

CUTTING ACROSS IMPERIAL SPAIN AFFINITIES AND RUPTURES AFTER 1492

In 1492, a few months before Christopher Columbus set sail across the Atlantic, the capitulation of the last Islamic stronghold in Granada initiated the first Catholic hegemony over the Iberian Peninsula. Over the following century, the Court and nobility of Castile and Aragon engaged in a process of political and religious reconfiguration, in order to define an integrated and global Spanish Empire. In doing so, they confronted a complex architectural landscape of pre-existing cultural and artistic heritage: mosques, synagogues, Islamic fortresses, Gothic cathedrals and Roman ruins, only to name a few.

During this seminar week, we will take a road trip to 'cut across' the multifarious ways in which the formation of a Spanish Empire during the 16th century was formulated in architecture. We will start in Andalucía, driving* across southern Spain between Sevilla and Granada, then turning north through Toledo and ending the trip at the monumental palace of the

Escorial. Along the way, we will see sumptuous Islamic palaces, repurposed to serve the institutional and representational ambitions of the Crown; rich private houses, refurbished to evoke fashionable Renaissance motifs; and entire neighbourhoods, rebuilt to respond to new internal and global systems of religious and political governance.

** We are looking for potential drivers (in possession of a driver's license B). Please contact the chair if you are able and willing to drive. (Contact: nadya.vonmoos@arch.ethz.ch)*