

## Inside / Outside: The Built Environment (online, 22–24 Sep 21)

online / CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences),  
University of Cambridge, Sep 22–24, 2021

Deadline: Jun 11, 2021

Ciaran Rua O'Neill

Inside / Outside: The Built Environment and Dialogues between Interior and Exterior Space  
online conference

Rarely has the boundary between the built, or domestic, interior and the exterior world been so forcefully underlined as in recent times. For many of us, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent lockdowns across countries and continents, has fundamentally changed our relationship with the interiors we inhabit, such as our homes and workplaces, as well the world outside their walls. Lockdown restrictions have highlighted the role of our domestic interiors as places of refuge but also catalysed a shift in our perceptions of the home as it becomes, for example, a place of forced confinement, while the boundaries between the home and the workplace increasingly blur. Correspondingly, our notion of the exterior world has shifted; due to restrictions on our access to it, it has come to represent variously a space of liberation, socialisation and infection that lies just beyond our walls, doors and windows. In addition, the pandemic has exposed issues of societal marginalisation by disproportionately affecting those on the 'outside', such as individuals from certain socio-economic backgrounds and racial and ethnic minorities.

Reflecting these changing perceptions of the 'inside' and 'outside', this online conference seeks to bring together new research to consider how the boundaries, thresholds and relationships between the built interior and the exterior beyond are configured, negotiated and depicted across disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences. The dialogue between the interior and exterior has been central to architectural theory and practice since antiquity, and has also been a defining feature of artworks executed in varying media that use contrasting depictions of interior and exterior spaces as narrative and framing devices. Moreover, architectural structures loom large in literary works across the ages, which, for example, explore themes of liminality and thresholds by considering the correlations between material interiors and exteriors and notions of emotional and psychological interiority and exteriority. In more recent times, scholars working across disciplines, such as urban studies and social policy, have demonstrated how relations between interior and exterior spaces reflect social and economic inequalities, as well as broader power dynamics within societies. The pandemic has further highlighted these issues in our immediate lived experience, such as the differences between those who have direct access to external space for leisure and socialisation and those who do not.

Through a range of interdisciplinary papers delivered by international scholars, this conference

will provide a platform for dynamic and engaging discourse that will consider relations between built interiors and exteriors from a variety of voices and perspectives.

#### Call for Papers

As part of this three-day online conference, we invite proposals for 20-minute papers that consider relations and dialogues between the built interior and exterior across places, periods, media and disciplines. Possible topics could include but are not limited to:

Boundaries between inside and outside in architectural theory and practice  
Notions of thresholds / liminality in relation to built spaces  
The depiction of architectural interiors and exteriors in painting practice  
Illusionistic or fictive exterior (trompe l'oeil) painting in architectural interiors  
Perceptions of the exterior and interior of buildings in relation to the body  
The inclusion of plants within interiors as bringing 'nature' indoors  
The use of limits between interiors and exteriors as narrative and plot devices in literature  
Representation of divisions between 'sacred' interiors and 'secular' exteriors in text and image  
Social / Racial inequalities and other forms of power imbalances that arise in the context of inside / outside spaces  
Defining / Designing 'shelter' for homeless people or refugees  
Marginality and the queer experience of the built environment

Those interested in delivering a paper are invited to submit a 300-word abstract to Ciarán Rua O'Neill (cro25@cam.ac.uk) and Rebecca Tropp (rkct3@cam.ac.uk) by Friday, 11 June 2021. We welcome proposals from fields across the arts, humanities and social sciences, and especially encourage proposals from graduate students and early career researchers.

Reference:

CFP: Inside / Outside: The Built Environment (online, 22-24 Sep 21). In: ArtHist.net, May 14, 2021 (accessed Apr 5, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/34111>>.