

EAHN Themed Conference (Jerusalem, 13–15 Jun 17)

Jerusalem, Jun 13–15, 2017

Deadline: Jan 3, 2017

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EAHN 2017

Histories in Conflict: Cities | Buildings | Landscapes

The European Architectural History Network (EAHN) is pleased to announce the EAHN's third thematic conference Urban Histories in Conflict, to be held at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute on June 13-15 2017. On the 50-year anniversary of the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the contentious unification it legislated, the conference aims to open up questions about the purpose of writing histories of urban conflicts. We ask how historians can account for the predicaments of violence and uneven distributions of power in the built environment, particularly in the face of current worldwide geo-political crises.

At the heart of the conference will be the question of how eruptions of strife shape architectural and urban histories; and reciprocally, how larger architectural and planning processes, along with the histories that register their impact, intervene in the predicament of conflict. The aim of the conference is to bring together different responses to this predicament from both regional architectural and urban historians and worldwide members of the EAHN.

We interrogate the inextricable ties between the history of cities and urban conflict through several complimentary questions. First, we examine how situations of socio-political conflict affect research. How does the temporality of spatial conditions stirred by conflict influence concepts of history, heritage, preservation and urban renewal? Bitter national, ethnic or class conflicts often inspire dichotomized readings of history, or conversely, generate pleas for "symmetry" or "moderation" that put the rigors of research at risk. What are the implications for architectural praxis (historiography, design, and their critical extensions) in either case? A second set of questions focuses on the architect/ historian/preservationist operating from a particular "side" of conflict, facing palpable restrictions in the form of inaccessible national, physical and moral boundaries that may put them at physical risk, or might raise questions of legitimacy, even as they may strive for scholarly rigor. Can one set claims on a "legitimate" practice from any particular perspective? Reciprocally, should architectural/urban history actively assume a civic responsibility towards conflict? How does the disparity of power affect historical analysis? And how does it affect practice, and the meaning of urban citizenship? Can history become a platform of negotiation regarding urban justice and democracy? Moreover, conflict has lingering effects. How does conflict inspire the post-traumatic histories of places such as Mostar, Famagusta and Dublin? How do these accounts intervene in current realities, such as the one we encountered in embattled Jerusalem?

Situations of conflict often compel interventions that put into question disciplinary autonomies

and make the issue of agency particularly pertinent. We therefore wish to explore the seam between the historian and the activist, because this is where architecture/history/heritage are negotiated, contested and pulled apart by different forces. On the one hand are scholars, and on the other hand are the state/ the market/ human rights activists—yet all of them claim a stake in the “public good”. Who is posing the rules of the game, according to which the historian as activist works? The study of this tension necessitates disciplinary exchanges between historiography and political theory, which we aim to address in this conference.

Conference sub-themes:

1. The “positioning” vs. the “autonomy” of the historian
2. Agency and the seam between historiography and activism
3. The collapse of former geo-political boundaries between North/ West/ center/ metropole and South/ East/ periphery/ colonies within European cities; alternative conceptualizations of the cross-cultural, beyond the modes of area studies
4. Urban conflict resulting from labor migration and the refugee crisis.
5. Preservation of conflictual sites, their impact and interpretation of the “public good”
6. The persistence of conflict schemas within historiographic/ design practices that engage with the prospect of consensual peace or halted violence
7. Strategies for advancing research on (and funding for) histories in conflict so that history/historiography can impact the realm of praxis around issues of conflict

We welcome papers that consider urban conflict and urge investigation into its related aspects of change and heterogeneity. Papers should be based on well-documented research that is primarily analytical and interpretative rather than descriptive in nature. Abstracts (of 500 words) and all queries should be addressed to conference chairs and the organizing committee: Alona Nitzan-Shifan, Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion, Technion City, Haifa 32000, ISRAEL; Tel: (+972) 4-8294048, Fax: (+972) 4-8294617, Email: alona@technion.ac.il; Panayiota Pyla, University of Cyprus, Department of Architecture, PO Box 20537, 1678 Nicosia, CYPRUS; Tel: (+357) 22892963, Fax: (+357) 22895330, Email: pyla@ucy.ac.cy.

Important Dates:

Abstract submission: January 3, 2017

Abstract selection and notification of speakers: January 13, 2017

Full papers due: May 1, 2017

Conference: June 13-15, 2017

Scientific Committee:

Alona Nitzan-Shifan, Technion

Panayiota Pyla, University of Cyprus

Hilde Heynen, Catholic University Lueven

Marc Crinson, The University of Manchester

Sibel Bozdogan, GSD Harvard and

Daniel B. Monk, Colgate University

Tawfiq Da’adli, The Hebrew University

Haim Yacobi, Ben Gurion University

Organizing committee:

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Petros Phokaides, National Technical University of Athens

Yoni Mendel, Van Leer Institute Jerusalem

Reference:

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