



ICAM23 conference – Salt Istanbul

Call for Papers

Pre conference tour Monday 19 October 2026
Conference sessions Tuesday 20 – Friday 23 October 2026
Post conference destinations Saturday 24 October 2026

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 20 March 2026

ICAM23, to be delivered as a in-person conference at Salt in Istanbul in October 2026 will include five sessions and a Lightning Session. Descriptions of the sessions are included below and we welcome abstracts to be presented in the sessions.

Our Lightning Session invites very short presentations of any aspect of your work with a focus on what is new, as well as offering new members the chance to introduce themselves – which is why we have planned for it earlier in the conference. The facilities at Salt allow us to curate this in a more informal setting with conversations and socializing after, so please put yourself forward!

Please note that all speakers are required to pay for their travel, accommodation and the conference registration fee. Grants covering accommodation and the fee will be available for members on a competitive basis.

Abstracts should be sent to the people specified for each session below, and should include the following information:

- Name, job title, institution
- ICAM member Y/N
- Email and phone number
- Brief biography (max 150 words)
- Paper title
- Abstract (max 300 words)

The International Confederation of Architectural Museums (ICAM) is pleased to announce that its **23rd Biennial Conference** will be hosted by [Salt](#) and will take place between **October 20–23, 2026** at **Salt Galata, Istanbul**. Held in a different city for each edition, the ICAM Biennial Conference combines thematic sessions with expert-led encounters with local architectural heritage, collections, and institutions. In 2026, the program will unfold across Istanbul's layered architectural and archival landscape, offering opportunities to discuss urgent issues in the field and to engage with new initiatives in archival and curatorial practice.

This year's program will address **five thematic sessions** that examine critical questions surrounding loss, pedagogy, digital transformation, curatorial practice, and the construction of responsive architectural repositories. Each session will be chaired by a different convenor, to be announced with the **call for papers**, inviting researchers, curators, archivists, educators, and practitioners working across architecture, archives, museums, and related cultural fields to apply with contributions aligned with its specific focus. The **first session** will focus on how loss, erasure, and archival silence shape architectural memory and how alternative archival practices can reframe what is remembered or excluded. The **second session** will examine pedagogical practices that activate archives and museums as tools for learning and public engagement with the built environment. The **third session** will address the tensions between digitized and born-digital architectures and their implications for preservation, authorship, and institutional care. The **fourth session** will explore curatorial negotiations and experimental approaches to activating architectural collections, with attention to conservation, reproduction, and equitable collaboration. The **fifth session** will focus on building responsive architectural repositories across Africa, West and Central Asia, and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, foregrounding local knowledge and regional histories.

Session 1: Architecture of Loss

Architecture of Loss is a poetic juxtaposition. The phrase deliberately places two contrasting concepts together to evoke deeper meaning: architecture as physical, permanent containers and the fleeting experiences of such places, often including memory and loss. This contrast can be used to highlight themes of memory, decay, and the transient nature of existence. But this theme can also be seen in a practical context as a preservation effort that responds to destruction (e.g., memorial architecture or post-disaster reconstruction) or to the literal loss of architectural heritage. In further interpretation, the phrase could be used to describe buildings, construction of buildings, or urban planning that results in a loss of community, history, or environmental balance.

The Architecture of Loss can also relate to challenges of researching and representing architecture and the built environment, especially if we are keen to know how they exist and perform in societies. For these inquiries, conventional historical architectural archives can

only provide a limited view. Whether faced with intentionally erased records or lost building elements, these conditions also encourage researchers to search for alternative methods and meaningful leads to other events. In the absence of physical records, we often wonder how vernacular architecture—often made from easily decaying organic materials—was generated and developed in predominantly oral societies. Oral histories offer one avenue, as well as alternative institutions working to develop documentation on specific, ephemeral subjects. For example, in Indonesia, some community organizations are working to overcome their lack of access to institutional memory and the transient nature of buildings.

Referring to these interpretations of the theme, we invite museum institutions, researchers, and curators to share experiences in research projects, archiving, exhibitions, or activities that can provide inspiration on how to produce and utilize archives and other activities to enrich the quality of our understanding and experience of “loss.”

Possible contributions may address:

- How do architectural archives influence what societies remember, forget, or reinterpret about the built environment?
- How can archival practices be reimagined to center underrepresented cultures and contested heritage?
- In what ways can regional histories—such as Istanbul’s layered architectural past—reshape dominant narratives in architectural memory?
- What role can community participation play in rethinking the social purpose and accessibility of architecture collections?
- How can architecture archives capture affective dimensions – grief, nostalgia, longing, or trauma – especially in relation to abandonment, decay, demolition, or destruction?
- What role do memory or attachment play in communities interacting with neglected buildings, ruins, or unrealized projects?
- Most buildings and neighbourhoods are constantly changing, replaced by new ones. Often these changes do not involve wrecking balls or dynamite, but a more gradual process of constant additions and alterations, an almost silent and biological process. In this situation, how do we counter the common “survivor bias” in research, which overlooks mundane architecture, to focus on those lost in dramatic ways or left as glorious ruins?
- What does it mean to archive destruction, abandonment, or erasure?

Abstracts should be sent to session chair: Avianti Armand, Setiadi Sopandi

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Please also copy to: Alison Fisher afisher@artic.edu, David Peycere

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Session 2: Pedagogical Practices

How to get architecture outside of museums and archives?

For the general public, issues of architecture are often crystallized around questions of construction, urban planning, or environmental concerns. Architecture, as an artistic practice grounded in the real world, stands at the crossroads of many fields of knowledge (sociology, geography, history, mathematics, engineering, arts, health, ecology, and others). It shapes daily lives, reflects culture and history, and defines environments. Our appreciation of architecture, when not “in the flesh,” is thus mediated through its representations: models, drawings, photographs, videos, or fragments of plans. These can be found, not only in the offices and estates of architects but within collections, museums, and archives.

Representations can never fully convey the experience of architecture as a lived, dynamic practice, but instead give insights about states of architecture no longer or not yet present, such as the process of designing, for instance.

Given this schism, we want to ask how we can help people to “read” their built environment, to understand the spaces they inhabit, and to engage emotionally and intellectually with them—and conversely, how we can learn from others about their spaces? Apart from guided tours or exhibition leaflets, what new tools, methods, or pedagogical practices can foster a genuine cultural awareness of architecture among diverse audiences—children, students, academics, professionals, or the general audience?

This session invites contributions that explore how museums, collections, and archives can be mobilized as tools to teach, communicate, and animate architecture, rather than simply as repositories or exhibition spaces. Presenters are encouraged to share case studies and reflections on how archives, collections, and museums can move beyond conventional exhibitions and publications to create innovative experiences, how seemingly ordinary or unfinished works can enrich pedagogical practice, and how curatorial decisions can interact with learning objectives to foster accessibility and sensitivity to architecture.

We welcome papers addressing, among others, the following themes:

- Building Environment Education (BEE) strategies that integrate emotion, perception, and lived experience into the understanding of architecture.
- Developing cultural and environmental awareness through architecture interpretation: how can historical or contemporary architecture, urban design, and landscape projects help foster sensitivity to space and the built environment?
- How do museums and archives play a social or political role in communicating, teaching about the built environment, or protecting built heritage?

- Architecture as an exhibited or archived object: what are the implications of exhibiting architecture through proxies? How can this distance be bridged in teaching and outreach?
- Rethinking the use of archives: beyond exhibitions and publications, how can museums and researchers activate their collections for both academic and non-academic audiences?
- The learning potential of the “unremarkable”: how might unfinished works, marginal documents, or everyday architecture enrich architectural pedagogy?
- The interplay between curatorial intentions and learning objectives: how to balance accessibility, interpretation, and expertise?

Abstracts should be sent to session chair: Sara Meunier

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Please also copy to: Anna-Maria Meister anna-maria.meister@kit.edu, Saman Quraishi saman.quraishi@cept.ac.in

Session 3: Invisible Tensions Between Digital and Digitized Architecture

Architectural history and preservation have long been tied to physical objects like buildings, drawings, models, and their materials. Digitization translates these objects into data, while digital architecture produces digital materials or forms from the outset. The tension arises since both now coexist within the same archival ecosystems, despite operating according to fundamentally different logics of creation, authenticity, value, and use.

Conservation and preservation methods have been mostly established for physical materials, rather than digital environments. In the context of archiving and preservation, are digital environments neglected because of their immaterial nature, or do they fall outside the scope of existing institutional practices?

Yet, digital spaces designed by architects for research, gaming, entertainment, industry, and advocacy are rapidly expanding. As the production of these environments increases, it becomes crucial to revisit both architectural practice and education, and to ask how they engage with these emerging forms of spatial design.

Architectural representation has also been transformed by digital tools, resulting in an immense volume of digital output that far exceeds that of physical representational forms. How do we address this vast body of material, most of which exists only in digital form and never becomes a physical artifact, stored on the servers of architectural offices, schools, and other institutions?

This session invites contributions that explore how digitized architecture and digital architecture are addressed—or neglected—within current discourse, particularly in the contexts of archives and museums. It asks how institutions might rethink the creation and preservation of memory beyond the inherited methods and practices.

We welcome papers addressing, among others, the following questions:

- Is there a tension between digitized architectural artifacts and digital architecture that has no physical precedent? How does this challenge traditional approaches to preservation and memory?
- How can images produced through online platforms such as social media and websites enrich architectural archives?
- How does the neglect of digital spaces shape our understanding of care, and what does their absence reveal?
- How do political, economic, and institutional conditions shape both the physical and digital forms of architectural production and education, and how do these modes, in turn, influence those conditions?
- In what ways can artificial intelligence be meaningfully integrated into archival processes, and what does it mean to “work with” and “train” AI in the context of preservation, classification, and access?
- How do questions of authorship, authenticity, and context shift when historical content is reassembled across multiple digital environments, and what ethical considerations arise in controlling or sharing digital archives?
- What new edges must be explored in this evolving landscape, and what pitfalls should be avoided as approaches to documentation, interpretation, and cultural memory are redefined?

Abstracts should be sent to session chair: Ala Talep,, Orkun Dayioğlu

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Session 4: Curatorial Negotiations, Collection Experiments

Museums today face growing pressure to make transparent how their collections were formed, whose perspectives they privilege, and which histories they overlook. Curators are therefore asked not only to preserve the archive (and collection) but to activate it, reflecting a broader shift in museum typologies that seeks to open up the collection itself—making storage visible, accessible, and experiential. This “storage-as-exhibition” paradigm positions the collection not as a secluded repository but as a public-facing space where processes of preservation become part of the visitor’s experience. It invites new interpretive, participatory practices, giving new meanings to reconstructions, collections-based commissions,

performances, and other forms of reanimation of architectural materials. Architectural holdings present particular challenges in this context: drawings, process materials, models, and photographic archives are often fragile, requiring short display times, sustained rotation cycles, and substantial institutional resources. How do curators negotiate the tensions between conservation and exhibition under these constraints? Material and digital experiments with reproductions increasingly provide essential avenues for access and dissemination, while also raising questions around authorship, interpretation, and the role of the physical museum.

Moreover, in contexts of collection exchange, rotating exhibitions, and other forms of inter-institutional collaboration, museums are called upon to develop accountable and equitable partnerships across uneven terrains of resources and authority—particularly with Indigenous, community-based, vulnerable, or resource-limited organizations. These collaborations require shared decision-making, long-term commitments, and practices that acknowledge asymmetries of power and historical mistrust. How can curators negotiate such structural imbalances while sustaining trust and collaboration?

This session invites papers that examine how architectural collections can be critically and ethically activated today. We welcome contributions addressing, among others, the following issues:

- Critical curatorial strategies for reanimating fragile or process-based architectural materials
- Projects, exhibitions, or initiatives exploring the experimental use of reproductions, both material and digital, in architecture exhibitions and curatorial projects.
- Collaborative, community-led, and trans-institutional approaches to working with architectural archives and collections grounded in ethical values.
- Approaches to accountability, shared custody, expanded accessibility, and restorative practice in partnerships across unequal resource contexts.

Abstracts should be sent to session chair: Carlos Mínguez Carrasco

E-mail address: carlos.minguez@arkdes.se

Please also copy to: Martien de Vletter mdevletter@cca.qc.ca, Shayari de Silva shayari.desilva@geoffreybawa.org

Session 5: Building Responsive Repositories:

Architectural Resonances in Africa, West and Central Asia, and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

Globally, there is an urgent need to preserve and curate architecture that is testament to local and situated building knowledge and traditions. The related archives offer crucial clues for reimagining contemporary issues of identity and history, helping to recenter underrepresented cultural contributions to the architectural canon, and promoting advancements in knowledge outside of the dominant Western architectural historiography.

Specifically, within the architecture archives of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, West and Central Asia, and Africa, progressive solutions for a global audience can be found, relating to climate responsiveness, urban pressures, and growing demographic diversity. As this awareness grows, local actors are confronted with the critical need to preserve the memory of these architectural contexts through physical and digital means, paying particular attention to oral testimonies, multilayered narratives, and horizontal modes of learning. The challenge is to shape resonant and responsive repositories that open up bodies of work in areas previously overlooked, for instance, by raising awareness of traditional building knowledge and local contributions to architectural (post)modernism. Consequently, archival and curatorial practice must orient itself toward engaging civil society directly, centering their perspectives and creating situated repositories.

Bringing together both established and grassroots institutions and initiatives, this session will investigate shared challenges in archival and curatorial practices across these regions and their role in reshaping existing dominant narratives. We invite papers that explore the building of architectural repositories and institutions that actively respond to the future of architecture, and the motivations behind the recent emerging interest and investment in architectural heritages. What important links and questions can be brought forward when reading architectural histories alongside institutional histories? How do archival and curatorial investigations into the built environment help construct or challenge narratives of presence and agency within these contexts?

We look forward to papers addressing one or more of the following questions:

- How can archival and curatorial practices be reimagined to center underrepresented identities, histories, architectural and cultural affinities, and contested heritage? Particularly in the Gulf Region, the African continent, the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, or West and Central Asia?
- In what ways do specific modes of recording architecture, such as digital tools, construct narratives of presence and agency within overlooked contexts? Or, conversely, how do they reinforce existing biases and dominant epistemologies?
- In what ways can regional histories and conditions—such as Istanbul’s past, geopolitical position, and multilayered present—offer counter-narratives to an architectural canon?
- What motivates the recent emerging interest and investment in architectural heritage in the Gulf Region, the African continent, the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean,

or West and Central Asia, and how does this phenomenon construct or challenge understandings of institutional legacy and agency?

Abstracts should be sent to session chair: Setareh Noorani

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Please also copy to: Ikko Yokoyama ikko.yokoyama@mplus.org.hk

Lightning Session

Champion: Birgitte Sauge

We invite storytelling based on images within the format: 20 slides, each of 20 seconds = 6 minutes and 40 seconds in total. We are looking forward to hearing stories not presented in the ICAM-conferences before, neither as paper nor Lightning Session. For example, new buildings, new museums, new collections. And if you are new to ICAM, why not introduce yourself and your institution?

Brief proposals should be sent to Birgitte Sauge, Senior Curator, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Norway

birgitte.sauge@nasjonalmuseet.no

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