

Alpine Landscapes in Transformation (Zurich, 12–13 May 22)

ETH Zurich, Switzerland, May 12–13, 2022

Deadline: Dec 17, 2021

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Alpine Landscapes in Transformation: Infrastructure, Culture and Climate Call for Abstracts

The image of the Alps is changing. Climate change, energetic transition, urbanization and industrialization have and will have tremendous effects on the Alpine landscape. Located at the crossroads of Europe, the transformations of this fragile environment need to be questioned. The symposium brings together experts from practice, research, and arts in a broad discussion about the past, present, and future of this unique landscape.

Format

The event consists of two main parts: two half-day workshops focussing on research, and an afternoon of round-table discussions. The research workshop gathers doctoral students and young researchers working on the topic of the symposium, giving them an opportunity to exchange ideas and reflect on their ongoing work. It is followed by a round table with various actors from academia and practice actively involved with the Alpine landscape. It is articulated in two sessions: labour/migration/culture and water/infrastructure/landscape. These discussions will offer a fragmented miniature of the complex issues at stake. A keynote presentation by Prof. Günther Vogt will complement the symposium.

Call for Abstracts

The aim of the research workshops is to gather perspectives on the transformations of Alpine landscapes to complete the panel discussions held on the second afternoon. Contributions to the workshop should specifically tackle this topic in relation to industrialisation, infrastructure construction, climate change, or the cultural adaptations they require. These relations and interactions can be seen in the form of competition, passive coexistence, or symbiosis, but may also very well be proposals for alternatives in the form of projects.

The contributions must to be aimed at one of the sessions listed below:

1. Shaping nations and shaping perception
2. Transformation and conflict
3. New industrial ecologies
4. Projections and alternatives
5. Open workshop

Description of the thematic workshops:

1. Shaping nation and shaping perception

Alpine passes, tunnels, or hydropower works have been narrowly intertwined with nation-building. These infrastructural works have historically positioned the Alps and the Alpine countries as both natural frontiers and points of passage, just as they have shaped discourses on national identity. Each project redefines the geopolitical relevance of a portion of territory in relation to the neighbouring countries and regions as if to constantly reconstitute a shimmering mosaic. The workshop embeds infrastructure works in larger political, territorial, or legal strategies, assessing the agency of the landscape in those projects.

2. Transformation and conflict

This workshop investigates the perceived destructive nature of industry and infrastructure construction. Landscape, as common ground, is the place where conflicts about its variegated uses, worldviews, and projected states play out. The multi-scalar dimension of infrastructure or industrial ventures brings global or transnational networks with very local specificities into immediate contact. The workshop focuses on the conflicts that arise from this friction: how are they perceived, contested, negotiated? Are the resolutions of the conflicts necessarily a zero-sum game?

3. New Industrial Ecologies

Material interventions in the Alpine landscape can generate major disturbances over scales, time, and species. Whilst some relations are lost, new relations emerge, some of which can be seen as symbiotic (both materially and culturally). This workshop explores the nature and development of such relations: intentional or unexpected, transitory or permanent, well-known or experimental. Can they inform us in more detail about the position and effects of human interventions? And can they be used as models for further developments?

4. Projections and Alternatives

Being mainly project-oriented, the spatial disciplines (architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and planning) have an operative role in suggesting ways of integrating industry or infrastructure into the Alpine landscape. The intent of this workshop is twofold. It calls designers and planners working on such transformations to the stand, to share their vision. It also aims at creating a public sphere for the discussions around recently completed projects, to be used as “lessons learned”.

5. Open Workshop

If your research relates to the overall topic of the symposium but less to the individual thematic workshops, please submit your abstract to the open workshop. Depending on the amount of submissions, several open workshops may take place. Papers submitted here are assessed in terms of interest regarding the overall topic of the symposium.

For each workshop, 3 participants will be selected for a 15-minute presentation. This will be followed by an open discussion, moderated by a guest critic. The organisers retain the option of setting up one or several additional thematic workshops, based on submissions.

Please send the following to alpensymposium@arch.ethz.ch, latest by the 17th of December 2021:

- Title of presentation
- Choice of thematic workshop
- Institutional affiliation of the author(s)
- Abstract (up to 300 words)
- Short bio (up to 150 words)
- Contact details

Key Dates

Publication call for abstracts: 12.10.2021

Submission deadline (abstracts): 17.12.2021

Notification of acceptance: end of January 2022

Submission of presentation: 10.05.2022

Research workshops: 12.-13.05.2022

Round tables and keynote: 13.05.2022

More information and event webpage:

<https://vogt.arch.ethz.ch/forschungsthema/alpensymposium>

Organisation

The event is organized by the Chair Günther Vogt for landscape architecture

Institute for Landscape and Urban Studies, ETH Zurich

Contact: alpensymposium@arch.ethz.ch

Reference:

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