



## Thematic Session

### TS4. Construction cultures of the recent past. Building materials and building techniques 1950-2000

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The history of building materials and building techniques is an important part of construction history and is particularly relevant for the period 1950-2000: many new construction materials and techniques were developed or improved during this period, reflecting the changing construction culture, but knowledge is scarce and scattered. Within construction history, the main publications on the topic pay attention to innovations, pioneering experiments and important milestones, but the building materials and techniques that were used in the everyday building practice are mostly disregarded. This session aims to gain insight in the culture and practice of construction in 1950-2000, by looking into to both innovative and pioneering experiments as well as building materials and techniques that were commonly used. This knowledge on the everyday is essential as a qualitative barometer for the known experiments and milestones and has a large quantitative relevance.

This session invites papers on the history of innovative as well as traditional (or so-called improved traditional) building materials and techniques. Materials and techniques that were used to construct the loadbearing structure, the facade and interior finishing of all types of buildings can be incorporated. We encourage papers that not only discuss technical and practical aspects, but also link these technical properties to cultural properties and give insights on how the building culture is embedded in building materials. Papers that focus on local building materials and building techniques are invited to position them within an international framework, in order to be able to discuss the tension or interaction between global evolutions and local applications.

The session builds on the latest methodologies and research methods in construction history, which have been broadened considerably in recent decades. An interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective is encouraged by paying attention to a wide range of actors, professions and institutions and their mutual collaborations, by studying diverse sources including built, written and oral sources, and by positioning the research in both the local and global context.





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The period 1950-2000 is largely unexplored territory within construction history. Therefore, this session will make an important contribution to construction history by expanding current research approaches and topics in time. In order to sketch a representative picture of the built patrimony, the building culture and the building practice of the second half of the 20th century, the research needs to be tackled with a broad, multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach. Hence our aspiration to link technical properties of building materials and techniques to cultural properties, and to include both 'first applications and exceptional materials' as well as 'typical materials'. For the development of construction history, which as a discipline is no longer emergent but needs to consolidate, it is important that the focus on the milestones and pioneers is broadened to incorporate and embrace the 'force of the everyday'.

This research is anchored within construction history, but the accumulated knowledge will provide new insights and enable cross-pollinations in other domains, especially those disciplines for which the research period 1950-2000 is also largely unexplored and which can benefit from the typical interdisciplinary approaches within construction history, e.g. architectural history, heritage studies, architectural renovations and circular (re-)construction.

