Call for Papers

Reparando / Repair in the History of Technology

**Joint annual meeting of the International Committee for the History of Technology (ICOHTEC)
and the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT)
9-14 July 2024 in Viña del Mar, Chile**

The technological environments we inhabit require continual repair and maintenance in order to function. Yet the people on whom such repairs rely—along with their knowledge and labor—too often remain unseen and undervalued, becoming visible only in cases of infrastructural breakdown or spectacular disaster. The routine invisibility of repair facilitates grand proclamations of technological solutionism, distracting from the requirements for living equitably in an increasingly fragmented and fragile world.

How does our understanding of the history of technology change when we center repair and maintenance? Such a shift involves highlighting users and experiential knowledge. It opens up conceptions of what counts as technological knowledge and who counts as technological actors. Such themes have lurked in our field for some time, mounting in scale and significance over the last decade. Repair is now part of our vocabulary, here to stay. The time has come to make it the thematic core of our annual meeting. The first joint conference between ICOHTEC and SHOT in three decades, to be held **bilingually** in Viña del Mar, Chile, provides the ideal place for doing so.

Reparando—the gerund of repair in Spanish—holds a special place in the history of Chile, a nation at the intersection of several tectonic plates. Chileans accept seismic activity as part of everyday life, remaining unfazed by mild earthquakes. Of course, the stronger earthquakes are deeply disruptive, destroying cities and communities. In 1960, the deadliest earthquake registered in human history (magnitude 9.5) struck the southern region of Valdivia. Accompanied by a tsunami, the Great Chilean Earthquake destroyed livelihoods and property, and took thousands of lives. This destruction required not just concrete infrastructural repair, but also social and emotional repair for traumatized victims. The Chilean experience highlights the need to approach repair as a practice of human and technological resilience, in which cooperation and compassion are as essential as material rebuilding and fixing.

This is the context in which we invite a critical appraisal of the concept, strategies, and philosophies of repair. How does repair/*reparando* sustain our built environment and our daily lives? How can we think through brokenness, restoration, and care? What and who counts as "normal," and how does that affect our infrastructures? How do people excluded from infrastructural benefits use rebuilding, repurposing, adjusting, and *reparando* as navigational strategies? How do discussions about repair and repurposing reflect social, political, and cultural dynamics? What does *reparando* look like at different scales, from the individual to the planetary? And how can focusing on these themes open a

discussion of what requires repair in our own field of the history of technology – and what methodologies and approaches are needed to enact that repair?

Topics and themes of special interest to the program committee include (but are not limited to):

- The ethics, aesthetics, and politics of repair
- Adjusting, tinkering, hacking - tactics for times of scarcity
- Invisible labor in science and technology
- Geographies of repair and care, from the local to the planetary
- The role of technology in environmental and climate (in)justice
- Ableism, disability, and crip epistemologies in technology studies
- Indigenous lands, indigenous knowledge
- Queering the history of technology
- Technologies of care and healing
- Local cultures of repair, repurposing, and recycling
- Intersections of repair, design, and engineering
- Normies and Others in technological history
- The technological dimensions and aftermaths of disasters, emergencies, and crises
- Reckoning with colonial pasts and imagining decolonial futures
- Repairing the history of technology: methodological and epistemic strategies for the future of the discipline
- The role of conservation, preservation, and archives in understanding the past and repairing the field

While we especially hope to prompt conversations around such matters, we also welcome proposals on other topics in the history of technology. We warmly welcome proposals from the wide range of fields that study such questions, including STS, Anthropology, American Studies, Black Studies, Communication, Discard Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, Indigenous Studies, LatinX Studies, Literary Criticism, Media Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, and Sociology. We especially encourage scholarship in African, Asian, and Latin American Studies.

Of special note: the program committee will accept proposals in English and Spanish, as well as for sessions that include both languages. Simultaneous translation will be available for plenaries and at least two session threads each day. As we get closer to the conference time, we will provide more details.

ICOHTEC and SHOT are committed to the ongoing diversification of our field. In addition to valuing intellectual quality, we encourage and will prioritize proposals that reflect diversity in their line-up of speakers, in particular with regard to career level, gender, race, and/or geography.

The submission deadline for open panels is **8 December 2023**.

The final deadline for all paper and panel submissions is **18 December 2023**. Please consult the conference website (https://www.historyoftechnology.org/) for detailed submission guidelines.

ICOHTEC, SHOT, and their joint program committee look forward to a vigorous, enthusiastic, and intellectually stimulating annual meeting in Viña del Mar!

Program Committee

Diana J. Montaño (Chair), Magdalena Zdrodowska (Associate Chair), Itty Abraham, Leticia Galluzzi, José Ragas, Verónica Ramírez Errázuriz.