

## IX AISU (Associazione Italiana di Storia) Congress (Bologna, 11-14 Sep 19)

Bologna, Sep 11–14, 2019

Deadline: Feb 10, 2019

Nancy Stieber

“The Global City: Urban Condition as a Pervasive Phenomenon” organized by the A.I.S.U. (Associazione Italiana di Storia Urbana) in Bologna, 11-14 September 2019.

Deadline: February 10th, 2019

We wish to draw your attention to the three sessions described below..

Abstracts indicating name, affiliation, email address, brief cv, and a description of the proposed topic of no more than 2000 characters should be sent both to the chairs of the session and to the conference organizers ([congresso@storiaurbana.org](mailto:congresso@storiaurbana.org)) using the form found on the conference website

<http://www.storiaurbana.org/index.php/en/component/content/article/9-congressi/1131-bologna-2019-call-for-paper-uk>

Session 3-5 “The Photo-book and the City”

The term ‘photo-book’ was coined in the 1920s by László Moholy-Nagy and went on to define a popular genre within 20th-century visual culture. While this genre emerged within the ‘New Vision’ of the inter-war period, it has a broader history that goes beyond the modernist avant-gardes. What role did this unique form of publication play within the history of urban representation? The aim of the session is to focus on the photo-book as an instrument for reading, analysing, and interpreting cities through a curated sequence of images. There is a long cultural and artistic history of these illustrated books, spanning from the late-19th to the early-21st century, which calls for comparative investigation. A tentative list should include celebrated examples, ranging from Alvin Langdon Coburn’s works inspired by Japanese view-making cultures (London 1909; Edinburgh 1909; New York 1910) to seminal books by Brassai (Paris de nuit 1932), Berenice Abbott (Changing New York 1939), Horacio Coppola (Buenos Aires 1936) and William Klein (New York 1956; Rome 1959), but we are equally interested in less-known publications. Attention will also be given to by the work of photographers trained as architects who used the camera to capture specific qualities of urban space, such as Norman Carver (Italian Hilltowns 1979) and Gabriele Basilico, whose observations of cities around the world (Milan; Beirut; Berlin; Moscow; Istanbul) were the subject of carefully curated volumes. There is a history here that awaits to be written; one that is made all the more significant by the recent use of photo-books to preserve the narrative of urban campaigns stretching over decades (e.g., works by Martin Parr and Garry Badger published by Phaidon). Gradually, as with other photographic trends, this type of representation has been taken up by contemporary artists, historians, architects and urban designers for a variety of urban explorations. We encourage participants to propose case-studies as well as reflective papers focusing

on photo-books across the history of photography – from its origins to the latest digital developments. Contributions that address the role of various figures involved in the production, circulation, and reception of these publications (e.g., photographers; editors; publishers; etc) are also welcome.

Chairs: Davide Deriu [d.deriu@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:d.deriu@westminster.ac.uk); Angelo Maggi [amaggi@iuav.it](mailto:amaggi@iuav.it)

#### Session 6-4 “Reading the City’s Histories Through Visual Documents”

Every city contains multitudes, presenting a collective artifact made up of innumerable places and lived narratives. Most present-day cities also overlay multitudes, covering or transforming earlier iterations of themselves. Our knowledge of those older layers, of urban landscapes since recast, quickly surrenders to the mortality of personal memory. We then come to depend heavily on the persistence of physical artifacts that capture fragments of the past city, whether through survivals and traces in the present-day built landscape or through records – textual, visual, and sometimes even three dimensional – of those largely supplanted deeper layers of the urban palimpsest.

But the city is a big and complicated artifact, and every such representation must be a purposeful distillation, begging questions of the part and the whole, and of choice. Each favors some kinds of information over others, and all demand a considered examination of the lens adopted by their creators, retrospectively framing the visual document in the context of agency, motives, models, and expected function. At the same time, even as we are conscious of such filtering frames, we want to ask what they tell us about their subject, as they offer posterity some of our best evidence of these places in time. They allow us to better see and read the built landscapes they portray as patterns of forms, as socio-economic artifacts, as settings of living and working and gathering, of entrepreneurial ambitions and communal organization, across the globe and through history.

For this session, we especially invite contributions that look to and interrogate visual documents that capture lost aspects of the city of both distant and recent history at a range of scales – from detailed surveys of common building forms to purposefully selected sets of views, from closely transcribed plans and streetscapes of whole blocks and neighborhoods to maps of larger spatial networks and depictions of a city as a whole – that offer us insights on both that city and our own vantage point, in terms of our intentions and responses, in our looking at and to it.

Contact person: Anat Falbel [anatfalbel@uol.com.br](mailto:anatfalbel@uol.com.br)

Chairs: The EAHN Interest Group “Urban Representations” (organized by group members Jeffrey Cohen, Anat Falbel, Min Kyung Lee, Nancy Stieber)

#### Session 6-6 “Stories We Tell: Narratives of Urban Space”

Architectural sites as tourist attractions challenge the histories and memories of the urban collective. The city beckons the potential visitor (both tourist and local alike) through the aestheticization and cultural branding that serve, particularly through pervasive mediatizations, to narrativize urban space that may be in contrast to, or stacked amongst, stories of place. This session will engage an assortment of pressing questions about the relationship of architecture to tourism and memory specifically to position concepts of demolition, preservation, heritagization and new construction within urban (geopolitically-shaped) sites, for no site is detached from place; no touristic visit can effectively be accomplished without considering – in some measure – the story of a place and the memories it holds for all those who dwell or pass through it. No guidebook is disentangled from interpretive memories and stories that contribute to how tourists come to learn about a site. Questions such as whose memories become the stories of a tourist’s encounter with a place, or how do we consider the terms heritage or heritagization within the context of place-

making and memory stories, will be discussed. Finally, what constitutes the memory or (competing) memories of a place in order for it to be preserved (and subsequently branded for a tourist economy)?

Chair: Shelley Hornstein shellehyh@yorku.ca

Reference:

CFP: IX AISU (Associazione Italiana di Storia) Congress (Bologna, 11-14 Sep 19). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 2, 2019 (accessed Jun 17, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/20078>>.