

The Ethics of Dust

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Jorge Otero-Pailos, Professor, Columbia University

Online Lecture in the framework of
Una Europa PhD Workshop:
*Heritage Hybridisations: Concepts,
Scales and Spaces*
Introduction: Professor Dominique Poulot

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[ZOOM link](#)

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Dust, the kind the atmosphere deposits on buildings, is an important historical and environmental record that usually goes unrecognized. The artworks in The Ethics of Dust series isolate dust and make it tangible by transferring it from the surface of buildings onto translucent casts. In this lecture, I will present a selection of dust casts taken from buildings around the world, and discuss the unexpected histories that each of them unveils. I will connect the dots between these punctual histories to outline a larger concept they all contribute to, namely that of atmospheric heritage. Taken together, The Ethics of Dust amounts to more than the sum of its particles, challenging the conceptual duality of tangible / intangible heritage, the limits of governmentality, and the politics of belonging, or so I will argue.

Jorge Otero-Pailos is a New York-based artist and architect best known for making monumental casts of historically charged buildings. He is Director and Professor of Historic Preservation at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture in New York. Drawing from his formal training in architecture and preservation, Otero-Pailos' art practice deals with memory, culture, and transitions, and invites the viewer to consider buildings as powerful agents of change.

Otero-Pailos' works are to be found in the collections of SFMoMA, The British Museum, and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary in Vienna. He has received awards from major art, architecture and preservation organizations including the UNESCO, the American Institute of Architects, the Kress Foundation, the Graham Foundation, the Fitch Foundation, and the Canadian Center for Architecture.

He is the founder of the journal *Future Anterior*, co-editor of *Experimental Preservation* (2016), author of *Architecture's Historical Turn* (2010) and contributor to scholarly journals and books including the Oxford *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, and Rem Koolhaas' *Preservation Is Overtaking Us* (2014).

Dominique Poulot is professor of cultural history of art at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne where he created the first French MA "Politics and History of Museums and Heritage". He is on the board of *Museum & Society*, *Future Anterior*, co-editor in chief of *Culture & Musées* (OpenEdition) and member of the Scientific Council of Louvre.



*The Ethics of Dust at Westminster Hall
Jorge Otero-Pailos, 2016
An Artangel commission. Photo by Marcus J Leith*