

Session at EAHN (Aarhus, 17-21 Jun 26)

Aarhus, Jun 17-21, 2026

Deadline: Sep 19, 2025

Monika Motylińska

On Thresholds and Junctions – Reading Transport Architecture across Scales.

For our upcoming session at the biennial EAHN 2026 conference, we are looking for contributions addressing various aspects of transport architecture. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted directly to the chairs, Johan Lagae and Monika Motylińska (for contact details see below), along with the applicant's name, email address, professional affiliation, address, telephone number and a short curriculum vitae (maximum one page).

In the aftermath of the spatial and infrastructural turns, global histories of transport infrastructure are being written across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences (e.g. van Laak 2004, Harvey 2016, Zunino 2018). Yet the “stubborn materiality” (Bridges 2023) and spatiality of roads, railways, subways, ports, as well as the buildings that serve them – infrastructures we would like to define as “transport architecture” – remain conspicuously understudied.

In order to bring this materiality and spatiality of transport architecture to the centre of the analysis, we propose to dedicate attention specifically to architectural structures that function as thresholds or

junctions, as intermediaries connecting and bordering different social conditions and spatial regimes – analogically to the bridge and the door (Simmel 1909, Teysot 2013). We are interested in discussions

of how transport architecture responds to these differences on each side of the threshold in its design and materiality and how it alters them. We also seek to identify junctions in the infrastructural systems,

acting as visible and invisible joints and divides between various modes and patterns of mobility.

Following this aim, we intend to dissect the analysed structures both from horizontal and vertical perspectives and across different scales, from the small to the large (Bélanger 2006).

This approach leads us to consider such questions as what kind of transport architecture emerges, for instance, at border crossings, where road or railway infrastructures need to be adapted to different regulations and norms related to design or operation. It also invites us to investigate revolving doors at the entrances to a temperature-controlled skyway system or other liminal spaces connecting different climatic conditions. In line with the work of historians like Mirko Zardini (2005) or Thomas Van Leeuwen (2023), who have written stimulating studies engaging with the surface, be it of roads or trottoirs, we are equally interested in papers investigating how the horizontal surface – as a threshold between the world above and below the crust of the earth –

informs the design of transport architectures such as subway stations, underpasses or animal crossings.

While transport infrastructure has most often been studied from the vantage point of the spectacular (the bridge as an oeuvre d'art, for instance), we are particularly looking for contributions that engage with transport architecture starting from the small and the mundane, and draw on unexpected or often overlooked source material. We are also open to papers engaging with thresholds or junctions connecting and dividing different modes of mobility. The focus on unimposing architectures that are easy to overlook en passant shall allow us to consider how transport architecture inscribes itself in transient places (Jirón 2018). Chronologically, our session focuses on the long 20th century, while it aims to be global in scope.

Abstracts are invited for the paper sessions and round tables by September 19, 2025, 23.59 CET. 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). For more information see:

<https://konferencer.au.dk/eahn26/call-for-papers-1>

Chairs:

Johan Lagae, Ghent University

johan.lagae@ugent.be

Monika Motylińska, IRS, Leibniz Institute for Society and Space

monika.motylińska@leibniz-irs.de

Reference:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/50426>>.