

Session at EAHN 2022 (Madrid, 15–18 Jun 22)

Madrid - School of Architecture of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Jun 15–19, 2022

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Architectural Criticism: Constructing a History

From: Hélène Jannièrè, helene.janniere@univ-rennes2.fr

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Chairs: Hélène Jannièrè, Université Rennes 2; Paolo Scrivano, Politecnico di Milano.

Architectural criticism has hardly developed the same epistemological tools and body of work as art criticism has done since the beginning of the 20th century. If the history of art criticism seems to have given little space to architectural criticism, criticism has often taken centre stage in modern and contemporary architectural discourses. In recent years, recurring discussions about its alleged “crisis” have also hindered most historical analyses on criticism’s founding criteria, on its primary actors and cultural milieus, its theoretical instruments, and its universe of intellectual references. Contrary to the history of art criticism, fully defined as an accepted field of art history in the 1980s, the history of architectural criticism remains in large part to be built. A few works mark out the construction of this field of research, as a reflection not only of different intellectual traditions but also of diverse theoretical postulations. The history of architectural criticism, in fact, still overlaps with multiple research realms: the histories of architectural theories; the histories of critics intended as histories of intellectual and professional trajectories that contributed to establishing the ground for architectural criticism; and the histories of media outlets dedicated to architecture. As related but subsidiary fields, none of them has established sufficient ground for the construction of a specific history of architectural criticism.

This session proposes to chart the current state of the history of architectural criticism by inviting contributions that participate in the consolidation of such a historical subject. Proposals may address three different types of questions.

In the first place, the session is open to contributions that adopt an epistemological or methodological approach to the history of architectural criticism. In the second place, it intends to host communications casting light on particular aspects of architectural criticism’s history, from the beginning of the 19th century to the present, for example, national or regional specificities and narratives or trying to analyze possible intersections with historical or theoretical work. Finally, it wants to encourage the analysis of exemplary cases and themes, such as notable figures of crit-

ics, media initiatives, and notions of criticism. Submissions may also examine discourses on criticism developed by architects, journalists, theorists and historians, including those emerging from their own practices of criticism. Studies on criticism as a visual discourse or as a visual tool, taking into account the role that images play in building critical discourses in books or magazines, are particularly welcome.

Submission through the conference platform:
<https://eventos.upm.es/53558/upload/eahn-seventh-international-meeting.html>

Reference:

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