

2 PhD positions, History and Theory of Architecture, ETH Zurich

ETH Zurich

Application deadline: May 31, 2022

Sigrid de Jong, Zurich

Within the framework of the research project « Building Identity: Character in Architectural Debate and Design, 1750-1850 », which focuses on the uses and meaning of 'character' in architectural criticism and practice in the period 1750-1850, the chair for the History and Theory of Architecture (Prof. Dr Maarten Delbeke) at the gta Institute, D-Arch, ETH Zurich is offering two positions for doctoral students. The project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation Council (SNS-F).

You will be enrolled on the doctoral programme of the Department of Architecture of ETH Zurich. The positions will start on 1 October 2022. The positions are available for a duration of 4 years.

Project background

The project « Building Identity: Character in Architectural Debate and Design, 1750-1850 » examines the uses and meaning of 'character' in architectural criticism and practice in the period 1750-1850. In architectural discourse 'character' denotes the capacity of buildings to give expression to quality or emotion, and thereby enter into a meaningful relationship with the public. Still used in architectural criticism today, often casually, 'character' was a topic of intense exploration and debate in European architectural criticism and practice in the period 1750-1850. This project will produce a critical history of the uses and meaning of 'character' in that period, to understand why it became so important, and why its concepts persist today. It studies writings on the character in architecture against the background of key developments during the Enlightenment and combines close reading with historical research.

The two PhD researchers will focus on how 'character' connected architectural style, public and nation. The first PhD project examines the role of 'character' in defining and propagating the invention, design and international dissemination and adoption of the Swiss chalet, the second PhD project explores how 'character' served to establish a naturalized relationship between Gothic architecture and the emerging nation-state. The project team is co-led by a senior researcher, Dr Sigrid de Jong, who will examine how, by assigning personhood to a building, 'character' served to naturalize the relationship between buildings and human actors.

Job description

- You will work closely with both the Project leader and the Senior researcher on the project, contribute to organising events and joint publications as well as an anthology, besides working on your own individual project.

- You will be supported with submitting papers to international conferences as well as begin to publish both jointly and independently.
- You will be supported with preparing and presenting papers at international conferences as well as publishing your research in peer-reviewed journals. The project grant will support conference attendance and research trips.
- You will be part of the doctoral program of the Architecture Department, and thus participate in the activities of the department, contributing to curricular and extra-curricular events.

Your profile

- We are looking for individuals with backgrounds in either the history and theory of architecture, art and landscape, cultural history or architects with research experience.
- You should hold a diploma or a Master's degree acquired at the university level in architecture, the history of art or related fields.
- Knowledge of German, French and Italian is a plus.
- We are particularly keen on hearing from individuals with experience in archival research who have excellent written and spoken communication skills (English, French and German) alongside an enthusiasm for meticulous research, close reading, cultural history and discourse analysis.

We look forward to receiving your online application with the following documents by May 31st 2022:

- a letter of motivation
- a resume
- an outline of your future research project (2 pages)
- 2 letters of recommendation

Please note that we exclusively accept applications submitted through our online application portal (https://www.jobs.ethz.ch/job/view/JOPG_ethz_vFPmqQ6qhvalpYL91N). Applications via email or postal services will not be considered. For further information please visit our website (<https://delbeke.arch.ethz.ch>) or contact Prof. Dr Maarten Delbeke and Dr Sigrid de Jong by email, professur.delbeke@gta.arch.ethz.ch (no applications).

Reference:

JOB: 2 PhD positions, History and Theory of Architecture, ETH Zurich. In: ArtHist.net, May 4, 2022 (accessed Jun 4, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36603>>.