



WHOSE MODERNISM?

5TH ALVAR AALTO RESEARCHERS' NETWORK SEMINAR – WHOSE MODERNISM? 14–15 JUNE 2023 JYVÄSKYLÄ FINLAND

CALL FOR PAPERS 28.9.2022

The 5th Alvar Aalto Researchers' Network Seminar – Whose Modernism? is to be held in Jyväskylä, Finland, 14.-15.6.2023. The seminar is being arranged by the Alvar Aalto Academy in collaboration with various partners. The Alvar Aalto Researchers' Network is an international collaboration that serves as a channel for discussion and cooperation between people undertaking research on Alvar Aalto. The network is managed by the Alvar Aalto Academy as part of the functions of the Alvar Aalto Foundation.

THIS ALVAR AALTO RESEARCHERS' NETWORK SEMINAR ASKS: WHOSE MODERNISM?

Much effort has been devoted to interrogating the origins, development, ambitions and products of modern architecture. This seminar seeks to identify and critically assess not just the factors, but also the actors involved: the individuals, institutions and other parties engaged in the creation, criticism, inhabitation, appropriation, and conservation of modern architecture.

Who sponsored, created, critiqued and narrated architectural modernism in the twentieth century, and who does now? Who should? To whom does modern architecture matter, and in whose lives does it play a role? Who holds responsibility for the future of modern architecture, and who do modern architectural heritage sites serve? Simply put: Who are the stakeholders, explicitly and implicitly, of modern architecture and its heritage?

The seminar seeks submissions that open up practical, cultural, political, and theoretical perspectives into modern architecture and modern architectural heritage, anchored in the question “Whose modernism?”



THEME

Submissions are asked to align themselves with one of three main themes: 1. Intent, 2. Authorship, 3. Legacy.

1. Intent

Although the “white cube” stereotype still persists to a large extent, the hopes that belied and were pinned to modern architecture were diverse and sometimes self-contradictory. Beyond the explicit aims and intents codified in project briefs and competition guidelines, a multitude of aspirations informed the commissioning, development, funding, construction and dissemination of modern architecture and urbanism. On the one hand, modern architecture served large-scale institutions and ambitions, from statecraft to multinational corporations, but on the other hand, it was employed to support and improve the conditions of the everyday life of individual citizens and families.

Who were the clients and ‘end users’ of modern architecture in the twentieth century, and who are they today? What were the institutional and improvised instruments that shaped the development of modern architecture, and how might their aims be measured against their outcomes? What are the ideologies that belie modern architecture and urbanism, and how do they resonate today and in the future?

2. Authorship

Hagiographic accounts of individual geniuses have made way for an awareness of architecture as an intrinsically collective enterprise. “Aalto” refers not just to Alvar, but to Aino and Elissa, employees of the studio, collaborators, contractors and clients—a multitude of hands that co-shaped “Aalto” designs. Furthermore, influences flowed across the arts, from sculpture to literature and from painting to poetry, one influencing the other, and mass media and scholarship have of course played a role shaping the reputation of modern architecture.

Who were the co-creators involved in making modern architecture and its reputation? What is their stake in the creative design process and in guarding the legacy of modern buildings and sites? Are there subgenres of modernism, and if so, what distinguishes them—say, the modernism of Aalto compared to the modernism of his peers? Who are the hitherto uncredited parties involved in the making or branding of modern architecture, and what methods can we rely on to identify and appreciate their contributions? Are questions related to authorship and process relevant today?

3. Legacy

A century after the breakthrough of modern architecture on the world stage—heralded by events such as the opening of the Bauhaus in 1919—the term “modern architecture” now relates more to built heritage than to contemporary praxis. Inhabitants of modern buildings have acquired embodied knowledge of what it is to live in modern milieus, as well as tools to evaluate the extent to which modern architecture fulfilled its ambition to make everyday life healthier, more efficient, and true to its time. Modern architecture also serves an unknown audience: future generations of dwellers, visitors and critics, for whom the architecture of the twentieth century will represent a historic period long gone.

What role does modern architecture play in upholding local identities? What are the principles for conserving modern heritage in heritage listing? How will the values of modern architecture project into an unknown future? Who will have an interest in visiting and taking care of modern heritage sites?



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Participants are asked to submit an abstract of 200 words to the desired sub-theme along with their contact details (name, e-mail address). Abstracts should be written in English, the official language of the event. The abstract as a text file document must be e-mailed according to the schedule by 23.11.2022 to academy@alvaraalto.fi.

If selected, speakers will be asked to provide a final paper of max 1500 words/5 illustrations and an outline of their paper for a twenty-minute presentation to be presented at the Alvar Aalto Researchers Network Seminar over the course of the two-day event. The organisers reserve the right to (re)arrange proposals into sub-theme sessions. Submissions will be evaluated by the Scientific Committee to ensure the quality and relevance of the seminar presentations.

DEADLINES

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| - Abstract Submission | 23.11.2022 |
| - Notification of Acceptance/Rejection | 14.12.2022 |
| - Final Paper Submission and registration deadline for authors | 15.3.2023 |

REGISTRATION

Participation requires registration for the seminar. The registration fee covers:

- Seminar programme, buffet lunch and coffee served during 14.-15.6.2023
- Seminar bag (seminar information package, seminar gift, tourist information, etc.)
- A printed copy and pdf-file of the seminar proceedings
- Attendance and/or author certificate

Registration fees (registration opens in January 2023)

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| - Author registration until 15.3.2023 (-50%) | €90 |
| - Early registration until 15.3.2023 (-20%) | €144 |
| - Standard registration 15.3.-31.5.2023 | €180 |
| - Late registration 31.5.-15.6.2023 (+20%) | €216 |

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- Kirsti Kovanen, architect, MA (Conservation), ICOMOS Finland
- Petteri Kummala, PhD (Urban Aesthetics), Deputy Head of Information Services and Research, Museum of Finnish Architecture
- Tommi Lindh, LicSc (Arch), CEO, Alvar Aalto Foundation
- Jonas Malmberg, MSc (Arch), MA (Art History), Senior Architect, Alvar Aalto Foundation
- Timo Riekko, MA (Humanities), Chief Curator Collections, Alvar Aalto Foundation
- Sofia Singler, PhD (Arch), Junior Research Fellow in Architecture, Cambridge University
- Niina Svartström, MSc (Arch), MA (Art and Design), Project Leader, Finnish Heritage Agency
- Anni Vartola, DSc (Arch), Senior Lecturer in Theory of Architecture, Aalto University
- Secretary: Nina Heikkonen, MA (Art History), Programme Manager, Alvar Aalto Foundation

FURTHER INFORMATION

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