

Society of Architectural Historians
1365 North Astor Street
Chicago IL 60610-2144

SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting
Toronto, Ontario
April 18-22, 2001



Thursday Afternoon

Thursday Afternoon Sessions

2:00-4:30

The Vernacular as an Aesthetic Category for Architecture
Elizabeth Hornbeck, [University of California, Santa Barbara], Chair
Territories, Mezzanine Level

2:00 Introduction

2:10 *From Vernacular to Modern: The Role of the Nineteenth-Century in Henry-Russell Hitchcock's Architectural Discourse*, Paolo Scrivano, Politecnico di Milano

2:35 *The Modesty of Anonymity and the Authority of Fascist Style*, Michelangelo Sabatino, [University of Toronto]

3:00 *Vernacular Architecture in the Age of Mass Media: Publishing the Um 1800 Aesthetic around 1900*, Kai K. Gutschow, Carnegie Mellon University

3:25 *File Under Vernacular: Western Scholarship and Non-Western Architecture*, Mark Cottle, Georgia Institute of Technology

3:50 Respondent: Dell Upton, University of California, Berkeley

4:05 Discussion

Colonial, De-Colonial and Post Colonial: Middle Eastern Perspectives in a Transnational Context

Nezar AlSayyad, University of California, Berkeley, Chair
British Columbia, Mezzanine Level

2:00 Introduction

2:15 *An Invisible City: The Politics of Modernization and the Making of Old Ankara*, Zeynep Kezer, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

2:40 *Marrying Modern Progress with Treasured Antiquity: Jerusalem City Plans during the British Mandate, 1917-1948*, Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, [Tel Aviv University]

3:05 *A Colonial Architect in the De-Colonizing Eastern Mediterranean: Austen St. Barbe Harrison 1942-1953*, Ron Fuchs, Adelaide University

3:30 *A Matter of Life and Debt: the Costs of Post-War Beirut's Downtown Reconstruction*, Richard Becherer, University of Pittsburgh

4:05 Discussion

K. KAI K. GUTSCHOW
6378 JACKSON STREET
PITTSBURGH PA 15206

Presorted
First Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit No. 8855

Kai K. Gutschow

Carnegie Mellon University

The Vernacular as an Aesthetic Category for Architecture

Session Chair: Elizabeth Hornbeck, [University of California, Santa Barbara]

Vernacular Architecture in the Age of Mass Media: Publishing the Um 1800 Aesthetic around 1900

By promoting vernacular architecture through a modern mass media campaign around 1900, the German architect and designer Paul Schultze-Naumburg and his colleagues elicited multiple readings of their reform message that eventually led both to a progressive and a conservative modern architecture. Their rhetoric stressed the values of ordinary, pragmatic building visible in the vernacular buildings from around 1800 while lambasting the stylized, academic aesthetics of the late nineteenth-century, and the more random forms of contemporaries. They pushed objective design and construction processes over subjective image and glitz. However, the barrage of persuasive photographs arranged for maximum propaganda value in family magazines, inexpensive picture books, pamphlets, and slide-shows also focused attention on the sober image and casual aesthetics of the older vernacular architecture.

Architects were able to mine propaganda such as an informal photograph of an anonymous late nineteenth-century, simple, sober, white stucco garden cottage, for disparate causes. Conservatives clung to the romantic, nationalist spirit recalled by the early eighteenth-century, to the well-crafted construction, and to the forms and organization of German vernacular traditions such as the pitched roof. More progressive architects valued the emphasis on objective construction and functional forms, but also vernacular architecture's tendency constantly to update itself to accommodate present needs. For both, the vernacular architecture from around 1800 represented not just an aesthetically and symbolically appropriate past, but the basis for a modern German architectural aesthetic.

This paper will argue that the modern media employed by Schultze-Naumburg and others around 1900 not only promoted the aesthetics and values of Biedermeier vernacular architecture to a broad array of architects, but also helped instigate the ideological and architectural schism between conservative and progressive architects in Germany after World War I. A careful analysis of the form, content, and reception of the media campaign around 1900 that proselytized vernacular architecture from around 1800, reveals that it projected a much more modern and variable message than has heretofore been acknowledged.