

## Conversations on Architectures, Cities, and Landscapes (Zürich, 14–15 Sep 23)

ETH Zurich, Sep 14–15, 2023

Deadline: Mar 10, 2023

Elena Rieger, Zurich

Listening In: Conversations on Architectures, Cities, and Landscapes 1700-1900.

Who do we listen to when we write histories of architectures, cities, and landscapes? How many women authors can we find among our sources? How many of them are cited by those whose research we read? We argue that women and other marginalised groups have always been part of conversations on architectures, cities, and landscapes - but we have not had the space to listen to them. This conference is an invitation to reconstruct such conversations, real, imagined, and metaphorical ones, taking place in the 18th and 19th centuries, in any region, in order to diversify the ways we write histories. Taking the art of conversation, integral as both practice and form to the period in Western thought, and repurposing it to dismantle the exclusivity of historiography, this conference calls for contributions which bring women into dialogue with others.

Listening In proposes a new approach to the 'canon' and its protagonists. Rather than either fighting its existence or expanding it by means of 'exceptions to the rule', we call for the setting up of productive conversations. We acknowledge that the canon never exists on its own; instead, it is shaped by what Griselda Pollock has called 'that which, while repressed, is always present as its structuring other' (1999, 8). This conference is envisaged as a listening exercise. We regard a conversation as both codified practice as well as a specific act of verbal exchange, spoken or written, on a particular subject – here architectures, cities, and landscapes – occurring in a specific site, from street to salon, kitchen to court, construction site to theatre, field to church, or book to newspaper, to name but a few.

We invite papers on conversations that grapple with hierarchies and inequalities, incorporating asymmetrical power relationships while taking care not to gloss over the struggle, pain, and conflict often occurring in these situations. Papers should highlight at least one protagonist identifying as a woman, and are encouraged to also listen to

- persons marginalised because of their race, class, religion, sexual orientation, or else,
- so-called 'canonical' figures, both architects and critics as well as those from other professions, disciplines, or domains,
- individuals from different geographical regions, including those affected by the violence of imperialism and colonialism.

Can a focus on conversations help to include in historiography new protagonists as well as sites

which we have so far not seen? How about printed sites, in pamphlets, books, magazines, newspapers, or letter writing? And what are the critical notions around which these conversations occur, such as the sublime, character, or sensibility, but also those emerging from indigenous or non-western knowledges, on different sites and in different media? Further, what shifts, if we start from conversations, rather than, for instance, drawings and buildings? How will it affect histories of architectures, cities, and landscapes if these conversations are inclusive rather than exclusive?

This call invites contributions from and on all regions, particularly those that centre intersectional marginalisations. We are interested to hear about every-day experiences and sites so far less explored as well as new reflections on better-known events and structures. We hope to attract speakers from diverse regions, disciplines, backgrounds, and career stages, who are willing to engage with new materials in innovative ways, listening to each other and our sources. The conference is planned as a focused, single-strand event aimed at creating networks of scholars, facilitating exchanges, stimulating groundbreaking discussions, and producing new knowledges.

#### INFORMATION

Listening In is organised in the context of two externally funded research projects based at gta, ETH Zurich: WoWA (Women Writing Architecture 1700-1900) is funded by the ERC, led by Anne Hultzsich, and studies female experiences of architecture and landscapes as recorded in women's writings from South America and Europe. The SNSF-funded project Building Identity: Character in Architectural Discourse and Design 1750-1850, led by Sigrid de Jong and Maarten Delbeke, focuses on the uses and meaning of the notion of 'character' in architectural criticism and practice. Both projects share an interest in the experiences of marginalised groups, especially those who identified as women, and strive to have them heard not in a niche, but in the centre of our field. With this conference we wish to open up our approaches to a wider field of research, going beyond our respective geographical frameworks.

#### SUBMISSION

Please submit the following by 10 March 2023 to [listening@arch.ethz.ch](mailto:listening@arch.ethz.ch):

- an abstract of no more than 300 words
- your name and professional affiliation if any
- a short curriculum vitae (ca 100 words)

#### KEY DATES

- 1 December 2022: Launch call for papers
- 10 March 2023: Deadline to submit abstracts
- April 2023: Paper selection and notification of authors
- 1 May 2023: Speakers confirm their participation
- 14-15 September 2023: Conference at ETH Zurich, Switzerland

#### ORGANISERS

PD Dr Anne Hultzsich  
Dr Sigrid de Jong  
Prof Maarten Delbeke  
Dr Sol Pérez Martínez

Reference:

CFP: Conversations on Architectures, Cities, and Landscapes (Zürich, 14-15 Sep 23). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 6,

2022 (accessed Jun 9, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38093>>.