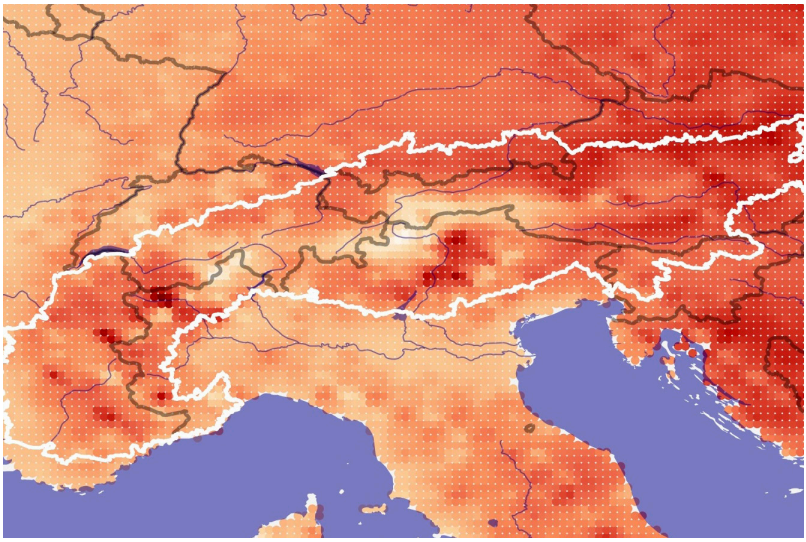
WWW.OEAW.AC.AT

ÖAW AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

CLIMATE-ARCH SYMPOSIUM 1
10TH – 12TH FEBRUARY 2026
AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
CONFERENCE ROOM 2, 3RD FLOOR
GEORG-COCH-PLATZ 2, 1010 WIEN

VERNACULAR FUTURES

Intertemporal and interdisciplinary perspectives on vernacular architecture and climate



Anomalies and extremes in surface air temperature in 2024 compared to 1961-1990. Graphic by: Martin Pospichal, 2025.

Based on: COPERNICUS C3S Atlas Data (https://doi.org/10.24381/cds.h35hb680),

Features (naturalearthdata.com, Perimeter of the Alpine Convention).

This project has received funding from the European Research Council, titled „Climate and Contemporary Transformations of Vernacular Architecture – Interaction, Effects and Perspectives (CLIMATE-Arch)“, Consolidator grant 101088693.

Funded by the European Union

erc European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

ISA – INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

OUTLINE

SYMPOSIUM 1: VERNACULAR FUTURES

Intertemporal and interdisciplinary perspectives on vernacular architecture and climate

This symposium will explore various ways in which locally specific and culturally embedded forms of architecture are shaped through dynamic interactions between climatic, environmental, social and technical processes. Bringing together historical and contemporary research from a broad range of academic and applied disciplines, the event seeks to clarify the role climatic factors play in the transformation of vernacular architecture over time, as well as to identify the main threats and opportunities it is likely to face over the remainder of the 21st century. This may include discussion of emerging risks and vulnerabilities as well as strategies, innovations, and interventions that could bolster resilience in future.

The symposium adopts a resolutely comparative, intertemporal and interdisciplinary approach. It will provide ample space for the presentation of specific methodologies and focused case studies, while encouraging exchange between scientific, technical, and social science experts. The aim is to develop collaborative platforms for the generation of comparative insights concerning vernacular architecture and climate across temporal, spatial, social, and disciplinary frames. The event will focus primarily on the Alps and the Himalayas, but research from other mountainous regions and different bioclimatic zones will provide vital comparative scope.

VENUE:

Conference Room 2, 3rd Floor

Austrian Academy of Sciences
Georg Coch-Platz 2,
1010 Vienna (Austria)

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 10TH MORNING SESSION:

09:00-09:30 | *Welcome and Administration*

09:30-10:00 | **Hubert Feiglstorfer** | **Calum Blaikie** | ÖAW ISA
Introduction

10:00-11:00 | **Keynote Lecture** | **Şeyda Emekci** | Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University
Vernacular Futures: Climate, Architecture, and Environmental Knowledge in an Age of Uncertainty.

11:00-11:30 | **Coffee Break**

11:30-12:00 | **A1** | **Berenice Aguilar** | Mexico National Autonomous University
Are Mayan Indigenous dwellings resilient to climate change?

12:00-12:30 | **A1** | **Borut Juvanec** | Institute of Vernacular Architecture Ljubljana
Representing Vernacular Architecture as Cultural Interpretation of Structure, Use and Sustainable Energy

12:30-13:30 | **Lunch Break**

A1 | **Interpreting and representing the past.**

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 10TH AFTERNOOON SESSION:

13:30-14:00 | **A1** | **Paola Favaro** | UNSW Sydney Australia
From St Anton (Austria) to Thredbo (Australia): Re-imagining Alpine Huts as a Vernacular Bridge across Continents

14:00-14:30 | **A1** | **Tapan Deshpande** | NMIMS University Mumbai
Journey of a "Home" across time, place, people

14:30-15:00 | **A1** | **Yun Zhao** | Chengdu Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, and TU Wien
Composite Constructions: Research on the Construction Techniques of Vernacular Architecture in Niru Village, located in the Tibetan borderland in Northwest Yunnan Province

15:00-15:30 | **A1** | **Hubert Feiglstorfer** | ÖAW ISA
Himalayan vernacular in Tabo/Spiti/India: eco-friendly building transformations driven by trends in living comfort and tourism marketing

15:30-16:00 | **Coffee Break**

16:00-16:30 | **A4** | **Michael Grabner** | BOKU University
Why did the amount of fir wood used in Austrian roof constructions change over time?

16:30-17:00 | **A4** | **Katarina Čufar** | University of Ljubljana
Xylogenesis and its Relation to Vernacular Architecture in Slovenia

17:00-17:30 | **A4** | **Open Dicussion**

A1 | **Interpreting and representing the past.**
A4 | **Climate-triggered changes in timber construction.**

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 11TH MORNING SESSION:

09:00-09:30 | **A2** | **Nicola Chiavarelli** | Ordine degli Architetti della Provincia di Trento
Good practices for the ancient Tabià farms of Primiero – Trento

09:30-10:00 | **A2** | **Roland Meingast** | LOPAS
The research prototype of a clay-wood-straw passive house as a further development of vernacular architecture

10:00-10:30 | **A2** | **Petra Gruber** | University of Applied Arts Vienna
Disaster waiting to happen - Speculations on vulnerability and resilience of vernacular architecture

10:30-11:00 | **Coffee Break**

11:00-11:30 | **A2** | **Michaelangelo Dragone** | Politecnico di Bari
What future for vernacular dry stone architecture?

11:30-12:00 | **B1** | **Gunther Kain** | Salzburg University of Applied Sciences
Infrared (IR) Shading as a Strategy to Mitigate Overheating in Traditional Buildings

12:00-12:30 | **A2** | **Rui Florentino** | University Portucalense | **Giuseppe Calabrese** | Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" Chieti – Pescara
Vernacular Futures in Extreme Environments: Lessons from Neolithic Çatalhöyük for On- and Off-Earth Climate Adaptation

12:30-13:00 | **Open Discussion**

13:00-14:00 | **Lunch Break**

A2 | **Vernacular Futures.**
B1 | **Vernacular buildings in the Anthropocene.**

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 11TH AFTERNOON SESSION:

14:00-14:30 | **A2** | **Franziska Prell** | University of Bamberg
Climate adaptation of architectural cultural assets in transition: Analysis of past and present strategies with regard to climatic impacts

14:30-15:00 | **B1** | **Riam Kuyakanon** | University of Cambridge
Renovating for the Anthropocene

15:00-15:30 | **B1** | **Felix Mayrhofer**
Restoring an old house in the Vienna Woods: Expert advice versus owner experience.

15:30-16:00 | **Coffee Break**

16:00-16:30 | **B1** | **Christian Abrihan** | Hochschule RheinMain
Climate-resilient Baukultur in the Wachau World Heritage Site

16:30-17:00 | **A1** | **Andreas Putzer** | South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology
The high alpine prehistoric architecture of Schnals Valley – Tradition versus Pragmatism

17:00-17:30 | **Open Discussion**

A1 | **Interpreting and representing the past.**
A2 | **Vernacular Futures.**
B1 | **Vernacular buildings in the Anthropocene.**

PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 12TH MORNING SESSION:

09:00-09:30 | **B4** | **Johannes Tintner-Olifiers** | EY denkstatt GmbH
The value of vernacular architecture in the context of ESG

09:30-10:00 | **B4** | **Senem İme** | Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University

10:00-10:30 | **B4** | **Massimo Crotti** | Politecnico di Torino
The Italian paradox of contemporary vernacular architecture

10:30-11:00 | **Coffee Break**

11:00-11:30 | **B3** | **Martin Michette** | University of Oxford
A new pedagogy for adaptive practice

11:30-12:00 | **B3** | **Susanna Milão** | CIAUD UPT Research Unit for Architecture Urbanism and Design Portucalense University
Participatory Mapping of Vulnerability and Heritage Resilience in Mozambique Island

12:00-12:30 | **Open Discussion**

12:30-14:00 | **Lunch Break**

B3 | Narratives and metrics of vulnerability and resilience.
B4 | The "noble vernacular" revisited: Sustainability and suitability in question.

FEBRUARY 12TH AFTERNOON SESSION:

14:00-14:30 | **A3** | **Ettore Mazzola** | University of Notre Dame School of Architecture
Urban Regeneration of Doha, Qatar

14:30-15:00 | **A3** | **Nutsa Lomsadze** | Architect and Urban Planner at BAU Design
The Complexity of Vernacular Heritage in Rapidly Transforming Mountain Contexts in Georgia

15:00-15:30 | **A3** | **Hubert Feiglstorfer** | ÖAW ISA
Himalayan vernacular: timber for cooking, heating, and building in in the 21st century

15:30-16:00 | **Coffee Break**

16:00-16:30 | **A3** | **Calum Blaikie** | ÖAW ISA
Houses, roads and time: Architectural and infrastructural temporalities in Ladakh, India

16:30-17:00 | **Open Discussion**

17:00-18:00 | **Round Table**

A1 | Interpreting and representing the past.

This panel invites comparative analysis of vernacular architecture across temporal frames and methodological approaches. As well as considering archaeological, historical and scientific studies of vernacular architecture in the past, it encourages reflection on how such work might better inform our understanding of the present and vice versa, while also probing the advantages and limitations of intertemporal analysis.

A2 | Vernacular Futures.

This panel will trace out the major transformative processes shaping vernacular architecture in the present day and reflect upon the emerging threats and possibilities it faces over the rest of this century, notably in relation to climate change. Bringing together scientific work on climate change and extreme weather, social science perspectives on vulnerability and resilience, and technical research into adaptive construction, the panel aims to generate interdisciplinary insights concerning the future of vernacular architecture.

A3 | Land use, infrastructure, and regulation.

This panel will examine relationships between governance regimes, infrastructural systems and vernacular architecture. How do changes in land use planning, building codes and other regulations shape the distribution, construction, maintenance and use of vernacular buildings? What role do houses and construction activities play within infrastructural assemblages? Engaging with such questions requires reflection on dynamic interactions between government policies and regulations, mobility and economic activities, landscapes and the built environment.

A4 | Climate-triggered changes in timber construction.

This panel examines the ways in which changing climatic conditions have shaped timber construction over time. What can different disciplinary approaches and methods (e.g., architecture, archaeology, anthropology, carbon dating, dendrochronology, materials science, agrometeorology) tell us about such changes? How can interdisciplinary and intertemporal perspectives enrich our understanding of these transformative processes? How can studies of past periods of change (e.g., from the interglacial period to the Little Ice Age) inform studies of present dynamics, or vice versa?

B1 | Vernacular buildings in the Anthropocene.

This panel considers small-scale, locally-based responses to the increased risk that formally unprotected vernacular buildings (e.g., farmhouses) are facing from changing climatic conditions and extreme weather events. This could include the adaptation of buildings in terms of design, structure and materials; changes to settlement structure; new building usage patterns; or larger-scale interventions aiming to mitigate the impact of floods, droughts, storms or wildfires.

B3 | Narratives and metrics of vulnerability and resilience.

This panel will explore various ways in which local people perceive, experience, discuss and act upon climate-related risks and vulnerabilities in relation to vernacular architecture. It also invites participants to compare and contrast locally-grounded views with scientific accounts of climate related phenomena, opening space for deeper understandings of vulnerability and resilience across subject/object, local/global and science/craft divides.

B4 | The “noble vernacular“ revisited: Sustainability and suitability in question.

This panel invites participants to revisit Marcel Vellinga’s 2013 article questioning the academic trend towards presenting vernacular architecture as inherently ecologically sustainable, culturally appropriate and socially desirable. As well as critically evaluating such discourses, the panel asks how we might ensure more nuanced and balanced representations of localised architectural forms.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR / CONTACT:
Priv.-Doz. DDr. Hubert Feiglstorfer
Austrian Academy of Sciences
Institute for Social Anthropology
Georg-Coch-Platz 2
1010 Vienna
T: + 43 1 51581 - 6467
hubert.feiglstorfer@oeaw.ac.at