

mod. highrise develop. (Stockholm 08/30-09/02/2005)

Call for Papers: Tower and Slab – perspectives on modernist highrise developments

Panel at the Eighth International Conference on Urban History - Urban Europe in Comparative Perspective. Organized by the European Association of Urban Historians Stockholm 30th August – 2nd September 2006

The modernist highrise development was the most successful urban design scheme of the 20th century. To date, from the government district of Brasilia to the Chicago housing projects and from the Paris banlieue to the Blue Towns of Siberia millions of city dwellers call a standardized, prefabricated concrete tower their home. Despite its success, no urban form has roused comparable controversies. In the fifty years since the completion of the first satellite cities, the tower and slab blocks have been alternately glorified as the salvation of mankind and scorned as generators of violence, blight, and misery. They have been ignored, ridiculed, and occasionally dynamited.

Despite its global proliferation, mass-produced modernist housing has been anything but a uniform program. The concrete blocks were built under diverse social, cultural, and political circumstances. Despite their formal similarities, Roosevelt Island, New York, Paris-Ivry, Berlin-Marzahn, Stockholm-Rinkeby, Warsaw-Ochota, or downtown Novosibirsk are very different urban environments and have spawned a wide range of cultural expressions.

We invite our panelists to investigate the condition of modernist highrise developments over the course of the 20th century. We particularly encourage contributions on the controversial perception of these buildings at different points in time, and on the reciprocal influence between urban design and cultural practice both at the level of centralized planning and informal organization. Possible topics could include architectural and social history, the peripheral condition, issues of race and migration, or the reception of tower and slab developments in the arts.

Please e-mail abstracts (max 400 words) and a short CV to both Susanne Stemmler and Florian Urban.

The deadline for submission: October 1, 2005. You will be notified about the acceptance by the end of November 2005.

For more information on the Eighth International Conference on Urban History: <http://www.historia.su.se/urbanhistory/eauh/sessions.htm>

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Reference:

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