

Session at EAHN (Athens, 19–23 Jun 24)

Athens

Deadline: Mar 1, 2024

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European Architectural History Network Conference.

ACTIVISM! The political dimension of heritage in the post-communist world. Eastern Europe Group Workshop at EAHN 2024.

The new millennium's heritage (architectural, but not only) discourse has reassessed its arguments, replacing at its core the notion of identity. Critically reconsidered or hastily embraced with a political agenda, this has become once more a significant element of debate in deciding what heritage is, who it belongs to and who has right to claim and contest it. In the former communist bloc, these two positionings are perpetually negotiated, adding further layers of complexity and contingency. Our focus here is particularly on the critical reassessment of identity in the post-communist world, which has added a nuanced understanding of heritage as legacy. That is, buildings or ensembles which do not necessarily aim to be seen as monuments and be inscribed in lists or registers, but which, however, encapsulate the memory of a community and its everyday life. Hence, these sites become frequently acknowledged, perceived as "iconic" for different reasons and "heritagized" from below - through urban community activism in various scopes and forms, which has emerged as a dynamic dialogue between local identities and communities, heritage professionals, and political actors.

This call for position papers focuses on the activism related to these processes and debates and its role in both redefining the terms of heritage and (re)fueling a political involvement with the concerned collectivities. What connections exist between activism, community, and heritage? How do post-socialist processes align and correspond with similar events in other parts of the globe? What role does heritage activism play in shaping a (new) political consciousness, and how do urban movements emerge in various scales and forms as a means of reclaiming a sense of belonging? How do heritagization and activism intersect, and how does activism reaffirm, reinterpret (perhaps even reject) already designated heritage?

We invite scholars of architecture, urbanism, heritage, and those from the fields of humanities and social sciences researching notions of heritage and its associated processes to submit abstracts for position papers for the Eastern European thematic group at the EAHN conference in Athens (19th-23rd June). We particularly encourage papers addressing actors, processes, and repercussions of urban activism in the former communist bloc and, more precisely, the ways in which these interactions frame contemporary engagement with contentious legacies. We also invite case studies, conceptual contributions, and epistemological and/or methodological perspectives on similar processes in other geographical areas, particularly from the Western Balkans, Greece, and Turkey.

Please submit a 300-word abstract and a 150-word biography to the form linked below. The deadline for abstract submissions is 1st March 2024.

<https://forms.office.com/e/m7SdFWUrPC>

In case of any questions or concerns, please contact Maja Babić (m.babic@rug.nl), Jovana Janinović (jovanav@ucg.ac.me), Abigail Karas (abigail.karas@nottingham.ac.uk) or Carmen Popescu (crm@noos.fr).

Reference:

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