

Doctoral Position in History and Theory of Architecture with SNSF-funded project, at the Institute for Urban Studies (ISUP) and the Institute for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture (ISA), Academy of Architecture, Università della Svizzera italiana (USI)

The Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) is a young and lively university, a hub of opportunity that is open to the world, where students are offered a quality interdisciplinary education in which they can be fully engaged, and where our researchers can count on having the space to freely pursue their initiatives. Established in 1996, the USI is in constant evolution, always taking on new challenges while remaining true to its three guiding principles: quality, openness and responsibility.

The Academy of Architecture is one of the five faculties of the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) and is based in Mendrisio. The Academy of Architecture offers an innovative, interdisciplinary, humanist and generalist educational and teaching model, suitable for our times. This has enabled the school to make a name for itself and play a leading role in the international panorama of architecture schools.

The Institute for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture (ISA), founded in 2011, has a profile inspired by similar famous and long-established institutions, such as the History Theory and Criticism of Architecture and Art (HTC) of the MIT in Boston or the Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur (gta) of the Zurich Polytechnic, which are still operating successfully after decades of activity.

The various disciplines presented by the ISA – including the history of art and architecture, philosophy, political thought, the visual and performing arts of the 20th and 21st centuries, to name only a few such fields – are intended to develop and implement concepts and instruments to enhance the understanding of the physical, historical and social contexts of artistic and architectural practices.

Considering the geographical position of the Academy, at the crossroads between northern and southern Europe, particular attention is paid to the influence of the Mediterranean on the artistic and architectural cultures of Europe through the ages and, increasingly, in the rest of the world. The Institute promotes the activity of its young researchers both through its own internal PhD courses and by assigning the best results to publication with the Institute's editorial series, with the recent establishment at the Academy of the Doctoral School of the Academy of Architecture and the consolidated affiliation to the Confederal Doctoral School in Italian Civilisation which, within a context extended to various Swiss and international universities, involves various disciplines, from the history of art and architecture to literature, archaeology, the history of music.

The Institute of Urban and Landscape Studies (ISUP) was established in 2018 with the objective of pursuing excellence in research on urban and landscape themes at the Academy of Architecture, Mendrisio, which is a faculty of the Università della Svizzera

italiana, Switzerland (USI). The institute shares with the Academy of Architecture a humanistic and wide-ranging approach to research on urban and landscapes issues.

The Institute for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture (ISA), at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio announces a call for a **Doctoral Assistant positions in History and Theory of Art and Architecture** as part of the Project: "*Voyaging Vapors: Plant Histories of Plantation Architectures* (Nr. PZ00P1_216182) of the Swiss National Fund) directed by Dr. Will Davis from **1. September 2024** (100% four years).

The Research Project

Plantation histories of tropical Southeast Asia are symbolic examples of resource extraction and asymmetric labor conditions. Architecture mediated and scripted this phenomenon in distinctive ways. Plants were simultaneously crops, cargo, and building materials, giving them a centrality to the process of resource extraction, and presenting an underexplored architectural archive. The project investigates the history of nineteenth century plantation culture in Southeast Asia and Europe through the lens of architecture, specifically, looking at the routes that plant species took between these geographies. As traded items and building materials, plants provide a unique way to understand these built environments and trade passages through an ecological framework. It begins with three points of departure, investigating first how plantation cultures and Indigenous lifeways in the tropics entangled with architecture in the metropole; conceptually, stylistically, and intrinsically. Second, it considers the selfconception of Swiss planters and their architectures both in Switzerland and Sumatra, who occupied an unusual position compared to Dutch or British counterparts. Third, the project considers the ways that the plantation, its laborers and their lifeways, become entangled with metropolitan life in Europe. As an architectural history of the plantation system, the project draws on a diverse range of materials to support the research, visiting archives and sites initially in Sumatra, Switzerland, and wider Europe.

Required Tasks

- Preparation and completion of a PhD thesis within four years.
- Collaboration in organizing exhibition, conference, symposia components of the project.
- Enrolled in courses of the Doctoral School in architecture at USI.
- Participation in the activities of the Istituto di studi urbani e del paesaggio (ISUP).
- Participation in activities at the Institute for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture (ISA)

The workplace

Research will take place at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio, near Lugano in Ticino Canton of Switzerland. The director of the project is Dr. Will Davis, and the supervisor of the PhD student is Prof. Dr. Sascha Roesler, a project collaborator and member of the faculty at the Academy of Architecture.

The doctoral position is accommodated by the project but not restricted by it: it is anticipated that the successful applicant will participate in research activities for *Voyaging Vapors* while carrying out the agenda of their doctoral project, developing their own field of expertise.

Requirements for participation

- An MA degree in architectural or art history, architecture, design, urban studies, cultural studies, or related disciplines.
- General knowledge of colonialism in global history and its architectures is beneficial.
- A readiness to carry out international interdisciplinary and collaborative research on a multi-sited project through site visits, archival work, etc.
- Excellent spoken and written English; ability or willingness to learn one of the languages of Switzerland (Italian/German/French).
- There is no application fee
- No requirement for GRE / TOEFL examination

Admission to the Doctorate

Doctoral students will be enrolled at the Academy of Architecture, affiliated with the Institute for Urban Studies (ISUP), the Institute of for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture (ISA), and on completion will receive a Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. Phil). The doctoral program is directed by Prof. Sonja Hildebrand and Prof. Dr. Sascha Roesler.

Salary

The full-time positions is financed for four years by the Swiss National Fund according to the rules defined in point 12.1 of the following provisions:

https://www.snf.ch/api/media/en/7ZvqgC6VigvQWxzd/allg_doktorierende_e.p.pdf

Documentation and deadline

- Application will include:
- Cover letter
- Curriculum vitae
- Completed application form:
https://www.arc.usi.ch/sites/arc.usi.ch/files/storage/attachments/usi-arc-dottorato_form.pdf
- Three recommendation letters, at least one of which comes from an academic contact
- Master's degree certificate, or any writing samples that testify to candidate's research and writing abilities

The complete documentation must be sent by **January 5th, 2024** exclusively in electronic format to the following address and to the attention of **william.davis@usi.ch**

As an institution that promotes diversity, USI particularly encourages applications from women and all individuals from the under-represented groups

For specific requests for information, please contact:
Dr. Will Davis: william.davis@usi.ch

Mendrisio, October 31st, 2023