

Emergency Measures in Architecture and Urbanism (Rome, 6–7 Sep 18)

Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History (Rome, Italy), Sep 6–07, 2018

Deadline: Jul 1, 2018

Danielle Abdon, Temple University

Cities in Crisis: Emergency Measures in Architecture and Urbanism, 1400-1700

Organizers: Danielle Abdon (Temple University/Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History) and Margaret Bell (UC Santa Barbara/Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence)

This interdisciplinary Study Day at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome will focus on how early modern cities responded to or attempted to anticipate social or health crises by repurposing structures, constructing temporary shelters or buildings, or adapting urban spaces in the context of emergencies. These include, but are not limited to, disease outbreaks, displacement, migrations, wars, natural disasters, famines, etc. Over the centuries, these interventions have taken various forms, such as lazaretti, temporary military barracks, makeshift refuges, quarantine or segregation zones, among many others, and we encourage submissions that interpret the notion of 'crisis architecture' beyond these examples.

We are interested in papers engaging with methodological issues, including questions of public and private space; gender, race, and socioeconomic identities; public health and social welfare; environment and materiality; structural and infrastructural innovations; and ephemerality and permanence. In addition, we particularly welcome submissions that address the theme from a global perspective. For instance, in the period of European colonial expansion and missionization, these questions took on added complexity as social and sanitary pressures increased and different cultural approaches to crisis architecture came into contact and conflict. We will also consider papers investigating the notion of risk, specifically in terms of how anticipation of and preparation for crises shaped architecture and urban planning. Moving away from a study of architecture focused on monumentality and magnificence, we ask how emergency structures embodied and responded to disruptive scenarios in the early modern period.

From the ongoing global migration crisis caused by the displacement of millions of refugees, to the current rebuilding of Puerto Rico and other parts of the Caribbean and Central America after devastating earthquakes and hurricanes, and the need for crisis units resulting from recent Ebola and plague outbreaks in Africa, architectural responses to crisis are as pressing now as they ever were. The fields of humanitarian and emergency architecture continue to gain relevance due to recurring catastrophes and new technological developments, and it is our hope that this study day will help us engage these questions historically and bear fruit in our thinking about the present.

We welcome submissions for a 20-minute presentation in English from doctoral candidates and post-doctoral and early career scholars. Throughout the course of the Study Day, we anticipate focused and productive discussion between junior and invited senior scholars, with dedicated time to address current issues surrounding the production and study of crisis architecture as a continuous phenomenon.

Please send a 300-word abstract, title, and current CV to both organizers, Danielle Abdon (danielle.abdon@temple.edu) and Margaret Bell (mfbell@umail.ucsb.edu), by July 1, 2018. Drafts of papers will be expected one week prior to the Study Day. The Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History will provide accommodation for three nights in Rome and partially reimburse travel costs (up to €150 for scholars based in Europe and up to €500 for those coming from elsewhere). Accepted papers may be considered for future publication in an edited volume.

Reference:

CFP: Emergency Measures in Architecture and Urbanism (Rome, 6-7 Sep 18). In: ArtHist.net, May 26, 2018 (accessed Apr 7, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/18242>>.