

Architecture Beyond Europe / ABE Journal, Special Issue: Material Constraints

Erkner, Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space, Mar 20, 2023

Deadline: Mar 20, 2023

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In a complex interplay with available means—including technologies, machinery, capital and labour—material constraints impact buildings. Taking construction materials such as cement, concrete, steel or aluminium, as well as auxiliary materials (e.g. timber for formwork or scaffolding) as starting points for an investigation, and inquiring how these informed, challenged and reoriented architectural practice, we seek contributions that offer new understandings of the built environment.

Rather than focusing broadly on material qualities or supply chains, we are explicitly interested in how materials have constrained various (human) actors in building processes. More intriguing than the straightforward impact of different groups of actors (clients, builders, authorities) on the material outcomes of building processes are cases in which construction materials eluded the actors; for instance, when particular physical or chemical qualities, the lack of specific construction materials or the lack of skill or knowledge forced these various actors to seek different solutions or to deal with the failure of their attempts. This interest in (the resistance of) matter is not limited to planning and actual construction but also seeks to address questions of maintenance and decay of materials. In other words, we intend to inquire how construction materials constrained building processes as well as the material afterlife of sites – while perhaps simultaneously enabling completely different, unpredicted outcomes.

To address how local design and building practices in a variety of local settings were influenced and complicated or conflicted by regional and global processes of industrialization of construction activities (and related branches of production such as metal processing), we set the temporal scope of this Themed Section on the (late) 19th century and the long 20th century. We invite contributions engaging with transnational connections between European/ non-European locations, including, for instance, trans-imperial links during the colonial period (e.g. through multinational contractors) or the attempt to overcome entrenched material dependencies with the former metropolises in the post-independence period. The analyses may address aspects related to the human agency, such as logistics of (long-haul) transportation of materials, standardization, bureaucracy, corruption etc. or areas of material constraints beyond the human agency, such as decay. We also welcome other ways of approaching the core theme, including contributions that help us re-think its conceptualization.

Through the interdisciplinary composition of the editorial team, we want to ensure that contributions from architectural history remain in dialogue with global history, economic geography and STS to add to the complex perspectives on (architectural) materiality.

Guest-editors: Monika Motylińska (corresponding editor), María Ignacia Jeldes Olivares, Paul Sprute, (Erkner, Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space) and Robby Fivez (Brussels, Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Submission deadline for abstracts (of around 300 words, to be submitted as a pdf, no CV required): 20 March 2023

Authors to send submission e-mail to: [freigeist \[at\] leibniz-irs \[dot\] de](mailto:freigeist@leibniz-irs.de)

Manuscript submission deadline: 30 June 2023

See Authors/Submission Guidelines: <https://journals.openedition.org/abe/302>

Authors workshop to be held on 13 July 2023 as part of the mid-term workshop of the Freigeist Research Group "Conquering (with) Concrete. Global Construction Companies as Global Players in Local Contexts." Erkner, Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space

Reference:

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