

Voyaging Vapors SNSF Group:

Will Davis is an architectural, urban, and environmental historian whose research focuses on the political economy of plants and multi-species life in the material worlds of architecture from the nineteenth century to the present. This work creates space for new, interdisciplinary collaborations and conversations between architecture, craft, political ecology, and postcolonial thinking. Davis leads an SNSF Ambizione 2022 project (690,740 CHF; 2024–2028), “Voyaging Vapors: Plant Histories of Plantation Architectures,” a research program that investigates how tactile, plant-based environmental knowledge grounded the architectural history of the plantation system. It engages collaborators and research partners across Europe and Southeast Asia and is hosted by the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio. His first book, *Palm Politics: Warfare, Folklore, and Architecture* will be published this year in the Lateral Exchanges series of the University of Texas Press.

Rixt Woudstra is an Assistant Professor of Architectural History at the University of Amsterdam, Co-Director of the Amsterdam Centre for Urban History, and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the open-access academic journal *Architecture Beyond Europe*. She is a historian of modern architecture, with a specific focus on the global circulation of architectural ideas, building materials, and technologies in the twentieth century. Her research explores the transformation of the built environment in response to European colonial expansion, particularly in West Africa. Before coming to the University of Amsterdam, she taught at New College of Humanities (now Northeastern University) in London and worked as a Leverhulme-funded Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Liverpool. She completed her Ph.D at the School of Architecture and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2020. In 2025, she received an Early Career Award from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

Siddharta Perez is Senior Lead Curator at NUS Museum, tending to the Southeast Asia collections and archives and helming the museum’s curatorial model “prep-room.” Her curatorial work and curricula, primarily situated in university museums and artist-run initiatives, contend with critical museology, and exhibitions relating to Malaya, Singapore and regional modernities. Recently, she has focused on finding watery ways of thinking with artists, self-identifying islanders, and students from the National University of Singapore. She is part of the Editorial Collective and journal, *Southeast of Now*.

Angela Gigliotti is an architect and educator. She is affiliated with ETH Zurich/gta where she is currently conducting research in the field of architectural history, with the aim of working on a monographic thesis entitled *The Italian Ticinification (TI-IT): Construction, Financing, and Promotion of Proximal Swiss Coloniality from Ticino to the Kingdom of Italy (1857-1947)*. She holds a master’s degree in architecture from the Polytechnic University of Milan and a Ph.D. in architecture from the Aarhus School of Architecture.

Giah De los Reyes (b. 2002) is an artist with a background in Architecture and Sociology. Her practice engages materiality and environment as central points of inquiry, unfolding through textiles, installations, photography, video, workshops, and combined media. Beyond her artistic practice, she is deeply engaged in community-based work that foregrounds collaboration. In 2020, she founded Katawhayan, a creative initiative producing naturally dyed wearable pieces that also serve as material research for her textile installations. She has organized and facilitated participatory workshops with rural children, fisherfolk, and local communities. She has worked for Super Inday Art Projects, an arts-based programming into women’s jail dormitories in the Visayas, fostering creativity and healing through art and storytelling within incarcerated spaces. Now based in Milan, she works part time while she continues to build her practice through interdisciplinary language that connects different social contexts and embodied processes, grounding her practice in both local and transnational contexts. She is a recipient of the Prince Claus Seed Award 2025.

Hélène Padma De Mello is an architect and researcher whose work bridges design, material practice, and collectivity. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Architecture from Rice University and is currently pursuing a Master of Architecture at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio, Switzerland. A licensed architect in New York, she has practised with Guy Nordenson and Associates, Adjaye Associates and Johnston Marklee, developing expertise in design, construction and structural coordination. Her research explores material lifespans, ecological thinking, and architecture’s role in shaping social and environmental futures through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Sylvia Lavin is a critic, curator, historian and theorist whose work explores the limits of architecture across a wide spectrum of historical periods. She is Professor of Architecture and Interim Dean at Princeton University. Her books and catalogs include *Architecture Itself and Other Postmodernization Effects*, *Kissing Architecture*, and *Everything Loose Will Land: 1970s Art and Architecture in Los Angeles*. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Art and Archaeology at Columbia University, and has received numerous awards and grants including from the Getty Research Institute, the Graham Foundation, the AIA and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her next book, *Architecture Amid the Trees, An Arboreal History of American Architecture*, is forthcoming in the Writing Architecture series with MIT Press.

Respondents

Ilyas Azouzi is an historian specialised in the political history and urban planning of fascist Italy, his work has focused particularly on the architectural legacy of Italian colonialism. Ilyas holds a PhD in History from University College London (UCL), a Master's in Art History from the University of Lausanne, and a Master's in Architectural History and Theory from the Bartlett School of Architecture. He is currently Head of Science, Research, and Innovation at the Istituto Svizzero and serves as a guest lecturer at UCL, where he has designed and taught courses in urban geography and architectural history. His work has been recognised with several international awards and fellowships, including those from the Max Weber Stiftung, the Raleigh Radford Rome Award, and UCL's Student Choice Award for Brilliant Research-based Education. His publications address themes such as heritage, segregation and urban design, and the use of colonial architecture as a tool of propaganda.

Eva Schreiner is head of a new Minerva Fast Track Research Group at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. Her research links architectural history with histories of imperialism, capitalism, and urban-rural relationships in Europe, West Asia, and North Africa. She specifically studies the material foundations of modern finance in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. She is currently working on her first monograph, which explores credit as an instrument of control deployed by German private and state actors in the late Ottoman Empire by examining a vast architectural network engendered by, and servicing, Ottoman debt. She has recently published her research in *Architecture Beyond Europe* and *Architectural Theory Review*.

Sarah Nichols is an Assistant Professor (tenure track) at EPFL and director of the lab THEMA (Theory of Environment and Materials in Architecture) within the Institute of Architecture at EPFL. Prior to joining EPFL, she was an Assistant Professor of Architecture (tenure track) at Rice University in Houston. She studied architecture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam and received her doctorate (Dr. Sc.) at ETH Zurich for which she was awarded the ETH Medal. Sarah Nichols's scholarly work examines the environmental and political entanglements of construction, particularly through building materials. Her material retrospective "Beton" was recently shown at the Swiss Architecture Museum in Basel. She is currently working on a book manuscript *Opération Béton: Constructing Concrete in Switzerland* based on her dissertation.

Sascha Roesler (Dr. sc. ETH) is an urban scholar and architectural theorist, working at the intersection of architecture, ethnography, and science and technology studies. He is the Associate Professor for Theory of Urbanization and Urban Environments at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio, Switzerland (Università della Svizzera Italiana). Between 2013 and 2015, Roesler was a senior researcher at the Future Cities Laboratory (Singapore-ETH Centre), and between 2015 and 2021, had the position of Swiss National Science Foundation Professor for Architecture and Theory at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio and ETH Zurich, leading a research group on "Architecture and Urban Climates." Roesler has edited seven books dealing with the theory and history of global architecture, sustainability and environmental technologies. His publications include "Weltkonstruktion" (Gebr. Mann, 2013, 2021), the first global history of architectural ethnography, and the two volumes "City, Climate, and Architecture" and "Coping with Urban Climates" (Birkhäuser 2022, 2024). Roesler is one of the laureates of the Swiss Art Award for Architecture (2012).

Ewan Harrison is a lecturer in Architectural Studies at the University of Manchester. His research

focuses on architectural practice and capitalism in post-war Britain and the post-war British African empire, through analyses of both the design of buildings for business and the business of building and design. His work seeks to broaden our understanding of the production of architecture in the post-war period, by examining the interactions between commercial architects, contractors, and their clients, figures that are generally side-lined in canonical accounts of post-war modernism. Ewan was a co-author of *Architecture, Empire & Trade: The United Africa Company* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2025). His research has also been published in *The Journal of Design History*, *Architecture Beyond Europe*, *Twentieth Century British History*, *Architectural History*, and *The Architectural Review*.