

Architecture and the Environment: Methods and Tools Workshop

First special interest group workshop at EAHN Dublin, 1 June 2016

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Workshop Proposal:

The aim of this workshop is to raise questions as to the tools and methods available to the historian who seeks to study the interrelationship of architecture and the environment. Composed of a diverse body of participants of EAHN's interest group "Architecture and the Environment," the workshop will draw together methodological stakes that have been outlined in architectural and urban history, but also in adjacent fields such as landscape history or environmental history. In the session we ask how we can make use of the concepts outlined in other fields and introduce them to the study of architecture. But we are also interested in discussing which concerns and ideas may be specific to our own field and how architectural history may contribute to other disciplines when it comes to the study of the environment.

We propose a format that fosters productive exchange rather than the presentation of results/research outcomes. We ask each group member attending the meeting to bring one object – this can be an image, drawing, archive document, book, a material etc. – and to use this object so as to raise a specific methodological question in a short input statement (no conventional paper with slides!). This will be followed by informal discussion, in which major research questions are collected and debated. The expected outcome of the session is a collection of research questions that are at the core interdisciplinary, but that also reflect developments in our own field. The emphasis is on sharing knowledge and on developing tools that may assist group members in the pursuit of their individual research projects. The workshop may also lead to more formal session proposals or symposia organized by smaller teams within the group with the aim of developing research questions further.

We expect that, depending on the schedule of other interest group meetings, approximately 10, maybe more, EAHN conference participants will attend the workshop, and we welcome everybody interested in joining the event, even if they are not yet members of the special interest group.

Previous Group Activity:

The special interest group "Architecture and the Environment" will have its first formal gathering after its inception in fall 2014 at the forthcoming European Architectural History Network meeting in Dublin in June 2016. The group currently consists of 10 registered EAHN members, and has started its work in spring 2015 by exchanging research questions and by defining fields of enquiry among its members. This has helped to identify a number of themes raised by the intersection of architectural history with environmental and ecological questions. These themes include, among others, transdisciplinary approaches to scholarship; theoretical concepts and terms that derive at the intersection of architecture and the environment (and their histories); questions of historiography; questions of representation; urban environments; activism and the historian's role/position/agency in

contemporary debates; geopolitical issues including nineteenth and twentieth century discourses on nation, race and colonialism as well as Cold War politics. In a next step we plan to develop bibliographies corresponding to these themes, which shall be distributed through the platform before the first group meeting next June.