

PICTURESQUE MODERNITIES

ARCHITECTURAL REGIONALISM AS A GLOBAL PROCESS (1890-1950)

International Conference
(Paris, 30 November – 2 December 2016)

German Center for Art History Paris
Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context", Heidelberg University
Centre André Chastel (University Paris-Sorbonne)
CRIHAM (University of Poitiers)
Association française des Historiens de l'Architecture (A.H.A.)

The International Exhibition of Paris 1937: Regionalism on a Global Scale

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Abstract

Using Mary Louise Pratt's term 'contact zone' to conceptualize spaces of colonial encounters in which geographically and politically separated experts come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, we focus on the most influential exchange platforms of (in our case architectural, both aesthetical and normative) concepts and trends in the second half of the 19th and first half of the 20th century: World and Colonial Exhibitions. During these events as temporary contact zones, as we would like to argue, colonial and metropolitan agents alike theoretically negotiated and temporarily even materialized and tested regionalist architectural trends for both sides of the 'colonizer-colonized divide'.

Our first case concerns the proceedings of the *Congrès international de l'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays de latitudes intertropicale* which took place during the 1931 International Colonial Exhibition at Paris. During this event, the art critic in favour of regionalism in France, Léandre Vaillat, discussed "the aesthetics in the colonies" during the same event for which Ernest Hébrard, one of the most important localist architects in the French colonies presented his thoughts and analyses on his own projects in Indochina. The second case concerns the France's last universal exhibition, the *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* in Paris of 1937 for which the French *Centre Colonial* in the Seine river and the neighbouring *Centre Régional* for France's own provinces were both staged in astonishingly similar regionalist styles. Never before and after did the stylistic visions of colonial and metropolitan peripheries come that close together and facilitated a combined, truly transcultural perception of regionalist style building processes on a global scale.



Samples of regionalist pavilions during the 1937 Exhibition: above Bretagne, below Indochina

Website for the 2016 Conference: http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/global_regionalism