

(Dis)Entangling Coloniality and Architecture (Delft/ Rotterdam, 20–21 Nov 24)

Delft and Rotterdam, the Netherlands, Nov 20–21, 2024

Deadline: Jun 26, 2024

Stef Dingen

11th JBSC Conference: Staying with Modernity? (Dis)Entangling Coloniality and Architecture.

Until recently, modernity and modernism stood for positive things: progress, enlightenment, emancipation and the promise of universal rights. Today, they are associated with colonial practices of exploitation, extraction and oppression. Should we then move beyond modernity and modernism, or do we stay with them and their problems? The 11th edition of the annual conference of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre (JBSC) seeks to unravel the entanglements between modernity, coloniality and architecture, in the context of the construction of welfare states, open societies and global production systems. With this open call, the JBSC invites contributions to this year's conference and welcomes proposals from academics and practitioners alike.

Coloniality in the Archive

The conference locates the problems of modernity and coloniality in architecture within the archives and institutional memory. While these are classic sites of fact-finding and the production of historical evidence, they also systematically fail to acknowledge other histories. They produce hierarchies between insider and outsider perspectives. They tend to overlook, erase even, positions and voices that are not hegemonic. They exclude other epistemologies, thereby diminishing the breadth of world cultures and human existence. And when they are included, they are all too often relegated to the realms of regionalism, the vernacular, the naive, the primitive or the noble savage. All in support of an uneven exchange and appropriation of values, practices and knowledge.

Pluralise, Dismantle, Stay

How can we counter the power logic of archives and institutions? We propose three approaches for the conference.

First, the continued deconstruction of constructed histories. Re-reading the discipline of architecture and its histories and theories from the perspective of colonialism remains urgent in order to recharge ongoing struggles for emancipation and justice. This increasing scrutiny of architectural archives sheds light on the often neglected spatial and material dimensions of colonial processes, as modernism is reassessed with due regard for its role within the colonial matrix of power. It is this sort of consistent and critical re-reading that advances the unfinished modern project.

Second, to pluralise history and theory beyond Western epistemologies. Decentring and 'provin-

cialising' the Western gaze helps to rewrite shared histories and construct new epistemological frameworks. By advocating for a diversity of ways of thinking (and feeling and doing), we seek to resituate archives and institutional practices in order to rebalance discursive power, knowledge production and evidence validation.

Third, to stay with the problems of modernity. We are keen to learn from exploring the inherent paradoxes of open societies and welfare state arrangements in relation to the emergence of global economies as part of (neo-)colonial networks, Cold War geopolitics, liberal world trade systems and their concomitant flows of exchange and migration. How might the history of modernism in architecture, its aspirations and legacies, be re-read and re-written? And, more speculatively, what role can archives and institutions of knowledge and culture play in the future in addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism in the fabric of contemporary societies?

Abstract

Abstracts of 300-500 words plus a short bio (300 words max) should be sent to Stef Dingen (s.dingen@nieuweinstituut.nl). The aim is to have the conference proceedings published by the conference date.

Dates and deadlines

- Deadline submissions of abstracts: 26 June 2024
- Notification of selection: 19 July 2024
- Submission of full draft papers (ca. 2000 words): 6 September 2024
- Conference dates: 20-21 November 2023

Organising committee

- Dirk van den Heuvel (Nieuwe Instituut, TU Delft)
- Alejandro Campos Uribe (TU Delft)
- Stef Dingen (Nieuwe Instituut)

Advisory board

- Tom Avermaete (ETH Zürich)
- Hetty Berens (Nieuwe Instituut)
- Maristella Casciato (Getty Research Institute)
- Carola Hein (TU Delft)
- Georg Vrachliotis (TU Delft)

Locations

- Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft.
- Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam.

Selection

The selection is in the hands of the convenors and advisory board of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre. Criteria are relevance and focus in relation to the call, state-of-the-art research, an innovative and challenging approach, and an eloquent and evocative articulation of the proposition. Academics and practitioners alike are invited to submit proposals. We are aiming for a diverse group of speakers, in terms of nationality, seniority and academic and institutional background, among other categories, so as to assure a productive and lively exchange of knowledge.

Reference:

CFP: (Dis)Entangling Coloniality and Architecture (Delft/ Rotterdam, 20-21 Nov 24). In: Arthist.net, Jun 12, 2024 (accessed Jul 30, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42107>>.