CALL FOR PAPERS

International Conference - Materiality and Color in Modernist Architecture: From Science to Everyday Heritage Conservation Practice

07-09 May 2026
Berlin, location tba

Organizer
Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, ICOMOS German National Committee, TU Munich and HfBK Dresden

This conference addresses the critical revision of materiality and color in modernist architecture, focusing on surface aesthetics, methodological criticism and restoration history. The organizing committee invites researchers, scholars, and professionals to submit original research contributions for presentation at the event.

Conference Scope and Objectives
Modernist architecture, including the UNESCO-listed Berlin Modernism Housing Estates, has gained shared recognition. Yet, most research has focused so far on architectural history and urban planning rather than on materiality. Conservation-restoration efforts are advancing, but the authentic materials, aesthetic qualities, history of material change and transformation processes remain understudied. This is not only the result of constantly changing approaches to monument conservation, but also of a still growing scientific sensitivity towards the recognition, understanding and restoration of historical architectural surfaces in general. Cutting-edge material science is opening new research avenues through interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration.

The conference brings together experts from all areas of heritage conservation—architects, conservator-restorers, heritage scientists, and art historians—to examine how historical knowledge and current material research can inform contemporary conservation practice. Through collaboration among all parties involved in the conservation process, the conference seeks to reflect on and refine existing methods, ensuring that insights gained directly support practical planning and conservation work on modernist architecture. Interdisciplinary basic research will focus on developing targeted, verifiable, comparable, and repeatable approaches, particularly in material investigations. By critically re-assessing past conservation-restoration strategies and material investigation methodologies, the event aims to promote sustainable and authentic preservation for the future.

The current research project "Materiality and Color: A critical revision of research methods in conservation-restoration and material science of „Berlin Modernism Housing Estates" – past, present and future" is positioned at the interface of academic and institutionalized preservation. We are committed to make our findings and discussions accessible to a broader audience within the heritage conservation field - including tenants and other stakeholders. Please find further information under:
https://www.arc.ed.tum.de/en/rkk/research/berlin-modernism-housing-estates/

Schedule framework

The conference sessions will start on Thursday, 07.05.2026, at 10:30, and continue on Friday, 08.05.2026, starting at 9:00. On Friday afternoon, the hosting research team of "Materiality and Color" will present their results and discuss a methodological guideline developed during the project. This panel discussion is open to the public, specialist audience, tenants, and other stakeholders.
On Saturday's guided tours to Berlin Modernism Housing Estates will be offered.
The conference language is predominantly English. The public session (Friday afternoon) will be in German.
The guided tours on Saturday will be offered in different groups in German and English.

Topics of Interest

We welcome submissions that address, but are not limited to, the following topics of modernist architecture:

- Materiality and color
  - New Materials (such as Linoleum, Bakelit, Steel etc.), paint systems, and surface aesthetics
  - Alteration of materials and surfaces over time
  - Invention of substitute materials
- Methodological criticism "New ways to approach an old issue"
  - Non-invasive and micro invasive material analysis of architectural surfaces
  - Interdisciplinary research methods combining conservation-restoration, architecture, literature and archival research and material analyses
  - Techniques for color definition and reconstruction
- Monument preservation and conservation-restoration, including its history
  - Evaluating past conservation-restoration interventions and their impact on authenticity
  - Challenges in restoration and best practice
  - Heritage values
  - Sustainability

Case studies of modernist architecture of all three topics are happily welcomed!

Submission Guidelines

Contributions should relate to at least one of the outlined sub-themes. Please indicate your chosen sub-theme when submitting.
Submissions must include the following:

- An abstract (maximum 300 words) clearly outlining the research scope, methodology, and major findings

Please send your submission to materialityandcolor.rkk@ed.tum.de 05.01.2026.
At least one author of each accepted paper must register for and present at the conference.

Publication Opportunities

Accepted papers will be published by ICOMOS – Hefte des deutschen Nationalkomitees as a full e-paper.

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission Deadline: 05.01.2026
- Notification of Acceptance: 23.02.2026
- Full Paper and Presentation Submission Deadline: 01.05.2026
- Conference Dates: 07.-09.05.2026

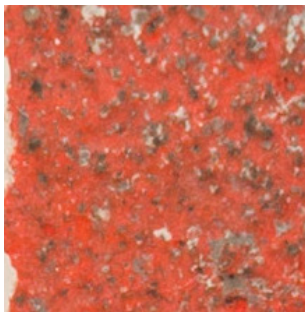
Scientific Committee

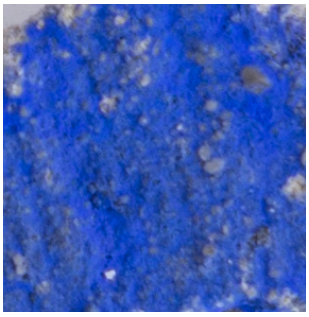
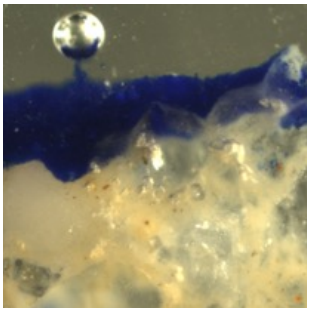
Prof. Dr. nat. Christoph Herm, University of Fine Arts Dresden
Prof. Dr. phil. dott. Thomas Danzl, Technical University of Munich
Dr. Christoph Rauhut, Berlin Heritage Authority
Prof. Dr. Tino Mager, ICOMOS Germany
Prof. Dr. Steffen Laue, University of applied Sciences Potsdam
Prof. Dr. Jan Raue, University of applied Sciences Potsdam

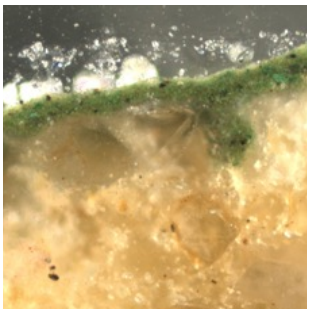
Contact Information

For inquiries, please contact materialityandcolor.rkk@ed.tum.de
We look forward to your contributions and to welcoming you in Berlin!

Stay tuned, further details and news will be published and communicated soon!





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From Science to Everyday Heritage Conservation Practice

International Conference, 07-09 May 2026, Berlin

Landesdenkmalamt BERLIN

International Council on Monuments and Sites
Conseil International des Monuments et des Sites
Deutsches Nationalkomitee e.V.

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