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

Aarhus, European Architectural History Network International Meeting, Jun 17–21, 2026
Deadline: Sep 19, 2025

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[1] Materials and Techniques on the Move
[2] Privacy, the Private, and Architecture

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[1] Materials and Techniques on the Move
From: Caterina Cardamone
Date: 14 Jul 25

Chairs: Caterina Cardamone (VUB), Lorenzo Vigotti (Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna)

In his 1645 French edition of Palladio, Pierre le Muet eliminated the chapters on building materials because of the differences between local practices in Italy and in France ("beaucoup de choses sont extremement differentes de celles qu'on pratique aujourd'huy en France"). Materials and techniques do not circulate well on paper. A stucco recipe may easily be disseminated with Italian architectural treatises, but North of the Alps its composition might change, leaving out marble powder. Building materials and the associated techniques are thus closely linked to their region of origin, even more so in a period in which the costs and difficulties of travel and long-distance transport added to their prestige.

This session asks how exactly building materials and related techniques circulated across late medieval and early modern Europe, and how their travels affected their meanings.
A first issue concerns the actual transport of materials, the routes they follow, the movement of specific techniques and instruments, the migration of specialized craftsmen. How do foreign materials and people adapt to the local context and its traditional building practices? Well-known examples such as the use of Istrian stone along the Italian Adriatic coast or the export of black marble from 'Flanders' to other parts of Europe (Northern Europe but also Florence) show that these materials mainly travelled over water and along established trade routes. But what other routes did materials follow? Did the difficulties of transportation add value and meaning to these materials?

Another, more literary issue concerns the circulation and perception of materials and techniques as documented in treatises, ekphrastic descriptions and other writings highlighting the materiality of architecture. In this case the distance bridged might not only be geographical but also temporal, as materials and techniques from Antiquity such as stucco, concrete, and porphyry were being rediscovered. What ancient or modern narratives and iconologies on building materials circulated in Europe? How did these impact the perception, use and imagery of these materials?

Not only marbles but also other natural stones and ceramic tiles were evidently vehicles of iconological meanings (Barry 2020, Dressen 2008, Butters 1996), because of their colors and texture, the difficulty of their fashioning, or the associated narratives on their history and provenance. How did these layered meanings contribute to the self-representation of patrons? What role did the imitation of materials, through painting or other media, play in this regard?

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted directly to the chairs, along with the applicant's name, email address, professional affiliation, address, telephone number and a short curriculum vitae (maximum one page).

Deadline: Sep 19, 2025
More information: https://konferencer.au.dk/eahn26/

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[2] Privacy, the Private, and Architecture
From: Nuno Grancho
Date: 14 Jul 25

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This session explores the complex relationship between privacy, the private, and architecture throughout history. While privacy in Western contexts extends beyond individual concerns to shape relationships with space, self, and community, architectural history has yet to fully engage with privacy as a critical lens of analysis.

Despite extensive scholarship on public and private realms in other disciplines, privacy remains underexplored in architectural discourse. Drawing on theoretical frameworks established by scholars like Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, and Michel Foucault, who have examined the evolution of public/private distinctions and spatial power dynamics, this session aims to bridge this gap. More recent contributions from scholars such as Beatriz Colomina on the mediated nature of modern architectural privacy, Georges Teyssot on the body's relationship to domestic space, Mette Birkedal Brunn on Early Modern Privacy and privacy studies method, and Peter Thule Kristensen on Early Modern Privacy and architecture will further inform our discussions.

Rather than simply applying existing privacy theories to architecture, we seek an interdisciplinary exchange that allows architectural elements to be reinterpreted through privacy studies and privacy concepts to be reconsidered through architectural analysis. We are particularly interested in how architecture becomes symbolically charged with privacy meanings, and conversely, how privacy is shaped by architectural forms and practices.

To provide focus for this broad topic, we encourage papers examining privacy and architecture from the Early Modern period to the present, a timeframe that encompasses critical transformations in Western conceptions of privacy alongside significant architectural developments.
This session invites contributions examining specific building typologies where privacy plays a central role in their conception, organisation, and use.

For example:

- Monasteries and convents: These structures provide rich case studies in how architecture regulates private devotion, communal living, and isolation. From the individual cell to the cloister, monastic architecture influenced Western conceptions of privacy and continues to resonate in staging prayer, study, and spiritual intimacy.
- Domestic architecture: From the development of corridor plans that separated servants from family life in 17th-century homes, to the open-plan living of modernism that reconfigured private/public boundaries, to contemporary smart homes with surveillance capabilities that redefine intimacy.
- Civil and military buildings: create spaces of secrecy, shelter, and privacy through secure architecture, restricted access, and controlled spatial organisation.
- Healthcare facilities: The evolution of hospital wards from large common rooms to private patient rooms reflects changing attitudes toward privacy in healing environments and medical ethics.
- Educational institutions: Boarding schools, dormitories, and study spaces reveal how architecture shapes learning through varying degrees of privacy and surveillance.
- Cultural institutions: Museums, libraries, and theaters that simultaneously offer public access while creating zones of private contemplation, study, or viewing.

We welcome papers exploring diverse architectural elements that frame privacy, including:
- Urban plans that establish public/private boundaries
- Spatial hierarchies and circulation patterns that control access and visibility
- Thresholds, screens, and partitions that mediate between private and public realms
- Sensory dimensions of privacy through acoustics, lighting, and material properties
- Domestic elements like alcoves and private rooms that accommodate bodily needs
- Documentation practices that reveal or conceal private aspects of architectural use
We particularly value contributions that examine concrete examples and take critical stances on the relationship between privacy and architecture, questioning conventional narratives and offering new interpretative frameworks.

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