although credited to Alphand and Barillet-Deschamps, who landscaped the new parks and squares of Paris, the engineer Darcel was charged with an elaborate display of private enterprise that included trees and flowers exhibited as specimens arranged amid false streams and foot bridges, and iron fencing, bird cages, kiosks and fountains. The spectacle of the “natural” is always artificial, but in this example, it was designed as a living catalogue of objects for a society that increasingly saw urban greenspaces as what Brian Larkin calls an “aesthetic infrastructure.” More than a leisurely promenade, the 1867 park engineered a mise-en-scène for an emerging industrial culture.

## Reviving Empire: Displaying Persian Heritage and Nationhood at International Exhibitions (1851–1935)

Mojgan Aghaei Meybodi

*The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University*

International exhibitions offered Iran a prominent stage on which architecture became a vehicle for negotiating modernity, heritage, and national identity from the mid-nineteenth century to the interwar period. Focusing on Persia's national pavilions at the Paris expositions (1867, 1878, 1889, 1900), Vienna (1873), Ghent (1913), Philadelphia (1926), and Brussels (1910, 1935), this study argues that Iran's built displays did not rely on a single revivalist language but instead mobilized a shifting and often eclectic architectural vocabulary. While many Qajar-era pavilions drew on Islamic, Safavid, and contemporary courtly forms – mosque façades, iwans, tilework, and ornamental programs shaped by Orientalist expectations – selective references to Iran's pre-Islamic past gradually emerged alongside these idioms. Designed largely by European architects, these pavilions combined Islamic, Safavid, Qajar, and, at times, pre-Islamic Achaemenid and Sasanian elements to articulate a hybrid visual language through which Iran positioned itself within the imperial exhibitionary context.

While these exhibitions were shaped by colonial hierarchies, they also offered Iran a diplomatic stage to assert cultural distinction and sovereignty amid rising European pressures. The 1889 Paris Exposition's dual presentation of Iran – through the state-sanctioned pavilion with Islamic motifs and the French-designed “Persian House” in the *Histoire de l'Habitation Humaine* exhibit – illustrates the complexity of Iran's self-representation. The latter's pre-Islamic references anticipated the monumental nationalist architecture promoted by the Pahlavi regime in the 1930s, when Iran's participation in the 1935 Brussels Expo embraced a distinctly Achaemenid idiom.

By tracing how Iran's built displays shifted from Qajar eclecticism to Pahlavi monumentalism, this paper explores how architecture served as both a container and catalyst for articulating Persia's national identity. Situating Iran's expositions within broader narratives of revivalism, cultural diplomacy, and imperial spectatorship, the paper contributes to an expanded understanding of how architecture – displayed, imagined, and performed – shaped global exhibition cultures in the long nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

## **From ‘Public Parks and Gardens’ to ‘Landscapes of Work and Leisure’: the development of mid 20th century landscape architecture in Britain told through four exhibitions**

Joy Burgess

*University of Liverpool School of Architecture*

Luca Csepely-Knorr

*University of Liverpool School of Architecture*

In the twentieth century, exhibitions emerged as crucial sites for propaganda and resistance, shaping how global and national movements were presented and contested, but academic research has so far given less attention to their role in shaping emerging fields of creative practice.<sup>1</sup> This paper makes the case for their relevance within debates on built environment professionalisation and especially the transdisciplinary formation of landscape architecture in Britain.

The 1910 International Town Planning Conference and Exhibition, organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), is often hailed as a pivotal moment in the history of town planning. The conference and its accompanying ‘Exhibition of Drawings and Models’ created a space for transnational knowledge exchange, arguably paving the way for the establishment of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). This paper argues that the conference and exhibition – especially its sections on public parks and gardens – served as a starting place for an evolving profession, landscape architecture, to begin using public displays, images, and curated materials to assert their relevance in mid-twentieth-century debates on the built environment.

Between 1910 and 1948, landscape architecture successfully established itself through its professional organisation the Institute of Landscape Architects (ILA), that not only expanded the remit of the profession, but also persuaded contemporaries of its international significance. This culminated in the 1948 International Conference and Exhibition, that led to the establishment of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), the largest international professional

organisation. Through four pivotal exhibitions – the 1910 ‘Exhibition of Drawings and Models’ at the Town Planning Conference, the 1934 ‘New Homes for Old Exhibition’, the 1938 ‘Garden and Landscape’ exhibition, and the 1948 international ‘The Landscape of Work and Leisure’ display – this talk will explore how these events narrate the evolving profession, the shaping of landscape design culture, and the aspirations of the ILA. Drawing on archival materials, it will emphasise the often-overlooked role of committees and curators, frequently women, and their agency in defining and promoting a new understanding of landscape architecture.

## **Greenwashing the Francoist Regime: The Garden Exhibition at the 2nd IFLA International Conference in Madrid, 1950**

Marta García Carbonero  
*School of Architecture, Universidad  
Politécnica de Madrid*

Amidst the international isolation of postwar Spain, the celebration of the 2nd conference of the International Federation of Landscape Architecture (IFLA) and its adjoining garden exhibition in 1950 was a major breakthrough for Francisco Franco's dictatorship. At a time when the country had been banned from entering the United Nations and NATO and was excluded from the Marshall Plan due to Franco's affinities with Nazi Germany, Spain's officials were desperately seeking ways to establish ties with foreign countries that could help improve its economic and political situation. Víctor D'Ors, Madrid's Chief Municipal Architect and founding member of the IFLA had secured Madrid as the venue for its second conference. He further organised the adjoining garden exhibition with the Sociedad de Amigos del Paisaje y los Jardines, which he presided. Together with the conference, the garden exhibition enjoyed the highest support from the government, as it was seen as an outstanding chance to showcase the country in a more favourable light. Most of the international delegations from 25 countries exhibited their most recent landscape projects, with the press especially highlighting the Swiss and Swedish proposals for public parks and children's playgrounds. In contrast, Spain featured the Islamic gardens of the Alhambra and Generalife as examples of "the extraordinary richness of national garden-making". At a time when Franco's regime was seeking new alliances with Arab countries, which eventually eased Spain's inclusion in the United Nations in 1955, Islamic heritage was heralded as part of a shared past. This paper aims to analyse the way Spanish gardens were presented at the 1950 IFLA exhibition and how they were instrumentalised by the Francoist regime as a diplomatic tool to overcome the country's international isolation.

# Roundtable: Women's Collective Organizing in Architecture: From the Grassroots to the Global, 1960-2020

## Chairs

Lori A. Brown, Syracuse University  
Karen Burns, University of Melbourne

Over the last 190 years collective organising has been a strategic tool for marginalised and under-represented groups. The final decades of the long twentieth century, marked by 'cleavages, conflicts and confrontations', produced a dense cluster of social movements and distinctive forms of collective, activist organising. The global women's movement was the largest of these social mobilisations.

This panel calls for papers that investigate how women organised collectively in architecture to enact demands for professional equity, new knowledge and social justice in the period 1960-2020. By focussing on campaigns, actions and networks, this panel aims to expand new areas for women's history in architecture. It seeks to move beyond histories of individual figures and their buildings produced in the context of private firms or state bureaucracies. It aims to situate women in architecture as social actors in civil society in pursuit of emancipation and transformation.

Drawing attention to architecture's activist past, we aim to situate women's collective organising within a diverse set of geographies and histories. Early feminist or women's collectives such as Matrix (London, 1980) and the Women's School of Planning and Architecture (US, 1974) are well established in the historical record, but other lesser-known examples include the First Women's Collective (Iran, 1974) and Thyra (Copenhagen, 1979). How does the inclusion of overlooked collectives alter the received historiography of the influence, origins and growth of the intersecting women's movement and architecture? What social and political forces and conditions specific to the profession and civil society have driven the rise of new collectives over the last decade, for example Counterspace, Johannesburg

(founded 2015) and professional women's organisations such as Women in Architecture and Design (founded Ahmedabad, 2016)?

Frequently shut out of the 'great man, great monument' model of mainstream architectural history, how does an examination of women's collective organising raise the visibility of other kinds of architectural labour and innovation: such as collective activist pedagogy - 'What's 'race doing in a nice field like the built environment?', UCL, 2020 or 'Contesting the Canon' by the Feminist Art and Architecture Collective, founded US, 2018, or the mobilisation of research as an activist tool in older media forms such as *Women in American Architecture* (1977) and *Making Space* (1984) or in new digital platforms (Parlour, Australia, 2012 and FAME, London, 2018). How does this new work decentre the discipline's objects of knowledge by centring experience, everyday lives and lived moments of sexism and racism?

Conferences and their ensuing publications have offered important temporary mobilisations of collective exchange, support, and new knowledge (for example *Desiring Practices*, London, 1993; *Alterities*, Paris, 1999; *An Emancipated Place*, Mumbai, 2000; *Architecture and Feminisms*, Stockholm, 2016). These published anthologies contain multiple voices and have proven to be a key format for women's knowledge, but traditional print media has limited circulation and requires capital. How has digital media democratised the space of global collective information, such as that provided by *una día / una arquitecta* (Uruguay, Spain, Argentina, founded 2016) with its daily profile of woman architects and its formation of a counter-archive? In recognition of broader knowledge shifts, other platforms such as #WIKD (US, 2015) have co-located digital and physical spaces in events designed to expand the lists of women on Wikipedia.

Attention to women's collective identity, protest and empowerment also invites us to ask how intersectionality and solidarity work. What kinds of labour and care are required to hold together campaigns and coalitions? What happens when they fall apart? Are these the unrecorded, difficult histories of women in architecture?

By using the temporal frame of the long twentieth century, we hope to establish persistent genealogies in women's organising. We encourage a broad range of papers, from those that provide historically situated case studies to those that develop new methods for studying women's collective action, agency and identity.

## Collective Action of Feminist Architects in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s

Sonja Hnilica

*Technische Universität Dresden*

Within the second women's movement in the Federal Republic of Germany, young architects began to organize themselves. Soon, the activists succeeded in publishing in the established journals (e.g. a special issues of the „Bauwelt“, 1979). Associations such as the „FOPA e.V.“ (Feminist Organization of Female Planners and Architects, 1981) were formed.

One of the major concerns of the women's movement in relation to architecture was the fight for exclusive women's spaces. A well-known example is the Schokofabrik women's and youth center in West-Berlin, which was founded in 1981 as a result of a squatting movement. Feminist architects contributed here both as activists and as experts. For example, the structural planning was taken over by „Itekt♀n“, a firm founded by lesbian architects and engineers.

At the same time, another group of women architects took action to expand the program of the „IBA (Internationale Bauausstellung) Berlin 1984–87“ to include women's issues. Their energetic protest prompted the IBA directors to commission several female architects to plan an experimental housing project. Myra Warhaftig was able to put her research on emancipatory apartment layouts into practice here for the first time.

About 20 years ago, I interviewed three key figures of those rebellious years (Kerstin Dörhöfer, Myra Warhaftig, and Christiane Erlemann). We agreed that the feminist achievements of the 1980s were not being given enough recognition. Today, however, I think that this has changed. A visible sign is the listing of Warhaftig's IBA-building in 2025, that had been overlooked in the first listing campaign several years ago. This step had been preceded by an architectural-historical reappraisal of Warhaftig's work. It turns out that various women's groups collaborated during the 1980ies to change architectural discourse and practice – and that more collaboration was needed to incorporate these facts into historiography. I would like to discuss these different practices of collaboration.

## What Remains of FOPA? The Fragile Nature of Feminist Organising in Architecture

Bettina Nagler

*University of Kassel*

Emerging from a 1968-inspired protest – the Go-In at the Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin by the “purple overalls women” and groups like Frauen, Steine, Erde (Women, Stones, Soil) 1981 – FOPA was among the first feminist associations completely independent of the institutionalised architects’ body (Bund Deutscher Architekten) excluding men. It advocated for women’s agency in public planning, promoted ecological sustainability, and negotiated with municipalities on the norms of social housing. While its activities are well documented – it published the journal *FreiRäume* (1983–2005), co-organised *Planerinnentagungen* (until 1998), and maintained strong regional groups in Berlin, Dortmund, and Kassel – its professional and intellectual impact remains contested. Even within women architects’ historiography, its achievements and strategies for feminist planning were often overlooked: Christine Jachmann, for instance, did not cite FOPA in relation to her housing project within the IBA Emancipatory Living project (1986–1993), despite archival evidence.

Scholarship (Becker 1998; Klosterkamp 2024) has addressed the vulnerability of feminist achievements to appropriation, but less attention has been paid to the mechanisms that dispersed FOPA’s activist energy. While many feminist (built) model projects initiated by the women’s movement have proven resilient and transformed into lasting institutions (like *Beguine Housing*, or the *Schokofabrik* in Berlin) until today, FOPA’s once politically vibrant regional groups have largely disappeared or shifted into less protest-oriented associations (such as FOPA Kassel), consisting mainly of the founding generation. This paper argues that FOPA has failed to engage a next generation and asks:

1. How did generational shifts within feminism, alongside societal changes such as German reunification (around 1990) within an adjusted discursive environment contributed eventually to the gradual dissolution of FOPA?
2. What does FOPA’s case reveal about the challenges of bridging feminist collective organizing across generations in architecture?

## The Architecture of Refuge: Housing, Supporting and empowering women

Isabelle Doucet

*University of Sheffield*

As a contribution to this roundtable, I will look at instances where women networks worked closely with spatial/architectural issues, and how these efforts involved architects or planners. I will focus on Women's Aid in the UK, founded in 1974 to support and empower women and their children to escape domestic abuse. I intend to take as a more specific starting point the grassroots volunteer-led refuge created by Sheffield Women's Aid, initially a squat in the Burngreave neighbourhood north of Sheffield City Centre, one of the first refuges in the country, and rooted in the Women's Liberation Movement and a feminist and justice ethos. I will study how in Sheffield, but also within the wider Women's Aid movement in the UK, the creation and running of shelters was part of wider discussions at the intersections of social work, political action, policy making, and the built environment, and I am interested in the role of the profession(al)s of the built environment in these efforts. How did the "built environment" figure in grassroots actions, policies, and the design and use of actual buildings, within Sheffield Women's Aid (as it would continue to create more shelters after its initial squat) and within the broader efforts of the Women's Aid Movement in the UK? I will draw from pamphlets, journals, and other publications by national bodies of Women's Aid in Scotland, England and Wales as well as the archives and collections connected more specifically to Sheffield Women's Aid (e.g., Feminist Archives at the Sheffield City Archives). In doing so, I will not as much seek out how architects organised themselves in (architecture) networks, but how, in the 1970s and 1980s, architects and other professionals of the built environment became involved in broader feminist and justice efforts where the built environment was acutely at stake.

## **'It's About Our lives': A Manifesto by Women Building Forum**

Helena Mattson

*KTH School of Architecture*

The network Women Building Forum grew out of the feminist movement as it took shape in architecture and the built environment in Sweden at the end of the 1970s. It addressed architectural questions that fell outside the remit of traditional architectural practices, in the grey area where practice and politics met, and became an official referral body in the corporatist system while lobbying for women's rights in deciding the built environment. This work was carried out on many levels. This presentation will focus on their involvement in the planning competition for Hansta, a new district on the outskirts of Stockholm, which led to KBF becoming an official referral body, giving feedback on reports by government committees of inquiry. As a radical bureaucracy, the formats of its documents were unconventional, for example being framed as manifestos.

This paper is part of a larger project investigating the role of "radical bureaucracy" as a field of work within the discipline of architecture, focusing on women's practice. By following the practice of women architects, the project challenges this assertion and creates alternative histories that change the historical narrative and also the definition of the discipline of architecture. The project tracks the development from the formation of the Swedish welfare state in the 1940s to the restructuring of the Swedish model in the latter part of the 20th century and explores the bureaucracy of the built environment as a field for women's activist architectural practices. The project combines traditional archival and experimental methods. The research has two main goals: to trace women's activism within architectural bureaucratic practices and to examine how women's practices transformed bureaucracy into a radical field of experimentation, thereby expanding the discipline of architecture.

## **The feminist architecture of Italian Collectives (1978-1999)**

Chiara Ingrosso  
*University of Campania*

With Antonia Marano  
*University of Campania*

From the late 1970s through the 1990s, feminist thought among Italian female architects was expressed primarily through several women's collectives. These were pioneering experiences, aimed at exploring design skills, creativity and female differences in designing and experiencing the city and dwelling. The paper aims to reconstruct the history of these collectives, regarding the cities of Milan, Rome and Naples. The objective is to investigate how these groups proposed a new approach to theory, history and design, highlighting the link between women and architecture in Italian cities. Emphasis will be placed on their attempt to bring to light the stories of female architects "in the shadows" and the extent to which feminist issues, such as care work and the work-life balance, have had an impact on projects and texts.

Milan and Rome are the epicentres of these new experiments. From the 1960s onwards, the so-called "second wave of feminism" took place, which had various manifestations in Italy, one of which coincided with the so-called "Theory of Difference" that developed between the 1970s and 1980s. The "Rivolta Femminile" group in Rome, with Carla Accardi, Carla and Marta Lonzi, and "La Libreria delle Donne" in Milan were the leading collectives. In architecture field, two collectives were founded: the "Vanda" group, in 1990 on the initiative of Ida Farè at the Politecnico di Milano, and "La Casa di Eva", established in 1999 in Rome. Starting from oneself, the practice of relationships, care work and attention to waste will be themes addressed by the two architecture collectives. In Naples, the link between female architects and feminists revolves around the magazine "Mille e una donna", edited by Clara Fiorillo and published in seven issues from 1978 to 1981. The magazine, run by a very active group of female architects, including Donatella Mazzoleni, gave space to women's voices on the issues of health and labour rights, political and cultural debate, and contributions to art and architecture. These experiences still represent a vanguard that can guide the history of gender in architecture and contributes to tracing the genealogy of feminist architecture in Italy.

## Feminist Protesting? On Women's Grassroots Organisations in Dutch Architecture

María Novas-Ferradás

*ETH*

With Lidewij Tummers, *Tussen Ruimte*,  
and Setarah Noorani, *Nieuwe Instituut*

In the Netherlands, long-term forms of activism have prolifically reshaped the relationship between gender and the built environment, providing a valuable case for rethinking feminist architectural historiography. From the early twentieth century onward, Dutch women's grassroot organisations developed practices of networking and interventions to influence housing and urban policies. This activism disrupts linear accounts of "first- and second-wave" feminist movement while revealing, at the same time, how successive generations of women's collectives adopted contrasting strategies and identities. Yet, they share an ongoing struggle to redefine architectural work, from unpaid domestic labour to professional feminist practices.

This roundtable proposal focuses on two genealogically linked formations: the Women's Advisory Committees (*Vrouwen Advies Commissies*, VAC), postwar municipal advisory committees originally created in Rotterdam in 1946 to represent the interests of working-class housewives in social housing design; and Women Building Dwelling (*Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, VBW), feminist collective active from the 1980s to the early 21st century. These cases illustrate the transition from gendered bureaucratic engagement with social housing policy (VAC) to explicitly feminist activism (VBW) – a shift in paradigm, from 'defending the interests of housewives' to openly challenging sexism and gender discrimination within architectural and planning methods and practices. This contribution explores both the clashes and continuities between these formations, showing how advisory, activist, and professional strategies coexisted and sometimes collided, while also examining how these dynamics were situated within transnational circuits of knowledge – such as the 1977 exhibition *Women in American Architecture*, brought to the Netherlands in 1982.

All in all, by foregrounding the overlooked contributions of women who collectively

organised in the Netherlands, this paper calls for an expanded historiography of architecture – one that centres collective labour, everyday struggles, and feminist genealogies as integral to the discipline's knowledge and practice while challenging the discipline's narrow definitions of architectural work and collective action.

## **A Coalition of Women, Wives and Mothers: Alternative Feminisms**

Lillian Chee

*National University Singapore*

With Dorothy Tang, Chaewon Ahn,  
Rachel Fong, and Pari Sen Biswas

*National University Singapore*

In the case of Singapore, a global city-state with a highly centralised urban governance, we explore alternative forms of feminist urban activism in the built environment. Through our case study, we propose a revised feminist analytic to investigate how women's collectives might successfully navigate a unique neoliberal political landscape where development is state-driven, liberties are selectively granted, and legitimate politics are controlled (Lee, 2002; Chua, 2011). We reiterate women's agency as culturally situated, and ultimately defined by its relationality and embodied character (McNay, 2016).

Confronting this context in practice is the remarkable case of women's grassroots activism by the Singapore Chinese Girls' School (SCGS) alumni, who mounted a self-organized campaign in 2018 to save their former school campus, 37 Emerald Hill, from redevelopment (Zaccheus, 2019). The compound of two- and three-storey art deco-era buildings occupy a lucrative site bordering Singapore's premiere retail district. Apart from influencing state-driven agenda on conservation, the campaign also distinguished itself by overturning Singapore's non-negotiable economic relationship with land as primary asset (Chua, 2018; Haila, 2016).

We perceive that the campaign aligned itself with the school's sociopolitical origins. Established in 1899 as Singapore's first secular girls' school, SCGS framed its mission as an endeavour to educate better wives and mothers, thereby rendering women's education more palatable within the constraints of prevailing domestic gender norms (Beaumont, 2013). We argue that it is through a similar non-partisan, non-militant, non-threatening and practical stance that SCGS' recent conservation campaign secured its successful outcomes.

In this instance, we see how tactical, pragmatic efforts and gentle negotiation

(Lydon & Garcia, 2017; Chua, 2012) might better engage top-down, state-led development frameworks. We analyse how the alumni mobilised an interdependent relational network, grounded in their shared recognition of the vulnerabilities entangling the school's fate with their collective identity (Butler, 2016; Scheibmayr, 2024). This discussion will flesh out the limitations of second wave feminist theories and the reach of intersectional feminism. Ultimately, the case study prompts a redefinition of 'feminism' outside of Western liberal democracies, shifting from radical individual sovereignty to citizen-centric activism and persuasive advocacy.

## **Agents & allies, opportunism and trust: the fast and slow of action on equity**

Justine Clark  
*Parlour NGO*

This roundtable presentation offers reflections from the grassroots, based in 14 years of Parlour: gender, equity, architecture. It examines 'organising' as a space of action and opportunism that is subject to continual negotiation, arguing that trust is fundamental.

Action on equity is an urgent, pressing and ongoing need. We can't wait! Simultaneously, time is required build the trust that is fundamental to long-term impact. This is particularly important if benefits are to accrue beyond already privileged groups. Building trust is a slow and careful process, especially with those who experience intersecting forms of marginalisation. It means listening; knowing when to be quiet and when to speak up to help ensure others can be heard. It means demonstrating care in everyday actions, not just talking about it as an abstract concept. It involves making mistakes. It also means grasping opportunities, and acting fast when occasions present themselves.

Action is also not always about 'organising'. Sometimes it is a matter of sharing resources, of offering platforms, infrastructure and appropriate support for others to come together. At another scale, trust needs to be built with the institutions and companies that have the capacity to contribute to systemic, structural change (while also making evident the complicity of these same systems). The urgency of action and the time needed to build trust are not oppositional, but they do pull in different directions, requiring continual calibration and careful navigation.

Parlour began in 2012. Grounded in a large, funded research project, the initial focus was on women in architecture. Over time, Parlour has pursued an increasingly intersectional agenda, with gender at its core. In 2024, it supports a wide range of conversations – about Indigenising the built environment, about the intersections of gender, race and cultural background, about neuro-divergence and accessibility.

This paper is an opportunity to assess and analyse this recent history to identify patterns and processes that enable organising, agency and allyship.

## Archiving the Gap: The oral history of 'Vrouwen en wonen'

Bart Decross

*University of Antwerp*

This paper reflects on the acquisition and exhibition of the archival materials of the 1980s Belgian feminist working group 'Vrouwen en wonen' [Women and dwelling] by the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAi).

The working group was founded in 1981 in the Vrouwenhuis [women's house] of Leuven in the wake of the second feminist wave and economic crisis. Through workshops, lectures and publications, the group articulated a feminist critique of the dominant housing model of the nuclear-family home, which they read as the spatial manifestation of a patriarchal society. Instead, they advocated for more collective housing typologies as emancipatory alternatives. Key members included architect and planner Danie Staut, interior architect Leen De Becker, landscape architect and urbanist Els Huigens, architect Els Tilman, sociologist Gerd Van Limbergen and lawyer Liliane Versluys.

In 2025 the VAi initiated an oral history project with most of the members of the former collective, tracing its history as well as collecting the scarce and fragmented archival materials, and preparing them for an exhibition. This process raised different institutional questions: how to exhibit a story that is largely contained in living memory? And how to archive a collection of materials, which cannot be assigned to a clear author, defined in space and time?

The paper reflects on how the archival process and the original material reveal the challenges of incorporating collective and solidarity work in conventional historiography. New approaches to archiving and exhibiting these collectives seek to highlight the solidarity work and previously hidden themes. The paper explores these connections, examining how exhibitions can activate archival materials in light of contemporary questions, and how conversations can reveal not only the content but the approaches of these women's groups. The project is being realized by Bart Decross (VAi/UA) in close conversation with Danie Staut (Vrouwen en wonen), Els Huigens (Vrouwen en wonen), Evelien Pieters (PAF), Gerd Van Limbergen (Vrouwen en wonen), Lara Schrijver (UA), Leen De Becker (Vrouwen en wonen) and Tine Poot (VAi).

## **‘The Work Is Mysterious and Important’: Teaching, Doing and Revisiting Architectural Histories with Collectives**

Alex Brown  
*Monash University*

Understood as an ‘expanded mode of practice,’ architectural collectives have the capacity to resist (or at least critically question) the discipline’s narrow professional self-image and complicity with structures of wealth and power.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, activist collectives and collective identities are not typically discussed in detail within architectural history courses, particularly at an undergraduate level.

Within schools of architecture, core units concerning the histories and theory of the discipline have traditionally been taught via chronological surveys of largely canonical projects and figures, delivered through weekly lectures and tutorials. Even as institutions have started to engage in vital efforts to decolonise and globalise their curricula, questioning selective and exclusionary historical frameworks to address urgent concerns in relation to social justice, technology and climate, the pedagogical model of the core survey unit has remained largely intact.

A recent curriculum redesign experiment within Monash University’s Architecture program centres contemporary architectural collectives as case studies for understanding the urgent concerns of the discipline and tracing them back through multiple histories and critical perspectives.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, the unit, *Positions and Dialogues in Architecture I*, departs from the historical survey model and the illusion of neat, resolved narrative threads. Importantly, rather than seeing the collective only in terms of teaching ‘content’, the unit’s pedagogical approach learns from feminist approaches to questioning entrenched power structures and hierarchies.

Foregrounding collective, embodied working processes in the ‘doing’ of architectural histories for students and teaching team members alike, *Positions and Dialogues in Architecture* units have been designed and co-ordinated and taught collaboratively, challenging institutional frameworks around educational labour and enacting the identity and practices of the collective. Delivering and co-ordinating classes together also means communicating and sharing with students the messy and at times uncomfortable process of choosing what material is included in the curriculum, while also establishing multiple critical lenses (Value, Creativity and Environment) and perspectives.

# Architectural Histories and Practices and the Aerial Spatial Revolution

## Session chairs:

Katrin Albrecht, Eastern Switzerland University OST  
Angela Gigliotti, Eastern Switzerland University OST  
Lisa Henicz, Eastern Switzerland University OST

The conquest of the air by balloons, kites, dirigibles and controlled powered flight at the threshold of the 20th century and the discovery of the air as a new element for movement and communication have profoundly transformed our way of perceiving, thinking and practicing space. New airborne technologies and visual media such as aerial photography, satellite imagery and drone vision have since become powerful means for surveying, representing, planning and designing architecture, cities, infrastructures and landscapes.

The gaining of a new vision indicated a revolutionary shift in design practice and theory, even if first balloon surveying attempts were doubted to 'ever be found practical and prove of more than theoretical interest' (E. Deville 1895). However, whereas air views could show the 'beauties and defects' (P. Abercrombie 1919) of the fast-growing historical cities by revealing a 'new urban façade and perspective never before known' (J. L. Sert 1942), they would soon equally facilitate planning in remote, yet unmapped and seemingly uninhabited regions by enabling rapid data collection containing a striking 'abundance of details' (R. Danger 1933) and by providing efficient tools for exploring and conquering new territories. Beyond the technical, analytical and documentary value of aerial means for planning and research, the changing perception and experience of spaces and bodies were assumed to also impact the overall 'sensing of gravity, dimension, density and quantity' (P. Zucker 1929), and, consequently, to 'enlighten and expand the spirit' (Le Corbusier 1942) of all architectural and urban projects.

Given the interdependence between spatial perception, representation and design, the session aims to investigate the impact of the "aerial" on concrete architectural

and urban design practices in the 19th and 20th century by focusing on key projects, places, figures, networks, documents and procedures that address issues such as urban patterns and developments, high- and low-rise construction, techno-colonial endeavours, aerial threat and scientific missions. The session seeks to explore the possibilities and intentions associated with new aerial means, ranging from the conditions of production, dissemination and reception of aerial imagery to its use and relevance for planning, design and theory formation and its function as visual, informational, representational and design means. It thereby intends to question technically and culturally conditioned approaches to architecture, the limits of spatial and morphological perception and representation, and the relevance of scale and distance required for design, particularly in relation to human scale.

Contributions on physical-material expressions of space, its formal treatment as well as its intrinsic conception are welcome. Papers may, for instance, discuss methods and practices of modern urban design and architecture; ideas and ideological underpinnings of architecture, city and territory revealed by the aerial; material and structural aspects of works affected by the conquest of the third dimension; or medial, iconographic and instrumental characters of aerial imagery. Transdisciplinary, transoceanic and transcultural issues related to architectural histories and practices are particularly encouraged.

## **This Aerial Life: On the Role of Popular Culture Images in the Spatial Reconceptualization of the City, 1880-1930**

Luis Miguel Lus Arana  
*Universidad de Zaragoza*

Writing about visionary urbanism in the 1920s, Carol Willis noted that “from the turn of the century until about 1920... professional illustrators and cartoonists created the most engaging predictions of the future city, while most architects and planners adhered to an urban ideal modelled on great European cities of the past.” Indeed, the planners of the ‘Titan City’ of the 1920s and 1930s built their proposals on concepts and images that had already been established in the collective imagination by Moses King’s Views of New York, Winsor McCay’s Little Nemo, and a myriad of illustrators working for magazines and advertising companies. However, popular culture’s contributions went much farther and dated further back: since at least the 1860s, and especially after 1880, when key developments in airship travel were achieved, newspapers, magazines, and books, such as Albert Robida’s trilogy on the 20th Century, bulged with pictorial predictions about the future of aerial travel, and its effect on the built environment.

In the hands of illustrators such as Richard Rummel, Harry Grant Dart, Charles Forbell, William Farr, and many others, skies filled up with all sorts of flying contraptions quickly gave way to images of aerial travel in a city now invariably shown in bird’s eye view. This new, top-down perspective, as well as the news means of transportation soon impregnated the form of the city itself, which grew upwards, and was taken over by aerial tramways, docking bays, aerocab stations, and advertising designed to be seen from the airplane, in visions that progressively made their way from humour magazines to commercial art, popular science journals, and architects’ drafting boards. This Aerial Life presents a selection of images drawing from research on over four decades of publications such as Collier’s, Cosmopolitan, Life Magazine, and Harper’s Weekly. Its goal is to complete the history of the perceptual reconfiguration of the city brought about by the aerial revolution by looking at a non-pedigreed corner of our visual culture that constitutes a rich, alternative archive, whose role still stands insufficiently vindicated.

## Counter-Constructions: Rotterdam and Sabena Passenger Helicopter Network, 1953-1966

Simon Rabyniuk

*TU Eindhoven / University of Toronto*

On August 3, 1953, Gerard van Walsum, then Mayor of Rotterdam, was joined by representatives of the Belgian airline Sabena in opening the Katshoek Helihaven (Heliport), one node in Sabena's wider inter-city passenger helicopter network. In his speech, Walsum used the occasion to commemorate the destruction of Walhaven Airport at the beginning of World War II. With pride, he noted that the flight had returned to the city, albeit of a completely different nature. Located in the city's industrial portlands, an urban periphery, Walhaven served as a stopover between European capital cities. In contrast, the Katshoek Heliport was centrally located within Rotterdam and provided short-distance passenger helicopter flights within the Netherlands, to Brussels, and several Western German cities. Prominently located within the North-East boundary of Rotterdam's reconstruction plan the heliport broke from the aspirations of reconstruction planning. The pattern, mode, and speed of urbanization projected by Dutch town planner Cornelius van Traa, who oversaw Rotterdam's last version of the Basic Plan, undermined what Dutch national officials considered safe operations for Sabena's helicopters. The demands of the mid-century passenger helicopter network prompted an as-yet-unrecognized parallel urban planning process alongside Rotterdam's reconstruction, which, while broadly supported by municipal and national officials, ultimately served as a counter-construction to the Basic Plan. Both Sabena's network and van Traa's Basic Plan were ideologically aligned, enacting city-building through commercial interests. Though with the heliport operated in a state of exception, in which national officials issued changing guidelines in response to Rotterdam's pace of reconstruction, by April 1965 Sabena single-engine helicopters no longer had permission to operate from Katshoek Heliport. In practice, securing the future of urban aeromobility in Rotterdam required maintaining urban absences and voids. This positioned aeroplaning as the negative practice of urban planning. Here, the pace of urban reconstruction served as a limiting condition for Sabena's technologically articulated vision of regional mobility.

## **EROS Center: U.S. Architectures of Aerial Data and Ecological**

Hilary Huckins-Weidner  
*University of Michigan*

In 1977, Chevron Oil Company purchased images of Sudan captured by the U.S. Landsat 2 satellite, leading to the identification of over 120,000 square miles of petroleum-rich land and catalyzing decades of intensive extractive exploitation. While the Landsat program, initiated jointly by NASA and the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1972, is most often associated with advancements in Earth and climate sciences, until 2008 it also served another function: advancing U.S. economic and geopolitical interests by selling data. High costs rendered imagery inaccessible to many nations but accessible to corporations, particularly within extractive industries, transforming satellite data into a lobbying tool and geopolitical asset. The U.S.'s refusal to place the surveilling technology under a multilateral governance structure such as the U.N. further ensured American dominance over aerial ways of seeing and environmental knowledge.

Central to this system was the Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Data Center in South Dakota, established as the hub for processing and distributing Landsat data. The site was selected through political lobbying, technical assessments, and arguments for regional economic development. Its isolated location and militarized design embodied an architectural strategy that leveraged distance, secrecy, and security to consolidate planetary information.

Once transferred to EROS, ecological matter became standardized data products, abstracted and operationalized in service of state and corporate interests. From its earliest years, the center facilitated interactions between Earth sciences and extractive industries through training programs, technical exchanges, and events focused on using Landsat imagery for resource exploration.

This paper examines how EROS mediated between orbital sensing systems and terrestrial regimes of extraction by regulating access to aerial ways of seeing, shaping environmental interpretation, and facilitating circulation to private industry. By tracing the negotiations and market systems that determined the site, its infra-

structures, and its governing systems, I argue that EROS was not simply a site of scientific advancement but a geospatial instrument of imperial governance.

## Fields of Vision: Norwegian Photogrammetry Projects in East Africa

Marya Rusak

*KIT — Karlsruhe Institute of Technology*

In December 1967, a Norwegian road engineer, Magne Brandshaug, employed at the Roads Branch in the Kenyan Ministry of Works, faced an unexpected career proposition: he was to spend six months at a factory in Switzerland that produced unique equipment for photogrammetry. This detour was intended to address an unexpected issue at the Kenyan Ministry of Works: having procured expensive, cutting-edge photogrammetric equipment through international aid networks, the Ministry couldn't find specialists to operate it. NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for International Development, which paid for Brandshaug's appointment in Kenya, generously agreed to finance the Swiss course. This, however, was not just an act of humanitarian goodwill: photogrammetry was one of the new ways to obtain reliable information about physical objects and their environment by recording, measuring and interpreting aerial photographic images. In other words, it was the latest technology to collect data and map the previously "unmapped" territories, a necessary step before Norwegian-sponsored projects of urban and rural development could take place. The resulting photomosaic images were analysed for agricultural and forestry potential, first by tech-savvy Norwegian regional planners Adersson & Skjånes, and later fed into mainframe computers for information processing. Through a close reading of original archival documents of NORAD's projects in East Africa, this paper explores how photogrammetry was mobilised as a tool of territorial conquest and resource mobilisation within the Western narratives of development. By tracing the many international and local actors and tools involved in aerial mapping of the seemingly "unknown" landscapes of East Africa, the study scrutinises the power dynamics established between the different fields of vision, technological regimes, and ecological knowledges. By doing so, it challenges the photogrammetry's claims to an objective point of view, arguing that it was a site of knowledge production in itself, disconnected from the on-the-ground realities of remote geographies.

## The Flying Foremen: How Computers, Soldiers, and Cameras Built the Munich Olympic Roofs

Giulia Boller  
*ETH Zurich*

In early September 1971, an airplane could be seen flying 600 meters above Oberwiesenfeld, a vast, largely undeveloped area on the Munich gravel plain, long used as a military site and airfield. This time, however, the flight served a technical rather than a military purpose: to produce high-quality aerial photographs of the complex roofs for the Munich Olympic Sports Facilities, then under construction.

The winning competition proposal by Behnisch & Partner, in collaboration with architectural theorist Jürgen Joedicke and engineer Heinz Isler, envisioned a three-dimensional structure of steel cables forming an artificial landscape over the Olympic site. Its shape defied traditional design tools, since no predefined geometries could be applied. To address this challenge, several professors from the University of Stuttgart joined the team: structural engineer Fritz Leonhardt, geodesist Klaus Linkwitz, computer pioneer John Argyris, and architect Frei Otto. While these figures are celebrated as the primary authors of the project, two technical devices – the metric aerial survey camera Zeiss RMK 30/23 and the mainframe computer CDC 6600 – played an equally crucial role in shaping the roof.

At night, the CDC 6600 calculated the coordinates of the cable net, which were then converted into drawings for the steel industry to fabricate the correct cable lengths. In Stuttgart, piles of these automatically generated plans were manually verified by soldiers before reaching the construction site. On site, only aerial photogrammetric techniques could guarantee the precision required, ensuring that the sprawling cable net matched the computed geometry within the strict Olympic deadlines.

By tracing this hybrid method – combining aerial surveying, computational processes, and human verification – this paper sheds light on the role of early computational design tools and their interaction with human labour and advanced survey technologies, much earlier than the so-called “Digital Turn.”

# The Book, the Self and the City: Architectural Histories of Guidebooks and Urban Idealizations

## Session chairs:

Gregorio Astengo, IE University

Linda Stagni, ETH Zurich

Historically, guidebooks have always propagated idealized images of cities. By operating strict selections of buildings, neighbourhoods and urban itineraries, guidebooks have consistently reproduced, reinforced and multiplied the expectations of readers/travellers. Over the centuries, this paradigm has been further consolidated by the referentiality and interdependency of this literary genre. Not only successive editions of the same book, but even different authors have reshaped similar content, imposing a tradition of authority and ideological visions of urban spaces and landscapes. A case in point is Girolamo Franzini's edition of the 1557 book *Le Cose Meravigliose dell'Alma Città di Roma*. Republished in 1588 to celebrate the 1590 jubilee, the booklet established religious itineraries and practices of pilgrimage throughout the city. Structured as a limited list of significant places of worship, *Le Cose Meravigliose* propagated the glories of the capital of Christianity by constructing an organised and controlled urban realm for the economies and bodily practices of the Catholic faith. Franzini's publication exemplifies how the guidebook builds urban ideals by normalising public expectations of the city.

The construction of a 'promised' city comes with the assumption that many of the more complex variables shaping urban space (local economies, collective spaces, social tensions, morphological transformations, environmental conditions...) are uninfluential to urban exploration, producing a simplified and individualised context. As a result, guidebooks operate under the assumption that cities are limitless resources. Through the guidebook, cities are presented as objects of temporary consumption, shaped into idealised spaces of organised, tailored movement, adaptable to any community of readers/travellers.

This session seeks to study when and how cities have historically clashed with the environmental, social, religious, political, and cultural idealization provided by the guidebooks. We want to explore how guidebooks have abstracted, codified, and rendered the thresholds between the marketable city, the expectations of the reader/traveller and the limits of the urban realm. We are especially interested in the ways in which a specific image of the environment (urban, natural, social...) has been idealised, and how this projected and mediatised reality relates with the more complex conditions of a place and the experience of the individual.

## **Mobilizing Ancient Ruins, Automobiles, and International Tourism in 1970s Turkey: Ruinenstädte Rund um Kuşadası**

Basak Eren

*Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University  
of Pennsylvania*

In 1975, the Touring and Automobile Association of Turkey published *Ruinenstädte Rund um Kuşadası*, a German-language book authored by Leyla Asım Turgut, one of Turkey's pioneering female architects. Aimed at German-speaking, automobile-driving tourists, the book portrayed the Aegean coast of Turkey as an oasis of natural beauty and ancient ruins, connected by modern highways.

This paper argues that the book was more than an archaeological or tourist guide: it functioned as part of a broader project to promote the region's tourism on the international stage following a polarized national and international political climate, specifically with the Cyprus conflict. Furthermore, it was intended as a remedy to the economic crisis resulting from the political climate and the oil crisis. The book highlighted nine Roman sites, including Ephesus, Miletus, and Hierapolis, seven of which were excavated by German-speaking teams. This allowed Turgut to mobilize long-standing German–Turkish archaeological ties to present a familiar yet modern image of Turkey to foreign audiences.

Focusing on the partnership between the Touring Association and Turgut, this paper asks: How did Turgut, as a practicing architect and pioneering “modern woman,” align her professional agenda with this project? What role did the Association play in promoting art, architecture, and tourism, and how did the oil crisis and increasing automobile culture shape the book? Seen through these questions, *Ruinenstädte Rund um Kuşadası* emerges as both a reaction to Turkey's political and economic climate after 1974 and as part of a longer westernization project. This paper situates the book within the intertwined histories of archaeology, tourism, and politics to show how such media codified urban and cultural ideals while obscuring social and economic complexities, offering promises of modern ideals tailored both to state politics and readers' expectations.

## **Toward cultural (mass) tourism. Cross-cultural perceptions of Granada, the ‘Oasis of Andalucía’**

Claudia Hopkins  
*University of Edinburgh*

Nineteenth-century guidebooks about Spain played a significant role in orientalising the country and transforming its cities into destinations for cultural tourism. Among them, Richard Ford's *Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain, and Readers at Home* (London, 1845) was particularly influential. Ford – an outspoken Tory of independent means, and a brilliant essayist – provided English-speaking readers with the first comprehensive survey of Spain's cities, architecture, and art, alongside historical and cultural information, practical advice, and recommended itineraries. This book went through several nineteenth-century editions and was even reprinted in the 1960s. In Ford's writing, Spain unfolds as a sensual, picturesque, backward, Catholic country, exotic, unaltered by modernity, and radically different from northern Europe. The city that best embodied this vision was Granada, based on its Andalusi heritage: the Alhambra palace-fortress, located high above the city and against the backdrop of the Sierra Nevada. Declared a monument of national significance in 1870, the Alhambra was transformed into a major site for tourism by the end of the century. Following Ford, guidebooks prescribed set itineraries and viewpoints from which to admire the Alhambra – recommendations that continue to shape the image of the city today.

The purpose of this talk is twofold: first, it outlines and critiques the carefully crafted narrative that depicts Granada's architectural and urban spaces as exotic and timeless – a narrative that has dominated travel guides since Ford. Second, it contrasts this narrative with accounts by Spanish writers around 1900, which offer a more complex picture of the city's urban and social realities, and a critical self-awareness of the political, commercial and identity issues surrounding Granada's transformation into Spain's foremost cultural tourism destination, with the Alhambra welcoming more than two million visitors annually.

## **Panorama Guidebooks and the Colonial Idealization of the City: New York and Lima in 1830s London**

Gonzalo Munoz-Vera  
*Virginia Tech*

Architectural representation has historically shaped perceptions of the urban environment, with Europe serving as a principal site of production. Prior to the nineteenth century, illustrated architectural treatises remained largely inaccessible to the general public due to prohibitive production costs and limited literacy. This dynamic shifted with the advent of affordable printing technologies, which facilitated the dissemination of illustrated newspapers and prints (Anderson, 1991). These media democratized visual culture, enabling broader audiences to engage with depictions of distant cities. While scholarship in visual culture and architectural history has predominantly focused on the post-illustrated press era (Hvattum & Hultzs, 2019), this paper examines an earlier and underexplored medium: panorama programmes. Distributed at panorama rotundas, these guidebooks combined descriptive texts with miniature keys to accompany immersive 360-degree displays. Prior to the rise of mass tourism and global transportation, panorama programmes offered accessible visual narratives of remote locations, often aligned with imperial exploration.

This study focuses on two panorama programmes exhibited at the Leicester-Square Panorama in London: New York (1834) and Lima (1836). As the sole extant records of these exhibitions, these guidebooks provide critical insight into how urban and cultural imaginaries of overseas cities were constructed and disseminated to British audiences. New York was documented onsite by British panorama proprietor Robert Burford, while Lima was surveyed by Lieutenant William Smith following a naval expedition to South America. The visual and textual narratives of each programme reflect distinct expectations shaped by the cities' geopolitical contexts – New York as a former British colonial city and Lima as the capital of a newly independent nation from Spanish rule.

This paper argues that the interplay of image and text in these programmes shaped a biased public understanding of foreign cities but also reinforced Eurocentric and colonial narratives, contributing to the formation of ideological perceptions of non-European cultures.

## Brisbane for Beginners

Andrew Leach

*Queensland University of Technology*

Taking as a starting point the stance adopted by Georg Simmel in writing his triptych of Italian impressions, this paper asks how one can encounter, by foot, or from the armchair, the city without history. Two parallel experiences inform this question: the task of writing a concise history of Rome (2016) intended to be carried with the reader within the city; and that of writing a history of the Queensland conurbation of Gold Coast (2017, founded as such in 1959) that escapes the preoccupation with the surface to find a more substantive and appreciable past. How to introduce the city of Brisbane – a state, and former colonial capital – and its architecture to visitors leading up to the 2032 Olympic Games? How to overcome its image of sleepy mediocrity by attending to the play between its monumental buildings (colonial, modern and contemporary), its sprawling fabric, and its deep Indigenous history – encompassing sites, artefacts and myth.

The paper reflects on the problem of the settler-colonial city as a subject of history, which is to say of the problem of this city and others like it that contain contrasting ideas of architecture, time, artefacts and experience. This problem was given its most poignant expression by Kevin O'Brien in his 2008 Venice Biennale project "Finding Country," in which the symbolic exposure of the substrate of Brisbane's streets by (literally) setting fire to its maps invites a more complex interplay between past and present. Returning to "Finding Country," the paper considers the categories in which a guidebook trades – monuments, itineraries, and encounters with historical events – as well as the ways in which a city like Brisbane works with the measures determining how seriously to take a city at all. No idle speculation, it directs this consideration to a five-year research programme leading to the 2032 Games.

# The 21st Century History of Architecture Theory

## Session chairs:

Joseph Bedford, Virginia Tech  
Alex Maymind, University of Minnesota

As we move into the second half of the third decade of the 21st century it is time to start writing the first chapter in the history of 21st century architecture theory, addressing the events, people, places, institutions, artifacts, documents, and debates, that characterized the recent history of ideas that have shaped the production of the built environment. This session calls simultaneously for two intersecting things. Firstly, it calls for a focus on the history of theory, something that is rarely given space in meetings of architectural historians. Secondly, it calls for a focus on the history of the more recent past, something which historians are reluctant to address.

When Hanno-Walter Kruft, published his monumental *History of Architectural Theory: From Vitruvius to the Present* in 1985 and Harry Francis Mallgrave published his equally monumental, *Modern Architectural Theory: A Historical Survey, 1673–1968* in 2005, they could not foresee the discourses and events that would unfold in the first decades of the new millennium. And while we have a consolidated history of architectural theory going back millennium, given to us by these historians, we have only a very sketchy understanding of the developments in architectural theory in that last quarter of a century.

The same distance now separates us from such horizons as 9/11, the dot.com bubble, the Iraq war, as separated the modern movement from the generation of historians of the 1960s who wrote the first comprehensive histories of modern architecture. The session asks historians to treat the 21st century with historical distance, even though it is still within living memory.

Papers might address the history of ideas about such matters as theories of architectural representation, drawing and computation; philosophies of perception;

discourses of race, gender and disability; discourses of affect, mood, sensation and atmosphere; debates about the critical and the projective; the phenomenon of starchitecture and iconic building; parametricism; digital fabrication; architecture's relationship to capitalism; theories of surfaces, skins and envelopes; debates about autonomy; theories of the role of culture, tradition and meaning in architecture; the history of architecture's relationship to phenomenology; the turn to preservation and adaptive reuse; the activist turn in architectural design culture; the material turn; contemporary post-digital aesthetics in architecture; post-internet culture; speculative realist philosophy and Object Oriented Ontology; discourses of care, repair, and maintenance; theories of Labor, Work, and the organization of the architectural profession; concepts of climate, planarity, non-extractive architecture, and carbon form; Automation and BIM, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data.

## Theory and/or History

Peggy Deamer  
*Yale University*

In support for architectural theory and its place in academia, this paper will ask questions rather than offer historical accounts. The questions all refer to the relationship between history and theory, as this relationship is exemplified both in the academy and in the call for papers for this panel.

1. In the panel's second area of interest, it calls "for a focus on the history of the recent past." What constitutes the "recent past" and how is it distinguished from current events?
2. Is there a correlation between theory needing to weigh in on history (albeit it current history) to the convener's first area of interest, which "calls for a focus on the history of theory"? In other words, are we theorists actually and always made legitimate by being historians?
3. If theory fears being illegitimate intellectually/academically if it does not address the past, is it because contemplating currency would be mere journalism? Or the fact that "everyone" can theorize and theorists need to be historians to legitimize expertise? Or that the "current" precludes objective distance and focusing on it might veer into advocacy?
4. In which case, what is "objectivity" in theory? Is it the case that theory, like history, must (we've been told) avoid motivated (as opposed to accurate) accounts of our reality?
5. What is the connection between probes into "histories of the past" and probes into ideology(ies)? Ideologies have current markers as well as past markers. Are those current markers off limits for theory?

I believe this panel is the right place for a deep probe into what is at stake when we defend theory and define the project theory should do. This is both an intellectual/academic question in need of answers but also a practical one if we observe that theorists more than historians are not invited to teach in our academies.

## The Tectonic Image: Building a Critical Context for Post-Internet Architecture.

David Turturo

*Texas Tech University, Huckabee College of Architecture*

Can tectonics suppress the seductive power of the image? Kenneth Frampton's classic argument suggests that the "mere visibility" of the image arrests its technical content – echoing the common refrain that the postmodern image is an uncritical byproduct of globalization. Against this, more recent voices (such as John May) suppose that architectural "imaging" is a technical mode of thinking, one which delivers spatial information more directly than the Albertian concept of lineament. This 21st century approach, heralded by influential anthologies such as *Possible Mediums*, *Inscriptions*, and *Drawing Codes*, includes among its techniques graining, glitch, hyperreality, pixelation, and immateriality in the production, understanding, and engagement of architecture. Paradoxically, the post-internet image insists on gestures of constructability alongside older antithetical tropes like figuration, ambiguity, distortion, and inflection. This "more, more, more" conundrum of the tectonic image, of architecture as data depiction, is best explained as a symptom of our hyper-saturated mediascape, where images must simultaneously disrupt tradition and novelty. Unsurprisingly, these new "buildings for building's sake" draw the same critical ire as in the past, as mere formalism devoid of socio-political, functional, or other building-oriented content, such as tectonics. But this autonomy critique misreads both history and the present. Half century ago, Denise Scott Brown, Robert Venturi, and Steven Izenour fused image and tectonics by transforming Las Vegas' everyday signage into a manifesto of surface and structure – "the decorated shed." That lesson of ironic inclusivity has been conveniently forgotten. The dismissal of the image as autonomous neglects its potential for deceptive populism and neoliberal spectacle, while also obscuring the urgent question: how does the intersection of tectonics and imaging shape our complex mediascape? This paper argues that the autonomy critique is no longer tenable and explores the myriad ways that post-internet images are central to how architects think and build in the 21st century.

## Political Theory: Aesthetics and Architecture after 9/11

Reinhold Martin  
*Columbia University*

In *The West and the Rest*, a strident polemic published in 2002, the British philosopher Roger Scruton (1944-2020) claimed that Mohamed Atta, a leader among the 9/11 hijackers who had studied architecture in Cairo and city planning in Hamburg, may have been motivated in part by a desire to retaliate for the negative

effects of modernist architecture on Middle Eastern cities. Not nearly as weighty as Scruton's 1979 treatise, *The Aesthetics of Architecture*, which was among the very few serious philosophical treatments of architecture in the last century, the short book nevertheless incorporated in capsule form the rudiments of an aesthetics that Scruton had refined and put to work during the intervening decades. This was aesthetics as political theory, a companion to Scruton's *The Meaning of Conservatism* (1980) with philosophical roots in his *Art and Imagination* (1974).

Disregarding, however, the dialectical lessons of "critical theory" as practiced by members of the Frankfurt School and others, most of what in the twenty-first century – that is, since 9/11 – has fallen under the rubric of "architectural theory" has failed adequately to confront idealist conservative thought like Scruton's, including his elaboration, with reference to architecture, of Samuel Huntington's notorious "clash of civilizations" thesis. For, out of the ashes of 9/11 was born an entire body of cultural and political theory grounded in aesthetics in a manner pioneered by Scruton, that has regularly taken up architecture as its object and has supplied what is now known as a "post-liberal" reaction with some of its key themes. This tutelary aesthetics has also supplied a notable portion of the background theory for two Executive Orders (2020, 2025) that stipulate classical architecture as a *de jure* style for federal buildings in the United States. What, we will therefore ask, has architectural theory overlooked, and at what cost?

## Tafuri and the Tafurian Left and Right: Eclectic Legacies of Marxism in 21st- Century Theory of Architecture

Alessandro Toti

*University of Westminster*

Manfredo Tafuri remains one of the most uncompromising Marxist-influenced historians of architecture of the twentieth century. His work rejected marxist idealist interpretations of the discipline and exposed the complicity of architectural innovation with capitalist development. Yet, following an eclectic conception of Marxism, Tafuri's own trajectory was marked by contradictions – above all the tension between the anti-bourgeois critique of *Towards a Critique of Architectural Ideology* (1969) and the more historically grounded, politically muted studies on the Renaissance from the 1980s and 1990s.

This paper investigates some of these political contradictions and traces how they re-emerge in two principal interpretations that have shaped the theory of architecture in the 21st century: the “Tafurian Right,” exemplified by Pier Vittorio Aureli, and the “Tafurian Left,” represented by Douglas Spencer.

Aureli reinterprets Tafuri through a politics of autonomy, recovering figures like Aldo Rossi and Archizoom to advocate a form of architectural withdrawal from capitalist production. His focus on spatial asceticism and political minimalism is grounded in an understanding of architecture as an autonomous producer of collective environments – promoting the illusion of a non-capitalist architecture detached from revolutionary class struggle. Spencer, by contrast, extends Tafuri's critique by analysing architecture's role in reproducing capitalist ideology. Yet his treatment of neoliberalism as a distinct system from capitalism sustains the misapprehension that architecture might resist exploitation through ethical subjectivities, alternative practices, or anti-neoliberal demands – while ultimately leaving capitalist property and class relations untouched. In examining these positions, and examining how they reflect broader class realignments within the architectural field in the 21st century, the paper shows how Tafuri's eclectic Marxist legacy has lent itself to opposing interpretations. Rather than resolving these contradictions, both Aureli and Spencer reproduce them – offering selective readings that illuminate important dimensions of Tafuri's project, while ultimately leaving its theoretical coherence open to question.

# **Roundtable: Teaching Architectural Histories in the Age of Global Crisis Organized by the EAHN executive committee.**

## **Chairs:**

Léa-Catherine Szacka, EAHN Vice-President, University of Manchester  
Fatma Tanış, EAHN Communications Lead, TU Delft

## **Contributors:**

Florian Urban, Glasgow School of Art  
Hannah le Roux, University of Sheffield  
Maarten Delbeke, ETH Zurich  
Stephanie Dadour, ENSA Paris-Malaquais  
Andrew Leach, University of Sydney  
Mary McLeod, Columbia University

In *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey famously asserted that ‘knowledge of the past is the key to understanding the present.’ Yet within architectural education – situated in a discipline fundamentally oriented toward projection and transformation – the epistemological and pedagogical status of history remains persistently unstable. Rather than functioning as a fixed foundation, history occupies a contested space, oscillating between instrumentality, critical inquiry, and cultural legitimation.

Moreover, within the broader context of what has been described as a condition of global crisis – the entanglement of environmental, social, political, and economic instabilities – the role of architectural history in education demands renewed scrutiny. If architecture is increasingly called upon to respond to urgent and systemic challenges, what forms of historical knowledge remain relevant? Should the

discipline continue to rely on inherited canons, or must it actively dismantle and reconfigure them? Or both? And to what extent can history serve not only as a seemingly autonomous repository of precedents but as an operative and critical tool for situating architectural practice within complex, intersecting temporalities?

In many schools around the world, recent curricular transformations, influenced by postcolonial, decolonial, and gender studies, have begun to address some of these questions by diversifying both content and perspectives. However, these shifts often unfold within institutional frameworks that impose significant constraints: limited curricular time, entrenched pedagogical models, and the inertia of established traditions. The resulting tension between expansion and selectivity raises fundamental questions about inclusion, relevance, and pedagogical responsibility. In parallel, the growing emphasis – particularly within European contexts – on adaptive reuse and building transformation calls for a reconsideration of history's role in shaping not only design thinking but also heritage practices and professional ethics.

This roundtable proposes to engage these issues by creating a space for critical reflection on the teaching of architectural history today, in an age dominated by a state of crisis. Rather than seeking consensus, it aims to foreground the plurality of approaches, experiences, and institutional contexts that shape the discipline.

Every other year, the EAHN gathers architectural historians from all corners of Europe, America, and beyond. As most of us dedicate some large part of our time to teaching history to future architects, it seemed like this conference was a good place and time to raise the issues previously mentioned. With this in mind, we invited six colleagues – teaching in the UK, France, Australia, Switzerland and the US – to share a short statement reflecting on the current and future status of the teaching of architectural history within their institutions (with concrete examples of syllabi, learning objectives, teaching methods and traditions). Contributions may address pedagogical frameworks, course structures, or specific teaching practices – whether in lecture-based formats, seminars, studios, or through field-based learning such as excursions and site visits – and are encouraged to situate these within the different cycles of architectural education.

# Friday June 19

# Plantation Worlds, Plantation Architectures

## Session chairs:

Will Davis, Università della Svizzera italiana  
Rixt Woudstra, University of Amsterdam

Plantations have been sites of bodily and environmental violence since the sixteenth century on, when the shipment of people and things – sugar, tobacco, coffee, cotton, timber, and cacao – across the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans began. Architectural sites that pertain to plantation worlds are manifold. Big houses and haciendas, jails and watchtowers, slave gardens and maroon communities, mills and storage sheds, situated on land reshaped and reconfigured as commercial resource. A way to understand the plantation in history can be characterized by what Maan Barua calls the “plantation multiple,” identifying how it is the “production of sameness, the violent exploitation of human labor and other-than-human work, the transterritorial circulation of biota, the generation of simplified ecologies, and the ongoingness of extraction and plunder proliferate and become extensive with a wider set of practices in a social and ecological field.”

The rural buildings and landscapes of the plantation find their metropolitan colonial counterparts in docks, warehouses, office buildings, and manor houses, department stores and stock exchanges strewn across contemporary cities today. In this session, we propose that to provincialize Europe, we must simultaneously cosmopolitanize the plantation by looking at European sites and those peripheral places that were crucial to its wealth together. Rebecca Ginsburg, Kathrine McKittrick and others have described plantations as villages, even urban structures, with their own legal and political regulations. In this way, rural, provisional, ephemeral structures facilitating monocrop agriculture in tropical places, like tobacco drying sheds in Cuba or Sumatra, can be read through the same global matrix as the headquarters of colonial trading companies or shopping arcades in London, Paris, or Amsterdam.

Following this line of thinking, where, we ask, does the plantation begin and end? And to what extent does this conceptual model enable new ways of thinking and

doing architectural history? What geographic, cultural, environmental, or economic entanglements situate the rural architecture and landscapes of the plantation at the center of plantation worlds? The plantation itself enables a global history of architecture through the shared climatic histories of the tropical band, presenting ways of thinking through history beyond singular hegemonic structures of colony or nation. We are interested in the way that conceptual models help to bridge geographies of knowledge, and how architectural historians might draw inspiration from examples such as Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" (1993) or Henley and Wickramasinghe's recent "Monsoon Asia," (2023) which have provided an opening for shared social and environmental histories.

Contributions that address notions of (economic) risk and volatility incorporated into the logic of plantation architectures, as well as buildings that embody the clashes and confrontations between plantation capitalist worlds and their opposites, such as maroon communities, runaways, resistances, and the forms of small-scale settlement, farming, and living that come with it are especially welcome.

## Binding Plants and Empires: Ropewalks in Plantation Worlds

Christy Anderson  
*University of Toronto*

The Edenton Ropewalk, established in 1777 by Joseph Hewes and later operated by Josiah Collins, was the first ropewalk in North Carolina and among the earliest in North America. Spanning 131 acres, it relied on the coerced labour of at least twenty-two enslaved men, women, and children documented in 1838 to manufacture cordage for shipping and shipbuilding. While often relegated to local history, Edenton epitomizes what recent scholarship has theorized as the *plantation multiple*: a space where agricultural monoculture, coerced human labour, and industrial processes coalesced into architectures of extraction and global circulation.

This paper situates ropewalks within plantation and maritime worlds by analyzing them as both building types and landscape technologies. The long covered walks, fibre sheds, and retting ponds materialized a system in which agricultural fibres, industrial craft, and enslaved bodies were bound together through spatial design. As with sugar mills or tobacco drying houses, ropewalks were not ancillary to plantation economies but structurally integral to their operation. The cordage they produced tied local enslaved labour to transoceanic mobility, binding agricultural fields to imperial naval power.

Methodologically, the paper combines architectural history with theories of materiality and labour. Rope becomes a connective medium, a “plantation architecture” that operated across scales: from the embodied act of twisting hemp into cordage, to the architectural form of the ropewalk, to the geopolitical projection of naval power. Following Susan Leigh Star’s call for an ethnography of infrastructure, the ropewalk is read as a site where technical practice, social ordering, and coercion intersect. By reading Edenton alongside European sites such as Rochefort and Chatham, the paper demonstrates how ropewalks render visible the otherwise hidden infrastructures through which plantation violence extended into maritime empires.

In reframing Edenton as a critical node in plantation worlds, the paper demonstrates how the architectures of rope-making enable us to theorize the plantation as the tether binding rural landscapes to modern industrial and maritime systems.

## **Building Materials as Trading Commodities: The Malabar Tea Plantation in West Java**

Erika Astuti

*Bandung Institute of Technology*

For centuries, the plantation economy in Indonesia played a significant role in supporting the country's income. In the first half of the twentieth century, plantation activities generated much work for Dutch architecture firms in Java. Colonial architects, like Gmelig Meyling developed offices and housing for plantation workers, not only in the plantation area but also in a new town: Bandung. In 1909 architect Gmelig Meyling was appointed to design the director's houses, offices and buildings for staff of several West Java plantations, including the Malabar Tea Plantation.

This paper investigates building materials as a trading commodity through the work of Gmelig Meyling. The research seeks to explore historical dynamics and trace building materials as remnants of the transnational enterprise. The tea factory is selected as representative of colonial industrial heritage sites in West Java considering their ownerships by a private Dutch company. The location also shows that the growth of the company and its operations impacted the broader development of nearby city.

It is well known that many of these designs were intercultural – both the typical style of European housing and the Indonesian sharp angle roof system were encountered. What remains overlooked however is that building materials were brought from Europe in exchange for commodities from plantations such as tea, sugar, tobacco, rubber, and coffee. For example, the iron sheet roof found in the factory buildings in Indonesia came from United Kingdom, while materials for merchants' houses were directly transported from other continents: Europe and Central Asia.

## **The Exclusive Share of the Slave: Transatlantic Habilitation and the French Plantation after Abolition (1848 -1860)**

Elena M'Bouroukounda  
*Columbia University GSAPP*

In 1840, on the eve of the abolition of slavery in the French empire, M. Reisser, the first director of the Jardin des Plantes in Martinique, declared that the goal of the new institution was to eliminate a fatal prejudice – that land cultivation was the “exclusive share of the slave.” By this, he meant that the botanical garden would be a tool to reintroduce cultivation to the French colonial population as an enlightened science, rather than a brute production. M. Reisser was not alone in this endeavor to reshape the exclusive share of the slave. Missionaries from the Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel also initiated a Colonial School of Agriculture in the French West Indies, modeled on agricultural education programs that had recently developed in France after the enfranchisement of agrarian laborers.

In this paper, I examine how, after the abolition of slavery, institutions sought to reconcile diverse colonial subjectivities in plantation societies by reframing cultivation knowledge through transplanted institutions. The resurrection of a network of botanical gardens and agricultural schools within the French West Indies helps us understand the afterlife of plantation societies as a transatlantic system that demanded continuous reformulation and reframing.

Beyond connecting institutions across the empire, I argue that the heterogeneous architecture of these institutions served as tools of habilitation, transforming the temporal framework of plantation labor by reintroducing cultivation as a science embraced by enfranchised colonial subjects – both free men and formerly enslaved individuals alike. In this way, the paper reconsiders the temporal limits and geographical boundaries of the plantation, revealing how institutions adapted from metropolitan models enacted an epistemic revision of a colonial regime built on racial subjugation.

# Undoing the Plantationocene: Gardens, Gossip and GriGri in the Seychelles Archipelago

Hélène Frichot  
*University of Melbourne*

“Let us inquire into the life of this island that is ours.”  
– Suzanne Césaire

This paper delves into the murky deals that conjoin colonial land grabs with the spatial politics of architecture in the context of the Plantationocene (Chao; Haraway and Tsing). The capitalist-colonial continuum founds itself on a plantation complex (Mbembe) that is planetary in scope, including violent histories of displaced peoples, enslaved and racialized labour, and contemporary histories that draw on the spatial logics of the plantation complex to organise urban enclaves to this day (from prison farms, to ghettos, to luxury resorts). This environmental story situates itself in the Seychelles, a granitic and coralline archipelago located in the Indian Ocean and geopolitically associated with East Africa, on a specific former plantation called Ma Joie and in its relation to a local “slum” colloquially called “Kan Frichot.” I draw on material stories gleaned from a family archive of former members of the French plantocracy, from the oral histories of locals, and from members of the Seychellois creole diaspora. I experiment with feminist auto-theoretical and ficto-critical approaches to unfold what Sylvia Wynter has described as the distinction between the plantation and the provision plot (a story to be told and a small patch of earth with which to sustain oneself and one’s family), and to think with what Suzanne Césaire has called the “human plant.” Where the monoculture that is the plantation is dedicated to the extraction of resources for profit by *homo economicus*, the biorefugia of the provision plot, or creole garden in the Seychelles context, emerges as the means of reclaiming cultural and material knowledge practices in the sympoiesis (Haraway) of plants and humans. I follow the circulation of gossip (the “bamboo telegraph”) and *grigri* (Seychellois practices of magic and witchcraft) that emerge in the “plot,” creatively resisting the imposition of the plantation complex and its afterlives toward emergent material expressions of *créolité* and vegetal life.

## **Afropolitanizing the Plantation: Land, Labor, and Earthmaking in Central Kenya**

Kenny Cupers

*University of Basel*

Where does the plantation begin and end? This session calls for connecting the plantation's rural architectures to metropolitan sites within a shared global matrix. But how can we cosmopolitanize the plantation without recentering the European perspectives that Black and Africanist scholarship has long worked to dislodge? This paper afropolitanizes (Mbembe & Lauvet, 2020; Bisoka, 2025) the plantation starting from the ways Africans made, contested, and remade plantation landscapes. Its analytical focus is earthmaking – the material practices through which land, labor, and ecology are reorganized by those who built, worked, and survived the plantation.

First, it shows how tea plantations in the Kenyan highlands depended on African labor that it could not fully control. Workers who understood themselves as cultivators – “farmers temporarily manqué,” in planters’ revealing phrase – drew limited but real autonomy from their mobility and access to land in the reserves. That autonomy, and the paternalistic strategies deployed against it, gave Kenyan tea plantations their specific architectural form. Second, the paper traces the plot as the plantation’s paradoxical afterlife. Departing from scholarship that theorizes the plot as a counter-space (Wynter; McKittrick), it argues that in Kenya, plotting absorbed both the logic of colonial land enclosure and the political energy of African independence struggles into an earthmaking regime propelled by the ideal of the African smallholder. The result was not liberation but enduring dependency, legible today in hedges, ecologies, title deeds, and debt structures that have outlasted the policies that produced them.

Methodologically, the analysis reads planters’ and government records against oral testimonies by the original performers of the 1977 play *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, approached here as analysts of the built environment. The plantation’s afropolitan history, this paper argues, becomes intelligible when constructed from the ground up. Such a construction reframes what counts as architectural history.

# Disability × Architectural Production: Bodily Diversity in the Construction of the Built Environment

## Session chairs:

Megha Chand Inglis, The Bartlett, University College London  
Nina Vollenbröker, The Bartlett, University College London

This session brings together contributions joined by the conviction that it is important to consider architecture's histories through the diversity of bodies that construct our built environment.

Diverse individuals make up the architectural production workforce, and recent architectural histories have paid much-needed attention to marginalised voices, addressing, for example, gender, culture, and race in the construction of the built environment. Making buildings, however, is deeply linked to a further critical factor which remains under-researched: disability (including deafness, neurodiversity, and chronic illness). Many construction workers identify as disabled (approx. 20,000 in the UK), and architectural production systems are a key cause of disability.

At the same time, disabled bodyminds make distinct creative contributions to architecture. Overlooking disability within architectural production reinforces problematic spatial perceptions which create certain bodies as less impactful, less modern, or less worthy than others and sidelines the generative and creative potential of disability and difference.

Lately, Critical Disability Studies has gained traction in architectural discourse, but its concerns remain limited to building users and, more recently, to disabled architects. It therefore seems crucial to bring the bodies and minds of those who make our architecture to Disability Studies.

Similarly, architectural history has been invigorated by the emergent field of Pro-

duction Studies, advancing critical understandings of relationships between the design of the built environment and the labour of constructing it. However, it does not yet specifically address disability.

Using both fields' historical, methodological, and political concerns, this session encourages the explorations of new architectural histories focusing on social and spatial justice from the vantage of disabled bodies. Papers address urgent questions such as: What is the creative potential of disability in the construction workforce and how has this played out historically? How can research at the intersections of Disability Studies and Production Studies problematise the fast and able productive body working in capitalist regimes of labour? How do production systems and processes affect the world of disabled users, architects, and builders?

Overall, then, approaching the construction of the built environment through a non-normative lens, this session highlights histories, bodies, and design and building practices usually left in the shadows of architectural scholarship.

## **'Sit Down Jobs': Disabled veterans and window making in Crittall's new factory at Silver End (1926)**

Katie Lloyd Thomas  
*Newcastle University*

Locals are proud that the factory at the centre of the modernist workers' village at Silver End, Essex, founded by F.H. Crittall in 1926, was to be staffed by disabled veterans. Unlike the existing factories where Crittall's metal windows were assembled, the production of smaller window fittings Silver End could be adapted to operatives with a variety of impairments. Just after manufacture commenced in 1927, 108 of the 119 employees were recorded as disabled, including 21 with dismemberments, and 13 with neurasthenic conditions including shell shock (McKie, 2020). This proportion would reduce, but many residents recall disabled family members and neighbours playing a prominent role in village and factory life.

Using oral histories, visual materials, staff records and in-house journals this paper both builds a picture of disabled workers' integration at Silver End, one of the more successful responses to the government's comparatively *laissez-faire* call, via the 'King's Roll', to employ at least 5% disabled veterans (Cohen, 2001), and takes a more critical approach in the light of two related developments. First, the enormous expansion of the building products industry in the interwar period, which enabled construction-related work to shift from the building site to the factory. And second, the move to mass production which Crittall learned, like many British manufacturers, through munitions provision during WWI. 'Dilution' or techniques of mechanisation and fragmentation of previously skilled tasks meant that during WWI large numbers of unapprenticed women could enter the metal industry workforce as unskilled or semi-skilled workers – without posing a threat to the existing (skilled, higher-paid, male) workforce (Lee Downs, 1995). To what extent did Silver End's 'sit down jobs' (Terry Wishart, Silver End Heritage Society interview) both establish a tier of lower-paid 'semi-skilled' jobs, and provide entry-points for a wider range of bodies into building-related work?

## **Handmade Modernism: Concealed Disabilities, Vulnerability, and Materiality in 1960s East Pakistan**

Fatema Tasmia  
*Boston University*

A recent interaction with two archival photographs of construction workers in 1960s East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), which inspired this project, reveal two intertwined histories: one of bodily resilience and improvisation, and another of systemic regimentation and pluralization. In one image, barefoot men haul baskets of stone, dig with unprotected hands, and stand waist-deep in rubble, an unmediated encounter between flesh and material. In another, rows of workers stand in disciplined formation beside ordered tools and concrete formwork, their individuality effaced in a vision of rationalized modernist production. Together, these images capture a shift that defined the region's architectural modernity: the transformation of labor into a consumable resource, rendered both indispensable and disposable.

Traditional construction in Bengal (East Bengal and later Bangladesh) with mud and thatch relied on embodied vernacular knowledge and a long-standing relationship with natural elements. Building with bare hands or feet was habitual and relatively less harmful to the body with intervallic exposure to the natural building elements. By contrast, the introduction of reinforced concrete in mass scale radically altered the scale of risk and exposure to the artificial-chemical centered construction. From the 1950s–60s, concrete was promoted by international development agencies as a symbol of progress but was realized through intensely manual processes in the so called “Third World”. Workers, dismissed often as “unskilled” in official reports, crushed bricks by hand to produce aggregate, improvised scaffolding, and poured concrete without mechanized support. Their experiential knowledge localized foreign technologies, adapting modernist materials to regional conditions. Yet this labor, concealed within narratives of scarcity and efficiency, carried disabling consequences: respiratory damage, musculoskeletal strain, and chronic injuries that resonate with what Hannah Le Roux terms “slow violence.”

This project will critically examine archival images and construction records from major undertakings including the Asian Highway construction, Louis Berger Engineer's projects and Louis I. Kahn's National Assembly Building to reveal the unseen on-ground practicalities and realities of labor in 1960s East Pakistan. Recent

reports showing 59.5% of Bangladeshi construction workers suffering from skin disease reveal how these vulnerabilities persist even today.

## **The Architecture of Occupational Therapy: George Edward Barton's Consolation House**

James Graham

*California College of the Arts*

The now-ubiquitous field of “occupational therapy” was, in fact, invented by an architect. George Edward Barton was a Boston-based Arts and Crafts devotee who studied with William Morris, but after a partial amputation (due to frostbite), tuberculosis, and depression, he committed the later part of his career to developing methods of rehabilitation through craft and construction. Along with exploring his background, the “improving” nature of Arts and Crafts design, and the philosophy of Emmanuelism that Barton drew on, this talk will offer a close reading of Barton’s work at Consolation House (the institution he founded in upstate New York) as well as his book *Teaching the Sick* (a book that would later prove instrumental for László Moholy-Nagy in his work with disabled veterans at the School of Design in Chicago). In understanding construction to be self-construction – and the labor of design as a genre of therapy – Barton’s relatively unknown work presaged and informed the complex relationship between architectural production and vocational capacity across the early decades of the twentieth century.

## **Caring for Buildings while Being in Care: Norwegian Patients with Rheumatism Navigating Treatment Abroad**

Anna Ulrikke Andersen

*Norwegian University of Science and  
Technology*

When participating in a four-week Norwegian rehabilitation programme to treat his chronic rheumatic illness in Igalo, Montenegro, Bjørn brings with him a toolbox. Being a retired caretaker, he likes to fix things: leaky taps, mouldy grout or loose fixtures in the building from 1986. Bjørn's story of caring for the buildings, while being cared for, is not unique. Since the Norwegian government began sending patients with rheumatism to treatment in Montenegro in 1976, thousands have travelled and many return year after year, forming close bonds with the place. Norwegian patients participating in local strikes supporting the local workers at the institute, including a blockage of the national border control between Montenegro and Croatia in the summer of 2023, or historical examples of foreign aid during the 1979 earthquake or the Balkan wars. While being in treatment, in what way have the Norwegian patients shaped the space they inhabit?

Disabled bodies have been routinely overlooked in the field of architectural history (Vollenbröker and Giamarelos 2025). Stories of architecture by disabled people do exist, both in archives or within marginalised groups (Andersen 2025) My research project, *An Architecture of Chronic Illness: A Critical Exploration of a Norwegian Bodies and Buildings from Post-War to Post-pandemic* (funded by the Norwegian Research Council 2025-27) addresses this issue, being disability led and building on my own experience as a patient at Igalo, while also employing a range of interdisciplinary methods to uncover new stories. Based on interviews, archival material, media coverage and ethnographic fieldwork, this paper contributes to the session theme of disabled body minds making an impact on the built environment. While rheumatism as a chronic condition is marked by body stiffness, pain and immobility, these stories of spatial impact, tell a different story: disabled people as highly mobile and active makers of space across European borders.

## (Un) Productive Spatialisations

Helen Stratford

*Sheffield Hallam University*

In *Disabled Ecologies* artist and critical disability researcher Sunara Taylor argues that “within an increasingly standardised and efficiency-based model of productivity and labor, the inability to work became a defining feature of modern definitions of disability,” (Taylor, 2024). This paper will focus on experiments with parodies of linear modes of time to critique the idea that everything can be programmed according to a universal logic, or to value that which is somehow overlooked, excluded or denigrated by conventional architecture or design.

Starting from my lived experience of a chronic pain condition, autotheory methods will explore the position of a disabled body caught between internalised numerical pain registers and the exhaustive efforts required at a granular level to plan the (im)possibility of conducting a normal workday. A ‘site inspection’ flow chart from Ronald Green *The Architect’s Guide to Running a Job*, forms the basis of a series of diagrams that critique the production of what is considered an efficient body. Through the diagrams I deliberately occupy a paradoxical position. Repeating them risks remaining within the very epistemological position I set out to critique, yet as performance studies theorist Rebecca Schneider has argued, quoting black feminist writer Audre Lorde, the meeting of the choreographed and the improvised contains the possibility to ‘wield the master’s tools against the master’s house’ (Schneider, 1997).

Through a participatory session that opens this process up to conference delegates, this paper will examine how the diagrams mobilise the objective language of representation of architectural and Fordist production processes in order to trouble, destabilise and deconstruct the tools by which this ‘house’ is constructed (Lorde, 1984). Ultimately, it will argue, that this troubling ‘crips’ – or makes accessible, anarchic and atypical the very production processes that set out to do otherwise (Waerea and Teeuw, 2024)

# On Thresholds and Junctions – Reading Transport Architecture across Scales

## Session chairs:

Johan Lagae, Ghent University

Monika Motylińska, Leibniz Institute IRS

In the aftermath of the spatial and infrastructural turns, global histories of transport infrastructure are being written across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences (e.g. van Laak 2004, Harvey 2016, Zunino 2018). Yet the “stubborn materiality” (Bridges 2023) and spatiality of roads, railways, subways, ports, as well as the buildings that serve them – infrastructures we would like to define as “transport architecture” – remain conspicuously understudied.

In order to bring this materiality and spatiality of transport architecture to the centre of the analysis, we propose to dedicate attention specifically to architectural structures that function as thresholds or junctions, as intermediaries connecting and bordering different social conditions and spatial regimes – analogically to the bridge and the door (Simmel 1909, Teyssot 2013). We are interested in discussions of how transport architecture responds to these differences on each side of the threshold in its design and materiality and how it alters them. We also seek to identify junctions in the infrastructural systems, acting as visible and invisible joints and divides between various modes and patterns of mobility. Following this aim, we intend to dissect the analysed structures both from horizontal and vertical perspectives and across different scales, from the small to the large (Bélanger 2006).

This approach leads us to consider such questions as what kind of transport architecture emerges, for instance, at border crossings, where road or railway infrastructures need to be adapted to different regulations and norms related to design or operation. It also invites us to investigate revolving doors at the entrances to a temperature-controlled skyway system or other liminal spaces connecting different climatic conditions.

While transport infrastructure has most often been studied from the vantage point of the spectacular (the bridge as an *oeuvre d'art*, for instance), we are particularly interested in contributions that engage with transport architecture starting from the small and the mundane, and draw on unexpected or often neglected source material as well as papers engaging with thresholds or junctions connecting and dividing different modes of mobility. The focus on unimposing architectures that are easy to overlook *en passant* shall allow us to consider how transport architecture inscribes itself in transient places (Jirón 2018). Chronologically, our session focuses on the long 20th century while it aims to be global in scope.

## Platform Cinema: Newsreel Theaters as Transport Architecture

Craig Buckley

*Department of the History of Art, Yale University*

In the train stations and busy streets of various world metropolises in the 1930s a curious type of media architecture was born: the newsreel theater. In Paris, London, New York, Berlin, and elsewhere, new screen environments took shape which did not show the feature films playing in the era's picture palaces, but rather aggregated programs of newsreels, short documentaries, and animations gathered from different studios. Within these small and long forgotten spaces – designed for continuously changing audiences of less than 200 spectators – a mass public began to form around the novel experience of news on screen. This paper will analyze the emergence of these theaters as a type of transport architecture shaped not only by the projection screen, but just as importantly by the design of thresholds. Located in basements, in storage spaces, and even up among the trusses of station buildings, news theaters developed elaborate threshold structures to announce their presence; zones of passage that combined the functions of advertising, lighting, orientation, and attraction with devices that enacted closure, counting, surveillance, and control. Such thresholds mediated between formerly distinct technical systems and spatial conditions, but they also enacted transformation: turning a confused bustle of commuters into an audience of spectators whose behaviors could be predicted and regulated. These small theaters fed on the vast crowds produced by transportation systems while simultaneously appealing to spectators through an imaginary of global transport. Newsreel packages, commonly advertised as a “tour around the world,” might bring commuters news of events as disparate as a Soviet cavalry march to the Caspian Sea, a report on an exhibition of underclothes in Chicago, and views of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. What emerged in this new condition, I argue, was a unique and reflexive type of media architecture that began to disappear in the 1950s, when the advent of televised news transformed the demand for news on screen. Examining the threshold architecture of these station theaters contributes to a broader media archaeology of screen interfaces, which were never restricted to two-dimensional planes for the appearance and manipulation of images but were linked to a surprisingly broad and shifting range of urban technologies and infrastructures at various moments in their history. Exploiting the railway station's liminal condition (Schivelbush), the news cinema elaborated a fantasy of global mobility as a means for contending with an urban temporality fractured by gaps, lags, and delays.

## **Domestic Boundaries and Public Interfaces: Reading Railway Architecture in Colonial Zimbabwe**

Nicole Elsie Nonhanhla Sithole

*Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge*

This paper examines railway housing and station architecture in colonial Zimbabwe between 1950 and 1965 as spaces that shaped everyday life and structured social difference. Far from neutral or purely functional, these environments were designed to regulate boundaries between work and home, Africans and whites, and respectability and perceived immorality. As a result, railway spaces became charged sites where colonial authority was imposed, negotiated, and contested.

Railway housing and stations, with their regimented layouts, shared facilities, and clear physical boundaries, regulated the relationship between work and domestic life. They produced new forms of proximity, surveillance, and conflict within African households and in relation to white authority. Railway housing granted African railway families access to urban accommodation while seeking to define the kinds of families considered acceptable within these spaces. Station environments, including waiting rooms, ticket halls, and platforms, functioned as public sites where racial segregation and gender norms were embedded in the built environment. Partitioned waiting areas, ticket counters, and carefully positioned barriers structured movement while reinforcing class, gender and racial hierarchies. Drawing on railway related court records read alongside Rhodesia Railways housing documents, this paper examines how Africans engaged with railway spaces in ways that signal both compliance and resistance to the colonial spatial order. These sources record incidents rooted in specific houses, shared yards, and station settings, allowing railway architecture to be interpreted through moments of conflict, moral judgement, and spatial transgression rather than design intention alone. Architecture thus appears as an active force through which mobility, labour, and domestic life were regulated and contested.

By foregrounding everyday railway spaces and their use in daily life, this paper argues for an understanding of transport architecture as central to the production of boundaries, the enforcement of gendered and racial tensions, social distinctions, and the routine negotiation of power.

## What to do with the motorway overpass: learning from London's Westway

Richard Williams

*Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh*

In the demonology of the modern city, few objects have been so disliked as the motorway overpass. Built in immense numbers worldwide in the 1960s and 1970s, calls abound for their demolition. The discourse of their removal speaks of healing and recovery, and of restoring natural order. There are celebrated cases of overpass removal worldwide, and their replacement by parkland (Madrid's M-30) or rivers (Seoul's Cheonggyecheon Highway) or even simply conventional streets (New York's West Side Highway). But these are exceptional projects: mostly we are going to have to live with them. So what if we try to understand better their spatial qualities, however awkward, in order to make something of them? Their low status derives in part, as the call for papers suggests, from their relative invisibility in architectural history. Perhaps we need to write them into history before we knock them down.

The paper draws on the experience of writing the book *The Expressway World* (Polity 2025) to explore the history and historiography of the motorway overpass, and its meaning as an object for architectural history. It focuses on the case of the Westway, the A40(M) motorway that traverses west London on its way from Heathrow airport to the central city. A controversial object from its inauguration in 1971, it is big but largely unspectacular. Its designers had little idea what to do with its gloomy underparts, which initially appeared as wastelands. But in a set photographs by Adam Ritchie made during its late 1960s construction, the unexpected potential of the Westway is revealed: its undercroft becomes a literal playground, a hedonistic character which has developed with remarkable consistency into the present day. This paper explores the Westway, and the motorway overpass in general through these and other images, reflecting on how we might regard these difficult objects.

## **“A Road to Oil”: Surgut Road-Building Trust and the Transport Architectures of Siberian Petroleum Extraction, 1980–1991**

Ksenia Litvinenko

*Leibniz Institute for Society and Space (IRS)*

On 4 September 1984, the Soviet newspaper *Izvestija* published an article with the headline: “A Road to Oil.” It reported the completion of “one hundred kilometres of concrete roads to the Tyumen oil fields,” allowing “powerful road trains to deliver equipment, building materials, and prefabricated homes for oil extraction workers” to remote sites. It also indexes a vast and understudied episode of late Soviet infrastructural expansion in north-western Siberia, one of the world’s largest fossil fuel producing regions.

This paper engages with archival traces of the *Surguti Tudeehitustrust* (Surgut Road-Building Trust), a construction unit behind the headline. Largely staffed by fly-in, fly-out workers from Soviet Estonia, the Trust operated throughout the 1980s from the settlement of Lyantorsky. A settlement that also neighboured the “national village” of Pim, an Indigenous Khanty community whose labour had been collectivised during recent Soviet sedentarisation campaigns and whose land was gradually absorbed by expanding petroleum extraction. Drawing on workers’ memoirs and self-made photo albums, local and republican newspapers, reports on the Trust’s activities, and design documents related to the upkeep of the settlement, this paper analyses the material and social worlds of roadbuilding. It shows how mundane artefacts – prefabricated timber dwellings, a winter garden cultivated with soil brought from Estonia, and log houses left by displaced Khanty families and later incorporated into a museum – functioned as thresholds: between Soviet republics, between state planning and demands for extraction, and between the promise of Soviet internationalism and the local realities of “industrial assimilation” (*osvoenie*).

## Surface Tensions: Park Station and Extractive Railway Infrastructures in South Africa

Meghan Ho-Tong

*School of Architecture, Planning & Geomatics,  
University of Cape Town*

Thinking with Tina Campt, this paper investigates railway infrastructure in South Africa connected to the *De Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg Maatschappij* (NZASM) as a form of surface tension that effortfully holds the compulsions, constraints and refusals of the colonial project of extraction. Conceived in the wake of the Witwatersrand gold discoveries, NZASM's network was devised as a logistical apparatus for mineral extraction, breaking vertically into the subterranean through a constructed migrant labour system invisibilised by empire. Along the horizontal surface, the railway establishes a system of territorial enclosure, directing flows of material and labour. Among these undertakings, the Rand Steam Tram network functioned as a coal artery between the collieries of Boksburg and the gold mines of Johannesburg, embedding extractive capitalism within the fabric of the territory.

Park Station occupies a pivotal junction in this matrix. Designed by architect Jacob Klinkhamer and fabricated in The Hague in 1895, the station was transported and reassembled in Johannesburg by May 1897. The displacement and re-siting of an entire prefabricated building encapsulates the dual materiality and transience of colonial infrastructure: the literal importation of European industrial form and the concomitant transfer of political and economic ideology. The station and its rooted network thus constitute a reification of social, political, economic, and ecological narratives that remain operative in the present.

Drawing on archival research, architectural ethnography, and inter-archival cartography from Dutch and South African collections, the project examines a shifting territorial order over time. These findings are placed in critical counterpoint with sidewalks today, and the work of South African photographers, Santu Mofokeng and David Goldblatt, examining everyday power asymmetries and subversions of transport architecture. Reading between the colonial and expanded archival, the project attempts to attune to the intimacies and durabilities of railway's archive across the scalarities of infrastructure and architectural threshold.

## ‘Character’ in Global Encounters with Architecture, c. 1700–1900

### Session chairs:

Sigrid de Jong, ETH Zurich

Nikos Magouliotis, ETH Zurich

Dominik Müller, ETH Zurich

The eighteenth century was at once the period when Classical architecture was canonized in the Western world and beyond, and the moment when its supposedly universal ideal came into crisis. The study of competing practices and traditions of various medieval (Romanesque, Gothic, Byzantine) and vernacular architectures in Europe, and the allure of ‘Oriental’ styles (filtered through *Turquerie* and *Chinoiserie*) challenged the claims of Classicism, as did the encounters with different extra-European building traditions through travel and colonialism. These encounters prompted an avid preoccupation with cultural difference, as evidenced in Voltaire’s *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations* (1756), Vico’s *Principi di una scienza nuova d’intorno alla natura delle nazioni* (1725–1744) or Hume’s *Of National Characters* (1748).

Before the systematic global histories of architecture of the nineteenth century (Brouwer, Bressani & Armstrong, *Narrating the Globe*, 2023), and previous to the notion of style (Hvattum, *Style and Solitude*, 2023), Western authors employed a particular term to describe cultural specificity and difference: character. Stemming originally from the Greek word *χαρακτήρ*, its meaning evolved from the tool with which one carved signs on a wax or stone surface, over denoting these signs themselves, to the imprint these had on a reader or viewer. The distinctiveness of that impact, and the marks of identity of a whole culture in its environment and material culture, was encapsulated by its character. As such, from 1750 onwards the notion of character became ubiquitous in a variety of languages and was used in reference to people, buildings and landscapes, and shared across different genres of writing and scientific disciplines: from travel literature, political theory and ethnography, over treatises of art and architecture, to gardening manuals.

This session interrogates the architectural category of character in the globalizing world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by zooming in on its meanings, implications and complexities in moments of encounter between Western and non-Western cultures and architectures. The five papers in this session venture gradually further afield, from Europe to Asia, the Americas and the South Pacific, and from the core corpus of architectural theory to anthropology, archaeology and other disciplines. They explore how Western accounts used the notion of character to describe non-Western architectures, building traditions, cultures, landscapes and places that challenged Western taxonomies and categorizations of architectural style. Together, we will discuss a variety of written, visual and material sources, drawn from various disciplines, to expand the critical history of the term character beyond its well-established place in the history of European architectural theory

## Slavers' Ionic

Mark Crinson

*Birkbeck College, University of London*

In 1806 a group of Manchester's elite citizens celebrated the completion of the Portico Library, the city's first Greek Revival building. Described as 'one of the first buildings of modern Manchester', its main source was the Temple of Artemis Agrotera on the river Illus in Athens. The Portico's architect Thomas Harrison, drew on Stuart and Revett's book for his knowledge of the temple. His design was an exercise in returning to architectural singularity: the historical accuracy, the massive column blocks, the lack of fluting. And in the interior too – a perfect square in plan with the circle of a dome inscribed on it. What those elite citizens were getting was really a clubhouse for the homosocial engagements they needed for networking and knowledge of the market (a newsroom occupied the central space). This associational culture increasingly spread over a set of institutions in England's north west, many also designed in Greek Revival style.

Manchester's cotton industry depended on the 'cheap nature' of cotton imported from the American south, and many of the subscribers who paid for the Portico had income derived from slave plantations and the trade in enslaved humans. In the same year the library opened, several of the subscribers campaigned against the parliamentary bill to abolish the slave trade.

This paper explores the role of 'character' as a mediatory form through which ethos is both veiled and projected. In this place and moment, the 'character' of the Greek Revival seemed to offer a triangulation between an emerging industrial middle class, urban development, and values associated with ancient Greece. But behind this, shadowing it yet increasingly emerging, was another, more fraught triangulation between non-architectures: encounters with the hybrid accretions of modern Greece, the social effects of factory work, and the brutalities of enslaved labour.

## **Symbol, Character, Folklore: Leo von Klenze's Reconstruction of the Tuscan Temple**

Maur Dessauvage  
*Columbia University*

As a concept, character helped architects and historians bring into view buildings that had been excluded from the classical canon. One such building was the Tuscan temple. While it was described by Vitruvius, no examples survived from antiquity. It was thus deemed barbaric and retrograde compared to the ostensibly more beautiful and fully developed temples of the Greeks that had withstood the test of time. In *Versuch einer Wiederherstellung des toskanischen Tempels nach seinen historischen und techischen Analogien* (1821), Leo von Klenze sought to grasp the architecture of the Tuscan temple on its own terms – that is, as an expression of the particular customs and traditions of the ancient Etruscans who built it. Through the concept of character, Klenze overturned the autochthonous status of Greek architecture and situated the Tuscan temple in a longer global history of religion, folklore, and myth. In this paper, I examine Klenze's engagement with anthropological, linguistic, and orientalist scholarship, which posed a fundamental challenge to the aesthetic norms and Eurocentrism of eighteenth-century antiquarianism and neoclassicism. Klenze's account drew extensively on emerging theories that traced the origins of Greek culture to Asiatic tribes that had settled in the Mediterranean during the so-called "migration of people" (Völkerwanderungen). In particular, I focus on the previously overlooked influence of Friedrich Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810-1812), which defamiliarized the classical cannon by drawing analogies between ancient Greek, Persian, and Indian mythology. Through these transhistorical and cross-cultural analogies, Klenze dislodged the Tuscan temple from the normative views of classical architecture that regarded the ancient Greeks as an ahistorical gold standard. Yet, as I will show, the concept of character – far from being purely relativist and value-free – smuggled in a different set of metaphysical assumptions to do with the universality of myth as the unifying thread of human history.

## **The elusive character of Andean monuments: European Enlightenment's (mis)representations and modern archaeology**

Marco Salazar-Valle

*Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania*

The ethnographic report of Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, describing the Andean region (among other Spanish colonial territories) in *Relación histórica del viaje a la América Meridional* of 1748, has been considered a pioneer representation of Indigenous architecture in archaeological surveys of the Andes (up until the late twentieth century). Juan and de Ulloa's publication followed the French geodesic expedition to Quito (1735-1744), supported by the Parisian Royal Academy of Sciences, to prove Newtonian theories on the shape of the Earth. In this paper, I will analyze the ethnographic interpretation of Juan and de Ulloa in the context of a general colonial apparatus of otherization, challenging its presumed objectivity. I focus on the way Juan and de Ulloa described spatial, constructive, and domestic practices under preconceived European categories, especially that of the monument. These interpretative preconceptions of material evidence coincided with their observations on the societal organization of Indigenous and colonial populations as hierarchically differentiated because of people's carácter (character). Carácter, in Juan and Ulloa's account, was an essential feature of people resonating in material production.

This paper argues that Juan and Ulloa's misinterpretation and essentialization of American architecture endured in modern archaeology in the Andean Region of Ecuador. Following examples of pre-Columbian Incan temples and pre-Incan earth mounds described by Juan and Ulloa, I show how subsequent revisions by archaeologists Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño and Max Uhle in the early twentieth century continued to interpret architectural features via Indigenous essentialization, including the notion of "carácter" to hypothesize building techniques and the purpose of monumental structures. The paper concludes by contrasting these Eurocentric assumptions of Indigenous monuments with late twentieth-century ethnographical interpretations of Indigenous rituals and spatial practices that decenter the European concept of monument as an inherent feature of architectural forms. These latter ethnographies portray pre-Columbian architecture in the Andes as signs of

the complex coexistence of Imperial and highly local heterarchical societies. Here, spatial practices intermeshed architecture and agriculture, both subjugated to the Andean landscape as a sacred, more-than-human, monumental entity.

## **Architectural Character and the ‘Psychic Unity of Mankind’, from the South Pacific to Lake Zurich**

Emma Letizia Jones  
*Hong Kong University*

This paper examines how late-eighteenth-century European encounters with the South Pacific shaped modern concepts of architectural character. It focuses on the influence of travel accounts and visual material produced during exploratory voyages to Polynesia, New Guinea, and New Zealand on the work of the Swiss anthropologist and archaeologist Ferdinand Keller (1800–1881). Keller’s *The Lake Dwellings of Switzerland and Other Parts of Europe* (1854; English edition 1866) caused a sensation upon publication, not least for its reconstructions of prehistoric villages that once lined the shores of Lake Zurich and neighboring lakes.

The visual reconstructions Keller presented relied heavily on paintings, prints, and diaries depicting South Pacific societies through a European lens. These materials were mobilized to establish what Keller understood as the architectural character of Neolithic Swiss dwellings. Keller argued that a full understanding of Europe’s prehistoric past required comparison with contemporary societies that, in his view, preserved analogous modes of life elsewhere in the world. This comparative method both drew upon and reinforced the anthropological doctrine of the “psychic unity of mankind.” In architectural terms, this doctrine depended on the identification of a universal architectural character – an idea that developed in parallel with, yet in tension against, emerging theories of national character. This paper explores the conceptual role of “character” within this anthropological framework and emphasizes the central importance of architectural images and reconstructions in disseminating and legitimizing Keller’s ideas within nineteenth-century scholarly discourse.

# Rendering and Architectural Knowledge

## Session chairs:

Lutz Robbers, Department of Architecture, Jade University, Oldenburg  
Roy Kozlovsky, David Azrieli School of Architecture, Tel Aviv University

Architecture renders the real. In our contemporary understanding, architectural rendering has become synonymous with photorealistic, often glossy visualizations of finalized architectural design projects, the metamorphosis of digital 3D models into highly persuasive, perspectival views of architectural and urban spaces to be built. Renderings have become ubiquitous elements of most design projects and competitions, striking simulations of predictable realities calculated more or less instantaneously by powerful CAD agents to seduce jury members, real estate developers, and policymakers. Hyper-realistic renderings change the way architecture is perceived and conceived. What still functions today as the translation of digitally modeled geometry by an underlying algorithm into a quasi-photographic image is currently being surpassed by powerful AI tools that generate architectural ‘renderings’ based on language prompts or diagrammatic notations.

Yet, despite the ubiquitous presence of renderings in today’s architectural practices and discourses, little scholarly attention has been devoted to better understand what renderings are and how they have changed the design process, as well as how they operate as and within media of architectural knowledge. In addition, further inquiries are needed to elucidate rendering’s diachronic characteristics, including pre-digital, analog, and early historical rendering practices. A brief look at the extraordinary multitude of meanings the word ‘render’ evokes (“to supply”, “to transmit”, “to cause to become”, “to convert”, “to translate”, “to give back”, “to surrender”, “to put a first layer of plaster on a wall”) hints at a more complex phenomenon that exceeds simple notions of architectural representation or visualization. One might ask, whether present renderings continue the privileging of precise lines over decorative shadows, of rational and technical geometries over poetic and symbolic “embodied experience” which began with the architectural sciences since the French notion of dessin in the seventeenth century (Perez-

Gomez/Pelletier 2000). Computational design no longer needs visual media such as lines to ‘represent’ space and the objects within it. Digital design allows for a deeper link between numbers and images to emerge, rendering both lines and shadows obsolete. Or, one might ask, whether renderings can still be conceived of architecture “giving back” reliable data of a measurable empirical reality, as it did, for example, in the case of Verniquet’s plan of trigonometric operations of Paris from 1792, or as “making complete”, as Quatremère de Quincy put it in 1832, or as media of “restitution” (Allais 2020).

The proposed panel invites specific case studies, both historical and contemporary, that address rendering practices in order to further explore the nexus between architecture and the image. Explorations of rendering further develop the intuition expressed by Walter Benjamin in 1933, when he discovered in Carl Linfert’s *Grundlagen der Architekturzeichnung* a specific type of image that no longer “reproduces” but “produces” architecture as both planned reality and dream image (Benjamin 1933). How can architectural renderings contribute to contemporary debates about the “operative” (Krämer 2009; Bredekamp 2010) or mimetic potential of images? What role do renderings play in the constitution of architectural knowledge in the context of a supposed analogue/digital divide (Carpo 2010)? How do renderings fit into the constellation of imaging technologies and architectural historiography? How does the ongoing development of rendering practices (e.g. real-time rendering tools; animated renderings of movement through space; AI-generated renderings) alter the epistemological questions of architectural history and theory?

## Rendering Desire: Helmut Jacoby, Foster Associates, and the Politics of the Image in a Pre-digital Context

Gabriel Hernández

*Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*

This paper examines the collaboration between the British architectural practice, Foster Associates (1967–1992) and Helmut Jacoby (1926–2005), one of the most celebrated renderers of Modernity, to explore how pre-digital renderings have continuously operated beyond representation – as active agents in shaping design processes and producing architectural visual desire that tied social and economic value. Far from being passive translations of geometry, Jacoby’s renderings acted as persuasive, operative images that helped Foster Associates articulate and expand its architectural ambitions. Born in Germany, Jacoby began his drafting career in the United States in the late 1950s, producing renderings for Philip Johnson and Eero Saarinen, amongst many others, thus becoming embedded in the visual politics of postwar architectural competitions. After returning to Germany in 1968, he edited *Architectural Rendering* (1971), a seminal publication codifying the practice of architectural image-making. Shortly after, in 1972, Norman Foster invited Jacoby to collaborate, recognising that his renderings could play a decisive role in attracting clients, winning competitions, and defining the public identity of Foster Associates at a crucial moment of expansion.

This paper focuses on the 1970s and explores Jacoby’s early work with Foster Associates during a period when the practice aimed to transition from designing high-tech industrial buildings to creating shopping centres and leisure spaces. These new projects required innovative modes of visualisation: renderings that not only depicted future environments but also conveyed lifestyles, economies, and desires associated with the forthcoming European suburbanisation and changing consumption patterns. While Foster Associates had exceptional in-house draughtsmen, such as Birkin Haward, outsourcing work to Jacoby represented a shift towards a distributed model of production – an “opening” of the design process that anticipated today’s multi-location design culture. Renderings were created in Germany and then presented in London, foreshadowing contemporary home office trends and cloud-based workflows. Drawing on unpublished archival material, this paper argues that Jacoby’s renderings served as operative media, foreseeing many design dynamics that are now prevalent in the digital era, such as home officing and

cloud-based collaboration. This perspective challenges a purely representational understanding of these radical imaginaries from a past analogue era, highlighting their relevance today.

## Rendering Probabilities: On the Nuclear Legacy of Architectural Photorealism

Uri Wegman

*Université libre de Bruxelles*

Eliyahu Keller

*Technion IIT — Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning*

Shortly before the detonation of the first hydrogen bomb in 1952, new images began to emerge at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. These were not drawings, spectrographs, or photos, but numerical simulations. Generated inside the first electronic computers, they aimed to visualize and predict the erratic behavior of materials under the extreme heat and pressure during the detonation of a hydrogen bomb. These images were arguably the very first computer-generated renderings: realistic depictions of nuclear fluid dynamics, represented by point clouds in motion.

This paper argues that the numerical methodologies that facilitated the design of the hydrogen bomb now increasingly undergird the computational techniques of contemporary photorealistic architectural rendering. Outlining an alternative genealogy for contemporary architectural renderings, this paper challenges the position that places them squarely and solely within the humanistic pedigree of Renaissance perspective. Indeed, the nexus of electronic computation and nuclear physics has historically created mimetic representational models that are epistemically incongruent with the pictorial process of perspective. These models produce representations of space not through delineation of symbolically stable forms but through stochastic processes and probabilistic frameworks, rendering space through the random accumulation of scattered points, diffraction patterns, and predictive processes.

These principles are exemplified in contemporary ray tracing techniques, employed in contemporary rendering engines. Their process of producing hyperrealistic imagery is rooted in the Monte Carlo method, a heuristic and stochastic computational sampling process developed at Los Alamos to model the paths of subatomic particles during thermonuclear fusion. Applying similar probabilistic calculations for photon scattering, ray tracing creates spatial images by calculating a statis-

tical point cloud that adheres to perceptual reality but lacks the spatial certainty associated with lines, surfaces, and edges. By tracing the rise of numerical fluid dynamic simulations and the migration of their unique principles to architectural rendering, this paper offers a critical assessment of the genealogy of contemporary architectural renderings and situates them as a product of an epistemology rooted in probabilities and stochastic processes that redefined spatial realism in architecture.

## Digital Affects: Venice Biennale and the Emotional Impact of Renderings on Architectural Knowledge

Ines Tolic

*University of Bologna*

Digital design technologies not only transformed design processes and architectural forms but also enabled the production and circulation of increasingly spectacular renderings – often well before projects were completed – through magazines, journals, websites, and, later, social media. These images shifted attention away from the materiality of architecture toward affective registers of anticipation, wonder, and desire. Rather than functioning as neutral representations, they became persuasive instruments of emotion, aligned with the neoliberal appetite for visibility and novelty.

In this context, the 9th International Architecture Exhibition (2004) is exemplary. Curated by Kurt W. Forster with Matteo Cainer and dedicated to “the universal adoption of digital technology,” *Metamorph* demonstrates how renderings operated within a shifting media landscape, complicating the conventional analogue/digital divide by foregrounding both their epistemic and emotional dimensions. That year, the extraordinary proliferation of digital renderings provoked intense debate about the impact of new design technologies on architectural culture, marking a turning point for both the discipline and the Biennale as a site of knowledge production.

Drawing on archival materials at the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee (ASAC) in Venice, interviews with architects and curators, and contemporary press coverage, this analysis reconstructs how renderings shaped both critical discourse and visitor experience, functioning as media environments that trained audiences to perceive and interpret digital restitutions of form and space. At a time when AI-generated visualizations further amplify these dynamics, revisiting the deployment of computer-generated images at the Venice Biennale – and especially in *Metamorph* – provides a productive lens to reassess the entanglement of rendering, knowledge, and affect in architectural culture.

While exhibitions have been extensively studied as spaces of knowledge-making, the specific contribution of renderings – and their affective dimension – remains insufficiently explored. By framing digital renderings as “operative images” that

mobilize emotion, the paper addresses this gap, also engaging with Asymptote's exhibition design and showing how its staging amplified the digital affects that shaped the experience of the 2004 Biennale.

## Synthetic Memory: Digital Excavations of Zaha Hadid's Pre-Digital Renderings

Laura Nica

*University of Westminster*

This paper proposes a synthetic retro-reality for reading architectural images beyond their visible surface, excavating hidden and forgotten layers that complicate what we assume we know about analogue media. It argues that the surface of an architectural rendering is never the full historical record; instead, digital, and physical media co-produce representational knowledge in ways that remain partially concealed.

The study centres on Zaha Hadid's *Vision for Madrid* (1992), a radical urban proposal articulated through dynamic drawings and a fully developed pictorial composition structured through colour, tone, and linear juxtaposition. Produced at a moment when Hadid's analogue techniques had reached maturity, the work nevertheless stands out for its subdivided composition, distinct resolution, and embedded orthogonal primitives that invite reconsideration of its media identity. Although historically circulated as a painting within galleries, *Vision for Madrid* reveals a hybrid graphic language that oscillates between organic and orthogonal, analogue, and computational, with distinct resolution and subtle irregularities.

Through processes of digital fragmentation, extraction, translation, comparison with archival material, and synthetic reassembly, the research reconstructs aspects of the work's lost or hidden early historical rendering practice. Treating the painting as a prototypical reverse-engineering artefact, the study reconstructs elements of its latent 3D model. In doing so, it examines how craft, gesture, representation, and inscription contribute to emerging historiographies of early digital periods, building on traces embedded in surviving software, hardware, and material fragments.

Ultimately, the paper reveals the overlooked pre-digital narratives embedded in Hadid's early work and advances a speculative framework for remapping incomplete archival records and fragments of obsolete spatial models. It proposes a form of synthetic memory that can be continually rendered and re-rendered, capable of negotiating texture translations, screen-based renderings, and other digital transformations while responding to the shifting entanglement between digital and physical media.

# Architectural Objects of Colonial Consumption: The Material and Visual Worlds of Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, and Other Stimulants

## Session chairs:

Laura Hindelang, University of Bern  
Anne Hultzsich, ETH Zurich

This session brings together three phenomena: ceramics featuring architectural motifs; the consumption of stimulants – from tea, coffee, and chocolate to sugar and a brewed corn drink – which played a significant role in colonial trade and imperial networks; as well as their spatial environments. Through this specific group of objects of consumption and the built spaces in which they were used, thus bridging material and visual cultures, we seek to tell architectural histories of global colonial entanglements and distinct spatial practices before ca. 1900. Already in the Inca Empire, the consumption of a corn drink (agha) served imperial practices; European elites from the 16th century onwards began to define themselves through the consumption of exclusive substances - often as hot beverages - that contained an intrinsic trace of increasing global integration. The vessels in which these were consumed link bodily ingestion with both representative and productive spaces. Taking these highly potent objects and environments as prisms, this session complicates early modern architectural historiographies.

The papers in this session explore questions such as: What kind of sceneries were displayed on architectural ceramics? To what extent did these real or imagined spaces relate to the physical spaces of both the production and consumption of hot beverages and addictive edibles, including plantations and coffee or tea houses? How can we conceptualize the intimate bodily encounters with architectural porcelain, the processes of ingesting stimulating substances such as hot chocolate, tea, sugar, coffee, or agha? How can ceramics manifest a space or constitute a spatial practice within the global-colonial networks necessary to produce, trade, transport, and sell not only the beverages but also the vessels? Through these

objects and their environments, how can we tell marginalized stories of exploitation, oppression, asymmetrical power relations, use, and abuse – but also of agency and resistance – in relation to architectural histories? The papers in this session explore questions such as: What kind of sceneries were displayed on architectural ceramics? To what extent did these real or imagined spaces relate to the physical spaces of both the production and consumption of hot beverages and addictive edibles, including plantations and coffee or tea houses? How can we conceptualize the intimate bodily encounters with architectural porcelain, the processes of ingesting stimulating substances such as hot chocolate, tea, sugar, coffee, or agha? How can ceramics manifest a space or constitute a spatial practice within the global-colonial networks necessary to produce, trade, transport, and sell not only the beverages but also the vessels? Through these objects and their environments, how can we tell marginalized stories of exploitation, oppression, asymmetrical power relations, use, and abuse – but also of agency and resistance – in relation to architectural histories?

## Inca Women Drinking: Painted Vessels and Spaces for Female Authority in the Early Modern Andes

Stella Nair

*University of California Los Angeles*

Across the Americas, beverages played a key role in colonizing projects, gender dynamics, and spatial practices. For the Maya, the beverage of choice was *xocoatl* (chocolate), for the Mexica it was *pulque*, and for the Incas, it was *aqha*. While these drinks were often cooked at high temperatures, they were usually served at room temperature or slightly chilled. In this paper, I will examine the early modern material culture of *aqha*, a highly valued corn drink that the Inca used in all aspects of their imperial practices and networks. It was used in family gathering, sacred rituals, political negotiations, and state ceremonies. It also played a critical role in political negotiations, trade, and colonial expansion. Often made and served by specially trained females (girls and women), this beverage had its own distinctive architecture for production (*aqhauasi*, “house of the corn drink”), and reshaped a diversity of spaces, objects, and relationships. In addition, it was associated with a distinct array of vessels that also became associated with Inca power and imperial expansion.

The central vessel I will examine is a ceramic pitcher that shows two Inca women flanking an *urpu*, a large ceramic vessel that held *aqha*. The women are painted against a large red background, the same color that was associated with the *acl-lacona*, or “chosen women” who made the sacred *aqha* and were stationed across the newly conquered provinces. This vessel is believed to come from the northern Andes, an area colonized by the Inca. It is by unpacking the imagery of this ceramic vessel that we can gain new ways of understanding the complex relationships among women, space, ceremonial drinking, and imperial power, in the Inca empire.

## **Roasting Beans and Sipping Hot Spiced Concoctions: The Case of the Chocolate Kitchens and the Royal Apartments of Hampton Court in the Late Seventeenth Century**

Panagiotis Doudesis  
*Independent Scholar*

In 1655, the English took over Jamaica from the Spanish after Oliver Cromwell's ambitious "Western Design" to expand to the Caribbean: a region with extensive plantations of sugar and cocoa, two of the most precious colonial products. Cocoa was rarer, exotic, and even more expensive than costly sugar at the time, and the direct access to it truly introduced chocolate as a hot beverage in England. Around the same time, the French royalty and elites - following the Spanish royalty and the princesses married to Bourbon kings - started consuming this beverage employing specialised chocolate makers. By the end of the 1600s, the chocolate-drinking culture spread among the elites, particularly the female circles in and around the European courts. A different trend emerged in England, contrary to the one on the continent: chocolate was predominantly reserved for elite/non-elite men, particularly in the infamous, politically charged "chocolate houses."

In 1689, William III and Mary II became joint English sovereigns, with William retaining the title of the "Prince of Orange and Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic", a state that, by then, controlled cocoa's global trade. For the massive extension of Hampton Court Palace, chocolate kitchens were prominently placed in the middle of the ground-floor layout and with direct access to the king's apartments upstairs, who had an insatiable appetite for the beverage. Chocolate was served for breakfast, during the levée ceremony, and at many other social or intimate occasions at court; so much so that both their successors, Queen Anne (1702-1714) and George I (1714-1727), kept and intensified the habit.

Few objects associated with William's, Mary's, or Anne's chocolate-drinking habits survived our days. However, Hampton Court's chocolate kitchens remain the singular known example of such dedicated spaces, revealing entangled histories of gendered consumption, status, politics, and intimacy, all told through the spaces where cocoa beans were roasted, transformed into the sumptuous hot drink, and served in public or intimate settings.

## **From Multisensory Experience to the Museum Display of Glory Days: The Peregrination of a Teacup from China, through the Ottoman Empire, Vienna, to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth**

Anna Myjak-Pycia  
*ETH Zurich*

The Princes Czartoryski Museum in Cracow, Poland, boasts an unusual porcelain teacup and a saucer. This seventeenth-century set, originally made in China, features a sophisticated pictorial program. The bottom of the inside of the cup shows a kitten seated on a refined stool, connoting a cosy, domestic interiority of fuzzy, warm textures. By contrast, the saucer references outdoor nature: its sunken, holding the cup, part is decorated with a pond scene with plants and water animals. The outer surface of the cup is overlaid with a gold floral-like net that holds emeralds and rubies; the stones are also on the saucer. Both the 1815 and the 1825 registries of the Izabela Czartoryska collection in the princess's estate in Puławy, Poland, list the set among the spoils of war of John III Sobieski, the King of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, from the victory over the Ottoman Empire at the battle of Vienna in 1683. The registries attribute the set's prior ownership to Kara Mustafa Pasha, the Grand Visier of the Ottoman Empire. Experts identified the gold-emerald-ruby embellishment of the cup and saucer as having been added in Turkey. In the Czartoryska collection in Puławy, the cup and saucer were among many objects that the princess envisioned as a depository of national memory, focused on former Polish kings, at the time when the partitioned Polish state struggled to regain independence. Scrutinizing the set's geographical peregrinations through its changes in materiality, spatial environments, and use, the paper shows how the transitions were accompanied by its major shift from being an object inviting a multisensory, bodily experience to becoming a museum artefact mainly for visual contemplation and charged with the Polish nostalgia for bygone glory days.

## **Materiality of Colonial Resistance: Cacao, Architectural Ceramics, and Spatial Practice in 18th-Century Mexican Convents**

Carina-Nathalia Madonna Visconti-Paff  
*Sapienza Università di Roma*

This presentation examines the intertwined material worlds of chocolate preparation and ceramic vessels within 18th-century Mexican convents, positioning them as architectural objects that mediated colonial consumption practices. Prepared in convent kitchens using indigenous metates for grinding cacao, chocolate was subsequently dissolved into hot beverages and consumed from specialized, locally manufactured tin-glazed earthenware – namely Puebla Talavera vessels, including jars, chocolate cups (jícara), and specialized saucers (mancerinas). Frequently adorned with intricate painted motifs depicting architectural vistas, formal gardens, and stylized colonial landscapes, these vessels served as the primary material interface for the consumption of stimulants within the spatial environments of the convent. Drawing on archival culinary records, cacao trade data, and studies of New Spanish material culture, the presentation investigates how nuns transformed an indigenous stimulant into a source of institutional agency and spiritual comfort within the cloister. This culinary practice and social ingestion took place across distinct conventual spaces: kitchens where the laborious grinding and thermal processing occurred, refectories where liquid chocolate was consumed during daily communal gatherings, and locutorios (visiting parlors) where chocolate and colonial news were exchanged with the public sphere. These spaces blended sacred enclosure with worldly connection, linking the intimate bodily ingestion of hot, sweetened chocolate with broader colonial trade networks, plantation economies, and global circuits of stimulants. Talavera ceramics, by displaying scenes evoking real or imagined architectural environments and productive landscapes, further materialized these spatial entanglements. They bridged the rural landscapes of cacao cultivation in regions such as Soconusco and Veracruz with the highly regulated interior spaces of the convent, creating a dynamic visual dialogue between the closed monastic world and the expanding Spanish empire. Moreover, by examining the production, trade, and transport networks of these ceramic vessels largely driven by monastic patronage of the Puebla pottery guilds this paper complicates early modern architectural historiographies. It redefines the cloister not as a static site of passive enclosure, but as an active node within global-colonial networks, where intimate bodily encounters with architectural ceramics manifested complex spatial practices of agency and resistance.

## Sweet Surfaces: Colored Sugar, Porcelain Imagery, and the Architecture of Colonial Consumption

Stella Rossikopoulou Pappa

*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

This paper argues that eighteenth-century French sugar sculpture functioned as a spatial medium through which colonial commodities, sugar and the stimulants it sweetened, were staged as architecture on the table. Focusing on Parisian and courtly dining environments from the mid-eighteenth century through the 1770s, I examine how colored sugar decorations produced miniature gardens, pavilions, porticos, and chinoiserie scenes that reconfigured elite service. This practice extends a longer early modern tradition in which sugar was used to imagine and stage architectural space, evident in sixteenth-century banquet imagery of sugar castles and in allegorical visions of abundance such as the *Land of Cockaigne*.

The paper focuses on three interlinked settings: Parisian confectioners' workshops, where architectural sugar forms and pigments were produced; elite dining interiors at court and in aristocratic households, where sugar and porcelain were assembled into temporary architectural landscapes; and mirrored *surtouts de table* that spatialized sugar and porcelain through reflection, light, and choreographed service. Using treatises by Joseph Menon and Joseph Gilliers, alongside accounts of spectacular *surtouts de table*, I trace how architectural forms migrated into edible décor through shared spatial repertoires, including the formal garden *parterre*, the *anglo-chinois fabrique*, and the mirrored *surtout* platform.

At the material level, I follow pigments and colorants, cochineal, indigo, saffron, verdigris, and copper-based greens, whose production and circulation relied on imperial trade routes, binding extraction to display. I argue that color operated as a technology of illusion that allowed sugar to masquerade as stone, textile, flower, or architectural surface, aestheticizing the colonial labor regimes that underwrote both sugar refinement and the consumption of hot beverages. By situating colored sugar within specific sites of production, display, and use, the paper reframes the dining table as an architectural environment that materialized empire, where ingestion and service converged to naturalize colonial entanglements within elite spatial practice.

# Caring for Aging

## Session chairs:

Michael Asgaard Andersen, Royal Danish Academy

Solmaz Sadeghi, Royal Danish Academy

Societies are growing older, and architecture plays a part in how they do so by organising care, mediating autonomy, and framing the experience of aging. *Caring for Aging* traces how housing for older adults has been imagined, designed, and inhabited across the twentieth century and into the present, sites where welfare-state policies, design ideologies, and everyday practices intersect. It approaches elderly housing not merely as a specialised typology, but as a lens through which to interrogate autonomy and dependency, domesticity and institutionalisation, and shifting responsibilities among states, municipalities, families, and communities. The session positions elderly housing as a site of negotiation between policy, place, and personhood, where architecture has mediated the political, social, and emotional realities of growing old.

Bringing together case studies from Belgium, Norway, Switzerland, Hong Kong, and China, the session juxtaposes distinct welfare regimes and urban conditions, Nordic, Continental European, and Asian, each with different configurations of care, family, and state. The papers chart the evolution of care environments from post-war welfare frameworks to contemporary models emphasising ‘ageing in place’, collective living, and community-based support. While grounded in specific contexts, they open wider questions about how ageing is governed and supported through built form, institutional arrangements, and everyday infrastructures of care. The contributions show how architectural form, typological planning, and organisational systems shape everyday life, not only through accommodation and accessibility, but through infrastructures of mobility, sociality, and routine, including the possibilities for community and intergenerational exchange. Across these contexts, architecture mediates between private life and collective systems, standardised provision and situated needs, and the desire to sustain dignity and agency within increasingly managed environments.

In dialogue with current debates on care as a critical lens, the session foregrounds care as a spatial and relational practice: enacted through material settings and forms of labour, but also shaped by administrative frameworks, policy agendas, and media environments. Together, the papers offer a comparative architectural history of how care has been spatialised and contested, asking whether emerging models reproduce older institutional logics or enable new forms of ageing that allow older adults not only to remain in place, but to thrive socially, emotionally, and spatially. Ultimately, the session reframes elderly housing not only as infrastructure, but as an ethical and civic question, a reflection of how societies choose to care, and to age, together.

## **Housing for Seniors: From Welfare State Models to Socialization of Care in Flanders**

Hilde Heynen  
*KU Leuven*

This paper aims to sketch a historical overview of models of housing for seniors that dominated after WWII in Flanders, Belgium. The aftermath of WWII saw the establishment of an extensive welfare state, in which housing for elderly people was no longer considered the responsibility of their families or of charities. Instead, specific housing solutions were developed, either as part of larger social housing estates (e.g. Kiel, Antwerp) or as clusters in themselves (e.g. Ruelenspark, Leuven). Residential care facilities for the elderly also became commonplace, whereas the three-generation home gradually disappeared. The rise of the welfare state thus coincided with the rise in individualism, and engendered among ageing people themselves a growing conviction that they should not be a burden to their children.

This model, however, is currently under pressure due to demographic evolutions. The growing proportion of the eldest groups within the overall population causes increasing financial pressure on social security and health systems, resulting in a call for the socialisation of care (back to the community). Residential care facilities continue to be built (although the average time people spend there is now less than 2 years), sometimes with innovative architectural plans (Osar Architecten; Korteknie Stuhlmacher) or as renovations of existing complexes (a2o). For most people, staying put in the long-term family home when they grow older is still considered the most ideal situation of aging-in-place – although this is arguably not a good strategy from a societal point of view. Gradually, therefore, alternative models are being developed. The paper will discuss several examples of such alternative models: assisted living apartments (dmvA Architects); care units attached to single-family homes (Madam Architectuur); and cohousing situations (Abbeyfields, AID Architecten).

## **Fehn and Grung's Økern Home for the Elderly (1950–55): Living Arrangements and Sensory Spatial Experience**

Espen Johnsen  
*University of Oslo*

This paper focuses on the conceptual solution by the young architects Sverre Fehn and Geir Grung for the Økern Home for the Elderly (1950–55) in Oslo. The municipally funded building represented a breakthrough in Northern Europe for the idea of building a single-storey nursing home to enhance the quality of life for elderly residents. Through procedural analysis, the project's concept development will be discussed through the interaction between the architects and the municipality, as well as study trips to North Africa and Southern Europe, and parallel projects Fehn and Grung were involved in, including Holla Home for the Elderly (1952).

A few years earlier, Knut Knutsen presented his innovative Tåsen Home for the Elderly (1935–41), with several projecting 3–4 storey wings adapted to the terrain. City architect Georg Greve followed up Knutsen's idea in a preliminary project for Økern. As assistants at the City Architect's Office in Oslo, Fehn and Grung developed (1950–52) an alternative conceptual project. They responded negatively to Knutsen and Greve's solutions, believing that these approaches rendered the elderly passive, "sitting with a coffee cup by the window". Instead, they conducted analytical studies of the elderly's physical and mental situation and needs, mapping mobility difficulties, fear of heights, hearing impairment, and social and psychological needs for interaction and privacy.

The architects challenged older notions of how the elderly should live by offering modern and sensory spatial experiences in indoor and outdoor spaces. By creating communal atrium spaces as well as private rooms with large windows and balconies, Fehn and Grung succeeded in achieving an interplay between community, protected privacy, and eye contact with nature. Housing that promoted activity, natural light and contact with nature, and a sense of freedom in open floor plans and glass volumes was an ideal among the architects within PAGON.

## Autonomy and Care in Elderly Housing in Zurich

Irina Davidovici  
*gta Archive, ETH Zurich*

Societal attitudes towards elderly citizens can be revealed by the language used in relation to housing them. Linked to its emergence as an industrial centre, Zurich's housing for older people has long been associated with institutionalised care and hospital-like typologies. In 1928, the city's first competition for an *Altersheim* – an old people's home – described the building as *die Anstalt* (“the institution”) and its residents as *Insassen* (“inmates”) (Weiss 2025). All prize-winning entries drew upon hospital architecture rather than residential models. Almost a century later, an informal term – *Alterscluster* – signals a radical shift towards care in the community and “autonomy in advanced age” (Kurz 2019). *Alterscluster* designates the adoption for over-60s of a housing format pioneered in recent cooperative housing: the “cluster apartment,” in which small self-sufficient studios are grouped around generous collective facilities. This new living configuration, seized upon as beneficial both for multi-generational and elderly residents, has recently migrated from cooperative to municipal housing.

Zurich illustrates multiple models for people after retirement age, ranging from the conventional and practical to the groundbreaking and idealistic. This paper first maps the current constellation of not-for-profit housing for the elderly in municipal, cooperative, and foundation ownership, connecting it to specific case studies and welfare formats. It then focuses on recent autonomous collective living configurations – either for people within the same advanced age group or across multiple generations – as a counter to the ubiquitous yet ill-fitting format of living in isolation in nuclear-family dwellings after the departure of grown children. The paper problematises the knowledge traffic around issues of ageing and care by asking if, and under what conditions, innovative formats such as the *Alterscluster* can penetrate the housing mainstream.

## Intrinsic Care: Ageing in a High-Density City

Esther Lorenz

*School of Architecture, University of Virginia*

Hong Kong is facing a rapidly aging population. Historically, changing migration patterns involving primarily the young and middle-aged have influenced this development. The city's population grew quickly through immigration from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, until concerns over the handover to China led to emigration from the 1980s. Compared to other places, Hong Kong's current ageing-population trend is exacerbated by its lower fertility rate and higher life expectancy.

During the early colonial period, the elderly in Hong Kong typically lived with their extended families, according to the Confucian tradition of filial piety. In the 1960s, the British colonial government implemented a public housing programme that supported the entire population, including the elderly. In the following decades, policies and models focused on seniors based on UK models were transferred to Hong Kong. However, cultural and urban differences meant these influences provided only the conceptual and administrative framework. Meanwhile, local implementation and adaptation were driven by Hong Kong's high population density, verticality, and comparatively slim welfare system. Provisions were integrated into public housing and transportation systems.

The 1990s brought a shift from institutionalisation to supporting seniors to live independently in their communities. Less than 5% of older individuals requiring long-term care currently live in residential care facilities for the elderly, with the rest living at home and receiving support from their families. Confucian values of elderly care through filial piety are now part of high-density living, often with maids being part of the family unit.

This paper examines how high urban density has enabled “ageing in place” in Hong Kong's cultural context. It analyses the functional and spatial networks of elderly living and care, considering housing, community, health, and transportation infrastructure. The results offer insight into integrated urban living systems that cater to the needs of people of all ages and abilities, equally benefiting senior citizens and enabling them to thrive within their communities.

## Dwelling in a Social(ist) Media Environment

Weihong Bao

*Department of Film and Media, UC Berkeley*

In the past decade, China's rapidly aging population has exerted tremendous pressure on the country's financial, infrastructural, and health care system. How does China – a postsocialist state with strong sovereign and ideological claims, a heterogeneous society with distinct regional and class interests, and an imaginary community with multiple traditions haunted by a rather recent socialist past – address this issue? Where does architecture fit in this schema, and how does it facilitate the care of the elderly as technics of space, time, and vitality?

As a media scholar long invested in questions of design, architecture, and environment, I would like to contribute to this panel by considering how flourishing senior care centres in China since the 2000s provide an emerging model of social(ist) media environment through distinct understandings of ageing and sociality from its historical precedents. I conduct my inquiry through the Qinggang Senior Care Center (2009–) in the mega-industrial city of Chongqing – China's most populist city, with 32 million people, over 8 million of whom are citizens above age 65 – run by the Chongqing Medical University and sponsored by the municipal government, in collaboration with Danish partners.

I characterise this environment as a media environment, in the sense that architecture performs as media – as a living environment that organises space and time and mediates one's perception, experience, and action. Meanwhile, a virtual environment of social support has been actively constructed through the residents' and the Center's use of old and new media for education, entertainment, e-commerce, and communication within and beyond the centre. This media environment, conjoining the built and virtual environment and animated by human use, ushers a semi-open society, reflected by the architecture and landscape design that emphasises both autonomous and shared living, coupled with protocols of control and freedom for social media platforms.

This semi-open society embraces the varied transformation of socialist legacies of collectivity – a state ideology imposed anachronistically upon its capitalist present, as well as an incomplete project renewed by the care-centre inhabitants as they relearn the aesthetics of collective living. Together, they generate a vision of

aging as an ongoing process of learning, development, and coping with precarity. Summarising the history of such complexes in China over two and a half decades, I will situate this recent example in relation to socialist-era care and rehabilitation centres and tease out the tensions that this entails.

# Frontiers: Kinetics of Expulsion, Expansion, and Contestation

## Session chairs:

Elif Kaymaz, Middle East Technical University

Emine Esra Nalbant, Binghamton University

Lucien Febvre's (1928) etymological and conceptual exploration of the term *frontière* in the context of French history reveals its militaristic, architectural, and juridical dimensions: it refers the frontline of an army, the *façade* of a building, and the shifting boundaries of territory. Similarly, the Arabic term *cabha(t)* (قبة), meaning "forehead" or "front," highlights the symbolic and spatial significance of the frontier, rooted in \*cbh\* and reflected in Aramaic/Syriac as a "high place." This is paralleled in Turkish with *ceph*, which carries the additional meaning of "a certain point of view." From Frederick Jackson Turner's (1893) "frontier thesis," which employed the frontier as a flexible concept to justify settler colonialism by framing it as a space of opportunity while simultaneously obscuring the violence of Indigenous displacement and dispossession, to Eyal Weizman's (2007) notion of "frontier architecture," which describes frontiers as "deep, shifting, fragmented, and elastic territories" that extend beyond the mere edges of political space to permeate its depths.

Frontiers serve not only as sites of spatiality and imagery but also as fertile grounds for explanation. While often equated with borders, boundaries, and limits, frontiers transcend the notion of mere liminality. They represent both a site of expansion and a point from which one projects outward. As such, a frontier delineates the boundary of one's existence, extending outward to encompass nations, military zones, territories, and even atmospheric boundaries as entities.

This session seeks to explore frontiers as both a framework for discussing the histories of built environments and as material realities where complex, dynamic, and multifaceted architectural situations unfold. We approach frontiers not solely as dividing lines, zones of transition, or mechanisms of control, but also as sites of

activism, resistance, and change. We are particularly interested in histories of frontiers that reflect the “restless, nervous energy,” as Turner describes it.

Departing from Thomas Nail's (2016) approach that reduces the frontier to a functional boundary, while also acknowledging his assertion that it serves as a generator of processes such as expulsion, expansion, and compulsion, this session aims to expand on the questions such as; how frontiers operate spatially? What kind of building stories do frontiers generate? What critical issues emerge when we put frontiers in use as a concept in architectural history? By framing architecture as a mediator of movement, conflict, and transformation, this session seeks to deepen our understanding of how kinetics of frontiers -the shifting, unstable, and contested nature- have functioned in building, unbuilding, and imagining environments.

## Sea Power at the Frontier: Ottoman Fortresses and the Politics of the Eastern Mediterranean, 1715–1821

Dilek Özkan-Pantazis  
*The Cyprus Institute*

This paper approaches the Ottoman frontier in the Eastern Mediterranean not as a fixed line but as a maritime political space, and reads fortress-towns in the Peloponnese as the empire's sea-facing front (cephe) where that frontier was made and governed. Fortresses monitored anchorages and sea lanes, staged sovereignty for visitors and enemies, and against risks approaching from the sea, stood on alert through centrally managed operations of inspection, repair, provisioning, and manning. For sea and coastal security, the adjustments to these "fronts" and the measures taken within frontier forts were visible signals of who ruled, or was poised to rule the Mediterranean.

The study rests primarily on Ottoman archival sources (inspection registers, repair and provisioning orders, armory inventories), complemented by Venetian maps and reports and GIS analyses derived from these materials (viewsheds toward maritime approaches; distance-allocation around fortified nodes). Case readings of Methoni, Koroni, Rio, Monemvasia, Niokastro, Acrocorinth, Acronafplia fortresses show how audits of walls, batteries, magazines, and manpower triggered targeted interventions (materials, munitions, specialist labor), and how lines of sight and harbor control were engineered to establish authority across nearby waters. These practices take shape amid shifting great-power geopolitics in the region: the collapse of Venetian rule and Napoleonic occupation of the Ionian Islands (from 1797), the Russian–Ottoman retake and protectorate (from 1800), and subsequent British ascendancy (from 1809/1815) reconfigured the maritime balance, which forms the core timeframe of this paper. Peloponnesian forts operated as sensors and actuators within this changing order, adjusting readiness to external shocks. The system ultimately unraveled with the Greek Revolution (from 1821) as the empire's regional position eroded.

By shifting attention from static fabric to operational material systems, the paper advances governance-by-repair as a key mechanism of Ottoman sea power politics and as a method for writing frontier architecture, it aims to show how fortified infrastructures at the water's edge made and remade sovereignty, territorial reach, and regimes of movement and expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean.

## **The littoral as a Laboratory: Making Frontiers of Risk in the coastal Bengal Delta, 1960s–1990s**

Pritam Dey

*University of California Los Angeles*

In the 1970s, the UN-FAO's Bay of Bengal Program under dictum of tropical protein extraction from the oceans of the 'Global South' and guided by 'phytoplankton density surveys' launched pilot aquaculture projects across villages in the Bengal delta, aiming to transform artisanal fishing settlements into replicable models of "coastal aquaculture development." With a humble architectural form of this transformation-biological laboratories, the aquaculture pen: an enclosure of casuarina poles and nylon mesh submerged in shallow brackish water – the experimental setup was meant to convert relational, caste-coded farmers and fishers into a common category of docile, programmable new rural subjects. My paper analyzes how these topographical technologies operated as a bureaucratic experiment, filtrating a new kind of coastal subject through a caste-neutral, apolitical vetting process. Filtration also followed infrastructural lines: farmers with land near regulated canals were inducted while those outside the network were excluded from the experimental frame. At the backdrop of this aquaculture modernization: Dutch polders, regulators, and sluice gates were engineering a rice-producing littoral frontier since the 1960s.

Analyzing FAO's experimental reports, phytoplankton surveys, and field reports from Bay of Bengal pilot sites alongside technical drawings of sluice gates and aquaculture manuals, I show how the program entangled the shelf's marine ecology with the polder's littoral ecology, creating a risky, unstable frontier. The experimental rationality released into the littoral zone persisted beyond formal projects through unauthorized modifications of the polders, and the ungovernable reorganization of land–water relations without the visible hand of scientists. Condemned in FAO reports as "sabotage acts," these practices do not register as political negotiation in the postcolonial sense nor as resistance from outside, but as I argue, is the immanent contradiction of the experiment itself and its failure to universalize its rationality in the face of the deltaic contingencies, vernacular epistemologies, and moral orders.

## **Architecture for Diplomacy: Wet Boundaries of Evros/Maritza/Meriç River**

Asya Ece Uzmay  
*Cornell University*

In 1923, the Lausanne Treaty drew the boundaries separating Greece and Turkey. After the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, the Evros/Maritza/Meriç river was divided among three nation-states: Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Countering the historical narratives that begin with a pre-existing partitioned land, this paper seeks to historicize the landscape by bridging the capitalist modernization of the Ottoman Empire with the developmentalist ethos of the twentieth century, which fundamentally shaped the water spaces in the region. While the Meriç/Evros river marked the land border between Greece and Turkey, the lowlands of the watershed were designated as a Demilitarized Zone between the two states. In the 1940s, a team of experts from both countries, including two prominent architects Constantin Doxiadis and Melih Birsal, envisioned a joint infrastructure project that would precede the river and transform the watershed into an agro-economic landscape – a project that would eventually lose steam because of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus.

Thus, this paper positions the Meriç/Evros River as both an environmental and a political frontier to explore the diplomacy of flooding. To understand the capitalist modernization in the region, it covers a long *durée* period, from 1840s to 1970s, spanning a century of environmental and architectural change. Drawing on geological maps, architectural drawings, legal texts, and journalistic articles from Greece, Turkey, and the US, as well as findings from fieldwork, this paper seeks to historicize the evolving landscape. It examines the legal and social frameworks of seasonal flooding in relation to the juridical and societal dimensions of the 'unmixing of peoples' principle, which characterized the long twentieth century.

## The Architecture of the Frontier: Earth, Empire, and the Militarization of Southern Algeria

Dana Salama

*University of Michigan Ann-Arbor*

In 1942, French-Belgian architect Michel Luyckx received a commission from The Southern Territories Department of Algeria<sup>1</sup> to construct a hospital in Adrar. When Auguste Perret commented on his protégé's building in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, he remarked; "Michel Luyckx has managed bring forth from the desert this vast building, using the resources available to him, and it is so well suited to the permanent conditions of the architecture that it seems to have always existed."<sup>2</sup> The permanence to which Perret refers is worthy of interrogation – it gestures towards oriental imaginaries of a Saharan landscape frozen in time, modern architecture's role in cementing colonialism's material effects,<sup>3</sup> and to France's practice of securing its colonial frontiers using invented tradition.

A closer reading reveals that the French military likely used earthen construction and "neo-Sundanese"<sup>4</sup> architectural styles in Algeria's southern territories to anchor Algeria into Africa, justifying the far south demarcation of the Algerian border as part of a territorial dispute between French West Africa (AOF) to the south and Algerian camel troops to the north.<sup>5</sup> Where Luyckx used sun-dried earth bricks lauded for their "permanence," local ksour are built in cycles which embrace decay. Luyckx' hospital, which featured a panoptic water tower, was part of a larger

1 Translated from "Le Direction des Territoires du Sud de l'Algérie."

2 Translated from "Michel Luyckx a su faire surgir du désert, avec les moyens de son sol, ce vaste édifice, si bien adapté aux conditions permanentes de l'architecture, qu'il semble avoir toujours existé." *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 1945 (no.3), *L'hôpital d'Adrar dans Le Hoggar*, 38.

3 In his *Contribution à une Théorie de l'Architecture* (1952, Auguste Perret describes that through the production of architecture, architects have the power to transform "transience into permanence," referring here to the permanent as enduring laws (climate, material and structural characteristics, and the significance of form), and transience as cultural or societal conditions. Following this logic, architecture has the ability to transform military objectives into "permanent" realities, and to invent man-made earth bricks as a "permanent" tradition in the Algerian Sahara.

4 The Neo-Sudanese style, as an invented tradition deployed by the French, is said to have originated when French engineers were involved in the reconstruction of the Great Mosque of Djenné (1907) under the patronage of the French state. It was subsequently exported to other French colonies, particularly across West Africa.

5 Kouzmine et. al., *Étapes de la structuration d'un désert : l'espace saharien algérien entre conceptions économiques, projets politiques et aménagement du territoire*, 666.

military complex in Adrar used to establish a military frontier. These infrastructures set the stage for the control of trade routes, resource extraction, and surveilling resistance movements in the Southern Territories. Fifteen years later, the first nuclear tests in the Algerian Sahara occurred just outside of Adrar. This proposal represents ongoing research exploring the early modern movement's entanglements with military frontiers, and the velocities with which they are established. It follows how the earth brick served as an invented tradition used to establish political frontiers during a period of geopolitical malleability; exploring dialectic and scalar relationships between building elements, political boundaries, and wartime logistics. Further, through Luyckx' personal archive, the agency and voice of local laborers, extensively recorded in his photographs, is examined.

## The Highest Frontier: Capanna Margherita and the Limits of Habitability

An Tairan  
*ETH Zurich*

Perched on Punta Gnifetti (4,559 m) of Monte Rosa and inaugurated in 1893 under the patronage of Queen Margherita, the Club Alpino Italiano (CAI)'s Capanna Margherita staged a frontier where sovereignty, science, and human endurance converged. Conceived after the CAI's 1889 call for a "solemn union between mountaineering and science," the hut's construction literally blasted a platform into the summit ridge and installed a compact complex – dormitory, kitchen, and laboratory – later expanded (1898–1902) into a two-story observatory. This paper argues that Capanna Margherita, which still remains Europe's highest building, transformed the high Alpine crest from a cartographic line into a volumetric frontier: a zone of thin air in which architecture actively reconditioned bodies, instruments, and national imaginaries.

Mosso's 1894 campaign with Alpini soldiers – staggering ascent times to test acclimatization – cast the hut as an experimental threshold where military labor, fatigue, and medical risk (including a probable case of high-altitude pulmonary edema) were measured against claims of national prestige. Material frictions – fuel that could not boil water, glassware splintered by frost, porters straining over crevasses – were not peripheral inconveniences but the very conditions that shaped what could be observed and recorded. These constraints inscribed altitude into scientific practice, forcing architecture, atmosphere, and physiology into alignment. In this sense, the frontier was not simply a site of experimentation but an unstable medium where the limits of knowledge were enacted through logistical struggle itself.

Reading Capanna Margherita as frontier architecture, the paper tracks the kinetics named by this session – expansion (engineering the summit into an observatory), expulsion (hypoxia and the bodily limits that eject the unacclimatized), and compulsion (disciplining soldiers and scientists into new regimes of altitude). The hut thus reframes the frontier as a materially enacted, unstable platform that mediates between territorial politics and the environmental limits of human life.

# Religious Enlightenment: Spirituality and Space in the Long Eighteenth Century

**Session chair:**

Demetra Vogiatzaki, gta/ETH Zurich

In recent decades, the traditional view of the Enlightenment as a period of radical secularization and material monism has been substantially revised. Scholars such as David Sorkin, Jonathan Israel, Catherine Maire, Paschalis Kitromilides, and Robert Darnton have emphasized the enduring and multifaceted role of religion and spirituality, across both institutional and popular expressions, in shaping the politics, culture, and everyday life of the long eighteenth century. Architectural histories of the period, however, have often lagged behind this historiographical turn, overlooking the importance of religion and spirituality in the formation of Enlightenment culture, limiting their scope to strictly formal analysis, or dismissing non sanctified spaces and lived experiences of sacrality as residual or anomalous within a narrative of progressive disenchantment.

This session examines the political, social, and aesthetic resonances of sacred space in the Enlightenment. From state sponsored and public programs to local, vernacular, and intimate expressions of sacrality, it asks how architecture and the built environment reflected, mediated, or resisted evolving religious identities, dogmatic debates, and communal rituals. Following the lead of scholarship such as Karsten Harries on Bavarian Rococo churches and Ünver Rüstem on Ottoman Baroque forms and their entanglement with Christian and Islamic traditions, the session integrates formal analysis with socio politically embedded approaches, foregrounding spatial practices that have often remained peripheral to dominant narratives of Enlightenment architecture.

The four papers explore this terrain through distinct but complementary lenses: confessional architecture and Catholic Enlightenment in late eighteenth cen-

ture Switzerland; rococo pilgrimage churches and Enlightenment conceptions of nature in rural Bavaria; the architectural mediation of spirituality, labor discipline, and colonial power in a Danish industrial estate; and provincial religious patronage in western Anatolia as a form of negotiated authority beyond imperial centers. Together, they advance a plural understanding of religious Enlightenment as a set of spatial practices shaped by reform, governance, and belief rather than as a single ideological project.

## Argue like it's 1599? The rebuilding of St. Galler Landkirchen and Catholic Enlightenment

Maarten Delbeke  
*gta/ETH Zurich*

Between 1759 and 1785 Iso Walser, Official of the Fürstabtei St. Gallen (Switzerland), had 40 churches and chapels on St. Gallen territory erected, restored or rebuilt. For this well-documented undertaking he relied on a team of artists and artisans, including the Vorarlberger architect Johann Ferdinand Beer, and the Moosbrugger brothers, prolific stucco workers active on both sides of the confessional divide. The works range from unique buildings such as the St. Johannes church in Bernhardzell to almost generic interventions in existing buildings. As a whole, Walser's campaign established Catholic markers in an area surrounded by protestant territories.

This paper wants to situate this campaign within the confessional and political context of late 18th-century Switzerland. More in particular, it asks how the campaign negotiated strategies rooted in Catholic Enlightenment with instruments of confessionalization forged in the Catholic reform of the 16th and 17th century. Walser's campaign involved the last large-scale import of catacomb saints before the establishment of the Helvetic Republic (1798). Many of the churches concerned still celebrated popular relics and devotional objects as important safeguards against heresy and disease. At the same time, St. Gallen was a center of the Catholic Enlightenment and, as such, involved in debates about the modernisation of education and devotional practices, as well as emerging nationhood and state-building.

Based on the numerous dedication sermons Iso Walser pronounced in new or restored sanctuaries, the paper will explore how he, and with him the Fürstabtei, walked the tightrope between tradition and modernity, between (re)confessionalisation from above and the spiritual aspirations of his flock. It will ask whether Walser understood the St. Gallen territory as a sacred landscape facing the combined onslaught of heresy and the modern state, or as the arena of a more subtle blend of forces.

## Enlightenment Ecologies in the Bavarian Rococo Church

Michael Yonan

*University of California, Davis*

This paper explores the relationship between rococo religious architecture and Enlightenment conceptions of the natural, as filtered through an important Bavarian rococo pilgrimage church, the Wieskirche. Erected by Dominikus and Johann Baptist Zimmermann between 1745 and 1754, it is (like many Bavarian churches) sited in a rural area. I shall ask how this non-urban setting animated the experience of the pilgrims who worshipped there.

Enlightenment philosophy does not correlate with a single artistic style, and rococo churches seem unaligned with the mechanistic conception of nature that dominated Enlightenment thought. Yet I would argue that rococo correlates to a different strand of Enlightenment thinking, not Rousseau or Linnaeus, but the ironic intelligence of Voltaire. Hermann Bauer proposed this in 1962, but it has largely gone unnoticed since. Rococo's complexity correlates with the ambivalent intellectual inquiry found in early Enlightenment philosophy, devoted less to confirming conceptual structures than to promoting a relatively free inquiry into nature sensually. One finds echoes of this kind of thinking in the Wieskirche's rococo design, which creates vivid and exciting ambivalences about human experience.

These possibilities are difficult to see if scholars caricature rococo as an art of extreme artifice. Artifice is important in rococo, no question, but so is nature. This paper will lean into the natural side of rococo ornament, the ways in which it engages the natural world, and in a situation like that at the Wieskirche, how those natural forms respond to and transform the experiences of the landscape surrounding it. The Wieskirche's rococo interior mediated conceptions of the natural that served the authorities who built it and also the peasant- and merchant-class pilgrims who were its primary audience. They may not have known Enlightenment philosophy, but they recognized in rococo some of the folk beliefs about nature that formed their worldview in its architecture.

## God, Guns, and Governance: Spirituality in the Schimmelmann Chapel

Natalie Patricia Körner  
*Royal Danish Academy*

Bastian Felter Vaucanson  
*University of Copenhagen*

In 1768, the influential minister, merchant and slave-owner Heinrich Schimmelmann acquired Hellebæk estate in northern Zealand, Denmark. The property included a mansion, workers' housing, workshops, a pub, a store and a Baillif's office. Its landscape featured artificial ponds and canals powering seven water mills that ran the industrial smithies. In the stifling heat of the forges, workers produced rifle barrels, branding irons, and chains, which the Schimmelmann family used on their Caribbean plantations. Hellebæk's spatial configuration displays religious dynamics, showing how "moderate enlightenment" elites (cf. Jonathan Israel) shaped and mediated spiritual life through architecture. Conforming to Robert Darnton's view of enlightenment as a negotiation rather than confrontation with religion, Heinrich balanced reform with social order and religious authority. He replaced the in-house pub in the mansion's western pavilion with a sumptuous rococo chapel, possibly designed by Philip de Lange. The chapel aimed to curb problems like 'witchcraft', drinking and illicit sexual behaviour among workers on Sundays, while projecting the family's power and enforcing social control.

When Heinrich died in 1782, his son, Ernst, took over. An idealist and arts patron who corresponded with Schiller on aesthetic education and spiritual emancipation, Ernst combined spirituality with reasoned governance. However, his family's religious practices shunned the common space of the chapel. Instead, he and his wife, Charlotte, hosted literary salons in the privacy of their mansion, where they explored class-based intimate expressions of sacrality aligned with romantic ideals and pietist sensibility (cf. C. Maire).

This paper explores how North-European enlightenment elites controlled and mediated religious public life through architecture. The chapel embodied the intersection of spirituality, labour, and power, reflecting colonial exploitation. We examine it as a space where private belief and public coercion interfered to shape a socially ordered site of production.

## **Piety, Prestige, and Provincial Authority: Âyân Religious Architecture in Western Anatolia, c. 1700–1850**

Ahmet Erdem Tozoglu  
*Istanbul Technical University*

Scholarship has shown how Ottoman âyân (provincial notables) rose as military-fiscal brokers in the peripheries as central authority waned from the late seventeenth century. What remains underexplored is the spatial staging of their piety and power since the eighteenth century: how charitable endowments materialized authority, cultivated publics, and negotiated legitimacy between province and centre. This paper offers a comparative study of two Western Anatolian religious complexes – the Cihanoglu complex in Aydın and the Karaosmanoglu complex in Zeytinliova (near Manisa) – to theorize âyân patronage as a form of religious urbanism.

### **Research questions:**

How should we conceptualize non-imperial displays of religiosity and charity – beyond sultanic/state patronage – in eighteenth-century Anatolian towns?

What do decorative programs and epigraphic agendas (stucco, painted marbling, tiles, carved marble, inscriptions) signal about piety, rank, and political aspiration in âyân mosques and ancillary buildings?

Can we speak of a “provincial Ottoman Baroque,” legible in post-classical orders and ornamental languages adapted to local workshops?

Who were the intermediaries and carriers – artisans, suppliers, officials – through whom forms, techniques, and devotions circulated between Istanbul and the wider Aegean–Mediterranean for local interpretation of Baroque?

The study triangulates waqf deeds (vakfiyes), imperial and provincial correspondence, travelogues/guidebooks, archival photographs and cadastral/insurance maps, and on-site architectural survey (plan/section, material analysis), supported by GIS analysis that maps patronage sites, material supply chains, and workshop links.

Building on capital-centred debates, the paper tests Ottoman Baroque beyond Istanbul, tracing Mediterranean trade and craft circuits (Izmir suppliers, ceramic repertoires, itinerant stuccoists/stonecutters) as vectors of form, technique, and devotion. Rather than a derivative “decline style,” these ensembles emerge as vernacular religious Enlightenment – a negotiated idiom of spirituality, display, and governance crafted by provincial elites in dialogue with imperial models and Mediterranean interlocutors.

# Excavating the Landfill: Towards an Environmental History of Architecture's Waste

## Session chairs:

Kim Förster, University of Manchester

Adam Przywara, University of Basel

The Warsaw Uprising Mound, the Trümmerberge across Germany, Liverpool's Crosby Beach, and Leslie Spit in Lake Ontario near Toronto are paradigmatic examples of twentieth-century landfills of construction and demolition waste. Emerging from urban warfare and architectural obsolescence (Abramson, 2016), these landforms constitute a unique architectural record structured by cycles of development and destruction. Nonetheless, despite increasing scholarly interest in extraction, production, and demolition, landfills remain an underrepresented – if not repressed – subject in architectural and urban history. Rooted in disciplinary calls to critically examine architecture's waste (Cairns and Jacobs, 2014), this panel positions the landfill as a crucial site of inquiry for historians of the built environment in the Anthropocene.

Over the past decade, historians and theorists have analysed the centrality of wasteland to the development of modern concepts of property and productivity (Di Palma, 2014), examined abandoned spaces produced by twentieth-century capitalist and socialist industrialisation (Hauser, 2001), and explored the entanglement of wasting and production in the built environment (Labban, 2019). Although the issue of architecture's waste – and of landfilling in particular – is addressed by the Basel Convention (1989) and the EU Landfill Directive (1999), a comprehensive history beyond the official chronologies remains to be written, aside from a few notable exceptions (Cerba and Hutton, 2021). Moving beyond these regulatory timelines and the imaginaries of control and containment they legitimise, this panel foregrounds the material and environmental realities of construction and demolition waste (CDW) and the landscapes it produces.

Recognising ongoing challenges – including the sheer volume of CDW, which accounts for nearly 40 per cent of all solid waste globally, and its toxicity, involving substances such as asbestos, PCBs, and radioactivity – the panel engages with more complex and globally situated architectural histories of landfills. Drawing on the concept of “reciprocal landscapes” (Hutton, 2018), it examines the historical role of the architectural profession in classifying, depositing, and reclaiming waste; identifies strategies of urbanization, landfill development, and property formation; traces material flows linking construction sites and disposal areas; analyses the complicity of the building materials industry in perpetuating waste and pollution; and explores the situated politics and economies of contamination and land use.

Abramson, Daniel M. *Obsolescence: An Architectural History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Cairns, Stephen, and Jane M. Jacobs. *Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014.

Cerba, Alison, and Jane Hutton. “Demolishing the City, Constructing the Shoreline.” In *History of Construction Cultures, Volume 1*, edited by João Mascarenhas-Mateus and Ana Paula Pires, 350–358. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2021.

Di Palma, Vittoria. *Wasteland: A History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Foster, Heidi, and Jennifer Schopf. “Urban Ecological Evolution through Mineral Migration: Extracting, Recomposing, Demolishing and Recolonizing Toronto’s Landscape.” *Landscape* 5 (2017): 47–64.

Hauser, Susanne. *Metamorphosen des Abfalls: Konzepte für alte Industrieareale*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2001.

Hutton, Jane. *Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements*. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Labban, Mazen. “Rhythms of Wasting / Unbuilding the Built Environment.” *New Geographies* 10 (2019): 33–41.

## **Making Ground: Waste and the Materiality of Urban Expansion in Interwar Helsinki**

Ella Müller

*Department of History,  
European University Institute*

The interwar period was a time of rapid transformation and expansion in Helsinki, the capital city of newly independent Finland. Located on a peninsula, authorities had facilitated urban development since the nineteenth century by adding buildable land through the drying of inland water areas and extending shorelines. This practice of creating more land has continued to this day: historical maps reveal that, over the past two hundred years, the land area within the nineteenth-century borders has increased by approximately 30% through land reclamation.

This paper examines the relationship between land reclamation and construction and demolition waste, used for land building in the 1920s and 1930s. The paper focuses on the history of a single site, which city officials allocated as a landfill for waste streams from Helsinki's construction sites around 1930. Today, it lies beneath a sports park in Jätkäsaari, a former harbour district that has been transformed into a residential neighbourhood over the past few decades. Analyses conducted for the area development project reveal that, almost a century after the landfill was closed, unstable ground and toxicity from heavy metals and hydrocarbons make the site unfit for residential construction.

Combining archival documents with reports of soil investigations conducted on the landfill site, I will trace the history of the Jätkäsaari landfill and use it to reflect on the system of CDW production and management as well as strategies of urban development and expansion in the interwar period. Histories of municipal waste have highlighted the role of collective waste management in enabling a system of production based on a constant disposal of old things. This paper proposes that urban renewal and land reclamation through landfilling can be viewed as different aspects of the same expansive politics of urban development.

## **Bricks and Waste Clay Pits in the Rupel Region as Reciprocal Landfills of Belgium's Regime of Cheap Urbanisation**

Tom Broes

*Ghent University / Vrije Universiteit Brussel /  
Université Libre de Bruxelles*

This paper examines the Rupel region in Belgium as a paradigmatic case of how post-war urbanisation in Europe generated vast landscapes of waste, revealing the entanglement between architecture, extraction, and disposal. Once among the largest brick-producing centres in the world, the Rupel region supplied up to 40 per cent of Belgian bricks during the 1960s. Intensive clay extraction transformed the area into a cratered moonscape of abandoned pits, which, from the early 1970s onwards, became systematically repurposed as landfills for asbestos, fly ash, household waste, and gypsum imported from across Flanders, the Netherlands, and Germany. In this way, the depleted industrial landscape was rebranded as the “dumping ground of urbanisation,” literally absorbing the externalities of the building boom it had once fuelled.

Drawing on archival research in the collection of the Rupel Region Environmental Action Group (ALR; one of Flanders' earliest grassroots environmental movements), policy documents, site investigations, and oral histories, the study reconstructs the socio-ecological transformation of the region between the 1950s and 1980s. It highlights how a logic of “cheap urbanisation” – driven by low-cost housing policies, and the abrupt production switch to inexpensive engineering bricks at state-capped prices – facilitated both the rise and collapse of the brick industry, and, subsequently, the commodification of waste disposal as a new economic model. The struggle of local residents and activists, exemplified by the “Waste route” (1981), made visible what policy and industry sought to bury: toxic legacies embedded in the very ground of urban development.

By situating the Rupel region within the environmental history of architecture's waste, this paper argues that the region's clay pits function as material archives of urbanisation's hidden costs. They expose how landscapes of production were transformed into landscapes of disposal, and how their apparent “re-naturalisation” continues to conceal hazardous substances, posing unresolved questions about heritage, ecology, and justice.

## **The Hidden Landfills of Architectural Whiteness: Titanium Dioxide Production and Accumulated Injustice in Kerala, India**

Kshitija Mruthyunjaya  
*University of Manchester*

This paper examines landfill in Kerala, India, created by titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) production, the white pigment dominating modern architecture since the early 20th century for its unmatched opacity and brightness. It creates the bright white finishes synonymous with modern architecture's emphasis on purity and cleanliness, while providing any colored paint with covering power to hide underlying surfaces. Over half (52%) of global production serves paints and coatings, with plastics as the second-largest application, providing opacity to PVC pipes, furniture, and other objects that would otherwise remain translucent. TiO<sub>2</sub> is also known for its self-cleaning, air-purifying, antibacterial properties.

While first mass-produced in Norway in the early 20th century, TiO<sub>2</sub> production arrived in India with Kerala becoming the primary site because its coastal black sands contain ilmenite, the raw material required to process it into white pigment. India's first facility opened in Trivandrum in 1952. Three decades later, Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited (KMML) was commissioned as the country's first integrated factory in 1984 in Chavara district in Kollam located an hour from Trivandrum. KMML has since created dual landfills – one that buries, one that is buried: initial step of mining ilmenite from beach sand has buried entire villages like Ponmana under dumps of mine tailing displacing over 1,000 families, while manufacturing byproduct toxic iron oxide sludge has been buried in concrete containment ponds since its inception – accumulation now exceeding 300,000 metric tonnes infiltrating surrounding communities, harming health and environment.

This paper asks two connected questions through the lens of these landfills. First, what production and consumption patterns led to the demand of TiO<sub>2</sub> which in turn created these landfills? Second, how do these landfills remain invisible? To address these questions in depth the paper draws on state archives, legal proceedings, advertisements, newspaper articles, and visual testimonies to trace and investigate how overlapping trajectories – colonial sand mining practices since the 1920s, Nehru's modernization programs including architectural developments like state housing schemes, and postcolonial marketing campaigns – converged

to influence production and consumption cycles that not only generated landfills but also maintain them. The paper historicizes  $\text{TiO}_2$  landfills not as material waste but as accumulated injustice – sedimented layers recording phases of India's architectural modernization that celebrated the architectural whiteness that depends structurally on buried villages and toxic waste remaining hidden from view.

## Reading the Landfill from the Stockpile: The NYC Clean Soil Bank

Amelyn Ng

*GSAPP, Columbia University*

The NYC Clean Soil Bank (CSB) occupies a peculiar space in contemporary land-filling and waste management practices in New York City. Housed within the Office of Environmental Remediation rather than the Department of Sanitation, the small-scale municipal soil exchange is a point of friction in an otherwise “smooth” waste management system that otherwise trucks demolition-site soil out of state. While the dirt is free, the CSB only accepts clean soil from deeper excavations. While the first few feet of New York City’s urban fill is notably contaminated, its deeper sedimentary layers are often tested to be pollution-free and nutrient-rich glacial till, deposited by the retreating Wisconsin glacier some 15,000 years ago.

Operating as a soil stockpile rather than a recycling facility, a close reading of the CSB raises questions about the narrow categorisation of construction and demolition (C&D) debris today, and opens up a broader history of U.S. soil classification and the shifting value of earthly matter over the last century. It prompts a reckoning of the value placed on urban soil: what and for whom it is considered useful, productive, or convenient, and when it is rendered disposable, leftover, or inconvenient. By reading the CSB as an addressable geological archive – literally, an address-book of piles – I propose landfilling as a media practice that can be read not only from its terminal site, but also from the intermediary fluxes, transfers, and transformations in the urban stockpile. Stockpile activities also offer glimpses into techniques of the quarry and the mine, underscoring how industrial logistics designed for extracting the earth persist even when that industry is no longer present. I use first-hand encounters with the Clean Soil Bank’s Forbell Street Stockpile, historic maps and archival material, and the material archive of the Soil Room at the Urban Soils Institute to advance this work.

**Saturday**  
**June 20**

# Stilled Lives: Living Materials and their Architectural Afterlives in Premodern Buildings

## Session chairs:

Costanza Beltrami, Stockholm University

Saida Bondini, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

‘Although plants have no sense of touch, they nevertheless suffer when they are cut [...] for their roots function as a mouth, to receive food; and the bark as skin; and the wood as flesh; and the knots or branches as arms with their nerves and veins’ writes Vincenzo Scamozzi discussing the use of wood as a building material in his *The Idea of Universal Architecture* (Venice, 1615). Scamozzi’s reflection about natural suffering surrendering to human necessity embodies a collision of ecological consciousness and anthropocentric values that also animates modern debates around natural and cultural heritage.

In addition to wood, coral, palms, reeds, bark, and turf (as in Scandinavian ‘sod roofs’) have long been used in architecture for their strength, flexibility, and insulating properties. In pre-modern epistemologies, even stone was seen as ‘alive’ and endowed with human qualities (Scamozzi’s *pietra viva*). Central to pre-modern building practices, yet side-lined in stories of architecture, living building materials offer a new angle to rethink the discipline from the perspective of the more-than-human, the cyclical, and the living.

Ecocritical and post-anthropocentric studies have challenged the long-established dualism between nature and culture. Proposing new ways of understanding such relations, from “vibrant matter” (Bennet 2010) to “naturalism” and “animism” (Descola 2005), such research urges a reconsideration of the historical entanglements between human and nonhuman dimensions. This panel engages with these debates by foregrounding the architectural traces of such interconnection: where life becomes form, and ecosystems are refigured as structures. Building as a form

of human manipulation participated in a process of material as well as conceptual conversion: it turned animate, ecologically embedded life-forms into static, structural components of human spaces. Architectural structures thus emerge as hybrid entities, natureculture bodies that resonate with memories of the former lives of their natural materials. The papers in this panel explore these and related questions across geographic areas during the premodern period (from antiquity to ca. 1750), investigating architectural “afterlife” of living materials, with particular attention to how such transformations were understood, represented, or ritualized in historical contexts.

## **From Pietre Spugne to Calcareous Tufa: A Geoarchitectural Investigation Into the Materiality of Florentine Grottoes**

Galaad Van Daele  
*ETH Zurich*

This paper investigates the calcareous rocks used in Cinquecento Florentine grottoes commissioned by the Dukes of Tuscany, traditionally referred to as *pietre spugne*, and known for their contorted forms and alveolar textures. A materiality whose animated quality was already recognized in the 16th century, in relation with scientific theories and literary traditions describing a vital subsurface.

These early modern views on animated rocks have already been extensively covered by the scholarship dedicated to those architectures, and the paper proposes to expand the historiography of these rocks and this idea of material life through a transdisciplinary investigation drawing from the contemporary earth sciences; the environmental humanities; as well as from first hand field observations made in the mountainous surroundings of Florence. It discusses the geological mechanisms at play in the formation of these rocks, which geologists refer to as 'calcareous tufa,' thus allowing to account for their value as paleoclimatic and environmental archives, but also for their emergence out of a sedimentary synergies between organic life and mineral fluxes, with connections to geological cycles going back tens of millions of years. In turn, the paper connects these rocks to recent theoretical debates coming from the environmental humanities, and especially the idea of 'geologic life,' a notion helping to acknowledge the irreducible presence of geological substances and histories within architectural objects.

From *pietre spugne* to calcareous tufa, and from the life of rocks to the geologic life of buildings, the paper thus offers a reflection on the multifaceted vitality of calcareous rocks and on the anchoring of architecture in an active geosphere.

## Pregnant Trees and Nursing Mothers: The Ontologies of Timber From Antiquity to the Renaissance

Berrin Terim

*Clemson University*

“Timber should be felled between early Autumn... For in Spring all trees become pregnant... render them empty and swollen, and so they are weak... This is also the case with women who have conceived. Their bodies are not considered perfectly healthy until the child is born... After the birth of the child, the body will take it in by lapping up its juices, and thus becomes compact and returns to the natural strength which it had before.”

Vitruvius, Book II – iv, *De Architectura*

Vitruvius' seasonal prescription – timber must not be cut when “pregnant” – anchors a bio-material ethics that Renaissance authors transmit in their material chapters (Alberti, Serlio, Scamozzi), largely without repeating the pregnancy metaphor. Yet Renaissance images of Vitruvius' origin of architecture (II.i) reintroduce reproductive life at the scene of building: in editions by Cesariano, Caporali, Rivius/Machaeropaeus, and Teutsch, men raise timber frames while women, having recently given birth, nurse infants by the hearth or inside completed shelters. While texts stabilize wood through rules of felling and seasoning, prints gender the new social order and visually “timber” the myth of origins.

Studied against Filarete's origin-of-architecture imagery – the earliest illustrated architectural treatise (1466), which pointedly represents timber as living, freshly felled material – the Renaissance prints come into sharper relief. Filarete theorizes buildings as living men that fall ill and require doctors, and he deploys pregnancy as an analogy for the architect's generative role. Considered alongside procurement clauses (seasonal felling, seasoning periods, inspections), the treatises and images together disclose a shared ontology in which materials and buildings are born, nourished, decay, and are cured, and in which the passage from ecological actor to architectural object is conceptually framed and ritually managed. The coupling of “pregnant” trees and nursing mothers thus renders vitality both the precondition and the problem that building must govern.

## **From Living Bamboo to Living Structures: Material Vitality across Assembly and Use in Premodern Bamboo Houses**

Jiayue Hao (speaker)

Hiroyuki Shinohara (co-author)

*School of Architecture, the Chinese University  
of Hong Kong*

The *bamboo house* is the traditional dwelling of the Dai ethnic group in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, China, named for its construction entirely from bamboo. It has a history of over 1,400 years and remained in widespread use until the midtwentieth century. This study focuses on its premodern origins. Not only is bamboo acknowledged as living matter before harvest, but its subsequent transformation during assembly of bamboo houses also represents material vitality, as the frame structure emerges from the interaction between bamboo's agency and human construction. During dwelling use, structural components were endowed with symbolic meanings corresponding to the community's cosmology and religious beliefs (Gao 2003), which in turn shaped the allocation of residential spaces. Consequently, bamboo continued to be regarded as living matter coexisting with the dwellers after transforming to components. This research examines how living bamboo was transformed into dwellings in which its vitality endured in assembly and use.

Previous research typically interprets bamboo houses as human intentionality to climate (Yang and Zhu 2009), or as architectural expressions reflecting local culture and social structures (Lu and Yang 2003). However, bamboo's vitality as an active participant in construction remains largely uninvestigated. This study addresses this gap by applying Bennett's theory of vibrant matter, arguing that seemingly inanimate materials have inherent vitality and possess agency (Bennett 2010; Khan 2012), to examine how bamboo's vitality and agency manifested during assembly and use. This study aims to offer a non-anthropocentric narrative that emphasizes the vitality of building materials as they persist in their afterlives within human spaces.

Research questions are: (1) How do bamboo's vitality and agency guide the formation of the frame structure of the bamboo house in assembly? (2) How did the structural components of bamboo houses continue to be regarded as living during

the dwelling use? (3) How did bamboo houses express Dai ethnic identity through the material vitality of bamboo? Since premodern bamboo houses are no longer directly observable due to modern material innovations, methodologically, this study combines archival research with oral history. Archival sources reconstruct assembly processes, plan layouts, structural components' symbolic meaning, while interviews with elder craftsmen who built bamboo houses in the twentieth century complement these records by demonstrating construction know-how and frame building logic traceable to premodern traditions. This study contributes to debates on the afterlives of living materials by showing, through the case of bamboo houses, how once-living building materials continue to endure as animate presences within human space.

## **“All the Island is a City, and All the City an Island”: Suakin’s Coral Architecture Under Ottoman Rule**

Alican Taylan  
*Cornell University*

Suakin, an entirely coral-built port-city on the Red Sea, developed architecturally under Ottoman rule in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Turkish houses and mosques used rough-cut blocks of coral taken from the seabed or gathered along the shore. Because coral is porous and brittle, builders encased exterior walls in plaster and combined coral with timber. Wooden members were keyed through walls and arches to add tensile capacity and accommodate settlement, improving performance under heat, salt, and humidity.

Projecting wooden *roshans* regulated light, air, and privacy, and mitigated heat retention in coral masonry, producing a material and spatial system calibrated to the climate. This hybrid—coral skeletons stabilized by plaster and stitched with wood—treated once-living matter as an architectural body that required ongoing care. At the urban scale, coral remained paramount to the city’s development: the reef formations around the island created a sheltered anchorage and helped attract long-distance trade; early Portuguese accounts described Suakin as a prosperous port akin to Lisbon.

Ottoman architecture in Suakin was simultaneously imperial and local. It was designed as the empire’s regional port while its forms and techniques were directly informed by the properties and limits of the reef ecology that framed the harbor.

In the nineteenth century, however, these relations shifted. No longer under Ottoman rule, Egyptian-period building practices favored squared coral bricks, left exposed, reducing the integration of keyed timber, preferring imported architectural elements, resulting in weaker, faster-decaying walls. At the same time, the coral-lined entrance channel that had protected the harbor limited access for deeper-draft steamships that became the norm in long-distance seafaring.

Drawing on archives from the Greenlaw collection at SARS, this paper documents Suakin’s premodern architectural practices. It recontextualizes the city’s architecture within the environmental, imperial, and material history of the Red Sea in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

# Learning from Collaboration – On the Many People who Worked Together to Create the Welfare States' Building Boom

## Session chairs:

Henriette Steiner, University of Copenhagen  
Maximilian Sternberg, University of Cambridge

In the emerging European welfare states of the post-World War 2 period, the building boom from roughly 1945 to 1975 was characterized by great technological, architectural, urban and social innovations which went hand-in-hand with industrialization of architectural construction. While the latter has often been subject to criticism, several researchers have pointed out that the architecture of the period was also characterized by an exceptional type of holistic thinking whereby architects, landscape architects and planners worked closely together across professional divides and joined forces with engineers, politicians, builders, artists, social workers, teachers, doctors, residents and many others to create a new built environment that would befit the period's emerging welfare states.<sup>1</sup> This particularly concerns large-scale public architecture projects such as public housing, museums, hospitals and schools – Aarhus University being a seminal example from Denmark. Moreover, this happened at a time when the educational landscape was changing, and new social groups were entering educational programmes and thus also entering professional practice in the design fields.

The contributions of practitioners across architecture, landscape architecture and planning have traditionally been investigated in separate streams of historical research. But how did people from these professions work together in the building boom period of the mid-20th century? What characterized their invisible collaborations across differences of profession, class, gender, generation and geography? In which ways was their work interlaced with that of people from other disciplines or societal sectors when it came to the value-driven transformative ethos that characterized much of welfare state architecture, landscape architecture and plan-

ning? What, then, did it take to make a collaboration successful, and when and where did barriers and conflicts emerge? And what value did these collaborative constellations hold for architecture in a period where the built environment was changing rapidly? These are the questions that will be broached by the contributors to this session, thereby challenging architectural historians to shed light on the invisible collaborations that have shaped the built environment of the mid-20th century's European welfare states. Methodologically, moreover, the session will ask what strategies can be developed in the face of the dearth of archival material that researchers often face when looking for documentation of collaborations across professional boundaries and diverse social groups.

We welcome papers from different national contexts that bring to light case studies of collaborative efforts in particular on public commissions of European welfare states in the mid-20th century, covering different paradigms of post-war Western European welfare states,<sup>2</sup> as well as looking for case studies from other national contexts and covering different typologies of publicly commissioned projects such as public housing, museums, hospitals and schools.

The session will provide invaluable knowledge about how the cities and landscapes of this period – a period which has left the greatest imprint in physical terms on the current built environment of Europe – came to be. In doing so, it will create a more accurate basis for today's many tasks regarding the repurposing or transformation of the built fabric from the mid-20th century building boom period, highlighting the relevance of architecture history for spatial practitioners today.

- 1 See e.g. Woudstra, J., "Danish Landscape Design in the Modern Era (1920-1970)", in: *Garden History* 2, 1995, pp. 222-241 and Bendsen, J.R., Riesto, S. and Steiner, H., "Collaboration – A Story About how Architecture Comes Into Being", chapter 5 of *Untold Stories*. Copenhagen: Strandberg Publishing 2023, pp. 248–95. Whilst the architectural and urban histories of the post-war welfare states have formed a burgeoning field in recent years, key publications include Worpole, K., *Here Comes the Sun. Architecture and Public Space in Twentieth-Century European Culture*, London: Reaction Books, 2000; Wagenaar, C. ed., *Happy: Cities and Public Happiness in Post-war Europe*. Rotterdam: NAIPress, 2004; Avermaete, T., van Heuvel, D., eds., "The European Welfare State Project: Ideals, Politics, Cities and Buildings". Special Issue of the *Footprint Journal*, 9, Autumn 2011; Swenarton, M., Avermaete, T., van den Heuvel, D. eds., *Architecture and the Welfare State*. New York: Routledge 2015. Lotz, K., Simpson, D., Raahauge, K. M., Vindum, K., Jensen, M. J., & Bendsen, J. R., eds. *Forming Welfare*. Copenhagen: The Danish Architectural Press, 2027.
- 2 See Esping-Andersen, G. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

## **Building Municipal Welfare: Politically Motivated Collaborations for Rozzano's Educational Infrastructure (c.1950–1970)**

Elettra Carnelli

*ZHAW - ETH Zurich*

This paper investigates the collective efforts that shaped the educational infrastructure of Rozzano, a red-led municipality in the Milanese hinterland, between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, focusing on political commitment and ideology as key drivers of sustained, interdisciplinary collaborations in the implementation of welfare services at the municipal scale. During this period, communist politicians, administrators, militants, and local stakeholders aligned with the Italian Communist Party's (PCI) programmatic goal of establishing a progressive alternative to the centrist national government's laissez-faire policies. This included expanding welfare locally, particularly in educational and recreational infrastructure, combining municipal socialism and bottom-up implementation. In Rozzano, this translated into coordinated efforts among PCI's cadres, municipal administrators, leftist architects and planners, and local actors – including educators, social workers, and residents – to establish the municipality's public educational facilities. The paper reconstructs these collaborations, particularly around kindergarten and school projects, as expressions of a politically motivated and value-driven ethos that actively challenged the centrist-liberal welfare model pursued nationally. It highlights the municipal context as a crucial yet often overlooked site of interdisciplinary cooperation, where shared political commitment fostered trust-based relationships across professions, classes, generations, and genders, while also addressing tensions between political goals, professional priorities, and local interests. Rozzano's case is particularly relevant for understanding how the enduring consensus toward the PCI enabled embedded networks of collective practice and effective spatial transformation. Methodologically, the paper responds to the challenge of retracing invisible collaborations by drawing on Rozzano's municipal archives and interviews with former administrators, local stakeholders, and practitioners. This approach uncovers the social, professional, and political constellations involved in planning and building Rozzano's educational welfare infrastructure. In this way, the paper illustrates how politically motivated collaborations shaped the built environment of the mid-20th-century Italian welfare state through a locally specific and grounded case rooted in grassroots political agency and municipal autonomy.

## **Collaborations on the building site: Landscapers and the negotiation of professional identities, power and class in 1960s Denmark**

Svava Riesto  
*University of Copenhagen*

The many new housing areas, public institutions and infrastructural complexes that were built in mid-20th century Denmark have often been described as 'holistic ensembles' that resulted from a culture of interdisciplinary collaborations (Treib 1994; Woudstra 1995). Yet, historical accounts of modern built environments traditionally focus on singular architects leaving much yet to be discovered about how different professionals collaborated to create such built environments. This presentation will explore what stories can be told when starting from the craftspeople who are often nameless or left to the margins in archives and history books, but who were nevertheless key contributors to building in the postwar welfare state. I focus on the role of landscapers in the complex collaborations that enabled the construction of the megastructure Farum Midtpunkt – a social housing estate near Copenhagen, from 1972-1976. Using oral history interviews, archival documents, and textbooks in horticultural education, I ask how landscapers organised and understood their work and how they collaborated with each other and with people from other professions in this large construction project. What frictions surfaced and how were the roles, identities and practices of landscapers negotiated in these collaborations? The paper will be structured around three objects used by landscapers on the building site – a pair of shoes, a tool and a construction machine – to tell a larger story of changing professional identities, power and class in the socio-material collaborations that shaped the built environments of modern Denmark.

## Decolonizing Collaboration

Łukasz Stanek

*University of Michigan*

In the wake of World War II, British architectural and planning culture was widely mobilized across the Empire, as colonial governments were increasingly assuming responsibility for providing educational and health infrastructure and housing for broad population groups. Alongside architectural technologies, typologies, and financing schemes integral to Britain's emerging welfare state, modes of collaborative practice – notably interdisciplinary collaboration – were also introduced. This paper examines the impact of these mobilities on the reorganization of architectural labor in the Gold Coast colony and, since 1957, in independent Ghana. It explores how older forms of coordination – linking programming, design, financing, procurement, and construction between colonial governments and the Public Works Departments (PWD) – were modified, adapted, and reconfigured in response to the political and social conditions of administrative decolonization and independence. Drawing on public and private archives in Ghana and Britain, particularly procurement and tender documents, the paper investigates the regulation and organization of labor within the PWD and its successor institutions, such as the Ghana National Construction Corporation. In so doing, it addresses two themes. First, it considers how policies of Africanization (aimed at replacing European with African cadres) led African decision-makers to critically revise modes of work and collaboration inherited from the colonial period as well as those proposed by foreign advisors from Britain and socialist Eastern Europe. Second, it examines how collaborative practices were rethought in light of the formidable challenges of delivering welfare programs during the Nkrumah period and their subsequent revisions under later regimes. While interdisciplinary collaboration conveyed the welfare state's ethos of providing a holistic living environment, this paper argues that by the 1970s such modes of work prompted a younger generation of Ghanaian professionals to question the capacity of the postcolonial state to deliver on its promise of welfare provision.

## Organizing Collaboration: The Open Schools

Meike Schalk

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology*

The decades after the Second World War saw both a building boom and an expansion of the system of education on an unprecedented scale. The baby boom of the 1960s required a fast production of new educational buildings. At the same time, rapid technological and social changes called for both, innovative pedagogies and the adaptation of planning systems and architectural design for a future society. To manage change, the school building was often seen as an instrument for integrating urban design necessities with new forms of organization, planning, and labour. The “revolution in the classroom”, which had already happened in the US in the middle of the 1960s with new instruments, i.e., language laboratories, school TV, as well as team-teaching practices had a strong impact on the imagination and the development of the open school building typology in Europe. “School planning had gone from environments with traditional teaching material, to mechanic and electrified ones, to emerging all-encompassing milieus that used cybernetic machines to integrate fully adaptable teaching activities with school organization, and administrative and planning tasks” (Juckel, 1967). The realization of the school projects needed municipalities, architects, and experts to collaborate in organizations. The Danish FYEN-Plan and CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme) cooperations in the UK are examples. Facing larger building projects, architects and engineers united in consortia, also conducting research and developing industrial construction systems, to offer clients complete services. For portraying the collaborations that shaped the school buildings paradigm shift of the 1960s and 1970s, the paper will discuss the SAMSKAP – collaboration between municipalities, architects and educators in Malmö, to build schools and standardize building elements (1969). The SAMSKAP – process was implemented on several levels in parallel where educators collaborated with architects who collaborated with technical consultants, all under the leadership of members of the local school authorities. The school buildings were not only produced in collaboration with diverse actors, many of whom would become the users of the building, they were also meant to form a larger infrastructure connecting civic spaces and activities across the city.

## **DIY Modernity: Bottom-up Collaboration in the Soviet Mass Housing Program**

Ekaterina Mizrokhi

*Newnham College - University of Cambridge*

This paper examines the social history of the khrushchevka, the first iteration of the Soviet Union's industrialised housing drive, to highlight forms of collaboration that have remained largely underexplored. Rather than professional or state-led endeavours, I examine the bottom-up refashioning of homes undertaken by residents as they moved into these new environments in the early 1960s. Through bricolage, adaptation, and improvisation, households reworked standardised apartments using inherited skill sets and gleaning salvaged materials, forging a sense of home amidst the dizzying transformations of post-war Soviet modernity. Conventional understandings of the Soviet mass housing programme have emphasised its supposed prescriptive uniformity and rigidity. By turning to oral histories of spatial adaptation with long-standing khrushchevka residents in Moscow's Northern Izmailovo district, I outline the DIY personalisations that quickly proliferated upon initial settlement. By interrogating how these overlooked collaborations – between residents, materials, and more-than-human forces – effectively de-standardising supposedly standardised space, this paper challenges the widespread assumption that Soviet mass housing was monolithic in either form or content. The paper concludes by reflecting on the significance of this DIY 'built heritage' today. At a moment when khrushchevki face widespread demolition under claims of structural weakness and inflexibility, acknowledging their history of adaptation and plasticity points to their continued capacity for repair, reuse, and reinvention – an urgent lesson amid the overlapping pressures of housing precarity and climate crisis.

# Transimperial Contact Zones and Collision Space in Southeast Asia

## Session chairs:

Robin Hartanto Honggare, National University of Singapore

Amy Y.T. Chang, Harvard University

Recent works by Amanda Achmadi, Paul Walker, and Prita Meier have brought attention to the connected architectural histories of empires, while Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Ines G. Županov, and Sidh Losa Mendiratta have opened up new directions in thinking about persistence, assimilation, competition, and contact between new colonial entrants to the Indian Ocean and pre-existing powers in highly desired trade zones. Yet much remains to be explored regarding how architecture shaped or became implicated in transimperial interactions, a topic for which Southeast Asia is a particularly productive space of examination.

During the heyday of colonialism, many imperial powers, including the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, US, and Japanese empires, mobilized their military and economic arms to claim and exploit different parts of Southeast Asia. They did not operate in isolation. Empires communicated, collaborated, and collided with each other as well as with local rulers, their transimperial contacts shaping the lives of millions of people.

State officers negotiated imperial boundaries across both land and water and fought over overlapping territorial claims, conceiving agreements, such as the Spanish-Portuguese Treaty of Saragossa in 1529 and the Anglo-Dutch Treaties of 1870–1871, that influenced the demarcation of borders. Yet those lines were not rigid walls: corporate and financial transactions involved traders and companies across colonial territories, resulting in the construction of ports, offices, markets, and other intersecting economic, administrative, and intangible spaces that produced encounters among people from different countries and empires. The development of the shipping and aviation industries in the early twentieth century intensified the flows of people and goods in the region. This simultaneously encour-

aged colonial tourism, humanitarian work, missionizing activities, and scientific networks. All of these involved laymen and professionals from neighboring empires working for multi-national collaborations in corporate, governmental, educational, or scientific enterprises, creating ideological, technological, and epistemological exchanges and networks.

However, transimperial interactions were not always cooperative. Power takeovers, such as the British invasion of Java in 1811, the US acquisition of the Philippines in 1898, or the Japanese occupation of British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies between 1942 and 1945, produced military zones and carceral spaces, including internment camps and prisons, as well as creating parallel spaces of exile and displacement, and networks of resistance or rivalry that extended beyond claimed spaces. While the indentured labor system, which powered economic developments across colonies, hinged on transitory sites that interpenetrated and stitched together discontinuous territories, such as labor recruitment offices in China, the Straits Settlements, and Java, and migration and quarantine stations at work destinations, which often involved carceral logics and exploitative operations of restriction and surveillance.

These examples bring us to the challenge of conceptualizing architecture that exceeds empire. This session calls for papers that discuss transimperial contact spaces and collision zones in Southeast Asia from the 16th to the 20th centuries. We invite works that investigate social, political, financial, cultural, technological, material, and other aspects of transimperial contact and collision, foregrounding buildings and environments that facilitated exchange, encounter, and collaboration; or which constituted sites of overlapping jurisdictional and territorial claims. We seek to foster a conversation on approaches, theories, issues, and case studies that bring new perspectives to our understanding of colonial architecture, especially as it concerns transimperial interactions.

## **Dutch Batavia's Chinese Hospital: A Diasporic Locus and the Colonial Imaginary**

Sim Hinman Wan  
*Texas Tech University*

In 1619, the Dutch East India Company founded the port of Batavia on Java to gain control of the Maluku Islands' profitable nutmeg and clove. This was a colonial enclave that excluded the native Javanese. Among the foreigners supportive of the walled settlement's economic growth, the Dutch authority particularly welcomed merchants and labourers from southern China. Johan Nieuhof, an officer of the Company who travelled to Batavia in the mid-seventeenth century, wrote about a 'Chinese Hospital' (Chinees Ziekenhuis) as one of the impressive colonial sites for sheltering impoverished seniors and orphans. Modern historians from the Netherlands are attached to this misperception of Batavia's 'Chinese Hospital' as equivalent to the post-monastic Dutch hospice (gasthuis). Based on original research with Chinese sources, the proposed paper reexamines the so-called hospital as a clan hall (huiguan) essential to migrants. Such a communal sanctuary for worship, entertainment, education, and philanthropic services eluded colonial documentation because early modern Europe did not boast any parallels.

Chinese clan halls are found throughout Southeast Asia as a key diasporic space. They are still revered as some of the most architecturally elaborate works from the colonial periods. Whilst Dutch Batavia's 'Chinese Hospital' was torn down in the nineteenth century, its history sheds light on the overlapping sociocultural practices of two imperial powers that extended their spheres of influence to early modern Indonesia. For the Dutch government, the accessibility of a Chinese site with religious and educational functions to various local groups outside the diaspora, including the underprivileged Mestizos and *Mardijkers*, was in direct competition with the Christian institutions. On a broader historiographical level, this postcolonial assessment of colonial architecture and urbanism recognises the plurality of colonising forces during the pre-industrial phase of globalisation, with diasporas from across Asia contributing to the reshaping of Southeast Asia's cultural and physical landscapes.

## **Fortifying ‘empire’: Buildings, materiality and transimperial contestations in early modern Southeast Asia (1600-1800)**

Marie Ngiam

*University of Oslo*

This paper considers how fortifications in early modern Southeast Asia served as material manifestations of transimperial contestations over natural resources. Through two case studies – Fort Amsterdam in Ambon, Indonesia, and Kota Belanda in Teluk Gedung, Malaysia – this paper interrogates how buildings served as a medium through which imperial regimes asserted authority and control over resources and landscapes.

The extraction of prized commodities – nutmeg, mace, and cloves in Ambon; tin in Perak – was at the heart of Portuguese, Dutch, and British imperial agendas. Yet engagement with resources extended beyond such items of trade. The very fabric of these fortifications using local timber, stone, and imported bricks, were just as important to imperial endeavours as the commodities they protected. Fort Amsterdam, first constructed as a Portuguese trading lodge in brick and ironwood, was later reconfigured and refortified by the Dutch, merging imported European bricks with local wood. Kota Belanda, initially erected by the Dutch as a garrison safeguarding tin supplies from Perak’s mines, endured cycles of destruction, reconstruction, and British appropriation, its materials similarly tracing networks of local, intra-Asian, and European trade.

By foregrounding processes of material reuse, this study interrogates strategies of conservation and extraction underpinning imperial praxis. Certain imported materials – valued for durability – reflect a transimperial pragmatics of resource maximization, whereas locally sourced woods were treated as ostensibly inexhaustible. This paper thus illuminates how buildings themselves embody histories of contact, collision, and negotiation across overlapping empires. Ultimately, this paper centers on the materiality of fortifications as active agents in the production and maintenance of power. Their ecological underpinnings offer a lens for understanding how engagement with the natural and material world – spanning forests, mines, and seas – shaped the exercise and maintenance of power in early modern Southeast Asia.

## **Sovereign Facades: Museum Architecture and the Transimperial Production of Colonial Time and Territory**

Lawrence Chua  
*Syracuse University*

This paper examines collisions of time and territory in the conjoined genealogies of the Musée Albert Sarraut (Phnom Penh, 1920) and the National Museum of Bangkok (1927). The designs of both museums sought to articulate historical and territorial claims to the historic heartland of Angkor by the sometimes competitive and sometimes collaborative imperial regimes of Siam and France. While the plans of both museums sought to map out a progressive aesthetic chronology on to fragments of the region's past, their façades sought to disaggregate local historicist idioms into a national stylistic idiom. In the early 20th century, French and Siamese scholar officials and architects would use the museums to withdraw sacred images from the realm of religious practice and embed them within a new economy of image production and a new culture of public exhibition of “found objects.” Drawing on Thai, Khmer, and French archival drawings, correspondence, and reports, the paper demonstrates the ways these museums helped transform sacred images into standardized artifacts within a colonial economy of image production – where replication, cataloging, and public display replaced ritual use, embedding them in a new regime of visual knowledge and statecraft. While nationalist historiography conventionally frames Siam as the sole Southeast Asian nation to have resisted colonization, the paper uses methodologies of *histoire croisée* or “crossed histories” to examine the intersecting imperial ambitions of both the Siamese monarchy and the French Third Republic in early 20th century Southeast Asia.

## Changing Architectural Geographies of a Colonial Enterprise: KPM in Sydney and Singapore

Amanda Achmadi  
*University of Melbourne*

Paul Walker  
*University of Melbourne*

The Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM, or Royal Packet Navigation Company) was established in 1888 to place sea traffic in the Dutch East Indies into the hands of Dutch enterprise. By 1920 KPM linked 300 ports throughout the colony and was central to forming the Indies archipelago into a single integrated state (*à Campo, Engines of Empire, 1992*). This role of consolidation is projected in the architecture of KPM's administrative buildings at the principal nodes in its network: Batavia, Makassar, Semarang, and particularly in its Amsterdam headquarters at the Scheepvaarthuis (architects: Van der May et al). However, the stability that was projected by these monuments of commercial building was not to last. As Tagliocozzo (2010) comments, in 1910 Dutch rule appeared to be consolidated and stable; 'technologies of control' – railroads, steamships, and telegraph lines – actualised this and made it visible. But within a generation this mirage would all be swept away.

In this paper, we will examine aspects of KPM's trajectory through its architectural manifestations not in Indonesia itself, but rather in two locations that may appear peripheral to its operations: Singapore and Sydney. KPM opened offices in Sydney in 1912 and by the 1920s was accommodated in premises in one of the city's principal retail areas. A booking office particularly facilitated travellers seeking passage to Singapore via ports in Java (Semarang, Surabaya, Batavia), with tourism to Bali and Java's interior also serviced (Walker & Achmadi 2019). Post-WWII, this office, serving as a place-symbol of Dutch interests, would become the focus of protests: those supporting Indonesian independence and those of Lascar and Indonesian seamen demanding support in the face of Australian union bans on KPM vessels. KPM established offices in Singapore in 1914, moving in 1931 into a ten-storey building of its own at Collyer Quay (architects Keys and Dowdeswell). This intimated the growing significance of KPM's business outside the Indies. With KPM facing

drastically curtailed prospects in independent, post-colonial Indonesia, after WWII it shifted its commercial headquarters to Singapore and undertook building work there in the form of extensive complexes of flats for its staff. The company was seeking an alternative commercial geography to that which had motivated its origins.

## **Transimperial and Transwar Perspectives on Radio Architecture in Japan and Southeast Asia**

Carolyn Birdsall  
*University of Amsterdam*

From around 1930 onwards, a raft of new radio buildings were unveiled internationally. These purpose-built 'media houses' were frequently understood as responding to associations of radio broadcasting with liveness, immediacy, and intimacy, and its grounding in urbanity, internationalism and cultural modernity. In the existing scholarship on broadcast buildings, there has been a tendency to focus on 'architectural icons' such as Radio City Music Hall in New York (Thompson 2002, Ericson & Riegert 2010), and exceptionally, to explore international radio production spaces as 'cosmopolitan contact zones' (Gillespie and Webb 2013). In response, this presentation proposes to consider the construction of radio buildings in Tokyo and Kyoto during the 1930s, which responded aesthetically to existing buildings in London and Berlin, each of which had been heavily invested with the respective imperial imaginations of Great Britain and Nazi-era Germany. The infrastructural prestige associated with radio can also be traced to colonial Korea and Taiwan, along with the architectural 'ultra modernism' that accompanied Japanese communications network incursions into Manchuria/Manchukuo (Denison and Ren 2016, Yang 2010). Against this background, the presentation will focus on the Japanese occupation of Dutch East Indies (1942-1945) in terms of a transimperial encounter with Dutch colonial radio infrastructures. Japanese occupation-era radio appropriated existing facilities (and staff expertise), while also trying to establish new structures to heighten its symbolic capital. In turn, radio took on new symbolic significance in 1945 for both communicating Japanese surrender and declarations of independence, followed by rapid efforts to repurpose broadcast buildings and technical infrastructures for an independent radio (Masduki 2023, Goscha 2012). I will conclude with a critical evaluation of this case of radio buildings for a research agenda that not only seeks to identify connected architectural histories of empire, but also explore architecture within transimperial interactions in Southeast Asia (as per the session description).

# Materials and Techniques on the Move

## Session chairs:

Caterina Cardamone, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Lorenzo Vigotti, Università di Bologna

In his 1645 French edition of Palladio, Pierre le Muet eliminated the chapters on building materials because of the differences between local practices in Italy and in France (“beaucoup de choses sont extremement differentes de celles qu’on pratique aujourd’huy en France”). Materials and techniques do not circulate well on paper. A stucco recipe may easily be disseminated with Italian architectural treatises, but North of the Alps its composition might change, leaving out marble powder. Building materials and the associated techniques are thus closely linked to their region of origin, even more so in a period in which the costs and difficulties of travel and long-distance transport added to their prestige.

This session asks how exactly building materials and related techniques circulated across late medieval and early modern Europe, and how their travels affected their meanings.

A first issue concerns the actual transport of materials, the routes they follow, the movement of specific techniques and instruments, the migration of specialized craftsmen. How do foreign materials and people adapt to the local context and its traditional building practices? Well-known examples such as the use of Istrian stone along the Italian Adriatic coast or the export of black marble from ‘Flanders’ to other parts of Europe (Northern Europe but also Florence) show that these materials mainly travelled over water and along established trade routes. But what other routes did materials follow? Did the difficulties of transportation add value and meaning to these materials?

Another more literary issue concerns the circulation and perception of materials and techniques as documented in treatises, ekphrastic descriptions and other writings highlighting the materiality of architecture. In this case the distance bridged

might not only be geographical but also temporal, as materials and techniques from Antiquity such as stucco, concrete, and porphyry were being rediscovered. What ancient or modern narratives and iconologies on building materials circulated in Europe? How did these impact the perception, use and imagery of these materials?

Not only marbles but also other natural stones and ceramic tiles were evidently vehicles of iconological meanings (Barry 2020, Dressen 2008, Butters 1996), because of their colors and texture, the difficulty of their fashioning, or the associated narratives on their history and provenance. How did these layered meanings contribute to the self-representation of patrons? What role did the imitation of materials, through painting or other media, play in this regard?

We invite papers that address any of these issues to illuminate how materials and their meanings travelled across Europe, and beyond, in the late medieval and early modern period.

## Sailing Stones: The Practice of Stereotomy Across the Medieval Mediterranean

Sara Galletti  
*Duke University*

This paper explores the ways in which the practice of stereotomy moved around Europe and the Mediterranean during the late medieval period via networks of builders and patrons.

Stereotomy is the art of dressing stones into particular shapes for the construction of vaulted structures. Stereotomic vaults are distinguished from the broader categories of stone and ashlar vaults by the size, shape, and assembly technique of their components; they are built with large voussoirs that are individually cut to fit one other precisely and then assembled like the pieces of a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle.

Stereotomy is best known for the variety of acrobatic masterpieces produced in early modern France and Spain, such as the coffered dome of the chapel of the Cha teau d'Anet and the annular vault covering the portico in the courtyard of the Palace of Charles V in Granada. However, stereotomy is neither European nor early modern; it has been practiced over a wide chronological span, from Hellenistic Greece to contemporary Apulia, and across a broad geographical area, centered in the Mediterranean but reaching far beyond, including Great Britain, Armenia and the Caucasus, as well as colonial Latin America.

In this paper, I present a new methodological approach to the study of stereotomy which combines large- and small-scale data to challenge traditional narratives about the circulation of stereotomy in the Mediterranean world. First, I use aggregate data to demonstrate that the practice was far more widespread than traditional scholarship suggests; then, I examine case studies to illustrate how constructive details reveal paths of transmission of the practice across geographic and cultural boundaries.

## The Stones of Perugia in the Renaissance

Anna Rebecca Sartore

*Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz,  
Universiteit Gent*

Perugia offers a privileged case study for examining the circulation, perception, and use of building materials in central Italy between the 15th and the 16th centuries. In the frescoes of the Prior's Chapel, painted by Benedetto Bonfigli between 1454 and 1480, the stories of Saint Louis of Toulouse and Herculanus unfold against urban backdrops rendered with striking precision. The masonry of the buildings is depicted in stone, brick, and travertine, alongside the ancient Etruscan walls. Towers and gates are meticulously portrayed, while Bernardo Rossellino's new bell tower of San Pietro emerges as a clear marker of ongoing architectural change. Such analytical representation is not merely the result of 'lenticular' precision associated with northern painting, but conveys Bonfigli's direct observation of local reality, at a moment when construction was so intense that contemporaries complained that "was no more lime, no bricks, no craftsmen to be found."

The prominence of building materials in these images points to the close interdependence between the urban fabric and its territory. Perugia's immediate hinterland supplied much of the stone, sand, lime required for construction, through a network of quarries and kilns that sustained both building sites and the local economy.

At the same time, however, the city's main monuments also depended on materials transported over longer distances. Since the 13th century, Rome had functioned as a favoured source of high-quality stone and marble. In 1277, for the construction of the fountain *in pede plateae*, at the foot of the main square, Charles of Anjou authorized Arnolfo di Cambio to bring marble and stone from Rome, a precedent that also resonates with the marble supply for the Fontana Maggiore by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano. Similar transfers appear to have been envisaged in the early 16th century for the funerary monuments of Cardinal Armellini and his father Bevegnate, planned for the family chapel in Perugia Cathedral in 1523.

The circulation of such materials corresponded to a parallel mobility of skilled labour. From the mid-15th century onward, Lombard and Florentine craftsmen are documented on Perugian building sites, contributing technical expertise and facilitating the transmission of practices across different regions.

Almost a century later, Giovan Battista Caporali's *Vitruvio in volgar lingua raportato* (Perugia 1536), provides a textual counterpart to these dynamics. Caporali demonstrates a direct familiarity with local building resources, contrasting the “lean sands of the Tiber” with the “fat and clayey” sands of the Perugia pits, and evokes a local marble “glistening like salt”. Nevertheless, he also reflects on the reuse of ancient materials, notably the spolia employed in the Tempietto of Sant’Angelo in Perugia, which he traces back to a Roman temple at Civitella d’Arna.

Together, these visual, material, and textual standpoints suggest how attention to building materials in Renaissance Perugia emerged from the interplay between local resources, imported supplies, and the circulation of skilled *maestranze*.

## **Like a house of cards: building materials in the Renaissance renovation of the Convent of Christ in Tomar (Portugal)**

Gabriel Pereira  
*Universidade de Coimbra*

During the 16th century, the Convent of Christ in Tomar underwent an intense process of expansion and remodelling, resulting in the largest building of its time in Portugal. The works were coordinated by the architect João de Castilho, a Spaniard who spent most of his life in Portugal, assisted by large teams of labourers from different parts of the kingdom and Europe.

The convent is located in the centre of mainland Portugal, but relatively far from the main urban centres. As such, Tomar did not have the capacity to produce all the materials needed for the normal course of the architectural renovation, so feeding the building site proved to be a demanding task. It was therefore necessary to create a complex organisational structure so that the work could be completed successfully.

Through the analysis of archival documentation (especially the payment books), it was possible to find a great deal of previously unknown information about the building site's operations.

This paper will focus on identifying the different materials used during the architectural renovation and how they were applied. In addition, we will also analyse the locations where the stone and different species of wood were extracted, as well as their construction potential and some of the transport routes and associated costs.

## **Admiring, Importing, Reinventing: Cultural Imaginaries, Material Circulations, and Design Practices of Imported Marbles and Stones in England (c. 1650-1750)**

Giovanni Santucci  
*Università di Pisa*

In late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, foreign marbles and stones exerted a powerful cultural pull. Guidebooks, travel diaries, and letters record both admiration for their dazzling variety in continental buildings and frustration at their scarcity in domestic architecture. Similarly, guidebooks to Britain praised their rare appearance in local buildings, while lamenting the lack of any comparable material on British soil. Such comparisons reshaped aesthetic values: buildings long stylistically praised like the Palazzo Farnese or Palladio's villas were dismissed for the "poverty" of their materials, while medieval monuments – deprecated but rich in marbles – were praised alongside lavish contemporary "popish" churches.

Marbles and stones reached England through diverse routes: shipments from specialized operators in Genoa, Carrara, Livorno, Rome, and Brussels; purchases by Grand Tourists; diplomatic gifts; or raids on ruins in Barbary and Greece. These channels conveyed both materials and technical knowledge, though unevenly, as England lacked Continental stonemasons. Local craftsmen attempted to adopt imported cutting and polishing techniques, but persistent difficulties of transport and workmanship ensured that foreign stones remained emblems of exclusivity and competition: for aristocrats, markers of continental refinement; for the Crown, instruments to rival Catholic monarchies; for the Church of England, appropriations of Roman splendour reshaped for Anglican worship.

As a consequence, British architects studied continental buildings to learn how to adapt precious stone revetments to national contexts – for instance, secularising, in stately homes, effects that abroad were reserved for sacred spaces, or adapting the forms of Catholic altars for local funerary monuments. Yet foreign materials were mostly reserved, even in the most luxurious contexts, for prominent architectural elements, with larger surfaces relying on native stones, carefully selected or treated to imitate the "exotic" ones, or even on scagliola and painted imitations.

By analysing selected accounts of admiration and lament, records of prospecting, import costs, and technical challenges, alongside the symbolic use of real continental materials and imitation thereof, this paper reassesses the role of foreign marbles and stones in Britain as both material resources and cultural models, illuminating their impact on architectural practice and social representation from the Restoration to the Georgian era.

## **Roundtable: Transmedia Architecture Archive: Historical Knowledge in the AI Era**

### **Chairs**

Dirk van den Heuvel, TU Delft  
Eytan Mann, TU Delft

The archive is undergoing a profound transformation. Once conceived as static repositories for historians, archives have expanded into dynamic, digital platforms attempting to democratize the narration of history. With the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Extended Reality (XR), the notion of the archive encounters ideas of collective, decentralized intelligence and multisensory engagement. This transmedia approach allows researchers to move fluidly between different modes of knowledge – from AI-powered pattern recognition to embodied understanding through virtual site visits – creating richer, more nuanced interpretations of architectural history.

However, historical knowledge in the AI era is increasingly shaped by a set of tensions particularly visible in the architectural archive. On one axis lies the pull between datafication and resistance: while machine-readable descriptions promise expanded access, they simultaneously provoke counter-archives and practices that insist on opacity, informality, or partial visibility. On a second axis lies the tension between augmentation and forgetting: while XR offers immersive, affective modes of engaging the past, it also foregrounds the fragility and potential “drift” of born-digital materials as constitutive conditions of knowledge rather than mere technical failures.

This roundtable invites scholars to interrogate the “Transmedia Architecture Archive” as a field of negotiation where historical meaning emerges through shifting relations between simulation and erasure, institutional stewardship, and precarious forms of memory work. We will explore how moving from metadata-based systems

to AI-driven epistemologies introduces intimacy and urgency, while navigating the pressures of digital persistence and loss.

### Guiding Questions

- What does the advent of AI entail for architectural historiography, and how does it reshape the agency of individuals and institutions in historical interpretation amidst the tension of datafication?
- What tools and methodologies can breathe life into static collections, transforming them into participatory spaces that balance the desire for cataloguing with the creative potential of archival “drift”?
- How can XR technologies (AR/VR) foster emotional connections to historical spaces, and how do we address the “confusing” or fragile nature of these simulations when representing systematically excluded histories?
- How can we ensure AI and XR don’t reinforce Western-centric power structures? Special attention will be paid to data sovereignty, indigenous knowledge, and the right to resist total digital legibility in contested historical contexts.
- By addressing these issues, the roundtable aims to push the boundaries of architectural historiography. We seek to understand how transmedia archives redefine the roles of historians, architects, and the public, inviting both speculative and grounded contributions that examine the future of architectural knowledge at the intersection of traditional scholarship and emerging, often volatile, technologies.

## Unfolding the Archive: New Dimensions of Access to Born-digital Architecture Collections

Ania Molenda  
*Nieuwe Instituut*

Born-digital architecture archives present unique opportunities to study and interpret the relationships between the built environment, digital cultures, and social change. They allow us to rethink the design practice and its archive as a dynamic collaboration between humans and machines. As pioneers of Computer-Aided Design (CAD), architects created archives that are idiosyncratic, transmedia and rich in file formats, including 2D drawings, 3D models, graphic design, collages, renderings, animations, and computer code. These archives ask for readings that will allow for new technical and cultural interpretations. However, much of their contents remain inaccessible to the broader public, posing limits to both research and discovery.

Research project Unfolding the Archive explored forms of access that position metadata of CAD records as key. It used inherent properties of CAD records to explore ways in which their discovery could be supported, bypassing proprietary technical dependencies. By developing conceptual approaches and prototypes, it demonstrates how relational and experimental interfaces can visualise connections between archival objects and their contexts, stimulate early-stage research, and democratise access to born-digital architecture collections. It presents ways that pose an alternative to the catalogue-based and author-centered forms of access towards networked, multimodal, and multivocal readings.

If we recognize machines as co-creators of architectural archives, they also need to become our allies in access. Ethical engagement, especially with technologies such as AI, posing risk of decontextualization and manipulation of archival material, and is crucial. A metadata-driven approach focusing on creating generous interfaces enables new narratives to emerge, for example, revealing conditions of practice and ways in which archives were created. Stimulating more nuanced and multivocal interpretations of architectural history requires a broader inclusion of users, beyond the specialist audiences. To create such inclusivity, responding to diverse levels of digital literacy and providing multiple modes of access that are meaningful to the users are key.

## The Intelligence of Loss in the Archive

Anna-Maria Meister

*KIT Karlsruhe, saai Archive / Kunsthistorisches  
Institute in Florence (Max Planck Institute)*

Archives are entropic sites, where the very processes designed to preserve knowledge – whether on paper or servers – inevitably lead to transformation, selective preservation and loss. While in art and architecture history, narratives of loss and decay have started to play a more important role in historiography, AI is hailed as a promise against loss. But what if we treated forgetting not as a bug, but a feature? AI's processes of erasure follow distinct patterns that may reveal new ways of managing archival sustainability. Its mechanisms of forgetting and loss – such as data selection, pruning, model drift, algorithmic obsolescence and capacity to (almost) randomize choices – offer alternatives to human-driven/caused archival destruction. Rather than treating AI as an optimized alternative for pattern recognition in archives, this research explores how AI's patterns of forgetting might reshape our understanding of archival decay and persistence. By taking loss and erasure seriously – not as failures, but as integral to knowledge systems – this project tries to explore how it might be an underappreciated field of exploration, one where its (at least seemingly) irrational and unpredictable human shape might be a form of intelligence AI could learn from. What does the pattern of loss look like and can it be modelled? Reversely, can humans gain insights from AI-driven loss provide into archival decay? Investigating what is lost with which intentions, what is memorable only because it was lost, or how forgotten materials incorporate intelligence, this project takes loss not as a problem, but as a promise of other ways of knowing.

## On Historical Archives and “Synthetic Memories”

Ana Miljacki

*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

In the night of June 13, 2022, *The Partisan Memorial Cemetery* in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, was vandalized. All 630 gravestones dedicated to fallen soldiers in the Second World War, part of a remarkable memorial land artwork by the local architect and monument artist Bogdan Bogdanović, were destroyed. This event prompted a very personal work of “preservation,” a form of “affective history.”

The artifacts that today constitute Yugoslavia’s socialist architectural heritage, and especially those that were instrumental in the ideological wiring of several postwar generations for antifascism and inclusive living, have been swallowed by the entropic appetite of aging collective memory, exacerbated by various forms of local and global political investment in forgetting their meaning. But for those who choose to claim citizenship in the idea of Yugoslavia, now thirty years after its destruction, memorials like the Partisan Memorial Cemetery in Mostar serve as navigational devices, both backward into history and forward into the future. *The Pilgrimage | Pionirsko Hodočašće* is a multichannel video installation comprised of nine video interpolations produced using the StyleGAN3 platform. StyleGAN3 has been widely available since 2021 and is already deemed obsolete by regular users of such tools, but when we began this work, it seemed that it would enable us to use a structurally “nostalgic” tool for the production of a deliberately reflective nostalgic effect, to borrow one of Svetlana Boym’s two characterizations of nostalgia.

We trained models in StyleGAN3 on photographs and images found in institutional and personal archives acquired specifically for the project, as well as those found online in video banks and on social media platforms. Each of these visual assets indexed actual visits to nine of Yugoslavia’s key postwar (WWII) memorials and monuments, and together they served as the basis of a time-filled video and audio experience. This transmediatic work has now been presented three times, each time differently and to a different audience, culminating most recently in a spatial video installation set against a nonlinear documentary soundscape at the Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, a museum dedicated to stewarding the heritage of Yugoslavia. I propose to present this work in detail for the panel *Transmedia Architecture Archives* in order to discuss “the archive,” as well as what is historical and what might function as “heritage” in this project.

## **Queering the architectural archive: AI-assisted data collecting, hybrid prototyping, and web scraping lost traces in architectural history**

Lucas de Mello Reitz

*IAB – Brazil's Institute of Architects*

This paper explores queer architectural histories circulating beyond canonical repositories and archives, unfolding across ephemeral media, local press, and digital platforms (re)collected and (re)assembled through AI-assisted programming, hybrid prototyping, and web scraping. Together, they describe a queered architectural archive, composed of architecture's material forms, attendant discourses, and historiographies, as put by Marko Jobst.

Drawing on work produced at muq – the transdisciplinary platform I run – I argue that queer archival practices of architecture and the built environment are often tacit, relational, and produced through gossip, alliance, and mutual protection: forms of record institutional archives marginalise, yet are visible in material forms and online traces. This work is built on Ann Cvetkovich's concept of the queer counter-archive and understands the archive as a technology of gender perpetuating normative knowledge, echoing Teresa de Lauretis.

The speculative investigation juxtaposes two forms of archive-building bridging material and online data excluded from disciplinary canons: (1) traces of Fernando Betzler, an architect whose career in 1980s Florianópolis, Brazil, remained confined to local newspapers and who later died of HIV/AIDS; and (2) queer spaces of encounter and sociability in Florianópolis, registered through point cloud scanning and collaborative online platforms mapping over 180 online dating websites. They result in text and image entries, data sets, and hybrid files – fusing online testimonies with material environments into 3D models based on point cloud scanning.

Through these dispersed fragments, the investigation exposes the limits of the traditional archive while pushing the boundaries of transmedia experimental practices. As a branched enquiry, the use of AI LLMs to data collecting programming reframes precarity: analysis no longer depends on formal expertise in data science but becomes a facilitator for queering the archive through natural language. Ulti-

mately, the project asks how to queer archival technologies to include histories, discourses, and material forms consistently excluded or marginalised.

## Architectural Warez: Another Archive of Digitalized Architectural Production is Here

Joshua Silver

*Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, saai Archive*

While institutional architectural archives have undergone a digital transformation, digital technologies remain a furtive presence among the material they collect. Archivists may find obscure data tapes among their paper collections. An architect may bashfully donate an external hard drive. Boxes of inert graphics cards gather dust in archival cold storage. But also, for architectural office archives, this digital transformation has added another tool to their public relations and project management toolkits. Original files are stabilized as PDFs. Email correspondence is periodically deleted. The material traces of office practice and architectural production are secured behind firewalls in virtual private networks. Otherwise, digital corporations like Autodesk, Meta, and Alphabet plunder the web and the Earth itself to fill their own archival architectures supporting Gen-AI, whether physical data centres or distributed databases. Meanwhile, “warez,” whether ad hoc software and pirate media, community hardware projects, or informal digital know-how, form their own networks in the cracks between institutions, corporations, and states. Could architecture’s warez, too, escape these binds? Could they be found, as I discovered during my own research, circulating through unexpected channels?

In contributing to this roundtable, I would take the position that another architectural archive, one which evades control of digital and architectural corporations alike, is not only possible but necessary for apprehending the contemporary conditions of architectural production under digitalized, “AI”-enabled global capitalism. And perhaps it might already exist in the distributed, informal, “grey” web repositories of born digital and digitized material, in the dark corners of architectural institutions, on the personal hard drives of peripheral design consultants, and in architectural workers’ own testimonies. Like the warez which gesture toward a more expansive definition of digitality, this “pirate” archive of architecture could direct researchers toward architectural voices, practices, and networks which are not only overlooked but whose traces are being actively deleted in favour of iconic drawings, images, projects, and celebrity practitioners.

# Water as Ecological Mediator in Architecture: Tracing Connections from Antiquity to the Modern Age

## Session chairs:

Martina Frank, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Myriam Pilutti Namer, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

This session investigates the multifaceted role of water – whether seas, rivers, lakes, lagoons, or artificial basins – as a crucial element in shaping architecture and urbanism. Spanning the period from Antiquity to the Modern Age, prior to the Industrial Revolution, it focuses on the Mediterranean region and its sub-basins, such as the Adriatic Sea, while also welcoming broader geographical perspectives and comparative analyses. Water is examined not merely as a practical resource or scenographic medium but as a dynamic ecological force and a cornerstone of material culture that has shaped human interaction with the built environment across time and space.

The session foregrounds the relevance of ecological theory as a lens to understand historical engagements with water. Ecological theory emphasizes the interconnectiveness of natural and human systems, inviting a reassessment of how architecture and urbanism have adapted to and co-evolved with aquatic environments. Recognizing water as an active agent within ecological systems – rather than merely a backdrop – allows for a deeper comprehension of historical architectural practices as complex environmental adaptations.

Through a variety of sources – including historical drawings, cartography, treatises, architectural plans, digital media, and photography – the session explores the cultural, technical, and environmental dimensions of water's integration into architecture. Key questions include: How has water served as an ecological mediator, influencing architectural design and urban planning across different historical and cultural contexts? How have communities leveraged water's physical and symbolic properties to negotiate the interplay between natural and built environments?

How can ecological theory reshape our interpretation of the historical built environment in light of contemporary environmental challenges?

The session highlights Venice as a paradigmatic case where the inseparable relationship between water and architecture is most visible. The city's Grand Canal palaces and mainland villas illustrate how waterways shaped economic, cultural, and urban frameworks, demonstrating water's centrality to the material and symbolic organization of space. Venice itself can be understood as a complex ecological system, where natural and human-made environments are interwoven. Its continuous negotiation with water across centuries connects practices rooted in Antiquity with innovations that shaped the Medieval and Modern Age, offering a unique model of adaptive resilience and environmental integration. In addition, comparative perspectives, such as Lisbon's engagement with the Tagus River, Edo's (Tokyo's) canal networks, and New Amsterdam's (New York's) waterfront spaces, underscore water's role as both a vital resource and a driver of urban form across different cultures and periods. By interpreting the relationship with water through the prism of ecological theory, the session highlights how understanding past interactions between natural forces and built environments can enhance strategies to preserve heritage today while promoting sustainable practices attuned to ecological realities.

# **Cultural Landscapes in Flux: Menderes (Maeander) River as a Living Mediator – Initiator, Generator, Transformer and Re-Constructor – of Landscape and Built Environment**

Gökhan Okumuş

*METU, Middle East Technical University*

A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz

*METU, Middle East Technical University*

With Gerdy Verschuure-Stuip

*TU Delft*

Rivers, as powerful ecological and natural agents, have historically served not only as sources of sustenance but also as creators and mediators of spatial and cultural relations. From ancient civilizations that shaped agricultural lands and established their cities along riverbanks to the modern landscapes that developed around them, rivers have consistently been central to the evolution of human societies and settlement history. The Menderes (Maeander) River in southwestern Anatolia presents a unique case for examining the role of water as an ecological, spatial, cultural, and symbolic force in shaping landscapes and built environments. Menderes' ecological dynamics and progradation process over time have changed and reshaped the complex interplay between societies and water, and their reflections - urban planning, morphology, and orientation of built environments, the location of settlements and harbors, development of hydraulic and water management systems and structures, infrastructural works, and industrial and technological innovations on the landscape. As water-related relationships evolved – marked by the river's fluctuating presence, scarcity, and abundance - they have given rise to new architectural, technological, and infrastructural solutions, embedding these responses into urban morphology and landscape forms.

Accordingly, this paper argues for rethinking water as a 'generative and mediating agent' within landscape and built environment, rather than a 'passive backdrop',

tracing *longue durée* interactions between ecological processes, urban morphology, and architectural expressions. It advances a holistic reading and heritage framework, which conceptualizes water's role as a catalyst between interconnected networks, spatial, technical, cultural, and mnemonic agents. Employing a landscape biography perspective, it interprets changing river relationships, evolving landscapes, transforming built environments, and shifting narratives through archival research, field-based studies, and spatio-temporal analyses. In conclusion, it demonstrates how rivers function as initiators, generators, and transformers and re-constructors of landscapes, offering critical insights for advancing heritage conservation and urban and architectural resilience in the face of contemporary challenges.

## Publicly Accessible Clean, Flowing Water at Rome's Late Antique Charity Centers

Gregor Kalas

*University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

Ever-flowing water gushed forth from fountains at the titular churches (tituli) and charity centers (xenodochia) of late antique Rome. Inscription evidence and archeological testimony attest that specific institutions for the assistance of the poor drew upon the infrastructure of public aqueducts where abundant resources of thirst-quenching water appeared to provide bounteous gifts to all. Such donations targeted the dispossessed people including vagrants and poor travelers, providing ample supplies of water to those in need. At the Titulus Fasciolae, the so-called "titular church of the bandage," there is evidence of cleansing and curing that drew upon the Antoniniana aqueduct feeding the Baths of Caracalla, since this humble, diminutive institution stood a stone's throw away from the towering imperial baths. Epigraphic testimony of water cures at the Titulus Fasciolae resounds with the evidence from an inscription at the charitable hostel or xenodochium founded by senator Pammachius at Portus, Rome's sea-bound port. Here a fountain stood adjacent to a basilica, welcoming poor travelers with the following phrase: "anyone who is thirsty and wishes to come and listen to the flowing sounds will find running water that remains as sweet as honey--[and after] dirt tarnished the heart's cisterns--cleanses and renews the bodies" (A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, no. 60, pages 224-225). Another hostel known as the xenodochium Anichiorum stood in the Campus Martius close to today's Piazza dei Calcarari where a dedicatory inscription in Greek hints at statues decorating a fountain at the entrance. From this evidence, I interpret the late antique charitable institutions as places where private benefactors transformed public waterworks into everlasting gifts. These merciful sponsors allowed the poor to benefit from donations that made abundant water resources accessible and yet the recipients remained unburdened by calls to return the favors.

## **Water and Space in Western Monastic Architecture (7th-18th Centuries)**

Gianmario Guidarelli  
*University of Padua*

In the monastery of St. Peter in Salzburg, (founded in the 7th century) one of the cloisters is crossed by a channel carved into the rock, which carries water from a nearby spring to the monks' quarters. Many Cistercian monasteries built later are crossed by streams, as in the case of Chiaravalle Milanese or Fontenay. However, the role of water as an essential component in the design of monasteries is not only linked to its function as a dynamic element serving the daily functions of the monastery, but also to the masses of static water contained in the cisterns at the centre of a cloister. In this case, in addition to serving as a source of nourishment, water also takes on a theological meaning, connected to its role of purification, which finds its maximum expression in the washbasins of the ante-refectory and sacristy. Therefore, water, as a spatial element (i.e., it has mass and occupies a surface, either dynamically or statically) in relation to the functions of the monastery, is fundamental to understanding monastic spaces. However, water also regulates the relationship between the interior and exterior of the monastery, because it can be an element of connection or isolation (a "desert" of water) with respect to the surrounding territory. This paper aims to examine all these symbolic and functional aspects in relation to the design of monasteries, focusing on the period from the 15th to the 16th century, when a new type of monastic landscape was developed, linked to the humanistic theme of the "locus amoenus".

## Soil, water, and mobility in Renaissance Venice

David Karmon  
*College of the Holy Cross*

In July 1568 two fishermen from the Lido, Lazzaro Savina and Pasqualin Franco, submitted a report to the Savi ed Esecutori alle Acque, the official body responsible for protecting the Venetian lagoon. Fishing was of course the most typical of all Venetian occupations, but this report argued for stricter control of the walkways leading to the fishing nets, as the fishermen “tamp the planks down as far as possible... leading not only to the filling up of the entire lagoon but also causing the soil to harden, making it impossible for the water to wash it away.” (“...mettendovi delle tavole li calcano con li piedi et per forza quanto più posso li abbassano... dal che ne segue non solo l'atterrazione di tutta la laguna ma anco l'indurirvi il terreno in modo che è impossibile che le acque più lo consumi”, ASV, B. 119, 245r). Even such minor interventions could turn the tide flats into meadows, upsetting the calibrated equilibrium between soil and water on which the Serenissima depended for its existence. After centuries of consolidating land in the lagoon, this document suggests how the conventional architectural principles of fixity and permanence could also be perceived as a liability in sixteenth-century Venice. Venice confronted an ecological crisis in the sixteenth century as fishing, unauthorized infilling, agricultural runoff, and the dumping of debris led to the massive redistribution of sediment in the lagoon. How did Venetian builders respond? Unlike most architects who could assume stable foundations for their buildings, Venetian architects developed a more fluid understanding of the relationship between built and natural environments. The Republic's intensive concern with soil and water management acknowledged the active role of these agents in shaping building practices as well as their long-term environmental consequences, and this prompted builders to embrace rather than oppose environmental instability. Drawing upon recent scholarship as well as new archival documents, this paper explores the relationship between soil, water, and mobility at this critical moment in the city's history.

## Caring for Sea Country: Yuin Nation's Pursuit of Native Title

Jennifer Ferng

*University of Sydney*

Architectural historians tend to privilege “land-centric” narratives when writing global histories of architecture and the built environment. Following the scholarship of Andres Tavares and Adnan Morshed, First Nations peoples have long conceptualised water as an active agent through their stories and conceptions of the world around them. For the Yuin nation in New South Wales, Australia, embracing the life of water suggests powerful ecological ways of conserving oceans. Caring for Sea Country is not only an Aboriginal cultural obligation but an ethical commitment to conserving waterways in all forms.

Before *Commonwealth vs. Yimirr* (1998) addressing Croker Island, NT, seas and ocean coastlines were treated the same as parcels of land in Australia. This decision granting native title rights offshore with limitations ran afoul of the Federal Court, which ruled that exclusive rights to the sea conflicted with international law. Counter to Western notions of ownership and property, longstanding Indigenous concepts of Country suggest that land and sea have no boundaries, and that the native title owed to the Yuin nation presents an age-old problem of human domination over nature (that of whose territory and whose rights). Tracing the Croker Island decision to Yuin nation's current struggles for native title, this paper argues that architecture emerges as a contested site of “second nature” between land and sea where cultural fishing and other food-related activities on the ocean signify transgressions of Western law. Yuin community members, for example, have even been jailed for offenses related to so-called illegal fishing. Settler colonialism has dictated how intertidal spaces affect the lives of First Nations peoples – to the detriment of the Yuin nation, Western imperial imaginaries based on the logic of land determine who can access these natural resources and who may benefit from maritime and economic industries that should be shared more equally.

# Privacy, the Private, and Architecture

**Session chair:**

Nuno Grancho, University of Copenhagen / ISCTE-IUL

This session explores the complex relationship between privacy, the private, and architecture throughout history. While privacy in Western contexts extends beyond individual concerns to shape relationships with space, self, and community, architectural history has yet to fully engage with privacy as a critical lens of analysis.

Despite extensive scholarship on public and private realms in other disciplines, privacy remains underexplored in architectural discourse. Drawing on theoretical frameworks established by scholars like Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, and Michel Foucault, who have examined the evolution of public/private distinctions and spatial power dynamics, this session aims to bridge this gap. More recent contributions from scholars such as Beatriz Colomina on the mediated nature of modern architectural privacy, Georges Teyssot on the body's relationship to domestic space, Mette Birkedal Brunn on Early Modern Privacy and privacy studies method, and Peter Thule Kristensen on Early Modern Privacy and architecture will further inform our discussions.

Rather than simply applying existing privacy theories to architecture, we seek an interdisciplinary exchange that allows architectural elements to be reinterpreted through privacy studies and privacy concepts to be reconsidered through architectural analysis. We are particularly interested in how architecture becomes symbolically charged with privacy meanings, and conversely, how privacy is shaped by architectural forms and practices.

To provide focus for this broad topic, we encourage papers examining privacy and architecture from the Early Modern period to the present, a timeframe that encompasses critical transformations in Western conceptions of privacy alongside significant architectural developments.

This session invites contributions examining specific building typologies where privacy plays a central role in their conception, organisation, and use. For example:

**Monasteries and convents:** These structures provide rich case studies in how architecture regulates private devotion, communal living, and isolation. From the individual cell to the cloister, monastic architecture influenced Western conceptions of privacy and continues to resonate in staging prayer, study, and spiritual intimacy.

**Domestic architecture:** From the development of corridor plans that separated servants from family life in 17th-century homes, to the open-plan living of modernism that reconfigured private/public boundaries, to contemporary smart homes with surveillance capabilities that redefine intimacy.

**Civil and military buildings:** create spaces of secrecy, shelter, and privacy through secure architecture, restricted access, and controlled spatial organisation.

**Healthcare facilities:** The evolution of hospital wards from large common rooms to private patient rooms reflects changing attitudes toward privacy in healing environments and medical ethics.

**Educational institutions:** Boarding schools, dormitories, and study spaces reveal how architecture shapes learning through varying degrees of privacy and surveillance.

**Cultural institutions:** Museums, libraries, and theaters that simultaneously offer public access while creating zones of private contemplation, study, or viewing.

We welcome papers exploring diverse architectural elements that frame privacy, including:

- Urban plans that establish public/private boundaries
- Spatial hierarchies and circulation patterns that control access and visibility
- Thresholds, screens, and partitions that mediate between private and public realms
- Sensory dimensions of privacy through acoustics, lighting, and material properties
- Domestic elements like alcoves and private rooms that accommodate bodily needs
- Documentation practices that reveal or conceal private aspects of architectural use

We particularly value contributions that examine concrete examples and take critical stances on the relationship between privacy and architecture, questioning conventional narratives and offering new interpretative frameworks.

## **Privacy Codified. Domestic Space, Typology, and Social Hierarchy from Serlio's Book VI to the Fuggerei in Early Modern Europe**

Theodora Giovanazzi  
*EPFL*

Sebastiano Serlio's Book VI: On Domestic Architecture (c. 1540s) was the first architectural treatise in Europe to assign domestic types to specific social groups, ranging from hovels for poor citizens to houses for kings. In doing so, Serlio suggested that the privacy of a home, understood as an aspiration for spatial separation and domestic intimacy, was no longer an exclusive privilege of the elite, but rather extended, in principle, to all 'deserving' members of society. Through his manuscript, the question of housing for the poor was effectively established as a problem worthy of the architect's attention. Through typological considerations, the manuscript's projects distribute rooms within each dwelling to articulate spatial hierarchies and various degrees of privacy.

Parallel to the drafting of Serlio's manuscript, the Fuggerei in Augsburg – one of the earliest large-scale housing projects for the 'shamefaced' poor – was built in the 1520s. The Fuggerei, with its uniform row housing, individual entrances on the street fronts, and small private gardens at the rear, materialised the principles implicit in Serlio's typologies. Whereas earlier large-scale housing often relied on communal spaces, the Fuggerei strengthened the concern for privacy on both the domestic and urban scales. It disciplined domestic life through the privacy of individual dwellings and made public life discrete by removing public squares within the scheme.

By bringing Serlio and the Fuggerei into dialogue, the paper argues that privacy in early modernity was not incidental but systematically codified: a typological approach to the design of domestic space became the means by which architecture reinforced growing social hierarchies and divided the private sphere from the public one. In this sense, Serlio's designs and the Fuggerei's complex stand as paradigmatic cases in the history of privacy and architecture, demonstrating how form and typological design informed the privacy of the domestic sphere, and by extension, that of the city.

## **Social reform's uneasy intimacy. The hammock and collective institutions in nineteenth-century France**

Oliver Brax

*The Bartlett, University College London*

The hammock, in European societies, is most frequently associated with seafaring activities. From this initial function, its use in nineteenth-century France shifted towards spaces where conventional middle-class modes of dwelling (bedrooms and beds) were impossible or undesirable. Therefore, it featured as an expression of social class, and could be found in situations and institutions where 'bourgeois domesticity' and the corresponding levels of 'comfort' and 'standing' were not deemed necessary. Though rather marginal, the hammock was synonymous with collective life, and signs of its presence appear in various sources and contexts, from agricultural colonies (Mettray, Petit-Bourg) and penal establishments (French Guiana, New Caledonia) to workers' dwellings. French reformers and theorists aiming to 'moralise' specific social groups (delinquent youths, convicts, the working class) were hence faced with an issue: reaching their political and philosophical objectives whilst resorting to an allegedly rudimentary technique.

This contribution will show how concerns with privacy and the sanctity of the family unit within these establishments were determined by material and financial concerns. These constraints allowed for ingenious designs, implementing various architectural strategies (thresholds, volumes, transparencies, and view-points) either aiming to preserve the moral values associated with privacy, or, to the contrary, deliberately preventing the creation of personal spaces. This interplay between the private (hammocks) and the collective (dormitories) questions linear narratives which present the nineteenth century as a 'golden age' of intimacy. Far from the leisurely and relaxing image which it might convey in the present day, the hammock's role in living spaces of this period was that of an experimental device responding to specific political and moral imperatives. More broadly, this paper will illustrate how a particular object's history demonstrates the influence of social hierarchies on the private realm's spatial character, and thereby reveals the economic roots of our most intimate spaces.

## **Bringing the separate together: Gottlieb Bingesbøll's Psychiatric Hospitals and Prison Projects**

Peter Thule Kristensen

*The Royal Danish Academy — Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation/  
University of Copenhagen*

In the 1840s and 1850s, the Danish architect Gottlieb Bingesbøll (1800-56) was responsible for designing three psychiatric hospitals in Denmark: Jyske Asyl, Kurhuset at Sankt Hans and Oringe Sindssygehospital. The hospitals represented a breakthrough in Danish psychiatry, initiated by senior physician Harald Selmer, and followed a set of principles in which architecture played a crucial role. According to Selmer, architecture should “do away with the unnatural isolation of the lunatic's life and once again place him in sensible interaction with the world. According to its fundamental concept, the treatment of the insane is not a question of separating, but of once again bringing the separate together.” The architectural design was thus founded on the principle of a regulated interaction between the individual and the community. The paper demonstrates how Bingesbøll's architectural approach meticulously addressed this concept across various spatial scales.

This aspiration for interaction stood in stark contrast to a competition entry for a prison at Vridsløse, which Gottlieb Bingesbøll designed during the same period. In this institution, the architectural design functioned as a manifestation of the principle of solitude, a concept aimed at fostering an environment conducive to introspection and inner peace. The spatial configuration of the institution was meticulously planned to ensure that inmates were separated from one another to the greatest extent possible, thereby creating an environment conducive to solitude and contemplation.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of Bingesbøll's psychiatric hospitals and his prison project in order to examine how architectural design in the mid-1800s was considered to have a very direct impact on the inner mental space of the occupant.

## The No-Go Zones and the No-Man's Lands

Pari Riahi

*College of Humanities and Fine Arts,  
University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This paper focuses on the Parisian Suburbs' open and public grounds located at the foot of housing projects, studying them as a complex amorphous terrain within the spectrum of public and private spaces. It argues that these grounds, conceived in the second half of the 20th century, and within the register of late modernism, shape a variegated continuum of built to land-scapes that are not so easily categorizable as neither public nor private spaces in recognizable patterns within the historic city. By inquiring into the notion of urban voids and tracking their history in different media, from photography and film to visual and drawn narratives (from autofiction to comic books), to music, the inquiry presents the many forms in which these voids appear, and the different roles they take within the sub and peri-urban zones. From large, designated spaces labeled as green space for the housing projects, to terrains vagues, to clandestine vegetable gardens, the range and scale of these voids vary and proliferate. In developing a taxonomy of these spaces and their conventional or unconventional roles and formal and material attributes, the question emerges of whether these voids – actively or passively – can play a significant role in the reconfiguration of the metropolis. These questions are particularly timely the projections and imaginaries for a greater Paris, now over two decades in the making, are coming into focus. Looking through the lens of privacy, this paper is interested in definitions of privacy and its opposites in a vast landscape that needs to be inventoried, understood, and explained in different terms than those of the historic city.

## **Boredom, Disprivacy, and Domesticity: From the (Cracked) Picture Window to Instagram**

Andreea Mihalache

*Richard McMahan School of Architecture  
Clemson University*

Seemingly unbeknownst to each other, the architect Bernard Rudofsky and the journalist John Keats published two books with strikingly similar titles in 1955 and 1957, respectively. Rudofsky's *Behind the Picture Window* consists of a series of essays written as incisive satires exposing the failures of what he calls the "American way of life" and, more broadly, the disappointments of the commodified postwar house. Based on newspaper articles and various studies published between 1944 and 1955, Keats's *The Crack in the Picture Window* is a fictional account of a generic middle-class family who purchases and moves into the only house they can afford, only to find themselves confined to an existence defined by monotony and financial precarity.

Despite their different formats, both works converge on a central theme: the deadening boredom engendered by suburban life. Rudofsky characterizes this condition through the notion of "disprivacy" – a term he coins but leaves undefined, intended to capture the peculiar dialectic of voyeurism and surveillance embedded in mid-century suburban architecture. Keats likewise identifies this dynamic in his critique of suburban domesticity. In the closing chapter of his book, titled "On Boredom and Disprivacy," Rudofsky asserts that "Defense against boredom ought to have the highest priority in our fight for survival." (p. 197)

I suggest that "disprivacy" indicates the separation of the self from the world and accounts for the modern collapse of different levels of intimacy into a single, flattened layer. Rather than indicating the absence of privacy, "disprivacy" designates a fabricated and performative privacy – one designed for showcase, most visibly through the midcentury picture window. Furthermore, "disprivacy" provides a conceptual framework for interrogating both physical and virtual devices that reconfigure cultural understandings of domesticity, privacy, and boredom, such as the front lawn, the artificial fireplace, the Zoom backdrop, and the Instagram shot.

# Notes from the Underground: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ecologies of the Subterranean

## Session chairs:

Silvia Balzan, University of Manchester

Giulia Scotto, ETH Zurich

Subterranean spaces have long oscillated between refuge and threat, promise and dispossession: cellars and shelters, mines and vaults, tunnels and pipes, archives and bunkers. This panel approaches “the underground” not only as a physical stratum but also as a cultural and political figure, an arena where modernity’s infrastructures and imaginaries take material form, where labour and risk are often rendered invisible, and where ecological processes are engineered, exploited, or made to appear controllable. In Dostoevsky’s novel *Notes from the Underground* (1864), the subterranean served as a metaphor for human isolation, alienation, and resistance to rationalist modernity. Historian of technology Rosalind Williams, in her 1990 book, whose title borrows from Dostoevsky’s work, interpreted fictional undergrounds (such as those depicted in Jules Verne’s and H.G. Wells’ novels) as offering a prophetic lens on life in a technology-dominated world, foregrounding the fragility of finite ecosystems and the technical consequences of “the human empire on earth.”

Bringing architectural history into dialogue with adjacent fields, the session asks how underground environments mediate power and knowledge, how they organise comfort and resource flows, enable technocratic solutions to crises of the surface city, and sustain extractive regimes. Encompassing diverse geographies and scales, the selected papers define the underground as a thermopolitical and geopolitical medium that stores, cools, and circulates fuel, heat, data, and water while also sedimenting the afterlives of Cold War security, colonial expansion, and racialised extraction. The selected papers “unearth” how subterranean built environments, from domestic basements to permafrost landscapes, mined caverns,

and gold infrastructures, materialise competing visions of futurity and how these visions are increasingly strained by environmental threats and uneven social repair.

## **Cold Cellar, Warm Cellar, Cold War(m) Cellar**

Frans Saraste  
*Aalto University*

During the period between 1870 and 1970, Finland industrialised, gained independence from Russia in 1917, turned westward during the interwar period, fought the USSR in WW2, and during the Cold War established a bilateral trade relationship with them. During this period, Helsinki's apartment buildings evolved from stove heating, to centrally heating, to district heating; from domestically fuelled by wood, to fuelled by British coke, to fuelled by Soviet oil and Polish coal fines. Cellar spaces evolved along with these developments.

In 'Media Hot and Cold' media studies scholar Nicole Starosielski introduced the term thermoculture for analysing the cultural meanings of heat and cold. Building off of this concept, I apply thermocultures in framing the architectural developments of mediating heat, where historical thermocultures are understood as the broader spatial and material configuration linking fuel source, heating, the thermal experience and exhaust. As the source of heat was displaced from room to cellar and finally to a district heating plant, the thermal conditions of the cellar evolved from cool to warm and finally to an array of mechanically warmed and cooled spaces.

Viewing them as materio-spatial nodes within their respective thermocultures, this paper compares three case study cellars. Each cellar is from a particular apartment building in Helsinki, one from 1885, one from 1926, and one from 1965. For each one, it asks what is the function of the cellar in relation to the sequence from fuel source to comfort? What do changes in the cellar say about culture of heat more generally? Through systems mapping and spatial analysis of archival material, it compares the thermal, material and spatial qualities of the cellars while accounting for the new roles they took, the thermal experiences they provided, and their functions relative to the above ground spaces they served.

## Nowhere to Go but Down: GECUS and Subterranean Urbanism

Sarah Nichols

*EPFL*

Between 1933 to 1975, Armenian-French architect Édouard Utudjian spearheaded a sustained campaign to position the underground as an essential dimension of modern urbanism. Through the organization Groupe d'étude et de coordination de l'urbanisme souterrain (GECUS) Utudjian launched a journal dedicated to subterranean planning, convened five international conferences, and cultivated a network of architects, engineers, and politicians whose influence eventually shaped Cold War urban imaginaries. GECUS promoted the underground as an abstract, unspecific space – an ever-present condition awaiting exploitation – framed as a technological and spatial solution to the crises of the surface city.

This paper examines the ideas, methods, and legacy of GECUS, analyzing how its ostensibly radical visions oscillated between utopian speculation and technocratic pragmatism. Using transhistorical modes of argumentation and design, the group approached the underground as a universal constant; a condition that is always there and that only becomes specific through the production of space within it. Following from this, GECUS concentrated their work on their home base of Paris, positioning it as a “world capital” to develop subterranean experiments replicable in other rapidly growing cities.

Yet, as their manifestoes gave way to built projects, the group's visions often collapsed into what Paul Rabinow termed the “middling modernism” of flattened, managerial solutions. By historicizing GECUS's imagined and built work, this contribution will situate this little-known but influential group within broader modernist postwar urban histories.

## **Mountains of Gold. Undergrounds of Swiss Banks in the Alps, 1937-1945**

Ludo Groen

*TU Delft*

It was in the first, frosty months of 1937, when the treasurer of the Swiss National Bank, a man by the name of Erich Blumer, was sent on an errand from Bern to the Alps, to search for 'a safe storage place, in peacetime and in the event of war.' His eyes fell on a military fortress at the foot of the Gotthard Pass, which he reckoned was both infrastructurally connected and topographically isolated. Until then, Swiss banks had kept their gold reserves safely in vaults in the city, but with the advances in aerial warfare, they discovered a more secure, affordable and spacious place for their gold: the Alps. Walking in the footsteps of the bank's treasurer Blumer, this paper describes the initiation, construction, and operation of the National Bank's very first Alpine gold depot in Andermatt's Fort Bühl. It not only presents for the first time evidence of a long-cherished Swiss myth, but more importantly, it reveals the dark side of these undergrounds, how they gave space to activities that could not bear the light of day. It was in the bowels of the mountains, where no building permits needed to be acquired, where the Swiss National Bank used public money for the benefit of their private shareholders, where spies working for Nazi Germany infiltrated, and where during the Second World War looted Nazi gold was hoarded.

## The Geological Clouds: Furnaces and Servers, Limestone and Data

Jia Weng

*University of Tennessee*

This paper examines the history of Iron Mountain's West Pennsylvania data center, a subterranean facility connecting air-borne digital clouds to Earth. Founded as Iron Mountain Atomic Storage Corporation in 1951, the company transformed a deserted limestone mine into nuclear bunkers and storage vaults for consumer files from major corporations like Exxon and Shell. Over time, these caverns evolved into refrigerated vaults housing analog and digital media, including tapes, microfilms, art pieces, hard drivers, and active data servers. Scholars such as Brian Michael Murphy and Ting-hui Hu have explored the Cold War lineage of the site, highlighting its psychological and physical ties to security.

This paper digs deeper into the geology of shifting digital clouds, focusing on heat regulation across different periods: steel production furnaces, refrigeration of analog files since 1952, and cooling systems for data servers since the 2010s. Through heat dynamics, it challenges the notion of subterranean spaces as isolated and protective environments. Iron Mountain's sustainability narrative is complicated by its reliance on a geothermal system drawing millions of gallons daily from an adjacent subterranean lake at 53F, raising questions about its ecological openness. Its subterranean caverns were not isolated interiors but porous infrastructures, constantly exchanging heat, water, and energy with their geological surrounds. By situating Iron Mountain within histories of extraction and cloud storage, this paper reframes the underground not as a refuge but as a site of entanglement where industrial afterlives, digital futures, and subterranean imaginations converge. It emerges as a palimpsest of subterranean ecologies, where industrial fire, refrigerated archives, and digital clouds leave overlapping strata of heat and waste.

## **Toxic Thresholds of a Subterranean Palimpsest: Extractive ecologies, slow violence and the question of care**

Sabina Favaro (Speaker)

*Wits Mining Institute*

Sasha Tamlyn Naidu (Co-author)

*University of Copenhagen*

Beneath Johannesburg's bustling surface lies a fragmented subterranean realm – an underground palimpsest layered with histories of extraction, displacement, and ecological estrangement. This paper unfolds the threshold where the hidden labyrinths of Witwatersrand's gold mines meet the city above, weaving archival cartographies with aerial imagery and embodied field encounters. Here, the earth's veins – pierced and carved for gold – trace wounds not only in the rock but across bodies, communities, and waters long subjected to toxic and racialised violences. Thick mapping the invisible – contaminated aquifers seeping poison beneath manicured urban facades, artisanal miners navigating shafts of neglect and risk, and evolving landscapes of reclamation and ruin – invites a reckoning with subterranean violences as living ecologies, exposing the entanglement of material severance with social abandonment, and a politics of erasures and extraction. Tracing subterranean ecologies highlights slow violence as a form of incremental, often invisible harm that compounds over generations, embedded in material severance and socio-political neglect. This slow violence manifests in acid mine drainage, land subsidence, and toxic dust dispersal, affecting communities and ecosystems. Mapping the erasure of care in dominant mining and urban governance poses urgent ethical questions: Who cares for the subterranean commons long marred by extractive violence? How might attentiveness to these toxic thresholds inspire deeper ecological responsibility and justice? This inquiry moves beyond technical representations to provoke a politics of care attuned to the layered aesthetics, invisibilities, and materialities of the underground. It invites reflection on alternative imaginaries and reparative practices that recognise and respond to the complex socio-ecological entanglements beneath Johannesburg's urban fabric. In weaving together extractive ecologies, slow violence, and care, this paper contributes to critical understandings of subterranean spaces as sites of violence, resistance, and possibility, advancing the discourse on the politics, aesthetics, and ethics of the underground in postcolonial extractive landscapes.

# The Reception of Gothic Architecture in Italy, 13.00–1700: Disapproval, Indifference, Appreciation?

## Session chairs:

Gianluca Belli, Università degli Studi di Firenze  
Pieter Martens, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

While much has been written about the negative reception of gothic architecture in Renaissance Italy, the positive appreciation there of the architectural culture of northern Europe has scarcely been investigated. Yet there are manifold indications that the first-hand experience of the architecture, cities and ways of living in northern Europe elicited appreciative responses from Italian travellers, merchants, architects and patrons. This is particularly evident for regions such as Flanders that were intensely travelled by Italian merchants fascinated by the fine artworks and luxury objects produced there. This session aims to explore to what extent not only the arts from the north (Belozerskaya 2002, Nuttall 2004) but also its architecture was positively appreciated south of the Alps.

We are not only interested in the favourable appraisal of the formal vocabulary associated with the gothic style, but more broadly in the reception of a foreign architectural culture, as expressed in writings, interior decorations and manners of dwelling, or in fictitious architectures imagined in paintings and prints. For example, many interiors in Renaissance Florence were decorated with Flemish objects, including tapestries or paintings depicting northern, gothic buildings, as in Hans Memling's *Last Judgement* triptych for Angelo Tani's chapel in the Badia Fiesolana.

The adherence to gothic architecture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy has already been studied for specific contexts, such as Venice, Milan, and Southern Italy, nuancing the opposition of "Gothic vs. Classic" (Wittkower 1974). Yet the well-known criticisms by Filarete, Vasari, Raphael and others of the so-called *maniera tedesca* still overshadow the more appreciative comments on the *architettura oltremontana* by writers such the humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini, even though studies on the

phenomenon of “Renaissance Gothic” (Chatenet & De Jonge 2011, Kavalier 2012) have convincingly challenged the conventional view inherited from Vasari in which the late gothic in northern Europe is seen as inferior or retrograde in comparison with the new Italianate *all'antica* style.

Building on this historiography, we invite papers that shed new light on the appreciation and possible impact in Italy of gothic architecture from northern Europe or elsewhere. How was this region's architectural culture understood, or misunderstood? Which qualities, positive or negative, were associated with its manners of building and dwelling? Was the northern gothic perceived as inherently different from the local gothic which persisted in projects such as Ghiberti's sacristy in Santa Trinita in Florence or Filarete's *Ospedale* in Milan? Papers may focus on all aspects of architectural culture, including formal and constructional aspects, interior decorations and manners of living, and the *fortuna critica* of northern treatises in Italy. They may consider travelling patrons, architects, and engineers, as well as other vehicles for the import of foreign architectural ideas, such as texts, drawings, building materials, and paintings depicting architecture.

## **Flemish influences on the furnishings of Florentine residences during the Renaissance**

Claudia Tripodi

*Università degli Studi di Firenze*

This contribution aims to offer some reflections on the influence of Flemish tastes and models on domestic furnishings and decorative culture in some prominent residences in Renaissance Florence, and on the meaning behind this influence. These reflections are based on the analysis of a rich documentary source spanning the entire 15th century, namely the extensive and varied private correspondence sent and received by members of the Medici family before the establishment of the Duchy, preserved at the Archivio di Stato in Florence in the 'Mediceo Avanti il Principato' fonds.

Among the letters concerning trade and banking relations between Flanders and Florence from the first half of the 15th century, some seem to focus on the acquisition or even *ad hoc* commissioning of Flemish-style furnishings for the homes of the Florentine elite, particularly those of the Medici circle. Starting from these specific indications, we will attempt to show and discuss how, as early as in the 1430s and 1440s, the premises were already present of that imported phenomenon which would become more evident at the end of the century, in the well-known commissions by Agnolo Tani and Tommaso Portinari (to cite only the most famous cases), of Flemish-style devotional panels made by the leading local painters. The inclusion of gothic elements, borrowed from the aristocratic circles of the north, alongside the more familiar motifs of Renaissance classicism, may be a further indication of the influence which court life exerted, after all, in the Florentine context: a context that was certainly mercantile, marked by strong social mobility, and formally republican, but in fact increasingly oriented, in the era of Lorenzo the Magnificent, towards a princely management of power and propaganda.

## Architectural dialogues in Hans Memling's Last Judgment Triptych

Alicia Rojas Costa  
*Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

Had it reached its intended destination, Hans Memling's monumental *Last Judgment Triptych* would undoubtedly have provoked numerous reactions within the Florentine community. The unfortunate fate of the triptych deprived us of the possibility of knowing how it would have appeared in its intended setting: the Brunelleschian church of the Badia Fiesolana. Painted by Memling around 1470 for Angelo Tani, head of the Medici bank in Bruges, and his wife Caterina Tanagli, the work was originally destined for the chapel of St Michael in the Badia. However, this triptych – together with other goods transported on the galleon *San Matteo* on its way to Florence – was plundered by Gdańsk privateers commanded by Paul Beneke.

This paper will address two overlooked aspects of the *Last Judgment Triptych's* painted architecture. Firstly, it will focus on the depiction of the Heavenly Jerusalem as a monumental gothic portal, an architectural feature that has never been studied independently within this painting. An unexplored dialogue emerged between this gothic portal and the plain, concentric mouldings on the exterior wings. The decision to depict the entrance to the eternal afterlife as a gothic space certainly conveyed much more meaning than what is first perceived, especially in an environment which evidently favoured an *all'antica* style. As I will argue, this gothic inclusion was not only a sign of the cultural exchanges taking place, but also evidence of Flanders' architectural development, since Memling was drawing direct inspiration from his nearest surroundings. Secondly, the painted architecture would have also established a dialogue with the real, built architecture of the Badia Fiesolana. This is particularly evident when the painted mouldings are compared to the actual round-headed *pietra serena* arches of the Badia chapel entrances. By analysing these interactions, this paper seeks to shed light on the Florentine reception of gothic architecture as it was being developed north of the Alps.

## **Bringing the Brussels cityscape to Italy around 1500: Pietrino de Villa and his artistic commissions for the church of Sant'Agostino in Chieri**

Philip Muijtjens

*Université catholique de Louvain*

The city of Brussels served as an important nodal point for many significant commercial, political, artistic, and architectural connections between the Low Countries and the Italian peninsula in the fifteenth century. In addition, it was widely known for its iconic town hall, the Coudenberg palace, and its impressive city gates. This resulted in the proliferation of (schematic) representations of its architecture in the Mediterranean World through the transportation of paintings, objects, and drawings. While depictions of Netherlandish cities abounded in fifteenth-century Italy, it is often very difficult to document their actual dispersion across the peninsula in this period. Based on archival evidence, this paper reconstructs the life and activities of the Italian merchant Pietrino de Villa and how a panel painting of the city of Brussels was sent by him to the church of Sant'Agostino in his hometown Chieri in the 1490s. Apart from its complex iconography, which gives a surprisingly detailed rendering of the Netherlandish city, its relocation to Chieri reveals more about the networks which enabled such an exchange of images of Brussels' architecture. As such, this case study not only presents new factual evidence but also allows further reflection on how schematic renderings of Netherlandish architecture were prepared and received in Italy around 1500.

## **Material consistency and gothic legacy in the baroque renovation project of San Martino al Cimino (1646-1653)**

Giordano Ocelli

*Bibliotheca Hertziana — Max Planck Institute for Art History*

The renovation of the small town of San Martino al Cimino near Viterbo (Italy), begun in 1646 by Pope Innocent X and the Pamphilj family, constitutes an exemplary case of urban management and reuse. It was sparked by the processes of new feudalisation and political crisis caused by the Wars of Castro which were fought in the provincial territory of the Papal States in the 1640s.

The town's mediaeval Cistercian nucleus was extended starting with water and road infrastructure works, for which considerable amounts of local labour and local materials were used, as attested by the contracts and building site instructions. The sources also show that the construction process was shared between the feudal lords and the local community: the overall project was supervised for the Pamphilj family by Virgilio Spada, the Oratorian priest and papal administrator who was also an esteemed connoisseur of architecture, and elaborated by architects Marcan-tonio de Rossi and Francesco Borromini, who drew the designs which were then materially executed on site by the master builders and future tenants.

The renovation of the church, the palace and the town walls started in the baroque period, but gave the town its characteristic medieval appearance. Evidently, the whole project was affected by a 'quest for the origins' approach, reflected in the 'revival'-style development of the medieval building fabric through the use of local stones (*peperino* and *ciminite*, already used in the 13th-century settlement) and models which were adapted to the new principles of baroque urban planning. The need for locally extracted resources and the adoption of traditional technical solutions in the building process testify to a productive backwardness compared to Rome in terms of means and labour, but also highlight the search for representative models in wartime, as well as the economic and material sustainability of a small-scale urban project.

Track E  
Histories for the Present

Saturday 13.00–15.00  
M2, building 1427-246

## Roundtable: AH meets AI

### Chairs

Markus Lähteenmäki (Architectural Histories)

Min Kyung Lee (Architectural Histories)

### Participants

Claire Zimmerman (JSAH / University of Toronto)

Anna-Maria Meister (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology / Kunsthistorisches  
Institute in Florence)

Łukasz Stanek (University of Michigan)

Richard J. Williams (University of Edinburgh)

Laura Nica (University of Westminster)

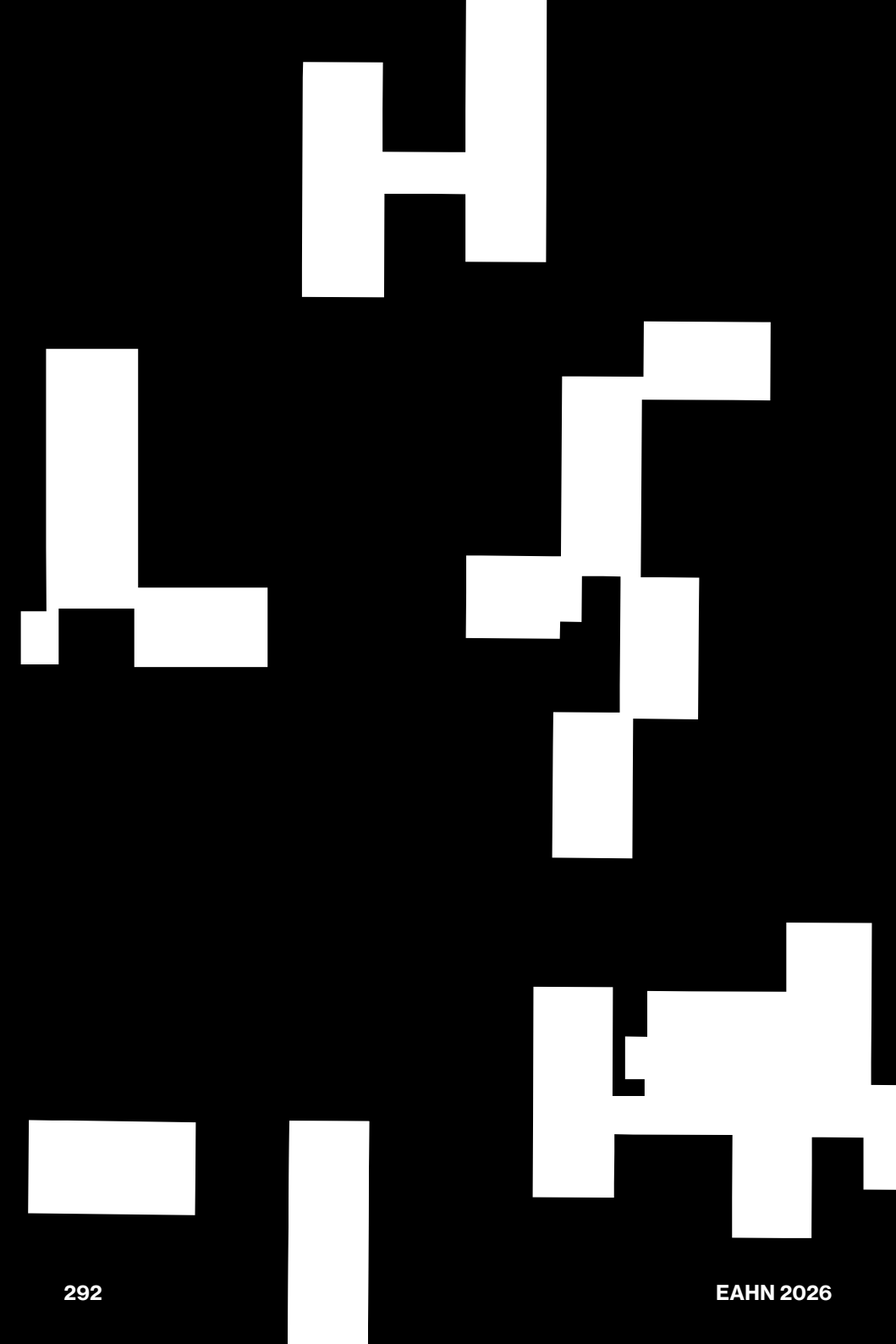
Automation, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI), or even alien intelligence, the AI label is under the spotlight for a variety of reasons. AI challenges long established forms, institutions, ethics and politics of creating, managing, interpreting, distributing and evaluating information, that is, how knowledge is produced – the basis of the shared practice that holds Architectural History (AH) together. It also shapes the built environment and the processes of its design in unexpected ways. The second episode of a two-part session co-chaired with JSAH at the SAH Mexico City conference, this roundtable tackles epistemic, social and material challenges as well as possibilities created by machine learning. It zooms out from the practical guidelines, tasks and tools to discuss more broadly what is the role of AI for AH and what is the role of AH in the age of AI?

If today's AI era represents a different epistemic regime, what principles will constitute our shared work, and which new ones must we establish? What do we sustain as a scholarly community in the face of information automation and algorithmic interpretation? How can architectural historians contribute to thinking of the future of society saturated by AI? Architectural historians already work in ways that engage material, spatial, and visual analysis in ways that AI can't, and are particu-

larly aware of the material consequences of the digital realm.

The panel picks up from the conversations in Mexico City and brings together scholars to discuss two main threads on AI in relation to AH: How AI affects the production and validation of AH? What does AH tell us about the material consequences of AI? The conversation is organised around the following topics, each opened up by an architectural historian, then extended for broader debate.

1. Scales – From personal space and privacy to a planetary project of knowledge and urbanization, what are the practical and ethical scales of AI? How are the scales of AI in research and reception uneven and unequal?
2. Infrastructures – what are the territories and built environments of AI from data centres to classrooms?
3. Materials and materiality – What are the material effects of and the resources fed into and produced by AI? What are its effects to processuality and labour?
4. Ethics – what are the ethics of AI both in terms of analysis and production of visual and textual information?
5. Publics – What are the publics created through and with with AI and how does it redefine our social relationships within our community and beyond?



# Special Interest Groups

Wednesday 11.00–15.00  
Mogens Zieler Stuen, building 1422-125

## **Building Word Image** Experiencing the Domestic

How can architectural historians still contribute to studying domestic environments by considering the stories, impressions, and experiences of those who dwell in or pass through them? Can we comprehend a space through such subjective experiences? What are the potentials as well as the limits of such approaches to historiography? And how can we reconstruct spatial histories from textual or oral traces beyond drawings or visual evidence? While studies on domestic space, domesticity, and housing proliferate, these remain central themes in our discipline and beyond, with the term “domestic” acquiring diverse and ever-changing meanings over time. After completing our first four-year project with a Field Note article in *AH*, reading domestic interiors through a synchronic object–media lens, this Interest Group session investigates domesticity from a subjective perspective: that of those who have imagined, encountered, or lived in such spaces, from shoppers to migrants, but also developers, labourers, tourists, artists, writers, and more. The session is open to all chronologies and geographies and is especially interested in thinking through the following ideas:

- Alternative understandings and definitions of the domestic that come from personal and experiential perspectives on architecture, including examples of interior adaptation and subjective views of space.
- Methods and approaches to the study of domesticity that allow us to rethink spaces seen as “domestic” (narrative, oral history, drawing, digital work...).
- Historiographical and/or theoretical challenges in dealing with subjective (hi) stories and the potential divergences emerging from the narrator’s experience and the author’s positionality.

Our upcoming EAHN meeting in Aarhus aims to open up new directions for investigating domestic space. To this end, we ask participants to offer insights into their research and methods by bringing along either a draft or portion of a text that they are working on, or any other piece of primary material (e.g. image or other) that

we can use to interpret or problematise as “domestic” and discuss its potential contribution.

### **Roundtable Programme**

- 11.00 Welcome and Introduction by SIG Coordinators
- 11.15 Short Presentations of Research Material by Participants
- 12.45 Lunch Together
- 13.45 Roundtable Discussion for Future Publishing Strategies and Opportunities
- 15.00 Closing and Informal Networking

### **Coordinators**

Gregorio Astengo (IE University)  
Rebecca Carrai (KU Leuven)

### **Contributing Members**

Guillermo S. Arsuaga (Princeton University)  
Charlotte Rottiers (ETH Zurich)  
Janno Martens (KU Leuven)  
Roxanne Goldberg (ETH Zurich)  
Yosuke Nakamoto (ETH Zurich)  
Alborz Dianat (University College Dublin)

Wednesday 11.00–13.00  
Richard Mortensen Stuen, building  
1422-122

## **On Vanished Buildings**

### Erasing Architecture: Past and Present Histories

This meeting, titled “Erasing Architecture: Past and Present Histories,” focuses on the way artefacts – an object, a photograph, a text, a document, among others – speak of absence. Contributors are invited to introduce an artefact asking: How does it witness absence? Where do you situate the object within canonical architectural history? What history does absence tell? These fragments, as part of the contributors’ research, will be approached as traces of absence to unpack the hidden historical narratives embedded within them. The meeting will include one-slide presentations introducing the selected artefacts to be followed by a collective discussion on the problematics of writing through absence; the limits and possibilities of history and historiography in an unequal world that continues to create absences; the deontological risks around the erasure of architecture amid a global ongoing destructions; and challenges on methods when working with traces of erased architectures. As the first official meeting of this group as an EAHN Interest Group, the aim is to establish a shared ground for delineating critical methods and approaches as strategies to be further explored in the group’s following meetings.

## **Workshop Programme**

- 11.00 Introduction of the Workshop's theme and Update on the Group's activities
- 11.15 'Object' Pitches: A round of participants sharing their selected object and story behind the object
- 12.15 Collective Discussion on Methods, Approaches, and Challenges Working with Archival Fragments
- 12.50 Closing Reflections and Next Steps
- 13.00 Informal Networking

## **Coordinators**

Savia Palate (University of Cyprus)

Linda Stagni (ETH Zurich)

## **Contributing Members**

Alena Beth Rieger (The Oslo School of Architecture and Design)

Chenchen Yan (Princeton University)

Claire Zimmerman (University of Toronto)

Elettra Carnelli (ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences)

Fabio Gigone (Centre for Privacy Studies - University of Copenhagen / DIS - Study Abroad in Scandinavia)

Laurent Koetz (École d'architecture de la ville & des territoires Paris-Est)

Nele De Raedt (UCLouvain)

Sean Silvia (Princeton University)

Yosuke Nakamoto (ETH Zurich)

Wednesday 11.00–12.30  
M2.3, building 1420-228

# **The Connective Histories of the Eastern Mediterranean**

## **Introductory Meeting and Open House**

The Mediterranean has been widely employed as both a geographical and conceptual framework by art, architectural and urban historians. But there is still much to explore: The Connective Histories of the Eastern Mediterranean Special Interest Group seeks to bring together scholars and practitioners in EAHN to critically explore the interconnectedness between Europe and the Mediterranean Rim as a place of intercultural mobility and exchange. It focuses on the Eastern Mediterranean where diverse cultures and communities of Europe, the Balkans, North Africa, and the Middle East have interacted throughout centuries. The interest group aims to explore the hitherto understudied aspects of their dynamic relationship and how the Mediterranean, as a physical reality but also an elusive notion, played a part in the formation of the built environment across the region. This will be the first meeting of the “Connective Histories of the Eastern Mediterranean” special interest group. Our aim is to introduce us and the recent work by our members to EAHN members and conference participants.

### **Meeting Programme**

- 11.00 Welcome and introduction
- 11.10 Short presentations by the group members on their recent work
- 11.40 Discussions
- 12.30 Informal networking

### **Coordinators**

Belgin Turan Özkaya (Middle East Technical University)

### **Contributing Members**

Belgin Turan Özkaya (Middle East Technical University)

Konstantina Kalfa (ASFA)

Fatma Tanış (TU Delft)

Wednesday 11.00–13.00  
Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422-132

## **Urban Representations**

### How did we get here and where are we heading? Assessing the field of urban representation

‘The Past in the Present’ is the theme of the EAHN conference in Aarhus in 2026 – in response, the Urban Representations Interest Group is seeking to briefly review its conversations and activities to date, to learn about ongoing projects, and ultimately to reflect upon the current and future shape of our shared field of inquiry.

Our event at Aarhus will be in two sections, with an emphasis on participation and interaction. Following a short overview of the group’s wide-ranging activities over the past fifteen years – at the biennial conference of the EAHN since 2010, but also at the annual meetings organized by the Associazione Italiana di Storia Urbana (AISU) – our workshop will take the form of an open-ended conversation, designed to generate discussion among individuals working on subjects within the wide rubric of urban representation, and reflecting on sources, interpretive lenses, methodologies, technologies, positionality and visual media.

This workshop aims to gather questions and positions on areas including, but not limited to, ongoing avenues of research, critical reflections on current reading, and new or forthcoming publications and projects in the field of urban representation. Attendees will have an opportunity to speak briefly in an informal setting while simultaneously generating responses, connections, parallels and contrasts among their peers.

## **Workshop Programme**

- 11.00 Welcome and introduction
- 11.10 Brief participant contributions: current research, readings, publications, and projects
- 11.45 Collective discussion: responses, connections, parallels, and contrasts
- 12.45 Closing remarks and planning next steps

## **Coordinators**

Miriam Paeslack (University at Buffalo)

Ines Tolic (University of Bologna)

## **Contributing Members**

Lisa Godson (National College of Art and Design)

Conor Lucey (University College Dublin)

John Montague (American University of Sharjah)

Freek Schmidt (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Wednesday 12.00–15.00  
M1, building 1427-149

## **Histories in Conflict**

### Architecture in Extremis: The Return of the Dual State

In 1938, the Jewish labor lawyer Ernst Fraenkel fled Berlin, with a manuscript he had secretly drafted. Published in English in 1941 as *The Dual State*, it described the Nazi regime as a system in which arbitrary power did not suspend the rule of law but operated through and alongside and within the ordinary apparatus of administration. The model has returned with force in recent readings of Erdoğanism, Putinism, and Trumpist America, and it sits productively next to a wider set of contemporary diagnoses: the hollowing of participatory democracy under oligarchic capture, the retreat of the state, the rise of neo- or techno-feudal rentierism, and the renewed political traction of messianic and eschatological theologies, from American evangelical and Zionist settler movements to Hindu nationalism in India. The workshop is conceived as a collective laboratory for formulating historical questions adequate to architecture in this moment of extremity: What role does architecture play within this reordering, and which ideological operations are at work in the buildings, territorial regimes, and visual cultures of an order in formation? How does architectural history write the present when the present resists the categories the discipline has inherited, and what becomes of heritage and its custodial claims? Which archives and periodizations still hold, and where might the field need to look beyond its established borders? A brief dossier will be circulated beforehand; the session will combine working discussion with planning for longer outputs, including a reader and a possible conference. Scholars working on any period or geography are welcome to participate and contribute to the discussion.

## **Workshop Programme**

- 12.00 Welcome and introductions
- 12.15 Short participant presentations
- 13.00 Break
- 13.15 Discussion and brainstorming
- 14.30 Concluding remarks and next steps

## **Coordinators**

Alona Nitzan-Shiftan (Technion IIT, gta/ETH Zurich)  
Demetra Vogiatzaki (gta/ETH Zurich)

## **Contributing Members**

Kenny Cupers (University of Basel)  
Maarten Delbeke (gta/ETH Zurich)  
Vanessa Grossman (UPenn)  
Meredith TenHoor (Pratt SoA)  
Claire Zimmerman (University of Toronto)

Wednesday 13.00–15.00  
Richard Mortensen Stuen, building 1422-122

## **Children Matter**

### Hide and Seek: Where are the Children in Architectural History?

This workshop aims to foster a critical discussion, both thematic and methodological, on the role of childhood and children in the built environment. Children, despite their visibility in architectural design and discourse, remain largely unaddressed in architectural historiography, having often been confined to a domestic and feminine sphere, stereotypically regarded as of lesser importance. At the core of the workshop lies the question of how children's perspectives and lived experiences might inform architectural history and, more broadly, architectural research. How have children been addressed in architectural historiography? What does a child-centered perspective mean in architectural history? What are the challenges of writing an architectural history of childhood? By engaging with these questions, the workshop interrogates the historical visibility of children in architectural discourse while fostering scholarly exchange and interdisciplinary collaboration.

## **Workshop Programme**

- 13.00 Welcome
- 13.15 Panel Session
- 14.30 Roundtable

## **Coordinator**

Maria Kouvari (King's College London)

## **Contributing Members**

- Joy Burgess (Liverpool University)
- Matilde Kautsky (KTH Royal Institute of Technology)
- Anna Myjak-Pycia (ETH Zurich)
- Amy F. Ogata (University of Southern California)
- Styliani Rossikopoulou Pappa (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
- Tino Schlinzig (ETH Zurich)
- Johanna Sluiter (University of Bern)
- Kostas Tsiambaos (National Technical University of Athens)

Wednesday 13.00–15.00  
M2.4, building 1420-226

# **Gender in Architecture, Landscape and Urban Design**

## **Methods for Researching Collaboration**

Feminist scholarship has for generations now contested the overexposure of singular designers in the histories of architecture and called for a greater understanding of how collaborations shaped and keep on shaping buildings, built environments and landscapes. This historiographical expansion allows for a much more diverse and rich understanding of who – and what – shaped our world, focusing not only on the ‘usual suspects’ of the canonized white man designer, but also involving other agents of change, such as women architects, residents, builders and others who are active parts of forming buildings, cities and landscapes. This workshop will ask: what methods and approaches are necessary to undertake this epistemological expansion and how can we deal with archival silences? The workshop will have an interactive format and is geared towards sharing reflections on methodological approaches and their limitations and potentials.

## **Workshop Programme**

- 13.00 Welcome  
Panel with early career scholars on Methods for Researching  
Collaboration and Gender in the histories of Architecture, Landscape  
and Urban design
- 14.15 Exploring Collaborative Approaches. Presentations and discussion of  
recent publications
- 15.00 Informal Networking

## **Coordinators**

Svava Riesto (University of Copenhagen)  
Luca Csepely-Knorr (University of Liverpool)

## **Contributing Members**

Joy Burgess (University of Liverpool)  
Alexander David Clark (University of Copenhagen)  
Ruo Jia (Pratt Institute)  
İpek Mehmetoğlu (University College Dublin)  
Patricia Semeniuk (University of Kassel)  
Anna Weichsel (Portland State University)

Wednesday 13.00–15.00  
Preben Hornung Stuen, building 1422-132

## **Migration and Architecture**

### Migration Pedagogies

This interest group session serves two purposes. The first is introductory: to meet current and new members, and present on-going research and projects in the area of migration and the built environment. We have been meeting monthly for two years, and this conference is an occasion to review those conversations and to reassess current and new directions for the group. The second purpose is a focused discussion of pedagogical topics, methods and goals. The aim is to explore together theories, concepts, readings, and assignments at the intersection of migration and architecture. We will pre-circulate sample syllabi as a starting point to a conversation that will also include subjects related to opportunities, such as summer schools, site visits, collaborative grants, public partnerships, etc. in the development of migration pedagogies and teaching subjects.

### **Workshop Programme**

- 13.00 Welcome and introductions of meeting participants  
Updates on research, workshops, symposia, conferences, and grant proposals
- 13.45 Overview of pedagogies dossier
- 14.00 Introduction and discussion of migration pedagogies
- 15.00 Closing remarks

### **Coordinators**

Min Kyung Lee (Bryn Mawr College)

Robin Schuldenfrei (Courtauld Institute, University of London)

### **Contributing Members**

Andrea Canclini (Lebanese American University)

Maria Louisa Palumbo (University Mohammed VI Polytechnic)

Olga Touloumi (Bard College)

Wednesday 13.00–15.00  
M1.1, building 1421-118

# On Housing

## Researching Housing in Bulk

Housing is, *par excellence*, a matter of quantity. In every city, housing shapes the urban fabric through its sheer prevalence relative to other building types. Moreover, in contrast to other typologies (administrative buildings, malls, hospitals, universities, etc.), this vast majority of the world's built environment is rarely a planned artifact. More often than not, it is driven by small-scale private initiative and developed both through formal and informal/illegal processes. Today, housing has become a financial asset – an investment sector produced through economic logics that rarely involve centralized planning. Despite its vastness and apparent banality, this output's historical integration into real estate profit structures, the histories of its production, and the forms of domesticity it offers, are pivotal for addressing a range of important questions. These include, for instance, class formation, the material culture of a given community, the politics of consensus-building, and processes of social and gender inclusion (or exclusion). A critical historical perspective must therefore treat 'housing in bulk' as a valid object of inquiry. But how do we engage with such a vast and largely uncharted subject? In the absence of centrally maintained archives – whether state, municipal, or privately held by real estate companies – where can one turn to better understand housing in bulk? How can we approach such archives, when they exist, and the sheer scale of the data they might yield? Can we develop in-bulk research approaches that match in-bulk housing production? Previous meetings of the Interest Group on Housing (IGH) have explored research and writing tools, such as microhistory, that may prove relevant here; other valuable approaches might include oral history and emerging digital methods involving machine learning and GIS.

This year's IGH meeting will explore these possibilities – both methodological and theoretical – without limiting the scope of inquiry, geographically or chronologically, with the aim of fostering new frameworks for understanding housing in bulk and its broader social, political, and economic implications. We encourage existing and prospective members to share their experiences, approaches and concerns, contribute to the discussion and envisage future developments for historical research on housing and its conditions of (mass) production.

### **Meeting Programme**

- 13.00 Welcome (Agarez and Kalfa)
- 13.15 Introductions (contributing members introducing themselves - 3-5' minutes each)
- 13.45 Discussion
- 14.15 Closing remarks (Agarez and Kalfa)
- 14.30 Informal networking - end of meeting

### **Coordinators**

Ricardo Costa Agarez (Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon)

Konstantina Kalfa (Institute for Mediterranean Studies / Athens School of Fine Arts)

### **Contributing Members**

Miles Glendinning (University of Edinburgh)

Chiara Ingrosso (Università della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

Dana Vais (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca)

Wednesday 13.00–15.00  
M2.3, building 1420-228

## **Postmodernism**

# The Historic City Renegotiated: Intersections of Postmodern Architecture and the Preservation Movement

Against the background of the anti-demolition protests and preservation activism of the 1970s – such as the public outcry following the demolition of Les Halles in Paris in 1971, the Covent Garden Redevelopment protest march in 1972, and the Amsterdam Nieuwmarkt Riots of 1975 – a segment of what we now call postmodern architecture strategically aligned itself with a broader shift in urban renewal discourse toward the preservation of historic city centres. Then perceived as a victory for heritage conservation over radical urban redevelopment schemes, the European Architectural Heritage Year of 1975 marked a high point in the attention given to the preservation of townscapes and city quarters. The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage and the Amsterdam Declaration, which advocated the recognition of heritage conservation as an integral part of urban planning, profoundly influenced conservation and planning policies across Western European countries. On the other side of the Iron Curtain, very similar approaches to shaping heritage policies were employed alongside holistic urban renewal schemes. This pan-European discourse, centred on the notion of “integrated urban conservation,” also addressed emerging social and environmental concerns regarding living conditions and the so-called “milieu” of existing structures. In response to these policy objectives, postmodern architects deployed a range of design strategies to adapt to historical contexts and to counter the perceived inability of contemporary architecture to engage with the cultural identity of the historic city.

The 2026 EAHN PoMo Interest Group Meeting seeks to re-evaluate the complex relationship between the preservation movement and that strand of postmodern architecture situated within historic urban settings. At a moment when the heritagization of postmodern buildings continues to spark controversy, the meeting proposes to revisit contested postmodern designs as they sought to engage with newly integrated environmental, preservation, and planning politics. It aims to give due historiographical weight to the ways in which various neo-historical

approaches to architecture and urban design were interwoven with the negotiation of urban conservation policies – and to the skepticism that these approaches provoked among conservators regarding postmodernism’s historicist stance.

### **Roundtable Programme**

- 13.00 Welcome and Introductions
- 13.15 Short presentations by participants
- 14.00 Discussions
- 15.00 Informal Networking

### **Meeting organizers**

Kirsten Angermann (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)  
Wouter Van Acker (Université libre de Bruxelles)

### **Contributing Members**

Frida Grahn (London South Bank University)  
Amanda Reeser Lawrence (Northeastern University)  
Janina Gosseye (TU Delft)  
Isabelle Doucet (University of Sheffield)  
Ilaria Zedda (RWTH Aachen University)  
Florian Urban (The Glasgow School of Arts)

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# Tours

# Overview of conference and post-conference tours

The conference offers a diverse programme of guided tours presenting Danish architecture, urbanism and landscape across periods and scales. From medieval towns and manorial estates to welfare-state suburbs, modernist landmarks and contemporary transformations, the tours connect local sites with broader historical and theoretical perspectives.

## City tours, June 19

All tours depart from the Conference Centre (meeting point: Stakladen), Building 1423, Universitetsparken 423, at 15.30 CET, except for tour no. 3 which begins at Hack Kampmanns Plads 1 (tram stop: Skolebakken) at 15.30 CET. All tours end at the Aarhus School of Architecture, Exners Plads 7, at approximately 19.00 CET.

### 1. **Traces of 'Aros' in the Middle Ages**

An exploration of surviving medieval traces revealing the early development of Aarhus as a cathedral city, trading hub and site of a maritime 'water cult' to the local Saint Niels of Aros.

### 2. **Classical Aarhus**

A tour of neoclassical and historicist architecture illustrating how classical ideals shaped Aarhus' civic and cultural institutions.

### 3. **Hack Kampmann, National Romanticism and Urban Planning in Aarhus around 1900**

A city walk tracing Hack Kampmann's civic buildings and the district of Frederiksbjerg, revealing how architecture and urban design shaped modern Aarhus around 1900.

### 4. **In the Footsteps of Kay Fisker and C.F. Møller**

A walk through Aarhus University's historic campus and the former Municipal Hospital, soon to become a new university campus, tracing the legacy of Nordic functionalism in Aarhus.

### 5. **Modern and Contemporary Aarhus**

A survey of post-war and recent architecture highlighting urban development, public buildings and contemporary design strategies. The tour includes a guided visit to Aarhus City Hall.

## Post-conference tours, June 21

All tours depart from Aarhus Coach Station (Aarhus Rutebilstation), Fredensgade 45, at 08.00 CET. Return times vary by itinerary, but participants can expect to arrive back at Aarhus Coach Station between approximately 18.00 and 20.00 CET.

### **Tour A: World Heritage and Design Culture: Jelling, Kolding and Christiansfeld**

A journey from Viking-age monuments to contemporary design, linking the UNESCO sites of Jelling and Christiansfeld with the restoration of Koldinghus, Olafur Eliasson's Fjordenhus and the CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art. The excursion explores continuities and reinterpretations of heritage, architecture and design culture.

### **Tour B: Art, Architecture and Experimentation in Denmark's 'Swinging Sixties': Herning and Silkeborg**

An exploration of the remarkable alliance between industry, art and architecture that shaped Herning's cultural landscape in the 1960s. The tour includes works by Jørn Utzon, C.Th. Sørensen and Steven Holl, as well as Ingvar Cronhammar's monumental Elia, before continuing to the pictorial world of Asger Jorn at Museum Jorn in Silkeborg.

### **Tour C: The Legacies of Utzon and Aalto: Modernism and Post-Industrial Transformation in Aalborg**

A study of Aalborg's transformation from industrial city to cultural hub, linking the redevelopment of former industrial sites such as Spritten and Nordkraft with modernist and contemporary landmarks including Jørn Utzon's Utzon Center, Coop Himmelb(l)au's House of Music and Alvar Aalto's KUNSTEN Museum of Modern Art.

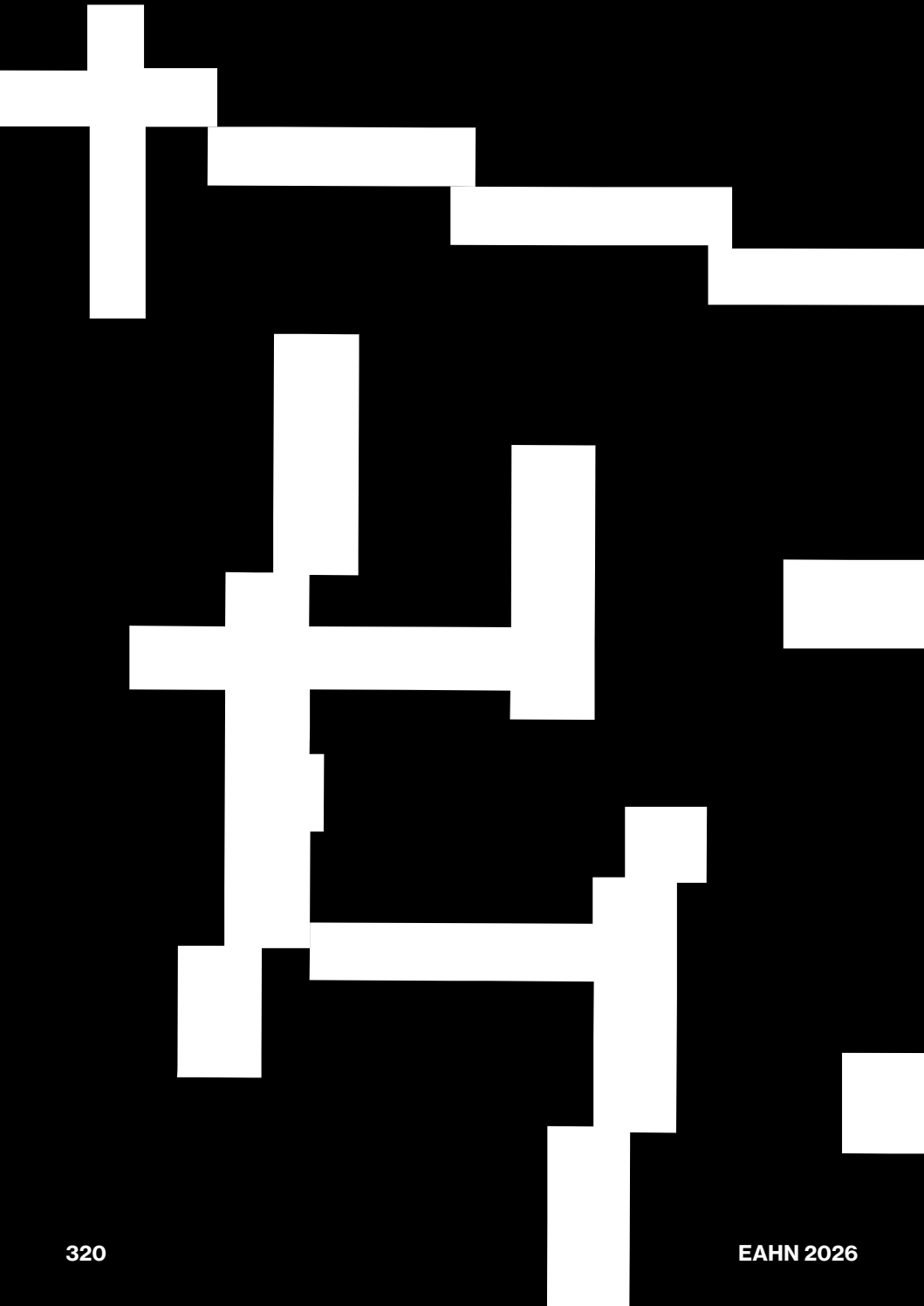
### **Tour D: Manorial Architecture, Monastic Ruins and Medieval Urban Life: Randers and Djursland**

Visits to three iconic Danish manor houses – Gammel Estrup, Clausholm and Rosenholm – exploring aristocratic architecture, landscape planning and estate culture from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century. The excursion also includes stops at medieval monastic ruins and in the historic town centre of Randers.

## Tour E: Welfare State Planning and Brutalist Architecture in the Suburbs of Aarhus

A survey of institutions, housing estates and campuses tracing the architectural legacy of the Danish welfare state and late modernism around Aarhus. The tour includes student housing such as Børglum and Skjoldhøj, the large-scale estate of Gellerupparken, selected works by Friis & Moltke, and concludes at Moesgaard Museum by Henning Larsen Architects.





# Epilogue

# **Aarhus as an Urban Space of Associations: Some City Reflections**

Anders Troelsen

## AERIAL VIEW AND PANORAMA

Approaching Aarhus from above, the city first appears as a greyish-brown mass, shaped like a kidney. On all sides it is sharply delineated by vivid colours: to the east, the blue-green sea; to the north and south, two expanses of green woodland; and to the west, yellow fields and the blue waters of Lake Brabrand. Between lake and sea, the river winds like a blue current, though on its final stretch before reaching the harbour it is covered over and therefore invisible.

Seen more closely, six or seven major roads can be distinguished as they lead away from the city, and the grey-brown mass dissolves into distinct areas. There is the dark, shadowy quarter formed by the weathered, densely packed buildings of the old town. There is the lighter, more clearly defined commercial district. Further from the centre are the almost white, gleaming areas dominated by imposing concrete building complexes. And scattered around them lie pale green zones where detached houses with their own gardens are clustered.

The intricate web of streets, with cars streaming through them. The rooftops, pitched and flat. Red, yellow and black. Human dots. Solitary figures, great crowds, pairs walking together. [...]

The white strip of sand separating the kidney-shaped city from the sea. And suddenly details appear in such overwhelming abundance that one is tempted to throw oneself into them, unable to resist this unruly, colourful throng.<sup>1</sup>

**This was the perspective of Icarus that Svend Åge Madsen adopted in his novel *Tugt og utugt i mellemtiden (Virtue and Vice in the Interim, 1976)* when describing**

1 Nærmer man sig Århus fra oven, er den først en gråbrun masse, af facon som en nyre. Til alle sider er den afgrænset af skarpe farver, mod øst det blågrønne hav, mod nord og syd de to grønne skove og mod vest gule marker og den blå Brabrand sø. Mellem sø og hav bugter åen sig som en blå strøm, der dog på det sidste stykke før udløbet er overdækket og derfor usynlig.

Nærmere på udskiller sig de seks-syv store veje der fører væk fra byen, og den gråbrune masse opløser sig i forskellige områder. Der er det mørke dunkle område, der dannes af de anløbne, tætsammenklinede huse i den gamle bydel. Der er det lysere og klarere forretningskvarter. Længere fra midten ser man de næsten hvide og skinnende områder, hvor prægtige beton-bygningskomplekser dominerer. Og rundt omkring ligger de lysegønne områder, hvor villaerne med egen have er samlede.

Gadernes fletværk, hvor bilerne strømmer. Husenes tage, skrå og flade. Røde, gule og sorte. Menneskelige prikker. Enlige, i store flokke, to og to sammen. [...]

Den hvide stribe sand, der adskiller nyren fra havet. Og pludselig detaljer i en så overvældende mængde, at man fristes til at kaste sig ud i dem, ude af stand til at modstå denne uordentlige, farverige vrimmel.

Fig. 01





his home city. Yet the aerial view ends in a joyful plunge towards multiplicity: a dizzying descent into detail. As long as the bird's-eye perspective is maintained, Aarhus remains a remarkably legible city, comfortably settled within its natural bowl. <sup>[fig. 1]</sup>

Since then, the river has been reopened, reviving the origin of the city's name in the Old Norse *Aros* – “the houses at the mouth of the river”. Aarhus is characterised by terrain that slopes down towards the harbour and the bay, and towards the river that runs through the centre. This creates an almost bodily sense of orientation that makes the city easy to navigate. Coming from Copenhagen, I have always had the feeling that, wherever I happened to be in Aarhus, if I wanted to reach the city centre, I simply had to walk downhill.

The city occupies the same position it always has: projecting outward, open to the world. This has given it an advantage over other towns in eastern Jutland, which withdrew into deep fjords. Aarhus Harbour has benefited from its proximity to the open sea and from a depth sufficient to accommodate larger vessels, while the surrounding waters are sheltered by the peninsula of Mols and Helgenæs.

Aarhus is skirted by the European route E45, which, like all motorways, does not so much lead from place to place as pass by places. Here, however, the motorway briefly splits, sending a four-lane spur road into the city, from which Aarhus can be seen en route as a panorama unfolding from a hillside. This connecting road feeds the outermost of three traffic rings. Viby Ringvej, Åby Ringvej, Hasle Ringvej and Vejlbj Ringvej, together with their extensions, form the outer ring. Ringgaden, with part of Marselis Boulevard, forms the middle ring. And Sønder Allé, Vester Allé, Nørre Allé, Nørregade and Nørreport constitute the innermost boundary, divided by the river and Åboulevarden. To the east, the coastal arteries interrupt these circular formations. Like historical growth rings, they encircle the city, which breaks through its own enclosure with radial roads reaching out towards other towns, many of which have lent their names to these routes.

Two forests embrace the city along the waterfront: the Marselisborg Forests to the south and Risskov to the north. From the water, one can see how the harbour front is almost framed by two functionalist building projects completed within the same year, 1936.

To the south lies Strandparken, with its open housing blocks that defy the surrounding perimeter blocks and their narrow street corridors. Set diagonally to the street grid, these elongated buildings are airy and oriented towards the light; in many places, the intake of light is further increased by wrapping windows around the corners.

To the north stands Klintegården, with its command bridge and portholes, rising from the slope like a stranded transatlantic liner.

Yet two larger internal park areas also create a kind of symmetry. Both mediate between the elevated sections of Ringgaden and the lower city, and at the transition to the city centre each was furnished with its own museum: Botanical Garden leads down to the market-town museum Den Gamle By, while the former art museum was situated topographically and architecturally in the lower part of the University Park, nearest the city itself.

Not Icarus but ARoS Aarhus Art Museum (Schmidt Hammer Lassen, 2003) is the name of the skyward-striving successor to the former museum. In its spelling, the name links Aros with *ars* – art. The new building has moved closer to the city centre, and on its tenth and uppermost floor the angular structure opens onto a full panoramic view of the horizon through *Your rainbow panorama* by Olafur Eliasson (2011). Through its circular form, and especially through its palette borrowed from the rainbow, the work suggests a covenant with a power beyond the earthly square of the building's body.<sup>[fig. 2]</sup> Despite the personal pronoun of the title, its symbolism is almost universal, not confined to Vitruvian Man, with its image of the human figure inscribed within a circle and a square. For much of the city, the rainbow functions as an aerial landmark, a kind of compass whose changing colours around the circumference can indicate the cardinal points for the inhabitants of the city.

Not from here, but from an even higher vantage point – or on a map – one can see how the elevated buildings of Aarhus University (competition win 1931 by Kay Fisker, C.F. Møller, Povl Stegmann and C.Th. Sørensen) form parallel displacements in relation to directions perpendicular to one another, apparently determined by the meeting of Nordre Ringgade and Nørrebrogade at the north-eastern corner of the campus. The building blocks are concentrated particularly around the edges of the university park, though over time they have spread while still more or less preserving a small lake at the centre of the grounds. To the north, the university complex extends to both sides of Ringgaden, as it has done since its inception in the 1930s. Along Nørrebrogade to the north-east, the campus is enclosed by long building blocks with sparse windows, located primarily in the circulation corridors, while the western side appears more open, with green spaces between projecting gabled sections.

The yellow bricks of the buildings are not limited to the walls but extend across the pavements of Ringgaden, spreading out on either side. On the northern side, they broaden into an entire square, open towards the road but otherwise enclosed on three sides by administrative buildings and the Stakladen, the student canteen and assembly hall. On the southern side, the paving lends the pavement – whose width varies – a certain plaza-like character.

Fig. 02



The buildings on this side form a long, continuous façade along the street, something clearly visible from a bird's-eye view but difficult to grasp from a fixed position at street level. At its eastern end, the row recedes three times, each recession parallel to the others, yet subtly adjusting to a slight bend in the street. Further west, an aerial view reveals how three projections extending at right angles towards the road cut perpendicularly across the central building row and seem to continue its line beyond them.

Facing the road, these projections terminate in windowless gables with pitched roofs. Even from street level, they create the impression that they are not merely protrusions, but continue behind the continuous façade along Ringgaden. Each forms a tongue extending into the park, whose terrain slopes down towards the city. The easternmost of the three is lower than the main building row, while the two further west rise above it. The first thus appears to bore through the building row, which continues over it, whereas the latter two transverse buildings cut through and surpass the row itself. As taller and continuing elements, they achieve a certain degree of dominance, framing and emphasising a section of the building row that runs parallel to the street and defines a small square.

This articulation corresponds to a certain gathering of the principal building elements opposite one another on either side of the road, though with a displacement that carefully avoids any axial system. The entrance to the promenade hall and assembly hall is therefore not placed in the centre of the square's frontage towards the street, but to the left, in one of the side wings. The façade between the projecting wings is, however, marked out as something distinctive. Here the fenestration differs from that of the rest of the complex's long elevation: in the two upper storeys the windows are not vertically aligned, but offset in relation to one another.

Most striking of all, however, is a row of arcades along the roadside, echoing the large, gently rounded window openings on the ground floor of the promenade hall façade. The form is repeated in the arcades within the hall, which subdivide its longitudinal axis parallel to the road, and in a more undulating series of corresponding arcades on a large terrace opening onto the park on the opposite side. The wave-like form of the promenade hall's ceiling follows the arches of the arcades, and the pattern of the floor tiles is likewise set into visual motion. The use of the same materials indoors and out naturally reinforces the continuity and coherence of the composition.

From the terrace outside the promenade hall, one can look slightly to the right and down into the park at a grassy amphitheatre that incorporates part of the slope below – again, however, an element that does not submit to any unifying axis. On the opposite side of the terrace, and at right angles to the promenade hall, the assembly hall or aula projects towards the city, continuing the high wing that extends towards Ringgaden. This part of the building is distinguished

by its elongated hexagonal form, a shape found nowhere else in the complex.

[fig. 3]

The immense glazed gable facing the park inevitably underscores the Gothic and sacral associations that cling to the hall despite all its modernism. It is not immediately apparent, but from an aerial perspective or on a map it seems to me that a symmetry axis through the assembly hall is clearly oriented towards Aarhus Cathedral in the city centre, if indeed it does not directly intersect it. Conceptually, the university is thus linked to the cathedral and its Gothic choir – described as the “seat of light”, in reference to late medieval metaphysics of light. Put briefly, this idea holds that that which most closely resembles God is light itself: invisible in its own essence, yet capable of making all things visible.

That Christianity is marked as part of the foundations of culture is further emphasised by the aforementioned cloister-like arcades, which appear both inside and outside the adjoining promenade hall, reflected across the threshold. It was in monasteries that monks preserved much of the learning of antiquity and transmitted it to later generations. Antiquity itself, as another cultural foundation, is evoked by the park’s amphitheatre, while the nearby canteen, Stakladen, on the opposite side of Ringgaden, with its exposed timber roof structures, possesses a rustic, perhaps even “Old Norse”, character.

The park’s small stream, which appears almost to spring from beside the assembly hall, is thus – perhaps somewhat insistently – symbolically filled to the brim with cultural sources as it continues its course from the “mountain” down to the city.

The university buildings are characterised by yellow brick, also used in the paving, and by clear cubic forms that appear sharply cut. Gutters are often concealed, and the pitched roofs avoid overhanging eaves that might otherwise tie the buildings to the ground by projecting imaginary lines of anchorage. Repeated motifs are also employed visually – for example where several gables are opened with large glazed sections, or in the special effect produced when the awnings over the window bands are not extended. In such cases, the windows appear to hang from the horizontal strips of the sun-shading devices.

In some places more organic forms have been allowed to take over, and over time many wall surfaces have become covered with ivy – perhaps also because this climbing plant has acquired an almost iconic status through the American notion of the “Ivy League” universities. The term refers to prestigious and long-established institutions of higher education, comparable to those in England and often characterised by a cloistered, inward-looking atmosphere.

Aarhus University is for the most part an open campus, and in its original form it was held together by a striking architectural unity. The area functions like a

distinct urban quarter, akin to neighbourhoods whose consistent façades and building heights, coherent street patterns, and reasonably clear outer boundaries make it possible to claim a distinctive identity. The university district's predominantly winding road network also sets it apart from its surroundings and continues to emphasise the park-like character of the campus.

Similarly, the dense “medieval city” around the cathedral stands out through its compact and winding street pattern. It is above all the character of the townhouses that provides a unifying element in the Sjøællandsgade district, which extends up towards the southern part of the university park.

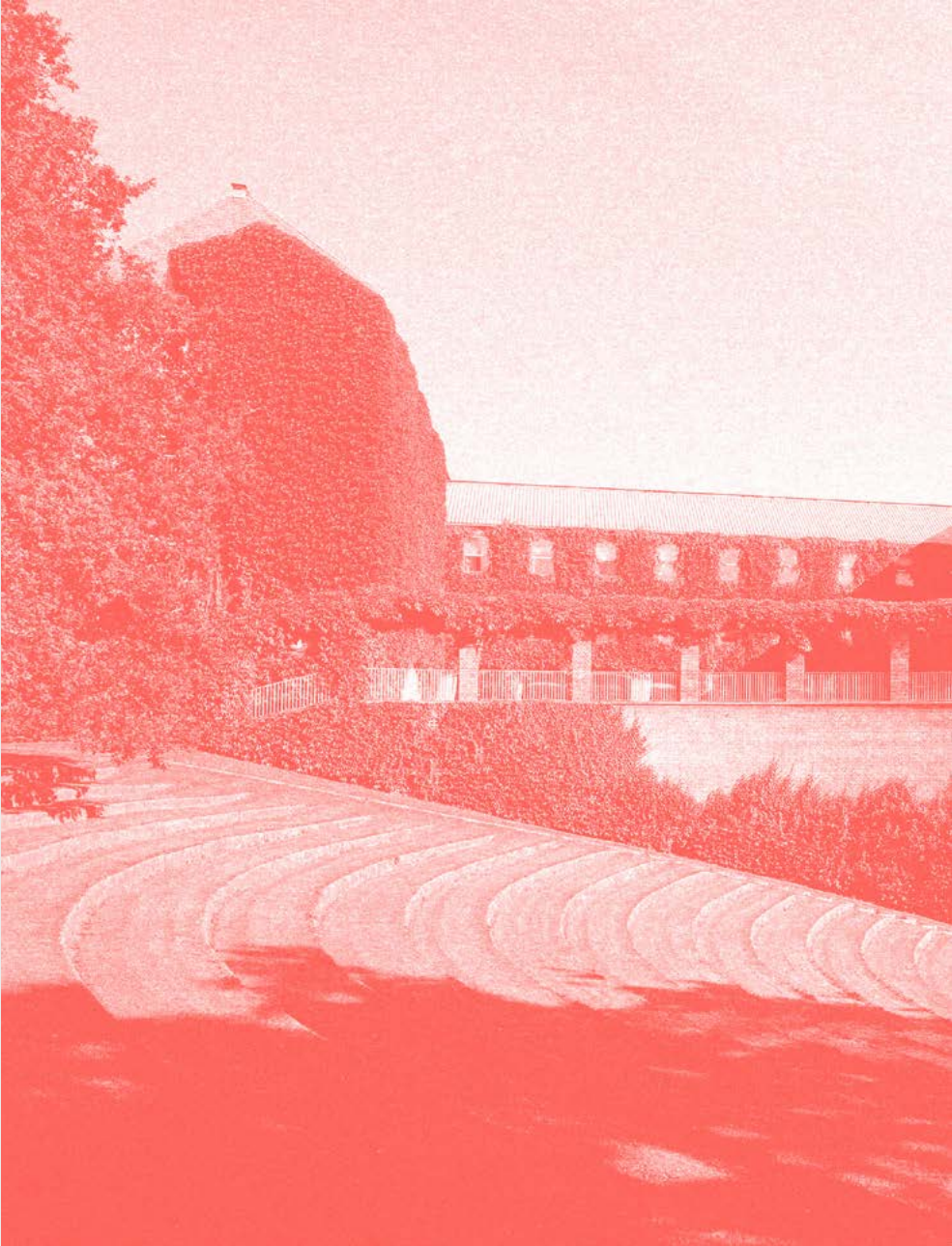
Equally cohesive, yet more varied, is the old Frederiksbjerg south of the railway station. This district is characterised by finely detailed apartment buildings, at times showing tendencies towards *skønvirke*, the Danish variant of Art Nouveau. Quite different is the newer western part of Frederiksbjerg, with its coarser street grid, framed by large-scale but rather monotonous perimeter blocks marked by a blend of Neoclassicism and a moderated Functionalism.

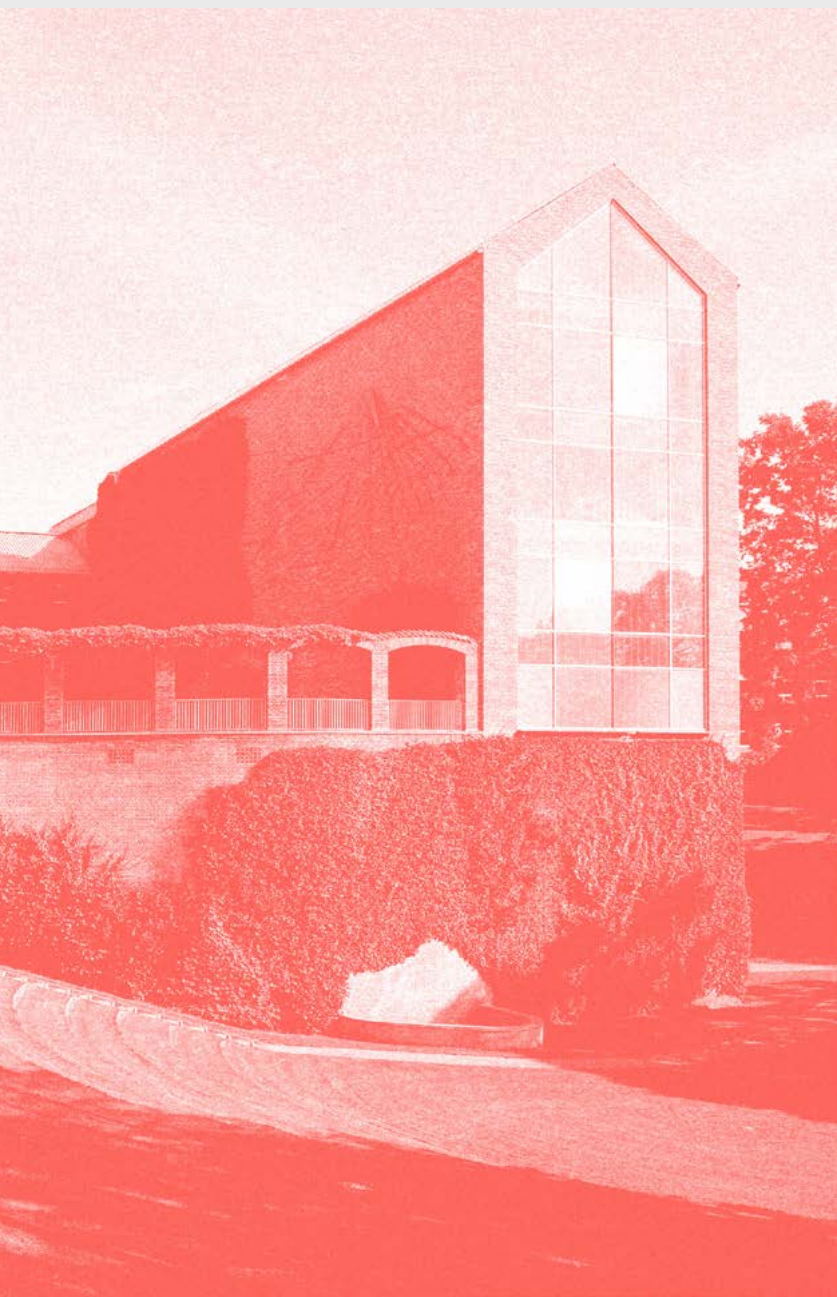
Two districts in Aarhus, both close to the city centre, are undergoing rapid transformation, having largely lost their original functions. One is the old industrial area south of the point where the Aarhus River enters the harbour. The South Harbour (Sydhavnen) was gradually expanded in the early twentieth century through land reclamation, creating space for large industrial enterprises that needed to be close to maritime traffic. The other is the freight-yard district (Godsbanen), just west of the Central Station, where railway carriages are still repaired and prepared within a smaller enclosed area, but where the surrounding land has otherwise been released for new purposes.

The latter district has been marketed as Aarhus K, the “K” standing, among other things, for *kultur* (culture). The same could equally be said of Sydhavnen, though it tends more towards established cultural institutions, with its galleries, the Jutland Art Academy, and Filmbyen (“Cinema City”). Here, as elsewhere, deindustrialisation has opened up spaces for creative entrepreneurship, while also making room for administrative and financial businesses – albeit with due consideration for the homeless people who have traditionally frequented the area. In Svend Åge Madsen's novel, the industrial district is indeed a favoured haunt for all manner of outsiders.

The northern part of Sydhavnen in particular has now been opened up to building heights that suggest what may eventually resemble a CBD – a Central Business District. Currently under construction is Mindet 6, designed by C.F. Møller Architects, which is expected to reach a height in 2027 comparable to Lighthouse on Aarhus Ø, which, at over 140 metres, lays claim to the title of the city's first true skyscraper.

Fig. 03





The Sydhavnen tower is geometrically composed as an extension of a former grain silo and will form a *point de vue* for the final stretch of the river. Yet the skyscraper appears likely to present itself differently from diverse angles, owing to the rhythmically varied and partially spiralling articulation of its light-coloured façades.

Already completed, by contrast, is the more experimental TRÆ by Lendager (2025), whose 20-storey tower rises to 78 metres. Phonetically, the name presumably alludes to the complex's three (*tre* in Danish) constituent parts, which combine planar façades with curves of varying extent. More obviously, it refers to *træ* – wood – as both material and plant form, with its upright, lignified trunk.

In a sense, the building is also intended to function as a kind of Tree of Knowledge, gathering experience in timber construction and in the interaction between wood and other largely recycled materials. The tower is clad in reused metal panels that lend it, from a distance, a bark-like surface, while parts of decommissioned wind turbine blades have been transformed into sunshades.

At the height of the planned tree canopies, the complex connects to the so-called Kulkransporet (“Coal Crane Track”). These elevated rails once allowed a crane to move the vast heaps of coal formerly stored on the site. Reimagined and extended, this industrial remnant is intended to serve as a landmark for the area and to provide an elevated perspective over the city.

The inspiration is clearly drawn from the raw pedestrian walkways of The High Line, which repurposes a disused elevated railway in Manhattan's former Meatpacking District. On New York's west side, the line has been transformed into a linear park of seemingly spontaneous vegetation, with rails and sleepers still visible among weeds and shrubs. The High Line (2009–19) itself had a more manicured, park-like predecessor in Paris's Promenade Plantée (1988).

In Aarhus, the intention may be that this elevated walkway will eventually connect to some of the rooftop terraces of the district, opening up a new level of urban life in Sydhavnen – much as Salling Rooftop has done since 2019, offering panoramic views near the cathedral tower, which has gradually lost its former dominance of the city skyline.

The Coal Crane Track traces a path in which coal has given way to culture, office work and entrepreneurship. In the freight-yard district, the exchange of goods has been replaced by the exchange of culture, interwoven with residential development.

Viewed from above or on a map, Sydhavnen in particular, and to a lesser extent the freight-yard district, seem to lack clearly defined streets. This reflects the industrial scale of Sydhavnen. At both sites, however, the planning aims to inte-

grate and align different forms of local mobility, while cars are to a large extent relegated to parking structures.

In the freight-yard district, a few high-rise buildings stand among the residential blocks, though they are set back from the former goods station and from the noisier areas where train sets are still serviced. The scaffold-like form of Aarhus City Hall's tower finds a modest echo in the tallest section of the buildings erected on the site of the former egg-packing plant.

Elsewhere, buildings and roads in this low-lying area are drawn out longitudinally. A map shows that they run for some distance parallel to the river, but above all it is the railway tracks entering from the south-west that establish the principal axes of the district. The terrain is exceptionally flat, which naturally made it well suited to rail traffic and shunting operations.

A few rails and sleepers remain outside the Danish State Railways area, helping to orient both the site and its elongated buildings visually and spatially towards the Ringgade Bridge (1938). The contaminated soil displays a remarkable biodiversity, owing to seeds carried over the years by railway wagons from distant regions.

The area is characterised by an open-ended and extrovert attitude and a celebration of diversity, qualities also reflected in the activities that periodically take place there. From the outset, one of the principal driving forces has been Institut for X, located opposite the former goods station. It comprises workshops and meeting spaces made available by the municipality.

More than Sydhavnen, the Godsbanekvarteret seems to invite an improvised and constantly changing event culture. It has benefited from its raw surroundings, which are robust enough to accommodate noisier activities. Despite its status as an educational institution, the factory-like character of the Aarhus School of Architecture (Adept, 2021) clearly takes its cue from this context. It is not a flamboyant piece of iconic architecture that, conceived by a "starchitect", imposes a lasting ideal upon future generations of architects. Rather, as a workshop or laboratory, it is a rough and flexible building. With its terraced composition and pervasive transparency, it appears open and receptive to additions and alterations.

Aarhus Ø to the north is a district, though perhaps not a neighbourhood in the conventional sense of the term.<sup>[fig. 4]</sup> The residential area is clearly defined, but somewhat too large to be regarded as a single quarter, and in any case too heterogeneous. Architectural diversity seems to have guided the development of the district, even if some individual projects are so extensive that they almost function as neighbourhoods in themselves.

This is true, for example, of Isbjerget (“The Iceberg”), a distinctive jagged complex with a strong sense of unity. Its upper volumes are cut into inverted V-shapes, creating visual openings towards the water; the staggered positioning of the building wings serves the same purpose. Glass balconies, shaded in blue-green that gradually lightens upwards, project at varying angles from the chalk-white peaks of the buildings. Seen from a distance, the windows can appear as though overlapped by other angular forms, since their outlines at times seem to be cut along imaginary continuations of lines that do not in fact exist.

Comparable visual challenges are presented by the more isolated complex Aarhus (BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group, 2019; 60 metres, 20 and 14 storeys). Seen from ground level, the building may resemble one enormous V, and one might imagine that its name plays on the silhouette as a gigantic scar (*ar* in Danish). From above, however, it becomes clear that the complex is composed of two enormous A-shapes descending towards a shared courtyard. This is also suggested by the fact that AAR is the three-letter airport code for the city’s airport.

That airport, however, lies some 42 kilometres from Aarhus at Aarhus Airport. The journey from the airport to the city takes roughly forty-two minutes – slightly less by car, somewhat longer by bus.

## ARRIVAL IN AARHUS

A satellite image – especially in 3D – can reveal many of the features I have described. More difficult to capture is the immediate impression of a city as it is experienced by a pedestrian on arrival. Svend Åge Madsen’s euphoric, yet also perilous, plunge into the urban throng does not correspond to the usual aerial arrival in Aarhus, where planes land safely at Aarhus Airport. In winter in particular, when the whole of Mols lies dormant in deep darkness as a summer-house landscape, visitors arriving from foreign metropolises might imagine themselves transported to the farthest North – Ultima Thule.

There is, of course, rather more city to be seen when one arrives by train. This perspective, too, was captured by Madsen in his novel:

The largest city in Jutland is Aarhus, the most beautiful – and the most dangerous.

Arriving by train, one is immediately given, in the railway station itself, a colourful and dramatic foretaste of the experiences the metropolis has to offer.

Here the idle and the busy, the strong and the weak, the sorrowful

Fig. 04



and the joyful all meet. Two people shout to one another across the full length of the hall in a happy reunion; two others whisper into each other's ears in a painful farewell. Someone runs to catch a train and trips over a drunkard who, lying on the ground, cannot even be bothered to draw his legs aside. Street boys, pickpockets and officers of the law immediately gather in the hope that the collision will develop into a full-scale fight.<sup>2</sup>

Set against the legibility of the bird's-eye view, the experience of the city at ground level is dense and immersive, as one is enclosed by it and penetrates its fabric. In Madsen, however, the distances traversed become rather more labyrinthine than I have ever experienced them myself. His Aarhus is not merely a site of chance encounters; it also takes on unstable dimensions. Its spaces are undermined by caves and cellars, punctured by openings of every kind that create thresholds, secret corners and hidden cavities.

**Madsen invests this “world’s smallest metropolis” with an aura of true metropolitan grandeur. Perhaps he is encouraged in this by the buildings around the railway station, designed by the architect Axel Høeg-Hansen. Their height certainly exceeds the provincial Danish norm, and the station square aims at a large-scale and coherent urban effect.**

**The Neo-Classical wall of buildings framing the square, dating from the late 1920s, contains only restrained accents and does not compete with the station building itself, designed by K.T. Seest and completed in 1929. The station distinguishes itself through its window rhythm and the emphasis placed on the temple pediment over the entrance.**

**Behind the station, however, a building has risen that does little to beautify the city: Bruun’s Galleri, a shopping centre crowned by a rather inarticulate high-rise block. Seen from Rymsgade, it towers above the station as a compact mass and weakens the latter’s role as a slightly oblique *point de vue*. By virtue of its abrupt change in scale, the tower appears telescoped forwards, as if threatening to crush the lower buildings in front of it.**

**Inside, its angular exterior is softened, yet even here the relationship to the sta-**

2 Den største af Jyllands byer er Århus, den smukkeste – og den farligste.

Ankommer man med toget får man straks på banegården en farvestrålende og dramatisk forsmag på de oplevelser som storbyen kan tilbyde.

Her mødes ledig og travl, stærk og svag, bedrøvet og glad. To råber til hinanden i hele hallens længde i et lykkeligt gensyn, to hvisker til hinandens øre i smertefuld afsked. En løber for at nå sit tog og falder over en drivert, der liggende på jorden end ikke gider trække benene til sig. Gadedrenge, lommetyve og lovens håndhævere stimler straks sammen i håb om at sammenstødet skal udvikle sig til regulært slagsmål.

tion remains somewhat unresolved. Arriving passengers may find themselves uncertain of the direction towards the city centre; the flow of movement is drawn in two directions, and the heavy circulation through the site is reflected in the fact that shops are not permitted to spill into the passageways, which must remain clear.

Many railway stations were built as a kind of city gate just outside the historic core, where there was still sufficient space for access and circulation. At the same time, they stimulated the development of new urban districts in their vicinity. In both Copenhagen and Aarhus, the main railway station eventually drew the city hall in its wake, although in Aarhus this occurred after a considerable delay.

Station Square (Banegårdspladsen) is naturally shaped by its function as a transport hub, which makes it an attractive location for a newspaper headquarters. At the time of the publication of Svend Åge Madsen's novel, the wall of buildings between the station and Bruunsgade was marred by a low, makeshift-looking structure. This changed only when Aarhus Stiftstidende constructed its headquarters, designed by Exners Tegnestue and completed in 2006.

The building shares the colour of its surroundings, and its roofline aligns with that of the station, while adding a slightly recessed glass superstructure. In its window arrangement, the Stiftstidende building takes up the pattern of a fluted sandstone ornament that vertically unites the windows in Axel Høeg-Hansen's opposing façade. Here, in the newspaper building, however, the recesses become part of a dynamic rhythm of larger and smaller vertical openings. Across the three lower storeys this creates an alternating, syncopated pattern, which settles into a calmer order on the top floor below the glass addition.

This upper structure is capped by a gently curved roof reminiscent of the roofs of historic railway carriages; it also echoes the roof of the nearest wing of the City Hall's citizen service department. The same roof form is repeated around the corner in the recurring building sections on the Bruunsgade bridge spanning the railway tracks. They almost give the impression of being the ends of train carriages aligned with the tracks below.

It is only natural that a newspaper should gravitate towards the City Hall as the seat of municipal power and seek, in its architectural language, to absorb the vitality and movement of a major traffic square. This impression is subtly reinforced by the fact that the window pattern can be read not only as the columns of a newspaper page but also as the compartments of a traditional printer's type case, which once held the movable type used in letterpress printing. Newspapers, as vehicles of current events, do not dwell on stasis and repetition, but move with change and transformation.

The inherent character of Station Square as a transport node is evident in the streets that pass through it rather than terminating there. Only Ryesgade debouches directly onto the square. A traveller emerging from the station entrance instinctively perceives the street opposite as the principal pedestrian thoroughfare of the city.

Yet the square, with the station as a city gate, suggests two possible directions for the newcomer: towards the cathedral or towards the City Hall – towards the spiritual or secular centre of the city. The latter route is reinforced by the buildings along Park Allé, which in several respects seem to prolong Station Square all the way to the City Hall. The enclosing wall of the square appears to bend around street corners at several points, but above all seems to continue towards the City Hall, whose tower is visible above the rooftops.

Slightly projecting buildings on both sides of the avenue introduce a subtle bend in the street, but also function as a kind of gateway to the final short stretch and as an oblique framing of the City Hall when approached from Station Square.

Aarhus City Hall, designed by Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller and inaugurated in 1942, consists of three clearly distinct cubic volumes. The public service wing is the first encountered when approaching from the station along Park Allé. It is the lowest of the three, and its openness is signalled by windows larger than the building's usual standard.<sup>[fig. 5]</sup>

The transition to the long but taller administrative wing is mediated by the City Hall tower, which shifts the composition slightly away from the street while still running parallel to it. Without quite assuming the character of a square, Park Allé is narrow enough, and the flanking buildings tall enough, to create a corridor that draws the visitor onwards and encourages movement towards the end of the office wing and into the City Hall's great hall. With its long side set perpendicular to the rest of the building, the hall pulls the adjoining City Hall Square along with it.

The square itself does not invite lingering – though perhaps it lends itself to demonstrations. No streets terminate there; all pass by. With its access ramp, the square also suggests that the clear external forms of the building were intended to be seen from moving traffic, while its details and ornament are reserved for pedestrians. In reality, however, it is the cars that remain stationary, since the ramp has effectively become a podium for parked vehicles.

Before one encounters the principal façade of the City Hall, one may notice the rather unremarkable office building on the opposite side. In many respects it appears as a muted reflection of the civic building. With commendable, though entirely understandable, modesty, it seeks to appear smaller than it is. To avoid dominating the City Hall, its top storey is recessed; the same is true of the side

elevations, which are articulated – also chromatically – as though they were separate parts.

Fortunately, the City Hall has not been displaced from its starring role. And the Functionalist building has not abandoned the classical tripartite entrance portal – much like that of the railway station – though without coming to rest in the centre. Set asymmetrically, the entrance draws towards Park Allé, a movement reinforced by the portal windows, whose asymmetrical mullions shift in the same direction.

At the same time, the entrance supports the projecting council chamber, which extends from the hall in precise alignment with the central office wing, mediating between the City Hall interior and the urban space beyond.

When moving close to the building, the visitor scarcely notices the roof structure, which is in any case quite understated. The City Hall appears as a composition of square-cut blocks fitted into one another. The marble cladding, imposed on the initially reluctant architects, was intended to lend the building greater monumental gravitas.<sup>[fig. 6]</sup>

Whatever the circumstances, the result is that the cool, angular exterior contrasts strikingly with what greets the visitor inside. The interior is characterised by organically rounded corners and by a shimmering interplay of filigree-like timber slats and vertical railings along balconies and staircases. The stairs strive for a sense of floating lightness, conveying an impression of free movement.

A curved staircase descending towards the basement directs attention to a patch in the floor that is in fact a polished stone from the former City Hall, once located opposite and close to the cathedral, where it was visually crushed beneath the overpowering presence of the latter. Even so, the stone may be understood as a *spolium*, transferring strength from the past to the present from its archaeological position within the floor.<sup>[fig. 7]</sup>

At the western end wall of the great hall, a tall glazed section opens towards the park, framing slender tree trunks that almost correspond to the vertical mullions, while the interior balconies pass through the glass wall and continue as external terraces.

From here, across Frederiks Allé, one can see the Musikhuset Aarhus (House of Music) by Knud Munk Kjær and Johannes Richter (1982). Like the City Hall, its volumes resemble boxes sliding into one another. Originally, however, the contrast was more pronounced between the enclosed concert halls at the rear, which take advantage of the falling terrain to avoid excessive dominance, and the transparent foyer, which opens to the public and glows in the evening like a



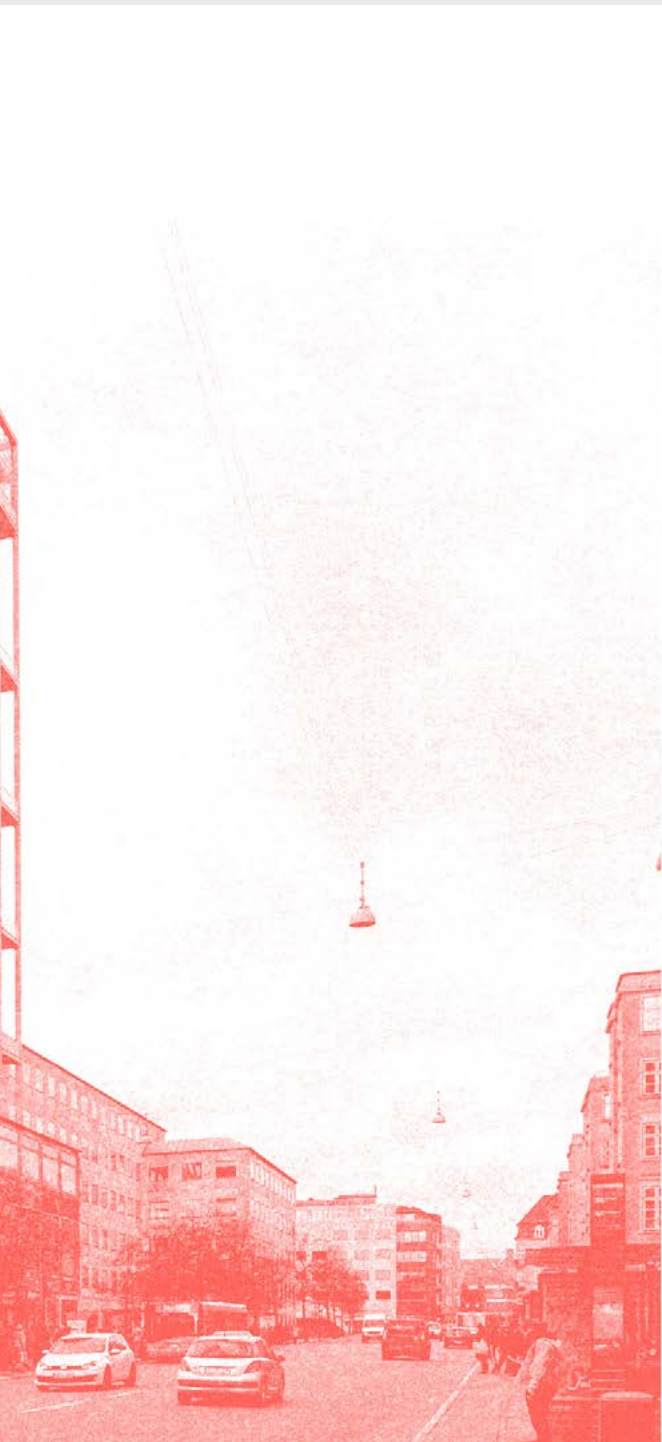


Fig. 05

tent of light. Unfortunately, later extensions and alterations have significantly weakened this contrast, allowing the advanced glass structure to dominate and to obscure much of the stage buildings behind.

The City Hall is crowned by a 60-metre cubic tower, which I, unlike some others, regard as an essential visual contribution to the building, even though the architects were displeased by this somewhat untimely manifestation of authority. As mentioned, the tower is inserted between two of the cubic volumes. Its core is encased in a kind of permanent “scaffolding”, suggesting provisionality. In this way, the tower blends with the surrounding air while elegantly mediating between exterior and interior volumes, vibrating, as it were, between two forms.

From the Scandinavian Center by Friis & Moltke (1995), the tower is framed in a manner that could contribute to the coherence of the city. The complex itself appears somewhat out of place beside Musikhuset, to which it is connected by a rather awkward arrangement of canopies.

At its core, the Scandinavian Center is a covered stepped street descending towards the transformed freight station (and today aligning with the corner of the School of Architecture). Looking upward, the directional force of the stair is exploited, as the ascent visually points towards the City Hall tower, which is captured within the axis. The canopy somewhat blurs the effect, and the result is a slightly muted version of Uffizi by Giorgio Vasari, whose office buildings form a street corridor that, through only subtly marked repetitions, creates an uninterrupted perspective towards the tower of Palazzo Vecchio.

The idea of an internal street overcoming the fall of the terrain towards the river is echoed in ARoS Aarhus Art Museum (Schmidt Hammer Lassen, 2003), situated on the far side of Musikhuset Aarhus. Whereas the former art museum, with its yellow brick and its overall architectural design, including large glazed gables, was drawn into the architectural language of the university campus, its successor sought to make the building part of the city itself. To this end, a covered public pedestrian passage has been driven straight through the museum like a curved ravine. As a glass fissure, it cuts through the cubic mass of the building.

ARoS's internal street resembles a shopping arcade, complete with café and shop. The museum's name is itself an instance of commercial branding (later extended by a somewhat playful allusion to Dante). The same movement through the building is articulated by the elongated balconies that span the many floors, interrupted only by the vertical rotation of the Guggenheim-like spiral staircase and, as in the Scandinavian Center, by the piston-like movement of the transparent lifts and the connecting bridges that cross the canyon-like void.

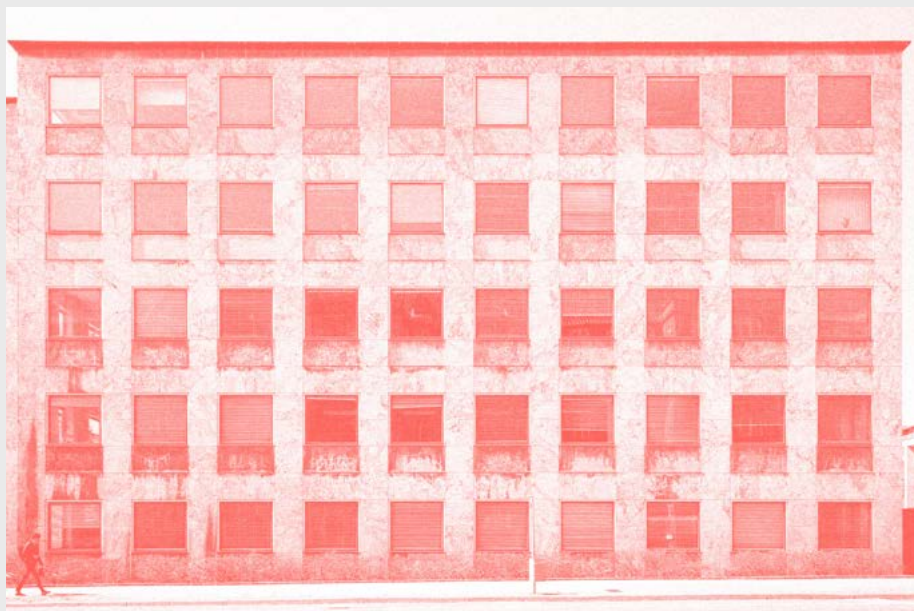
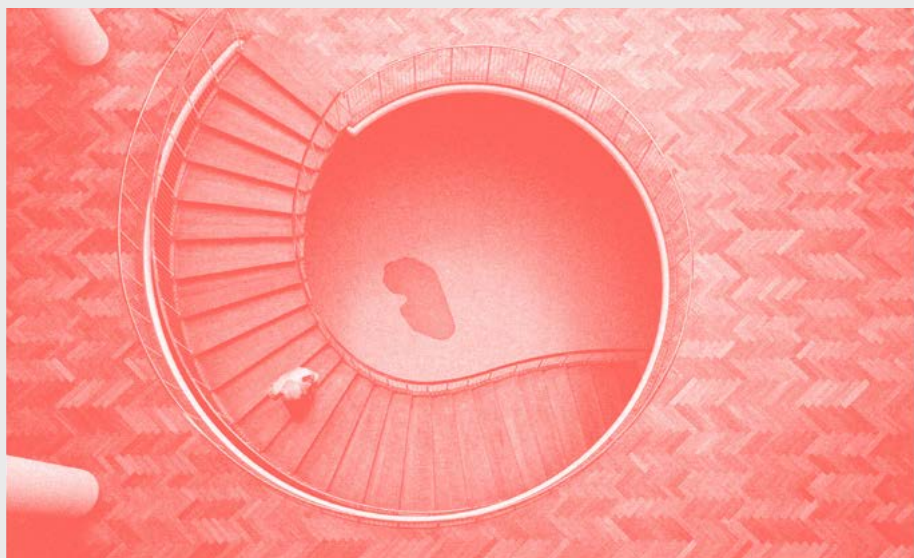


Fig. 06

Fig. 07



What is less strongly emphasised is the movement into the galleries themselves. In its effort to absorb the city's energies, the flowing movement through the building has been allowed to dominate over the preparation for – or threshold to – the encounter with art. The museum passage is conceived as an artery in the urban organism and, like the Scandinavian Center, seeks partly to exploit the directional force of the passage by pointing towards the tower of Aarhus City Hall as a shared point of orientation.

For the arriving visitor who, on leaving the station, chooses the second of the two routes mentioned above, the tower of Aarhus Cathedral becomes the principal landmark. It appears ever more distinctly, though it is anticipated at the outset by the tower of the Catholic St Knud's Church.

Along the way one also passes a fine example of Danish modernism: Salling Department Store, designed by C.F. Møller and Gunnar Krohn and completed in 1948. It has been remodelled in the same spirit in which it was originally conceived. The building appears to rest upon a weightless glass plinth, at times almost like a cushion of shadow, with a correspondingly floating roof, while the articulation of the façade absorbs the direction and vitality of the pedestrian street.

The final stretch of the pedestrian streets extending from Ryesgade takes the cathedral tower as its visual target, though not frontally, since the street meets the church on its south-west side. Two features, however, help guide the visitor towards Store Torv, which forms the western forecourt of the cathedral.

The first is Equestrian Statue of King Christian X by Helen Schou, located on the adjacent Bispetorv. Positioned off-centre at the edge of the square near Clemens Torv and facing away from it towards Store Torv, the monument may have been intended to mediate between the two spaces, though above all it has become part of Store Torv itself.

Aarhus Theatre, designed by Hack Kampmann and completed in 1900, is oriented towards the cathedral tower. It seems almost from the outset to have been deprived of the possibility of commanding its own square and making Bispetorv its forecourt, though it may once have used the equestrian statue as a kind of relay, connecting it visually to Store Torv across the sunken square. Today, planting behind the sculpture has made the beautiful Art Nouveau theatre even less visible on the approach to Store Torv.

The second “pivot point” is the Classicising-Functionalist bank building from 1937 on the south-west corner of the square. Its corner tower acts like a crankshaft or relay for the forward movement of the visitor, as both the tower itself and the building's colour and relative height echo the cathedral. The tall windows of the stair tower paraphrase the Gothic windows of the church, while

the recessed door and window surrounds appear as angular interpretations of archivolts.

Store Torv itself, rising gently towards the cathedral, resembles in its triangular form a projection of the church spire laid down upon the ground. The church's axis of symmetry does not in fact coincide with that of the square, but the correspondence between the two pointed V-forms is reinforced by the elegant paving pattern that unifies the space.

With the tower placed at the western gable, the square functions, in accordance with long tradition, as an extension of the church's longitudinal axis – just as the breadth of the City Hall's great hall unfolds into the shape of City Hall Square, though without being centred upon a tower.

The cathedral's 90-metre tower, crowned by a spire added in 1921, strives towards and dissolves into the very sky to which it gives visual form. It participates in Aarhus's carefully staged dialogue of towers, standing not only in contrast to the angular yet permeable forms of the City Hall tower, but also to the enclosed book tower of the former State and University Library Book Tower, located a little west of the university promenade hall and aula.

This windowless tower, rising eighteen storeys, was until a severe storm partly covered in ivy and signalled the seat of learning by associating itself with the university's other buildings – perhaps also, somewhat curiously, by being crowned with a pitched roof.

The two most important towers in Aarhus – the City Hall tower and the cathedral tower – play a central role in *Menneskeslægten* (“The Human Race”), the large mural by Johannes Hagedorn-Olsen located in the entrance hall of Aarhus City Hall. As noted, the council chamber forms an independent architectural volume projecting over the main entrance portico and into the reception hall, aligned with the administrative wing's panopticon-like corridor.

In terms of colour, the mural sits rather awkwardly with the warm timber materials of the interior. Compositionally, however, it embraces the city, as the panorama of Aarhus is stretched between the City Hall and the cathedral. The painting bridges these two poles through monumental arches recalling those that carry Ringgaden over the railway tracks to the south – structures that, as mentioned, form a dominant visual focus from the former goods station.

Yet the bridge assumes a broader significance. Although it appears at first to span water, it transcends its immediate function as a railway overpass and becomes a symbolic marker of the harbour city's connection to the wider world. The painting establishes harmonious symmetries between professions and generations of citizens. At the centre of the composition, however – above a

ship moored at the quay and beneath the central arch –stands a woman gently cradling a small child in her arms.

She is nude, like the other figures, who appear liberated from historical costume and transposed into a universal sphere. Anchored within a stable triangular grouping of family figures, she represents the feminine and nurturing values to which any “good governance” has gradually had to subscribe. Aarhus is thus portrayed as a maternal city, caring for the citizens entrusted to it.

The notion that a city should feel obliged to safeguard its past naturally extends to the idea that its future life must also be protected, while at the same time emphasising that urban vitality depends upon connections to the world beyond.

### CALM WATERS, OUTLOOK AND RETROSPECT

In the Middle Ages, it was not overland routes that chiefly facilitated communication between cities – even in a flat country such as Denmark, which remains firmly attached to the earth rather than aspiring towards the blue heavens. Dense thickets, forests and marshes were often insurmountable obstacles. Rivers, straits and seas, by contrast, created lines of connection between settlements. This was also true of Aarhus, which Svend Åge Madsen mischievously places in the company of Europe’s most celebrated metropolises:

The most beautiful of Europe’s great cities have all grown up around a watercourse that supplies the city with the water of life. Just as London has the Thames and Paris the Seine, Aarhus has its River. But with characteristic modesty, the people of Aarhus have covered part of their stream and laid a boulevard over it.<sup>3</sup>

The single-syllable Danish word å (“river”) admittedly does not sound very grand. It is no rushing torrent and can at times seem almost uncertain about which direction it ought to flow. The City Council’s decision some years ago to reverse the 1948 spelling reform and restore the double “aa” in the city’s name rather than using the Scandinavian letter “å” scarcely changes that fact. Yet the doubled spelling has the practical advantage of avoiding a letter used only in Scandinavian languages, and internationally it moves Aarhus considerably further forward in alphabetical listings.

As noted, the Aarhus River has since been reopened, while the harbour – the city’s original raison d’être – has lost some of its function and thus some of its significance. City, harbour and sea often find it more difficult to work in harmo-

3 De smukkeste af Europas storbyer er alle voksende op omkring et vandløb, der leverer livets vand til byen. Som London har Themsen, Paris Seinen har Århus sin Å. Men med karakteristisk beskedenhed har århusianerne dækket en del af deres strøm og placeret en boulevard over den.

ny when the inner harbour loses its practical purpose and activity shifts to vast container ports that are more readily accessible to modern transport networks.

Containers have introduced a fundamental standardisation that has greatly facilitated exchange, but they have also stripped the harbour of its former sense of imaginative engagement with the exotic and unfamiliar. Everything has, quite literally, been reduced to an abstract common denominator.

Aarhus is no exception. What remains are transport corridors – including railway lines – that separate the city from its harbour and obstruct connections across this divide, both physically and visually. In relation to the city, the harbour also tends to operate on an entirely different scale of inarticulate masses: enormous warehouses, silos and similar structures.

These are typically gigantic installations capable of blocking sightlines from the city to the sea and vice versa, or of allowing only a few narrow visual corridors through which glimpses of the water remain possible.

At least some of these problems have, to my mind, been impressively addressed – if not entirely resolved – in Aarhus through the implementation of the winning proposal by Knud Fladeland Nielsen and Peer Teggaard Jeppesen in the 1999 ideas competition. Not everything has succeeded, which would be too much to expect, but the waterfront of the city has been made continuously accessible, and it has indeed proved possible to create a dynamic interplay of urban associations and visual axes.

The inner harbour front was conceived as being anchored between two focal points to the north and south: The Customs House, designed by Hack Kampmann in 1897, and the point where Skolegade emerges from the choir of Aarhus Cathedral, functioning as a kind of midpoint. In earlier times, the Customs House could assert itself as a city gate facing the sea, with higher and more slender echoes in the cathedral's trinity of towers: the great western tower and the two delicate ornamental towers flanking the eastern choir. The cathedral in particular was once more visible from the harbour and participated more directly in the city's gesture towards the sea.

The weakest contribution to this ensemble is, in my view, the northern anchor building designed by the otherwise highly accomplished architectural practice Kjær & Richter. Architecturally, Navitas (2014), conceived as a hub for education and entrepreneurship, falls some way short of its ambitions.

The building seeks to convey a spirit of activity and innovation through its dynamic starfish-like form and its internal atria, where different levels are brought into dialogue. It resembles the prow of a ship terminating long bands of windows, or a series of compass needles pointing in every direction. Yet the overall

effect offers few surprises beyond a controlled irregularity. The fundamental problem is that the building has virtually no contact with the city; it presents a powerfully closed and unwelcoming face towards the land.

In principle, Navitas's outward-looking character corresponds reasonably well to Dokk1 (2015) by Schmidt Hammer Lassen, which more subtly shares some of the same traits. Their scale also makes both buildings suitable for framing a substantial portion of Aarhus's waterfront.

The name Dokk1 presumably plays on the ambiguity between a numeral and the Danish definite form – “the dock”. In any case, the building has assumed the role of a forward cultural bastion facing the bay, strategically positioned where the river meets the sea. Located close to Europa Plads, it mediates between the historic city and the harbour with its connections to distant places.

Its concrete character is sufficiently raw to harmonise with the surroundings, though it appears heavy only from above, where six light wells can be seen channelling daylight – particularly northern light – down into the body of the building.

Dokk1 is a thoughtful and meticulously realised example of the contemporary cultural centre and public library. The structure appears to rest upon a kind of shadow cushion, forming a roof over the urban life below – above all, the traffic in all its forms. Raised on columns, the irregular block hovers above the movement converging at a point where the city still receives maritime traffic.

Light rail trains, bicycles, cars and pedestrians each trace their own trajectories, with pedestrians perhaps the most vulnerable amid the many marked lanes and intersecting paths. Some cars are literally drawn underground, disappearing into the depths. A fully automated parking system stores them on racks beneath the library, only to retrieve them again when needed.

In this way, the building opens itself to the urban space at harbour level (level 0). It attracts movement and allows all kinds of circulation to flow through it. More than anything else, it seems founded upon the principle of continuous movement.

The upper volume (level 3) rests visually upon the library's transparent glazed body and is leased for office use, intended particularly for cultural institutions. This upper structure forms a heptagon, projecting slightly in places beyond the lower volume, while the building envelope at certain points subtly breaks the vertical line by inclining or folding along an extended diagonal.

Access to the first public level (level 1) is provided by four external staircases. The largest and broadest faces the city, while the other three point in different

directions – somewhat analogous to the points of the Navitas building, though with their perspectival emphasis turned inward.

None of the staircases approaches the building at a right angle. From appropriate viewpoints, three of them can appear to form near symmetries in pairs, though without ever settling into perfect equilibrium. All are activating in character, their oblique alignments generating a visual sense of acceleration upwards and into the building. At the same time, they provide varied seating opportunities from which to orient oneself and contemplate the surrounding city.

[fig. 8]

The stairs lead to the building's octagonal balcony (level 1), which extends all the way around the structure. Themes from various playgrounds mark the cardinal points – for example, a Russian bear and a Chinese dragon to the east, and a monkey to the south.

The first public floor at this same level is transparent almost all the way around, even if not every area is directly accessible. From within, but especially from without, the city appears to the moving observer as a revolving stage or panorama – the library's counterpart to the coloured circuit atop the square art museum.

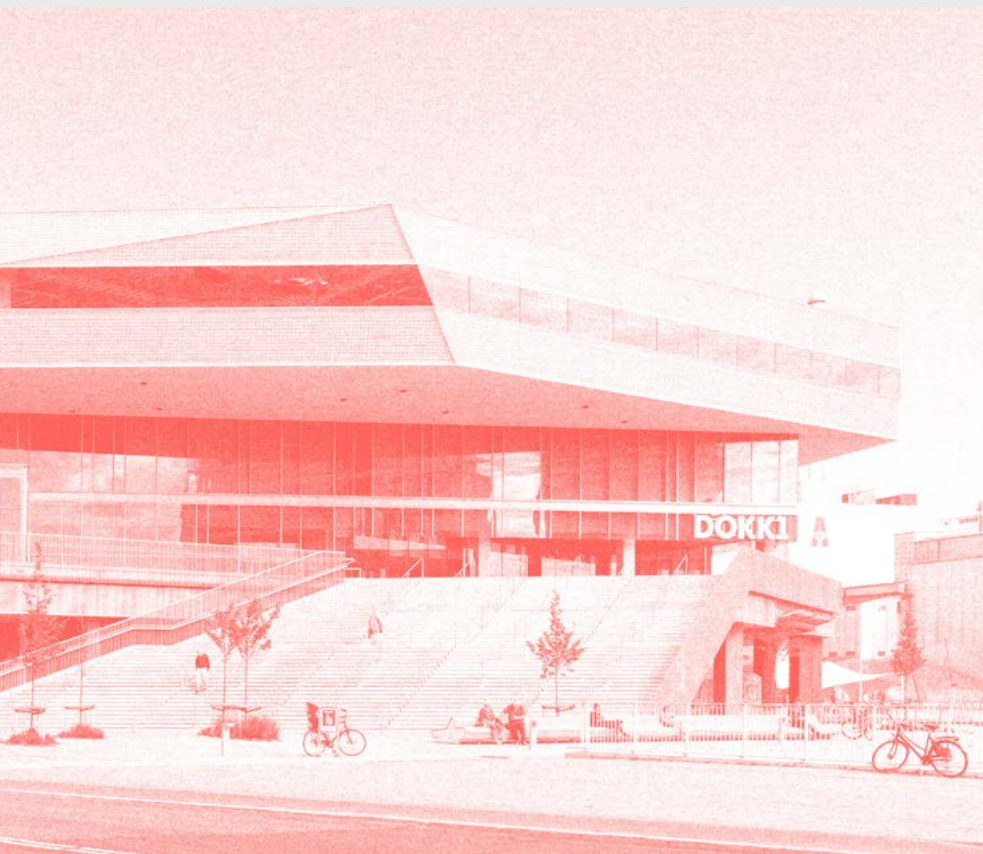
Both buildings demonstrate that architecture is not only something one looks at, but also something one looks from. It frames its surroundings and establishes visual orientations.

If Navitas postulates a multiplicity of outward-thrusting directions, Dokk1 translates them into an actual experience of movement and dynamism rather than merely signalling them symbolically. Polygonal floor plates are stacked one upon another in such a way that they take account of each other, adjusting to mutual constraints and alignments, as well as to the geometries and contours of the adjacent quays and harbour basin. Yet as one moves upward through the levels, the building continually introduces subtle shifts – sometimes not immediately legible, but always dynamic and activating. The floors seem to rotate in relation to one another without ever settling into a final or stable configuration.

The second public floor (level 2) occupies a simple square plan, but the library itself fills only a little more than half of this area, creating “houses within the house”, while the sections facing the city are not publicly accessible. The transparent floor below is likewise inscribed within a square, but in contrast to the surrounding exterior space its four corners are cut away at differing angles. The result is effectively an irregular octagon, like the encircling balcony, yet one that enters into a syncopated rhythm with it, avoiding any simple parallel correspondence.

Fig. 08





Unlike Navitas, the library is characterised by obtuse angles that mediate between the orientations of the outer glass screens. Rather than projecting in sharp points, the building continually shifts in a turning motion. It does not radiate outward but rotates around itself. Only in the publicly accessible part of level 2 does the interior contain two right-angled encounters between glazed walls.

The library is not hierarchical. None of its levels functions as a *bel étage* or *piano nobile*. No floor claims overriding importance, just as there is no single position or viewpoint, either outside or within, that appears definitive. The visitor is constantly set in motion, drawn into changing approaches and perspectives. The parts follow one another, but never in a subordinate manner that submits to an overarching order. Externally, the building avoids solidifying into a fixed frontal façade; internally, it does not culminate in a central or commanding space.

There are few uninterrupted opaque partitions. Those surrounding the lecture halls are clad in a plastically animated pattern of timber slats. The most striking spatial feature is almost the ramp itself, which zigzags between a series of landings that function as small stages. These can, however, also become auditoria directed towards a screen that unfolds below. Alongside the sloping connections runs a staircase leading to the high-ceilinged viewing space on level 2. This opens towards the harbour and, after yet another slight shift in level, gives access to “The Balcony”, where a long row of study spaces overlooks the ramp below.

Near the staircase to the smaller double-height section housing The Balcony, the children’s library contains a built-in seating structure whose varied platforms allow for a multitude of sitting heights and positions. This reflects the almost inexhaustible range of seating options throughout the library.

At Dokk1, one may sit on low, easily movable stools, settle on long benches, perch on tall bar stools, recline on soft sofas, or sink into armchairs that almost enclose the body in a shell or cocoon. One may choose round tables, sit opposite others at long communal tables, or line up at individual desks. To varying degrees, one can occupy a lookout position or become a focal point for the gaze of others.

There are transparent group rooms, and in one corner of the library a small reading room offers the possibility of silence and concentration. Taken as a whole, however, this is not the mode of use the architecture primarily encourages. It is not a building of divisions and separations. With its fluid boundaries, continual changes in level, and shifting ceiling heights, it invites constant movement and relocation. The sequence of spaces promotes an open diversity of behaviour that, to my taste, may almost become excessive.

Even so, I regard it as profoundly positive that children are genuinely welcomed into the library and that play is made an integral part of its activities. Whereas games define their rules in advance, play creates them as it unfolds. Yet imaginative fulfilment does not occur instantaneously. The inner world presses against the limits of the outer; imagination stretches itself against the boundaries of reality, encountering barriers constituted by spatial distances and temporal delays.

At Dokk1, play is presented as continuous with the imagination exercised in literature, where unknown and hypothetical possibilities of life can be explored and tested. Just as in the harbour itself, what is distant and unfamiliar – exotic places and alternative possibilities – can be made inward and immediate in a process of constant exchange.

From the viewing hall, perhaps most clearly from its north-western corner, one can look north towards the aforementioned Lighthouse on the north-eastern tip of Aarhus Ø (3XN, 2022; 44 storeys, 142 metres). It is a rather successful high-rise whose location ensures that its name is unlikely to be obscured, literally or metaphorically, by shadows cast inland.

There is, so far as I can see, a visual axis from Scandinavia's largest library building to Denmark's tallest residential tower, both of which aspire to become icons of the city. With its recurring wave motif, Lighthouse presents itself as a maritime landmark, echoing earlier lighthouses, while its Anglicised name suggests enlightenment in a broader sense. In this respect it recalls the French Revolutionary architects' fascination with *phares* – lighthouses conceived as emblems of a new age of Enlightenment in a more secular sense than the light metaphysics of Gothic architecture.

The sightline towards the tower is clearly mediated by the V-shape of AARhus (2019), whose lowered centre functions as the library's aiming device towards the ascending skyscraper. It is tempting to imagine that the A-shapes visible from above – echoing the airport code AAR – may herald a future shaped by drone technology. As such visualisations become more widespread, they may eventually encourage architecture designed as much for the sky as for the street.

Lighthouse is itself an aerial prospect. From its summit one may look back towards the library and survey the city as a panorama, or enjoy the elevated viewpoint and lowered horizon across the sea.

Yet the skyscraper – if it can fully justify the term – is not the best vantage point from which to understand how Aarhus Ø as a whole is anchored to the city. The district is organised around Bernhardt Jensens Boulevard as its principal artery. Rather than offering a terminating *point de vue* towards the north-east,

**the boulevard directs the gaze inward towards the city, clearly identifying the tower of Aarhus Cathedral as its visual target and mooring point.**

**The cathedral, dedicated to St Clement, whose iconographic attribute is the anchor, thus serves as the anchor linking the new Aarhus to the old. It fulfilled this role when the city expanded inland with the establishment of the university, and it has assumed it once again in the latest advance of the city into the bay.**

**Note:** This article is an expanded and updated version of “Ankomst til Århus” (“Arrival in Aarhus”) in Søren Elgaard (ed.), *Reflex Århus* (Aarhus: Kunstforeningen af 1847, 2000), and, in particular, “Århus år 2004. Nogle byrefleksioner” (“Aarhus in 2004: Some Reflections on the City”) in Niels Lehmann et al. (eds), *Kulturliv i Aarhus. Fra bjerget til byen I. Årbog fra Det Humanistiske Fakultet* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2005).

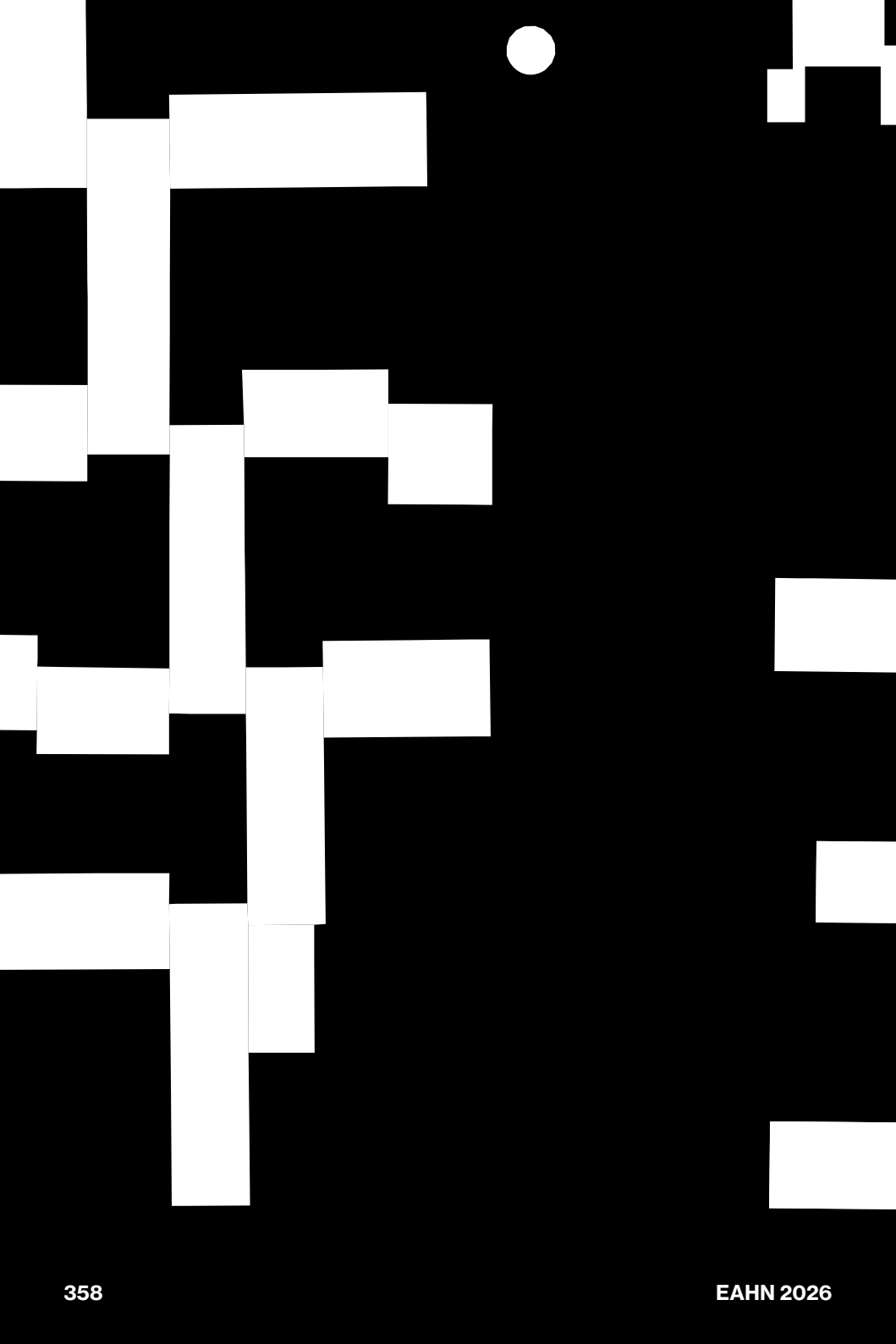
The quotations from Svend Aage Madsen’s novel *Tugt og utugt i mellemtiden* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1976) are taken from vol. 2, p. 9 (Aarhus from the air); vol. 1, pp. 44–45 (Aarhus Central Station); and vol. 2, p. 155 (the Aarhus River).

The Freight-Yard District is discussed in the exhibition booklet *Godsbanen in a String Figure Perspective* (Aarhus School of Architecture, September–November 2025), by Mathilde Kirkegaard, Mogens Andreassen Morgen, Nina Ventzel Riis and Sidse Martens Gudmand-Høyer.

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His most recent major publications include *Kunstværk, udenværk og visuel kultur. Om at se på billeder* (Aarhus University Press, 2022) and the article “To Know and Show the World: The Wunderkammer between Art, Technology and Natural Science”, in Mikkel Bogh and Inge-Merete Kjeldgaard (eds), *Reinventing the Cabinet of Wonder: Entanglements of Art, Science, and Self in Exhibitions* (Aarhus and Yale University Press, forthcoming 2026).

From 2017 to 2019, he was Principal Investigator of a research project on the skyscraper city funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Some findings are presented in the article “The Vertical City: Approaches to the Skyscraper City as Phenomenological Space and Semantic Field”, *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, no. 59 (2020), available online at <https://doi.org/10.7146/nja.v29i59.120471>.





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