

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Society of Architectural Historians to Host 78th Annual International Conference in Atlanta

ATLANTA, January 14, 2025 — Registration is now open for the 78th Annual International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians in Atlanta, Georgia, April 30–May 4, 2025.

More than 500 architectural historians, art historians, architects, museum professionals, and preservationists from around the world are expected to convene at the Hilton Atlanta to present new and ongoing research on the history of the built environment—across the centuries and the globe—and to explore Atlanta’s significant architecture.

SAH members will deliver papers in 56 sessions on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Conference attendees will be able to choose from a wide array of topics including housing and adaptation, gender and nature, race and wealth, health and urbanism, sound and silence, erasure and resistance, preservation and maintenance, and queer expression. Roundtable discussions, workshops, networking receptions, keynote talks, SAH’s annual awards ceremony, and public architecture tours will round-out the program.

Several sessions will address topics relevant to local architectural history, including the reframing of African American contributions to the built environment, the systemic harm of biased design, and signs of solidarity and urban activism in public spaces. A number of the planned architecture tours will further explore how Atlanta, and more broadly the state of Georgia, manifests the themes of race, religion, and community-creation in its architecture.

SAH’s 2025 conference will offer more opportunities than ever before for graduate students and emerging scholars to strengthen essential skills in academic writing, publishing for general audiences, and applying for grant or fellowship funding. Graduate students will introduce new and original architectural history research in various stages of progress during a dedicated “Lightning Talks” paper session on Friday afternoon.

“This conference is our chance to welcome and nurture upcoming scholars in our field,” said SAH President and Conference Chair **Mohammad Gharipour**, professor of architecture at the University of Maryland. “Society members care deeply about the vitality of our discipline and want to help others produce high-quality research on the built environment. We have organized these activities tailored for students and junior faculty to promote professional growth and collaborations.”

On Wednesday evening, the Society will name the 2025 winners of the SAH Publication Awards and SAH Award for Film and Video at SAH’s annual awards ceremony. Immediately following, **Maurice J. Hobson**, Associate Professor of Africana Studies at Georgia State University, and **Akira Drake Rodriguez**, Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s Weitzman School of Design, will deliver a two-part Introductory Address.

At the midpoint of the conference, renowned environmental health expert **Richard Joseph Jackson**, MD MPH FAAP HonAIA HonFASLA, will bring an interdisciplinary perspective on urbanity as he presents the seventh annual Eduard F. SeklerTalk. A professor emeritus of environmental health science at the University of California, Los Angeles, Jackson’s recent research sits at the intersection of public health and urban design. He has shown how cities with walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use development achieve better health outcomes for residents. His talk will draw lessons from medical history to demonstrate how architecture can attenuate or accelerate epidemics.

The local community is invited to participate in the conference through a broad selection of architecture tours and public events. Fifteen tours will offer an opportunity to explore the varied buildings and landscapes of Atlanta’s downtown, campus communities, and historic neighborhoods.

“From the outset, we targeted sites that celebrate Atlanta’s diversity, understood here in chronological, demographic, and geographic terms,” said local planning committee co-Chairs **Christina Crawford**, associate professor of art history at Emory University, and **Elisa Dainese**, historian and theorist of architecture and urbanism at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Tours run throughout the duration of the conference and cover numerous neighborhoods and civic sites including:

- Sweet Auburn, Atlanta’s first Black neighborhood that blossomed during segregation into an exemplar of African American civic and business success
- Atlanta BeltLine, as experienced through the lens of graffiti and public art
- The women’s college of Agnes Scott, home to a modernist arts building designed by native Atlantan John Portman
- Downtown/midtown Atlanta, home to Marcel Breuer’s last building, beautifully preserved nineteenth century commercial structures and, of course, plenty of John Portman buildings

“We sincerely hope that conference attendees and the public take the extra time for a short walking tour during lunchtime breaks and/or a longer tour on Wednesday or Sunday. It’s worth it to experience Atlanta’s architecture firsthand,” said Crawford and Dainese “The tour leaders, experts on these sites, will provide tour-goers with an insider’s view of Atlanta’s rich built environment and culture.”

Conference registration is open at sah.org/2025/registration. Early registration ends February 18. Registration for tours and keynotes opens to the public on February 19.

View the full conference program of sessions, papers, speakers, and tours at sah.org/2025.

About SAH

Founded in 1940, the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) is an international nonprofit membership organization promoting the study, interpretation, and conservation of architecture, design, landscapes, and urbanism worldwide. The Society serves a network of more than 2,500 institutions and individuals who, by profession or interest, focus on the built environment and its role in shaping contemporary life. Through print and online publications, local, national and international programs, and advocacy efforts, SAH engenders meaningful scholarly and public engagement with the history of the built environment.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Olivia Archer, Communications Manager

oarcher@sah.org

312-573-1365