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European Architectural History Network / Fourth International Meeting

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ABSTRACTS

THURSDAY: 2 JUNE 2016

FIRST PAPER SESSION

SESSION:Architectures of Waiting in the City
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Visual representations of contemporary urban milieus commonly suggest precise or uninterrupted activity. People move unhindered in and out of buildings and vehicles pass smoothly through the city. However, we must acknowledge that as everyday users of the city, our activities are often punctuated by intermissions, halts, interruptions and delays. In fact, a significant amount of our time in the city is spent doing very little—simply waiting.

In contemporary culture, the places where we tend to wait are frequently pigeonholed as neutral or even unremarkable spaces; interstitial settings that are patently functional but devoid of wider consequences and meaning. Despite being a modality of participation in urban life, waiting or loitering is seen as a negative that contrasts with more active, goal-oriented activities. This session presents an opportunity to reappraise the significance of urban architectures of waiting. In doing so, it will also uncover how the phenomenon of waiting is fundamental to how we negotiate not just individual buildings or architectural settings but also the wider urban realm. More often than not, places of waiting are important thresholds, liminal spaces that communicate between two or more different locations or activities. The session proposes to explore the intricate relationship between waiting as an urban praxis—something people incontrovertibly