

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

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

Deadline: Sep 20, 2021

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Session 14 – The Architecture of Global Governance

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Chairs: Sven Sterken, KU Leuven; Dennis Pohl, TU Delft / Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.

Next EAHN2022, the Seventh International Meeting of the European Architectural History Network, will take place in Madrid, Spain, hosted by the School of Architecture of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.

During the past century, states have increasingly become subordinate to intergovernmental organizations. Initially, the seats of such bodies, like the Permanent Court of Arbitration (The Hague), the League of Nations (Geneva), and the UN (New York) gave rise to high architectural aspirations. Values such as peace, cooperation and solidarity were intended to foster a new architectural idiom expressing political power beyond the established registers of nationalism, democracy, and separation of powers. Today, institutions such as NATO, WTO, and IMF constitute a global governance that relies on non-hierarchical steering mechanisms. Being non-elected bodies for the most part, these organizations exist in the public imagination predominantly as abstract acronyms, and are generally housed in corporate-like buildings. With bigness and harmless banality as their principal characteristics, these buildings corroborate the popular idea that global governance requires gigantic bureaucratic machines that are of little architectural interest. The recent inauguration of the vast NATO headquarters in Brussels was a painfully illustration of this, for it went unnoticed in the architectural press. Thus, the architecture of global governance not only constitutes a political problem, it also is a design issue that challenges both architectural criticism and historiography.

Starting with the assumption that these transnational political constructs require new and imaginative forms of identification, this session proposes to interrogate the capacity of architecture to provide spaces for representing such bodies at the global scale, thereby shaping political culture by defining procedures, rituals, and norms of governance. To this end, we invite papers that discuss built, unrealized, or theoretical projects for the seats of supranational or intergovernmental organizations across continents. Papers may focus, for example, on how political values are visu-

ally expressed through built form; address such buildings as theatres of diplomacy and explore how they accommodate the rituals of consultation, lobbying, and decision making. Or, papers may investigate how their complex bureaucratic machinery is organized in terms of offices, translation booths, and meeting rooms. We would especially welcome contributions that consider non-Western international organizations (such as the Non-Aligned Movement and All-African Peoples Conference), as well as papers analyzing how the interfaces between bureaucratic acts, political leaders, and the public are shaped and exploited. For paradoxically, these buildings – despite being symbols and instruments of global governance – are mostly sealed off from the world they represent.

The deadline for the Call for Papers has been extended and abstracts can be submitted until 20 September 2021.

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

More info: <https://eahn2022conference.aq.upm.es/conference/sessions>

Reference:

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