

The Politics of Architectural Destruction

International Conference

Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
23-24 April 2010



CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

This international, interdisciplinary conference, which will be held at Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, Ireland, aims to promote thoughtful, wide-ranging analysis of architectural destruction as an aspect of historical and contemporary conflict. The goal is to treat this global, transhistorical, interdisciplinary issue in the widest possible light. Therefore, the participation of scholars working across historical periods, geographical areas, and scholarly disciplines will be a key feature of the conference.

Whether inflicted intentionally or collaterally, whether wrought by invading forces or internal factions, and whether wrought upon civic, domestic, or sacred buildings, architectural destruction and the destruction of built environments has always been an important, highly charged aspect of political, religious, ethnic, ideological, and other forms of conflict. And yet, until recently, little systematic analysis has been devoted to the meaning of architectural destruction in the context of conflict.

How has architectural destruction been used as a deliberate technique of war, conquest, or armed liberation? What have been the long-term cultural and social implications of architectural destruction for populations subject to it? What is the relationship between the destruction of symbolic structures and the creation of new ones by the forces responsible for destroying earlier structures? How have processes of architectural appropriation or modification related to episodes of destruction?

On 23-24 April 2010, the Department of History and the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates (CSHIHE) at the National University of Ireland Maynooth will host the first international conference to treat these important global issues in a synthetic manner. Bringing Irish researchers together with a network of international experts from a dozen countries, 'The politics of architectural destruction' conference will approach the above questions from the broadest possible historical perspective.

With this goal in mind, speakers will consider architectural destruction in contexts as ancient as the expansion of the Assyrian empire and as contemporary as the recent wars in the Balkans and the Northern Ireland conflict—as well as during intervening conflicts, like the French Revolution and the 1857 Indian Uprising, that became flashpoints for architectural destruction. And, to promote the most thoughtful analysis possible, the speakers will include scholars with wide-ranging expertise in archaeology; architecture and historic preservation; cultural geography; folklore; the history of art, architecture, and design; history, peace and conflict studies; political science; and urban studies.

For further information, please contact the conference organisers:

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CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

DAY 1 FRIDAY 23 APRIL 2010

08:15-08:55 [Registration](#)

09:00-09:15 [Introductory remarks](#)

09:15-10:20 **Panel 1 (Theme: *Early contexts*)**

- Heather D. Baker, University of Vienna, Austria: “I razed, destroyed and burned those cities”: deliberate architectural destruction as a tool of Assyrian imperial expansion’
- Guy P. R. Métraux, York University, Canada: ‘Early Christian architectural destruction: politics and theologies’
- Joëlle Rollo-Koster, University of Rhode Island, USA: “The rabble pillaged his house in the city and actually tore it down, going as far as stealing the blocks of marble”: The interregnum spoliation of the Church’

10:20-10:35 [Coffee & tea](#)

10:35-12:00 **Panel 2 (Theme: *Colonial histories*)**

- Kahina Amal Djar, Algiers National Superior School of Architecture, Algeria: ‘War on the medina of Algiers: architecture and the politics of colonialism 1830-1962’
- Helen Gyger, Columbia University, USA: ‘Our place: destruction, politics, and Aboriginal housing in Australia’
- Jyoti P. Sharma, Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, India: ‘The Indian Mutiny: the 1857 uprising as an agent of transformation of the urban landscape of 19th-century Delhi’
- Pauline K. M. van Roosmalen, Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands: ‘Ambiguous battleground: colonial built heritage’

12:00-12:30 **Question session for morning speakers**

12:30-13:30 [Lunch](#)

13:30-13:55 [Dr Conor O’Carroll & Dr Celia Gallagher, Irish Universities Association: ‘Marie Curie Actions in FP7 - dedicated to human resources in research’](#)

14:00-15:05 **Panel 3, part I (Theme: *Divided terrains*)**

- Rita Harkin, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, Northern Ireland, & Tom Woolley, University of Gloucestershire, England: ‘The destruction and threat to historical buildings in Northern Ireland—a new perspective on “The Troubles”’

- Sofia Toufic Schwayri, Seoul National University, Korea: 'The fall of the modern state of Lebanon and the rise of the state of the post-Civil War: the destruction of the Presidential Palace in 1990'
- Chara Stephanou, University of Cyprus: 'Neutralisation as a form of architectural destruction'

15:05-16:10 **Panel 3, part II (Theme: *Divided terrains / focus on the Balkans*)**

- Andrew Herscher, University of Michigan, USA: 'Redestruction'
- Erin Koenig, Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, and Sarah Meharg, Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and Royal Military College of Canada: 'Architectural reconstruction or reconfiguration?: the relationship between people and their places in post-disaster environments'
- Darja Mahecic, Institute of Art History, Zagreb, Croatia: 'The case of Dubrovnik: UNESCO's World Heritage Site under siege 1991/1992'

16:10-16:30 *Coffee & tea*

16:30-17:35 **Panel 4 (Theme: *Focus on France during and after the Revolution*)**

- Keith Bresnahan, Ontario College of Art and Design, Canada: 'Consuming the Bastille: destruction, revolution, and commodity spectacle ca. 1789'
- Paula Young Lee: "'Qui bâti, ment": attacking architecture during the French Revolution'
- Janet Marquardt, Eastern Illinois University, USA: 'The politics of Burgundian romanesque: Cluny and Mâcon basilicas, 1820s-1860s'

17:35-18:00 **Question session for afternoon speakers**

20:00 **Conference buffet dinner at Carton House, Maynooth, Co. Kildare**

DAY 2 24 APRIL 2010

09:15-10:40 **Panel 5 (Theme: *The world wars and after*)**

- Neil Jackson, University of Liverpool, England: 'Tradition versus Modernity: the architecture of resistance in post-war Japan'
- Melissa Renn, Boston University, USA: "'Fine arts under fire": LIFE Magazine and the display of architectural destruction'
- Evert Vandeweghe, Ghent University, Belgium: 'Making history: destruction and (re) construction of old Flemish towns during and after the First World War'

10:40-10:55 *Coffee & tea*

10:55-12:00 **Panel 6 (Theme: *Focus on the United States*)**

- Erika Doss, Notre Dame University, USA: 'Semiotic disobedience, purposeful anger: rethinking cultural vandalism in modern America'
- Katherine Manthorne, City University of New York Graduate Center, USA: 'Eliza Pratt Greatorex: witness to the razing of old New York, 1865-1876'
- Michael Ann Williams, Western Kentucky University, USA: 'Removal, rebuilding and remembrance: the destruction of traditional housing in the Great Smoky Mountains'

12:00-12:30 **Question session for morning speakers**

12:30-13:30 *Lunch*

13:35-14:40 **Panel 7 (Theme: *Dictatorship and destruction*)**

- Joshua Arthurs, West Virginia University, USA: "Down with the balconies!": iconoclasm, preservation and the architectural legacy of fascism in Italy, 1943-1846'
- Concha Diez-Pastor Iribas, IE University, Segovia, Spain: 'Madrid's "1925 Generation" heritage destruction, 1927-2009'
- Mark Kehren, Loras College, USA: 'Demolition debates: the politics of architectural destruction in Rio de Janeiro during military rule, 1964-1985'

14:40-15:45 **Panel 8 (Theme: *Image-making and image-breaking*)**

- Milda B Richardson, Boston University, USA: 'Lithuanian wayside shrines and totems in a totalitarian society, 1940-1990'
- Christine Stevenson, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, England: 'The destruction of Cheap Cross, London (1643)'
- Finola O'Kane, UCD, Ireland: 'Patrick Pearse and his magic lantern box: the formation of Ireland's national landscape and architectural identity through the lens of a 1916 Revolutionary'
- Ramona Usher, Nottingham Trent University, England: 'The battle for "Iconoclasm" in 1960s Dublin'

15:45-16:00 *Coffee & tea*

16:00-16:45 **Panel 9 (Theme: *Commercial impacts*)**

- Christina Schwenkel, University of California, Riverside, USA: 'An ethics of urban aesthetics: the demolition of socialist architecture in post-reform Vietnam'
- Will Rourk, University of Virginia, USA: 'The alteration of Lhasa: the impact of cultural tourism and the re-invention of an historic city'

16:45-17:15 **Question session for afternoon speakers**

17:15-18:00 **Closing remarks and discussion**

CONFERENCE FEES

CONFERENCE FEE € 150
(Includes 2 days of conference papers with light lunch & tea/coffee breaks at Castletown House, Celbridge)

CONFERENCE DINNER € 40
(Buffet Dinner, 8pm, 23 April 2010 at Carton House, Maynooth)

Places are limited to 100 and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Bookings and payment must be received **before Monday 29 March 2010** to guarantee places. Payment can **only** be accepted by **cheque** or **bank draft (Euro only)**. These should be made payable to: Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses & Estates or CSHIHE and posted to CSHIHE, Junior Infirmary, South Campus, NUI Maynooth, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Further information:

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