

histories of urban design

global trajectories
and local realities

conference
15-17 November 2021
Zürich, Switzerland

Conference Organisers

Tom Avermaete

ETH Zürich, CH

Janina Gosseye

TU Delft, NL

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ETH Zürich, Switzerland

Janina Gosseye
TU Delft, The Netherlands

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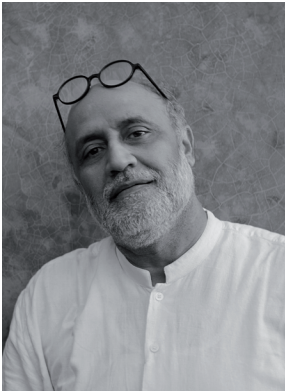
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Keynote speakers



Rahul Mehrotra

Rahul Mehrotra is the founder principal of RMA Architects. He divides his time between working in Mumbai and Boston and teaching at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University where he is Professor of Urban Design and Planning and the John T. Dunlop Professor in Housing and Urbanization. His most recent book is titled *Working in Mumbai* (2020) and is a reflection on his practice evolved through its association with the city of Bombay/Mumbai.



Jennifer Mack

Jennifer Mack is Lecturer and Associate Professor at KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Broadly, Mack's work links theories and methods from architectural history and anthropology to investigate questions of equality, power, ecology, and social change in the built environment. Her current research focuses on the green, open, and public spaces of the Swedish modernist suburbs designed during the 1960s and 1970s. She is author of *The Construction of Equality* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017) and co-editor of two recent anthologies.



Roger Diener

After his studies, Roger Diener joined the office run by his father, Marcus Diener, in Basel, which he then took over in 1980. Diener was Professor of Design at the EPFL, and at ETH Zürich and co-founded the ETH Studio Basel Contemporary City Institute. Diener has been an active member of the Federal Commission for Monument Preservation and of the Commission of the Protection of local Landmarks in Zürich. He has received the French Grande Médaille d'Or, the Prix Meret Oppenheim, the Heinrich Tessenow Gold Medal, and the Kulturpreis of the City of Basel. In 2019, the Bauhaus University of Weimar awarded him an honorary doctorate.



Nan Ellin

Nan Ellin has spearheaded the creation of vital and vibrant places including Canalscape for Phoenix, the 9 Line for Salt Lake City, the Trinity Innovation Corridor for North Texas, and eDEN for Denver. Ellin is Dean of the College of Architecture and Planning at the University of Colorado Denver and holds a PhD in Urban Design from Columbia University. Her writings – including *Postmodern Urbanism*, *Integral Urbanism*, and *Good Urbanism* – have been translated into 13 languages.

Programme Overview

Monday, 15 November 2021

09.00 – 18.30	Registration Desk Open
13.00 – 13.30	Welcome by Tom Avermaete and Janina Gosseye
13.30 – 15.00	Keynote Lecture by Rahul Mehrotra
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee Break
15.30 – 18.00	Parallel Sessions Session A1 Agents of Cross-cultural Exchange Session B1 Form Follows Finance Session C1 Approaches and Tools Session D1 Engaging with the Environment
18.30 – 20.00:	Conference Apéro

Tuesday, 16 November 2021

09.00 – 17.30	Registration Desk Open
09.30 – 12.00	Parallel Sessions Session A2 Cities and Citizens Session B2 Geopolitics of Urban Design Session C2 Concepts and Discourses Session D2 Housing Types
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Keynote Lecture by Jennifer Mack
15.00 – 17.30	Parallel Sessions Session A3 Neighbourhoods and Communities Session B3 Regimes and Ideologies Session C3 Disciplinary Tensions Session D3 Infrastructure and Mobility
17.30 – 18.00	Coffee Break
18.00 – 19.30	Keynote Lecture by Roger Diener
19.30 – 22.30	Conference Dinner

Wednesday, 17 November 2021

09.00 – 13.00	Registration Desk Open
09.30 – 12.00	Parallel Sessions Session A4 City Governance and Urban Transformation Session B4 The Politics of the Plan Session C4 Professional Culture and Agents Session D4 Model Cities
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Keynote Lecture by Nan Ellin
15.00 – 17.30	Parallel Sessions Session A5 Roles and Actors Session B5 Urban Divides Session C5 Urban Design Pedagogies Session D5 Urban Figures in Transformation
17.30 – 18.00	Coffee Break
18.00 – 19.00	Closing Comments by Track Respondents

Conference Tracks

Urban design history can be told in different ways and from various perspectives. There is not one history of urban design, but many.

The rich variety of urban design histories presented during this conference are organised into four tracks, each of which focuses on one particular perspective (or 'theme') with which urban design has engaged over the course of the 20th century.

Some of these tracks relate predominantly to the 'heteronomy' of urban design (i.e. 'Governance, Citizens, Agents' and 'Politics, Economics, Inequities'), while others adhere more closely to its 'autonomy' (i.e. 'Profession, Discipline, Practice' and 'Types, Figures and Projects').

Strong relationships exist between these four tracks and the histories of urban design presented within them, as the autonomy of urban design cannot be uncoupled from its heteronomy and, indeed, all papers in some way weave threads between them.

Track A Governance, Citizens, Agents

Track Respondent:
Andreas Kalpakci

The development of urban design in the 20th century is inextricably linked with histories of governance, citizens and agents.

Urban design projects almost invariably involve a broad cast of actors and agencies, who alternately take on the role of designer, commissioner, client, steward, patron and even builder of pioneering urban schemes.

The papers presented in this track all in one way or another engage with questions of governance, citizens and agents (or even agency) in urban design.

Track B Politics, Economics, Inequities

Track Respondent:
Léa-Catherine Szacka

Politics and economics have a strong influence on urban design. Throughout the 20th century, urban design has often been used to underline the importance of particular political systems, and also expressed the advent of new socio-political and socio-economic regimes.

The papers presented in this track explore the reciprocal relations that exist between politics, economics and urban design, as well as the social motivations and effects (from integration to separation) that have characterized urban design projects from the early 20th century to today.

Track C Profession, Discipline, Practice

Track Respondent:
Rebecca Choi

Although urban design has been practiced throughout history, the definition and use of the term 'urban design' dates from the mid-20th century, and the first formal master of urban design program only started in the fall of 1960, at Harvard University.

Even though the practice of urban design is old, as a profession and discipline, urban design is relatively young.

The papers presented in this track focus on the development, formation and formalisation of the profession, discipline and practice of urban design, by shedding light on its approaches, tools, concepts, discourses, cultures and pedagogies.

Track D Types, Figures, Projects

Track Respondent:
Anne Hultzsich

Histories of urban design projects almost inevitably engage with the concepts of type and figure.

Certain urban figures and types, such as the square and the grid, have a long lineage in the urban design, while others, such as the urban highway and the skyscraper are relatively new.

The papers gathered in this track all examine particular types and figures, as well with as their adaptation and re-formulation over time, through the analysis of specific urban design projects and schemes.

Programme

Monday
15 November 2021

9:00 Foyer

Registration Desk Open

13:00 – 13:30 Room E51

Welcome by

Tom Avermaete & Janina Gosseye

13:30 – 15:00 Room E51

Keynote Lecture by

Rahul Mehrotra

15:00 – 15:30 Foyer

Coffee Break

15:30 – 18:00

Parallel Sessions

Session A1 Room J43.1 **Agents of Cross-Cultural Exchange**

Chair: Hannah Leroux

[Christina E. Crawford & Alessandro Porollo](#)

From Hof to Homes: Interwar Urban Design Exchange between Vienna and Atlanta **p.12**

[Cathelijne Nuijsink](#)

Comment Vivre Ensemble: Kitagata Housing (1994-2001) and Arata Isozaki's Urban Gestures **p.13**

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Housers in a Swedish American Landscape **p.14**

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The Golden Suburb **p.15**

[Rohan Varma](#)

Housing Design as Urban Design: From CIAM's 'Charte de l'Habitat' to Charles Correa's 'Bill of Rights for Housing in the Third World' **p.16**

Session B1 Room E51 **Form Follows Finance**

Chair: Carola Hein

[Yasmina El-Chami](#)

Foreclosing Reconstruction: The Agency and Failure of Urban Design in Beirut's City Centre **p.20**

[Sebastiano Fabbrini](#)

Stairway to Europe: The Urban Renewal of Toledo **p.21**

[Elmira Jafari](#)

Planning a Transition: Making Tehran Global **p.22**

[Anne Kockelkorn](#)

The Shareholder Value of Gross-Berlin or the Economies of Urban Design **p.23**

[Charlotte Malterre-Barthes](#)

EuroMediterrannée: Social Segregation and Spatial Exclusion in Marseille (1995-2030) **p.24**

[Susanne Schindler](#)

Accelerated Depreciation, Tax Credits, and Other Conundrums for Urban Design: New York City, circa 1970 **p.25**

Session C1 Room E41.1 **Approaches and Tools**

Chair: Tom Avermaete

[Marcela Aragüez](#)

Mediating Urban Tensions in Post-War Japan: The 'Red Book' and the Expo Osaka '70 **p.28**

[Valéry Didelon](#)

The Plan-Guide, From One Island to Another **p.29**

[Tanja Herdt & Sibylle Wälty](#)

Revisiting Density: The CIAM Study for the Redevelopment of Zürich's Langstrassen Quarter, 1935-1937 and its Impact on Urban Design and Planning in Zürich **p.30**

[Pollyanna Rhee](#)

Data Over Politics: Technocratic Faith in Urban Design in the 1970s **p.31**

[Maxime Zaugg](#)

The *Projet Urbain* and the Maquette: Negotiating the Complexity of Euralille, 1986-1991 **p.32**

Session D1 Room E23 **Engaging with the Environment**

Chair: Kelly Shannon

[Luca Csepely-Knorr](#)

Environmental Crisis, Ecology and Oak-wood-Warrington New Town **p.36**

[Peter Hemmersam](#)

The 'Arctic Urban Nucleus' - From Colonial to Liveable Circumpolar Cities **p.37**

[Maroš Krivý](#)

Ian McHarg's Pardisan (1975-9) and the Limits to Ecological Urbanism **p.38**

[Marie Pirard](#)

'Voile sur la Plate-Taille': Hydraulic Infrastructure and Hybrid Landscape in Postwar Belgium **p.39**

[Sascha Roesler](#)

Ludwig Hilberseimer's 'The New City' in the Light of the New Science of Urban Climatology **p.40**

[Victoria See](#)

Tracing Covered Linkways in Singapore **p.41**

18:30 – 20:00 Foyer

Conference Aperó

Room J43.1

From Hof to Homes: Interwar Urban Design Exchange between Vienna and Atlanta

Christina E. Crawford
Alessandro Porotto

The urban design project Techwood Homes in Atlanta, Georgia (1937) represents both the first federally funded public housing in the US and a synthesis of early 20th c. European mass housing accomplishments. This paper uses the development of Techwood as a lens through which to view both the process of, and result from, transnational urban design exchange in the Interwar/New Deal period—here, between Red Vienna and Jim Crow Atlanta. Public housing in the US originated in 1933, when Atlanta real-estate mogul turned housing crusader, Charles Palmer, successfully secured slum clearance and low-cost housing funding through President FDR's National Industrial Recovery Act. In 1934, during Techwood Homes' project development, Palmer took a European Grand Tour of social housing to visit projects he deemed worthy of study and possible replication in Atlanta. Vienna was a highlight of his trip, confirmed by his autobiography, *Adventures of a Slum Fighter* (1955). Palmer toured the Karl Marx-Hof, among other Viennese municipal socialist housing projects, took his own photographs and moving picture films, and gathered promotional materials. He also met important policymakers of the Viennese initiative to pose questions about financing, site planning, and programming. Concrete urban design connections between the Karl-Marx Hof and Techwood Homes include low site coverage (around 15%); rational yet non-rigid site planning; high-quality garden and playground design; abundant collective facilities; and rich materiality. This co-authored comparative analysis of the two sites, based on archival documentation and analytical redrawing of both projects, allows for critical assessment of why, how, and in what ways European urban design principles crossed the Atlantic. By focusing on the particular relationship between the Hof and the Homes, this paper aims to demonstrate how urban design ideas are globalized, then adjust to local scale.

Dr. Christina E. Crawford is assistant professor at Emory University, Atlanta, USA. Her book *Spatial Revolution* (Cornell UP, 2021) investigates early Soviet urban theory and practice, and new research explores interwar exchanges of housing expertise between Europe and the US, specifically Atlanta.

Dr. Alessandro Porotto is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium. His book *L'intelligence Des Formes* (Mê-spresses, 2019) compares interwar housing developments in Vienna and Frankfurt.

Comment *Vivre Ensemble*: Kitagata Housing (1994-2001) and Arata Isozaki's Urban Gestures

Cathelijne Nuijsink

The 1970 World Expo in Osaka and the 1973 oil crisis acted as catalysts for Japanese architecture culture to step back from dreaming and making cities—from both the large-scale planning efforts for new towns and the visionary utopias from the Metabolist architects—and instead to retreat into the small, detached house. Polarization between “bureaucrat architects” and “genius architects,” as Henry Hitchcock had put it in a 1947 essay in *Architectural Review*, created a sharp division in 1970s Japan between large firms working on large-scale planning and artist-architects focusing on small facilities and private houses. A key figure who has tried to narrow this gap between architectural scale and urban scale is the Japanese architect and theorist, Arata Isozaki. In his role as commissioner, Isozaki coordinated several urban housing projects in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s that allowed “genius architects” to contribute to the socio-cultural development of urban planning in Japan.

This paper sets out to tell the microhistory of one of Isozaki's urban gestures in Japan, the reconstruction of Kitagata Public Housing (1994-2001) in which he invited an international cohort of architects to make a bold statement against the monotonous repetition and rigid planning of Japanese public space and housing. Through scrutinizing the project brief, the responses from the invited architects, artists, and landscape designers Liz Diller, Christine Hawley, Akiko Takahashi, Kazuyo Sejima, Martha Schwartz, Emi Fukuzawa, and Aiko Miyakawa as well as the “after-effects” of the four apartment blocks and communal gardens, this paper aims to highlight how Isozaki's strategic curatorship resulted in a productive encounter in which local and foreign ideas regarding house and home met, informed each other and mutually inspired. While all designers started off from Roland Barthes' urgent social call of “how to live together”, Japanese designers sought the answer in re-interpretations of typical vernacular dwellings such as verandas, movable partitions, and movable furniture, while the foreign responses activated the local Japanese housing debate with references to duplex dwellings and New York style lofts. Through exploring the innovative cross-cultural dwelling concepts from an all-women team, this paper subtly uncovers a feminist critique of existing collective housing models.

Cathelijne Nuijsink is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) at ETH Zürich where she works and teaches on the history of modern and contemporary architecture. Her research focuses on cross-cultural and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange in architecture culture and aims to contribute to a more dynamic and inclusive “crossed” history of architecture.

Housers in a Swedish American Landscape

Frida Rosenberg

In the period from the 1930s to the 1960s the role of design was an important arena for cultural contacts between Sweden and the United States. Investigating the complexity of cultural, social, and economic exchanges and in particular transnational trajectories in housing development, one can locate sites of female housing heroes, such as Alva Myrdal, Catherine Bauer, and Carin Boalt. These women can offer alternative ways of framing the progression of dwelling in which technologies and regulatory bodies such as requirements, standards and implementing legal restrictions are articulated in relation to the urban development in the two nations.

This essay will make use of the borderland concept investigating cross-border relations between Sweden and America in order to frame a critical history of domestic architecture with a focus on housing reformers in the 20th century. The premise is twofold: to acknowledge the role of female actors in the larger scope of improving the housing condition; and to understand the transfer of knowledge in a Sweden American Borderland. Alva Myrdal's work at the UN is indebted to a greater attention to the social condition in designing the built environment. She brought awareness to social injustice and how it informed modernization. Catherine Bauer's contacts with Sweden and the rest of Europe affected how the 1937 Housing Act was adopted in the United States. This showcase how the urban environment is conditioned by contextual circumstances, but foremost the transfer of knowledge on how to regulate architecture. Carin Boalt, the first female Professor in Sweden, spent tedious work mapping 'normal science' in order to improve the home environment in the 1960s-70s. This Swedish rational approach to the practice of architecture illustrates how the profession evolved and how empirical research became the foundation for political decision-making, which played a central role in how Swedish society urbanized.

Frida Rosenberg has a PhD in architecture and is lecturer at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology School of Architecture in Stockholm, teaching a Housing Studio + History/Theory courses. She is author of The Construction of Construction: The Wenner-Gren Center and the Possibility of Steel Building in Postwar Sweden.

The Golden Suburb

Davide Spina

In the post-war period, Rome was one giant construction site. From 1949 to 1963, the Italian capital almost doubled in size, as thousands of small builders cluttered with apartment buildings every available plot within the city's metropolitan area, often in disregard of planning regulations. As a result of this process, by the late 1950s Rome was swollen, congested, and on the verge of collapse. Crumbling road and transport infrastructure punctually failed and paralysed entire sectors of the city. Several historical parks were sieged by developer greed. And, following the rise of organised labour nationwide, the streets of the Eternal City had become more and more the set for clashes between the police and unionised workers. Confronted with these issues, the Roman middle class started looking around for alternatives to urban living, and many within it found one in the Casal Palocco suburb.

Planned and built by Vatican-controlled developer SGI between 1960 and 1975, Casal Palocco was the first suburb in the country and the largest real estate venture in post-war Italy. Perhaps unique in its category, Casal Palocco featured elements from select American models like Radburn and Levittown and the programme of the European new town, all adapted to the Italian context. The result of this cross-pollination brought to the Roman flatlands the car, body, and leisure cultures which were then booming on both sides of the Atlantic. Despite its size and historical significance, Casal Palocco has gone virtually unnoticed in architectural scholarship. This talk will examine the history of this landmark piece of urban design by locating it in the context of the crisis of the European city after the Second World War, the rise of the suburban model in the global north, and the transatlantic transfer of knowledge during the Cold War era.

Davide Spina is a doctoral candidate at the gta, ETH Zürich, where he is exploring the postwar activities of the Rome real estate developer and contractor Società Generale Immobiliare (SGI). Some of his essays have appeared in the AA Files.

Housing Design as Urban Design: From CIAM's 'Charte de l'Habitat' to Charles Correa's 'Bill of Rights for Housing in the Third World'

Rohan Varma

In 1956, the same year when José Luis Sert organised the landmark conference on urban design at Harvard, the international organisation CIAM met in Dubrovnik with the aim to draft a 'Charte de l'Habitat'. But while no such charter was ever formally drawn up, over the next two decades, architecture and planning discourse would come to be dominated by members of Team X and their largely Euro-American affiliates who proposed an ecological notion of 'Habitat' with varying "scales of association" as an antithesis to the 'Functional City' propagated by the 'Charte d'Athènes' of 1933. This paper intends to expand the debate on habitat beyond this limited geography and timeframe by throwing light on its development – and transformation – through two understudied manifestos written from the context of the Developing World. The first is the 1976 'Habitat Bill of Rights' prepared on behalf of the Iranian government and co-authored by Sert, George Candilis, Nader Ardalan, Moshe Safdie and Balkrishna Doshi that found its most direct translation in the design of a 'sites and services' scheme prepared by Doshi in the mid-1980s in Indore. The second case is Charles Correa's 1985 'Bill of Rights for Housing' that described seven principles and a hierarchical "system of spaces" that he believed to be essential ingredients for building affordable cities best demonstrated in his incremental housing project built in New Bombay. In both cases, it is not architecture – which, in fact, was programmed to be morphed by dwellers over time – but urban design that prevails and generates community. Through a spatial reading of these two cases that draws on both archival and contemporary material, this paper seeks to position housing design – especially in today's context of the Global South – as primarily an urban design challenge of curating thresholds: from the private courtyard to the public commons.

Rohan Varma graduated as an architect from the KRVIA in Mumbai and worked for Charles Correa before receiving his masters at TU Delft as a Tata Scholar. Currently a doctoral candidate at TU Delft, Varma's research and teaching activities focus on housing design, architectural ethnography and participatory planning in India.