

## 1 Session at EAHN 26 (Aarhus, 17–21 Jun 26)

Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark, Jun 17–21, 2026

Deadline: Sep 19, 2025

[konferencer.au.dk/eahn26/](https://konferencer.au.dk/eahn26/)

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9th Biennial Conference of the European Architectural History Network.

Abstracts are invited for the paper sessions and round tables by September 19, 2025. 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): <https://konferencer.au.dk/eahn26/call-for-papers-1>

[1] The Book, The Self, and the City: Architectural Histories of Guidebooks and Urban Idealizations.

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From: Linda Stagni

Date: 14 Sep 25

Deadline: 19 Sep 25

Historically, guidebooks have propagated idealized images of cities. By offering strict selections of buildings, neighbourhoods and urban itineraries, guidebooks have consistently reproduced, reinforced and multiplied the expectations of readers/travellers. Over the centuries, this paradigm has been consolidated further by the referentiality and interdependency of this literary genre. Not only successive editions of the same book, but even different authors have reshaped similar content, imposing a tradition of authority and ideological visions of urban spaces and landscapes. A case in point is Girolamo Franzini's edition of the 1557 book *Le Cose Meravigliose dell'Alma Città di Roma*. Republished in 1588 to celebrate the 1590 jubilee, the booklet established religious itineraries and practices of pilgrimage throughout the city. Structured as a limited list of significant places of worship, *Le Cose Meravigliose* propagated the glories of the capital of Christianity by constructing an organised and controlled urban realm for the economies and bodily practices of the Catholic faith. Franzini's publication exemplifies how the guidebook builds urban ideals by normalising public expectations of the city.

The construction of a 'promised' city comes with the assumption that many of the more complex variables that shape urban space (local economies, collective spaces, social tensions, morphological transformations, environmental conditions...) are irrelevant to urban exploration. Instead, guidebooks tend to produce simplified and individualized contexts and often operate under the assumption that cities are limitless resources. Through the guidebook, cities are presented as objects of temporary consumption, shaped into idealized spaces of organised, tailored movement, yet they are also adaptable to any community of reader-

s/travellers.

This session seeks to study when and how cities have historically clashed with the environmental, social, religious, political, and cultural idealization provided by guidebooks. We explore how guidebooks have abstracted, codified, and rendered the thresholds between the marketable city, the expectations of the reader/-traveller and the limits of the urban realm. We are especially interested in the ways in which a specific image of the environment (urban, natural, social...) has been idealised, and how this projected and media-tised reality relates with the more complex conditions of a place and the experience of the individual. We are interested in collecting the widest possible spectrum of this publicly produced type of media (pamphlets, maps, booklets...), from all periods and geographies.

Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

Material histories of guidebooks and of their production through specific interests and cultural projects (propagandistic, political, religious, financial...);

Written histories of a place (buildings, cities, landscapes...) through its mediatization and its exploration;

Histories of tourism and travel through the individual or collective experiences of guidebooks (travel writing, diaries...);

Environmental histories of places as interrelated, dependent, or opposed to the urban environment;

Digital humanities projects that explore the movements of the reader/traveller in the city.

Chairs and Contact Details:

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Reference:

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