

Architectures of Colonialism (Cottbus, 16–18 Jun 21)

Cottbus, Jun 16–18, 2021

Deadline: Jan 8, 2021

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Sixth Interdisciplinary Colloquium, 16 to 18 June 2021

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“Architecture”, as the architect Léopold Lambert recently stated, “is, above all else, a materialisation of power relations and the enforcement of their potential violence.” This applies all the more to the architectures of colonialism, which were used to dominate and segregate people, exploit labour, and restructure land. As architectural history was for a long time written by the “colonisers”—that is the Global North—, these acts of domination have been marred by focusing on canonised buildings, architects, and specific archives, ignoring the experiences and agency of the “colonised”. But monuments provoke, and their values for society can be called into question, as the emotionally charged debates in the Black Lives Matter movement have recently demonstrated so vividly. Dealing with cultural heritage and its cultural significance necessitates a continuous process of negotiation and re-evaluation. Hence, those writing the architectural history of colonialism and colonisation should be concerned with decolonising perspectives, working on methodologies and narratives, and acknowledging actors, memories, and places that have been overlooked so far.

The Sixth Interdisciplinary Colloquium of the DFG Research Training Group 1913 “Cultural and Technological Significance of Historic Buildings”, which will take place from 16 to 18 June 2021 in Cottbus, targets the current debates on decolonising practices and the contested built heritage of colonialism, addressing, amongst others, the following questions:

- How can we reassess historical archives and material evidence to study the built spaces erased through colonising acts and trace the temporary architectures that were used to relocate people and fight riots? How can the traces and material remains of marginalised subjects be analysed and made visible? What and whose stories do these remains tell? How can oral history be used when grappling with the architectures of colonialism?
- Which actors, institutions, and knowledge networks were involved in the design and building practices of colonial power, and what role did local actors play? How did these colonial networks influence the design and building practices in the “centre”? How can we rewrite architectural history to take into account the complex topologies of knowledge circulation in a globalised world shaped by colonialism?

– Whose heritage are colonial sites? What different memories are attached to them, and how have they changed over time? How have the architectures of colonialism been appropriated and reused, endowed with new stories and memories? And how have practices of heritage conservation and divergent policies of remembrance transformed the history and identity of all actors involved in colonialism? How can this entanglement of conflicting memories be dealt with?

We invite scholars from all disciplines interested in architectural, building, and construction history, archaeology, architectural conservation, and heritage studies who are engaged with the above-mentioned and related questions to apply. Both theoretical papers as well as specific case studies focusing on different periods—from antiquity to modern times—and different regions are welcome.

Invited keynote speakers are Antoinette Jackson (University of South Florida), Itohan Osayimwese (Brown University), and Reinhard Bernbeck (Freie Universität Berlin).

We kindly ask all interested scholars to send their proposals (300 words) and a short CV to dfg-graduierntenkolleg-1913@b-tu.de by 8 January 2021.

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