

Exploring UNESCO and UIA (Zurich/online, 21–22 Nov 24)

Zurich/online, Nov 21–Dec 22, 2024

Andreas Kalpakci

Exploring UNESCO and UIA – Histories of Architecture and Bureaucracy in Development Contexts.

International Workshop at the gta Institute, ETH Zurich (audience can join online).

Organized by Frederike Lausch and Andreas Kalpakci.

International organizations had a profound impact on the global architectural culture of the Cold War period. Two of them stood out: UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, an intergovernmental organization) and UIA (the International Union of Architects, an international association of architectural societies). Their respective roles in the institutionalization of heritage conservation and in the promotion of the architectural profession are well documented. Rather, this workshop places particular emphasis on the relationship between UNESCO and UIA. This relationship began in the formative years of both bodies in the immediate post-war era and continues to this day in areas such as architectural education and international architectural competitions.

As a discipline and discourse, architecture participated in the development regime that sought to restructure societies in the pursuit of socio-economic “progress”, thereby perpetuating colonial power dynamics. Exploring the relationship between UNESCO and UIA builds on recent scholarship that links bureaucracy to architecture’s involvement in development contexts, defining practices, directing information flows, and mediating legitimacy. Both organizations have been engaged in development contexts, from the 1963 UIA congress on “Architecture in Countries in the Process of Development” to the work of UNESCO’s Division for Human Settlements and the Socio-Cultural Environment, established in 1976. How did these organizations interact in terms of cooperation, competition, and interdependence? How did they provide training, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance to so-called “developing countries”? How did they mediate architecture in these contexts, contributing to nation-building and international exchange?

This workshop aims to explore critical histories of the multifaceted relationship between UNESCO and UIA in development contexts. It will address various aspects of their partnership, including environmental initiatives, housing programs, school buildings, professionalization efforts, heritage campaigns, international networking, and media strategies. The workshop will also serve as a platform for exchanging research methodologies, archival sources, and historiographical perspectives.

Program:

THURSDAY, 21 November 2024

ETH Zurich, Campus Höggerberg, HIL Building, Room E 71.1

13:00–13:25 Introduction by Frederike Lausch and Andreas Kalpakci

13:25–14:35 Panel 1 – Data for Development

Moderation by Giulia Boller (ETH Zurich)

“The Pursuit of Global Architectural Expertise: UNESCO and UIA’s Collaboration for an International Information System for Architecture” – Michael Moynihan (University of Texas)

“Monument or Data? ‘Science Statistics’ and UNESCO’s Cybernetic Fortification of the 1970s Bengal Delta” – Pritam Dey (University of California, Los Angeles)

14:50–16:00 Panel 2 – Professionalization of Architecture

Moderation by Andreas Kalpakci (ETH Zurich)

“Yugoslavia’s Policies of International Collaboration: The Case of the UIA and the Association of Architects Societies of Yugoslavia” – Tamara Bjažić Klarin (Institute of Art History, Zagreb)

“Investigating Jai Rattan Bhalla’s Presidency of the UIA and the Council of Architecture in India: Impacting the Architectural Profession in the 1980s” – Neha Korde (SPA New Delhi), Prachi Patel (Nirma University), Shalini Shaeron (DLCSUPVA)

16:30–18:15 Panel 3 – Foreign Expertise and National Interests

Moderation by Frederike Lausch (ETH Zurich)

“Building in the Sahara: UNESCO’s Arid Zone Program and the End of French Colonization” – Paul Bouet (ENSA Paris-Est)

“The Emergence of a UIA Expertise for UNESCO in the Postwar Context: The Role of Michel Écochard’s Cross-Cultural Practice” – Fatima Zohra Saaid (National School of Architecture, Rabat, MA), Najoua Beqqal (National School of Architecture, Rabat)

“Was it Coloniality by Advisory? Vilhelm Wohlert, UNESCO and Architectural Procurement in Development Contexts” – Angela Gigliotti (ETH Zurich)

18:45–19:45 Keynote Lecture

Moderation by Laurent Stalder (ETH Zurich)

“Jewel, Equipment, Cadre: Three Architectures of Internationalism and the Musée Dynamique de Dakar, 1966–1982” – Lucia Allais (Columbia University)

FRIDAY, 22 November 2024

ETH Zurich, Campus Höggerberg, HIL Building, Room E 71.1

09:00–10:45 Panel 4 – Heritage Preservation and Tourism

Moderation by Tom Avermaete (ETH Zurich)

“The Polish Origins of World Heritage: Polish Architects in UNESCO” – Kyrill Kunakhovich (Univer-

sity of Virginia)

“Internationalization of the Yugoslav Periphery: UN Development Programs in the Socialist Republic of Montenegro (1967–1988)” – Danilo Bulatović (Polytechnic University of Turin)

“Work to Rest, Rest to Work: UIA, the International Competition for the Touristic Development of Side, and the Politics of Leisure in Inter-coup Turkey” – Burcu Köken (TU Delft)

11:15–13:00 Panel 5 – Critiques of Development Discourse

Moderation by Daniela Ortiz dos Santos (Goethe University Frankfurt)

“UNESCO and UIA from Athens to Beirut: Minnette de Silva at the East-West Crossroads” – Anoo-radha Iyer Siddiqi (Barnard College, Columbia University)

“The Development Discourse Under Scrutiny: Brazilian Perspectives on the UIA and UNESCO” – Paula Dedecca (Escola da Cidade, São Paulo)

“Young Architects’ Social Concerns as Architectural Culture: UNESCO’s Mediated Image of Latin America Informed by Dissidence at UIA’s Students and Young Architects Meetings in the Late 1960s” – Cristina López Uribe (National Autonomous University of Mexico)

14:00–15:30 gta Archive Lecture and Thematic Tour

“‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’: Colonial Hybridities in the gta Archive Collections” – Irina Davidovici (ETH Zurich), Sabine Sträuli (ETH Zurich)

Thematic Tour gta Periscope and gta Archive: “Export Architectures: Decolonizing the Archive” – with gta Archive team and guest input from Sebastian Loosen [not livestreamed]

15:45–18:05 Panel 6 – School Buildings and Development through Education

Moderation by Sebastiaan Loosen (ETH Zurich)

“Buildings for Education and Development: Relations between the UIA School Construction Commission and UNESCO, 1950s to 1970s” – Susanne Rick (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)

“Transnational Architectural Meetings: UNESCO and School Construction in Asia 1960–1972” – Ning de Coninck-Smith (Aarhus University)

“The Construction of the Mohammadia School of Engineers: UNESCO and UIA in Post-Independence Morocco” – Amine Mohamed Bajji (National School of Architecture, Rabat)

“Prefab Spaces for Education: Alfred Roth and UNESCO Strategies in the Gulf” – Roberto Fabbri (Zayed University)

18:05–18:30 Closing Remarks

The workshop is supported by ETH4D and SNSF.

Contacts: Frederike Lausch (lausch@arch.ethz.ch) and Andreas Kalpakci (andreas.kalpakci@gta.arch.ethz.ch)

Register here to receive the Zoom link for the live stream:
<https://ethz.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Mqfuysqj4iHdzIPGR59aPQV34n905HF16j>

More information and updates:
<https://gta.arch.ethz.ch/en/education-and-research/faculty-and-visiting-faculty/visiting-lectureship-dr-frederike-lausch/events/exploring-unesco-and-ua-histories-of-architecture-and-bureaucr.html>

Reference:

CONF: Exploring UNESCO and UIA (Zurich/online, 21–22 Nov 24). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 13, 2024 (accessed Jun 4, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43153>>.