XIII AISU Congress: The Wounded City (Genoa, 7-10 Sep 27)

Genoa, Oct 7–10, 2027
Deadline: May 24, 2026

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The Italian Association for Urban History is one of the leading European scholarly associations devoted to the study of urban history in all its dimensions. Since its foundation in 2001, it has promoted an interdisciplinary approach and sought to move beyond the boundaries of national historiographies, fostering an understanding of urban history open to dialogue with civil society.
On the occasion of the 13th edition—organized with the support of the University of Genoa, Department of Architecture and Design (DAD)—we aim to build on this well-established format by complementing the traditional structure of parallel academic sessions (held during the day) with an open cultural festival, partly addressed to a wider public (in the late afternoon and evening).

Theme: The Wounded City/La città ferita
Cities have always been more than merely settings for human events—often marked by conflicts of varying intensity. They are themselves among the most sensitive and enduring outcomes of those events and conflicts. Urban transformations bear the material and symbolic traces of the tensions that have traversed them: wounds produced by armed conflicts, political and social crises, natural disasters, and processes of exploitation or exclusion, as well as by projects of reform, reconstruction, and refoundation.
What is at stake goes far beyond the material control of spaces or buildings. Urban “wounds” affect the symbolic dimension of places, the rules governing their appropriation, and the very forms of civic coexistence. Among the issues involved are rights of citizenship and processes of identity formation, access to political institutions and to the social uses of space, the management of shared resources and the provision of public infrastructures. These also include cultural memory and practices of sociability, the horizons of the collective imagination and shared customs, as well as the dynamics of artistic, literary, and technological production that contribute to shaping the urban experience in distinctive ways.
Contexts and variables may differ widely depending on historical periods, geographical settings, and scales of analysis. Yet—whether in times of war or peace, under authoritarian regimes or more liberal political orders, in moments of growth as in those of crisis or emergency—the city appears as a space constantly exposed and vulnerable, crossed by tensions that challenge its structures, balances, and meanings. From this perspective, urban places are never neutral backdrops or simple containers; rather, they constitute fields of force in which programs of domination and claims to autonomy, planning ambitions and material urgencies, practices of exploitation and capacities for resilience—as well as forms of cohabitation, solidarity, mediation, and political imagination—polarize and take shape.

It is within this unresolved tension between trauma and reparation, fracture and recomposition, that the theme of the congress is situated.
The congress will be organized around six thematic macro sessions, conceived as spaces for interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange.

1. Governing and Controlling the City: Powers, Institutions, Negotiations
2. Attacking and Defending the City: Crises, Emergencies, Disruptions
3. Living in the City: Interests, Practices, Uses of Space
4. Narrating and Representing the City: Memories, Identities, Contested Heritage
5. Imagining and Experimenting with the City: Programs, Challenges, Visions of the Future
6. Agorà (events open to the public)

The first Call for Sessions and Public Events is now open to proposals for academic sessions, round tables, and public initiatives addressed to a broader audience.

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Further information: https://aisuinternational.org/genova-2027-home/
Contact: genova2027@aisuinternational.net

Reference:
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