

2024 lecture series on construction history

materials | energy | labour

Jane Mah Hutton

*The expanded relationships of the act of building.
From material flows to labour movements*

Thursday February 29, 4 pm (CET)
ONLINE

Sabine Barles

*From circularity to linearity. The infrastructures of
urban metabolism, 18th-20th centuries*

Friday March 1, 5:30 pm (CET)
BEURSSCHOUWBURG+STREAM

Barnabas Calder

*Emergency stop:
a call for radical inaction*

Wednesday March 13, 2 pm (CET)
VIDEO + ONLINE Q&A

Kiel Moe

*Construction Ecology.
Thinking about systems rather than objects*

Thursday March 28, 4 pm (CET)
VIDEO + ONLINE Q&A



2024 CHsB lecture series on **construction history**

Jane Mah Hutton is a landscape architect whose research examines the movement of materials as they pass from production landscapes (plantations, quarries, factories) to designed constructions (buildings, landscapes, infrastructure) through demolition and disposal or re-use. In her book, *Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements* (Routledge, 2019), she traces five seminal landscape materials that ended up in New York City over the past century.

The expanded relationships of the act of building. From material flows to labour movements

In her lecture, Jane will share one of the cases from *Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements*, looking at the flow of granite paving blocks from coastal Maine to Manhattan. Streets were paved to speed the flow of capital, and the New England quarry industry, and labor movements grew in response. The chapter explores the idea of material flows as tethered to human hands.

Thursday February 29, 4 pm (CET)
ONLINE, via MsTeams

To follow the lecture online, please register [here](#) at least 2 days beforehand. You will receive the link one day before.

Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements (Routledge, 2019). Left: Sands Quarry in Vinalhaven, Maine, 1907. Photograph by T.N. Dale. (U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 313: 1907. U.S. Geological Survey Department of the Interior/USGS.) Right: paving and construction of cable car line on Broadway, 1891. Photograph by C.C. Langill and William Gray. (Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations).

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Sabine Barles is professor of urban planning at Université Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne and researcher at UMR Géographie-cités. Trained as a civil engineer, she has also learnt urban planning and history of technology and prepared a PhD in urban planning. Her work deals with environmental history and history of technology (since the 18th century), urban metabolism and territorial ecology, and socio-ecological prospective.

From circularity to linearity. The infrastructures of urban metabolism, 18th-20th centuries

The past three centuries saw industrialization and urbanization shift societies from agrarian to industrial regimes, impacting energy sources, material flows, and urban metabolism. This talk explores how industrializing cities underwent complex changes in urban metabolism and built infrastructures, evolving from circular to linear systems since the 18th century.

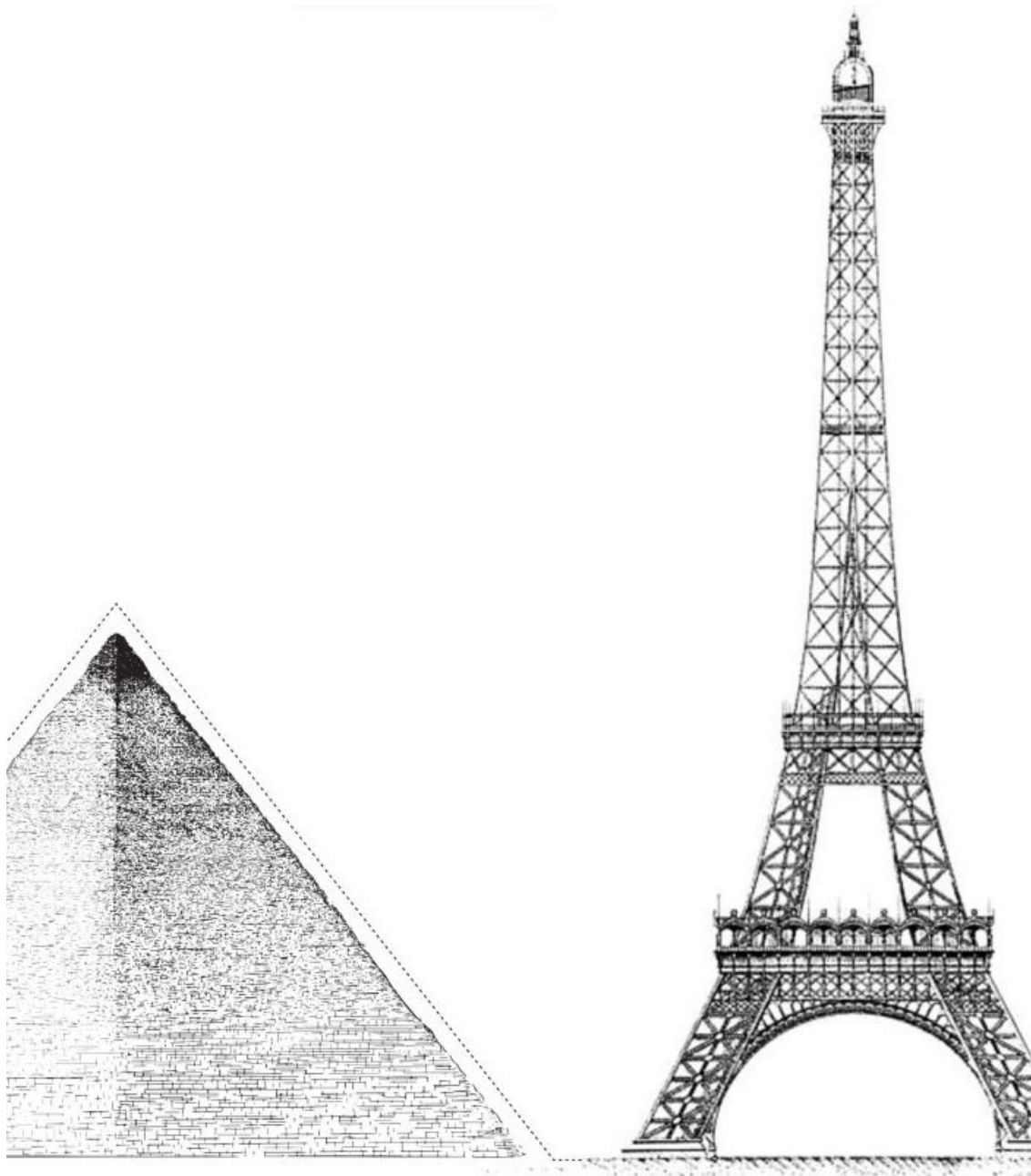
Friday March 1, 5:30 pm (CET)
BEURSSCHOUWBURG + STREAM

The lecture is part of the lecture series StadsSalonsUrbains 2023-24, “rewind, fast forward: unravelling the historical layers and meanings of our built environment”, co-organised and funded by Brussels Centre for Urban Studies and Brussels Academy. It takes place at the Beursschouwburg in Brussels and will be streamed live. You can find the link via <https://urbanstudies.brussels/news-events/circularity-linearity-infrastructure-urban-metabolism-18th-20th-c-sabine-barles>

Paris vers 1788. Tour de l’Horloge du Palais, démolitions des Maisons sur le pont au Change © Sabine Barles



*Paris vers 1788
Tour de l'Horloge du Palais, démolition des Maisons sur le pont au Change*



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Barnabas Calder is Head of the History of Architecture Research Cluster, University of Liverpool- the largest architectural history research grouping in the UK. Barnabas's research focuses on the relationship between energy and human culture throughout history. His book *Architecture: From Prehistory to Climate Emergency* (Pelican, 2021) has been hailed as 'one of the most significant architectural publications of recent years' (Professor Florian Urban, in *The Drouth*).

Emergency stop: a call for radical inaction

In his opening lecture for the StadsSalonsUrbains 2023-2024, Barnabas Calder argued that the built environment is the trace left behind by changing human energy systems. He explored architectural history across humanity's great energy shifts, going back 14,000 years to homes built by ancient hunter-gatherer people, on through the great monuments of the world's agrarian empires, and through to fossil-fueled modernity, consumerism, and potential climate catastrophe. Tracing the past three centuries of construction in the industrialising world is a dizzying experience of soaring fossil fuel dependency and ever more extravagant energy consumption for making and running buildings and cities. Looking back further, or to the less industrialised world, provides inspiration and reassurance: we have lived at zero carbon in the past, and we can do it again.

Wednesday March 13, 3 pm (CET)
RECORDED LECTURE + LIVE Q&A via Teams

The StadsSalonsUrbains lecture took place on October 20, 2023. Please watch the recording (<https://vimeo.com/881715270>) before tuning in for this live Q&A session with Barnabas. Please register [here](#) for the Q&A session at least 2 days beforehand. You will receive the link one day before.

© Barnabas Calder, *Architecture: From Prehistory to Climate Emergency*



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Kiel Moe is a registered practicing architect and Visiting Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was previously (visiting) professor at the University of Minnesota, McGill University, and Harvard University and has received numerous awards. He has published nine books on architecture including *Empire, State & Building*; *Wood Urbanism: From the Molecular to the Territorial*; and *Insulating Modernism: Isolated and Non-Isolated Thermodynamics in Architecture*.

Construction Ecology. Thinking about systems rather than objects

In his latest book, *Unless*, Kiel Moe argues that the immense material, energy and labor involved in building require a fresh interpretation that better situates the ecological and social potential of design. The book mixes construction ecology, material geography, and world-systems analysis through architecture to help articulate all the terrestrial activities that engender building generally, and more specifically through the example of a most modern of modern architectures: the Seagram Building.

Thursday March 28, 4 pm (CET)
RECORDED LECTURE + LIVE Q&A via Teams

Please watch a recorded lecture delivered by Kiel for the Berlage Sessions in 2022 (https://www.youtube.com/live/zx3C1IUQ6CU?si=ozrkU_YgLoeg9iMQ) before tuning in with this live Q&A session with Kiel Moe. Please register [here](#) for the Q&A session at least 2 days beforehand. You will receive the link one day before.

More literal descriptions of architecture could help elucidate the terrestrial basis of building, as well as the disparities inherent in it. The Seagram Building, for example, represents an extreme concentration of human and material resources - underdevelopment in its periphery and over development of global capital in a global capital. © Kiel Moe

We would like to thank the many organisations that have supported or financed the research that is presented in this series.

This lecture series is organised in the framework of the course 'Architectural and Construction History (before 1850)' by prof. Stephanie Van de Voorde and the Joint VUB-ULB research group 'Construction HistorieS Brussels (CHsB)'. The course is part of the educational programmes Bachelor in Architectural Engineering and Master in Urban Studies (Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Université Libre de Bruxelles). For more information, contact stephanie.van.de.voorde@vub.be.



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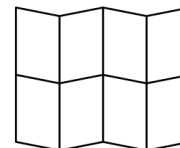
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