

Session at SAH (online, 20–22 Sep 23)

Online, Sep 20–22, 2023

Deadline: Jun 7, 2022

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76th Annual International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians – virtual

[\[1\]](#) Neo-Medievalism Studies: New Directions for Architectural Historians

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(thematic session)

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This session explores the architectural repercussions of medievalism and the study of those repercussions, across cultural, stylistic, and historical boundaries. Since the codification of medievalism studies in the 1970s, scholars have devoted great attention to “the study of responses to the Middle Ages,” to quote the definition attributed to Tom Shippey, literature academic and expert on J.R.R. Tolkien. Yet within medievalism studies – an interdisciplinary genre involving, for instance, scholars of literature, history, and cultural studies who explore time periods after the Middle Ages (despite its traditional association with the study of the actual Middle Ages) – architectural history is under-represented and the role of the architectural historian remains unclear. Conversely, although there is a great body of scholarship on neo-medieval architecture, it is not seen as part of a defined academic subfield within architectural history and is, instead, associated with the study of specific cultural spheres, stylistic outcomes (the Gothic revival, in particular), and time periods (the late modern).

Setting aside other meanings of “neo-medievalism” (for example, Umberto Eco’s notion that we are living in a sort of new Middle Ages [1985]), the term has a comfortable fit in architectural history to describe the various manifestations of the medieval in post-medieval architectural culture and to denote the antithesis of classicism. Larger than the study of style, neo-medievalists are called to consider the revival of the Middle Ages as a perennial trope. “Neo-medievalism studies” can demarcate the responsibility retained by the architectural historian to contribute to the understanding of the topical return of the Middle Ages, including the burning issue of its political exploitation. The session invites explorations of neo-medieval architecture, and its history, theory, and historiography, in Europe and beyond, from the end of the Middle Ages to the present century and provides a place to discuss the subject matter of neo-medievalism studies.

Papers relating neo-medievalism to broader historiographic, cultural, and political discourse are especially welcome.

Session Chair: Dr Tommaso Zerbi, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History

The SAH is now accepting abstracts. Please submit an abstract no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT on 7 June 2022. Submission guidelines: <https://www.sah.org/2023/call-for-papers>

Reference:

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