



international confederation of architectural museums

## **icam14 Oslo, 26-29 May 2008**

Pre conference: 24-25 May

Post conference tour: starting 30th May

More information: [www.icam-web.org](http://www.icam-web.org)

### **Call for Papers**

**Deadline for abstracts to chairs Oct. 15**

#### **Session 1: Collecting Architecture**

Although objects, furniture, and fragments have long been a part of architectural collections and exhibitions, we tend to focus on accumulating their surrogates: drawings, models, written descriptions. As a complement to these concerns this session will address the issues of dealing with buildings in pieces or as wholes, the reasons behind their collecting, the challenges of their cataloguing and display, and practices for their preservation.

The Scandinavian countries were the first to collect entire structures, primarily as extension to ethnographic museum collections. Founded in 1891, Skansen in Stockholm expanded the realm of the nearby Nordiska Museet; slightly later, in 1894, the Norwegian Folk Museum was founded at Bygdøy, outside Oslo. Here our session will take place.

Papers are welcome on all aspects of collecting, displaying, and preserving buildings, architectural fragments, and furnishings (as architecture).

*Please send papers to*  
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## **Session 2: Architectural Museums and Architectural Education**

Few museums set out to collect student work, unless they are set themselves within a school of architecture, or unless with hindsight they are eager to have the early steps of a great master, say a student drawing by Alvar Aalto, represented in the collections.

Yet in recent years architectural historians -- and to a lesser extent architectural curators -- have been interested in the history of the education and training of architects. An early landmark in this development was the 1975 exhibition "The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts" at New York's Museum of Modern Art, an instantly controversial display drawn primarily from the historical collections of the great Parisian school whose name had become all but synonymous with official "academic" architecture by the early twentieth century.

For the first time the museum gave its galleries over to the works produced by student architects, marking a break with the museum's policy of collecting and displaying master works by famous designers. The event was a harbinger of the post-modern turn in architectural practice and scholarship, and also engaged the museum in an active debate over contemporary architectural education in North America. In the end this was a short lived engagement.

This session invites papers, which reflect on the relationship between architectural education and museums and galleries devoted to architecture, both historically and in current practice. What should be collected from student work and as evidence of the evolution of pedagogy; who should collect it, and in a digital age in what form? Equally of interest are dimensions of the question of audience that always confront architectural curators: in what ways can architectural museums address both issues of import to architectural students and to the general public? Are these audiences distinct or mutually engaged? And in general what should be the relationships between architectural museums and schools of architecture.

Papers related to the practices of architectural galleries in Schools of Architecture are not sought unless they deal with the larger issues of non-specialist audiences and the challenges of selecting from student work for posterity.

*Please submit papers to*  
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### **Session 3: Travelling exhibitions**

To exhibit architectural themes in the past was a matter of showing original and individual 2D material such as plans and sketches and original 3D scale models. Photographs and texts accompanied these exhibits. With the emergence of digital techniques, both the concept of originals and architectural shows themselves has changed. In 2000, the notion of photos printed out on a standard color printer and not by the photographers was considered weird, and travelling shows by sending CDs by FedEx in order to save money was revolutionary. What are the experiences by curators and organisers of travelling shows in these last years – and what are their insights and strategies?

*These are some of the questions that have come up:*

What are the reasons that make visitors go to the authentic museum space to actually see an architectural exhibition? What are the advantages of the physical reality that surpass those of the non-physical digital and electronic environment and make the visit of a museum a special experience, worth the extra effort of travelling and spending time and money? And in which ways does the advancement of exhibition design help foster these experiences?

What is the role of the authentic piece for travelling exhibitions in our digital age? How can architectural exhibitions be repeated for other venues? What are the main changes in this field that strongly influence the design and organization? What influence do the international festivals of architecture - such as the growing number of Biennales – have on the concept of shows?

What forms of leisure entertainment are the main competitors to exhibitions – video games, films, Internet? Has there been a change in visitor expectancy lately - due to technological advancements in those fields? What does this mean for future visitor groups? Have these activities affected the age and typology of visitors – and what happened to architectural students?

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## **Session 4: Architectural Publishing**

The session looks at the challenges faced by the world of architectural publishing and the factors that influence the range, quality, content, typology and medium of architectural publications and shape their future.

An international panel of speakers will debate the influence on publishing of architecture and design issues of the new millennium and more specifically advancing technology, graphic design and editorial input over the last decade. New factors have become influential since Robin Kinross's and Linda Eerme's survey of changes in the 1980s and 90s architectural publishing landscape appeared in *Domus* in 2002 and the digital revolution made a strong impact on the presentation, readership demographic and dissemination of architectural content.

Please submit papers to  
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## **Session 5: Selection: Between ideal and reality**

Selection in architectural archives is one of the most important means to keep the collection manageable. As archives are often extensive, much energy has to be spent on management, processing and preservation, which is of course a costly affair. Costs of storage are also high.

All reasons to think of selection, on reducing the size to get an archive that is better manageable, where the right records are easier to find, and where the costs of packing and storage are diminished. The subject Selection can be approached on several ways: a few questions to stimulate the thoughts.

*Conditions that can influence the decision for selection:*

The collection policy of the architectural museums, the nature of the collection: complete archives or a collection of drawings, the use of the collection primarily for research or for exhibitions, the period of the collection, the material: paper or digital, the contract with the (still living) architect

*Should we take care of all we have collected?* The question of de-accessioning.  
*For whom are selections made?* Or: how a museum or institute can stimulate research on architecture by presenting well selected archives or leave the archives as they are, without any selection for researchers.

*Is there a relationship with the protection of buildings?* Can selection be of help or not. Are we as collecting institutions responsible for future conservation of buildings by keeping all material available?

*Is reproduction (digitization or microfilming) a solution?*

*Born digital archives:* are they the solution for the problem of the big size or do they pose other questions about selections? How to keep these archives readable? Do they find way to another collecting policy?

We would like to discuss these and other questions that can rise about the subject Selection. By discussing these we hope to help members to take a position between an ideal collection and the reality of time and money.

*Please submit papers to*  
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