INTEREST GROUP URBAN REPRESENTATIONS

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Pre-conference WORKSHOP AND PANEL DISCUSSION, DUBLIN, JUNE 2016
Contemplating the Past through the Present: Architecture and its Pictorial Representation.

The EAHN interest group Urban Representations aims at contextualizing, assessing, and theorizing urban still and moving imagery (drawings, print media, maps, photography, film, video).

Formed in 2010 with the goal of determining the modes and potentials of architectural and urban representational media, we are interested in exploring different pictorial narratives generated by the single image, series, moving image, appropriation, or mixed-media project. We aim at engaging with concepts such as the narrative, theatrical/performative, and documentary; in so doing, we strive to determining the functions, and effects of these media throughout architectural and urban representation from the 19th century until today. Such investigations are deeply related to questions of time-space relationships, the visible/invisible, individual and cultural memory, identity formation processes, migration, and globalization.

The goal of this thematic group is not only to establish a scholarly platform for urban visual representations of the 19th to the 21st centuries, but also to open a dialogue between disciplines such as visual studies, architectural history, urbanism/planning, human geography, anthropology, and others.

The EAHN Urban Representations interest group proposes as its third pre-conference workshop a panel discussion titled Contemplating the Past through the Present: Architecture and its Pictorial Representation.

We invite participants to tackle questions of representation from two ends, the architectural historical, and the photographic. The former asks how contemporary historians deal with architectural representation and how photographic representations have served as crucial instruments in historical research. The latter explores how architectural images — through the process of image making, publication, and curation/exhibition — generate historical narratives in their own right. In this workshop, we encourage participants to tackle the hermeneutics of both architectural images and historiographic texts by considering bodies of pictorial work (maps, drawings, photographs, film, video, new media) that are concerned with architecture of different and distinct contexts and that articulate such concerns through a broad range of heterogeneous positions.

The exploration of relationships between architecture, the image and history writing reaches back to the emergence of architectural scholarship and historic preservation. It is manifest in 19th century writings by, for example, Viollet-le-Duc and Albrecht Meydenbauer, and has experienced waves of critical reflection over the course of the last century. We can observe this in more recent publications by architecture historians such as Richard Pare (Photography and Architecture, 1839–1939 (1982)), Cervin Robinson and Joel Herschman (Architecture Transformed (1987)), and Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann (Architecture and Its Image (1989)). Research into history writing's "photographic qualities" includes Siegfried Kracauer's posthumously published work History: The Last Things before the Last (1969) as well as the one done by historians associated with the French Nouvelle Histoire such as Marc Bloch, Jacques LeGoff and Clemens Cheroux,
We propose a round table of up to 8 ten-minute presentations of matured projects, followed by a general discussion. We invite papers that theoretically frame and contextualize a specific case, scholarly approach, set of images/projects and the ways in which they manifest and affirm a particular historic narrative.

Those interested in participating, please send a 300 word proposals by March 15 to Miriam Paeslack at paeslack@buffalo.edu and to Anat Falbel anatfalbel@uol.com.br. Presentations will be pre-circulated amongst participants in early May.

The interest group Urban Representations has organized two successful pre-conference workshops since its formation during the first EAHN meeting at Guimarães. In Brussels 2012, architectural and urban historians, photographers and art historians addressed two topics during a day of presentations and discussions concerning “urban and architectural photography and film through 1970” and “constructions of architecture, city and landscape.” In Turin in 2014 the workshop “Urban and Architectural Imaginaries” focused on seriality / intertextuality and the city as well as travel, foreignness and anxiety in the city. The conception of these workshops has been the result of group meetings during the biennial meetings. The group's ca. 30 members have also exchanged information about publications, conferences and other events on a google group site since 2010 [https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/urbanphoto].

The Urban Representations interest group welcomes new members and is looking forward to lively discussions in Dublin.