



“Expanding Expressionism: The Role of Expression in Architectural Theory and Practice”

Architecture’s ability to “express” character, function, emotion, structural ideas, social hierarchies, political ideology, or other abstract notions, has long been recognized. Historians and theoreticians of architecture have identified “expression” as key to understanding aspects of Egyptian, late-Roman, Gothic, Baroque, Romantic, and many non-Western architectures. And yet it was only in the early twentieth century that the term “Expressionism” began to be used overtly to define a movement or specific approach to architecture, narrowly associated with the works of Bruno Taut and colleagues in Germany and Holland. The 100th anniversary of German Expressionist art, as well as the expressive formal tendencies of some of today’s computer-generated architecture, has renewed scholarly interest in the role that “expression” has played in the development of architecture before and after the iconic Expressionist period, around the world.

Despite, or perhaps because of our awareness of the rich and eclectic roots and progenies of “Expressionism,” the term remains a vague and ill-defined term. This session seeks to deepen and expand our understanding of expression in architecture beyond the focus on Germany in the years after World War I. We seek papers on a range of theoretical or interpretive models and definitions of “expression” in architecture throughout history. Papers should discuss specific theories, critiques, or examples of “expression” or related terms in architecture. They may address issues such as how expression in architecture was different from expression in the other arts? How did architects distinguish an expressive architecture from one that symbolized, represented, or embodied a certain character, function, or style? What role did emotions, the senses, the body, and form play in creating and experiencing expressionist architecture? What characterized the periods, architects, or buildings that intentionally “expressed” ideas or emotions more powerfully and provocatively than others? We encourage comparative and inter-disciplinary papers that investigate multiple ideas of “expression” in architecture and related fields.

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