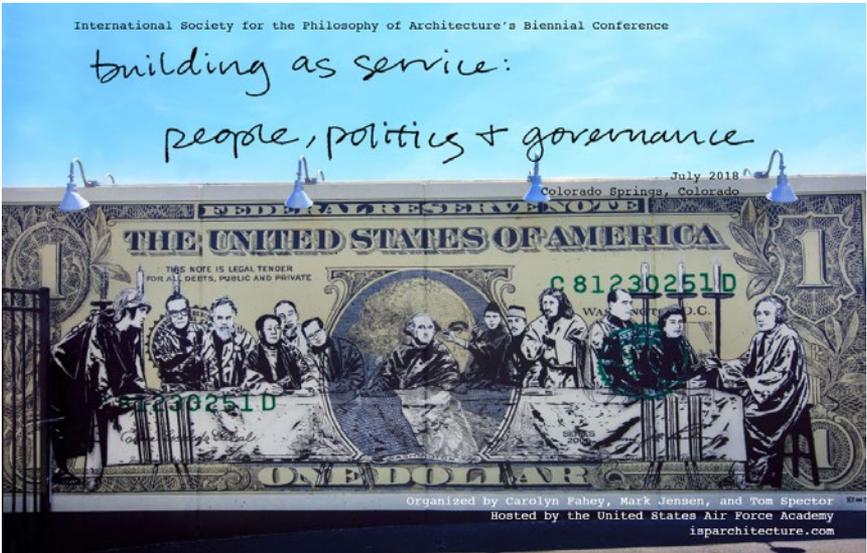


# CALL FOR PAPERS: BIENNIAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE



The fact that buildings are so strongly associated with various power holding empires, nation-states and other forms of civilization is widely recognized in the study of both the history of people and their buildings. From Pericles's Acropolis to Niemeyer's Brasilia, architecture has long been associated with political figures and institutions. Buildings such as the British Parliament, the Russian Kremlin, and the U.S. Capitol stand out not just as iconic architecture, but also as representative of the politics, institutions, and culture of their nations. Architecture and politics are intimately connected, yet precisely how are political concepts captured in the form and function of buildings?

Certainly utility plays a strong role here. We know that buildings serve the establishment and maintenance of a governing body. But in serving that function, do they also necessarily contribute to maintaining a particular ideological belief system? If we acknowledge that buildings hold both deterministic effect and autonomous disassociation, how do architects and politicians act? To what extent should architects design public structures intended to capture the social and political ethos of the people? Do architects have an obligation to address the socio-political in their work, or is this kind of moral obligation misplaced? Is it rather that the work of architects is already tacitly, inextricably part of the political

process? And to what end? Is the ‘autonomous turn’ in architecture of the 1980s well and truly dead?

Beyond considerations of functionality, how do rulers utilize building to achieve their political goals and ideals? Is building fundamental to realizing ideological goals or a mere part of the process? One might also worry that we read too much into the social and political power of architects and buildings. While power routinely uses architecture to further its agenda, how reliably can we read buildings as instances of specific intentions? Architecture can be a highly political art form, but what can be said about the relationship between political intentions and aesthetic merit? Are there styles or typologies particularly conducive to establishing and maintaining power? Is the association of contemporary democracy with classical Greek and Roman architecture appropriate or warranted? And is the style’s reverence intrinsic or learned? Could the Romanesque not equally as well serve the same purpose?

Assuming that buildings are already intrinsically enmeshed within the governing body’s authority, can a single building work against that same authority? Can a building undermine a regime more readily than it can legitimize it? Some may argue that the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Communist rule over Eastern Germany, but how much weight can we ascribe to a building’s maintenance of a governing body? Does time sanitize architecture that came into existence in the service of repugnant regimes?

How effective, for instance, are efforts to rebuild Iraq? Do contractors design buildings that are consistent with the social and political climate of the people? Can the people interpret these buildings independently of their feelings about the builders? Could it be that the very act of building in Iraq may be taken as an offense by some in the Iraqi nation-state? Although not all instances of international exchange are as contentious as this one, can architecture be incompatible with particular political concepts or systems?

Finally, what of the relation between architecture, power and capital? Does the globalization of capital and in its wake, of architecture, render architecture’s connection to any individual state obsolete? Or to put it another way, is everything becoming an expression of the values of global capital?

The intent of this interdisciplinary conference is to gather philosophers, architects, urban planners, and critics to consider these questions regarding building’s service to political ideologies, governing authorities, and socio-political contexts.

The event will be held in one of the most iconic and representative projects of the International Style of 20th century modern public architecture: Walter Netsch Jr.’s United States Air Force Academy—a premier education facility—in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The conference itself will be held in the latest addition to the Academy: the new Polaris Hall—a 45 million dollar addition

designed by SOM that remains true to Netsch's original vision. The stunning new addition breathes new life into a pristinely preserved Modernist campus, a detailed analysis of which is featured in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*.

In addition to the conference, presenters and participants will have the rare opportunity to tour the Academy, including the well-known Academy Chapel with its four distinct worship spaces.

Full consideration will be given to all proposals (500-700 words) received by 15 January 2018; acceptances announced no later than 12 February 2018. Send your proposal as an attachment prepared for blind review to [isparchitecture\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:isparchitecture@gmail.com).

A selection of papers will be published in a special issue of *Architecture Philosophy*, edited by Prof. Tom Spector, Dr. Mark Jensen, and Dr. Carolyn Fahey.