

Plato to NATO: A New Global Order to Architectural History

It is commonly understood that reforms in the teaching of university-level global architectural history will remedy the discipline's Euro-American biases. Despite decades of work on a more expansive understanding of architectural history, however, the discipline remains stubbornly embedded within a teleology that traces the origins of modern world order (NATO) to Western-European rationalism (Plato). Meanwhile, the widening global orbit of architectural history has not been mirrored by architectural theory, which continues to perpetuate the intellectual legacies of mostly male Euro-American philosophers.

The current moment offers an opportunity to reflect on the mission to globalize architectural history and theory, and how it has manifested in practice, in teaching, and in research in architecture and art history programs. This is especially pressing given that the status of the global itself has transformed in the last decade as the intellectual mood shifts from the enthusiasm for globalization in the age of Francis Fukuyama, and confidence about the unfolding of democracy around the world, to the age of Trump and Brexit in which political and intellectual resistance has formed against the very concept of the global and globalization. The cooptation of architectural heritage by radical nationalisms the world over has given special pause to an earlier, more flattering, view of globalization and its potential. Given the range of competing intellectual projects to broaden history, including world history, BIG History and planetary history, it is also pressing to sharpen the intellectual tools of what a global approach might mean in challenging the rigidities of nationalism and regional restrictions on historical knowledge. Equally, an ever-widening gap between the global trajectories of architectural history and the rooted locations of architectural theory demands a critical appraisal of our discipline as a whole.

This issue of XXXXXXXX calls for papers that critically assess the methodological and theoretical assumptions of global architectural history and its practical challenges. In particular we seek papers that reflect on: the institutional, economic, and methodological conditions of knowledge production; the effects of curricular pressures and accreditation requirements on the production of historical knowledge in teaching and research; the relationship between global history and the legacies of the triad of history, theory, and criticism as it emerged in schools of architecture in the post-war period; the stakes of global history in relation to broader questions of humanities education and the ethical function of diverse historical education; the methodological debts of global history within traditions of social history, economic history, history of science and technology, intellectual history etc; the interaction between global history, preservation, heritage, UNESCO and the global tourist industry; the enduring methodological question of the canon and its composition; the possibilities and perils of digital technologies as they fundamentally shape the imaginary of global architecture; the critical posture required when narrating the global past from the global present.

We welcome papers from any and all stakeholders in the problematic of globalizing architectural history and theory in the last decade: from instructors, to researchers, independent historians, to those in the field of architectural history, art history and social history, to curators and writers, who have grappled with these issues both inside and outside the classroom.