

Béton Fédérateur (Zurich, 25–26 Jan 19)

ETH Zurich, Jan 25–26, 2019

Sabine Sträuli

Béton Fédérateur – Workshop

The workshop proposes to study the transformation of the Swiss territory in light of concrete, from the latter half of the 19th century to the present day, from the first feats of civil engineering to contemporary major rail, road, and energy infrastructures. In particular, it aims to retrace how various structures built independently of one another (dams, bridges, bunkers, as well as storage depots, and housing) came to constitute, in the course of the 20th century, an interdependent infrastructure network covering the Swiss territory in its entirety and encompassing everything in its path, from artificial networks (energy, transport) to natural ones (waterways), from the built environment to topography.

The workshop will bring together national and international scholars from the fields of history, history of architecture, history of technology, and social history. The first day of the symposium will be devoted to methodological questions, covered by international experts, followed by a panel that will open the field to current research on concrete. The second day will propose a broad-ranging survey on key studies in Switzerland.

Friday, 25 January 2019 – An International View

10:00–10:30 Welcome and Introduction

Laurent Stalder, ETH Zurich "Switzerland – A Technological Pastoral"

10:30–12:00

Amy E. Slaton, Drexel University Philadelphia "Knowing Concrete: Some Historiographic Possibilities"

Adrian Forty, University College London "A 'Global Medium', or 'an Agent of Territory'?"

Hannah Le Roux, University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg "AC: The Pressing of an Asbestos-Cement Development Complex"

14:00–15:30

Réjean Legault, Université du Québec à Montréal "The Making of Architectural Concrete: Between Invention and Discovery"

Tullia Iori, Università degli studi di Roma Tor Vergata "The Role of Reinforced Concrete in the Italian School of Engineering"

Roberto Gargiani, EPF Lausanne "The Primitive Frame in Concrete of Mies and SOM"

16:00–17:30

Jürg Conzett, Chur "Attitudes Towards the Use of Concrete in Swiss Bridge Building"
Eugen Brühwiler, EPF Lausanne "Non-invasive Interventions on Three Concrete Structures of High Cultural and Aesthetic Value"
Anna Rosellini, Università di Bologna "Primordial and Ideological Values of Matter: Concrete in Art"

18:00–19:00 Futures Roundtable

Guillaume Habert, ETH Zurich
Mario Monotti, Università della Svizzera italiana
Markus Peter, ETH Zurich
Karen Scrivener, EPF Lausanne

Saturday, 26 January 2019 – A Swiss View

09:00–10:30

Aurelio Muttoni, EPF Lausanne "Does a 'Swiss Federal Building Identity' Exist?"
Martin Tschanz, ZHAW Winterthur "Concrete Architecture? The Examples of St Nicolas in Hérémence and the Capuchin Monastery in Sion"
Salvatore Aprea, EPF Lausanne "Concrete Buildings in French-speaking Switzerland: The Predominance of Frame Structures"

11:00–12:00

Nicola Navone, Università della Svizzera italiana "Concrete in the Canton of Ticino: An Overview"
Ilaria Giannetti, Università della Svizzera italiana "The N2 Chiasso–San Gottardo Motorway: The Design and Construction of 143 km of Concrete"

14:00–15:30

Sarah Nichols, ETH Zurich "Building and Blowing-up the Monolith"
Manuel Hiestand, Wollerau "Cement for Swiss infrastructure"
Lorenzo Stieger, ETH Zurich "Both High-rise and Bunker: The Terrassenhaus in Switzerland"

16:00–17:00

Silvia Groaz, EPF Lausanne "Banham's New Brutalism and the 'Swiss School'"
Marcel Bächtiger, ETH Zurich "Béton is a State of Mind: On the Representation of Concrete in Swiss Cinema"

The workshop is a collaboration between the Archives de la construction moderne – École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Archivio del Moderno – Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), and Institute gta – Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETHZ).

The workshop is open to the public, seats are limited. For further information please visit www.gta.arch.ethz.ch/events

Reference:

CONF: Béton Fédérateur (Zurich, 25-26 Jan 19). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 14, 2019 (accessed Feb 10, 2026), [<https://arthist.net/archive/19907>](https://arthist.net/archive/19907).