



SYNTHETISCHE LANDSCHAFTSMOMENTE  
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## Call for Abstracts

# Alpine Landscapes in Transformation: Infrastructure, Culture and Climate

Symposium, 12-13 May 2022, ETH Zurich  
Deadline for submission 17.12.2021

### Alpine Landscapes in Transformation

The Alps are anything but static; they form a dynamic and sensitive organism. Their characteristic relief emerged from complex geological processes and was re-shaped by ice ages, erosion, and evolving life forms. Alongside these forces, humans have increasingly become major geomorphic agents. The consequences of human actions, calculated or unintended, have radically transformed the Alpine landscape, as illustrated today by climate change. The symposium addresses these changes and their representations through the lens of infrastructure, culture, and climate. Cases such as tunnels, roads, and dams shift substantial portions of mountain masses, re-structure entire water systems, revolutionise the mobility of people and goods, and generate new ecologies. These changes continuously challenge the established understandings of the environment. But they are also opportunities to question the worldviews those projects are predicated upon, allowing us to imagine alternative futures for the Alps.

### Event webpage

<https://vogt.arch.ethz.ch/forschungsthema/alpensymposium>

### Organisation

The event is organized by the Chair Günther Vogt, Landscape Architecture, Institute of Landscape and Urban Studies, ETH Zurich  
Contact: [alpensymposium@arch.ethz.ch](mailto:alpensymposium@arch.ethz.ch)

## **An Interdisciplinary Gathering**

This symposium is the opportunity to discuss past, ongoing, and future changes in the material and cultural reality of the Alps. It offers a moment of exchange and reflection to explore these transformations, following the development of industry, infrastructure construction, and climate change. This interdisciplinary gathering aims at consolidating the role of the spatial design and planning disciplines (architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planning). Handling or even shaping new images of the Alpine landscape requires grounding these fields of practice both in contemporary scientific discourse, but also in the historical specificities of this cultural space. The production of a new and critical understanding of the Alpine landscape can only happen in close co-operation between disciplines, in a broadened field of expertise.

## **Format**

The event consists of two main parts: several workshops focussing on research, and an afternoon of round-table discussions. The research workshops gather doctoral students and young researchers working on the topic of the symposium, giving them an opportunity to exchange ideas and reflect on their ongoing work. They are followed by round-table discussions with various actors from academia and practice actively involved with the Alpine landscape. The discussions are articulated in two sessions: labour/migration/culture and water/infrastructure/landscape. These discussions will offer a fragmented miniature of the complex issues at stake. A keynote presentation by Prof. Günther Vogt will complement the symposium.

## **Call for Abstracts**

The aim of the research workshop is to gather perspectives on the transformations of Alpine landscapes to complete the panel discussions held on the second afternoon. Contributions to the workshop should specifically tackle this topic in relation to industrialisation, infrastructure construction, climate change, or the cultural adaptations they require. These relations and interactions can be seen in the form of competition, passive coexistence, or symbiosis, but may also very well be proposals for alternatives in the form of projects.

The contributions must to be aimed at one of the workshops listed below:

1. Shaping nations and shaping perception
2. Transformation and conflict
3. Emerging symbioses
4. Projections and alternatives
5. Open Session

For each topic, 3 participants will be selected for 15-minute presentations. This will be followed by an open discussion, moderated by a guest critic. The organisers retain the option of setting up one or several additional thematic workshops, based on submissions.

Please send the following to [alpensymposium@arch.ethz.ch](mailto:alpensymposium@arch.ethz.ch), latest by the **17<sup>th</sup> of December 2021**:

- Title of presentation
- Choice of thematic workshop
- Name of author(s) and affiliation
- Abstract (up to 300 words)
- Short bio (up to 150 words)
- Contact details

## **Key Dates**

Publication call for abstracts	<b>12.10.2021</b>
Submission deadline (abstracts)	<b>17.12.2021</b>
Notification of acceptance	<b>End of January 2022</b>
Submission of presentation	<b>10.05.2022</b>
Symposium	<b>12.-13.05.2022</b>

## Description of the thematic workshops

### 1. Shaping nation and shaping perception

Alpine passes, tunnels, or hydropower works have been narrowly intertwined with nation-building. These infrastructural works have historically positioned the Alps and the Alpine countries as both natural frontiers and points of passage, just as they have shaped discourses on national identity. Each project redefines the geopolitical relevance of a portion of territory in relation to the neighbouring countries and regions as if to constantly reconstitute a shimmering mosaic. The panel embeds infrastructure works in larger political, territorial, or legal strategies, assessing the agency of the landscape in those projects.

### 2. Transformation and conflict

This session investigates the perceived destructive nature of industry and infrastructure construction. Landscape, as common ground, is the place where conflicts about its variegated uses, worldviews, and projected states play out. The multi-scalar dimension of infrastructure or industrial ventures brings global or transnational networks with very local specificities into immediate contact. The session focuses on the conflicts that arise from this friction: how are they perceived, contested, negotiated? Are the resolutions of the conflicts necessarily a zero-sum game?

### 3. Emerging symbioses

Material interventions in the Alpine landscape can generate major disturbances over scales, time, and species. Whilst some relations are lost, new relations emerge, some of which can be seen as symbiotic (both materially and culturally). This session explores the nature and development of such relations: intentional or unexpected, transitory or permanent, well-known or experimental. Can they inform us in more detail about the position and effects of human interventions? And can they be used as models for further developments?

### 4. Projections and alternatives

Being mainly project-oriented, the spatial disciplines (architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planning) have an operative role in suggesting ways of integrating industry or infrastructure into the Alpine landscape. The intent of this panel is twofold. It calls designers and planners working on such transformations to the stand, to share their vision. It also aims at creating a public sphere for the discussions around recently completed projects, to be used as “lessons learned”.

### 5. Open session

If your research relates to the overall topic of the symposium but less to the individual thematic sessions, please submit your abstract to the open session. Depending on the amount of submissions, several open sessions may take place. Papers submitted here are assessed in terms of interest regarding the overall topic of the symposium.