

International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA): Rupture and Response

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CALL FOR PAPERS

International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA)

Special Issue: Rupture and Response

Thematic volume planned for July 2023

This special issue of the International Journal of Islamic Architecture addresses urban and architectural responses to rupture. Prompted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this issue understands and investigates rupture as a state of emergency which may reveal systemic inequalities through the moment of crisis. Such rupture can be caused by events including epidemics, explosions, fires, episodes of armed conflict, and earthquakes or other natural disasters – events which all have myriad and wide-reaching effects on buildings, cities, urban environments, and the communities that inhabit them. While not directly addressing the current pandemic disrupting many of our lives, this special issue aims to explore moments like these and responses to them through built environments. In line with the mission of the IJIA, which aims to encourage dialogue between practitioners and scholars, this special issue hopes to be strongly interdisciplinary. Contributions will be drawn from fields ranging from urban design, history, architecture, planning, and art and architectural history.

Rupture can take the form of a physical rending, manifesting itself in the tearing apart of our built environment. For example, an earthquake might tear down a building important for the social life of a community or level a town. In the first instance, therefore, such moments of rupture themselves may have an effect on the built environment – they may cause direct damage or other change to buildings. However, such an event might also rend the social, economic, or political structures around it. All too often, the damage done by events such as epidemics, natural disasters, or explosions is exacerbated by, while also exacerbating, pre-existing social inequalities. Such moments can place extra strain on political, social, economic, and personal crises. In addition, aspects of culture, such as the production of art or the performance of music and theatre, are also impacted, as they are often deemed secondary needs and neglected at such times of crisis. These two aspects – the urban/architectural and the social/cultural – are, thus, frequently affected in parallel. A moment of sudden disruption might be made manifest in the built environment, as well as the social structures which inhabit and support it.

Further, subsequent to these initial moments of change, the urban and built environment is a medium in which responses to rupture are frequently made material. The environment we build around us is so often the space on and in which we make our preoccupations manifest. The buildings

affected by moments of rupture are in many ways extensions of the people who call them home, and the economic and social structures which shape their lives. In light of this, contributors are encouraged to approach these moments as catalysts for architectural and urban change, but also for other, wider forms of change within society. Moreover, as this special issue will have a focus on the built environment, it may also address acts of commemoration and the architectural memorialisation of the loss of life that is often a consequence of the moments investigated by this special edition.

Indeed, rupture and the response to it can take myriad forms and the past year provided many examples. In 2020, the world has been unexpectedly disrupted in many ways by the spread of COVID-19. Iran, for example, one of the countries dramatically impacted by the pandemic, has already seen effects caused by this outbreak made manifest on its architecture and urban environments. Many of the most significant religious sites in the country have had their doors shut for months, with the shrine of Shah Abdol-Azim in Rayy even being repurposed as a mask factory. The past year also saw the explosion in the port of Beirut on August 4, 2020 which devastated the city and its inhabitants in many ways, one of which was the widespread damage to the urban fabric. Homes, work spaces, places of worship, museums, and many other sites felt the full force of the blast. In the days that followed, many of the responses were embedded within and emerged from the damaged cityscape, whether in the shape of the clean-up effort or anti-government protests.

The changes that take place after rupture affect not only physical spaces, but also social relationships. In response to COVID-19, for example, buildings are used differently and space is managed in new ways. Interior spaces look different – they bear the paraphernalia of social distancing enforcement and increased sanitisation. Many of us are inhabiting spaces differently – frequenting them less; distancing ourselves from others when we do. In addition, new technologies might be developed to guard against further damage. Legislative adjustments, as well as changes to social norms brought about in response to the moment of rupture will have their own effects on the built environment. Thus, the changes can range from repurposing or renovation to reconstruction or relocation. Through studies of the manifestation of rupture and such responses to it in architecture and the wider built environment, this issue aims to explore not only the rending of urban, but also social, fabrics and the conjunction between these two aspects.

Paper proposals should work from the framework outlined above and offer insights relevant to the IJIA's remit, which is defined broadly as 'the historic Islamic world, encompassing the Middle East and parts of Africa and Asia, but also the more recent geographies of Islam in its global dimensions'. In this vein, we encourage contributors to address Islamic architecture in less-frequently represented geographies such as sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe and the Americas. Equally, papers addressing groups often under-represented in the study of Islamic architecture such as women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities are very welcome. Papers can address past or present moments of rupture and the responses to it.

Contributors might range from an architectural historian investigating a mosque built in the early-modern period to commemorate the damage wrought by a fire, or an historian working on the impact of pandemics on hospital design, to an urban planner designing a new town in southern Iran after a major earthquake, or an entrepreneur trying to design a prototype shelter for Syrian

refugees in Iraq, etc. Contributions are welcomed from individuals at any stage of their careers, and advanced graduate students are encouraged to submit proposals. Questions that might be addressed by contributors to this special issue are unlimited but could include:

1. How are the social and political ramifications of these events reflected in architecture? After rupture, how are new and changing societal or political needs expressed through art, architecture and urban design?
2. In what ways are societies' responses to rupture reflected in the worlds they build around them? Are there responses which are distinctive to particular regions? How do religious practice and cultural traditions play a role in the response? Have marginalised communities produced distinctive responses through architecture?
3. What role do architecture, urban design, planning etc. play in recovery from rupture? How is architecture used to mend tears in the social fabric?
4. What are the consequences of the lack of an architectural response to rupture?
5. What effect do such moments have on social justice and disparity? How do they exacerbate pre-existing patterns of inequity and marginalisation? How can responses to these moments build toward a more equal society?
6. How might architectural studies help us understand moments of rupture more clearly? What are the benefits or challenges of working with buildings as sources in these cases?
7. How have planners, architects, and designers understood their role in providing responses to pandemics, earthquakes, etc.?
8. How is architecture used to memorialise such moments? How are urban spaces used for the making of memory? In what ways does damaged or otherwise altered architecture stand in testament to the moment of rupture?

Articles offering historical and theoretical analysis (DiT papers) should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words, while those on design and practice (DiP papers) between 3,000 and 4,000 words. Urbanists, art historians, anthropologists, geographers, political scientists, sociologists, and historians are also welcome. Practitioners from all relevant fields (i.e., architecture, urban planning, landscape design, art) are welcome to contribute insofar as they address the critical framework of the journal.

Please send a title and a 400-word abstract to the guest editor, Fuchsia Hart, University of Oxford (ijia.rupture@gmail.com), by April 5, 2021.

Authors of accepted proposals will be contacted soon thereafter and will be invited to submit full papers by January 30, 2022. All papers will be subject to blind peer review. For author instructions, please consult: www.intellectbooks.com/ijia.

Reference:

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