

2 Sessions at SAH 2021 (Montreal, 14–18 Apr 21)

Society of Architectural Historians, Montreal, Canada, Apr 14–18, 2021

Deadline: Jun 3, 2020

ArtHist Redaktion

[\[1\]](#) New Material Histories of Architecture (Session Chair: Kim Förster, kim.forster@manchester.ac.uk and Sarah Nichols, Rice University)

[\[2\]](#) Collecting the Uncollectable: Architecture in the Museum (Session Chair: Elizabeth Keslacy, keslacem@miamioh.edu)

[\[1\]](#) New Material Histories of Architecture

Building architecture requires materials. This truism links architecture to its hinterlands— forests, quarries, mines, oil wells, laboratories, production plants, transport and storage infrastructure—as well as to the businesses, knowledge, and labor that turn matter into materials and materials into buildings. What does the history of architecture look like when the extended trajectories of building materials are made the subject of research, writing, and pedagogy? This panel seeks papers that answer this question, investigating architecture through its materials. Historical and methodological contributions—whether within or across geographies—are both welcome.

Modernist narratives of architecture and urbanization have already been revised to acknowledge their reliance on craft modes of production and to contextualize the modernist movement within larger processes of modernization whose forms often bore no traces of aesthetic revolution. Nevertheless, over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, changes in material production, supply, and consumption were also changes to architecture as both building and discipline. Yet, far from an irresistible “flood” of industrialized materials into the building, the construction of materials and of buildings were both far more entangled, relying on both workshop and material science, rule-of-thumb and patent, propaganda and counter-propaganda.

Of particular interest are contributions that follow thematic areas such as: the spaces, sites and landscapes of material sourcing and disposal; the fumes and dust embedded within and emitted by materials during processing, construction, use, and demolition; and the relation of these materials to environmental and social injustice at scales ranging from the bodily to the planetary. To follow the resources and energy, capital and labor that spin out from building and unbuilding, we assume that panel contributions will link architectural histories to other disciplines, including studies of environment and energy, economic geography, urban political ecology, material anthropology, the history of science and technology, or related disciplines.

Session Chairs: Kim Förster, University of Manchester/MARG, and Sarah Nichols, Rice University

Submission Guidelines:

- Abstracts must be under 300 words.

- The title cannot exceed 65 characters, including spaces and punctuation.
- Abstracts and titles must follow the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Only one abstract per conference by an author or co-author may be submitted.
- A maximum of two (2) authors per abstract will be accepted.
- Please attach a two-page CV in PDF format.
- Abstracts are to be submitted online using the link below.

[2] Collecting the Uncollectable: Architecture in the Museum

For more information or to submit: <https://www.sah.org/2021/call-for-papers>

Collecting the Uncollectable: Architecture in the Museum

The paradox of the architectural exhibition, in which conceptually complex and physically large works of architecture threaten to exceed the space in which they are presented, can be extended to the collection of architecture by museums and other cultural institutions. In that context, objects and spaces never intended to be apprehended in the museum are nevertheless acquired, displayed, and reinterpreted according to its biases, which include a foregrounding of aesthetic distance and an emphasis on origin and authenticity. Scholarship on architectural exhibitions largely focuses on contexts with contemporaneous disciplinary significance: specialized architecture museums that primarily collect drawings and models, large influential exhibitions staged by major art museums, and the recent profusion of architectural bi- and triennials. The scholarship of architectural museology has the potential to address other prevalent ways in which architecture is collected and musealized, such as period rooms or other exhibitionary scenography, archaeological fragments presented individually or as a refashioned whole, environments that stage both the building and its urban context, or instances when the museum's own building serves as a central feature of its exhibition. These forms are generally not self-reflexive, but rather present extra-architectural narratives about history, culture, or heritage.

This session invites papers that address the problematics of architecture's musealization and collection through case studies of institutions, collections, or individual objects in underexamined forms and contexts. Papers on any location or time period may address such questions as: What regulatory regimes or policy developments have emerged to account for the collection of architecture? What new interpretive lenses or display strategies structure interaction with musealized architecture? How do curators reconcile the conflicting demands for architecture to serve as both a primary object of concern and a scaffold for other collections or narratives? How does the collection of architecture pose alternatives to modern art-historical notions of authenticity?

Session Chair: Elizabeth Kessler, Miami University

Reference:

CFP: 2 Sessions at SAH 2021 (Montreal, 14-18 Apr 21). In: ArtHist.net, May 25, 2020 (accessed Jan 8, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23136>>.