# 2 Sessions at EAHN (Aarhus, 17-21 Jun 26)

Aarhus, Denmark / 9th Biennial Conference of the European Architectural History Network, Jun 17–21, 2026
Deadline: Sep 19, 2025
konferencer.au.dk/eahn26/

[1] Animal, Industry, and Labor: Towards an Architectural History of Intensive Animal Farming.
[2] Building Science: The City as a Site and Object of Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Period.

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[1] Animal, Industry, and Labor: Towards an Architectural History of Intensive Animal Farming
From: Sofia Nannini
Date: 3 Jun 2025

Chairs: Sofia Nannini (Politecnico di Torino) and Víctor Muñoz Sanz (TU Delft)

Animal based products are everywhere: on our supermarket shelves, in our skincare routines, or in the shoes we wear. Yet the scale and quality of the places where those products come from are far from our collective imagination or set in some form of idealized countryside. Industrial livestock farming is a pervasive planetary phenomenon. Scientists warn us that factory farming crucially contributes to the climate emergency: the breath and flatulence of cows warm the planet; monocultures of animal feed crops drive deforestation, biodiversity loss, and challenge the livelihoods of many; overcrowding increases zoonotic risks to human and non-human health. At the same time, in Europe and beyond, farmers are protesting in defense of what they consider their culture and mission to feed the world.

Caught in the middle, the lives and deaths of billions of non-human animals annually continue occurring in buildings which are little known, if not wholly invisible. Somehow, the history of these buildings, with their layouts and technologies, is also opaque and often disregarded by architectural historiography, with a few exceptions (Garric 2014; Alsayer 2021). Conversely, since Sigfried Giedion's Mechanization Takes Command (1948), many studies have focused on the architectural, urban, and social history of the slaughterhouse and of the packing industry (Cronon 1991; Vialles 1994; Young Lee 2008; Pachirat 2013; Pacyga 2015).

From sixteenth-century Palladian villas to today's concentrated feeding operations, Western architecture has evolved along the entanglements between humans and domesticated animals – mostly cattle, pigs, poultry, and horses. How do we conceptualize an architecture of animal farming – when we are dealing with a blend of technologies, animal bodies, ideal abstractions, and dirty realities? The architectural history of intensive animal farming is scattered among different geographies, actors, and institutions – and it is often a history without architects. Who has designed these spaces since the industrial revolution – architects, engineers, veterinary doctors, agrarian experts, or also the animals themselves? Which zootechnical

elements or typologies date back to pre-industrial times and attest to a longue durée of rural and farming practices? What was the architectural impact of the animal welfare debate, sparked in the 1960s with the publication of Animal Machines by Ruth Harrison (1964)?
While animal farming and its environmental impact has been the object of attention in anthropology, geography, STS, environmental humanities, and the arts, investigating this architecture and its paradoxical and multifaceted global histories is now more urgent than ever (Schrepfer & Scranton 2004; Blanchette 2020; Piazzesi 2023; Wadiwel 2023). This session welcomes case studies on the architectural history of animal farming at a global scale, with a preference for papers that present original archival investigations and that shed light on the industrialization of rural practices that occurred in the past three centuries. Key questions we would like to address in this session include, but are not limited to: what are the models, technologies, building materials that most contributed to the industrialization of animal agriculture? What have been the key institutions, companies, professional figures, and geographies in this history? To what extent have farming practices been technologies and instruments of Western colonialism (Fischer 2015; Specht 2019)? How have societal and cultural ideas on 'the animal' and welfare influenced the architecture of industrialized farming? What has been the role of human and non-human labor in the spatialization of factory farming?

With this session we aim at increasing our knowledge and awareness on animal farming, in order to promote a deeper understanding of the Anthropocene and its alternative definitions – most notably, the Thanatocene, or the era of massive global death (Bonneuil/Fressoz 2016). If the future is closely dependent on our capacity of historical analysis, research into the history of industrial farming may suggest new modes of positive and responsible coexistence and allow the architecture discipline to participate in the search for more livable other worlds.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted directly to the chairs (sofia.nannini@polito.it, V.MunozSanz@tudelft.nl) until September 19th 2025, along with the applicant's name, email address, professional affiliation, address, telephone number and a short curriculum vitae (maximum one page).

References

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[2] Building Science: The City as a Site and Object of Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Period.
From: Christine Beese
Date: 12 Jun 25

Chair: Jun.-Prof. Dr. Christine Beese
Kunstgeschichtliches Institut, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

When the Swedish natural scientist Olof Rudbeck embarked on a peregrinatio medica to the Netherlands in 1653, he not only became acquainted with the latest techniques and instruments of anatomical dissection. The site of Leiden University, a former beguine church, was also home to a maths school for future engineers who were to map, build and secure the young republic. After his return, Rudbeck was appointed professor of natural history at the Royal University of Uppsala, where he taught anatomy and botany as well as architecture. To promote technical skills, he soon set up a ‘mechanical house’, a workshop where craftsmen, land surveyors, and instrument makers were trained. On behalf of the crown, the city council, the university, the church, and individual citizens, Rudbeck and his students erected buildings, surveyed land, designed technical equipment, and improved the city’s sanitary infrastructure.

In his book series Atlantica, Rudbeck furthermore tried to scientifically prove that the Swedes were born with a special degree of technical ability that legitimised them as a hegemonic power. Based on archaeological findings, he attempted to identify Uppsala as the former capital of the lost Atlantis. In this way the city was supposed to embody a model of society that was considered natural. Both the architectural form and the mythological narratives that characterise the image of the city of Uppsala in the 17th century thus originate from very different fields of knowledge and served practical, epistemological and political goals.

As the Swedish example shows, several actors were actively engaged in the creation, implementation, and dissemination of knowledge within the early modern city. From scholars to craftspeople, from the church to the courts – actors with different institutional, social, and cultural backgrounds contributed to the formation of an urban body that was shaped by and through their knowledge-making. Objects and materials of

local, regional, and even global origin were as much involved as images, histories, and stories.

Numerous scholars have explored the situatedness of knowledge production (Livingstone, Shapin), the relationship between craft and academic knowledge (Smith, Bertucci), and between architecture and natural science (Galison, Gerbino). The significance of instruments (Bennett, Dupré), objects (Findlen, Bertoloni Meli) and maps (Ballon, Friedman) for knowledge production and (global) circulation has been considered as well as the relationship between urban space and knowledge (Sennett, De Munck, Long).

Based on this research, the session aims to shed light on the city as a contact zone and as a subject and object of making, circulating, implementing, and institutionalising knowledge in the early modern period. In order to gain insights into the reciprocal process that both practically and theoretically shapes the city and situates architecture within a broader field of knowledge-making, we seek contributions that address the following topics, among others:

1. Institutions of knowledge production and their urban and social context (e.g. the architecture of workshops, guilds, universities, academies).
2. Urban space and architecture as an object and laboratory of transdisciplinary knowledge production (e.g. excavations, surveys, fortifications, but also lighting, hygiene, burial, building standards, pattern books).
3. The city as a contact zone across different fields and cultures of knowledge (e.g. natural and political philosophy, mathematics, medicine, arts and crafts).
4. Conceptualizations and representations of the built city (e.g. as models of social order, in terms of territorial or cultural affiliation).

We warmly welcome contributions from across the globe.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words by September 19, 2025, at 23:59 CET. Along with your abstract, include your full name, email address, professional affiliation, postal address, and telephone number, as well as a brief curriculum vitae.
Applications should be sent directly to christine.beese@rub.de.

Reference:
CFP: 2 Sessions at EAHN (Aarhus, 17-21 Jun 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 15, 2025 (accessed Feb 10, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/49477>.