

International Conference on Architectural Criticism

9, 10, 16 & 17 October 2021
Online at 14:00 – 17:30 GMT

Press Release and Conference Program, 23 Sep 2021

Why this Conference?

Should architectural criticism be enlightening? Should it help in the creation of a better built environment? Is there a factual basis to it? Does it have a duty to present evidence in the evaluation of a building? Or should it take on what architects say about their designs?

In the context of a flat internet, should architectural criticism be able to define best practices? Does it wield the power over who is in and who is out?

Architectural criticism, like all human endeavors, is at a crucial juncture. While serious architecture struggles for recognition, much so-called architectural criticism is merely a poorly paid, decorative legitimization for hyperbolic practice. Incisive architectural criticism is rare, while the definition of criticism itself has become opaque.

The international conference has gathered exceptional papers that define the purposes and methods of architectural criticism. What should the ethical basis be of architectural criticism? Can it be objective in the context of paid content? Should it outline ideal practices? Or what should it do?

All contributions address either the duty or the power of architectural criticism, in both cases offering the outline of one analysis of an existing building.

Celebrating Independent Criticism

Independent architectural criticism is disappearing due to the changes in publishing. Traditional printed media – newspapers and professional journals – are losing influence to online platforms. The latter's business model depends on architects' willingness to pay for privileged placement on a site's home page; they rarely carry critical texts. Architects themselves avoid evaluating colleagues' work for fear of reprisals.

This International Conference on Architectural Criticism is therefore an essential occasion and medium for independent criticism, dedicated to the task of enlightening the public, students and professionals with the aim of improving the quality of the designed environment in the age of the climate crisis.

Funding for the conference is made possible through the O'Neil Ford Professorship at The University of Texas at Austin. The conference and the proceedings have not had to rely on external funding. All papers were selected via a double-blind peer review. Each presentation elucidates both a cohesive ethical and methodological approach with reference to a built edifice.

Bringing together diverse voices from across the world, this conference is not only an essential, independent platform in the current media desert, it also provides concrete case studies for future generations of architectural critics. For, without independent criticism, there cannot be any search for truth.

General information

The conference is scheduled in such a way that as many people as possible will be able to participate across the world.

There are therefore four weekend slots, structuring the conference in four sessions. Each session begins with greetings from the organizers and session chairs, followed by one of the four keynote lecturers and then the four selected presenters. A roundtable discussion with all participants concludes each session.

There are three breaks.

Please note that the conference will be recorded and posted.

Participation is free of charge, a maximum of 280 viewers can be accommodated.

The Zoom link for all sessions is <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/99569235856>
Meeting ID: 995 6923 5856

For all presenters, including keynote lecturers, session chairs and presenters of papers, please test your connection half an hour before the official start of your session.

Each participant is given an allocated time, including time for Q & As. Please adhere to your allocated time. It is a matter of courtesy to everyone else to keep to your schedule.

Time zones:

Central Time

08:00 – 11:30

Central Europe

15:00 – 18:30

South East Asia

21:00 – 00:30

Session structure:

Greetings	5 min
Keynote lecture	30 min
Q & A	20 min
Break	10 min
Paper 1	15 min
Q & A	10 min
Paper 2	15 min
Q & A	10 min
Break	10 min
Paper 3	15 min
Q & A	10 min
Paper 4	15 min
Q & A	10 min
No break, straight to	
Roundtable	35 min

Conference program

Saturday, 9. October

Session 1:

Session chairs

Frampton, Kenneth

Tsiambaos, Kostas

Voet, Caroline

Low, Kevin

van Gerrewey, Christoph

Origins and Approaches

Ana Tostões and Robert McCarter

Keynote lecture

A Critique of Building Construction: On Timber Construction in Pikionis' Acropolis Works
Paradigms of design and deep readings.
The creative emancipation of critical building analysis
The dominant paradigm we call design
Truth Content: SANAA's Rolex Learning Center

Sunday, 10. October

Session 2

Session chairs

Zheng Shiling

Comas, Carlos Eduardo &
Almeida, Marcos
Hartung, Martin

Costa Cabral, Cláudia

Zafer, Seda

High Culture in Conflict

Louise Noelle Gras and Elias Constantopoulos

Keynote Lecture

Niemeyer Do(o)med:
Remembrances of Planes past
The New MoMA –
Architectural Criticism 1979 – 2019
On Lina Bo Bardi's Iconography: Three drawings
Imported Starchitect in a Local Market

Saturday, 16. October

Session 3

Session chairs

Verde Zein, Ruth

Galjer, Jasna

Petrakos, K.

Jorgensen, Morten Birk
Chaves, Carolina

Criticism and its Effects

Hélène Jannièrè and Wilfried Wang

Keynote lecture

Architectural Criticism in the Space for the Unexpected
Aphaeresis and Urban Policies
Verdicts on the Viking Ship Hall
Architectural Criticism on Post-WW II
Collective Housing: Complicit in an Historical Prejudice?

Sunday, 17. October

Session 4

Session chairs

Tumubweinee, Philippa

Widder, Lynette

Staub, Alexandra

Ciarkowski, B.

Erkarslan, Özlem Erdoğan;
Altınışık, Burak &
Kepekçioğlu, Batu

Explicit Criticism

Şengül Öymen Gür and Fernando Diez

Keynote lecture

"The lightest parliament in the world":
Hans Schwippert's *Bundeshaus*
Whose Architecture? Whose Criticism?
Bank of America Tower/2226 Office
The lost battle for memory: Why does architectural criticism in Poland remain silent?
The New Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture: Multiperspectival Criticism in Contemporary Turkish Architecture