

## P21. Rethinking 20<sup>th</sup> Century Built Heritage in Conflict Zones and Contested Territories

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The 20th century witnessed the waning of imperialism, a surge of decolonization processes, dramatic territorial transfers, mass migrations and ethnic cleansings unprecedented in scale. These changes brought about a modern phenomenon of territorial complexities and hybrid places, whose identity is related to conflict, territorial transfers, or change of hands. In the city of Beersheba in Israel/Palestine, for example, one finds a national Israeli museum, housed in an Ottoman mosque, that formed part of local Muslim heritage in its prime. In Germany, former GDR housing estates and public buildings are reused, appreciated, and conserved. This session engages these phenomena and seeks to ask: what type of models can we suggest for understanding the current political, social and cultural significance of such buildings, which have been appropriated and reinterpreted? What are the terms for introducing the discussion of such places into contemporary post-colonial and global political discourses? How can social and political theories, as well as architectural history and theory, facilitate new readings of the re-signification of built heritage?

Built heritage in past or present conflict zones and contested territories have received ample attention. However, focus on the built environment of the 20th century is lacking, perhaps because critical analysis of the more recent past is intrinsically connected to politics of memory or ongoing disputes, deeming it charged and fragile. This session, therefore, proposes to present such analyses and provide a platform for rethinking concepts and practices dealing with hybrid or layered forms of built heritage; for analyzing current theoretical challenges and problematizing the relation between power and heritage in politically and culturally intricate zones. Through this session, we wish to acknowledge the current tension between the disciplines of history and heritage studies and discuss nuanced methods that might suit this challenge. We thus welcome papers that engage the intersection of political and cultural processes related to architectural heritage, as well as case studies analyzing heritage practices in contested built environments.

**Keywords:** Built Heritage; Political Geography; Cultural Capital; Conflict Zones.

**Thematic lines:** Heritage and Identities; Re-signification, Revisionism and Postcolonial Discourses; Banalization of Heritage / Heritage Practices; Heritage Management; Conservation, Restoration and Sustainability / Destroyed Heritage and Vulnerable Heritage; Heritage Actors and Stakeholders.

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**Short bio:** Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler (Ph.D. Tel-Aviv University, 2005) is a senior lecturer at Sapir Academic College and head of the Visual Culture section in its Department of Communication. At Ben Gurion University of the Negev, she is a teaching fellow. Her main research areas are the modern architecture of Israel/Palestine and Israeli visual culture. Her latest book, *Architectural Culture in British Mandate Jerusalem, 1917-1948* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) is the recipient of the Concordia University Library - Azrieli Institute Award for Best Book in Israel Studies for 2021. She is co-editor of *Israel as A Modern Architectural Experimental Lab, 1948-1978* (Intellect Books, 2020) with Anat Geva. Her research has been published in numerous journals, including *Israel Studies*, *The Journal of Architecture* and *Design Issues*. Since 2014 she serves as co-chair of the DoCoMoMo Israel branch, and since 2020 she serves as the head of the ICOMOS-Israel Committee for Twentieth Century Heritage.

Dr. Ronit Milano is a senior lecturer at the Department of the Arts at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. Since 2015 she serves as head of the Museum Studies M.A. program at the department. She chairs the Arts Program of BGU at the Eilat campus and is also Chair of the Humphrey Institute for Social and Cultural Research at BGU. Her latest book, *The Portrait Bust and French Cultural Politics in the Eighteenth Century* was published in 2015 by Brill. Her current research focuses on the politics of the contemporary art market, and on symbolic capital in visual heritage. Her most recent article on visual heritage is forthcoming in *Cultural Heritage in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Annette Loeske and Sarina Wakefield, and published by Routledge.

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