

Architectures of Berlin

Berlin Program Alumni Panel
at the 35th Annual GSA Conference

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time & location TBA

BERLIN PROGRAM
for Advanced German & European Studies

“Architecture” is often used metaphorically, to comprehend notions of structure and order within complex organizations. “The Architecture of Society” subtends both literal and metaphorical meanings—but it is mostly the latter that prevail in the use of such a phrase. Computer scientists currently use “architecture” as shorthand to describe the complex design problems of computation in hard and soft versions. A metaphor that does a great deal of organizational work, “architecture” has been used in a variety of other fields as well, from history to literature, to economics, to cognitive science, to market economics.

This panel seeks to explore the uses of architectural metaphors as they apply (or do not apply) to the recent history and historiography of Berlin, a city in which architectural battles played out with particular vividness in the last century. If the term “architecture” has been broadly applied to the study of society, of economics, of cybernetics, of politics, what specific role did it play in Berlin in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Berlin was a showcase for imperial, modern, and fascist architecture, and then again for a showdown between East and West Germany after the war. But how was the city particularly susceptible to architectural thinking in other arenas, arenas that were both physical and administrative? What effect did the physical destruction of the city have on the ways in which architecture could be thought, and deployed as thought? What might we learn through a broader examination of the role of architecture in the history of the city, particularly in relation to the limits of the metaphor? What is omitted, when such a conceptual framework is imposed? What pushes back against this usage—to what might an “anti-architecture [of Berlin]” amount?

Moderator: Claire Zimmerman, University of Michigan
Commentator: Wallis Miller, University of Kentucky

**The Architecture of Urban Intervention,
Berlin 1910/2010**
Erik Gheniou, Pratt Institute

**Beyond Reconstruction:
Architectural Metaphors in Postwar Berlin**
Clara Oberle, University of San Diego

**When Berlin was an Island:
Ecology and Urbanism in the 1970s**
Jeannette Redensek, Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

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