gta papers: Demolitions

Deadline: Nov 30, 2025

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Demolitions have often been framed in architectural history as spectacular narrative moments: the implosions of large-scale buildings, the clearing of “obsolete” modernist icons, or the large-scale operations of urban renewal, including infamous domicides, urbicides or acts of ruination. In the current global context where genocidal action and warfare systematically destroy lives, archives and architectures, designed destructions or demolitions continue to erase social and material landscapes, demanding a critical reflection in academic discourses.
Across critical and non-critical contexts, the majority of demolitions are often not written about—considered minor, almost indifferent, hidden events. Yet despite their apparent ordinariness, they reveal deeper societal consequences and challenges. These unexceptional acts of removal nuancedly expose the paradoxes within the hierarchies of societal values, becoming inscribed in the architectural identities of people and places.
This issue of gta papers seeks to give voice to contributions that focus on the everyday: marginalized spatial disappearances that reveal the social, political, and cultural dynamics shaping what is deemed worthy of preservation for future generations—and what is not. We invite critical interrogations into the why of considered ordinary demolitions: not only their material consequences, but their role in exposing shifting cultural hierarchies and the lived consequences for affected communities or peoples. We encourage analyses of how class, race, gender and marginalized identities, as well as processes of coloniality, extraction or oppression, intersect in the valuation and devaluation of the built environment, and how architectural design, and the industries of construction and destruction, participate in these dynamics.
Contributions from a wide variety of time periods and geographies might explore paradoxes such as preservation efforts that simultaneously erase everyday architectures, the belated recognition of works by women architects that have been lost, or the partial survival of structures that unsettle colonial histories. Submissions may also engage with methodological challenges and opportunities, ranging from the scarcity of material sources to experimental approaches for documenting complex cases. Image-based contributions are welcome that trace, reclaim, and contest both institutionalized and non-institutionalized archival materials, particularly endangered objects, images, and documents.

SUBMISSIONS
gta papers is the platinum open access journal of the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at the Department of Architecture at ETH Zurich. Please send proposals of 300 words (and sample images if applicable) to academic.editor@gta.arch.ethz.ch (María Novas) by November 30, 2025. We welcome proposals for short (2500-word) or long (5500-word) articles, photo essays, and image-based archival submissions. State your preferred format and the num-

ber of images that you hope to include. Accepted contributions will need to be submitted in full by April 1, 2026. All articles will be peer-reviewed, revised and professionally copyedited before publication.

Reference:
CFP: gta papers: Demolitions. In: ArtHist.net, Oct 3, 2025 (accessed Nov 24, 2026),
<https://arthist.net/archive/50777>.