2 Sessions at AISU Congress 2027 (Genoa, 7–10 Sep 27)

Genoa, Sep 7–10, 2027
Deadline: Oct 18, 2026

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[1] The Nonhuman City: Wounded Animals and the Development of Urban Modernity.
[2] Reconstruction Generation: Childhood and Design among the Ruins of the Post-War Era.
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[1] Session 3.13. The Nonhuman City: Wounded Animals and the Development of Urban Modernity – XIII Congress of the Italian Association for Urban History (AISU): "The Wounded City. Urban Spaces as Sites of Conflict, Life, and Memory", (Genoa, 7–10 Sep 2027)

From: Corey Ratch
Date: 6 Oct 2026
Deadline 18 Oct 2026

Convenors: Corey Ratch, Independent researcher (PhD art history); Mimi Cheng, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut (PhD art history)
Email: corey.ratch@columbia.edu; mimi.cheng@khi.fi.it

The modern city was built, in no small part, on the bodies of nonhuman animals. Its streets were paved and goods transported through the labour of horses and other draught and pack animals; its expanding populations were fed by the hidden machinery of the industrial slaughterhouse; its parks enclosed exotic creatures behind iron bars for the edification and amusement of its citizenry; its sewers and back alleys were colonized by rats and pigeons whose presence was managed, moralized, and even racialized. Yet the history of urban modernity has largely been written as though the nonhuman animals who inhabited, powered, and were consumed by the modern city were incidental to its story, or no part of it at all.

This panel takes as its point of departure the transformation of European and global cities from the mid-nineteenth century onward, with particular attention to the ways in which processes of urban modernization reorganized, displaced, concealed, and reimagined the nonhuman animal lives that had long been woven into the fabric of urban existence. But one example is how the banishment of slaughterhouses and related trades to the margins rendered animal death invisible in the name of hygiene and the so-called "civilizing process," producing an organized forgetting of the lives and deaths that powered the modern city.

This panel invites papers that take seriously the nonhuman animal as a subject of urban history, attending to the full range of creatures whose presence in and relationship to the modern city has been shaped by, and has in turn shaped, the processes of urban transformation. Who, and what, has been allowed to inhabit urban space, on what terms, and at what cost? It examines how animal bodies and lives have been man-

aged, exploited, displaced, aestheticized, exterminated, and mourned, and what has been suppressed or rendered invisible in these processes. Particular attention is given to the racialized and discriminatory dimensions of urban animal management, including the association of “vermin” with marginalized, racialized, and immigrant communities. The reorganization of urban space in relation to nonhuman animals was a global process shaped by colonial encounters, imperial networks, and local and Indigenous histories. We therefore welcome contributions addressing cities in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and beyond, and engaging critically with colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Topics may include the history of the slaughterhouse and other animal industries; the displacement of working animals by technological change (for instance, the replacement of horses by automobiles); the zoo as a site of imperial knowledge production; urban hygiene and the extermination of “pest” species; and representations of urban animal life. Methodologically, the panel welcomes interdisciplinary approaches spanning history, art history, urban studies, environmental humanities, and postcolonial and decolonial critique.

How to submit
- Deadline: 18 October 2026
- Session language: English
- Submit your title and abstract on the congress website, selecting Session 3.13: https://aisuinternational.org/en/genova-2027-sessioni-macrosessione-3-proposta-paper/
- Notification: 6 December 2026
- Final abstracts for the Proceedings: 15 June 2027; full papers for the post-congress volumes (Insights series): 15 October 2027
- Each person may present in only one session (Agorà contributions excepted)
- Participation grants for early-career scholars under 35 (as of 31 August 2027): https://aisuinternational.org/en/genova-2027-borse-di-partecipazione/
- Congress information: https://aisuinternational.org/en/genova-2027-home/
- Questions about the session: corey.ratch@columbia.edu

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[2] Session 2.17. Reconstruction Generation: Childhood and Design among the Ruins of the Post-War Era – XIII Congress of the Italian Association for Urban History (AISU): “The Wounded City. Urban Spaces as Sites of Conflict, Life, and Memory”, (Genoa, 7–10 Sep 2027)

From: Aurora Pizziolo
Date: 7 Oct 2026
Deadline: 18 Oct 2026

“The school [could be considered] as the most jealous matrix of human rights [...] and every citizen must insist that, in the present reconstruction of the country, this work of the school be undertaken with the due energy in every sector.” In 1947, when Europe was recovering from the wounds of war, Ernesto Nathan Rogers, director of “Domus”, introduced with these words the monographic issue of the journal dedicated to “educative architecture”. Aware that the war had left in European cities not only physical ruins but also wounds inflicted upon the community, Rogers underlined the urgency of initiating a debate on this theme within the complex forge of reconstruction, proposing to offer childhood environments of profound architectural quality, capable not only of overcoming material destruction but also of generating new processes of community. “Reconstruction” therefore means not only the restoration of buildings, but also the defini-

tion of new collective social arrangements. In this context, Rogers's thoughts are linked to an international debate, in which Alfred Roth was a fundamental reference. With his volume "Das Neue Schulhaus" (1950), Roth – who had been working on the theme since the 1930s – proposed endowing schools with a political significance, capable of giving form to the new society. In the post-war landscape, schools, kindergartens, children's homes, orphan villages and educational centres thus assumed a role that transcended mere welfare functions, acquiring a genuine political value, while girls and boys – destined to inherit and transform the reconstructed cities – became the subjects onto whom the greatest expectations of social refoundation were projected. The panel seeks to address the relationship between reconstruction, politics and architecture by taking school building as its field of analysis, recognised as strategic in addressing reconstruction and the creation of a new civic community after the devastations of totalitarianism and war. The session welcomes contributions that deepen the political dimension of architectures for education, investigating projects and programmes directed towards childhood in post-war contexts, while also giving careful consideration to the significance assumed in such projects by the relationship with the material and symbolic presence of ruins. Particular attention will be devoted to Italian and international cases in which spaces for the care of minors were configured as fields of architectural and social experimentation, translating a condition of uncertainty into a political project for the future.

The proposal should be submitted here:
https://aisuinternational.org/genova-2027-sessioni-macrosessione-2-proposta-paper/, selecting session 2.17 .

The proposal should include a long abstract (5000 characters, including spaces); a short abstract (500 characters, including spaces); a short bio note (500 characters, including spaces); and 5 keywords in English and Italian.

Session language(s): English or Italian

A number of participation grants will be awarded to early-career scholars under the age of 35 (as of 31 August 2027): https://aisuinternational.org/en/genova-2027-borse-di-partecipazione/

For further information and inquiries: https://aisuinternational.org/en/genova-2027-home/
info@aisuinternational.net

Reference:
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