

An evolving architectural heritage today (Strasbourg, 19–20 Oct 23)

École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Strasbourg, Oct 19–20, 2023

Deadline: Jun 30, 2023

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Réseau scientifique et pédagogique Architecture, Patrimoine et Création:

« An evolving architectural heritage today: direction and signification? ».

In its widest definition, built heritage encompasses a collection of technical and typological knowledge that architects can draw upon to support a return to simplicity and rational choice. These buildings, which have withstood the test of time and changing use, have evolved from symbols of history and memories to exemplars of techniques, local materials, thermal capacities, and adaptability to meet societal needs. Classical typologies for plans such as cloisters, stoas, agoras, and sections like patios and dense urban blocks, along with constructive rationalism, have become prevalent in contemporary architectural expression.

However, it may seem absurd to preserve at all costs the frame of a burning house. Focusing conservation efforts on a limited number of legally protected buildings conflicts with the growing imperative to make the most of everything we have and to move beyond a 19th century heritage classification system that did not account for today's climate emergency. Considering all previously built structures as materials to be preserved and transformed challenges the very concept of heritage. Can the need for classification for restoration purposes coexist with the need to view all existing structures as a resource for transforming the world?

How can we reconcile the concept of heritage with emerging practices of recycling and reuse? Traditionally, processes of conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation have focused on protecting and repairing buildings, with the resulting body of knowledge eventually rising to the level of heritage. However, restoration efforts have increasingly focused on preserving original material rather than renewing it. This poses a paradox: today's buildings must be designed to be demountable and to provide a reserve of reusable materials. We must design with the future dismantling in mind and the rebuilding on a clean slate. Constituent materials are no longer considered for their contribution to a built work but separately, piece by piece, according to their carbon footprint.

Given these challenges, the next seminar of the APC network seeks to redefine the notion of heritage in light of these contemporary issues. Questions that will be explored include: What constitutes heritage? Which materials, buildings, and environments should be considered? How should we adapt our tools, diagnoses, and inventory and classification methods? What is the future of heritage?

Proposals may address the following questions theoretically, and eventually through pedagogical experiences:

Which heritage?

Architectural, urban, landscape, natural, intangible - which heritage for which society? Is built heritage the same as any other form of heritage? In what way can it or should it be distinguished from landscape heritage or natural heritage?

Which classification?

Classify, protect? What and how? Criteria: existence value, capacity for mutation, ...? If the term "heritage" is understood to mean all that we inherit, how does the new climate paradigm transform our way of classifying architectural heritage? Should we preserve that which we fear to lose or that which is easiest to transform? Should we continue to create untouchable icons or should we learn to recognize the qualities of current production? Should we conserve the past or rather preserve the future?

Which future for heritage?

And at the end of the heritage spectrum, what becomes of the structures that breach functional continuity? Do we continue to create beautiful ruins? If we must use as far as possible what we already have, is the conservation of inert and fragmentary buildings still acceptable today? And if we must build in a recyclable and demountable way, will our generation provide future generations with a heritage worthy of study?

Procedure for submitting proposals

Proposals must include a title, an abstract of no more than 300 words, and a brief curriculum vitae. The proposal should indicate which of the above themes it relates to. The abstracts must be submitted before 30 June 2023 to seminaire.apc@strasbourg.archi.fr

Schedule

Launch of the call for contributions: May 2023

Deadline for contributions: 30 June 2023

Response to contributors: July 2023

Seminar: 19 and 20 October 2023

Publication of proceedings: 2024

Organising Committee

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