

Histories of Postwar Architecture, Issue: Committed, Politicized, or Operative

HPA - Histories of Postwar Architecture

Deadline: Jul 31, 2020

Lorenzo Ciccarelli

Histories of Postwar Architecture (HPA) is a biannual open-access peer-reviewed Journal that aims to publish innovative and original papers on post-war architecture, with no geographical, methodological, historiographical or disciplinary restrictions.

Committed, Politicized, or Operative: Figures of Engagement in Criticism from 1945 to Today
Issue edited by Hélène Jannière (Université Rennes 2) and Paolo Scrivano (Politecnico di Milano).

In a 1995 article on the renewal of architectural criticism, French architect and critic Bernard Huet referred to Charles Baudelaire to define art criticism as necessarily – in the poet's words – “partial, impassionate, political”. During the 1990s, perhaps as a reaction to the 1980s, when in many specialized publications architectural criticism was identified as “communication” or even as promotion of architects and architectures, it emerged an extensive nostalgia for a notion of criticism associated to the historical avant-gardes. In this “committed” criticism or in the “politicized” one it was possible to emphasize the critic's influential and active role in discovering, promoting, and intellectually supporting groups of artists or architects. The idea of a “golden age” of criticism has thus spread, being from time to time related to the end of the 19th century, to the 1920s, and to the 1960s and 1970s.

This issue of HPA intends to collect studies devoted to historical examples of “committed” and “politicized” criticism, reflecting on the real meanings of these concepts and on the themes and subjects to which they are tied.

On the one hand, the figure of “committed” critic might be linked to the art and architecture avant-gardes from the end of the 19th century onward, hence defining a privileged relationship between critic and artist/architect; on the other, “politicized” criticism can be characterized as the understanding in political terms of architectural and city phenomena.

Among the questions the issue wants to address are:

- in which way do these definitions of “committed” and “politicized” criticism come close to or differ from the definition of “operative” criticism, in the various meanings that have been attributed to it since Manfredo Tafuri?
- What are the theoretical tools, the rhetorical constructions, and the intellectual and political references of “committed” and “politicized” criticism?
- Should the latter be necessarily bound to the author's belonging to a party or political group?

- What are their principal ways of circulation (specialized periodicals, journals, targeted actions)?
- In which measure did "politicized" criticism influence architecture's historical narrative?
- And finally, what are the interlacements and the convergences between criticism's intellectual and artistic engagement and the political commitment?

The issue of HPA intends to include contributions dealing with specific case studies or themes, with a periodization that spans from the end of the Second World War to the present date.

Papers should be submitted using <https://hpa.unibo.it/user/register>

The guidelines for paper submission are available at
<https://hpa.unibo.it/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

- Applicant's name
- Title of paper
- Abstract
- 5 keywords
- A brief CV (max 2,000 characters)

Please submit the proposal in the form of MS Word (length between 20,000 and 50,000 characters). The submitted paper must be anonymous.

in relation to the available literature and indicate the sources which the paper is based on. All papers received will go through a process of double-blind peer review before publication.

HPA also looks for contributions for the review section.

<https://hpa.unibo.it/about/editorialPolicies#sectionPolicies>

Reference:

CFP: Histories of Postwar Architecture, Issue: Committed, Politicized, or Operative. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 21, 2020 (accessed Dec 17, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23008>>.