AIARG 2015

All-Ireland Architecture Research Group

Call for Papers Fourth Annual Meeting UCD Dublin January 30-31, 2015

Proposals for papers are sought for the fourth annual meeting of the All-Ireland Architecture Research Group on January 30-31 2015. In keeping with previous AIARG conferences the purpose of the fourth annual meeting is to offer a window into current architectural research in Ireland and beyond. In doing so it is hoped that the meeting will bring new areas of research to light, encourage collaboration and facilitate exchange of research results.

Following successful previous meetings in Belfast, Limerick and Dublin, the format of the annual meeting has been revised this year. A Call for Sessions was issued in July and after an enthusiastic response the conference team has made a selection of 12 thematic sessions which we hope will lead to an interesting, engaging and reflective conference. Each session will consist of four 20 minute papers with time for questions and discussion. A description of each thematic session is given below.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words including title, should be submitted via email to the session chair *and* to aiargconference2015 [at]gmail.com by **15 September**. Proposals may come from individuals or groups. For all participants, please include name, professional affiliation (if applicable), email address, contact number, and a current CV.

Please note: Only one abstract per author or co-author may be submitted. Session chairs may suggest changes to the abstract in order to ensure if addresses the session theme. Similarly, session chairs may recommend revisions to a paper and reserve the right to withhold a paper from the program. All speakers and session chairs will be required to register for the conference.

aiargconference2015.com   aiarg.webs.com

Key Dates

8 August 2014	Call for Papers
15 September 2014	Deadline for submitting paper abstracts to sessions
30 September 2014	Session chairs notify all persons submitting abstracts of the acceptance or rejection of their proposals
20 December 2014	Deadline for submission of papers to session chairs for circulation and comment. Papers also forwarded to conference team.
9 January 2015	Feedback from session chairs on papers
30-31 January 2015	Conference

Architecture, Infrastructure and the Making of Modern Ireland

'A free Ireland would drain the bogs, would harness the rivers, would plant the wastes, would nationalise the railways and the waterways, would improve agriculture, would protect fisheries, would foster industries, would promote commerce, and beautify the cities …' (Padraig Pearse, 'From a Hermitage', 1913)

Somewhat unusually in his often romantic writings Padraig Pearse – poet, pedagogue and revolutionary – chose to describe the future of an independent Ireland in terms of infrastructure and technological processes. Terence Brown's locating of this excerpt at the beginning his seminal work *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002* highlights the simultaneous and interlinking construction of both a new physical *and* cultural landscape for an independent modern nation. Lacking any significant industrial complex, the construction of new infrastructures in Ireland was seen throughout the 20th century as a key element in the building of the new State, just as the adoption of an international style modernism in architecture was perceived as a way to escape the colonial past. For Paul N. Edwards modernity and infrastructure are intimately connected.

'infrastructures simultaneously shape and are shaped – in other words, co-construct – the condition of modernity. By linking macro, meso, and micro scales of time, space and social organisation, they form the stable foundation of modern social worlds' (2003: 186). Simultaneously omnipresent and invisible – *infra* means beneath – Edwards also points out that infrastructure tends only to become apparent when it is either new or broken. Interpreting the *meso* scale as being that of the building, this session calls for papers that critically and analytically investigate aspects of the architectures of infrastructure in 20th-century Ireland. Like the territory they explore these papers may range across scales to oscillate between a concern for the artefact and its physical landscape, and the larger, often hidden systems and networks that co-define this architecture.

Session Chairs: Gary A. Boyd; g.boyd@qub.ac.uk and John McLaughlin; john@johnmclaughlin.ie, Joint-curators Irish Pavilion, International Biennale of Architecture, Venice 2014.

Architecture and Philosophy: Between Craft and Knowledge

"philosophy and design are heading for the same point – philosophy in thinking, design in making." Otl Aicher

Architecture is frequently understood as a discipline which combines the useful with the beautiful, but distinguishes between *techne* and *poesis*; bridging technology and art while navigating between experience and knowledge in an attempt to be and to dwell. Architects today seem to be more and more interested in philosophers and it is not rare to find quotes from Plato, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Lefebvre, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and others in papers dealing with architectural and research in design. Focusing on our contemporary global, but fragmented world, full of conflicting, but intriguing complexities, this session will be (re)opening questions about the communications between these two disciplines. Some suggested sub-topics for papers, although submissions do not need to be restricted only to these:

Can architects use philosophy to rediscover and redefine their role in society?
What conditions and limitations, obstacles and possibilities are imposed on architects when they read and interpret philosophical texts?
What exactly are architects really looking for from philosophy?
What can philosophy bring to contemporary architecture?
Should an architect's own view and understanding of the world, be aligned with or informed by a particular philosophical position? Or is the need for philosophy in architecture a sign of the discipline's weakness to rest its base on its own firm grounds?
Can a better understanding of how the world itself is constructed improve the way architects construct?
In their never-ending struggle to make, improve and construct the world, is it possible for architects and designers to attain an understanding of the world as it is, in and of itself?

Session chairs: Aleksandar Kostić, Department of Architecture, Waterford Institute of Technology; akostic@wit.ie and Dr Brendan O'Byrne, Department of Philosophy, Trinity College Dublin; obyrnebr@tcd.ie

Architecture or Society

The social role of architecture, its value and purpose in our everyday lives and how it might be considered and used as a positive tool in our health and well-being is a discussion which lacks focus and direction in Ireland. At a political and policy level economic imperatives continue to dominate discussions on our built environment. In 2014 we have already seen the strident and explicit re-emergence of a national social housing policy that vitally depends on a private construction industry for success, with any meaningful discussion on the social potential of design and building being clearly avoided.

However there is an emerging strand of thinking, practice, pedagogy and research across all-Ireland which taken together, is starting to examine the purpose and role of architecture and the architect in contemporary society. The purpose of this session is to gather research and researchers on socially responsible design in order to build a collective platform for future work, advocacy and change.

This session therefore seeks papers concerned with the relationship between architecture and society and our everyday life, to offer some focus and direction and coalition of ideas on this urgent and critical direction in architecture and built environment.

Session chairs: Emmett Scanlon, University College Dublin; emmett.scanlon@ucd.ie and Nuala Flood, Queens University Belfast; n.flood@qub.ac.uk

Biography
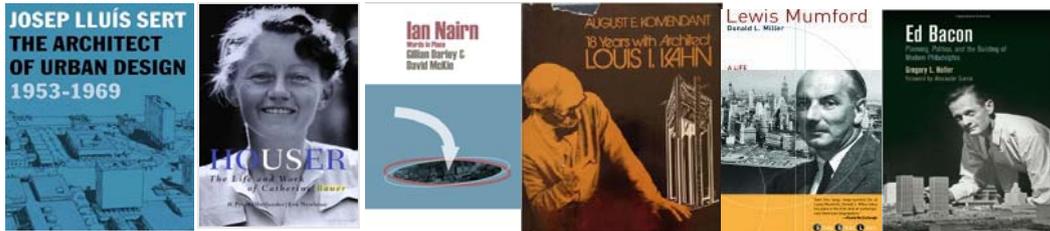
Images of biographies on urban designers, reformers, crusaders, architects and engineers.

Biography; bios 'life' + -graphia 'writing.'

Have you ever been curious about the lives of thinkers or speculated how biographical details affect creative output? Has reading about the life-choices of a designer, architect, and urban intellectual, building or radical ever inspired your own choices? If so, you share an interest in 'Biography', the focus of this session at AIARG.

Biography, being both verb and noun, '*scientific as well as literary'* offers an interesting duality. Regarded once as a poor relation of history, by 1803, biography was held by Sir Walter Scott to be '*the most interesting species perhaps of every species of composition'.* Embracing the circumstances of specific lives, it is how biography is viewed collectively and positioned culturally that is of particular relevance here. The lives of designers can be viewed as an odyssey, marked by artifice but the narrative of a life brings the artifice to life.

Therefore, in the spirit of uncovering the inter-connectedness of lives and built form, this session seeks proposals which focus on a scholarly examination of how the life of a person and the life of a building or city become intertwined, especially how one can become an extension of the other. Group biographies and reflections on the peculiar relationship between the biographer and his or her subject are welcomed.

Session chairs: Miriam Fitzpatrick, University College Dublin; Miriam.Fitzpatrick@ucd.ie and Sarah Mulrooney; Sarahmulrooney@gmail.com

Film Architecture

Film still: *Adam and Paul* (Lenny Abrahamson, 2004, Ireland)

In his edited book *Film Architecture: Set Designs from Metropolis to Blade Runner*, first published in 1999, Dietrich Neumann studies cities and interiors represented in European and American films through set design. Research on film architecture has been on the agenda of architectural theorists since the last quarter of the 20th century. This session of the fourth A-IARG conference aims to open a window into current research on film architecture in Ireland and beyond. Academics and professionals who do research on film architecture in Ireland or elsewhere are invited to submit their proposals on one of the questions the session targets:

- How do film directors represent architectural/urban elements in fiction/documentary films made in Ireland or elsewhere?
- How do architects/students use film as a design/analysis/presentation tool in architectural profession/education in Ireland or elsewhere?
- How do architectural theorists/architects collaborate with other scholars/professionals on the research topic of film architecture in Ireland and beyond?

Session chair: Dr Gul Kacmaz Erk**,** Queen's University Belfast; g.kacmaz@qub.ac.uk.

On Environment: Relationships between Architecture and the Contemporary Landscape

Through our production of carbon dioxide and the movement of synthetic chemicals within our ecosystems, humans have left no place untouched. As our landscape becomes more crowded, we are compelled to live in human-made environments increasingly abstracted from nature. Moreover, current approaches to architecture can demand we live in sealed building envelopes, with mechanically controlled environmental conditions. Through these changes our relationship with nature is being modified, and since we are inherently dependent on our environment this directly affects us.

Wilson, Ulrich, and others have argued that connection to nature is important for us based on the conviction that nature deeply affects us. For Wilson nature as a living entity has significance beyond a reliance on it for our material survival. If nature were just about keeping us alive, he explained it would be something akin to 'maintaining a patient in intensive care as opposed to watching him walk down the street in good health.' Nature, he argues has a profound influence on our bodies and minds, our health and wellbeing.

As our connections with nature are limited, it becomes more important for us to realise what it is in nature that we need. In addition, if we are to inform current technological approaches that establish perceptual breaks between architecture and landscape, we must understand our broader ecological needs within our modern surroundings which sometimes mitigate against an overly romantic reading of nature. In search of positions that can inform current approaches, this session reflects upon the ways that we fit architecture and landscape together. How can architecture accommodate connections with nature within human-made landscapes? What are the possibilities for human engagement with landscape? What can site-specific relations contribute towards experiences? Are there practices that support our perceptual relationship with landscape? How do we design with nature in mind?

Session chairs: Sarah Sheridan, Dublin Institute of Technology; sarah.sheridan@dit.ie, and Brian Ward, Dublin Institute of Technology and University College Dublin; brian.ward@dit.ie

Redefining Architectural Scholarship through Visual Methodologies

Architectural humanities research has been undergoing a shift away from purely academic scholarship to incorporating artistic and practice-based work. Following on from a tradition of practice-based research in fine arts, this shift is represented in the recent flurry of architectural publications and conferences that support not only text-centred expositions but also visually motivated and evidenced architectural research. Engaging creatively with modes and techniques of visual media - photography, filmmaking, drawing, diagramming, digital manipulation etc. – can allow engagement with wider audiences and diverse methodologies through inter-, transdisciplnary, multi-sensorial practices.

If much architectural knowledge resides in the projections and representations of the disciplinary practice of architecture (Evans, 1997), visually stimulated and practiced architectural scholarship has the capacity to re-orient, incorporate and invert translations to and from 'building' to 'drawing', and therefore create new forms of knowledge. But what does it mean to work across or at the intersection of established humanities scholarship and creative practice through visual methodologies? What are the newly emerging visual artistic methods and practices of architectural translation that inform academic architectural scholarship? How does a prioritisation of the architect's critical gaze or hand differ from the ethnographer's or artist's in creating new knowledge in architecture?

This session solicits original and rigorous work that probes the use and complexities of the visual as research material, process and output in architecture, and as part of a broader reflexive practice. Papers from scholars and practitioners might engage with emerging hybrid audio/visual practices, visual ethnography, visual technique, the visual essay, the visual over time, visualisation as artefact, and the dependency and interdependency of the visual with other methods. Please email 300 word maximum abstracts including 3 images maximum – taken from photographs, films, storyboards etc. – to both session chairs. Include in your abstract links to any videos or films that you intend to screen with your presentation.

Session chairs: Dr Igea Troiani, Oxford Brookes University; itroiani@brookes.ac.uk ; and Suzanne Ewing, University of Edinburgh; suzanne.ewing@ed.ac.uk

Reframing Representation

Architects, unlike most artists and sculptors, rarely get to work directly on their buildings. The design and creation of architecture is typically mediated through the representation that is used to describe and instruct. Drawings and models, the methods of representation most commonly used by architects are not neutral transmitters of fact; rather they form an opaque media with their own conventions, possibilities and limitations. Students, theoreticians and architectural practitioners draw and model their work in order to better understand and develop it but also to describe, convince or cajole. Drawings and models, films and photos are not merely technical facilitators of the process of design; they undoubtedly help shape the results.

The aim of this session is to explore the implications of architectural representation in both the development and dissemination of architectural ideas- built and theoretical. Representational tools are an obvious necessity in explaining the implications of design decisions to clients and the public before construction. As such, drawings and other forms of representation can play an important social role in either including or excluding people from genuine engagement. How can architects effectively communicate with a public largely untrained in conventional representation?

With the rapid expansion of digital dissemination, drawings, photos and models have overtaken buildings as the primary 'artefact' in architectural discourse. Iconic architectural drawings such as those by Van Doesburg, Hadid and Superstudio have played a powerful role in the trajectory of architectural design. How may new forms of digital media and the expanding consumption of the drawn artefact affect architectural development and debate?

Session chair: Miriam Delaney, Dublin Institute of Technology, miriam.delaney@dit.ie

Systems Thinking and the City: New practices and connections.

In a series of essays in the Architectural Review from 2011-2013 entitled 'The Big ReThink', Peter Buchanan acknowledges that we are now 'in the throes of comprehensive systemic collapse, prompting a rethink of 'almost everything', including the design of the built environment. Profound cultural changes are necessary to inspire the urgent and radical transformations required 'to reach true sustainability' which will involve 'rich connections' to place, nature and community.

In systems thinking, effective and creative change can be considered through a synoptic approach that facilitates an understanding of whole systems and their component and interrelated parts. Donella Meadows notes that 'Change comes first from stepping outside the limited information that can be seen from any single place in the system and getting an overview', and that it is not possible to 'navigate well in an interconnected, feedback-dominated world unless you take your eyes off short-term events and look for long-term behavior and structure; unless you are aware of false boundaries and bounded rationality'. Thinking outside the box, crossing disciplinary, political and physical borders are essential aspects of a systems thinking approach to change.

This conference session seeks papers from researchers examining new ways of doing things in the broad arena of the built environment that may effect change in social and/or ecological systems in the city. It is anticipated that the session will embrace cross-disciplinary research activities and connections including with planning, urban design, urban conservation and landscape urbanism. It is recognized that change does not always require entirely new ways of thinking, but rather the cross-fertilisation or adaptation of historical, established or emerging ideas and practices from a range of disciplines and sectors, often applied in a different context or for a new purpose.

Session chair: Philip Crowe, University College Dublin**;** philip.crowe.1@ucdconnect.ie

Tools and Techniques

Image courtesy of Marcus Donaghy

The art of architecture is most commonly examined through recourse to aesthetics, or in reference to social dynamics, politics or other cultural discourses. Rarely do we discuss the art of *making* architecture, to reveal the artfulness in the use of techniques, tools or materials. Yet, it is by virtue of these elements and processes that architecture comes into being and, through their adept usage, that architecture endures against the tide of time and decay.

The history of construction offers an alternative viewpoint from which to understand and appreciate architecture, revealing the tools and techniques employed in its making, and the influence that their evolution has had on architectural form. Equally, it exposes the other participants involved in the production of buildings, including tradesmen and contractors whose contributions so often remains unacknowledged, as well as the dynamics between all parties involved, which has varied significantly through time and across cultures.

Proposals are welcome that address these concerns through; the examination of specific projects; the history, production and use of specific building materials; the development of construction tools; specific building techniques in response to environment; the history of a building trade or specific builders; or the history of services.

Session chairs: Elizabeth Shotton, University College Dublin; elizabeth.shotton@ucd.ie and Peter Carroll, University of Limerick; pcarroll@a2.ie

Transnational Networks and Exchanges

The exchange of knowledge and skills between cultures has always been a driving force for innovation. This session focuses on the ways in which transnational networks and exchanges of ideas fostered innovation and change in 20th-century architecture on the Island of Ireland.

Contributions might address questions as to why traditional architectural idioms were abandoned in favour of new ones, who pursued change and why, and what obstacles were encountered? Which architectural precedents from outside of Ireland served as sources for change and how were these interpreted and altered? What kind of exchange was pursued between which actors and in which locations? What kinds of networks were established and for what ends? Modernism and its proliferation and re-contextualisation within Ireland are central to this session.

Network theory and the research of transnational influences have recently been given heightened attention. The 2013 WHA (World History Association) conference "Diasporas and Refugees in World History" addressed such themes and ways in which research outcomes have recently found their way into the classrooms of secondary and tertiary education. The SAHANZ (Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand) 2014 conference "Translations" addressed the influences of European architecture in Australia and New Zealand and the EAHN (European Architectural History Network) provides a world-wide network of scholars working on this field and analyzing how modern architecture, developed in a cultural 'centre', has found its way into 'peripheral' spaces world-wide.

Whereas many of these conferences and groups focus on the relationship between the European 'centre' and the Asian, African, and Pacific 'periphery', this session would focus mainly on connections between Ireland and Great Britain, the European continent, and the USA. This would also encourage overarching discussions on, for example, the question of whether Irish architecture was perceived as part of the cultural centre or its periphery. Investigations into transnational networks and exchanges will also enable discussion on the ways in which networks might have supported the development of architecture that sought to delineate national and cultural identities, and that wished to be perceived as either modern and independent or as adhering to inherited traditions.

Session chair: Dr Tanja Poppelreuter, University of Ulster; t.poppelreuter@ulster.ac.uk

Writing Spatially

"When I think about architecture, images come to mind. Many of these images are connected with my training and thinking as an architect. (...) Some of the other images have to do with my childhood. There was a time when I experienced architecture without thinking about it."
[Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, Basel: Birkhauser, 1998]

The *Writing Spatially* session will invite papers that explore the dichotomy between 'Writing about Architecture' and 'Writing Architecturally'. As such this interdisciplinary session is open to practitioners drawn from architecture, architectural criticism and other fields such as literature and urbanism.

Papers might highlight the challenges experienced when writing about architecture (i.e. attempting to describe a four-dimensional, multi-sensory and spatial experience) and the opportunities that spatial thinking offers when writing architecturally. The session will consider different approaches and styles of architectural criticism, including writing architectural criticism for different platforms (analogue and online).

The papers in this session will also explore whether writing itself is a spatial experience, drawing on such experiences as concrete poetry but also the inherent structure of literary texts.

Session chairs: Michael Hayes, University College Dublin, michael.k.hayes@ucd.ie; and Dr Sandra O'Connell, Royal Institute of Architects Ireland; soconnell@riai.ie