XS-S-M

Architecture of the Fitting

Edited by Adriano Dessì, Pier Francesco Cherchi, Marco Moro

BoA

UNICApress Università degli studi di Cagliari

On behalf of the European Association for Architectural Education, founded in Brussels in 1975, I am pleased to welcome you to the EAAE Annual Conference and General Meeting 2026, hosted in the inspiring setting of Cagliari, Sardinia, by the School of Architecture celebrating the 20th anniversary of its foundation.
As we look ahead to this gathering, environmental challenges, social transformations, and deep geopolitical tensions continue to redefine the contexts in which architecture operates. In response, architectural education has an important role to play: not only in preparing future professionals, but also in fostering critical thinking, experimentation, and new ways of imagining how we inhabit the world.
The conference theme, XS–S–M: Architecture of the Fitting, invites us to reconsider questions of scale, relevance, and appropriateness in architecture. At a moment when resources are limited and many territories, especially peripheral and fragile ones, are undergoing profound transformation, the idea of fitting becomes increasingly important. It encourages us to think of architecture not in terms of size or spectacle, but as a practice of careful calibration, attentive to place, responsive to communities, and mindful of ecological limits.
For the EAAE community, this theme resonates strongly with the evolving mission of architectural education. Across Europe and beyond, schools are developing new pedagogies, research agendas, and collaborations that respond to the complex realities of our time - EAAE President, Roberto Cavallo

XS-S-M Architecture of the Fitting - Book of Abstracts
EAAE Annual Conference 2026 - European Association for Architectural Education

Editors
Adriano Dessì, Local Representative for EAAE, University of Cagliari DICAAR
Pier Francesco Cherchi, Coordinator of the Bachelor's Program in Architecture, University of Cagliari
Marco Moro, Coordinator of the Local Organizing Commettee EAAE AC 2026, University of Cagliari

Keynote Speakers
Mario Abis, Nicolò Galeazzi & Martina Salvaneschi (Associates Architecture),
João Ferreira Nunes, Marco Navarra, Loepold Banchini

Session Chairs
Pier Francesco Cherchi, Carla Sechi, Benedetta Rubattu, Marco Lecis, Lavinia Dondi
Silvia Bodei, Marco Moro, Fabrizio Pusceddu, Roberto Sanna,
Emanuela Quaquero, Andrea Margagliotti, Francesco Marras, Chiara Cabras,
Stefano Mais, Elisa Pilia, Valentina Pintus, Silvia Orione,
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2008 VENTI 2028

European Association for Architectural Education
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We thank all speakers, respondents, moderators, student volunteers, colleagues and administrative staff from the University of Cagliari who provided the venue.

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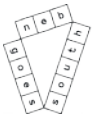




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26-29 August School of Architecture
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BoA

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Ph. Cédric Dasesson

Adriano Dessì

Architect PhD, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Cagliari, where he coordinates the International Master's Program in Landscape Architecture. His research focuses on rural and urban transformations, territorial regeneration, and the relationship between environmental and productive landscapes, with particular attention to Sardinia and Mediterranean territories. His publications include *Le città della campagna. Il paesaggio rurale nel progetto urbano* (2019), and *Paesaggio che Avanza. Progetti di nuove nature nei territori post-industriali sardi* (2025), addressing landscape regeneration in post-industrial Sardinian territories.

Pier Francesco Cherchi

Architect PhD, Associate Professor of Architectural Design and Coordinator of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Architecture at the University of Cagliari. His research focuses on the adaptive reuse of industrial, architectural, and urban heritage. He has authored numerous books and scientific papers on these topics, including *Typological Shift: Adaptive Reuse of Abandoned Monumental Hospitals* (2016) and *Memories of Industrial Landscapes* (Memorie dei paesaggi industriali, 2018). Together with Marco Lecis, he designed the entrance building for the Serbariu abandoned coal mine in Carbonia, a project selected for exhibition at the 16th Biennale di Venezia (2018), and the Hospice Madonna.

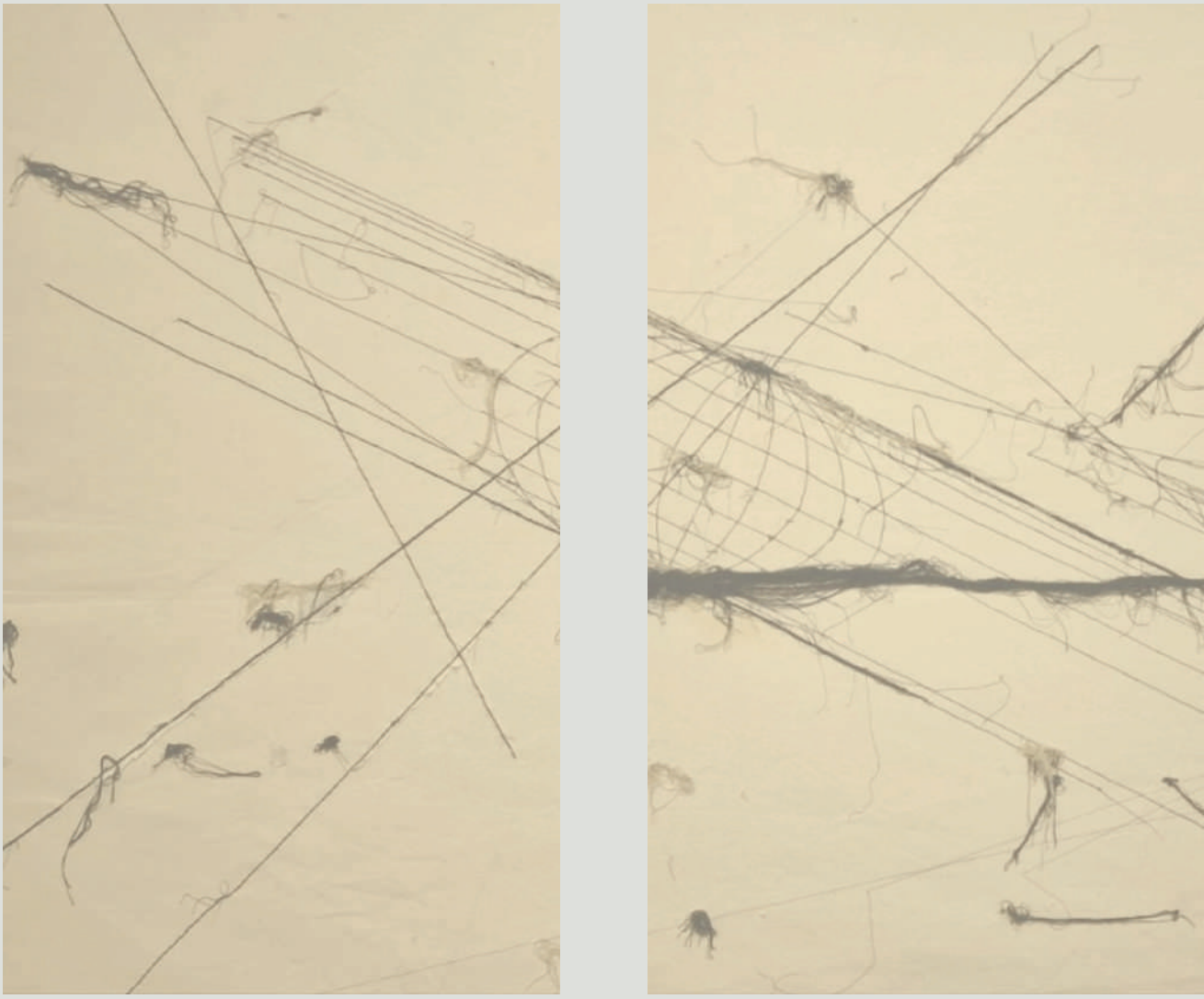
Marco Moro

Architect PhD, Research Fellow and Assistant Professor of Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Cagliari. He has been Visiting Scholar at the University of Auckland and Visiting Professor at the Universidad Católica del Norte, Chile. In 2022, he was appointed Postdoc Visiting Fellow at Harvard University for the project *The Architect as Educator.* His research explores campus design and university architecture as paradigms of transnational exchange in the postwar era, and the mutual influence between form and pedagogy in contemporary times. He authored the book *UNIVERSOSUD. Immagini, figure e archetipi di campus universitari in Cile e Argentina 1947-1967* (2025).

Architecture of the Fitting Chairs Welcome

Thirty years after the proclamation of Bigness, a vision of architecture conceived as a scalar device of urban power, we are now in a position to critically reassess its ambitions and limitations. That moment in architectural discourse, fueled by a strong confidence in growth, large-scale interventions, and the possibility of constructing a boundless urban whole, has progressively fractured under the pressure of the intertwined crises that shape our present. The very idea of global well-being has been unsettled, exposing widespread conditions of vulnerability, precarity, and uncertainty. As Denis Cosgrove anticipated in 2011, globalization has revealed itself not only as a sea of connections, but also as a complex system of shared fragilities. Architecture—among the most exportable cultural products of that moment—has increasingly distanced itself from the lived realities of place. This stance has contributed to the marginalization of weaker territories that are now confronting depopulation, deindustrialization, economic decline, limited access to essential services, and the erosion of civic rights.

Against this backdrop, a radical rethinking of architecture's role becomes imperative in order to identify new trajectories for territories facing the progressive depletion of both material and immaterial resources. So-called peripheral or marginal territories are no longer at the edge of architectural discourse; they have become critical observatories of present and future transformations. It is precisely within these conditions that alternative modes of building and inhabiting can be explored



Maria Lai, Fili al vento, Globo (arazzo), 1985. Stazione dell'Arte, Ulassai

and spatial formations can be reimagined. Here, the small-and-medium-scale is not is not a leftover of decline but a deliberate strategy of survival, adaptation, and regeneration. Far from suggesting a nostalgic return, this approach calls for a rediscovery of the right measure, that is, finely tuned, site-specific interventions that transform limitation into a resource and design into an act of attentive listening and spatial interpretation. This perspective is not new.

Since the late twentieth century, a range of architectural approaches has increasingly engaged with small- and medium-scale strategies in response to the progressive depletion of places and resources. Across both professional practice and architectural education, renewed attention has been given to reduced scales of intervention, incremental processes, and context-sensitive design projects, interpreting socio-economic contraction as an opportunity.

Today, in an era marked by the renewed prevalence of what Anna Tsing has defined as an *economy of appearances* (2005)—a cultural and economic regime in which value, growth, and development are produced and legitimized through visibility, narrative, and promise rather than through lasting material benefits—the crucial question for architecture is how "fitting" may be reframed as an operative principle and translated into design practices and educational frameworks, where reduction and contraction are understood not as limitations but as forms of knowledge.

This vision underpins the conceptual framework of EAAE AC/GA 2026, hosted by

the School of Architecture of Cagliari. With its low-density landscapes, imperfect processes of modernization, and still-intact material and immaterial resources, the island of Sardinia functions as a nexus within a broader constellation of shrinking territories united by the urgent need to rethink development paradigms and construct new forms of centrality rooted in care for place.

Therefore, investigating local conditions without endorsing localism, XS–S–M positions the small-and-medium-scale as a paradigm for architectural practice and education, through which wider implications can be critically examined across diverse yet interconnected disciplinary fields. Ultimately, do small and large scales operate as fixed oppositions, or can intermediate and relational scales emerge beyond extreme categorizations?

Isola dell'Asinara, near Tumbarino. Ph. Marco Moro, 2019

To address this question, XS–S–M is structured around the interplay of two key concepts:

Architecture | understood, through the lens of a regressive crisis, not as a condition of loss but as an opportunity to reframe architectural practice in response to emerging needs, reaffirming it as a cultural and artistic discipline engaged with questions of beauty, sustainability, and shared experience.

Fitting | conceived as a paradigm for architectural responses to depopulation, economic regression, resource optimization, and limits to consumption (energy, land, materials), articulating the search for the right measure through a deep and situated engagement with place.

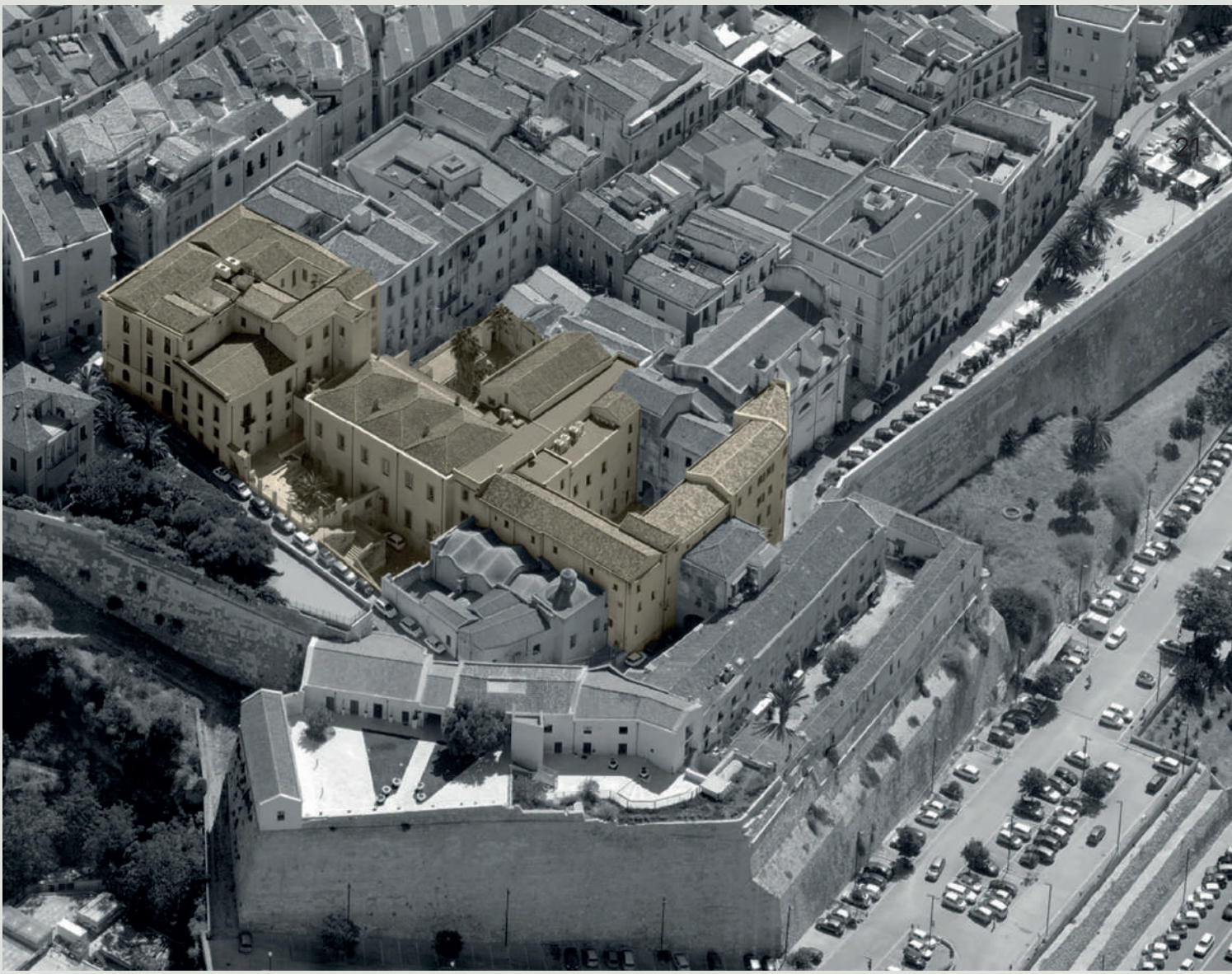
Costantino Nivola, Pergola Village, 1953. Museo Nivola, Orani

A small school, but perhaps, not a “small” school

The School of Architecture in Cagliari was established in 2000 within the Architecture degree program and officially became a Faculty in 2006. Architectural Chairs, Institutes, and Departments, however, had already been active since the second half of the nineteenth century. These two dates are highly significant: 2000 coincided with the adoption of the European Landscape Convention, while 2006 marked the approval of Italy’s first Piano Paesaggistico Regionale (Regional Landscape Plan). The growing centrality of landscape within disciplinary, cultural, and institutional frameworks was not incidental, but rather the expression of a broader cultural shift aimed at rethinking development and spatial practices through territorial specificity. Thus, while rooted in the legacy of the Modern Movement, the School has critically reinterpreted the very notion of progress. Over the past two decades, it has contributed to shaping a wider cultural sensitivity grounded in care for place, right measure, and the capacity to operate across scales. Through research, teaching, and design experimentation, the School has trained generations of architects to engage with fragile and evolving territorial conditions, positioning architecture as both a cultural practice and a form of critical inquiry. Consistent with this trajectory and its sustained focus on contemporary territories, the School has been a member of the EAAE for over fifteen years. In November 2025, it also joined the “NEB Goes South” network, becoming one of the first institutions admitted after the six founding schools.

Cagliari, a modern low-density city

Sardinia is an island situated at the heart of the Mediterranean. From the early medieval period onward, it developed a distinctive territorial structure based on fortified cities and villages, later expanding toward the sea and consolidating urban forms that continue to shape Cagliari today. Within the historic Castello district, still enclosed by its sixteenth-century walls, the School of Architecture occupies a complex of historic buildings that form part of the city's urban campus. The University of Cagliari, with 25,000 students across fifteen departments, is largely embedded within the historic city center. This close integration between university and urban space has shaped a contemporary campus model grounded in permeability, proximity, and the activation of public space, transforming the city into an open platform for cultural exchange and research. At the same time, Cagliari serves as the core of a wider metropolitan region (420,000 inhabitants), interconnected with surrounding towns and forming the most densely populated area of the island. While concentrating many of Sardinia's resources, this metropolitan hub remains embedded within a low-density territorial system and in constant interdependence with a dispersed network of smaller settlements. This territorial condition offers a critical field for exploring new spatial scales, local production systems, circular economies, and infrastructural strategies. In this context, architecture plays a key role in interpreting and shaping emerging forms of inhabitation, organization, and care.



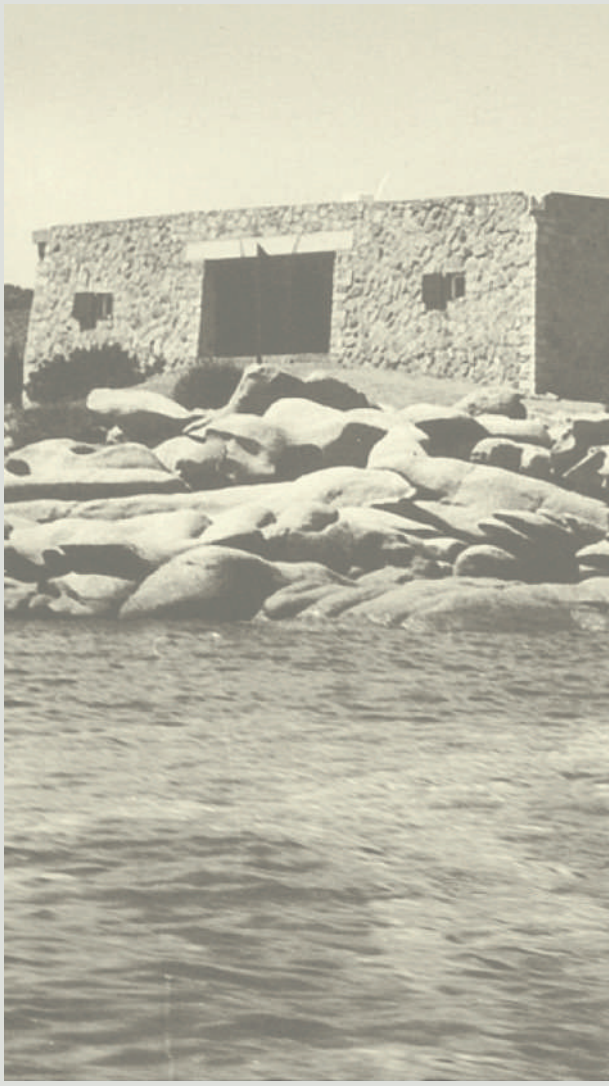
Nuraghe Santu Antine, Valle dei Nuraghi, Torralba. Ph. Silvia Orione, 2025

Sardinia, an island of territories

Some territories narrate themselves not only through their cities, but through the pauses and intervals of their landscapes. Sardinia is one of these: an island that is not isolated. Here, fragments of urban life are dispersed along the coast and across the interior, shaped by low density yet remaining central to architectural debate and education. From this perspective, Sardinia may be read in its anthropogeographical condition (V. Gregotti, 1966): an island constantly confronting its limits. Its measurable and traversable dimension—approximately 300 km from north to south and 150 km from east to west—brings into relation a dense network of villages, landscapes, and local constructive knowledge that counterbalance urban centrality. At the same time, its 2,000 km coastline allows the island to be explored and understood from the sea, offering an alternative spatial reading. This dual perspective informs the recent docufilm On the Sea Side (2023), which documents a circumnavigation of the island as a method for observing forms, memories, and ongoing transformations.

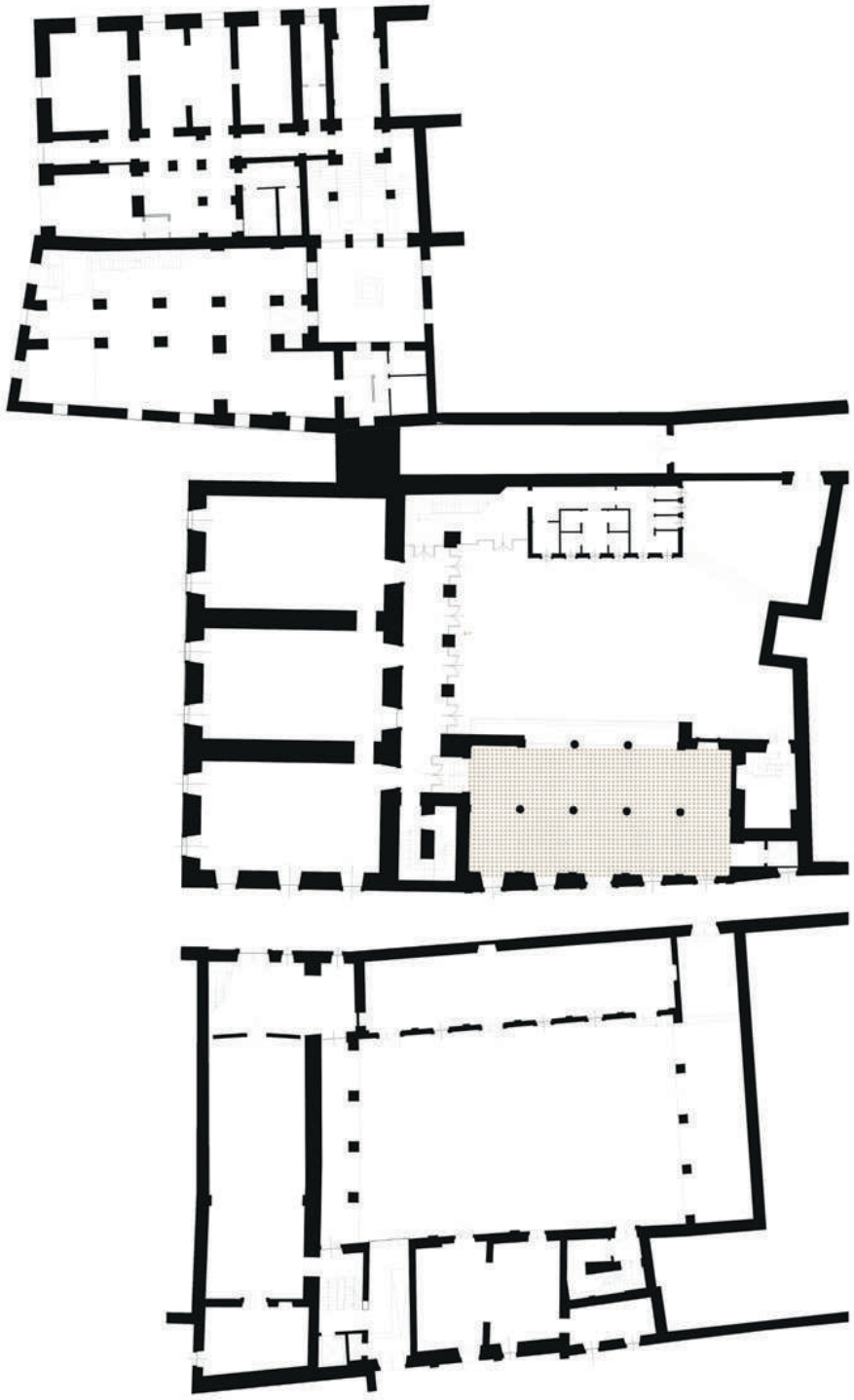
Archetypes of low density constitute foundational references within the pedagogical project of the School of Architecture in Cagliari. This approach is articulated through research and teaching lines focused on three territorial lenses: archaeology, production, and domesticity.

The archaeological territory represents a millennia-old spatial system marked by more than 8,000 nuraghi scattered across the island like a primordial code.



Marco Zanuso, Casa Arzale, 1964-65. Arzachena, Loc. Monti di Mola

These megalithic structures testify to a civilization capable of integrating territorial knowledge and cosmological awareness, shaping a city-territory vision currently under consideration for UNESCO recognition. The territory of production, shaped by nineteenth- and twentieth-century agricultural and mining enterprises, generated dispersed settlements and planned micro-cities embedded within the myth of the industrialized landscape. Today, many of these sites remain suspended between abandonment and reuse, calling for calibrated design approaches suited to areas that can no longer be repopulated through outdated paradigms. Among them, the former Sos Enattos Mine has recently been proposed as the site of a major international scientific infrastructure (Einstein Telescope) demonstrating how conditions of isolation and silence may be reinterpreted as strategic resources. Finally, the domestic territory reveals Sardinia as a laboratory for rethinking dwelling during the economic boom of the mid-twentieth century. While often framed as a form of soft colonization, many single-family houses built on the island demonstrate a critical engagement with modern language, shaped by careful observation of a landscape still governed by relatively intact natural systems.
Together, these perspectives frame Sardinia as an island of territories, or, a laboratory for exploring the possibilities of reduced scale where limitation becomes a design resource and XS–S–M can be tested as a paradigm for architectural practice and education.



Programme 26-29 August, 2026

WEDNESDAY
26 Aug

15:00 — **WELCOME & REGISTRATION**

Atrio delle Colonne, Corte d'appello 87

Historical City Tour

Self-guided & Free Tour
Cattedrale - Torre di San Pancrazio - Cittadella dei Musei - Bastioni

17:00 - 17:30 — **OPENING CEREMONY**

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

Francesco Mola
Rector of the University of Cagliari

Roberto Cavallo
EAAE President, TU Delft

Daniele Cocco
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

Ivan Blečić
Head of Department of Civil, Environmental Engineering and Architecture

Adriano Dessì
Local Representative for EAAE, University of Cagliari DICAAR

17:30 - 18:30 — **KEYNOTE LECTURE [1]**

MARIO ABIS
An alternative to the metropolitan planet

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

18:30 - 19:00 — **EXHIBITION OPENING**

LIGHT OF TOMORROW by VELUX 2026
Introduced by Tina Christensen

Corridoio Esposizioni, Corte d'appello 87

19:00 - 19:30 — **EXHIBITION OPENING**

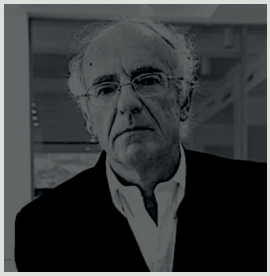
AFTER TWENTY / SCUOLA DI ARCHITETTURA DI CAGLIARI
Introduced by Sanna, Atzeni, Cadinu, Chiri, Giannattasio, Peghin, Sanjust

Aula Asili, Corte d'appello 48

20:00 - 22:00 — **WELCOME DINNER & COCKTAIL**

CHIOSTRO SANTA CROCE, Via Santa Croce 59

KL 1



THURSDAY
27 Aug

10:00 - 11:30 **PAPER SESSION / MORNING**

SESSION 1A-1B-1C-1D / IN-FORMS
SESSION 2A-2B / UN-BUILD
SESSION 3A-3B / HER(M)ITAGE
SESSION 4A-4B / EX-URBAN

11:30 - 12:00 **COFFEE BREAK**

12:00 - 13:00 **KEYNOTE LECTURE [2]**

NICOLÒ GALEAZZI & MARTINA SALVANESCHI / ASSOCIATES
Forms of Dialogue with Places

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

13:15 - 14:45 **LUNCH**

14:45 - 15:30 **MEET THE EAAE PARTNERS**

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

15:30-17:00 **PAPER SESSION / AFTERNOON**

SESSION 1A-1B-1C-1D / IN-FORMS
SESSION 2A-2B / UN-BUILD
SESSION 3A-3B / HER(M)ITAGE
SESSION 4A-4B / EX-URBAN

17:00 - 17:30 **COFFEE BREAK**

17:30 - 18:30 **KEYNOTE LECTURE [3]**

MARCO NAVARRA
Bosco Colto. Practices of Art and Architecture in Landscapes

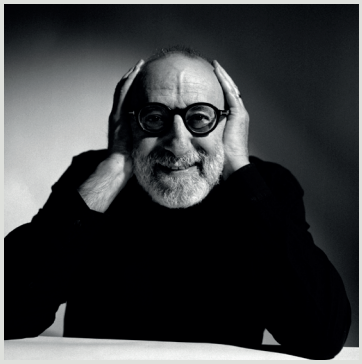
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

18:30 - 19:00 **EXHIBITION**

GENERATIVE HABITAT
Unica Space Force 2012-2026
MUACC, Via Santa Croce 63

KL 2

KL 3



FRIDAY
28 Aug

9:00 - 9:30 — **EXHIBITION**

VIAGEM SEM PROGRAMA
Corridoio Aule, Corte d'appello 87 / 2nd floor

9:30 - 10:30 — **WORKSHOP & ROUNDTABLES**

PEDAGOGIES OF THE FITTING / Teaching Architecture in a Time of Change
Curators: Pia Fricker, Sima Rouholamin, Débora Domingo Calabuig, Laurent de Wurstemberger, Peter Princen
Aula A, Corte d'appello 87 / ground floor

LIVING EDUCATION / How Live Lab projects connect architectural education and everyday life
Curator: Liesbeth Huybrechts
Aula Rossa, Corte d'appello 87 / 2nd floor

EDITING & PUBLISHING FOR ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION / Stoà Journal
Curators: Pier Francesco Cherchi, Alberto Calderoni
Aula Verde, Corte d'appello 87 / 2nd floor

PhD WORKSHOP / Imagine[ing] Research in Architecture
Curators: Marco Moro, Marianna Ascolese, Francesco Marras, David Escudero
Aula B, Corte d'appello 87 / ground floor

10:30 - 11:30 — **WORKSHOP & ROUNDTABLES [2]**

RELATE TO "L"
Curator: Winy Maas
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

11:30 - 12:00 — **COFFEE BREAK**

12:00 - 13:00 — **KEYNOTE LECTURE [4]**

JOÃO NUNES
Landscape and the Domesticated World
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

13:15 - 14:45 — **LUNCH**

14:45 - 16:30 — **EAAE GENERAL MEETING**
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

17:00 - 17:30 — **CONFERENCE CLOSING**
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

Roberto Cavallo, Adriano Dessì, Pier Francesco Cherchi, Marco Moro
EAAE 2026 Steering Committe

17:30-18:30 — **KEYNOTE LECTURE [5]**

LEOPOLD BANCHINI
Neotopia
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Corte d'appello 87

20:30 — **GALA DINNER**
Casa Clàt, viale Regina Margherita 55/57

SATURDAY
29 Aug

9:00 - 18:00 **MINING LANDSCAPE TOUR**

Masua – Porto Flavia – Carbonia
Guided Tour / all day with light-lunch included / distance: 60 min by bus

9:00 - 18:00 **NURAGIC LANDSCAPE TOUR**

Pozzo di Santa Cristina – Nuraghe Losa
Guided Tour / all day with light-lunch included / distance: 90 min by bus

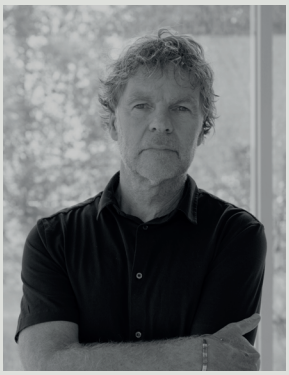
10:00 - 12:00 **COASTAL CITY WALK**

Via Roma – Su Siccu – Padiglione Nervi – Parco degli Anelli – Lazzaretto
Free Guided Tour / morning / distance: 90 min by foot

KL4

KL 5

RT2



Ph. Cédric Dasesson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keynote lecture
introduced by Adriano Dessì
an alternative to the metropolitan planet
MARIO ABIS
Aug 26 17:30
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Via Corte d'Appello 87
Italian sociologist and founder of the research institute Makno (1979), where he led studies on social change, political behavior, and the evolution of post-industrial Italian society. Since the early 1980s, his work has focused on the transformation of urban and territorial systems, including deindustrialization, demographic decline, and the socio-economic future of peripheral and rural communities. He has also developed research on housing, urban regeneration, and the cultural economy, establishing an international observatory on housing and design in 2003. A professor at IULM University, Abis has advised the Italian government on metropolitan strategic planning and collaborated with the G124 group led by Renzo Piano on urban peripheries. His research explores longevity and community resilience in Blue Zone territories, also in Sardinia, linking social cohesion, local culture, and sustainable development.
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forms of dialogue
ASSOCIATES
with places
ARCHITECTURE
Nicolò Galeazzi
Martina Salvaneschi
Aug 27 12:00
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Via Corte d'Appello 87
Architects and founders of Associates Architecture, based in Brescia, Italy, conceived as a laboratory where practice meets architecture and craftsmanship. The office is guided by a method that seeks the original idea of things, beginning with a deep study and understanding of the physical and cultural context in which it is called to operate. Each project takes shape through a tailored and patient process capable of expressing the identity of the places it engages with. Their projects span multiple scales and geographies, with works completed in Italy, Brazil, Spain, Mexico, and Portugal. Associates Architecture has been featured in major international exhibitions, including the 16th and 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, the São Paulo Architecture Biennial, the 5th Lisbon Architecture Triennale, and the Triennale di Milano. They have also been invited to deliver lectures and hold visiting professorships at leading Italian and European universities, and edited the recent publication Ordinary Beauty. An Italian Scenario (2025) which brings together the work of sixty-one Italian practices.
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MARCO
bosco colto
NAVARRA
Aug 27 17:30
Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Via Corte d'Appello 87
Italian architect, researcher, and professor of Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Catania. Founder of NOVA (Navarra Office Walking Architecture), his work investigates the relationship between architecture and landscape. He has developed a body of work focused on fragile territories and post-catastrophe environments, exploring architecture as a form of spatial repair and collective transformation. His projects investigate the relationship between geology, infrastructure, memory, and abandonment, proposing experimental design practices as active grounds for new forms of inhabitation and landscape regeneration. He has exhibited projects and installations at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Milan Triennale, the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. His work has been recognized internationally, including nominations for the Mies van der Rohe Award, the European Prize for Urban Public Space, as well as the Medaglia d'Oro for Italian Architecture. Alongside practice and research, he has authored numerous books on architecture and landscape transformation.
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Annual Conference + General Meeting
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ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026
exhibition
introduced by Antonello Sanna, Carlo Atzeni, Marco Cadinu, Giovanni Marco Chiri, Caterina Giannattasio, Giorgio Peghin, Paolo Sanjust
scuola di architettura di cagliari
AFTER TWENTY
curated by Stefano Cadoni, Francesco Marras, Stefano Mais, Silvia Mocci, Marco Moro, Elisa Pilia, Fabrizio Pusceddu
Aug 26 19:00
Aula Asili, Via Corte d'Appello 48
This exhibition presents the pedagogical framework and teaching culture of the School of Architecture of the University of Cagliari, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year 2026. The exhibition features projects developed within theoretical courses, architectural and urban design studios, as well as Bachelor's and Master's thesis projects. It reflects the academic paths of the Bachelor's Degree in Architecture, which admits 100 students each year, and the Master's Degree programmes in Architecture focused on Heritage, Landscape, and Sustainability. Design projects, physical models, and research outputs illustrate the diversity of themes and methodologies explored across the curriculum, addressing topics such as ancient and industrial archaeology, rural landscapes, educational spaces, modern planning and urban regeneration, among many others. Rather than a retrospective, the exhibition offers a reflection on where twenty years of architectural education and design experimentation have led, highlighting the School's current position and future directions, as well as its impact on the territories of Sardinia and the wider Mediterranean region.
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exhibition
introduced by Tina Christensen
light of tomorrow 2026
BY VELUX
Aug 26 18:30
Corridoio Esposizioni, Via Corte d'Appello 87
The competition and award challenges students to explore the theme of daylight to create a deeper understanding of this ever-relevant source of energy, light, and life. Every second year since 2004, the VELUX Group has invited students of architecture to participate in the Light of Tomorrow by VELUX, formerly known as the International VELUX Award for students of architecture. The aim of the competition and award is to engage with students of architecture about how to use sunlight and daylight as main sources of energy and light and how to ensure health and well-being of the people who live and work in buildings.Since the launch, it has grown into the largest competition and award of its kind with students from 800 schools, from 130 countries of all continents. Light of Tomorrow by VELUX 2026 is arranged in close collaboration with the International Union of Architects (UIA) and acknowledged by the following educational organizations: The European Association for Architectural Education, The American Institute of Architecture Students, the Architectural Research Centers Consortium, and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.
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Annual Conference + General Meeting
EAAE 2026
XS-S-M
ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026
exhibition
introduced by Carlo Atzeni, Ivan Blečić, Stefano Cadoni, Francesco Marras
unica space force 2012-2026
GENERATIVE HABITAT
Aug 27 18:30
Museo MUACC, Via Santa Croce 63
Generative Habitat is a set of architectural devices designed to activate the transformation of abandoned, underused, and undervalued public spaces. Rather than proposing permanent solutions, these interventions reveal the latent potential of places by enabling new forms of occupation, interaction, and collective appropriation. Through temporary and adaptable configurations, Generative Habitats encourage spaces to evolve over time, responding to changing needs, uses, and communities. They act as open frameworks for experimentation, capable of generating unexpected relationships between people, architecture, and the environment. Unica Space Force fixes space by working with limited resources, local materials, and collaborative construction methods, the collective demonstrates how small-scale architectural actions can produce meaningful spatial, social, and cultural impacts. Coordinated by a research group from the School of Architecture within DICAAR at the University of Cagliari, Unica Space Force has, since 2012, involved hundreds of students, researchers, local communities, institutions, and international partners in a growing network of experimental projects.
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ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026

exhibition

introduced by Adriano Dessì, Giovanni Battista Cocco

Viagem STUDY sem TRIP programa

Aug 28 9:00

Aula A, Via Corte d'Appello 87

This exhibition presents a selection of photographs produced during the study trip included in the Master's Degree programme, exploring travel as a pedagogical tool in architectural education. Moving between Lisbon and Porto, the journey allowed students to engage directly with places, buildings, and professional practices, fostering learning through observation and experience. A particularly significant moment was the visit to the office of Álvaro Siza, where students had the opportunity to meet the Portuguese master and discuss themes of contemporary architecture. The programme also included a visit to the atelier of Eduardo Souto de Moura, offering insight into the architectural design process through dialogue with members of his team. The journey concluded with a visit to the recently restored Torre dos 24 by Fernando Távora. Through images and travel notes, the exhibition reflects on the educational value of travel as a means of discovering architecture through direct experience, observation, and encounters with places, works, and leading figures.

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roundtable

curated by Pier Francesco Cherchi, Alberto Calderoni

editing&publish STOA JOURNAL in architecture education

with Mia Roth Cerina, Jörg Schröder, Martine De Maeseneer + students UNICA

Aug 28 9:30

Aula Verde, Via Corte d'Appello 87

Architectural education is shaped not only through teaching and design practice, but also through the ways knowledge is edited, communicated, and shared. This roundtable brings together educators, editors, and representatives of academic institutions to discuss the role of publishing in supporting learning and critical debate within schools of architecture. The roundtable is triggered by the experience of Stoà Journal, a successful Italian publishing initiative with a growing international profile. Conceived as a platform dedicated to methods and tools for teaching architectural design, Stoà Journal offers a case through which to reflect on the relationship between editorial practices and architectural pedagogy. From this starting point, the roundtable aims to foster a dialogue on publishing as an active component of architectural education and as a tool for building academic communities, exchanging ideas, and engaging broader audiences.

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Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026

workshop

curated by Liesbeth Huybrechts

live lab projects LIVING connect to the EDUCATION einstein telescope

with Liese Mertens, Frank Vanden Ecker, Massimo Faiferri, Ivan Blečić, Benedetta Medas

Aug 28 9:30

Aula Rossa, Via Corte d'Appello 87

In this workshop titled "Living Education: how Live Lab projects connect Architectural Education and Everyday Life" we will codesign a Live Lab Project to experience and debate its principles. In a Live project, designers, residents, policy makers and/or associations think about the sustainable change of a certain place or issue by 'making' something together at that place: "revealing" diverse human and non-human experiences of the daily life context and its challenges; "confronting" them with each other" "debating them" and "enabling people and environment to act differently in these challenges". We will use as a case study of the Einstein telescope project (a telescope that will be built to measure gravitational waves and gather knowledge about black holes) that is currently being prepared in both Belgium (where our school is situated) and Sardinia (where the conference is hosted). We will demonstrate the role Live Lab projects have played in revealing the spatial, ecological and societal challenges and potentials of such a project and critically discuss its potential and pitfalls.

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XS-S-M
ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
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roundtable

introduced by Roberto Cavallo, Adriano Dessì

WINY relate to L MAAS

Aug 28 10:30

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Via Corte d'Appello 87

The 'M' of MVRDV, Founding Partner and Principal Architect Winy Maas, has received international acclaim for his broad range of urban planning and building projects, across all typologies and scales. Driven by this dedication to green, user-defined, sustainable cities and spaces, Maas' leadership drives many of the office's award-winning projects. These include the Dutch Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hannover, WoZoCo in Amsterdam (1997), Rotterdam's Markthal (2014), Crystal Houses in Amsterdam (2018), the Tianjin Binhai Library (2017), New York's Radio Hotel and Tower (2022). In Maas' broad portfolio are also several masterplans, including a vision for the future of Greater Paris, the Left Bank in Bordeaux, and the waterfront of Oslo. Maas also designed and supervised the world horticultural exhibitionFloriade 2022 and supervised Eindhoven city centre from 2017 until 2022. Through TU Delft's The Why Factory founded in 2008, Maas challenges the boundaries of established standards to produce solutions that reimagine how we live, work, and play.

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XS-S-M
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workshop

curated by Marco Moro, Marianna Ascolese, Francesco Marras, David Escudero

imagine[ing] research in architecture

PhD WORKSHOP

with PhD candidates and Early Research Scholars from EAAE and UNICA

Aug 28 9:30

Aula B, Via Corte d'Appello 87

Contemporary architectural research operates within a paradoxical condition. On the one hand, academic research is increasingly shaped by scientific and quantitative evaluation frameworks, privileging standardized formats, measurable outputs, and text-based forms of knowledge production. On the other hand, we live in an age of unprecedented image production and consumption that have dramatically expanded the circulation, accessibility, and manipulation of visual content. Architecture occupies a peculiar position within this tension. This workshop starts from the assumption that images are not ancillary to architectural research but constitute one of its fundamental epistemic instruments. Through a carefully orchestrated process of selection, composition, interpretation, (intellectual) manipulation and re-composition, participants will explore how visual narratives can generate, transform, and communicate knowledge, and how research itself may be understood as an open field of visual inquiry.

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EAAE 2026

XS-S-M
ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
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roundtable

curated by Pia Fricker, Sima Rouholamin, Débora Domingo Calabuig, Laurent de Wurstemberger, Peter Princen

pedagogies of the fitting in times of change

EAAE PA AWARD

Aug 28 9:30

Aula A, Via Corte d'Appello 87

This participatory roundtable asks what kinds of architectural pedagogies are needed in a time of ecological pressure, technological acceleration, social transformation and material limits. Taking the conference theme XS-S-M: Architecture of the Fitting as a point of departure, the session approaches "fitting" not only as a question of scale, but as a pedagogical capacity: the ability to judge what is necessary, appropriate and responsible in relation to place, resources, communities and uncertain futures. Through short reflections by the EAAE Pedagogy Award finalists and an active discussion with participants, the session will consider what architectural education should continue to teach, what it may need to reconsider, and which new capacities students require when even the question of how, where and whether we should build has become urgent. The session aims to formulate shared pedagogical propositions for teaching architecture in a time of transition.

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XS-S-M
ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026

keynote lecture

introduced by Massimo Faiferri

landscape and the domesticated world

JOAO NUNES

Aug 28 12:00

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Via Corte d'Appello 87

Portuguese landscape architect and founder of PROAP – Estudos e Projectos de Arquitectura Paisagista, an internationally recognised practice based in Lisbon. He is Full Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera Italiana. His work spans landscape design, territorial strategies, and urban interventions across Europe, the Middle East, and beyond, with a strong focus on the cultural and ecological dimensions of landscape. Among his most acclaimed projects are the Jardim das Ondas at Expo Zaragoza, the Ribeira das Naus waterfront in Lisbon, and the Park Spoor Noord in Antwerp, all widely recognised and awarded for their design quality. He has also developed projects in Sardinia and is therefore familiar with the region's specific environmental and territorial conditions. Nunes' work is widely published and has received numerous international awards, reflecting a practice that combines conceptual clarity with a deep sensitivity to context, memory, and environmental processes.

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Annual Conference + General Meeting

EAAE 2026

XS-S-M
ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026

keynote lecture

introduced by Marco Lecis, Pier Francesco Cherchi

neotopia

LEOPOLD BANCHINI

Aug 28 18:00

Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima", Via Corte d'Appello 87

Swiss architect and founder of Leopold Banchini Architects, an internationally active practice based in Geneva. Educated at the Glasgow School of Art and EPFL Lausanne, he has developed a body of work spanning architecture, research, exhibition design, and pedagogy. His practice is known for exploring site-specific forms of construction, often working across architecture, craft, and collective making. Before establishing his office in 2016, he collaborated with B720 Arquitectos, and Groupß. His projects have received international recognition, including the Golden Lion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Swiss Art Award and the first price for the CEVA Champel public space competition. Alongside practice, he has taught widely in Europe, including at EPFL, the Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam, and the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD).

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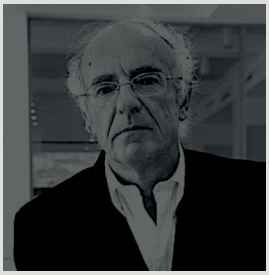
Ph. Cédric Dasesson

Keynote Speakers Aula Magna “Gaetano Cima”



Mario Abis

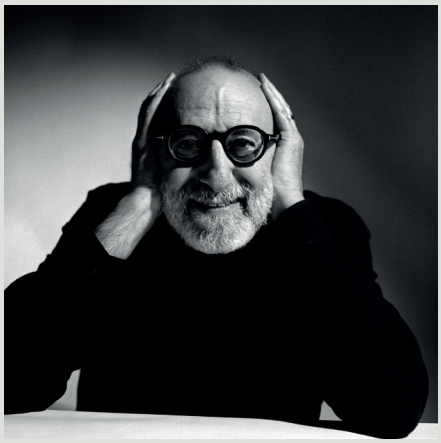
An Alternative to the Metropolitan Planet
Social and Economic Development in Small Cities
and Territorial Identities

Italian sociologist and founder of the research institute Makno (1979), where he led studies on social change, political behavior, and the evolution of post-industrial Italian society. Since the early 1980s, his work has focused on the transformation of urban and territorial systems, including deindustrialization, demographic decline, and the socio-economic future of peripheral and rural communities. He has also developed research on housing, urban regeneration, and the cultural economy, establishing an international observatory on housing and design in 2003. As professor at IULM University, Abis has advised the Italian government on metropolitan strategic planning and collaborated with the G124 group led by Renzo Piano on urban peripheries. His research explores longevity and community resilience in Blue Zone territories, also in Sardinia, linking social cohesion, local culture, and sustainable development.

Nicolò Galeazzi & Martina Salvaneschi
ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTURE

Forms of Dialogue with Places

Associates Architecture, based in Brescia, Italy, is conceived as a laboratory where practice meets architecture and craftsmanship. The office is guided by a method that seeks the original idea of things, beginning with a deep study and understanding of the physical and cultural context in which it is called to operate. Their projects span multiple scales and geographies, with works completed in Italy, Brazil, Spain, Mexico, and Portugal. Associates Architecture has been featured in major international exhibitions, including the 16th and 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, the São Paulo Architecture Biennial, the 5th Lisbon Architecture Triennale, and the Triennale di Milano. They have also been invited to deliver lectures and hold visiting professorships, and edited the recent publication *Ordinary Beauty. An Italian Scenario* (2025) which brings together the work of sixty-one Italian practices.



Marco Navarra

Bosco Colto
Practices of Art and Architecture in Landscapes

Italian architect, researcher, and professor of Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Catania. Founder of NOWA (Navarra Office Walking Architecture), his work investigates the relationship between architecture and landscape. He has developed a body of work focused on fragile territories and post-catastrophe environments, exploring architecture as a form of spatial repair and collective transformation. His projects investigate the relationship between geology, infrastructure, memory, and abandonment, proposing experimental design practices as active grounds for new forms of inhabitation and landscape regeneration. He has exhibited projects and installations at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Milan Triennale, the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. His work has been recognized internationally, including nominations for the Mies van der Rohe Award, the European Prize for Urban Public Space, as well as the Medaglia d'Oro for Italian Architecture. Alongside practice and research, he has authored numerous books on architecture and landscape transformation.

João Ferreira Nunes

Landscape and the Domesticated World

He is a Portuguese landscape architect and founder of PROAP – Estudos e Projectos de Arquitectura Paisagista, an internationally recognised practice based in Lisbon. He is Full Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana. His work spans landscape design, territorial strategies, and urban interventions across Europe, the Middle East, and beyond, with a strong focus on the cultural and ecological dimensions of landscape. Among his most acclaimed projects are the Jardim das Ondas at Expo Zaragoza, the Ribeira das Naus waterfront in Lisbon, and the Park Spoor Noord in Antwerp, all widely recognised and awarded for their design quality. He has also developed projects in Sardinia and is therefore familiar with the region's specific environmental and territorial conditions. Nunes' work is widely published and has received numerous international awards, reflecting a practice that combines conceptual clarity with a deep sensitivity to context, memory, and environmental processes.

Leopold Banchini

Neotopia

Swiss architect and founder of Leopold Banchini Architects, an internationally active practice based in Geneva. Educated at the Glasgow School of Art and EPFL Lausanne, he has developed a body of work spanning architecture, research, exhibition design, and pedagogy. His practice is known for exploring site-specific forms of construction, often working across architecture, craft, and collective making. Before establishing his office in 2016, he collaborated with B720 Arquitectos, and Group8. His projects have received international recognition, including the Golden Lion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Swiss Art Award and the first price for the CEVA Champel public space competition. Alongside practice, he has taught widely in Europe, including at EPFL, the Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam, and the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD). Recent projects include Round About Bath in Logroño, Spain, and Dar El Farina in Morocco's Al Haouz region, a rural house shaped by local materials, rammed earth, and traditional water infrastructures.

Winy Maas

Relate to “L”

The ‘M’ of MVRDV, Founding Partner and Principal Architect Winy Maas, has received international acclaim for his broad range of urban planning and building projects driven by dedication to green, user-defined, sustainable cities and spaces. Among the office’s award-winning projects the Dutch Pavilion in Hannover (2000), WoZoCo in Amsterdam (1997), Rotterdam’s Markthal (2014), Crystal Houses in Amsterdam (2016), the Tianjin Binhai Library (2017), the Glass Farm in Schijndel (2013), New York’s Radio Hotel and Tower (2022), Amsterdam’s Valley (2022) and the Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, which opened its doors in Rotterdam end of 2021. In Maas’ broad portfolio are also several masterplans, including a vision for the future of Greater Paris, the Left Bank in Bordeaux, and the waterfront of Oslo. Maas also designed the world horticultural exhibition Floriade 2022 and supervised Eindhoven city centre (2017-22). Through TU Delft’s The Why Factory founded in 2008, Maas challenges the boundaries of established standards to produce solutions that reimagine how we live, work, and play.

Ph. Cédric Dasesson

Conference Session 1 IN-FORMS

In 1964, reflecting on the “goodness of fit,” Christopher Alexander proposed that form emerges from a dual coherence between the internal logic of its structure and its consistency with the surrounding context. In this sense, it was understood as the result of interacting forces, where the form is the solution to the problem; the context defines the problem. The diagram thus became a key instrument of design knowledge, enabling architects to verify fitting through the interplay between contextual forces and spatial configurations. Although later eclipsed by other theories that challenged its deterministic implications, revisiting the goodness of fit appears particularly relevant in light of current conditions and emerging paradigms of contemporary design. In today’s shrinking and rarefied landscapes, the force lines that once structured relationships between form and context—between people and places—are increasingly weakened and eroded by processes of social and economic contraction. In those territories affected by deindustrialization and seemingly irreversible depopulation, architecture is compelled to operate within conditions of depletion, incompleteness, and suspension. However, a crucial question emerges regarding the contemporary role of architecture, that is, how can form actively and productively address these processes, rather than remain a marginal outcome of formless or purely strategic responses?

To pose this question is to reaffirm architectural and landscape formations as operative fields capable of rearticulating relationships, intensities, and spatial hierarchies. In this perspective, shrinkage and contraction do not imply the absence of form but the necessity of rethinking these processes through forms able to give measure, structure, and direction to territories marked by depletion and suspension. In other words, reinterpreting the goodness of fit today means engaging a spectrum of approaches aimed at condensing those weak force lines that shape the built and natural environments of rarefied yet deeply stratified territories:

theoretical and critical positions grounded in design research;

architectural and landscape design practices emerging from conditions of shrinkage and contraction;

territorial and urban strategies whose spatial effects materialize as small-and-medium-scale interventions;

drawings, diagrams, and artifacts as tools of inquiry in architectural pedagogy and education;

aesthetics of incompleteness, adaptation, and deliberate suspension of architecture

SESSION CHAIRS

Marco Lecis, University of Cagliari
Benedetta Rubattu, University of Cagliari
Carla Sechi, University of Cagliari

1 A IN-FORMS

Drift spaces: design research in eastern Naples

Marianna Ascolese, Alberto Calderoni
University of Naples "Federico II", Department of Architecture

Keywords
Marginal territories, Residual spaces, Situated transformation, Design as knowledge

In critical contexts, architectural design can be interpreted as a form of knowledge whose operative capacity emerges when consolidated spatial, institutional, and environmental frameworks reveal conditions of crisis and discontinuity. Operating across marginal conditions – peripheral territories, dismissed industrial landscapes, and interstitial urban spaces – the project becomes a critical device for reading, recognising, and transforming complex spatial configurations.
The eastern area of Naples constitutes the field of investigation of this paper. During the twentieth century, this territory played a central role in the industrial development of Southern Italy. Subsequent processes of deindustrialisation and abandonment have produced a condition in which urban, infrastructural, and environmental systems overlap without stable hierarchies. Rather than approaching these conditions through conventional planning strategies (Twemlow, Cardoso, 2024), the research1 investigates residual spaces as transitional environments in which fragility becomes an active dimension for design inquiry (Easterling, 2014).
In particular, the coastal area of San Giovanni a Teduccio is assumed as a critical case study. Marked by infrastructural discontinuities, residual industrial landscapes, and fragile public domains, the waterfront reveals a fragmented spatial condition that resists unified planning visions. In this place, the project operates through processes of adaptation and small-scale interventions aimed at revealing latent structures and redefining the relationships between land, water, infrastructure, and collective use (Sennett, 2018).
The adopted methodology is grounded in the interaction between teaching, research, and action, understanding design as a device for knowledge production. Napoli Est becomes an urban laboratory in which students, researchers, public institutions, and local organisations participate in processes of collective investigation and negotiation. Through design studios, workshops, seminars, and field-based activities, the research explores marginal territories as spaces capable of activating incremental and situated transformations.
These experiences outline a research model applicable to other critical and fragile contexts. Knowledge emerges through direct engagement with material conditions and cooperative processes, re-anchoring research within an empirical and exploratory dimension (Ingold, 2015; Spahn, 2025).

Architectures of Re-fit.
Reuse, proximity, and territorial care in a fragile valley

Emilia Corradi, Kevin Santus
Politecnico di Milano, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies

Keywords
Inner areas, Caring architecture, Reuse, Space for commons, Risk

Revisiting the notion of "goodness of fit" (Alexander 1964), the contribution examines the relationship between form and context in fragile, contracting territories, where socio-spatial relations are increasingly weakened by depopulation, infrastructural abandonment, and environmental instability. In such conditions, the "fit" cannot be assumed as a pre-existing equilibrium but emerges as a projective and situated construction.
The contribution towards a selection of design projects developed within the Architectural Design Studio "Strategies and Architectures for Fragile Contexts" (Politecnico di Milano, 2025–2026), focusing on the Roveto Valley (Central Italy) want to describe the role of architectural design as an instrument to re-fit the abandoned persistence with a new perspective for the community to reactivate the future of the territories, facing the increasing presence of environmental and social fragilities. The students engaged with disused railway buildings and underused infrastructures, transforming them into collective spaces and distributed first-aid facilities embedded within the territorial system.
The interventions in which reuse operates as both an architectural strategy and a form of territorial care are conceived as small- and medium-scale spatial devices. The projects, through precise, limited transformations, redefine accessibility, proximity, and spatial hierarchies, establishing new relationships among settlements, infrastructure, and open landscapes. Beyond the adaptation, projects selectively reinforce specific spatial relations, contributing to the reconfiguration of fragmented contexts.
The goal is to intervene on a limited scale, producing territorial effects by condensing and rearticulating weakened force lines. Architectural form operates as an agent that structures emerging spatial configurations and mediates between inherited material traces and evolving socio-environmental demands.
By foregrounding design as a situated and operative practice, the contribution proposes a contemporary interpretation of the "goodness of fit" as a dynamic, design-driven process in which the project's scale plays a critical role in shaping the spatial and relational qualities of fragile territories.

Reframing forms and measures of the landscape. A case study in the southern Apuan Alps

Edoardo Cresci
University of Florence, Department of Architecture

Keywords
Architecture, Landscape, Forms, Measures, Design studio, Camaiore

Pier Paolo Pasolini opened his short film "La forma della città" with a shot that zoomed out from what he called a "foreign body": a modern building that disrupted the silhouette of the hill town of Orte against its tufa cliff. His discomfort came not from the building itself but from its failure to accord with its surroundings: a failure of 'fit'.
This article aims to present the work of a design research studio conducted at the University of Florence in the hilly territory of Camaiore, on the southern slopes of the Apuan Alps, where a network of ancient trails still connects fourteen small villages.
Here the built fabric is losing its character, the trails are becoming difficult to follow, and the boundary between settlement and surrounding landscape is left unattended.
Through field research, these fragments were reinterpreted as a system of latent relationships with significant potential. Drawings, maps, and atlases functioned as tools to condense forces into a legible field, devices through which the project becomes thinkable.
From this ground, a series of architectural proposals were developed. Abandoned stone ruins along the paths are transformed into shelters for temporary dwelling; at the same time, the edges of three villages are reconfigured through small additions accommodating collective functions. In both cases, form emerges as a response to a specific condition of the place, and architecture is called upon to give measure to what is dispersed, suspended, or weakened, yet may still, in some way, find new life.
The projects try to demonstrate that fitting can be achieved through the ability to reveal, gather, and intensify existing relationships and that architecture, in this sense, does not have to impose itself on the landscape, but to work with it, to become it, to make it perceptible once again, and thus habitable.

Living the landscape.
Towards new scenarios for re-inhabiting reclaimed farmlands

Alex Ferletti, Elisabetta Nascig
University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture

Keywords
land reclamation, Reactivation, Phenomenology, Farmhouses

Land reclamation—from the Latin bonum facere, meaning "to make good" — can be defined as the activity of adapting land and water for higher production and social coexistence. It is the concept of "integral land reclamation", theorized and initiated in Italy between the two World Wars, that allowed for the stable occupation of new lands by creating self-sufficient, low-density settlements based on sharing and cooperation: the colonial house. Over the last century, the progressive abandonment of the countryside and the mechanization of agriculture, which reduced human stewardship, accelerated their gradual decline. Looking at the settlement model of farmhouses today offers an opportunity to rethink new selfsufficient micro-communities, capable of accommodating the functions and services necessary to sustain contemporary life within "territorial cells". These function as elements of a proximity network capable of strengthening autonomy and quality of life, recreating the relational fabric that was once spontaneous while simultaneously introducing new sustainable development models integrated with the agricultural one.
This paper proposes to hypothesize methods for transforming the landscape to counter abandonment, with the aim of turning farmhouses into catalysts of experience. This approach is supported by the thought of J. N. Baldeweg, who interprets the landscape not from an aesthetic point of view, but as a set of physical phenomena in which architecture "carves out" space, thereby making it understandable to humans. An example is the Casa de la Lluvia, where architecture interprets the landscape, the form embraces the context, and provides a privileged viewpoint over the surroundings.
The building, interpreted as a sensory and psychological experience, allows the landscape to be experienced phenomenologically. Buildings reveal the "invisible" and manifest physical phenomena, such as light and gravity. In this vision, they become a tool to frame the context and measure the landscape, clarifying its scale and proportion in relation to nature, with the ultimate goal of raising awareness and promoting the reactivation of these spatialities.

Strangeness, Ecognosis, and the dark ecologies of the Waning River

Chris French
University of Edinburgh, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Keywords
Dark ecology, Agrilogistics, Contaminated landscapes

Cities," Koolhaas declares, are "places of cuteness," of a whimsicality enabled by the rationality that dominates the countryside. Urbanity and countryside are in opposition: "In terms of contrast to the city," Koolhaas states, the countryside has the "potential to be really its opposite;" against its cuteness, vast rural-industrial sheds are beautiful, "the definition of the sublime." But the formal changes that Koolhaas observes – which undoubtedly affect the periphery – are driven by urban logics. The apparent radicality of the contemporary countryside in Koolhaas' thesis leaves unchallenged the relationship which Marx once described: the countryside remains subject to forces of urbanization.

To re-read a peripheral landscape I will linger on the strangeness of the small, as an alternative to the vastness of the sublime. Through Timothy Morton's Dark Ecology, which offers a rebuke of agrilogistics, I will describe a design-research project which aims toward an 'ecognosis', an 'awareness' of an industrial-agricultural landscape enmeshed within a specific dark ecology. The project is based in a town in North Yorkshire, England. In 2024, this town was declared the most contaminated site in Britain. Firefighting foams containing PFAS had been (legally) discharged into lagoons that periodically overflowed, contaminating the surrounding land, river, and groundwater. The project explores ways to inhabit this contaminated landscape. Small, speculative interventions located along the river are folded into morphological studies of agricultural settlements. Recalling the geological erratics which populate the surrounding hills, the forms of these interventions negotiate weathering and decay. Through these interventions I will argue that if we are to reassess architecture's relationship with the countryside, or other peripheral territories, it should not be through an agrilogistic project validated by bigness, but by reconsidering how forces are made present, and retain their strangeness; we must become "accustomed to strangeness that doesn't become less strange through acclimation."

Giving form to uncertainty.
Adaptability and reconstruction in post-disaster territories

Francesca Lucenti
University of Lisbon, Faculty of Architecture

Keywords
Post-disaster, Adaptability, Goodness of fit, Uncertainty, Lisbon 1755

In 1964, Christopher Alexander proposed that the quality of an architectural form lay in its capacity to respond coherently to the forces generated by its context: the goodness of fit as a measure of adaptation between problem and solution. This conceptual framework, grounded in the legibility of context and the stability of its forces, presupposes conditions that disaster — in its capacity to erase consolidated relations, hierarchies and spatial references — radically undermines.
In territories affected by catastrophic events, context is no longer stable or legible: the forces Alexander intended to map are dispersed, contradictory, or simply absent. In this void, uncertainty is not a temporary obstacle but a structural condition shared by affected communities, permeating both emotional and design dimensions. Responding with tools oriented toward restoring a pre-existing equilibrium means misreading the very nature of the post-disaster condition.
This contribution proposes to reread Alexander's goodness of fit through post-disaster adaptability, understood as the capacity to change while accepting that things will be different. Adaptability recognises in disaster an opportunity to build better conditions. The goodness of fit thus becomes a diachronic capacity: form is good not when it solves a defined problem, but when it remains open and oriented toward transformation over time.
The reconstruction of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake anticipates this logic. The Pombaline plan did not restore the pre-event city but radically reinterpreted it. The gaiola pombalina incorporated uncertainty as a constructive principle, anticipating the diachronic dimension that Alexander had not theorised.
The contribution argues that an architectural theory of post-disaster adaptability must articulate three critical nodes: uncertainty as a constitutive design condition; participation and social learning as processes through which form transforms over time; small and medium scale as the privileged operative dimension for calibrated, reversible and incremental interventions in territories marked by suspension.

Enabling constraints: How to ecologize architectural design?

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Keywords
Ecology, Disruption, Constraints, Media theory

Is the current preoccupation of architecture with becoming 'ecological' by coming up with ever more efficient formal solutions, genuinely ecological materials, focusing on local demands or smarter technologies to stay within CO_2 benchmarks is perpetuating architecture's humanist myth? Despite the agreed upon necessity of "ecologizing" design by focusing on questions of co-existences and shared agency, by calling for "fitting" solutions depending on specific situations and loci, architecture's fundamental tenets appear to remain unchanged: it is still the centered and rational subject that organizes an ever more complex object-world through increasingly sophisticated tools of representation and control.
Rather we should look to design practices treating constraints as enabling structures that (Juarrero, 2023; Massumi, 2014). The recognition of ecological limitations should be perceived as enabling opportunities for designers to partake in actively conditioning the conditions that condition us (Peters 2015). Drawing on relational space theory, ecological thinking, and systemic analysis, boundaries do not simply mark ends or signify differences, they also activate virtualities, potentials and contingency.
Situated "fitting" is not an antidote to the global capitalist production of space. Coming from cultural techniques studies I consider architecture as material and materializing media that rely on conditioning how we understand, represent and design the built environment. By actively exploring new planning and design media (e.g. mapping, diagrammatic reasoning, interactive "graph-games," scripted disruptions and participatory design labs etc.) to navigate systemic complexity and manage disruptive, contingent events I will argue for an architecture capable of "unfitting" the existing conditions. After all, architecture if it wants to "ecologize" it can not simply represent a particular situation or solve a functional problem in a "fitting" way. Rather, architecture "causes", not in the sense of producing an effect but in the sense of triggering a contentious conflict that 'un-fits' the situation to produce new attachments (Stengers, 2005).

Peripheral narratives as a prefiguration of conceptual paradigms

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Keywords
Tropical architecture, Critical practice, Social engagement, Climate performability, Contextual sensitivity

The research is based on the relationship between traditionally dominant and less represented narratives in architectural history. The practices by which architectural knowledge was exported, imported or translated are analysed and evaluated based on the relationship between the cultures of the centre and the cultures of the periphery, whose culturally defined domains are thereby re-examined. Focusing on the architectural experiences of the Global South, it transfigures the local narratives into the globally valuable set of architectural approaches. Starting from the theoretical point of view, it confronts the discourse of modernity with practices which deviated from the modern canon. By in-depth analysis of the work by architects Hassan Fathy, Andre Ravereau, Charles Correa, Yasmeen Lari etc. but also Rural Studio, Ana Heringer, Francis Kerre, Tatiana Bilbao etc. it reveals their social, economic and ecological impact. At the same time, it reveals the design approaches arising from the physical and spiritual realities of the peripheral communities. The identified architectural operations are then processed through a new creative synthesis, through analytical drawings and conceptual models. The resulting concepts are open to universal interpretations. The perspectives through which they can be viewed are: compositions of the (un)finished, core housing, architecture of (in)accessible resources, adaptability of walls, floors and ceilings, earth building techniques, cross-section complexity, multipurpose porch, public large-span structures, enclosed courtyard, open room, construction modularity, community space and architectural activism etc. The specificities of architectural approaches from a seemingly handicapped hemisphere of the earth, viewed from an inverted perspective thus offer the possibility of synthesizing new, valuable and purposeful insights. The research was applied as a basis of a seminar course in the final year of study.

Minimal measures, necessary ordinary: Small design devices in the alpine context

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Keywords
Fineness, Adaptation, Fragmentation, Ordinary, Mountain Marginality

In mountain territories marked by demographic and economic contraction, architectural design attains operative efficacy through the dimension of small scale and the "necessary ordinary". "Measure" is understood not as a quantitative parameter, but as a qualitative device capable of condensing relationships, uses, and local conditions. Within this framework, the detail is no longer subordinate to a larger system but assumes a generative role: it is within the at the smallest scale that design engages necessity and renders visible a situated order, emerging from incremental practices and small-scale interventions.
The present reflection is situated at the intersection of studies on mountain fragility, adaptive practices and incompleteness, and approaches that foreground the role of the "minimal" and the "ordinary" in design. Within these fields, the relationship between form and context challenges compositional models grounded in completed totalities, privileging instead reversible and incremental processes. The micro-scale thus emerges as a critical point in which tensions between use, structure, and contingency are inscribed. Alpine territories constitute a privileged field of observation: rarefied landscapes marked by discontinuities and the progressive weakening of settlement structures. Spontaneous forms and minimal devices - shelters, enclosures, provisional extensions – emerge, eluding formal disciplinary codification.
The paper investigates how contemporary architectural practices in mountain regions must engage with the ordinary and with the adaptation of forms to contingent conditions. In vernacular architectures, the relationship between context and material becomes a generative principle, whereby the site acts as a co-author of the project. Local materials operate as an operative matrix guiding geometries, construction techniques, and functional devices, inscribing design within a continuity of resources, climate, and practices of use. From this perspective, architecture is understood as both measure and device of the territory: a situated practice capable of interpreting and making visible the latent conditions from which it emerges.

The sacred landscape of Thebes: layers of memory, heritage and community

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Keywords
Cultural landscape, Heritage, Memory and community, Egypt, Reuse

The Theban Necropolis on Luxor's West Bank represents a site of unparalleled world-historical significance. Since 1983, the Hungarian Archaeological Mission in Thebes has conducted systematic field research within the "Tombs of the Nobles," focusing on the excavation and restoration of a complex funerary ensemble dating primarily to the New Kingdom (16th–11th centuries BC).
The site's history is a spacial palimpsest of continuous reuse and transformation. Following the Roman era, the tombs faced centuries of neglect and looting until the 19th-century birth of modern Egyptology. By the early 20th century, the village of Gurna had organically integrated into the necropolis, with vernacular structures built directly atop ancient tombs and burial shafts. This unique vernacular coexistence became the catalyst for Hassan Fathy's word famous "New Gurna" project—a pioneering effort in community-led planning and vernacular architecture. Despite Fathy's intervention, the original village persisted until its final relocation in 2008, which finally allowed for comprehensive archaeological access.
Parallel to the excavations, our mission (2015–2025) has documented Fathy's Egyptian oeuvre, with a specific focus on the evolution of New Gurna. Today, a profound spiritual and social connection remains; our excavation teams consist of the descendants of Gurna's former inhabitants. This presentation analyzes the spatial dynamics of the Theban Sacred Landscape, the intersection of Fathy's architectural legacy with the ancient site, and the theoretical challenges of restoration. Ultimately, we explore how memory and the "architecture of reuse" define the current preservation strategy in this complex heritage environment..

SESSION CHAIRS

Pier Francesco Cherchi, University of Cagliari
Lavinia Maria Dondi, Politecnico di Milano

1B IN-FORMS

Holobiont: design-research and the architectures of extraction

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Keywords
Post-Extractive territories, Architectural design pedagogy, Holobiont thinking, Relational mapping

Coal extraction shaped several regions in Europe and beyond as a territorial, social, and architectural project tied to technological optimism, welfare ambition, and modernisation. Today, these landscapes reveal the afterlife of extraction through conditions of ecological degradation, infrastructural obsolescence, and socio- economic reduction. This paper examines how post-extractive territories can operate as critical frameworks for architectural design pedagogy. Over the 2025-2026 academic year, the Holobiont Design Research Studio (DRS), a masters design studio in the School of Architecture at University College Dublin, engaged with the South Wales Valleys as a post-extractive landscape territory. The studio approached the Valleys not simply as sites of industrial decline, but as globally entangled energy landscapes in which local territories were historically embedded within wider planetary systems.

Grounded in the concept of the holobiont, the DRS adopted interdependence and relational thinking as both its ethos and method. Using a design-research methodology in interconnected cycles, drawing and critical mapping became the means of investigating architecture as networks of symbiotic connection – the primary mode of inquiry to render visible and invisible territorial systems, including energy flows, ecosystems, infrastructures, and social relations across micro, meso, and macro scales. The collective Faniffesto (Welsh for manifesto) produced by the studio as one of its design outcomes established architectural representation as a speculative and projective practice capable of spatialising radical post-carbon futures.

Holobiont DRS exemplifies a pedagogical model rooted in situated practices of fitting for post-extractive territories marked by depletion, contraction, and uncertainty. As such, the paper contributes by proposing a transferable pedagogical framework which reframes post-coal territories as critical sites through which architecture can rediscover relational, multi-scalar, and ecologically attuned modes of practice, where local challenges can become generators of new architectural imaginaries rather than conditions of deficit.

From Bigness to Invisibility.
The subsurface as a strategy of fitting in heritage landscapes

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Keywords
Underground, Interiority, Displacement, Section, Visibility

Large-scale architecture has long been associated with logics of autonomy, visibility, and formal assertion. Today, especially in heritage landscapes – but not only – this position appears increasingly untenable, while visibility itself becomes a problematic condition, often addressed through surface-based and image-oriented strategies.
Within this framework, the paper proposes to interpret an emerging tendency – minor yet significant – as a possible counter-trend: rather than asserting themselves or mimicking the context, certain interventions choose to conceal themselves within the ground. Through a displacement below ground level, architecture drastically reduces its visible form without renouncing spatial and programmatic complexity. This does not imply a reduction of the intervention, but a redefinition of its measure: a measure of the visible rather than of the built. The reduction of visible presence does not imply a renunciation of form, but a shift of focus toward the construction of interior space.
The recourse to the subsurface does not merely resolve issues of contextual insertion, but entails a profound transformation of architectural conditions. Architecture becomes ground – opaque, massive, continuous – and finds in section and light its primary design tools. Space is constructed through subtraction, excavation, compression, and controlled illumination, producing interior conditions often more complex than those of fully emergent buildings.
Within the XS–S–M framework, this tendency reveals a paradox: large-scale interventions assume a minimal visible presence. The renunciation of form does not coincide with a renunciation of space, but with its intensification. In this sense, the subsurface is neither a technical solution nor a defensive response, but a conscious design strategy capable of withdrawing from the logic of appearances without abandoning architectural inquiry. The paper takes museum architecture as a privileged field of observation, where this tendency becomes particularly explicit, without exhausting its broader implications.

Pocket parks. Student drawings and contemporary projects in Krakow

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Keywords
Pocket park, Green spaces in the city, Urban space reclaimed, Architecture education, Drawing skill

The development of modern cities contributes to the shortage of green spaces within their boundaries. It is necessary to utilize and revitalize undeveloped spaces into small gardens, providing residents with a place for recreation, relaxation, and education. Pocket gardens (or mini-park) strengthen the relationships between people, places, and their history. These interventions, tailored precisely to a specific location, transform constraints into a resource that generates a new quality of space. Small gardens are excellent research tools in architectural education, both through observation and creation. Their small scale and "adaptability" teach an economic approach to design and architectural education.
The article presents new topics for students of the Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology (Poland), introduced in freehand drawing classes:
pocket garden of dreams – drawing from imagination; inspiration with organic form in the creation of architecture in a small garden – plein air; small gardens in Krakow – drawing from nature.
The article also presents selected contemporary pocket parks in Krakow. They are characterised by a high degree of functional and thematic diversity. They refer to the context of the places and provide engaging outdoor educational spaces that combine recreational and cognitive functions. Pocket parks allow residents to connect with nature, which is particularly important for the elderly, children, and people with limited mobility.
The article concludes that Krakow's pocket gardens improve the quality of urban space and residents' lives, encourage various social activities, and promote an active and healthy lifestyle. They have significant ecological, social, and urban planning potential, which is why they are increasingly considered an important element of sustainable urban development. In the education of future architects, they serve as inspiring examples of small-scale projects that address the ongoing depletion of space and resources in the modern city.

Proximity. Learning spaces in dialogic relationship with the context

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Keywords
Learning spaces, Proximity, Place, Right measure

The following contribution reflects on the design of small-and-medium-scale educational spaces as a situated practice, understanding and interpreting the specificities of context by exploring proximity, in its various forms, as a design principle.
This investigation, part of a broader doctoral research project addressing the design of innovative school spaces in relation to their place, identifies and analyzes three virtuous case studies that, on a small scale, reflect different qualitative intervention experiences in a sensitive dialogue with the context. The research structure, therefore, methodologically presents a comparative analysis of recent interventions in learning spaces which, in their different spatial configurations, respond and interact with contextual characteristics and variations in proximity: from a new small-scale intervention, to one for the renovation of the existing, up to a system of new, specific, repeated interventions in the urban context. Thus, these educational spaces become opportunities for architectural, urban, and social reactivation and reconnection. The analysis, through similarities and differences, aims to highlight architectural design as a significant response to the construction of dialogical relationships and the interaction between contextual forces and spatial configurations, between interpretation and adaptation, between spatial and social reconnections.
The cases also examine how learning spaces can be a condition of innovation even in calibrated, measured interventions that enhance the available starting conditions, from a perspective of design opportunities and generative resources of spatial and social processes. This investigation, as in the doctoral research, aims to identify best design practices for school architecture and learning spaces to contribute to the development of the Guidelines for the Iscol@ program of the Sardinia Region.

Symbol, icon and index. Tessellation as an architectural language

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Keywords
Semiotics, Traces, Patterns, Figures

Symbol, icon, and index are the fundamental categories of signs in semiotics. First theorized by Peirce and later applied to art and architecture by Krauss, the icon is a sign that refers to its object through resemblance; the symbol has a conventional and socially agreed meaning; while the index is the most complex sign, as it is the record of a real process or event, a trace of a past presence. In rural areas, the index can be recognized in elements such as the linear rows, the patterns of the irrigation network, and the crop patterns, signs that become tools for interpreting the landscape. These traces bear witness to how humans have perceived, used, and transformed the countryside, as each era has generated settlement structures consistent with the knowledge, available techniques, environmental conditions, and social relations of its time.
This paper aims to explore a language for analyzing the territory through the lens of formal coherence, interpreting recognizable patterns as manifestations of a phenomenon and as vehicles of meaning. To this end, configurational schemes are illustrated, inspired by Dardi, Polesello,Gandelsonas, Forman, and Allen, authors who introduce complementary and innovative approaches to the formal analysis of the territory, based on the application of visual languages formalized through disciplinary contributions in the form of essays, books, or projects.
Applied to the case of the lower Friulian plain, this methodology has highlighted how the landscape is the result of an evolutionary process linked to farming practices. Land reclamation, agronomic practices, forms of land parceling, and settlement patterns are all material manifestations of an evolving relationship between society and space. The landscape becomes a fabric in which to read the stratifications of the various historical phases that have shaped the countryside. The methodology could also be adapted and applied to other geographical contexts, based on the hypothesis that settlement patterns in European plains tend to exhibit homogeneous characteristics.

Fitting Aging: adaptive and inclusive public space design for active aging in place

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Keywords
Aging in place, Public urban space, Small-scale spatial interventions, Adaptability, Inclusiveness

This paper investigates how small-scale spatial interventions can transform everyday green urban public spaces into adaptive environments that support active and inclusive aging in place. In response to the rapid aging of urban populations, the research positions public space as a critical infrastructure for sustaining health, social engagement, and everyday mobility in later life.
Focusing on key spatial elements- such as seating, lighting, pathways, and signage- the study examines how their configuration, materiality, and spatial distribution influence patterns of use, underuse, and misuse among elderly users. Through comparative case studies and spatial analysis, the research identifies how targeted, small-scale design adaptations can enhance accessibility, safety, orientation, and comfort, thereby extending both the duration and quality of use in public space.
The paper is grounded in the concept of the "ecology of ageing," which frames aging as a dynamic interaction between individuals and their spatial environment. Within this framework, adaptability, redundancy, and polyvalency emerge as essential design capacities, enabling public spaces to accommodate diverse physical abilities, temporal rhythms, and social practices. Particular attention is given to culturally specific and resource-constrained contexts, where design must operate through low-cost, durable, and context-sensitive interventions.
The research proposes a set of spatial strategies that translate the principles of Inclusive Design into applicable architectural approaches. By emphasizing the performative role of public space elements, the paper argues that adaptive, age-inclusive environments can be achieved through incremental transformation, positioning small-scale interventions as a key mechanism for enhancing social diversity, resilience, and the everyday usability of urban public space..

Urban summer heat as an opportunity. Insights from the Living Lab "O'Frais au Schönberg"

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Keywords
Urban Heat Island, Temporary interventions, Participatory design, Living lab, Urban transformation

In the context of climate change, urban populations are increasingly exposed to abrupt and intense heatwaves, exacerbating the urban heat island effect. While cities worldwide are developing and implementing heat mitigation strategies such as green infrastructure and large-scale planning frameworks, these approaches require significant time, resources, and coordination, limiting their ability to respond to urgent conditions. Temporary urban interventions have therefore emerged in recent years as an effective tool for rapid, localized action, suggesting a potential paradigm shift in addressing urban heat.
In this context an applied research project developed in Fribourg, Switzerland, investigates temporary heat-mitigating urban interventions designed and implemented with local actors within the Living Lab (LL) "O'Frais au Schönberg".
The LL experimenting site, a central and strategic place for the neighborhood, is a rather unwelcoming space for its users. Entirely mineral and enclosed, with dark colors on the ground and walls and no shading, some surfaces can exceed 70°C during periods of intense heat. This condition results from a built outcome that diverges from its original, more open and vegetated design. Yet, this problematic "misfit" became a ground for experimentation and summer heat, an opportunity to improve urban quality for and with the local actors. The square was transformed with the remarkable energy and dedication of a group of migrant women who found in this project a way to improve their neighborhood and gain legitimacy in their community.
Addressing the relation between form and context, this contribution presents insights from a case study where architectural form generates the problem, while the context constitutes a source of opportunities for elaborating solutions. We argue that under conditions of urgency and constraint, solutions may emerge less from formal coherence than from the capacity to mobilize and reinterpret the inherent potential embedded within a challenging context.

Imagined urban intervention. The city beyond form

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Keywords
Urban imaginaries, Lived urbanism, Cultural production, Epistemological triangulation, Imageability

This paper examines how cities are not only constructed through physical form but are continually completed through imagination, perception, and cultural production. Moving beyond conventional frameworks of urbanism grounded in infrastructure and planning, it proposes that architecture, literature, and music function as parallel modes of urban knowledge. These disciplines operate as "imagined urban interventions," shaping how the city is experienced, interpreted, and inhabited without necessarily altering its material fabric.

Drawing on the work of John Hejduk, Italo Calvino, and David Byrne (Talking Heads), all working in the mid-20th century, the paper establishes a triangulated epistemological framework in which the city emerges through narrative, rhythm, and symbolic form. Within this framework, the perceivable city is completed through the application of meaning across multiple media. Despite their differences, these disciplines share a common structure defined by the urban context, the imagined object or narrative, and the active participant who interprets and activates it.

In Hejduk's architectural practice, the city is inscribed with poetic objects and characters that invite interpretation. In Calvino's literary constructions, urban space unfolds through memory, metaphor, and narrative. In Byrne's musical work, the city is rendered as an affective and temporal experience shaped by movement and sound. Across these media, the participant—viewer, reader, or listener—actively completes the urban condition.

These imaginaries are situated within broader perspectives on lived urbanism, emphasizing human-scale experience, adaptability, and social infrastructure. A distinction is drawn between the "imageable city," as perceptible and legible form, and the "imaginary city," as culturally and emotionally constructed. These dimensions are mutually constitutive, with imagination serving as the mechanism through which meaning is produced. Ultimately, imagination operates as a critical urban practice, expanding architectural discourse and offering new tools for evaluating and envisioning livable cities and the function of built form.

Stitching the invisible: urban acupuncture across the heterogeneous landscapes of the Berlin Wall Corridor

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Keywords
Urban acupuncture, Public-space integration, Design pedagogy, Spatial typologies, Berlin Wall corridor

This paper examines a structured method for selecting small-scale spatial interventions in complex, meaning-laden urban environments. Using the heterogeneous, spatially complex landscapes of the Berlin Wall corridor as a testing ground, it focuses on identifying and interpreting recurring spatial and social typologies and on translating fieldwork evidence and analytical findings into site-specific urban acupuncture proposals. Situated within the EAAE 2026 theme XS–S–M: Architecture of the Fitting, the study asked how carefully calibrated interventions could respond to historically charged urban situations in ways that were spatially precise, socially meaningful, and pedagogically productive.

Rather than treating the former Wall corridor as a single heritage object, the workshop read it as a stratified historic urban landscape composed of thresholds, seams, residual spaces, memorial fragments, and everyday routes. The first stage of the method was the identification and classification of recurring conditions in which the former border persisted as an experiential discontinuity or a governance-and-meaning conflict. The second stage consisted of an analytical toolkit that students used to evaluate selected micro-locations in terms of continuity, permeability, legibility, hospitality, and meaning coding. On this basis, design proposals were developed at the scale of the threshold, street segment, or block edge.

The paper argues that the value of this approach lies not in urban acupuncture itself, but in the structured relation established between diagnosis and intervention. In this sense, the Berlin case became both a design inquiry and a didactic model. It shows how the identification and classification of physical and social phenomena can inform the choice of intervention type, scale, and narrative role, and how architectural education can connect public-space analysis, heritage-sensitive transformation, and design action through an analytical-first framework transferable to other contested or historically layered contexts.

Fitting the In-Between: reframing architecture across displacement and material evidence

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Keywords
Permanent temporariness, Fitting, Spatial misalignment, Spatial commoning; Material calibration

Thirty years after the proclamation of Bigness, architectural practice is shaped by conditions of instability, displacement, and uneven resource distribution. Relationships between form and social life no longer hold as stable or coherent, but must be negotiated. Territories are defined less by growth than by fragmentation, incompleteness, and what can be described as permanent temporariness. Rather than assuming alignment, architecture must operate through processes that are partial and adaptive. Within this shift, "fitting" is approached not as a predefined correspondence, but as an active and situated practice.

The refugee housing estate of Aspres in Nicosia, Cyprus, offers a critical ground through which to examine these conditions. Conceived as a temporary response to crisis, the settlement persists as a space of prolonged uncertainty, where standardized planning has produced spatial and social misalignment. Over time, this condition has generated fragmented forms of inhabitation, requiring ongoing acts of adaptation by residents. Architecture, in this context, cannot operate through fixed solutions, but must engage incremental transformations that support shared use, negotiation, and collective agency.

Within this framework, the architectural detail is understood as a site of operation. It is used as a tool to record—through acts of making, assembly, and adjustment—the micro-decisions through which spatial relationships are recalibrated. These acts do not resolve form once and for all; they register how architecture is shaped in response to material constraints and lived practices. Large-scale planning exposes the persistence of misalignment, detail makes visible the processes through which more precise conditions can emerge.

Fitting operates across scales as a continuous process of adjustment between bodies, materials, and environments. Form is not given in advance, but develops through situated actions that reconfigure relationships over time. In this sense, architecture regains its agency through attentiveness, precision, and the capacity to work within conditions that resist closure..

SESSION CHAIRS

Silvia Bodei, Politecnico di Milano
Marco Moro, University of Cagliari

1C IN-FORMS

Pattern Language as a Critical Tool for Small-Scale Housing: An Undergraduate Design Studio Experience

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Keywords
Architectural design pedagogy, Pattern language, Christopher Alexander, Constructive diagram, Living building

This paper examines the use of Christopher Alexander's "Pattern Language" within an undergraduate architectural design studio as an operative framework for spatial inquiry. Rather than treating patterns as repeatable solutions, the studio challenges their fixed interpretation by repositioning them as instruments for analysis, comparison, and transformation. In the initial phase, students identify and deconstruct patterns found in a list of case studies, focusing on how spatial relationships, such as thresholds, shared spaces, and transitions, are constructed and modified across different contexts (pattern mining). The next exercise isolates a single pattern and subjects it to dimensional and spatial testing, exposing the limits and variability of its application at room scale (pattern application). The following phase extends this critical reading into a specific design task titled "HousingPLS: Reclaiming/Repairing Bahçelievler", situated at a neighborhood originally developed as a green, cooperative residential settlement, now transformed through incremental and often uncoordinated interventions. Here, patterns are not applied directly but reinterpreted in response to specific household structures that combine domestic life with productive programs (pattern usage).
Drawing on the concept of the "un-private house," student projects question conventional domestic boundaries by introducing spatial overlaps, shared uses, and negotiated degrees of privacy, while responding to varying conditions of orientation and adjacency across different parcels within the same urban block (pattern development). Acknowledging that the claim that the activities and their spatial configurations possess a timeless quality is problematic, the paper argues that the value of pattern language in this context lies not in its capacity to produce coherent form, but in its ability to reveal inconsistencies between inherited spatial models and contemporary modes of living. Through this tension, the studio positions patterns as tools for critique as much as for design, enabling re-reading of Bahçelievler's fragmented condition through small-scale architectural interventions.

Architectures for downshifting: design research and teaching for shrinking territories

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Keywords
Shrinking territories, Research-by-design pedagogy, Archetypes, Architectural design for heritage

Calabria, now primarily traversed along its longitudinal axis, preserves a layered palimpsest of connections that testify to its historical role as a Mediterranean crossroads. During Greek colonization and later Basilian monasticism, settlement patterns developed along transversal routes. Though now fragmented, they once enabled exchanges among diverse cultures, connecting settlements like beads on a rosary across a landscape that offers both refuge and isolation.
The isthmic route between Sybaris and Laos connects three distinct landscape units: the Sybaris plain; the Campotenese mountain plateau, and the narrow Lao valley, where nature remains largely untamed. This corridor has hosted a continuous sequence of settlements, including Neolithic villages, Italic necropolises, Greek cities, Roman statio, Byzantine monasteries, Basilian sanctuaries, and medieval fortifications. Although the path itself is largely invisible today, it still reveals a persistent settlement structure through a network of inland towns, many now in decline, forming a fragmented and often overlooked cultural heritage.
Within this research, the Sybaris–Laos palimpsest is understood both as a material substratum—a repository of historical settlement dynamics—and as a field condition shaped by ongoing processes of transformation. This perspective supports a renewed narrative that connects places through shared environmental and landscape conditions, as well as related social practices. These sites can be interpreted as transfigurations of archetypes, reflecting a complex dialogue with contemporary spatial and socio-economic challenges, and calling for new design interventions.
The Sybaris–Laos isthmic route has been explored within the international research framework of MedWays and implemented as a "research by design" educational experiment. Conducted in the Thematic Studio of the MSc in Architecture and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano, in collaboration with TU Delft (MsC Studio Architectural Design Crossovers), the research-by design project (2020–2022) involved over thirty design proposals developed by student teams in close interaction with the teaching staff.

Drawing air workshop: drawing attention to air in architectural education

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Keywords
Air, Hand drawing, Architectural education

Air is continuous and recognises no borders. The air we share is multi-scalar and extends from the human scale of our breath and lungs to the atmosphere that hovers above the earth. Air is invisible in its default state and this 'invisibility has led us to take air for granted' (Abram, 2014) and misuse it as a dumping ground, despite being named as a global concern by the United Nations. Air is a shared fragility, that is central to climate change, to the experience of place, to health and well-being, and to the experience of being indoors where we spend over 90% of our time. While it does feature in architectural education, it is often siloed within environmental science, taught by experts from outside the discipline (Moe, 2014, p. 42), and neglected in design studios.
Invisible air resists visual representation. What happens when you try to draw air? This presentation documents a short workshop called 'Drawing Air', delivered to final year architecture students, who were invited to make a speculative hand drawing of the air in their own design projects. Hand drawing aids cognition. An air-borne approach to design situates a project in its immediate physical, environmental, historical, cultural and climatic context, and can reveal fresh insights that inform design decisions from concept to detail. Air is XL and XS.
The workshop forms part of a PhD study that explores how foregrounding air within architectural education can raise awareness of air and prompt exploration, critical interrogation and creative engagement with its role and potential in design of the built environment in the context of the climate crisis. The study forms part of the 'Building Change' project, through which the six schools of architecture in Ireland revised their architecture curricula in response to the climate emergency.

Situated visualities, critical cartographies: filmic mapping of public space in metropolitan landscapes

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Keywords
Filmic mapping, Critical cartography, Metropolitan landscapes, Architectural education

This contribution examines filmic mapping as a method for interpreting open public spaces in metropolitan landscapes. Informed by HERITAGESCAPES, a research project on Madrid's heritage ecology developed within the Cultural Landscape Research Group (GIPC) at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, it argues that moving images cultivate a critical visuality essential for contemporary architectural discourse. This approach enables students to register socio-ecological processes, ranging from river corridors to peri-urban landscapes, that remain elusive to static media while being fundamental to the historical layering of metropolitan environments. This context raises a central pedagogical challenge: How can architectural education guide students to capture the elusive, un-mappable temporalities of metropolitan change?

Two pedagogical experiments at the Madrid School of Architecture (ETSAM-UPM) lie at the core of this work: the Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) "Living Landscapes in Madrid" and the "Theory and History of Landscape" course. Both serve as active learning environments where open public spaces are analyzed as complex territorial systems rather than isolated entities. Through critical filmic observation, students engage with the persistence of hydraulic infrastructures and shifting cultural perceptions, integrating historical inquiry into a visual practice that treats the metropolitan environment as a living archive.

Methodologically, filmic mapping extends critical cartography by introducing duration, sequence, and situated attention into the architectural curriculum. This fosters an embodied understanding of these spaces, revealing urban conflicts and processes of re-signification that escape conventional surveys. By examining the filmic mappings produced within these teaching activities, the inquiry frames production and montage as reflective pedagogical practices. Ultimately, it presents filmic mapping as a catalyst for challenging the static hegemony of the architectural gaze, positioning the lens as an active site for theoretical production.

Drawing as Fitting: slow pedagogy through the travelling sketchbook

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Keywords
Hand drawing, Architectural pedagogy, Embodied observation, Travel workshop, Situated architecture

In an era defined by the rapid generation of images, ideas, and architectural proposals through artificial intelligence, the act of drawing by hand emerges as a radical pedagogical counterproposal. This article presents an educational experience at the School of Architecture of Valencia: a travel workshop with first-year students whose sole purpose is drawing. The proposal departs from a fundamental distinction: drawing not as a medium of project representation, but as a mode of slow, embodied observation. "Drawing is not merely a visual act but a haptic one, a way of touching and understanding architecture through the moving hand" (Pallasmaa). When a student draws a building, they are forced to look at it for an extended period. They must calibrate proportions, light, materiality, context—aspects that cannot be delegated to a digital tool. This is the fundamental pedagogical condition: less speed, less digital mediation, fewer tools. This subtraction produces a deeper and more situated architectural understanding.

The experience reveals a growing difficulty: each year, it becomes harder to wean students off their mobile-phones and get them to face the blank page. The screen offers an immediate and risk-free relationship with the image; drawing demands exposure, slowness, and tolerance for error. This resistance is the symptom of the pedagogical problem that the traveling workshop seeks to address.

Drawing requires students to calibrate their perception to the scale of what is in front of them, developing a scalar attention and a careful, situated engagement with the place. The travel journal, incomplete and provisional by nature, becomes an instrument that doesn't resolve but rather questions.

This article argues that hand drawing is not a nostalgic technique but a pedagogical practice of productive contraction—one that trains future architects to observe before designing, to understand before proposing, and to adjust their responses to places.

Postcard Perfect: the representation and production of the Canary Islands as tourist space

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Keywords
Colonisation, Image, Tourism, Public space, Identity

From the vedute acquired by travellers on the Grand Tour to the disposable-camera photographs taken during cruise excursions, images –in a wide range of formats– have long operating as instruments for representing the tourist destination. Objective as they might seem, these images are not an accurate depiction of reality, but rather mythifications of the tourist site. Through processes of capture, framing, and dissemination, rather than depicting reality, they produce mythified versions of the site. Over time, these images crystallize into built and social realities: only to be visited, photographed, and circulated again, continuing to reinforce the myth. Impartial as they might seem, they flatten and sediment the identity of the visited places, under the gaze of those observing.

Through the infinite reproduction of images in advertisements and souvenirs, this research examines how a complex and politically layered territory has been compelled to align itself with its image-based representations. Despite ongoing social, energetic, and geopolitical frictions, the archipelago is widely understood, by visitors and residents alike, through a Disneyfied appearance of 'holiday islands'. This elevates the somewhat perverse notion of the tourist as the exemplary citizen: politically uncontroversial, ideologically detached, and largely indifferent to the processes shaping the place they inhabit temporarily. The mental image that attracts them in, ultimately becomes the tool for shaping the city in their name.

According to Fernando Estévez's notion, "the tourist gaze, eager to consume images, has come to appropriate everything on display at tourist destinations". As such visual regimes force the visited place to reinvent itself to meet visitors' expectations, the charming postcard image of a young woman sunbathing on a paradise beach becomes, in reality, a disguised instrument of quiet colonisation.

Fitted landscapes: the Architecture Exhibition as a productive topos

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Keywords
Architecture Exhibitions, Curatorial practice, Display formats, Constructed spaces

If shrinkage and smallness can be a design choice dictated by territorial and resource constraints – today more than ever –, they are also inherent to architecture exhibitions. This paper argues that exhibitions should not be understood as mere representations of architecture, but as architectural productions in their own right. Contrary to the literal meaning of the word 'exhibere', which suggests an outward movement, the exhibition practice fits full-scale projects into curated environments rooted simultaneously in spatial contraction and conceptual density.
Exploring concepts such as 'displacement' (Arrhenius et al., 2014) and architecture exhibitions as productive 'heterotopias' (Foucault, 1986) this paper analyses a range of exhibition formats – from two-dimensional displays to multisensorial experiences – approaching them as architectural practices that construct their own territory within the exhibition space. At the same time, the exhibition space itself – whether it is enclosed or not – is understood as never finished but always reinvented through what is displayed. While this is relevant for all exhibition practices, this condition becomes especially evident in architectural artifacts that function as a medium between what is outside and inside the curated space.
By examining exhibitions as sites of both contraction and production, the paper proposes the notion of exhibitions as topoi of smallness: spaces in which styles, buildings, time trajectories, landscapes and social contexts are juxtaposed and brought into dialogue. In doing so, it positions the architecture exhibition as a critical medium that ultimately reflects on the architectural practice as a whole.

Fitting in architectural education: rethinking pedagogy through construction strategies

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Keywords
Form generation, Model making, Modular construction, Digital modeling, Deviation index

As digital technologies become increasingly integrated into architectural education, understanding how they influence students' design thinking and construction strategies has become an important pedagogical question. Rooted in longstanding construction logics of stacking, repetition, and modular aggregation, this research investigates the relationship between prior learning experiences, specifically inherited construction logics and digital 3D modeling proficiency, and students' construction strategies.
The experiment involved 110 participants, including undergraduate and graduate students. To examine design behavior within a controlled and measurable environment, the study employed an XS-scale assembly task where participants constructed a 3D spatial configuration using twenty pieces from four standardized module types within three minutes. Data collection was dual-layered: a structured survey documented software proficiency, while the resulting physical artifacts were systematically analyzed. This methodology enabled a comparative analysis of how learned habits interact with exploratory thinking.
Configurations were evaluated through a coding process and a Deviation Index, a metric developed to measure the departure from linear assembly toward complex axis variations. The findings reveal a significant correlation between advanced 3D modeling skills and higher Deviation Index scores. While lower-year students frequently reproduced more familiar and repetitive patterns, senior and graduate students were more likely to reorganize the internal logic of the system.
Rather than evaluating design quality, the study quantifies immediate construction behaviors under time constraints, focusing on the capacity for differentiation. The findings demonstrate that higher levels of digital modeling proficiency are associated with a greater tendency to depart from repetitive patterns and explore alternative spatial configurations. These results contribute to the 'IN-Forms' dialogue by demonstrating how digital competencies may influence the organization of formal relationships in physical making. Ultimately, the study suggests that digital competencies may support students in reinterpreting and transforming inherited construction patterns into more diverse spatial and formal strategies.

Periphery as a model: small and medium-scale social care facilities in post-socialist central Europe

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Keywords
Care facilities, Inclusion, Periphery, Post-socialist, Architecture

In the context of Slovakia, marked by deepening spatial inequalities and demographic decline, peripheral regions can become key environments for exploring new models of social service provision (elderly care homes, facilities for people with mental disabilities, children's homes, and services for the homeless people). This paper examines how architecture and planning can redefine social care facilities in sparsely populated areas - from residential homes and community centres to hybrid care typologies - and transform demographic regression into an opportunity for flexible, scalable, and locally embedded spatial solutions in line with the XS–S–M framework and the principle of "fitting."

The key concept of "fitting" refers to the appropriate calibration of scale and context-sensitive integration, turning material, financial, and demographic constraints into a productive design framework. Small and medium scale interventions emerge as suitable platforms for linking formal and informal care, enabling the multifunctional use of existing buildings, and fostering cross-sectoral cooperation among municipalities, healthcare providers, schools, and civic initiatives.

In the post-socialist context of Central Europe, these approaches respond to the legacy of centralised models while reflecting ongoing processes of decentralisation and transformation in social care systems. Emphasising smaller scales and the adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure represents not only an economically efficient strategy but also a means of strengthening local ties and identity.

The paper argues that well-designed social care facilities in peripheral regions can function not only as infrastructures of care but also as active spatial nodes supporting stability, identity, and sustainable regional development. In this sense, "fitting" repositions architecture towards public responsibility and offers scalable paradigms for future models of social policy and spatial justice.

Object and Territory.
Drawing as a tool for the critical reading of architecture and landscape

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Keywords
Fitting, Situated measure, Redrawing

The contribution investigates the concept of "fitting" in architectural design, interpreting it not as a passive adaptation to context, but as the active construction of a situated measure. Within a framework marked by territorial fragility and the progressive contraction of resources, the research proposes to understand the relationship between architecture and landscape as the outcome of specific design decisions, capable of operating through precise and calibrated interventions. Through a practice of selective redrawing applied to case studies, the analysis focuses on the devices that make this construction possible – ground, section, morphology, systems of access and thresholds – showing how the project does not simply respond to given conditions, but actively contributes to redefining them. In this sense, the "right measure" does not correspond to an abstract principle, but emerges from specific operations that transform environmental, economic, and infrastructural constraints into operative resources. The contribution suggests that drawing, understood as a critical and selective practice, constitutes a privileged tool to make the "fitting" between architecture and landscape legible, allowing a distinction between secondary elements and structural devices. Within this framework, the reflection takes shape through a workshop for students titled "Object and Territory. Drawing as a Tool for the Critical Reading of Architecture and Landscape", conceived as a device to test these hypotheses, opening towards the definition of a design sensibility oriented to precision, reduction, and adaptation.

SESSION CHAIRS

Fabrizio Pusceddu, University of Cagliari
Roberto Sanna, University of Cagliari

1D IN-FORMS

Teaching playfulness of public space through participation

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Keywords
Playfulness, Participation, Public space, Small interventions, Education

In the context of the growing need for architecture to 'fit' diverse social practices and spatial conditions, this paper examines the importance of physical play in public space as a fundamental method of creating spatial experience and learning for all age groups. In contemporary society, such forms of engagement are increasingly threatened by the lack of accessible public spaces and by the shift of play and exploration into the digital realm. The paper considers the role of architects as mediators who, through participatory engagement with users, develop small-scale spatial interventions in locations that simultaneously present spatial challenges and offer potential for playful interaction. Through careful interpretation of user input and having in mind the playfulness, spatial interventions are proposed.
This approach resonates with Aldo van Eyck's experiments with abstract spatial structures that provoke unstructured and unexpected physical activity in playgrounds. Drawing on Rudolf Laban's theory of movement, it also emphasizes spatial configurations that allow for multiple patterns of use. Such openness enables public spaces to function as inclusive platforms for interaction, fostering shared experiences and a stronger sense of community.
In collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Novi Zagreb and the Goethe-Institut, this method is explored pedagogically through the elective master's course Participatory Design of Space, structured as a short experimental design workshop. Focus was put on the Museum's southern plateau, a transitional zone between public urban space and a cultural institution, with the potential to function as a place of encounter, gathering, and orientation.
The paper provides insight into this pedagogical experiment, as a case study of participatory design methods grounded in play and movement together with various student creative approaches for small-scale public space interventions.

The reasons of form, hic et nunc.
A project for the Villacidro landscape in Sardinia

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Keywords
Crisis, Mindscape, Transscalar architecture, Cultural landscape, Urban edge

Within the framework of the research agreement between the Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering at the University of Cagliari and the Municipal Administration of Villacidro, the research group "Architecture, City, Landscape," coordinated by the author, has initiated a study aimed at the architectural and urban regeneration of the eastern edges of the town. This scientific consultancy stems from the profound crisis affecting the Villacidro area and the progressive socio-economic decline that has resulted from it. The working hypothesis reinterprets architecture as a specific narrative field and assigns to form the capacity to make the rituals of life visible, undertaking a process of reconnection and reconciliation with the landscape. In this sense, the intervention operates through both large and small-scale dimensions, linking the critical transformation of the territory to an elsewhere. More specifically, the study develops through the identification of a central theme - the adaptive reuse of an old railway structure into a cycling station - promoting the regeneration of a particularly critical urban area and conveying the dimension of travel, not only cultural but also physical, toward a renewed recognition of the land and its forms (the gore irrigation channels, the alluvial fan, the agricultural plain, the mountain outcrops).
This rewriting of the context thus seeks to recompose what has been fractured, showing how the imbalances generated by the socio-economic crisis can be addressed starting from the recognition of existing environmental features as non-negotiable elements of value. This "capacity for adaptation" fosters and consolidates inhabitants' interest in the landscape, understood both as an objective form and as the result of the interaction through which individuals interpret it based on their own knowledge. In this way, echoing Gregotti's thought, the landscape can be recognized as a specific domain of architectural relevance.

Defining the context.
Didactic experience through interpretative diagram

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Keywords
Context, Process, Diagrams, Theory, Teaching

This paper reflects on the theoretical basis of the architectural discipline and its teaching, specifically regarding site response and a project's appropriateness. Addressing the theme of Session #1, this work questions and reinterprets the concept of context.
The work comments on several key texts investigating the topic (from the genius loci in the writings of Pope to Norbeg-Schulz, through to Alexander, Venturi and Scott Brown, Rowe, Rossi, Koolhaas and others). Rather than a fixed definition, context is explored as a complex, multifaceted entity – physical and cultural, concrete and interpretive – that can be redefined within each project. Consequently, the project's response to the site becomes a journey of research and interpretation.
Based on these reflections, our pedagogical approach focuses on design strategy through experimentation, using diagrams and drawings to investigate and visualize design choices. These interpretive tools are entrusted with conveying the complexity of the issues investigated, while simultaneously serving as the expression and representation of the project's core themes. The capacity of these synthetic tools to communicate theoretical and critical issues abstractly reinforces the project's response as a critical act.
Through synthesis, complexity is broken down, understood, and resolved into its multiple components. Ultimately, this process reveals context as a research-based issue, transforming design into a free, critical investigation that traverses several theoretical realms – from phenomenological experience to the layered approach of "landscape urbanism" and to the lesson of Italian "urban architecture", and current ecological imperatives. By intersecting a variety of approaches, chosen case-by-case, the diagrams establish a new, flexible attitude that responds to specific conditions, histories, and goals. These experimental drawings serve as creative and interpretive means from which design solutions can then be defined.

From hand sketch to AI visuals: scales of the design process examined through consumer neuroscience

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Keywords
Design process, Sketching, Universal design, Generative AI, Consumer neuroscience

This paper presents results from a consumer-neuroscience (neuromarketing) study developed alongside the Erasmus+ AI:nterior workshop on universal design (UD) (RISEBA FAD, Riga). It examines "scale" in the design process by tracking how hand sketches—an embodied, "XS" mode of thinking—translate into AI-generated interior visuals, and whether this translation preserves design intent. Treating "fitting" as the measurable alignment between design intention and received perception, the study asks whether small-scale design cues (sketch decisions and UD micro-interventions) survive, drift, or are amplified when converted into image-based outputs.
The workshop focused on a university entrance lobby, where UD is often composed of easily overlooked XS interventions (step-free thresholds, legible wayfinding, turning radii, tactile cues, low-effort controls). Student teams produced sketch sets across speed tiers (napkin, development, decision), two representational modes (plans/sections and experiential viewpoints), and two modifiers (diagram overlays and annotations). Selected sketches were then used to generate corresponding AI visuals, enabling a controlled comparison across media.
Methodologically, the consumer neuroscience study focuses (N≈25) combining (1) webcam-based eye tracking with UD areas of interest and metrics including time-to-first-fixation, dwell proportion, and fixation counts; (2) Implicit Association Tests contrasting accessible/welcoming versus excluding/unwelcoming, administered at baseline, post-sketch, and post-AI stages; and (3) a short qualitative survey on perceived continuity between sketches and AI images.
The analysis tests whether attention patterns and implicit associations observed for sketches predict those for their AI outputs, and which sketch modes/modifiers best preserve design intent through the pipeline toward AI images.

Link as a plan strategy: landscape city Architecture

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Keywords
Site, Mark, Scape, Link, Network, Texture

How can we teach, plan and design to preserve architecture identity in AI Age?This could be the most important question facing architecture today. Architects are pressured to design and develop a project very quickly and simply to keep pace with the timelines of funds (edge funds mainly), investors, stakeholders, local councils and government regulations. All these actors and obligations seek to simplify the design process and reduce it to AI-generated renderings and images.
These factors do not work to build a human environment in relation to nature; they are related only to an economic value. This misunderstanding beaars to lose the connection between architecture and nature, between people and built spaces. Instead we need to build dynamic relational spaces, able to connect the virtual and physical sphere of mankind within nature.
If we think architecture as an expression of humanity, as a medium and a bridge (in the sense intended by Heidegger) between nature and technology, we cannot ignore how important the construction of the built environment within nature is, and how this can determine the very fate of humanity in the world. This is the fundamental question that architecture must address as art and science, and also as a place for learning life lessons. Journey and movement place both the architect and the citizen in the very same conditions and let the citizen understand and give intellectual value to the project actions as much as they let the architect imagine and design spaces that can be communicated and transmitted to the real community of men and women.
This process creates the never-ending possibility to check the ability of a space to be the bearer of identity for its users and then it improves the spreading of culture and the ontological link between mankind and its territory. This approach designs precise grids of indeterminacy and intends architecture as the formal infrastructure to allow multiple identities, open to different and unexpected uses and characters.

From macro goals to micro sites: scaling SDGs as site-specific pedagogical tools in architectural education

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Keywords
Architecture of the fitting, Architectural education, Sustainable development goals (SDGs), Site-specific pedagogy, Multi-scalar interventions

In the millennium, architectural education, faced with multiple global crises and inequalities, is obliged to adapt its traditional frameworks and rigid institutional methods to local realities. This study discusses the re-imagining of architectural education not merely as a pedagogy that transmits knowledge, but as one that seeks a "fitting" in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In the process of transforming site-specific interventions at the micro, meso, and macro scales amid multiple crises, the "rediscovery of the right measure" should be considered a fundamental pedagogical threshold. This research aims to highlight how flexible, informal learning practices, which can be defined as "in-forms," reintegrate into architectural education through relationships with local actors and sustainability-based expectations. In this context, it is argued that the SDGs, in addition to being theoretical keywords added to the curriculum, are positioned as tools for developing site-specific interventions in applied courses. Methodologically, this study maps contemporary architectural projects against the UN SDGs using a comparative case-study analysis. These cases are categorized according to a multi-scale framework to evaluate their 'fitting' capacity and effectiveness in generating local solutions. By synthesizing these results, the study proposes a pedagogical matrix for site-specific design interventions. Drawing on examples ranging from infrastructure solutions developed in resource-constrained contexts to social interventions within existing urban fabrics, this study discusses how architectural design can generate social, ecological, and economic values in a site-specific and appropriate scale. Ultimately, this paper presents a model that aims to train architecture students not only as aesthetic designers of spaces, buildings, and products, but also as harmonious and sociable actors who listen to the needs of the local context and generate solutions.

Reclaiming material literacy at the XS scale: earthen architecture and design-build learning in Türkiye

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Keywords
Low-Tech Architecture, Material agency, Natural building materials, Material pedagogy, Design-build

Thirty years after Bigness normalized architectural thinking around industrial scalability, architectural education continues to reproduce a material hierarchy shaped by large, standardized systems. Concrete, steel, and prefabricated assemblies remain the dominant technological languages through which building production is taught, while low-carbon local materials such as earth, straw, or stone occupy only a marginal place within architectural training in Türkiye. This reflects a deeper mismatch between industrial modes of material instruction and the small-scale forms of judgment required for context-responsive construction.
Unlike standardized industrial products, unprocessed natural building materials operate through a radically different epistemology of construction. They demand small-scale judgment, iterative assembly, and continuous recalibration between material behaviour, craft knowledge, and local site conditions. The competence required by such practices cannot be acquired solely through abstract technical instruction. Yet despite Anatolia's extensive earthen-building heritage and a growing field of contemporary small-scale earthen experimentation, this material intelligence remains weakly integrated into formal teaching and is sustained largely through informal learning networks.
Drawing on selected contemporary earthen-building examples in Türkiye, this paper examines the discrepancy between the adaptive knowledge mobilized in practice—soil testing, hybrid detailing, non-standard assembly, and situated decision-making—and the codified industrial knowledge privileged in architectural education. It argues that the current legitimation crisis of earthen construction is inseparable from this pedagogical gap. In response, the paper positions 1:1 design-build studios, practitioner-led workshops, and hands-on earthen building initiatives as critical counter-pedagogies through which unprocessed natural materials are learned through making, testing, and direct construction at the scale of fitting. Reclaiming material literacy at the XS scale is thus framed as a necessary pedagogical shift if architecture is to produce fitting responses within resource-constrained futures.

Rethinking sacred heritage: from abandonment to landscape reactivation

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Keywords
Sacred landscapes, Church heritage, Ruins, Reactivation, Sardinia

The growing disuse of religious heritage, linked to the progressive loss of its liturgical function, is leading to a widespread process of abandonment of ecclesiastical buildings. This phenomenon affects both urban centers and peripheral areas, emerging as a pervasive and transversal condition of the contemporary territory. In this context, Sardinia, with its vast open spaces and low settlement density, represents a privileged field of analysis for understanding the phenomenon at a territorial scale, highlighting the relationships between abandonment, permanence, and landscape stratification.
The agrarian landscape reveals itself through layers of territorial and architectural stratification that define specific spatial conditions and both past and present patterns of use. Alongside the persistence of some original functions, there is a widespread presence of recognizable yet inactive structures, often taking the form of ruins of abandoned churches, endowed with significant testimonial value despite lacking a contemporary role. The potential reactivation of these structures emerges as a strategy for regenerating portions of landscape that have gradually lost their centrality and collective recognition, as evidenced by the remains of ancient religious architectures. Their distribution and mutual relationships suggest the need to move beyond a site-specific reading of individual buildings, in favor of a broader perspective that considers specific landscape portions where similar structures coexist and describe historical forms of land use. Within this framework, the notion of the path assumes a central role as both an interpretative and operational device for studying these areas, forming the knowledge base upon which the architectural project is developed.
The project thus becomes a tool for critically interpreting the landscape, capable of reactivating spatial relationships and latent meanings through new configurations of use. From this perspective, territorial design becomes an act of recomposition that restores continuity to fragmented systems, transforming abandonment into an opportunity for renewed legibility and design.

Mapping absence: no-data as an operative framework for territorial analysis

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Keywords
Territorial analysis, Spatial representation, Digital archives, Data visualization

Contemporary territories are increasingly mediated through digital systems that do not simply represent space, but actively structure its visibility. Within these systems, certain areas remain partially or entirely absent. These absences (manifesting as missing, obscured, or inaccessible data) are not neutral omissions, but are produced through uneven development, infrastructural disparities, and political decisions that regulate access, representation, and knowledge. As such, no-data zones reveal how territorial realities are selectively constructed and governed.

This paper examines the potential of architectures of no-data as a critical framework for interpreting complex data environments, analyzing spatial relationships and patterns, uncovering hidden connections, and informing research processes and outcomes. The study was conducted within a graduate-level elective architecture course, in which students engaged with digital spatial archives as primary sites of inquiry.

By selecting and critically analyzing datasets such as satellite imagery, environmental records, and urban data platforms, the study maps multiple forms of absence, including infrastructural gaps, demographic invisibility, discontinuities in territorial connections, and the underrepresentation of informal settlements. Through representational strategies that foreground these absences, the projects reinterpret no-data as an active spatial condition, demonstrating how invisibility aligns with processes of marginalization while simultaneously exposing overlooked spatial, cultural, and environmental realities.

Positioned within the networked information age, this research establishes a pedagogical and analytical framework that integrates multi-scalar thinking with data-driven spatial interpretation. It understands absence as a condition produced through socio-political inequalities and regimes of control, while also using it as a critical lens to interrogate these very structures. In this sense, no-data is not framed as a generative resource in itself, but as evidence of uneven territorial processes that, when made visible, can inform more just and accountable spatial practices.

Limited resources, unbounded practices: An experiment in collective hands-on learning

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Keywords
Hands-on learning, Material-driven approach, Collective design processes, Context-sensitivity

Architectural design education produces an abundance of material output—drawings, models, prototypes, installations—while simultaneously generating significant amounts of waste. Leftover, discarded, or partially used materials accumulate across campuses and educational settings, often treated as expendable byproducts of learning. This paper presents a pedagogical experiment designed to cultivate awareness of material value, lifespan, and circularity in developing contextually responsive design solutions.

The project "reserve" is a small-scale 1:1 application that seeks to establish both a physical and pedagogical framework for reserving, storing, and reactivating materials within architectural education. The term "reserve" denotes both a spatial repository and an educational practice of designing with waste and/or available materials for context-sensitive interventions. Through a hands-on workshop series, the project "reserve" aimed to foster emancipatory and collective design processes that utilize existing resources at technical and spatial levels.

Framing material availability as a starting point rather than a restriction, the project encouraged the harvesting of found materials across the campus to compile a material inventory. Exploring the potential of this inventory, design ideas evolved in response to material behavior, uncertainty, and unforeseen constraints. Construction details were closely informed by material properties and the collective assembly process, incorporating improvised and ad hoc solutions that fit emerging on-site conditions.

Rather than resisting limitations and uncertainty, the project embraces them as integral to architectural thinking and practice. Within this framework, making becomes a critical mode of inquiry for exploring and negotiating through which spatial, material, social, and ethical questions are explored and negotiated. By engaging students in iterative cycles of designing, making, failing, and reflecting—often collectively—the project positions unpredictability, urgency, and incompleteness as productive conditions. This approach cultivates critical judgment, resilience, and adaptability, enabling students to fit their design processes within complex, open, and dynamic situations, rather than seeking fixed or final solutions.

The current regression crisis calls for a fundamental rethinking of construction, beginning with scale and modes of intervention, whether on new buildings or existing ones. The lessons of traditional architecture—governed by necessity, by the balance between permanence and reversibility, and by the use of local resources—urge a renewed sensitivity to the measure of any intervention. Remind, Reuse, Renounce, Recover, Reduce, represent five key actions through which to proactively respond to the crisis, proposing transformation strategies rooted in the real needs of places, in the tension between long and short timescales, and in circular resource flows and site-specific processes.
In relation to these five key actions, the session invites contributions that deal more specifically with:

Remind focuses on the ability of heritage to convey design principles that remain valid for contemporary transformation, beginning with the processes and techniques through which it was built;

Reuse emphasizes material flows and the potential of construction sites to activate short, local cycles of reuse and recycling, turning the building process and construction sites into models of sustainability based on local resources;

Renounce is linked to the need to focus on existing architecture, limiting the use of resources in the search for a new concept of sustainability that takes shape through a logic of low technology and high thinking. This session centres on place and available resources, advocating for an architecture that works with what exists by constantly seeking balance with the built and natural environment;

Recover is to respond meaningfully to contemporary needs in existing buildings, balancing conservation and innovation in use, adapting them to new requirements through changes in geometry, materials, or techniques. Recovery may involve simple maintenance, targeted additions, or even partial demolition to accommodate new functions;

Reduce understood as the avoidance of waste, is the categorical imperative that synthesizes the previous actions, rooted in the logic of traditional architecture, where responses are tailored to the essential. Self-building, long a staple of rural economies, still represents a viable mode of transitional occupation and site reactivation under constrained conditions

SESSION CHAIRS

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2A UN-BUILD

Tectonic Afterlives: Repositioning Materiality and Collaborative Knowledge in the "Architecture of the Fitting"

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Keywords
Architectural pedagogy; Material reuse; Collaborative design; Circular construction; UN-Build

The Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) sector is currently grappling with a "regression crisis" precipitated by the unsustainability of extractive "cradle-to-grave" capitalist models. This paper interrogates the pedagogical potential of the Fabrication & Structure (VS3) studio at [university redacted], positioned as an "inquiry-based biotope" that destabilizes the traditional primacy of site and program. By prioritizing the inherent material traits of timber offcuts as the primary design driver, the studio reframes architectural practice as a humble, knowledge-driven response to the ecological limits of the Anthropocene.

Addressing EAAE Session 2 (UN-Build), the paper presents the Found.Designed.Made. project, which repositions materiality—specifically the reuse of timber offcuts—as the primary driver of form. Students are tasked with giving discarded timber an "afterlife" by treating it as a legitimate research medium through hands-on testing and physical prototyping. This fosters a "logic of low technology and high thinking" that aligns with the session's focus on the actions of Reuse, Reduce, and Recover.

Significant pedagogical innovations explored are the "spread authorship" method and the "design exchange" process. By staging projects so that ideas are swapped and developed by different teams, the studio reduces personal attachment to individual concepts and encourages rational, collaborative discussion. This method teaches students to negotiate the "goodness of fit" between structural requirements and available, often irregular, resources.

Ultimately, treating the studio as a site for collaborative knowledge generation creates a transferable model for sustainable education. Linked to the school's externally funded Circular Modularity research project, the studio provides generalizable strategies for addressing construction waste while empowering future architects to see form as a means of giving our built environment measure and direction. The result is a model that addresses the discipline's evolving mission to produce beauty and shared experience within planetary boundaries.

The Role of Environmental Simulation in Achieving Contextual Fit: Evidence from a Longitudinal Undergraduate Study

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Keywords
Architectural Education; Building Performance Simulation; Decarbonization; Pedagogical Challenges

While contemporary architectural research continuously evolves to address climate crises through expanding 5R to comprehensive 10R and 15R strategies, first-cycle architectural education severely lags this theoretical progression. Instead, environmental performance is treated as an isolated theoretical package introduced into the design process as a late-stage add-on, rather than a core design driver. Consequently, students frequently rely on initial, intuitive starting concepts where massing is applied without considering site-specific climatic data.

This study addresses this gap by presenting the results of a comparative process analysis within a three-year longitudinal third-year building technology course on performance-based form-finding (2023–2026). Apart from theoretical lectures, the course is built upon a term-long design study of small-scale buildings located in diverse climate zones. The research observes the design iterations of 55 student groups. Through purposive sampling, this paper analyses the evolution of nine student group projects in response to empirical data provided by simulation tools, specifically Autodesk Revit Insight and Rhinoceros 3D/Honeybee.

The synthesis of these projects shows that simulation-driven workflows operationalize 'R' strategies to achieve contextual fit through two primary ways: (1) Morphological Refusal and Rethinking: Initial intuitions dismantled when performance failures necessitate relocation or fragmentation (e.g., Venturi effect) to optimize solar and thermodynamic efficiency; (2) Material Reduction and Substitution: Carbon benchmarks identify materials, compelling a shift from carbon-heavy systems to alternatives like Mass Timber. Ultimately, this process establishes a rational error-correction system, replacing intuitive habits with performance-validated decisions.

This study frames the design process as an iterative negotiated deal among the contextual data, comfort, form, and material. Hence, it suggests that environmental fitness requires a pedagogical shift toward being data-responsive in education, where design teams must be willing to mechanically dismantle any architectural decision that fails empirical performance benchmarks.

Agency through Co-Design: How Live Projects Equip Architecture Students for Climate Action and Real-World Impact

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Keywords
Architectural Education; Live Projects; Design-build; Climate Change

Built environment professions play a critical role in climate mitigation and adaptation. This paper investigates how future practitioners are being prepared for this challenge, focusing on the potential of co-design experiences, or live projects, to equip students for socially engaged climate action. It argues that student-stakeholder co-design processes foster innovative, sustainable solutions, while benefiting the learning outcomes. Transformative pedagogies adopting co-design and experiential learning have been gaining traction, but initiatives remain dispersed. This paper reports on a case study that examines two iterations (2025 and 2026) of a design/build module in Ireland. Each involves master's in architecture and final-year structural engineering students collaborating with clients (users and decision makers) to develop temporary, small-scale interventions, which they subsequently build on the university campus. The projects prioritise the reuse of locally sourced materials to creatively address heritage adaptation, circularity, and universal design. Adopting a qualitative approach and a case study strategy, the research employs observations, questionnaires, participatory evaluations with students and teachers, and interviews with stakeholders. The findings reveal that student and client collaboration offers valuable reflections on the roles of architects and engineers. Tutors highlight pedagogical gains and motivation from meaningful contributions, despite setup challenges. Stakeholders value students' creative problem-solving for complex, divergent client needs and welcome continued partnerships.
Despite the inherent constraints of live projects and client demands, the students embraced their increased agency with enthusiasm. The process deepened their understanding of user needs and universal design, championing a "low-tech, high thinking" approach to local resource reuse. By engaging with existing structures, these co-design initiatives and physical interventions serve as replicable models for campus-wide adaptive reuse. Ultimately, these experiences deliver tangible results while sharpening students' focus on circularity, heritage adaptation, and the evolving social responsibilities of their professions.

From Concept to Fitting: Addressing AI's Operational Gap in the Intermediate Design Phase

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Keywords
Artificial Intelligence; Architectural Design; Intermediate Design Phase; Contextual Fitting

While Artificial Intelligence demonstrates broad efficacy in the early stages of design conceptualisation and visual representation, it often generates generic solutions that struggle to align with specific design intentions and site peculiarities, operating through abstraction processes driven by global databases.
This contribution investigates the role of AI in the transition toward small and medium scales, highlighting a significant operational gap in the intermediate phase of the design process. Through a critical literature review, the study reveals the asymmetry between AI's ability to rapidly generate concepts and its limited capacity to support contextual fitting and the production of technical and executive drawings required for the actual realisation of architectural works.
While current tools show promising results in metropolitan contexts characterised by rich digital datasets and existing models, their limitations become even more evident in minor, rural, or less digitalized contexts. In this scale transition, the architect's role remains pivotal: critical judgement is essential to assess coherence, guide design decisions towards context-appropriate solutions, and evaluate the relevance of generated proposals. Consequently, there is a clear need to develop AI models with enhanced contextual awareness, capable of supporting the design process while preserving the decision-making role of the architect.

Extracting Architecture: Mining as a process for reusing abandoned architectural relics

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Keywords
Mining; Abandonment; Materials; Territory/landscape; recycling

The paper reflects on the concept of "mining" as a generative principle of construction, examining the role that abandoned architectural objects can play within a process of material resource reuse and recycling. The process of dismantling and extracting materials or components from an existing artifact to be reused in the construction of a new architectural object is deeply rooted in the history of building cultures. This is evident in the historical reuse of ashlar blocks and structural elements adapted for new constructions, as well as in the informal solutions typical of the rural world, where immediate needs are frequently addressed through "ready-made" operations.
This contribution analyzes the practice of mining through key virtuous architectural examples, bringing to light an essential and transferable principle: that the built environment, existing structures, and architectural relics scattered across the landscape can be considered, ar from being mere waste, as "anthropic quarries" from which architectural design can draw nourishment. Furthermore, the study highlights the indirect benefits that extracting salvaged materials from abandoned buildings (through their partial demolition or transformation) produces on the landscape, establishing new balances between what exists, what is needed, what is appropriate to remove, and what deserves to be preserved.

Marginality as productive condition: a case study in situated practice

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Keywords
Rural Settlements; Depopulation; Self-building process; Construction

How can architectural practice engage in remote rural settlements shaped by abandonment and infrastructural scarcity, and what forms of spatial and material engagement do such conditions enable? What if we could reframe marginal rural contexts not as sites of deficit, but as productive environments for alternative architectural approaches, generating distinct ways of making, inhabiting, and maintaining? This question is explored through a project in the small inland village of Dol on the Croatian island of Hvar, situated within a context of long-term depopulation, the decline of agrarian livelihoods, and limited accessibility. The project originates from two realities: traditional stone houses persist as partially abandoned structures, and conventional building methods are challenged by the island condition. Exploring prospects of temporary dwelling in a remote Mediterranean village, this casestudy investigates self-building as both a historically rooted and a contemporary form of spatial agency. The House in Dol, developed over ten years through an openended self-building process, is grounded in the immediate experience of making, in a continuous relationship with material, site, and their constraints. Rather than resolving the ruin, the intervention works through its incompleteness, maintaining partial emptiness as an active spatial condition. Construction relies on incremental building, seasonal reoccupation of the site, and continuous adaptation. Embedded within existing social and material networks, the project depends on reciprocal exchange with the community, established in shared knowledge and collaborative construction. It proposes marginality as a productive condition shaped by cycles of use, decay, and transformation, and positions self-building as a practice that reworks rural territories through sustained, incremental acts of making.

Material Reuse as a Design Driver: Insights from Superuse Studios

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Keywords
Material reuse; Circular design; Superuse Studios; Material-driven design

Materials have long been designated to fulfill predefined functional and formal requirements in architectural design, leaving existing materials underutilized in the design process. This paper examines how reuse-based practices reconfigure this assumption. It argues that material reuse operates as a fundamental input that actively shapes design decisions. Accordingly, design unfolds through the reciprocal relationship between programmatic needs and available materials as each continuously informs and reshapes the other.
The paper focuses on Superuse Studios (formerly 2012Architecten), an international architectural collective established in 1997. Guided by the requirements of the design brief, Superuse identifies locally available reusable materials through its "harvest mapping" method in the very early stages of its design process. With their predefined dimensions, properties, and prior uses, the found materials may initially appear to be constraints; yet they ultimately guide the process, add value, and serve as sources of inspiration for designers. The use of found materials also enables adaptive design processes in which spatial and programmatic solutions remain open to modification until the final phase, resulting in what Superuse describes as a "dynamic final design." Through an analysis of selected projects, this paper aims to demonstrate the feasibility of reuse-based design, render its processes visible, and draw on Superuse Studios' expertise. By foregrounding material reuse as a constitutive element of design rather than a secondary consideration, the study addresses a relatively underexplored dimension of architectural design and contributes to emerging discussions on circular and material-driven design methodologies.

Ex-Mercati Generali in Turin and the Sustainable Afterlife of Post-Industrial Heritage

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Keywords
Adaptive reuse; Post-industrial heritage; Sustainable renovation; Energy-conscious design; Regeneration

Ex-Mercati Generali in Turin is a place shaped by several lives. Built in the early twentieth century as a wholesale market, later transformed for the 2006 Winter Olympics, and today marked by uncertain uses and unfinished regeneration, the complex raises a question that is central to sustainable architecture: how can existing buildings be adapted without erasing the material, spatial, and historical value they already contain?
This paper examines Ex-Mercati Generali as a case of adaptive reuse understood as "fitting." Rather than treating sustainability as a matter of adding new technologies to an old structure, the paper considers reuse as a more careful process of working with what remains. Building on a master's thesis developed at Politecnico di Torino, it compares three moments in the site's history: the original 1933 market, the Olympic transformation, and a proposed future reuse.
Through this comparison, the paper discusses how changes in function, envelope, materials, and spatial organization affect both the environmental performance of the building and its capacity to support new civic uses. The proposed reading argues that the value of Ex-Mercati Generali lies not only in its architectural form but also in its ability to absorb change. Its large spans, recognizable concrete arches, urban position, and layered history make it a useful site for testing how reduced intervention, energy-conscious renovation, and public-oriented programs can work together. Internal insulation, improved envelope performance, photovoltaic systems, and the reuse of existing spaces are considered not isolated technical solutions but part of a broader strategy of recovery. Seen in this way, Ex-Mercati Generali contributes to the theme of UN-build by showing how reuse, reduction, and careful adaptation can turn post-industrial heritage into a resource for vulnerable and changing urban contexts.

The Architecture of Adjustment: Artificial Intelligence and Adaptive Reuse in Industrial Heritage Interiors

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Keywords
Architecture of adjustment; Artificial intelligence; Industrial heritage; Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse consists of assigning a new use to existing buildings without destroying their essential structure or their historical, cultural, or material value. This type of intervention in heritage industrial spaces poses specific challenges for architectural design, especially in the realm of interior spaces, where the new programmatic transformation must operate with precision, restraint, and sensitivity toward what already exists. In this context, the present study examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI) as a support system for the design process in small-scale interventions, focused on detail and fine-tuning, without replacing the fundamental criteria of architectural design and critical human approach. Thus, rather than substituting core design principles, AI is conceived as an instrument that enables the refinement, verification, and adjustment of project decisions, reinforcing the analytical capacity of the designer. Within this framework, two former industrial buildings converted into schools of architecture become experimental laboratories in which the aim is to develop a design calibrated to the needs of international and multicultural student communities, while always maintaining respect for the identity qualities of the intervened industrial architectural heritage. In line with recent literature, AI is employed as a decision-support system, facilitating the exploration of scenarios and the comparative evaluation of alternatives. The effectiveness of these tools depends on a human-in-the-loop approach, in which the sensibility of the architects, critical judgment, and awareness of the site's memory remain irreplaceable elements. Therefore, the project is understood as an iterative and adaptable process, based on data and grounded in human, contextual and cultural knowledge. The paper advocates for an "architecture of detail" as opposed to an architecture of excess, arguing that AI can contribute to a project methodology that is close to artisanal practices and compatible with reflective, pedagogical, and cultural processes.

Circular Design: An Urban Perspective

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Keywords
Circular Economy; Reuse, Recycling; Urban Transformation

This contribution discusses knowledge on circularity in a perspective of urban transformation, as inherent urban dynamic and as construction of desirable futures. Circularity and circular economy are understood not only as important factor to achieve resource saving and climate neutrality in all processes regarding the built environment but also as factor towards social and economic resilience in increasing global uncertainties. With this backdrop, knowledge on circularity will be discussed in two directions: (1) a new thinking about concepts, modes, and roles of research from a design perspective. While research on circularity in a material and technological perspective is widely established, it will be here about opening up new fields and methods, between design, arts, architecture, and planning. (2) how knowledge is driven by and driving a change of academic and professional paradigms. In conclusion, it will be examined whether extending circularity to an urban perspective calls for a new role of creativity, culture and arts to extend architectural-urbanistic knowledge towards climate-neutrality and sustainability. How can an urban perspective trigger understanding and upscaling of context-based practices and experiments? How can performativity-oriented practices foster activation and engagement? Thus, new forms of organising economy in a circular sense is seen to be bound to knowledge production and exchange as well as to a change of paradigms and approaches in education and research of architecture and urbanism. The contribution is based on the results and experiences from the Circular Design Innovation Alliance (CiD), funded by European Union 2023-26 and developed by 11 partners across Europe. Bringing together actors from Universities, Research institutes, Vocational education providers, enterprises, business incubators, civil society organisations and NGOs, CiD fosters interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration. The establishment of six observatories at local and European levels connects these activities to broader socio-economic contexts, supporting challenge-based approaches to learning and knowledge production.

SESSION CHAIRS

2B UN-BUILD

Francesco Marras, University of Cagliari
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Kabin: Material Negotiation at Extra-Small Scale

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Keywords
Research-by-Design; Digital fabrication; Self-Production; Spatial and Material Constraint; Hands-on pedagogy

ScaleKabin is a 1:1 mobile fabrication hub, collectively designed and built by architecture students in an elective course. The project began from a concrete spatial problem: a crowded studio with newly acquired 3D printers and no space to house them. This made mobility a design parameter and positioned material and spatial limitation as the primary condition for research. Students surveyed university storage spaces and assembled a stock of salvaged structural and sheet components, each with its own dimensions and tolerances.
Formal and tectonic decisions were worked out against these properties, in workshops where making and thinking proceeded as a single, retrospective operation. Digital fabrication entered this same negotiation and produced custom-fitted joinery, tested and revised on site.
At extra-small scale, the tolerances of the salvaged material and the precision of the digital tools were measured in millimetres, so misalignments had to be caught and corrected by hand. Decisions were revised throughout construction through direct bodily engagement with material behaviour: joints were tested, failed, and rebuilt until they held. Practical knowledge accumulated through this repeated cycle of testing and adjustment, and is articulated here through a design research folio and a survey of participating students that documents material quantities and design reasoning.
This account follows a research-by-design method, in which knowledge is drawn retrospectively from the act of making rather than tested against a prior hypothesis. Framed this way, Kabin shows how material and spatial limitation can structure a coherent architectural process in which construction itself becomes a site of knowledge production.

Archaeology in everyday life: forms of interaction between the extraordinary and the ordinary in archaeological landscapes

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Keywords
Archaeological landscapes; Everyday landscapes; Production; Adaptive reuse; Hybridisation

This paper reflects on architectural design in the context of the enhancement and enjoyment of archaeological landscapes, emphasising the need to adopt a cross-disciplinary perspective on the subject – one that remains unclear and largely unexplored in contemporary debate, particularly from an operational standpoint – partly due to a series of complexities arising from the fragmented disciplinary approach to the relationship between architecture and archaeology, the interaction between ancient and contemporary settlements, and the need to protect heritage while allowing it to coexist with the landscapes of everyday life. The question concerns how architecture can operate between these polarities, with the potential to bring about transformations aimed at achieving new balances and within a vision of the territory as a common good, where heritage and production play an active role. In particular, the case of the Nuragic landscapes in Sardinia is extremely interesting in this regard, and the ongoing UNESCO nomination process is faced with an emblematic example of the coexistence between the need for measures to safeguard an archaeological heritage, the existence of inadequate planning, and the productive activities that inhabit and shape its surroundings. The research therefore explores forms of interdependence between archaeology and everyday life, proposing a design approach in which the value of heritage emerges not from the isolation of the site, but from its integration with processes of reuse and with the material and cultural resources already present in the area. The reasoning focuses on working with what is already there and moving away from the idea of exceptional intervention in favour of measured, adaptive transformations that are deeply rooted in the place.

Repairing Housing, Rethinking Education: Experiential Pedagogies in the Lakni Kell Initiative

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Keywords
Housing precarity; Industrial heritage; Sustainable reuse; Design-build pedagogy; Solidarity architecture

This paper examines an experiential educational project that adopts renovation, reuse, and minimal intervention as pedagogical strategies underpinning the 8th iteration of Lakni Kell ("We All Need a Home") initiative at the University of Pécs.
The intervention aims to address increasing housing precarity with ecological responsiblity: demanding a shift in innovation towards transforming what's already existing. The in-process transformation of a vacant 33 m^2 municipal apartment to house a family at risk of homelessnes began with the design challenge of rehabilitating one of the more than 400 vacant municipality-owned houses, originally erected during the industrialization of the 19th century, vacated since the 20th century as a legacy of regime change and capitalism. The small-scale heritage site provided an opportunity for students to consider the connected processes from design to building through direct engagement with real-world limitations. This included technical issues (reconnecting to utilities) and social considerations supporting the needs of a real client (low-income family at risk of homelessness, transitioning from a shelter facility with a disabled child).
The approach foregrounded collective authorship and situated learning to repair, adapt, and reuse existing materials. Highlights include: university students worked along volunteers skilled labor, applying existing construction methods - collaborations that bridged design digital tool learning with techniques utilizing locally available material donations design faculty mentored vocational students to apply contemporary building trade skills (such as heat insulating and plastering) to restore sensitive heritage conditions
Developed through a multi-stakeholder collaboration between municipality, NGOs, educational institutions, and industry partners, the paper introduces a discussion that considers opportunities of the small-scale and deliberate pace of a university pedagogical project in the civic context. Ongoing collaboration with civic actors considers how the reserve of vacant municipal plots could support regional housing demand while sustaining the ethical, social and material commitments of this small teaching pilot.

Learning from Venezia

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Keywords
Adaptive teaching; Critical reuse; Design reduction; Operative memory

If in recent years reuse has progressively established itself as one of the central references of contemporary architectural design, the question today no longer concerns only how to reuse, but how to teach design when building is no longer a necessary premise. This paper reinterprets the teaching activity of Francesco Venezia—developed between 1986 and 2014 across several Italian and international universities—as an early articulation of the categories Remind, Reuse, Renounce, Reduce. Taking Venezia's pedagogy as a field of inquiry, the research shifts attention from the production of the new to a design method grounded in the reading, selection, and transformation of what already exists. Within this framework, Remind operates as the memory of architecture's constructive and logical principles. In courses based on redrawing and rewriting—such as Idee allo stato nascente—students engage with projects by Libera, Le Corbusier, or Mies not to imitate them, but to reconstruct their generative devices through drawing (Burlando, Campo, and Pinna 1995).
Reuse appears as the projectual reuse of disciplinary materials: sketches, unfinished projects, fragments. In exercises on unbuilt or interrupted works, the original drawing becomes a base for transformation, activating processes that avoid both imitation and replacement (Ciruzzi et al. 1995).
Renounce corresponds to a conscious rejection of spectacle and of the autonomy of the architectural object. In courses such as Addizioni, the project takes the form of minimal insertions, where building is not a necessity but a choice to be assessed (Cendron et al. 2001). Reduce, finally, runs through the pedagogical framework as a reduction to essential principles. In courses on light, the horizon, or minimal elements, the project is brought back to a limited set of relationships (Venezia 1988; Venezia 2011).
Learning from Venezia thus means adopting a critical stance in which reuse becomes a matter of judgment.

Light Architecture.
Reinventing architectural aesthetics from what already exists

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Keywords
Light architecture; Built heritage; Place reactivation; Architectural aesthetic; Habitat

What if we are to reinvent the aesthetics of architecture in marginal places? How would it look like? And what could be our contribution as designers - in terms of professional ethic and formal aesthetic - to this incremental process of building, layer above layer, on what is already there? How can heritage become a reference for new strata to come, without constraining the creativity and regenerative capacity of architecture? And, most of all, how to create a space for the community that inhabit the place, for its well-being, for its happiness?
These open questions form part of a research reflection developed over years in the inner marginal territories of central Apennine, in the Marche Region, Italy. The research stems mostly from Branding4Resilience (B4R), a project of relevant national interest (PRIN) and several other connected research investigations and design explorations.
Through a transcalar, design-driven, collaborative approach derived by the above-mentioned research projects, Light Architecture tries to trace guidelines and addresses for architectural design in marginal contexts, proposing a compositional method that works through precise and measured architectural interventions capable of reactivating resources on a broader scale. In fragile places such as inner territories, practicing architecture is often an invisible, tailored, non-authorial action, built with as few resources as possible but with the aim of maximizing and amplifying potential, in order to generate quality, beauty, and social well-being. As a metaphor inspired by Calvino's Six Memos for the Next Millennium, lightness becomes a measure of precision and depth, guiding an architecture that is at once delicate, resilient, and incisive, because it engages in dialogue with communities, the layers of history, the identity of the built heritage, the local resources, the habitat as the multi-dimensional ecosystem that connects them all.

Architecture as Ecological Device: Fitting Climate and Context

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Keywords
Ecological design; Low-tech approach; Vernacular intelligence; Seasonal adaptability; Resource-conscious solutions

Excessively high comfort standard, rigid building regulations, and the widespread outsourcing of ecological performance to technological systems—often hidden within walls—result in a generic architectural language, strict spatial categorizations, and increasing construction costs. Addressing the themes of remind, renounce, and reduce, the paper examines how architecture can be conceived as a site-specific ecological device, defined through a process of fitting to climate and context. This approach informs architectural language, material choices, and spatial qualities, enabling low-tech, adaptive, and cost-effective solutions. The exhibition ±1°C | In Search of Well-Tempered Architecture at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 highlighted how low-tech vernacular architecture responds to climatic conditions with limited means, achieving high ecological responsiveness and spatial quality. From a broader set of strategies, five key principles emerged: room within a room, hotspot, intermediate zone, seasonal use, and spatial compression. Recent projects extend this research by exploring new spatial hierarchies and adaptive modes of use. The Wintergartenhaus by Supertype Group develops intermediate climatic zones through a lightweight timber structure and polycarbonate envelope, creating a buffer between interior and exterior. Enclosed heated volumes allow for differentiated thermal conditions, flexible composition and seasonal use. A student housing conversion by EMI Architekt*innen applies the hotspot principle, introducing compact heated volumes for essential functions such as bathrooms and kitchen. Heat is concentrated and retained through thermal curtains, producing gradients of space and enabling different occupation scenarios.
At the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, a design studio explored the retrofit of a 1970s office building into student workspaces. A winter garden wraps the upper floors, creating a buffer zone and a bright workspace usable for most of the year. This robust and economical intervention expands usable area while requiring only minimal insulation and low costs. Calculations indicate a significant reduction in energy demand.

Rethinking Building in the Existing: From Experiment to Transferable Practice

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Keywords
Building in the existing; Sustainable transformation; Ecological and reused materials; Low tech design; Hands on learning

The transition towards sustainable architecture requires a shift in focus from new construction to transforming the existing built environment. Although there is extensive knowledge on sustainable building, practical methods for transforming existing structures are underdeveloped.
The teaching and research project ReLAB (Real World Laboratories for Sustainable Building) at the School of Architecture Bremen, Germany, addresses this gap through an experimental, hands-on learning format with Master's students in architecture. It investigates how material-based transformation approaches can generate transferable strategies for the adaptive reuse of buildings at risk of demolition. The project frames transformation under conditions of necessity not as a constraint, but as a design field shaped by uncertainty, incomplete knowledge, and open-ended futures. Its central contribution lies in producing transferable knowledge through full-scale interventions in existing buildings. Following expert workshops on ecological materials, six student teams developed and implemented interventions in a vacant post office building in Bremen. In a four-week realization phase, students designed and built reversible assemblies, repairable details, and adaptable spatial strategies directly on site, using regional and ecological materials such as clay, hemp, straw, seaweed, cork, and reclaimed timber. Conceived as 1:1 hypotheses rather than final solutions, these interventions tested how architecture can fit existing conditions and inform larger-scale transformation strategies.
The prototypes were iteratively tested, compared, and refined in response to site-specific conditions. By comparing the built outcomes and reflecting on decision-making processes on site, the project identifies robust approaches that integrate material constraints, spatial adaptation, and stakeholder negotiation. In doing so, it reframes sustainability as a situated practice.
ReLAB proposes a model of practice-based knowledge production linking education and research. It advances low-tech, context-specific transformation strategies based on reduced, reused, and locally sourced materials, and tests how interventions can fit structures materially, spatially, and socially, offering insights for architectural education and practice.

Learning in the Existing.
Reprogramming, Dispersing, and Recovering the Urban School

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Keywords
Adaptive reuse; Educational infrastructure; Urban transformation; Architectural pedagogy

The proposed contribution reflects on three consecutive design-research studios that address the transformation of educational spaces within dense urban contexts. Framed within challenges of urban cores, these studios explore adaptive reuse as a critical design approach grounded in existing spatial, social, and material conditions. The first case, The Dispersed School, investigates the renunciation of the conventional, monolithic school building by proposing a distributed system of educational spaces embedded within the historical urban block. By working with existing structures and residual spaces, the studio advances low-tech, resource-conscious interventions that redefine the relationship between school and city, emphasizing proximity, adaptability, and shared public use. The second case, School Forum: Redux, shifts towards recovery through the reinterpretation and extension of a historically layered educational campus initiated in the 19th century but never fully realized. Students engage with inherited urban fragments, both built and unbuilt, developing strategies of addition, interpolation, and reinterpretation. This approach balances conservation with transformation, acknowledging temporal continuities while enabling new pedagogical and spatial configurations. The third case, Reprogramming Schools, directly addresses the adaptation and extension of existing school buildings erected in the first half of the 20th century to contemporary educational demands, including full-day schooling and changing demographic conditions. Through processes of reprogramming, addition, and partial transformation, students explore how existing typologies can be recalibrated to accommodate new uses, didactic responsibilities and community interfaces. Across the three studios, architectural education becomes a laboratory for testing the implicit didacticism of educational environments while engaging with the social role of learning infrastructure. The studio framing, as well as the projects, demonstrates how recovering latent capacities within built environments can generate resilient, context-specific responses that align architectural practice with ecological and societal imperatives. The concept of didactic space thus evolves, situating students within a space which is simultaneously a direct learning experience.

Time as the Right Measure: The Chrono-Passport as a Tool for Architectural Sustainability across Generations

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Keywords
Temporal design; Chronity; Chrono-Passport; Architectural education; Material ageing

The architectural profession is undergoing a structural crisis whose nature it has not yet fully grasped. Artificial intelligence has exposed a core vulnerability: what architecture schools teach today is increasingly reproduced by an algorithm faster and at lower cost. But there is one dimension the algorithm cannot assume. That dimension is ethical: who bears responsibility for what happens to a building after the keys have been handed over? Who ensures that the next generation understands what it has inherited — and does not destroy it out of ignorance? This ethical competence is today falling out of professional culture and architectural education simultaneously. Its absence gives rise to what the author defines as temporal violence: the measurable destruction of accumulated value, committed not out of malice but out of the absence of a language capable of transmitting architectural intent across generations. In response, the author develops the Architectura Temporis methodology, introducing the term Chronity — the fundamental property of matter and environment to accumulate time as verifiable value, perceived through sensory experience and cultural memory. Two operational instruments follow: the Chronity Index (CI), combining sensory intensity, material strategy and reversibility; and the Chrono-Passport — the immunity of chronity and an operational instruction for the building's maturation, written in a language the next owner can read. The methodology is verified against Casa Zamprogno, an unpublished work by Afra and Tobia Scarpa (Montebelluna, Veneto, 1971), T+55, original materials intact: sensory intensity 22/25; TCO 18.3% lower than standard strategy; Authenticity Premium 35-45%; CI 0.855. The concept of fitting must be understood not only as spatial but as temporal. The paper proposes integrating temporal responsibility into architectural curricula — not as an additional discipline, but as a change in the foundational question: how will this building look at its inhabitants fifty years from now?

Fitting the Sacred: Evaluating Adaptive Reuse Potential of Churches

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Keywords
Adaptive reuse; Churches; MCDM; Secularisation; Rural border regions

Across Europe, ongoing secularisation has led to a growing number of underused or abandoned church buildings. In the Czech Republic, this condition is particularly pronounced in rural and border regions affected by depopulation and declining religious practice. While numerous examples from countries such as the Netherlands demonstrate the potential of adaptive reuse as a strategy for preserving these structures and reactivating them as community assets, such approaches cannot be universally applied. In many cases, a fundamental mismatch emerges between the spatial capacity of church buildings and the socio-demographic reality of their surroundings. This paper argues that adaptive reuse must be understood as a problem of "fitting" – requiring a careful alignment between architectural scale, community needs, and local conditions. To address this, it develops a multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) model as a tool for identifying churches with realistic potential for adaptive reuse, based on spatial, demographic, and functional indicators. The results indicate that a significant number of churches within the Czech Republic show high potential for adaptive reuse. To further investigate this potential, the research is complemented by a research-by-design approach conducted within an architectural design studio. Students select churches identified by the model and develop adaptive reuse proposals, exploring possible programmatic scenarios and spatial transformations. The designs are informed by the concept of churches as "third places," as defined by Ray Oldenburg, rather than strictly sacred spaces, thereby opening possibilities for new social and community functions. The paper ultimately argues that adaptive reuse of churches should not be approached as a universal strategy, but as a selective and context-sensitive process, in which identifying the "right scale" of intervention becomes a critical architectural task.

(In)visible soil

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Keywords
Soil; Teaching; Drawing; Open spaces; Anthropocentric

The current ecological crisis calls for a rethinking of our relation to natural resources, particularly the soil—which architecture has long regarded as merely a volume to be excavated or a surface to be built upon. Nevertheless, today, ordinance for inward densification, recent European directive on "zero net land take", refusal to construct new buildings in favor of renovating existing building stock and moratoriums on demolitions, all point toward limiting excessive land consumption. Yet these initiatives say nothing about the purpose of those open spaces, that are soil resources. What value, what project, what ecosystem should be promoted? The assumption of this proposal is that understanding and giving meaning to open spaces reinforce the renunciation of building and the preservation of natural environment. Without solid soil, there are no foundations, literally and figuratively. But if architecture is grounded in its relationship to the soil, this relationship cannot be reduced to a mechanical observation; it must incorporate the complexity of living systems. Without living soil, there is no life. Education appears to be a key driver in initiating this transformation. A seminar was developed for master's students in architecture in Fribourg. The goal: to shift the perspective of future architects from an anthropocentric approach to a multi-species vision. Through the herbarium—a representational tool borrowed from the natural sciences—and architectural drawing, the students observed, analyzed, and depicted fragments of Fribourg's urban soils, their ecosystem dynamics, and the impacts of disruptive elements. This work, situated at the intersection of scientific, fictional, and architectural approaches, challenges the conventions of representation within the discipline. It poses a simple yet radical question: before building a piece of land, shouldn't we first identify the quality of the soil, its inhabitants and assess the damage we will inflict upon them?

Ph. Cédric Dasesson

Conference Session 3 HER(M)ITAGE

The title of the session, by recalling the term heritage, proposes a critical re-reading through the insertion of the "(M)," which both expands and problematizes the very notion of heritage. The "M" refers to memory, acknowledging heritage as a site for the construction and transmission of collective memory; it recalls the human and communal dimension upon which it is grounded; it evokes maintenance as an ongoing practice of care; and, finally, it suggests modification as an intrinsic condition of every historical reality. The suspension implied by the parentheses thus foregrounds the tension between permanence and transformation, between inheritance and project, in which heritage —understood in its dynamic dimension— becomes a space of shared responsibility and critical reflection. Within this framework, the historic urban landscape represents a particularly significant field of inquiry, in light of the environmental, social, and existential dimensions that, since the post-World War II period, have been widely acknowledged as inherent to inhabited space. Moving beyond the notion of a mere aggregation of monumental landmarks, such heritage should instead be understood as a stratified system in which minor architecture and public space are called upon to address contemporary needs while respecting their historical values. This perspective entails replacing the traditional conservation-oriented approach with more up-to-date integrated strategies, in which protection and transformation converge toward design solutions that respect the identity of places and are capable of counteracting the pervasive dynamics of exclusion affecting resident communities. Building upon the significant body of knowledge developed within the disciplines of Urban History and Restoration Studies, it appears both timely and necessary to continue a critical reflection on the processes of interpretation, conservation, and modification of historic centers, beginning with their urban and social dimensions. This involves recognizing their collective values and vitality, while placing at the core of the project the communities that inhabit them. When regarded as a whole and as an authentic and unrepeatable unicum—without losing sight of detail, yet without becoming overwhelmed by it—these contexts may attain a renewed contemporary dimension that is both respectful and sustainable. On the basis of these premises, the session invites contributions addressing the following themes:

Tools for assessing current conditions and the landscape, architectural, and functional transformations of historic centres;

Strategies and virtuous operational practices for the protection, enhancement, and accessibility of historic centres, with particular attention to the widespread historic built environment and public space;

Methodologies and techniques for the restoration of historic buildings, examined through multidisciplinary expertise and perspectives;

Case studies exploring the dialogue between old and new, in keeping with the notion of "continuous history"

SESSION CHAIRS

Stefano Mais, University of Cagliari
Elisa Pilia, University of Cagliari

3A HER(M)ITAGE

Memory and things

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Keywords
Interiors; Identity; Agency; Identification; Housing; Summer camps

Memory settles into things and the forms of architecture.
The way cities, buildings, interiors and equipment are constructed conveys a unique shared idea of life and a view of the world. Architecture speaks to us and makes us feel at home in a space.
What does the passage of time entail? What meaning does it convey? This contribution explores the relationship between the meaning embodied in architectural forms and the inevitable changes that affect them.
Considering examples from diffused heritage, it questions their meaning and highlights the relationship between an apparent, somewhat superficial meaning — such as that expressed by symbols on façades, like those affixed by the Fascist Party at the entrance to the Colonie — and a deeper meaning. This deeper meaning expresses the capacity to welcome one person, a small group or many users in silence, amidst the chorus of voices, in light and shadow, as is still the case in the Colonie. It is precisely this deeper meaning that allows for a change in use, enabling the adaptation of spaces to actions that are fundamentally similar, reinterpreting and sometimes even overwriting a mere façade.
Furthermore, this contribution aims to examine architecture's capacity to accommodate bigger changes, such as those affecting living spaces. Here, the need to adapt to new situations, whether involving new households of various sizes or the demands of transience and economic necessity, clashes with a rigid structure nonetheless steeped in the memory and identity of a place and rooted in traditional ways of inhabiting domestic spaces. The contribution seeks to explore means and possibilities for accommodating people inhabiting the built environment amid change, paying particular attention to the scale of detail as a point of mutual interaction and design verification.

In Use. Negotiating Urban Legacies in New Belgrade

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Keywords
Urban legacies; Everyday practices; Micro-transformations; Urban Care; Maintenance

What if heritage were something continuously kept in play?
Across the large housing landscapes of post-socialist Europe, continuity takes shape as a dispersed field of ordinary, largely independent actions - repairs, appropriations, minor adjustments, acts of resistance - which renegotiate urban forms over time. In New Belgrade's Blocks 61–64, the afterlife of modernism unfolds as a condition of stratification, in which fragments of the past persist through processes of selection and reinterpretation, oscillating between memory and erasure.
New Belgrade challenges linear descriptions of time. The case reveals a multiplicity of overlapping temporalities embedded in the material and social fabric. Built forms carry traces of past intentions, often left open, alongside latent futures. Everyday practices rework these inheritances, shaping an unstable interplay between persistence and transformation. A quiet form of transformation advances through micro-practices: a café inhabiting a residual ground-floor space; a basketball court sustained through maintenance; a pre-school expansion across buildings; a green corridor preserved from densification through collective care. These micro-transformations operate as situated forms of resistance, often enacted by residents and local communities in tension with the extractive logics of large-scale development. Through them, use, governance, and spatial form converge in a field of continuous adjustment. To trace these processes, a broader investigative approach is required, combining field observation, situated testimonies, and archival exploration, to understand how temporal layers, inherited structures, and forms of agency intertwine within ongoing transformations.
Within this perspective, heritage emerges as an operative field, shaped through practices of maintenance, adaptation, and selective transmission. In this context, small transformations remain dispersed, difficult to trace and unfold through actors and practices that often resist stabilisation into codified forms. "Fitting" operates as a situated, partial, and uncoordinated mode of regulation, opening a critical ground for rethinking how heritage could be negotiated and defended. Heritage happens in use.

Scaling the Transition.
Bridging the Gap Between European Governance and Local Inertia

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Keywords
Socio-Ecological infrastructure, Regulatory gap, Spatial justice, Policy translation, Urban morphology

Within the framework of Europe's ecological transition, a disconnect is emerging between supranational climate goals and local implementation tools. Although the European Green Deal and the European Climate Law set binding targets for carbon neutrality by 2050, their morphological translation follows timelines and approaches that diverge from those of General Urban Development Plans (PRG). The latter, historically designed to govern urban expansion, are now inadequate for managing the complexity of climate-focused regeneration in established urban areas.
This study examines the architecture of adaptation by analyzing the regulatory gap that arises between these two paces. The study highlights how European funding - particularly the Horizon Europe and LIFE programs - often operates in isolation from routine planning, resulting in the design of interventions that struggle to integrate into local regulatory frameworks. Through an analysis of the pilot case in Turin and international comparisons (Paris, Barcelona), the study demonstrates how the impact of these funds on urban morphology generates spatial transformations whose implementation timelines are not reflected in local administrative procedures. The design of public space thus emerges as the only calibrating mechanism capable of mediating between the macroscopic scale of climate policies and the micro-urban dimension of the built environment.
In conclusion, this research proposes interpreting public space as a socio-ecological infrastructure to establish congruence between global ecological imperatives and the experiential dimension of the territory. In this sense, the gap between funding and planning is transformed into a design condition for seeking the 'right measure' (fitting), where small- and medium-scale interventions prove to be essential tools for achieving spatial justice.

A New School of Architecture pedagogically aligned to 'Fitting' and a situated engagement with Place

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Keywords
Heritage; Community Sustainability; Adaptive reuse

By moving away from the mandate of perpetual novelty and innovation, architecture can reaffirm itself as a cultural and artistic discipline, deeply engaged with the enduring questions of beauty, sustainability, and the collective human experience.
Central to this reframing is the concept of 'Fitting'. In a world defined by limits to consumption—of energy, land, materials—"Fitting" replaces the aggressive imposition of form. It is a paradigm for a more modest, yet more precise, architectural response. In places that are facing economic challenges, declining populations, the goal is no longer to build more but to find the right solution to problems of inhabitation. This requires a radical departure from standardised solutions in favour of a situated engagement with place.
These themes have informed the idea of a new School of Architecture – The York School of Architecture (YSA) which welcomed its first students in September 2025, is responding to the University of York and its alignment to public good. The new School is a professional education for public good. To put human experience first, considering the collective impact of architecture and placemaking on community and to consider the idea of sustainability as the first question for every design decision.
Architecture education in York directly mirrors the "Fitting" paradigm by using the city's unique heritage fabric as a living laboratory for sustainable, socially responsible design. YSA explicitly frames its pedagogy around redefining the architect's role within historic and environmental constraints.
The research and teaching are being designed around three key pillars, sustainability, heritage and community. This includes considering sustainability as a wicked problem – recognising the interconnected nature of this problem related to social, economic and natural systems . Also to consider the heritage context and how adaptive re-use and retrofitting can preserve the heritage context but also provide more sustainable architectural solutions.

Scaling the Avant-Garde: Bruno Taut's Lecture Notes in Turkey

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Keywords
Architectural Education; Peripheral Modernisms; Architectural Knowledge; Character

The 20th century witnessed numerous modernist avant-gardes in exile who present diverse narratives of adoption and adaptation, of fitting and adjustment. Whereas the most renowned cases have been the Bauhaus masters who moved in to the United States, this paper focuses on a lesser cited German architect, who did not move westward but to the East; Bruno Taut. Leaving Germany initially for the Soviet Russia and then passing on to Japan, to land on eventually in the young Republic of Turkey, Taut's story presents a uniquely rich narrative of sustaining a modernist drive through a carefully critical calibration and re-scaling of avant-garde enthusiasm.

Taut is definitely not an obscure or unacknowledged name, nevertheless, the conference call presents a conceptual reframing that makes it plausible to revisit him as a precious case of discussing architectural "relevance, appropriateness" and "fitting", particularly in fragile peripheral contexts where scarcity of not only economic but also social resources apply considerably more than orthodox prescriptions of a modernist progress.

Similar to the European figures practicing in the States, Taut's vastly operative engagement in the Turkey involved both teaching and practicing roles, equally influencing both. The paper will emphasize his role in the educational context, with a focus on his book "Mimari Bilgisi (Architectural Knowledge)", which was a collection of his lecture notes. The book will be projectively re-read in its relation to the current vocabulary highlighted with the renewed call for an evolving mission of architectural education, with keywords such as "character", particularly in comparison to those who performed in similar roles in the Turkish architectural academy, i.e. Ernst Egli before him and Sedat Hakkı Eldem after him, where they all set out to inscribe similarly responsive yet concretely diverse reflections for a pedagogy of change in an(other) age of compelling imperatives.

The Measured Opening: Enclosure, Permeability, and Urban Quietness

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Keywords
Regenehortus conclusus

This contribution investigates fitting as an operative paradigm through the regeneration of abandoned intra muros areas, focusing on former military complexes of monastic origin. Rather than addressing the building itself as the primary object of intervention, the research shifts attention to the enclosed open spaces that often characterize these sites. Due to their scale, location, and physical enclosure, these spaces frequently assume the spatial and symbolic qualities of the Hortus Conclusus: introverted, protected, and detached from the surrounding urban dynamics.
Within this framework, fitting is interpreted as a process of recalibration between closure and accessibility. Through the study of external references—particularly the Flemish Béguinages—the research explores how minimal and carefully positioned openings in the perimeter walls can generate new forms of permeability without dissolving the spatial identity of the enclosure. These interventions do not aim at full integration, but rather at a controlled negotiation between inside and outside.
The requalification of the internal open space thus becomes central: not as residual land, but as a spatial resource capable of hosting forms of collective quietness and urban pause within increasingly dense and accelerated environments. In this sense, the project engages with fitting as a practice of measure, where subtraction, limitation, and spatial specificity become design tools.
This approach is applied to the case of the former convent of Santa Maria della Ripa in Forlì, currently undergoing a process of transformation, positioning it as a testing ground for rethinking the relationship between enclosure, permeability, and inhabitation.

Architectural Heritage in MisFit.
Spatial Forms, Excluded Bodies in mountain settlements

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Keywords
Mountain settlements; Architectural heritage; Accessibility; Spatial exclusion; UNESCO cultural landscapes

This paper examines the mountain settlements as an example of architectural and historical "fit" that gradually evolved into a contemporary condition of "MisFit". In this context, the term "MisFit" describes the phenomenon whereby historically adapted settlement forms no longer correspond to contemporary requirements of accessibility and inclusive habitation.
Located in the region of Epirus in north-western Greece, the forty-six traditional villages of Zagori (Zagorochoria) serve as the main case study of this research, having developed across the steep terrain of the Pindus Mountains in close relationship with topography, climate, local materials, communal life and historical need for security. Their formation within this demanding landscape shaped a distinctive architectural identity, demonstrating that these villages were not conceived as static compositions, but as adaptive and evolving spatial systems responding to environmental constraints and human necessity.
These characteristics led to the recent designation of Zagori as a Cultural Landscape by UNESCO. Today, however, demographic aging, depopulation, tourism pressures and restrictive heritage regulations bring light to new forms of spatial exclusion, especially for people with disabilities, elderlies and those with reduced mobility. Spatial qualities historically valued for their cultural authenticity often no longer align to the contemporary bodily experiences.
This raises a fundamental question: for who are heritage environments designed, and to what extent can they be modified without undermining their intrinsic value and or becoming socially exclusionary landscapes?
Within the framework of an ongoing doctoral research that repositions accessibility as a cultural and territorial prerequisite central to rural regeneration, this paper critically investigates the relationship between cultural heritage, conservation, adaptation and spatial inclusion in mountain settlements. By examining settlement morphology, public-space accessibility and circulation patterns, it argues that preservation and inclusivity should be faced together as conditions of rural regeneration and long-term vitality.

From Margins to System: Energy as Heritage and Socio-Spatial Infrastructure in Mediterranean Minor Settlements

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Keywords
Active heritage; Mediterranean minor settlements; Transitions; Renewable energy communities; Socio-spatial infrastructures

This contribution proposes a reinterpretation of heritage in minor settlements through the lens of the energy question, understood as both a critical and operational device for contemporary design. Within the framework of environmental, economic, and demographic crises, Mediterranean inland areas — often considered marginal — emerge as anticipatory contexts capable of activating new relationships between space, society, and resources.
Adopting the paradigm of her(M)itage, heritage is interpreted not as a static legacy to be preserved, but as a dynamic, energetic, social, and culturally active infrastructure. From this perspective, the Mediterranean is understood not merely as a geographical context, but as an operational field for design experimentation, where environmental and settlement conditions make evident the transformative potential of emerging contextual forms.
Within this framework, and in continuity with Giovanni Carrosio's interpretations of inland areas as laboratories of territorial innovation, the energy transition is not limited to the introduction of technological devices; rather, it configures energy as a cultural, social, and spatial infrastructure capable of profoundly redefining ways of inhabiting and producing territory. Renewable energy communities are interpreted, in line with Jeremy Rifkin's perspectives, as distributed and collaborative systems, while Reyner Banham's reflections on the relationship between energy, environment, and design enable these devices to be understood as part of a renewed ecology of architecture.
In minor settlements, heritage becomes an active support for the local production and management of energy, triggering processes of cultural, economic, and spatial regeneration. Moving beyond the dichotomy between conservation and transformation, the research proposes a reversal of perspective: from margins as places of fragility to margins as laboratories of innovation. In this sense, the theoretical triangulation between Carrosio, Rifkin, and Banham allows the energy transition to be interpreted as a simultaneously territorial, social, and design-related phenomenon, founding a new alliance between energy, community, and heritage.

Restoration Methodologies as Negotiated Practice: Multidisciplinary Approaches from the House of Wonders, Zanzibar

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Keywords
Heritage restoration; Multidisciplinary conservation; Built cultural heritage; Conservation methodology; Stone Town, Zanzibar; Negotiated practice

The restoration of historic buildings often requires approaches that move beyond purely fabric-centered conservation toward more integrated and context-sensitive practice. This conference contribution examines the restoration of the House of Wonders in Stone Town, Zanzibar, to understand how restoration methodologies are shaped in practice under conditions of incomplete documentation, material uncertainty, local regulatory oversight, limited resources, and uneven availability of specialized conservation expertise.
Rather than treating restoration as a fixed sequence of technical steps, it is understood as a process unfolding through interpretation, decision-making, and adaptation. In this sense, restoration involves not only the careful study of historical evidence but also sustained engagement with material conditions, institutional requirements, and the realities of the site.
The contribution draws on a qualitative case study based on interviews with key actors involved in the project, including an architect, engineers, a quantity surveyor, a historian, and a conservation artisan. The findings suggest that restoration develops through a set of interrelated practices in which negotiation is key, rather than a single defined method.
Four aspects are particularly evident. First, restoration begins with documentation and the reconstruction of architectural knowledge where original records are missing. Second, it depends on material and structural assessment, combining traditional knowledge with investigative and digital techniques such as 3D scanning. Third, it is shaped by planning and conservation policies and approval procedures that regulate intervention. Fourth, it relies on multidisciplinary collaboration, including site-based craft knowledge, while also revealing shortages in specialized skills and experience.
Considered in relation to one another, these observations suggest that restoration operates as a negotiated practice, in which methodologies are shaped through the interaction of historical, technical, institutional, and practical forms of knowledge. This highlights the need for architectural education to engage more directly with interdisciplinary collaboration, heritage governance, material diagnosis, digital documentation, and craft-based learning.

Beyond Infrastructure: The Naha Port Freeway Airport Route Ventilation Towers as Landmarks of Continuous History and Collective Memory

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Keywords
Okinawa; Landscape Identity; Continuous History; Civil Engineering Structures

Background.Modern infrastructure often prioritize functional efficiency at the expense of cultural resonance, engendering urban "non-places." However, the Naha Port Ventilation Towers (2012) represent a critical counter-narrative to this technocratic standard. Situated at Naha's historic gateway—a liminal space where contemporary transit intersects with the memory of the Ryukyu Kingdom—these structures occupy the sites once guarded by the Miegusuku and Yarazamori-gusuku fortresses. Historically significant as defensive bastions, their contemporary counterparts adopt Gusuku-inspired (the Ryukyuan term for castle or fortress) circular plinths and Ryukyuan limestone textures. This intentional spatial continuity suggests that massive civil engineering works can transcend utilitarianism to become cultural landmarks that anchor urban identity in an era of hyper-mobility.
Methodology and Critical Reflection. The study employs a qualitative case study approach, first analyzing historical iconography and the cultural significance of the original fortresses as benchmarks for spatial continuity. This is synthesized with architectural analysis and interviews with the lead architects (Kannari Architects), tracing the project's 15-year conceptual evolution (1997–2012). Furthermore, through media discourse analysis, the paper offers a critical reflection on the "Architecture of the Fitting." It interrogates how these "para-architectural" objects translate the cultural essence of lost landmarks into modern public landscapes, thereby revitalizing infrastructure's capacity to maintain collective memory and foster a sense of belonging.
Contribution to "Continuous History". This research demonstrates that infrastructure can bridge the rift between historical heritage and future development. By re-embedding vernacular symbols into a modern logistics hub, the towers counteract the dynamics of exclusion inherent in large-scale engineering. This study posits that "fitting" a historical context requires activating the site's stratified vitality rather than mere formal replication. Ultimately, the Naha Port Ventilation Towers serve as a sustainable model for transforming dormant historical coordinates into visible contemporary vessels of memory, enriching the city's "identity."

SESSION CHAIRS

Valentina Pintus, University of Cagliari
Silvia Orione, University of Cagliari

3B HER(M)ITAGE

Teaching innovation in heritage. MURAA+ BIP

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Keywords
Roman Baths; Ruins; Architectural Project; Hand-drawn sketch; International Workshop

This paper presents the results of the international workshop entitled MURAA+, held at the Higher Technical School of the Polytechnic University of Valencia. The workshop aims to explore the building of social value at the Térmas de Mura archaeological park in Llíria, a site containing Roman remains from the 1st century AD located in the town centre. This initiative stems from a project launched a year earlier by the Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, the University of Valladolid and the Polytechnic University of Valencia, and now includes the University of Florence and the University of Porto as new partners. It adopts the structure of a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), funded by the European Union, with both an online and a face-to-face component. The course is based on the following teaching methodologies: online and face-to-face masterclasses on the topics to be covered in the workshop; project-based learning: a heritage intervention project is carried out; collaborative learning: projects are developed in groups mixing students from the different participating schools; hands-on work, through drawings and models, allowing interaction within the group and reflection whilst formal solutions are being developed; and learning from real case studies through several visits to heritage intervention sites. As for the face-to-face component of the work, this is organised into three distinct phases: an initial analysis phase, in which the case study is examined; a second phase involving a review of relevant literature, in which intervention strategies used in other projects and potentially useful for the case study are analysed; and, finally, the project itself, which is based on the analysis and the literature reviewed. The results demonstrate the value of this innovative teaching initiative.

Two Hippodromes, Two Cultural Temporalities. Reframing Fitting across Milan and Ankara

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Keywords
Fitting; Cultural Temporality; Hippodromes; Paolo Vietti-Violi

This paper presents a comparative ground through two hippodrome structures designed by Italian architect Paolo Vietti-Violi, in Milan and Ankara, both conceived in the early twentieth century as instruments and symbols of modernization. While originating from a shared architectural authorship and typological logic, the two cases reveal radically divergent urban conditions today: the Milan hippodrome persists as an active, institutional, and culturally embedded entity, whereas the Ankara hippodrome—initially conceived as part of a larger sports complex—ceased operation in the late twentieth century and was ultimately demolished in 2019. This asymmetry forms the conceptual basis of the paper. Rather than comparing two existing contexts, the study examines two modes of architectural existence—presence and absence—as equally operative spatial conditions. Within the framework of the Architecture of the Fitting, the paper argues that these cases, which frame two different divergent trajectories, reveal distinct scenarios of historical continuity. Therefore, it extends the discussion of fitting beyond the physical scale of built form to encompass cultural continuity and a dialogue with history.

It seeks to examine, from a contemporary standpoint, the perspectives through which the fitting and integration of cultural heritage within cities can be understood and discussed. In this sense, fitting is not treated as a static condition, but as a time-based process, examined through the transformation of each case and the evolving relationships they establish with their surroundings. The discussion focuses on how both hippodromes engage with their urban context over time—how they adapt, persist, detach, or dissolve—and how, in turn, they actively reconfigure their immediate and extended environments, thus scenarios of fitting. Through this temporal and relational reading, the paper demonstrates that fitting can be discussed as a dynamic condition, produced through continuous negotiation between architecture, context, and change.

Burdened Ground: An Architectural Essay on Land Art, Reclamation, and Post-Industrial Mining Landscapes

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Keywords
Post-industrial mining heritage; Land Art; Reclamation; Maintenance; Robert Smithson

Taking Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty (1970) as its point of departure, this essay examines construction, materiality, entropy, reclamation, and post-industrial landscape. It considers the pertinence of Smithson's work and his attitude towards space, matter, and landscape for architecture: a way of looking more sharply at questions of construction, material behaviour, heritage, and transformation that are fundamental to architectural practice. The essay first turns to the making of Spiral Jetty and Smithson's collaboration with contractor Bob Phillips. Drawings, photographs, and Phillips's recollections reveal a recursive process of drawing, construction, observation, and revision in which machinery, unstable ground, stone grading, access, and technical expertise actively shaped the work.

Form emerged through negotiation between artistic intention, situated construction knowledge, material behaviour, and changing judgements on site. The discussion then expands from the object to the transformed territory of northern Utah. The Rozel Point oil field, railroad causeway, quarries, polluted landscapes, and Smithson's mining and reclamation proposals situate Spiral Jetty within a broader geography of extraction, infrastructure, waste, and labour. Maps and archival images recover histories often excluded by canonical aerial photographs, challenging the representation of the work as an isolated gesture in empty nature.

This reframing places entropy within construction itself, where changing site conditions and material responses generate knowledge, rather than appearing only as later decay of a finished object. Finally, reclamation is considered an architectural problem. If landscapes are already burdened by extraction, ecological change, and accumulated material histories, reclamation cannot simply return them to an imagined original condition. Instead, it can enable ecological repair and future use while preserving the legibility of disturbance, labour, waste, and transformation.

A landscape approach to heritage: Implications for architectural pedagogy

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Keywords
Architectural conservation; Historic urban landscapes; Urban heritage; Architectural pedagogy; Cultural significance

Perceptions of conservation as an evolving practice that is agile and adaptive to broader values and interpretations support the premise that architects work as part of a continuum. With diminishing resources globally, architects have a responsibility to value and care for the built heritage and connected urban ecosystems.
A training in conservation prepares an architect for a specialised engagement with historic buildings and sites, but in this time of radical urban change and uncertainty, such skills are increasingly relevant for practice as a 'generalist' architect. Shifting interpretations of cultural values raise challenges for the practitioner, with reinterpretation necessary as sites evolve and develop. The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape formalised a 'systems-thinking' approach to the treatment of historic urban landscapes.
The definition of urban heritage is extended beyond the physical, to encompass intangible heritage and a layering of natural and cultural values. There is an inherent understanding that a meaningful design intervention can contribute to the significance of a place. This is only possible when time is given to interrogate the place and understand its broader significance. This paper forms part of a PhD study which examines creative ways in which architectural conservation values can be embedded within the early years of architectural education, to inform a more sensitive and sustainable practice in rapidly changing urban conditions. The work explores the implications of the Historic Urban Landscape approach for architectural pedagogy, through a series of heritage mapping workshops that formed part of Design Studio. The workshops focus particularly on observation, collaborative learning and reflective practice skills. The research is part of the Building Change project, a collaborative endeavour across the six schools of architecture in Ireland to rethink how we teach and practice in the context of a climate emergency.

Constructed (Dis)Continuity: Materials, Building Techniques and their Transformations in Shaping Urban Identity — Via XX Settembre, Genoa

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Keywords
Material transformations; Post-war reconstruction; Urban identity; Via XX Settembre

Via XX Settembre in Genoa, constructed between the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries, emerges within a phase of social transition linked to industrial revolutions. The street can be understood as a site of experimentation, where new materials and construction techniques were introduced into the urban fabric. The resulting ensemble represents a major urban intervention and a deliberate act of discontinuity with the pre-existing city architecture, expressing the cultural aspirations of an emerging bourgeois society.
Today, this identity remains unchanged, and Via XX Settembre continues to serve as a primary axis in the city centre. Yet, this apparent continuity conceals a more complex condition: the built fabric has undergone multiple phases of intervention, linked to significant historical events and incremental modifications over time.
During the Second World War, a large part of Genoa's urban fabric suffered severe damage, including Via XX Settembre. Nevertheless, this axis has not become a focus within collective memory, resulting in a gap in its knowledge and perception. Its present material condition appears intact, with no perceptible signs of war damage. This apparent integrity makes archival investigation essential, revealing transformations far more substantial than those suggested by the buildings today. This discrepancy raises questions about the material continuity of the buildings along the street, as well as the structural implications of the damage and the reconstruction methods adopted in the post-war period.
Furthermore, such transformations are not limited to traumatic events. Continuous maintenance and minor interventions, carried out throughout the twentieth century to the present, have also played a significant role in shaping its identity.
The paper aims to analyse these processes through the reconstruction of building histories and the study of materials and construction techniques, revealing the paradox between perceived continuity and actual transformation as observed in the urban scenography of the modern heritage.

Cistercian Landscapes in Medieval Sardinia. Dynamic Heritage between Permanence, Transformation, and Territorial Rewriting

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Keywords
Landscape history; Architectural history; Sacred continuity; Water management; Monastic infrastructures; Territorial stratification

This paper investigates Cistercian settlements in medieval Sardinia as agents of territorial fitting within extra-urban and low-density environments. Rather than considering monasteries as isolated architectural complexes, the research interprets them as nodes within wider networks linking water control, agricultural organization, granges, sacred sites, and small settlements. Through a crossreading of landscape history and architectural history, the paper explores how Cistercian presence rearticulated pre-existing spatial structures, adapting to inherited environmental and cultural conditions rather than merely imposing a uniform model.
A central assumption of the paper is that the history of landscape architecture offers a crucial interpretative framework for perceiving, understanding, and studying changing landscapes and dynamic heritage. It allows buildings, infrastructures, sacred continuities, and environmental modifications to be read not as separate elements, but as parts of a single historical and spatial process. From this perspective, Cistercian foundations are examined as interventions within already stratified territorial systems, engaging with older sacred geographies, pre-existing settlement patterns, and inherited environmental structures. In the Sardinian case, this means approaching the monastic landscape not as an isolated medieval creation, but as a field shaped by long-term transformations, where protohistoric persistences, later religious resemanticizations, and rural infrastructures intersect.
Particular attention is given to plains, hydraulic practices, and resource management, understood as devices for mediating between local ecologies and monastic organization. The paper therefore addresses Cistercian landscapes not only as historical evidence of monastic settlement, but also as dynamic heritage systems in which permanence and transformation coexist. In dialogue with current debates on inner areas, territorial imbalance, and the interpretation of changing heritage, the Sardinian case is proposed as a historical laboratory for rethinking extra-urban space not as marginal residue, but as a structured field of relations, memory, and productive infrastructures, beyond the scale of the individual monument. In this perspective, water management emerges as a key form of mediation between monastic organization, inherited ecologies, and long-term territorial adaptation.

Municipal markets hall: a network of proximity spaces

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Keywords
Market hall; Interior architecture; Participation; Social/spatial networks; Proximity

Cities have always taken shape alongside major expansion or redevelopment projects through smaller-scale interventions repeated over time, forming a recognisable network within the urban fabric. This practice has only recently regained importance, engaging local authorities and influencing design culture. Rather than large-scale services, we are thinking of smaller-scale initiatives, amongst which covered municipal markets play a strategic role.
Developing from a long-standing tradition of periodic markets, street trading, and the permanent sale of specific product categories, they were standardised at the beginning of the last century, primarily to enable the retail sale of essential goods at controlled prices.
In many cities, they have taken the form of a network of small, distinctive buildings spread across the area. Beyond their architectural quality, these buildings have figuratively defined focal points that have structured social relations, the urban fabric, and the shared use of parts of the city. Often accompanying the progressive expansion of cities, they have reflected the specific characteristics of the resident population, even though they have lost their effectiveness over time.
For several years now, a process of regeneration has been underway, starting with the restoration of the buildings themselves. This process aims to trigger the revitalisation of the urban fabric and the communities that inhabit it through participatory processes. The idea is to build a system of activities around commercial functions that are deeply rooted in the local context. These processes are implemented through small-scale interventions that engage with existing buildings, using lightweight, often reversible installations and equipment designed in close consultation with users.
Against the backdrop of a historical review, this contribution seeks to address these issues by comparing the policies and projects of several European cities with the Milanese experience and design research developed in the Interior Architecture Studios at the Politecnico di Milano.

Preserving the Original through Transformation: The "Fitting" of Vernacular Heritage

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Keywords
Architecture of the fitting; Living heritage; Vernacular architecture; Masonry fabric; Ağırnas

In vernacular architecture, the concept of "fitting" emerges from the tension between the permanence of historical fabric and the evolving demands of contemporary habitation. Within current heritage debates – which frame heritage as a dynamic condition shaped by memory, maintenance, and modification – adaptive interventions are essential tools for sustaining the continuity of inhabited historic environments. This paper explores this "fitting" process through a case study of a traditional masonry house in Ağırnas, Kayseri, located within the UNESCO Tentative World Heritage site of the Koramaz Valley.

Built in the 1860s over amorphous, rock-cut subterranean spaces, the structure exhibits a layered spatial continuity that challenges conventional restoration approaches. A 1956 property division for inheritance further complicated the site, splitting the original unit into two plots with distinct entrances and courtyards. While the house remains characterized by a small (S) scale, it must now be adapted to accommodate contemporary demands for larger (L) interior layouts and modern amenities. Utilizing locally sourced volcanic stone and traditional timber craftsmanship, the building embodies a material tradition that must "fit" modern technical requirements without losing its soul.

The study examines a restoration project aimed at reinhabiting deteriorated spaces for contemporary residential use while preserving spatial and material integrity. Particular emphasis is placed on the "calibration" of modern domestic functions – such as kitchens, bathrooms, and climate control systems – into the original masonry fabric. By prioritizing careful integration over imposition, the paper demonstrates how design interventions can sustain the continuous history of vernacular heritage, contributing to broader discussions on the maintenance of fragile historic urban environments.

Minor architecture, difficult memory: the GIL of Piacenza between heritage and transformation

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Keywords
Adaptive Reuse; Minor Architecture; Difficult Memory; Urban Palimpsest

The network of youth buildings during the Fascist era constitutes a layered heritage of "minor architecture" that shaped the identity of Italian provinces. Not monumental, these structures operated at an intermediate scale: compact to integrate into the urban fabric, yet incisive to define public space. Today, many survive through adaptive reuse, raising questions about how "difficult memory" persists beyond original ideological programs. This contribution examines the Casa del Balilla (GIL) in Piacenza, designed by Luigi Moretti in 1932–33 as a public school. The building is a palimpsest where ideological memory, architectural language, and functional transformation intersect. Elements of the past (the memorial shrine or inscriptions) coexist within a modern spatial framework characterized by articulated volumes. The conversion has rendered their coexistence operational within daily life.

Moretti's project constitutes a case of architectural fitting: its compositional logic responds to a precise functional program and clear strategy of urban insertion. This spatial coherence has allowed the building to adapt, demonstrating how high architectural quality can transcend its initial ideological framework to establish itself as a latent civic and pedagogical resource.

The specificity of Moretti's approach is explored through an analytical comparison with the contemporary GIL in Arborea. While sharing the same institutional program, the two interventions offer different avenues of investigation: while the Sardinian complex, closely linked to land reclamation and the regime's "new towns", operates primarily as territorial infrastructure and a direct vessel for propaganda, the Piacenza building distinguishes itself through a greater degree of autonomy, translating functional requirements into a complex architectural expression rooted in its context. In this regard, the Piacenza GIL demonstrates how transformation can become an operational condition for the heritage of "minor architecture," redefining the relationship between form, memory, and the urban context.

We should not follow progress, but initiate it...

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Keywords
Social responsibility; Sensitivity; social, Local retention; Community

Tatabánya–Felsőgalla; Komárom–Szőny; Gyöngyös–Zsellérköz
Through cooperation agreements, settlements and urban districts that had fallen behind socially and technically came into contact with the Department of Residentialbuilding Design at the Faculty of Architecture of BME.
Recognizing the problems, and thanks to the sensitivity of the participants, areas were selected for the semester-long design tasks of the design courses where, alongside improving social aspects, there was also an opportunity to apply experimental forms of housing based on the values and historical embeddedness of the place, through contemporary architectural interventions. The aim was to keep residents in their original place of residence, to offer prospects, and to shape a vision for the future of the community.
Balatonfüred Old Village
However, the new educational methodology process involving real design sites integrated into education had already begun in 2009, with the intention of renewing Balatonfüred Old Village. Based on the student plans prepared at the time, decision-preparatory concept studies were developed with the continuous participation and involvement of the town's leaders and residents. Then, in 2024, the investment was implemented according to a plan based on these foundations. The project traced a beautiful arc, starting from ideas rooted in a university design semester. By using the site's special values rooted in the past, the renewed center of the district could be created in the present, serving the future.

Conference Session 4 EX-URBAN

The intensification of territorial transformation processes, driven by ongoing economic, social, and environmental dynamics, calls for a critical rethinking of traditional interpretative paradigms grounded in the dichotomy between "urban" and "extra-urban". The polarization of urban growth, marked by significant disparities in industrialization and socio-economic development, has resulted in a complex system of large and medium-sized urban centres coexisting with a widespread network of smaller settlements and intermediate spaces. This contemporary configuration is characterized by fragmented connections and emerging spatial hierarchies. Such a condition aligns with a comprehensive, network-oriented conception of "territory" that acknowledges the interdependencies among urban, peri-urban, and rural contexts. In this regard, the need for alternative development models converges with a renewed emphasis on "inner areas", which have traditionally been perceived as peripheral and marginal in relation to major urban centres due to persistent structural inequalities in access to essential services, progressive depopulation, and economic stagnation.
However, precisely because of their extra-urban character, these areas preserve a stratified system of historical and cultural layers, heritage, local knowledge, and relatively unspoiled environmental resources. Consequently, they may serve as laboratories for experimenting with innovative planning strategies and design practices aimed at reconciling centrality and marginality. The goal is to unlock their intrinsic potential and latent local values not merely as compensatory responses to urban challenges, but as autonomous drivers of broader territorial development.
Within this perspective, in which planning and design are called to operate through forms of territorial fitting, this session aims to:

Critically discuss both theoretical frameworks and empirical approaches to addressing the urban/rural divide;

Examine emerging spatial configurations and hierarchies resulting from uneven urbanization and socio-economic polarization;

Analyse the role of small and medium-sized settlements in rearticulating territorial networks;

Investigate how cultural practices and local forms of organization contribute to shaping territorial identities and cohesion;

Explore urban planning and design approaches that integrate multi-scalar relationships and foster more equitable and balanced territorial development

SESSION CHAIRS

Dag Boutsen, KU Leuven
Sergio Serra, University of Cagliari

4A EX-URBAN

Water, rest, and production in Kashan: small infrastructures of territorial fitting

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Keywords
Kashan, Territorial fitting, Water infrastructure, Caravanserai, Ab-anbar, Watermill

Kashan, a historic city on the edge of Iran's central desert, is often approached through its merchant houses, bazaar, and Fin Garden. This paper proposes a different reading. It examines Kashan through a set of small and medium-scale infrastructures that regulated water, movement, rest, and production in a hot-arid environment: ab-anbars, caravanserais, and peri-urban watermills. Rather than treating these elements as isolated building types, the paper reads them as a dispersed architecture of territorial fitting, through which the city negotiated water scarcity, seasonal heat, agrarian production, and regional mobility.

The paper develops this argument through an architectural and urban-historical reading of Kashan and its surrounding territory. Ab-anbars are considered as infrastructures of storage and collective access to water, linking underground construction, thermal moderation, and shared practices of use and maintenance. Caravanserais are examined as architectures of rest, exchange, and movement, connecting the urban fabric to regional routes and to the practical needs of travellers, animals, goods, and water supply. Watermills, particularly those associated with water routes around Fin, Qohrud, Barzok, Ravand, and the agricultural edges of Kashan, extend this logic from storage and mobility to production.

Seen in this light, Kashan appears not only as a city of houses and monuments, but also as a multi-scalar system of modest architectures that sustained life between the city, its routes, and its agrarian hinterland. By foregrounding these less visible infrastructures, the paper brings a historical Iranian case into the conference discussion on scale, resource limits, and place-based architectural knowledge. It argues that fitting can be understood not as a fixed formal property, but as an architectural capacity to mediate between environment, use, and territory.

Mobile inhabitants and territorial cohesion: a temporal perspective

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Keywords
Mobile inhabitants, Spatial-temporal dynamics, Architecture, Well-being, Adaptive reuse

The rise of mobile populations signals a structural transformation in how territories are inhabited and produced. Contemporary mobile inhabitants—such as international students, migrants, long-term visitors, and digital nomads—are no longer marginal figures but integral to spatial and socio-economic systems. Their mobility challenges planning paradigms historically grounded in sedentary populations, permanence, and stable spatial organization.

This paper examines the impact of mobile inhabitation on territorial identities, cultural practices, and social cohesion through a spatial perspective. While mobility is often framed through economic or policy mechanisms, this study repositions architecture and the built environment as central mediators of these transformations. Drawing on Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which understands social reality as emerging from interactions between human and non-human actors , the paper acknowledges the presence of broader networks—such as policy instruments, digital infrastructures, and housing markets—not as primary analytical focus, but as conditions that frame and limit spatial action.

Within this network, architecture occupies a critical yet underexamined position. Existing spatial systems remain largely oriented toward permanence, standardized dwelling, and fixed occupancy patterns, revealing a mismatch with increasingly transient forms of inhabitation. This misalignment raises a key question: how can spatial design engage with temporality without reinforcing isolation or undermining the human need for continuity, community, and belonging?

The paper proposes to transform existing building stock as a spatial infrastructure for temporal inhabitation, capable of accommodating fluctuating populations and multiple rhythms of use. By foregrounding space as an active agent—rather than a passive container—this approach positions architecture as a tool for negotiating between mobility and rootedness. In doing so, the study reframes equitable and balanced territorial development as a spatially mediated process through which the interaction of permanence and temporality produces the conditions for well-being, understood as the integration of social cohesion, spatial equity, and lived experience.

Urban morphologies in transition in the outskirt of Marseille

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Keywords
Transition, Scenario-based design, Urban morphology

Territorial transformations are widely recognized as being characterized by long temporal horizons and by an irreducible dimension of uncertainty. The duration of these processes implies that intermediate stages—namely transitional phases—are often as significant as, if not more significant than, the final outcome. The uncertainty surrounding the eventual outcome is closely tied to political, economic, social, and cultural conditions, whose shifts are directly reflected—albeit with varying temporalities and modalities—in the physical and morphological transformations of the territory.
The research project, which also engages a thesis group within a master's-level design studio, advances scenario-based design, supported by computational digital tools, as an approach capable of anticipating a range of possible outcomes of ongoing transformations. The development of multiple scenarios may be articulated in relation to the various stakeholders involved, the planning instruments available, the temporal thresholds considered, demographic dynamics within the study area, and emerging political priorities. Computational design tools—enabling the generation of multiple spatial and morphological configurations in response to variations in both quantitative and qualitative parameters—constitute a powerful instrument for guiding the morphological and spatial transition of the evolving city.
The Plombières area in Marseille, situated at the interface between the historic urban core and the industrial periphery, has been selected as a case study for the proposed design methodology. This portion of territory, not yet fully consolidated as urban fabric, is currently regarded as strategic by the municipality of Marseille. Around Boulevard Plombières and its elevated roadway, productive plots, manufacturing activities, and, to a lesser extent, residential uses are concentrated. The gradual yet incomplete process of deindustrialization affecting certain plots, together with the heterogeneity of functions, morphologies, and densities, renders this area particularly suitable for testing the potential of a scenario-based design approach.

Involving UCD Architecture students in a live project. The Dundrum by Design Case Study

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Keywords
Live project, Participatory pedagogy, Tactical urbanism, Systems thinking, Architecture studio

In an era of accelerating climate emergency, the built environment requires a paradigm shift from top-down expert-led solutions toward inclusive, democratic transformations. This paper explores Dundrum by Design (DbD), a "live project" partnership between UCD, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCoCo), and the local community. By immersing Year 2 architecture students in a real-world urban transformation, the initiative tests how innovative pedagogies equip future architects with social and technical skills to navigate a just climate transition. The project argues that HEI act as vital drivers of change, bridging the gap between high-level policy and grassroots well-being. Structurally, DbD was built upon a year of intentional co-planning between UCD and DLRCoCo to align timelines and expectations, ensuring community engagement was a foundational component of the studio's design logic rather than an external addition.
The curriculum was delivered through two cycles of research and design. In the first cycle, students utilised GIS mapping, systems thinking, and heritage walks to conduct a deep analysis of the site's systemic layers and uncover "unseen narratives". Through the "Under the Bridge" street takeover during Open House Dublin, student-led tactical design interventions transformed an underused space with live installations, allowing students to gather community values directly from citizens – a shift from abstract studio work to real-world social impact.
The second cycle required students to develop the "Dundrum Activator", temporary timber pavilions designed using circular economy principles. These structures served as urban armatures responding directly to local needs identified during the initial engagement phase. The semester culminated in the production of Metabolic Sections, mapping the territory's invisible socio-economic and environmental flows. This project demonstrates that involving students in participatory design not only enhances design skills but also provides a neutral platform for facilitating complex community discussions, positioning architecture as an active agent in territorial systemic change.

Reframing urban: rural marginality through renewable energy communities

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Keywords
Renewable Energy Communities, Territorial Regeneration, Urban-Rural Divide, Energy Landscapes, Devices of reconnection

Understanding the recent transformations of human settlements requires acknowledging that energy and space have historically operated as inseparable forces in shaping infrastructures, resource distribution, and territorial hierarchies. Planned industrial areas, however, consolidated a rationality grounded in productive centralisation, infrastructural concentration, and rigid separation between areas of production, consumption, and dwelling, thereby deepening the dichotomy between urban centres and marginal territories. This process generated fragmented landscapes and planning systems increasingly incapable of addressing the socio-spatial inequalities they themselves produced.
The persistence of functionalist and sector-based planning models further reinforced this discontinuity by treating territory as a sum of autonomous zones rather than as an integrated metabolism of material, ecological, energetic, and social flows. In contrast, it could be deepen some relational readings between urban, peri-urban, and rural systems, even referring to the theories developed since the 70s by some Italian radical avant-gardes that imagined the reposition of marginal landscapes as reservoirs of ecological, cultural, and productive values. Within the same perspective, Friedman reaffirmed local energy self-sufficiency as a strategic condition for the reorganisation of contemporary urban systems.
By articulating post-industrial inequality, critiques of territorial exploitation, energy decentralisation, and related landscapes, the paper intends to deepen how Renewable Energy Communities exceed the technical dimension of the energy transition and should instead be understood as territorial devices of reconnection. Embedded within the logic of urban metabolism and low-carbon circular economy, they offer the possibility of rebalancing the relations between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, transforming marginal landscapes and inner areas into new centralities of cohesion and resilience.

Rethinking boundaries in contemporary Porto: the case of Fontaínhas an In-Between territory

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Keywords
Fontaínhas, In-between territories, Place-based planning, Urban fragmentation, Cultural landscapes

This paper examines the neighbourhood of Fontaínhas as a critical case for rethinking the conventional dichotomy between 'urban' and 'extra-urban' within contemporary territorial studies. Although centrally located in Porto, Fontaínhas displays characteristics typically associated with 'inner areas', including socio-economic fragility, demographic ageing, and uneven access to services. Such conditions challenge rigid spatial classifications and instead support a network-oriented conception of territory, where centrality and marginality coexist within the same urban fabric.

The study situates Fontaínhas within broader processes of territorial transformation driven by tourism growth, property market pressure, and evolving economic dynamics. These forces have contributed to an increasingly fragmented spatial structure, characterised by uneven development and micro-territorial hierarchies. While some parts of Porto undergo rapid valorisation, Fontaínhas remains in a condition of partial integration, functioning as an 'in-between' space that connects historic centralities with peripheral dynamics, yet lacks cohesive and place-sensitive planning frameworks.

Conversely, this paper also argues that this marginal condition constitutes a latent resource. Fontaínhas retains a stratified system of cultural landscapes, vernacular architecture, and resilient social networks that resist homogenising urban processes. These qualities position the area as a potential laboratory for innovative, place-based planning strategies capable of reconciling local identity with broader territorial integration. Methodologically, the research combines spatial analysis with qualitative observations of local practices to explore how small-scale interventions—such as public space regeneration, adaptive reuse, and support for local economies—can reinforce the neighbourhood's role within wider urban networks. The findings highlight the importance of multi-scalar planning approaches that connect neighbourhood-level initiatives with metropolitan and regional strategies. Ultimately, Fontaínhas exemplifies a hybrid territorial condition that calls for more inclusive and balanced models of urban development.

Entangled maps: cultural infrastructures and the making of agricultural heritage across metropolitan Madrid

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Keywords
Agriculture, Heritage, Madrid region, Cultural landscape, Ecology

This paper examines how certain agricultural processes are becoming legible as heritage within the metropolitan landscape of Madrid. It does so at a moment when the metropolis is being rethought through green infrastructure and new socioecological imaginaries. Rather than treating metropolitan agriculture as a unified field, the paper traces the dispersed connections through which it persists across research, production, public action, and cultural practice, and through which it acquires new heritage meanings.
Within this framework, cartography is used to make legible the renewed social, cultural, and institutional interest in agricultural spaces whose presence in the metropolis remains fragmented, ordinary, and historically layered. This approach makes visible both production itself and the initiatives, spatial relations, and forms of attention through which these spaces are being re-read and activated in the present. Mapping serves here to understand how dispersed places, practices, and actors are being connected through new forms of interpretation. In this sense, it also becomes a way of reading metropolitan history.
Organised around a commented selection of original maps, the presentation traces different entry points into the agricultural heritage ecology of metropolitan Madrid. Rather than treating these landscapes as isolated remnants to be protected, it approaches them as active components of metropolitan heritage, where productive use, ecological function, cultural memory, and public meaning remain interdependent. In this way, the paper argues that mapping can make visible the contemporary practices through which agricultural heritage is being redefined, while also opening new ways of imagining future metropolitan landscapes.

Architectures and rural landscapes in transition

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Keywords
Rural landscapes, Architectural heritage, Adaptive reuse, Resources, Communities

This contribution is developed within the framework of a research grant funded by the Marche Region and engages with the debate on the extra-urban, proposing a reflection centered on the role of architecture as the minimum unit of intervention in the redefinition of territorial hierarchies. From this perspective, rural architectures can be understood as active nodes within a multiscalar territorial network, capable of activating alternative forms of "glocal" development.
Starting from an investigation of rural productive architectures and the agri-food supply chain in the Vallesina area, the study explores the role of dispersed heritage—often abandoned or underutilized—as a material and cultural infrastructure capable of reactivating relationships between communities, resources, and landscape. Wineries, mills, and farmhouses are reinterpreted as productive, collective, and hospitality-oriented devices, able to accommodate contemporary uses through adaptive reuse strategies and to respond to ongoing environmental, economic, and social changes. The study further develops a situated experimental approach based on empirical practices, co-design, and 1:1 self-construction of temporary and ephemeral architectures which—by integrating local traditional knowledge and interdisciplinary expertise—reactivate spaces. In this perspective, the architectural project engages multiple dimensions—social, cultural, economic, and touristic—and becomes a tool to "empathize" with places, foster collective learning processes, and strengthen territorial cohesion. Synergies among local actors, institutions, and agri-food enterprises represent an operational condition to promote local resources and circularity. Within this process, the community also assumes an active role in the co-creation and shared management of new forms of habitat and production, reinterpreting the existing architectural heritage as a new commons. In this sense, architecture—through practices of reuse, adaptation, and experimentation—emerges as a critical and operative device capable of connecting different scales and guiding a transition toward more equitable and sustainable development models in rural contexts.

A comparative study of territorial hubs for climate change adaptation in Singapore, Australia, and Japan

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Keywords
Climate change adaptation, Watersheds, Sustainable habitats, Social license, Readiness

In recent years, countermeasures against flooding caused by intense rainfall in short-duration—as part of strategies toward climate change adaptation—has been identified as a key issue in the fields of architecture and urban design. To advance these efforts, it is becoming increasingly important to adopt a watershed-based approach—one grounded in topographical features rather than administrative boundaries tied to the modern planning—and to strengthen the resilience of inhabited areas by evoking behavioral changes among residents, taking into account land use from the past to the present.
Since 2025, the authors have been engaged in a joint research project involving researchers from Singapore, Australia, and Japan. This project aims to establish an internationally comparable framework that transcends differing topographical and social characteristics, enabling the mutual comparison of leading examples. In this study, we focus on cases where physical spaces serve as territorial activity hubs to provide exhibitions, learning programs and/or workshops to local communities, and we compare and analyze these cases.
We have selected four cases—Tsurumi River Watershed Center and River Disaster Prevention Station of Kano River Tsukamoto District in Japan; Living Lab Northern Rivers in Australia; and Marina Barrage in Singapore—to conduct a comparative analysis of their facility sizes, target areas, functions, and programs offered. The findings revealed that facility scales vary in response to the size of the target area; that functions and activities serving the community are provided as an adjunct to the primary objective of disaster management; and that these facilities operate on a dual-use basis by incorporating recreational functions during normal times. Furthermore, the study examined how these initiatives function at a right measure to the local context and operate through forms of territorial fitting integrating multi-scalar relationships.

The operational study of urban form as an investigation of (bio)diversity: an educational experiment in Nanjing

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Keywords
Urban morphology, Urban anamnesis, Urban surgery, Chinese city, Biodiversity

This contribution presents the methodology, outcomes, and potential impacts of the design studio Urban Morphology, Architectural Typology, Contemporary Settlement Patterns, led by Professors Bao Li and Marco Trisciuoglio at the School of Architecture, Southeast University, Nanjing. The 2026 edition, titled URBAN ANAMNESIS AND URBAN SURGERY. Urban Design and Spatial Morphology in the Zhen Xiang Area, Nanjing, investigates how operational readings of urban form can inform design as a process of (bio)diversity-making.
URBAN ANAMNESIS explores the site through its transitional morphological phases, revealing past layouts, alignments, and spatial structures as active design resources for an "urban surgery" approach. The studio focuses on a complex area at the intersection of Taiping South Road and Zhankang Road, in the Qinhuai District, structured around the old Zhen Xiang (Needles Alley), historically known as the narrowest alley in Nanjing. Within a layered context of early 20th-century industrial and commercial buildings and large-scale interventions from 1985–2004, the area is currently in need of spatial and functional reorganization.
Starting from an extensive typo-morphological survey and in-depth site analysis, students developed design scenarios addressing contemporary urban forms, building types, and their capacity to host diverse social and economic actors. The paper argues that reading and reactivating "hidden traces" of the urban landscape can support more resilient, inclusive, and diverse urban transformations, and discusses the pedagogical value of this approach in today's Chinese urban context.

SESSION CHAIRS

4B EX-URBAN

Alessio Floris, University of Cagliari
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Fitting the Lava: polyphonic assemblages in the Bosco di Aci

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Keywords
Forest, volcanic, Ecological infrastructure, Suburban troubled landscape

The Bosco di Aci, a residual forest grown on the lava flows of Mount Etna, is approached here as a troubled fragment of an ecological relic, rather than as a space to be restored or reinterpreted. Embedded within a fragmented suburban condition, the site expresses an unstable coexistence between vegetal succession, anthropogenic pressures, and geological substrate, where lava continues to exert a specific agency in shaping ecological processes and spatial configurations.
Drawing on the notion of "polyphonic assemblage" as articulated by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, the forest is understood as a more-than-human system in which heterogeneous temporalities, species, and practices intersect without converging into a unified order. This perspective challenges conventional approaches to landscape design, often oriented toward coherence, control, or ecological optimization.
Within this framework, fitting is reframed not as the formal adaptation of design to a given context, but as a situated and ongoing practice of management across scales. Operating within the XS–S–M spectrum, the project engages the forest as a small yet ecologically dense fragment whose effects extend beyond its physical boundaries. Design becomes a process of attunement to an already active assemblage, working through partial agreements, selective maintenance, and the careful negotiation of disturbances. Rather than stabilizing or resolving the system, the intervention aims to sustain its capacity to host multiple forms of life and use. Through the case of the Bosco di Aci, the paper proposes a shift from design as form-making to design as the maintenance of plurality. In conditions of environmental fragility and territorial contraction, fitting emerges as a critical practice capable of engaging uncertainty, embracing incompleteness, and supporting the coexistence of heterogeneous agencies.

Port-City habitat: multi-scalar architectural strategies for reconnecting coastal and city fragments of Ancona

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Keywords
Port cities, Small-ports, Landscape, Architectural interventions, Multi-scalar strategies

Contemporary port cities are complex entities that embody the dichotomy between the urban and extra-urban reality. By its very nature, the port is part of the city, yet is separate from it in physical, spatial, administrative and governmental terms at the same time.
In small and medium-sized Mediterranean port cities, this condition is especially pronounced. On one hand ports are embedded within dense, fine-grained historic fabrics, where everyday urban life unfolds in proximity with large-scale infrastructures. On the other hand, ports maintain an extra-urban character rooted in their historical and administrative status as distinct spaces oriented toward global networks of trade and exchange. In this context, the port city of Ancona stands out as a paradigmatic example of a complex system that preserved its hystorical heritage, local culture, monumental port buildings, and environmental resources in proximity to each other, creating a unique and layered identity. Set within a broader landscape system, the port reflects the specificity of Ancona, whose topography is defined by a promontory that shelters the harbor and embrace the Adriatic Sea. This geographic configuration generates spatially and symbolically two seas, one where the sun rises and one where the sun sets. Despite being part of Ancona's identity, landscape, port and urban center fail to get in contact with each other, causing reciprocal marginality.
This paper focuses on recognising small and medium-sized Mediterranean ports as complex exurban areas and on Ancona as ideal laboratory to test architecture as a critical mediating device, capable of reconnecting fragmented systems and articulating relationships across multiple scales. Architectural interventions can act as an interface between the geographic, urban, and landscape dimensions, to transform the port-city boundary into a permeable and dynamic habitat, fostering new forms of interaction and re-establishing continuity between the built environment, the coastline, and the wider territorial landscape.

Emerging bioregional urbanization in inner areas

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Keywords
Alter-urbanizations, Inner areas, Territorial heritage, Place knowledge, Social-ecological systems

Many contemporary authors have already proposed an interpretation of rural-urban interaction in terms of spatial configurations that are neither properly urban nor rural. On this basis, it is time to definitively overcome the entrenched, but now obsolete, dichotomy between urban and the 'rest of the world'.
Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the processes of 'planetary urbanization' (Brenner and Schmid) generally exhibit a deficit of 'urbanity', that is, the capacity to embed both 'convivial' relationships among humans (Choay) and 'coevolutionary' dynamics between human actors and the non-human entities (Magnaghi) that mediate such interactions (Anderies et al.). Consequently, the challenge lies in delineating the conditions necessary for the emergence of new forms of 'alter-urbanizations' (Brenner), i.e. 'urbanizations with urbanity'.
Transcending the urban–non-urban dichotomy, this paper employs the Alto Medio Sannio inner area (Molise, Italy) as case study, developed within the framework of the PRIN 2022 (Research Project of National Relevance) RE-PLACE, REframing PLace-based Approach through the Cultural Ecosystem services of inner areas. The analysis focuses on practices that exemplify diverse modes of reconstructing co-evolutionary relationships between human settlements dynamics and environmental processes.
Particular emphasis is placed on conceptualizing these interactions as social-ecological systems à la Anderies et al., while their governance structures are scrutinized through the lens of Ostromian commons theory. This approach facilitates a critical discussion on the potential for territorial self-governance within an urban bioregional planning framework (Magnaghi), examined in relation to formal public institutional planning. Finally, the practices are evaluated from the perspective of immanent 'place knowledge', i.e. the tacit expertise embedded in inhabitant's actions, that may catalyze self-sustaining territorial development (Magnaghi). Taken together, these elements delineate a framework for the collective management of territorial commons, operating in a synergistic and subsidiary manner with public policies for the management of public goods.

From loss to opportunity: a building culture for rural revitalization

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Keywords
Building culture, Rural areas, Revitalization, Services of general interest, Adaptive Reuse

The growing polarization between urban centers and rural areas is accompanied by a profound restructuring of access to services of general interest in rural areas, driven by digitalization and dematerialization. The reduction of physical meeting points (post offices, train stations, local shops, etc.) exposes rural communities to two major consequences: first, the accumulation of underused or abandoned buildings, and second, the weakening of their social and economic infrastructure.
In response to these contemporary issues, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings to host services of general interest supports village revitalization and stimulates the emergence of new rural narratives.
Through a collection of 30 good practice projects across Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria and Italy, the "COBASI" research project investigates which building culture is currently at work in rural areas and how it contributes, spatially, functionally and socially to the quality of rural areas. Transforming a barn into a bakery, converting a former post office into a local café, or integrating co-working spaces in rural valleys require specific spatial strategies and processes whose effects go far beyond the sustainability aspects of transformation.
This contribution presents some of the key findings of the good practices analysis. To combine architectural transformation with socio-cultural improvement in rural areas, several factors need to be integrated in the project process, including the involvement of polyvalent stakeholders, the diversification of functions and the flexibility of uses.
The results presented aim both to contribute to the debate of future rural development and to deliver actionable strategies for architects, municipalities, and inhabitants willing to engage in rural revitalization.

Architecture of fitting social houses and collective life in fragmented alpine territories

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Keywords
Alpine Social Houses, Territorial fragility , Collective space, Mountain territories, Social cohesion

In recent years, Alpine architectural discourse has shifted from large-scale applications to more site-specific, context-sensitive interventions. It has been observed that most of these transformations occur in fragile mountainous regions, where they are facing depopulation, reduced services, and the fragmentation and dispersion of social life, which challenge inherited models of public space. In this context, architecture is no longer tasked with portraying the idea of growth, but rather functioning under conditions of constraint, scarcity, and uncertainty. This study investigates the notion of "fitting" as functional principle for architectural design in the inner areas of the Alpine Region. Instead of viewing the theme of 'deterioration' as a failure, minor and modest interventions can redefine the relationship between the built environment and social life. The emerging concept of the Alpine Social House" is conceived not as a predefined architectural typology but as a spatial tool that mediates between fragmented settlements, local governance, and day-to-day practices.
The Autonomous Province of Trentino offers a significant context in which these questions can be observed, particularly in its hyper-peripheral valleys, characterised by dead-end geographies, fragmented settlements, influence of Italo-Germanic dual culture, and limited access to centralised services. Shaped by steep, challenging terrain and seasonal conditions, these environments require flexible communal spaces that can accommodate diverse needs. Architectural expression is characterised by its versatility rather than specification, and by its ability to support a variety of patterns and social life. The concept of fitting is not just a matter of contextual compatibility.

After displacement: living outside the city

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Keywords
Displacement, Living outside the city, Small-scale settlement, Production and space

In the context of large-scale internal displacement caused by the war in Ukraine, western cities have absorbed a significant influx of population, leading to infrastructural overload and an intensified housing crisis. This condition prompts a fundamental question: can living and working be reorganized outside the city, not as a temporary escape, but as a sustained spatial condition?

This paper presents a design studio developed within an architectural design program in Ukraine, based on a real rural site near Lviv. The studio departs from the familiar model of living outside the city while remaining economically and socially dependent on it, and instead explores the possibility of living, working, and producing locally.

Students were asked to design a small-scale settlement of 9-10 households structured around forms of small production, including cultivation, animal care, and food processing. The project required them to engage with the spatial implications of production processes, seasonal cycles, and land use, as well as to develop models of co-existence based on shared resources, collective infrastructures, and new forms of neighborhood. The studio approaches the rural not as an abstract or pastoral condition, but as a real context shaped by the tension between individual needs, collective organization, and environmental constraints. Particular attention was given to the relationship between landscape and ways of living, and to the question of how production shapes spatial organization at both the scale of the dwelling and the settlement.

Working outside the city reframes architectural scale and agency. Small-scale settlement is not a reduced version of the city, but a condition with its own spatial logic.

The paper positions this as a shift from expansion to redistribution, and from abstract models to situated practice, where living and producing are inseparable.

Exploring cultural ecosystem services of inner areas to improve community-based approach

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Keywords
Inner areas, Cultural ecosystem services, Local communities, Place-based approach, Territorial development

Kashan, a historic city on the edge of Iran's central desert, is often approached through its merchant houses, bazaar, and Fin Garden. This paper proposes a different reading. It examines Kashan through a set of small and medium-scale infrastructures that regulated water, movement, rest, and production in a hot-arid environment: ab-anbars, caravanserais, and peri-urban watermills. Rather than treating these elements as isolated building types, the paper reads them as a dispersed architecture of territorial fitting, through which the city negotiated water scarcity, seasonal heat, agrarian production, and regional mobility.
The paper develops this argument through an architectural and urban-historical reading of Kashan and its surrounding territory. Ab-anbars are considered as infrastructures of storage and collective access to water, linking underground construction, thermal moderation, and shared practices of use and maintenance. Caravanserais are examined as architectures of rest, exchange, and movement, connecting the urban fabric to regional routes and to the practical needs of travellers, animals, goods, and water supply. Watermills, particularly those associated with water routes around Fin, Qohrud, Barzok, Ravand, and the agricultural edges of Kashan, extend this logic from storage and mobility to production.
Seen in this light, Kashan appears not only as a city of houses and monuments, but also as a multi-scalar system of modest architectures that sustained life between the city, its routes, and its agrarian hinterland. By foregrounding these less visible infrastructures, the paper brings a historical Iranian case into the conference discussion on scale, resource limits, and place-based architectural knowledge. It argues that fitting can be understood not as a fixed formal property, but as an architectural capacity to mediate between environment, use, and territory.

At the edge of UTOPIA: co-designing resilient public spaces in marginalised European territories

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Keywords
Situated Knowledge, Community labs, Public space co-creation, Climate adaptation, Immersive technology

Across Europe, climate change, social exclusion, and demographic transitions are reshaping demands on public space beyond metropolitan cores, especially in marginal territories. Urban and landscape design increasingly relies on digital, data-rich, and AI-supported workflows to assess, visualize, and implement climate-adaptive strategies; yet when deployed in participatory settings, these tools also reconfigure how knowledge is produced, negotiated, and materialized. This paper addresses these dynamics through the early implementation of UTOPIZE (HORIZON-IA, 2025–2028), a New European Bauhaus initiative establishing UTOPIA Labs as community hubs for site-specific, collectively driven actions at small and medium scales.

Comparative, practice-based research spans three marginalised European contexts facing distinct climate challenges, governance structures, and socio-cultural conditions: Ponte Lambro (Italy), Karlskoga (Sweden), and Penacova (Portugal). Across these urban fringe, peri-urban district, and rural settlement, multidisciplinary teams co-design each lab's governance, spatial configuration, and technological ecosystem, combining XR engagement platforms, AI-supported analysis, and prototyping. These media shape what becomes visible, discussable, and actionable in 'ex-urban' design: while they can democratize access to complex environmental information and support collective deliberation, they may also privilege quantifiable risks and expert categories, potentially obscuring experiential and place-based knowledge. Co-design thus emerges as a negotiated field where scientific, technical, and local understandings are held in productive tension.

By coupling a comparative account of context-informed lab configurations with design principles for keeping climate knowledge negotiable, situated, and collectively owned, the paper positions emerging technologies as political and relational. Findings articulate three forms of fitting: scale, by calibrating tools to local capacities; knowledge, by maintaining models open to place-based cultural and ecological narratives; and time, by linking nature-based scenario development to incremental acts of stewardship. Ultimately, UTOPIZE advances a practice of tailored, shared world-making for resilient cities and landscapes across Europe.

Cultural practices and territorial cohesion of the Ionian hinterland

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Keywords
Rural Regeneration, Cultural heritage, Territorial planning

In the wake of rapid coastal urbanization in the Mediterranean, rural hinterlands often face a paradox of demographic decline versus untapped potential. This paper investigates the "100 Villages" project in Albania—a strategic cooperation plan between national agencies and academic institutions — focusing on the village of Mursi and its neighboring. Situated as the cultural backbone to the high-density tourism of Saranda, these villages offer a unique case study in "Architecture of the Fitting" across XS to M scales.
The research argues that sustainable territorial cohesion is not achieved through standardized infrastructure alone, but through the preservation of "immaterial wealth"— the ancient habits of hospitality, multi-linguistic identities (Albanian and Greek), and the "magnetic force" of ancestral land. By analyzing the rural fabric through the lens of both vernacular preservation and modern economic synergy the study demonstrates how local forms of organization, act as anchors for resilience.
Using observations from the field and territorial planning strategies, the paper proposes a model where the architect acts as a facilitator between top-down state visions and bottom-up local realities. It concludes that the "fitting" of new architectural interventions—such as the restoration of stone masonry and the re-paving of traditional cobblestones—must respect the "thousand-year history" of the territory to successfully transform a rustic network into a sustainable economic landscape."

Ph. Cédric Dasesson

Exhibitions, Roundtables & Workshops Friday 28. 08. 2026

This exhibition presents the pedagogical framework and teaching culture of the School of Architecture of the University of Cagliari, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year 2026. The exhibition features projects developed within theoretical courses, architectural and urban design studios, as well as Bachelor's and Master's thesis projects. It reflects the academic paths of the Bachelor's Degree in Architecture, which admits 100 students each year, and the Master's Degree programmes in Architecture focused on Heritage, Landscape, and Sustainability. Design projects, physical models, and research outputs illustrate the diversity of themes and methodologies explored across the curriculum, addressing topics such as ancient and industrial archaeology, rural landscapes, educational spaces, modern planning and urban regeneration, among many others. Rather than a retrospective, the exhibition offers a reflection on where twenty years of architectural education and design experimentation have led, highlighting the School's current position and future directions, as well as its impact on the territories of Sardinia and the wider Mediterranean region.

Exhibition curated by Francesco Marras, Stefano Cadoni, Stefano Mais, Silvia Mocci, Marco Moro, Elisa Pilia, Fabrizio Pusceddu with Bachelor's students in Architecture

AFTER TWENTY Scuola di Architettura di Cagliari

LIGHT OF TOMORROW

Exhibition curated by VELUX

The competition and award challenges students to explore the theme of daylight to create a deeper understanding of this ever-relevant source of energy, light, and life. Every second year since 2004, the VELUX Group has invited students of architecture to participate in the Light of Tomorrow by VELUX, formerly known as the International VELUX Award for students of architecture. The competition and award seeks to challenge students to explore the role of daylight in architecture and inspire new thinking. The aim of the competition and award is to engage with students of architecture about how to use sunlight and daylight as main sources of energy and light and how to ensure health and well-being of the people who live and work in buildings. Since the launch, it has grown into the largest competition and award of its kind with students from 800 schools, from 130 countries of all continents. Light of Tomorrow by VELUX 2026 is arranged in close collaboration with the International Union of Architects (UIA) and acknowledged by the following educational organizations: The European Association for Architectural Education, The American Institute of Architecture Students, the Architectural Research Centers Consortium, and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.

Generative Habitat is a set of architectural devices designed to activate the transformation of abandoned, underused, and undervalued public spaces. Rather than proposing permanent solutions, these interventions reveal the latent potential of places by enabling new forms of occupation, interaction, and collective appropriation. Through temporary and adaptable configurations, Generative Habitats encourage spaces to evolve over time, responding to changing needs, uses, and communities. They act as open frameworks for experimentation, capable of generating unexpected relationships between people, architecture, and the environment. Unica Space Force fixes space by working with limited resources, local materials, and collaborative construction methods, the collective demonstrates how small-scale architectural actions can produce meaningful spatial, social, and cultural impacts.Coordinated by a research group from the School of Architecture within DICAAR at the University of Cagliari, Unica Space Force has, since 2012, involved hundreds of students, researchers, local communities, institutions, and international partners in a growing network of experimental projects.

Exhibition curated by UNICA SPACE FORCE
Carlo Atzeni, Ivan Blečić

GENERATIVE HABITAT

VIAGEM SEM PROGRAMA

Exhibition curated by
Adriano Dessì, Giovanni Battista Cocco

This exhibition presents a selection of photographs produced during the study trip included in the Master's Degree programme, exploring travel as a pedagogical tool in architectural education. Moving between Lisbon and Porto, the journey allowed students to engage directly with places, buildings, and professional practices, fostering learning through observation and experience. A particularly significant moment was the visit to the office of Álvaro Siza, where students had the opportunity to meet the Portuguese master and discuss themes of contemporary architecture. The programme also included a visit to the atelier of Eduardo Souto de Moura, offering insight into the architectural design process through dialogue with members of his team. The journey concluded with a visit to the recently restored Torre dos 24 by Fernando Távora. Through images and travel notes, the exhibition reflects on the educational value of travel as a means of discovering architecture through direct experience, observation, and encounters with places, works, and leading figures.

This conference suggests that this is the time for smallness. It is understandable in days of frustration and regression, but it is not the solution. The urgencies are too big to only think small. Architectural research has to combine this smallness with bigness. It has the academic obligation to engage itself with this bigger perspective. Universities: show and manifest this ambition, feed the researche(r)s. To criticize and feed the commercial practices that aren't doing enough. What are the urgencies, dangers and possibilities? Climate-Ecology-Economy-Sociology-Technology. What researches can we force? What steps are needed? (1) Measure - How good are we? make carbon calculators, and new devices like life span calculators, diversity and footprint calculators and metabolizers. On the scale of the building and or the city; (2) Bring together - How separate are we? The world needs to develop strength and togetherness. Facilitate that. The variety of cultures are actually the key to do that. Strengthening differentiation leads to specialisations and thus to needs; (3) Materialize - Innovate radically materials. speculate on the needed steps in the coming years to ask to the industry to help to do these steps; (4) Fly - Use the drone industry to make more capacities and usage instead of defense only. Go 3d; (5) Biology - Stretch recycling. Step into a world that is completely recyclable and biological, and call it Biotopia....

Roundtable curated by Winy Maas

RELATE TO "L"

EDITING & PUBLISHING

Roundtable curated by
Pier Francesco Cherchi, Alberto Calderoni
with Mia Roth-Čerina, Jörg Schröder

Architectural education is shaped not only through teaching and design practice, but also through the ways knowledge is edited, communicated, and shared. This roundtable brings together educators, editors, and representatives of academic institutions to discuss the role of publishing in supporting learning and critical debate within schools of architecture. The roundtable is triggered by the experience of Stoà Journal, a successful Italian publishing initiative with a growing international profile. Conceived as a platform dedicated to methods and tools for teaching architectural design, Stoà offers a case through which to reflect on the relationship between editorial practices and architectural pedagogy. From this starting point, the roundtable aims to foster a dialogue on publishing as an active component of architectural education and as a tool for building academic communities, exchanging ideas, and engaging broader audiences.

This participatory roundtable asks what kinds of architectural pedagogies are needed in a time of ecological pressure, technological acceleration, social transformation and material limits. Taking the conference theme XS–S–M: Architecture of the Fitting as a point of departure, the session approaches “fitting” not only as a question of scale, but as a pedagogical capacity: the ability to judge what is necessary, appropriate and responsible in relation to place, resources, communities and uncertain futures. Through short reflections by the EAAE Pedagogy Award finalists and an active discussion with participants, the session will consider what architectural education should continue to teach, what it may need to reconsider, and which new capacities students require when even the question of how, where and whether we should build has become urgent. The session aims to formulate shared pedagogical propositions for teaching architecture in a time of transition.

Roundtable curated by Pia Fricker, Sima Rouholamin,
Débora Domingo Calabuig, Peter Princen,
Laurent de Wurstemberger

PEDAGOGIES OF THE FITTING

LIVING EDUCATION

Workshop curated by Liesbeth Huybrechts
with Liese Mertens, Frank Vanden Ecker,
Massimo Faiferri, Ivan Blečić, Benedetta Medas

In this workshop we will codesign a Live Lab Project to experience and debate its principles. In a Live project, designers, residents, policy makers and/or associations think about the sustainable change of a certain place or issue by ‘making’ something together at that place, such as a meeting place, a road design or a monument. The workshop explores the 4 principles that we have identified in studying 10 years of Live Lab projects which enable the Live Lab approach to connect daily life to education, being “revealing” diverse human and non-human experiences of the daily life context and its challenges; “confronting” them with each other” “debating them” and “enabling people and environment to act differently in these challenges”. We will use as a case study of the Einstein telescope project (a telescope that will be built to measure gravitational waves and gather knowledge about black holes) that is currently being prepared in both Belgium (where our school is situated) and Sardinia (where the conference is hosted). We will demonstrate the role Live Lab projects have played in revealing the spatial, ecological and societal challenges and potentials of such a project and critically discuss its potential and pitfalls.

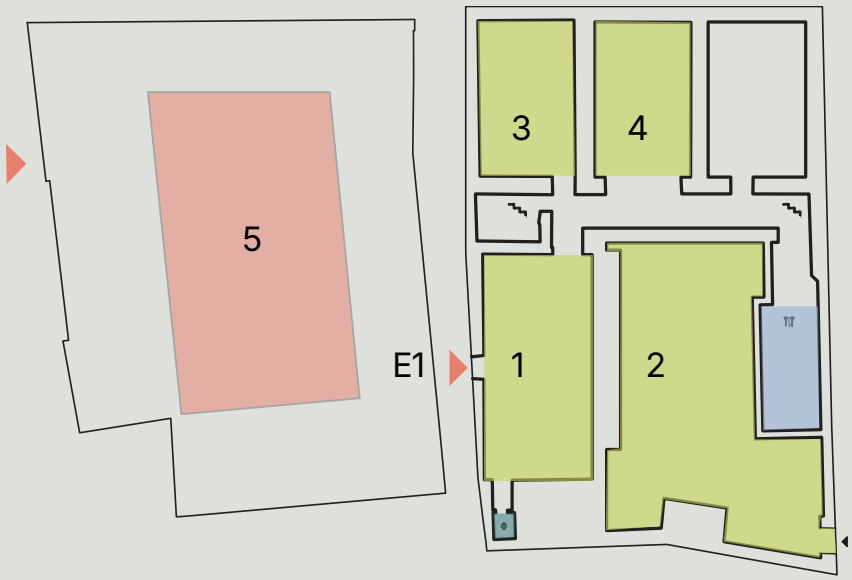
Contemporary architectural research operates within a paradoxical condition. On the one hand, academic research is increasingly shaped by scientific and quantitative evaluation frameworks, privileging standardized formats, measurable outputs, and text-based forms of knowledge production. On the other hand, we live in an age of unprecedented image production and consumption that have dramatically expanded the circulation, accessibility, and manipulation of visual content. Architecture occupies a peculiar position within this tension. While increasingly required to conform to scientific models of research assessment, it continues to think, investigate, and communicate through images. Drawings, maps, diagrams, photographs, models, and visual assemblages are not merely illustrations of research outcomes; they are often integral to the research process itself. This workshop starts from the assumption that images are not ancillary to architectural research but constitute one of its fundamental epistemic instruments. Through a carefully orchestrated process of selection, composition, interpretation, (intellectual) manipulation and re-composition, participants will explore how visual narratives can generate, transform, and communicate knowledge, and how research itself may be understood as an open field of visual inquiry.

PhD Workshop curated by Marco Moro, Marianna Ascolese
Francesco Marras, David Escudero

IMAGINE[ING] RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE


EAAE 2026 PhD Workshop
School of Architecture of Cagliari
share
8 images + research abstract by 16.08
reinterpret
receive images from another research + share 2 to 4 images by 25.08
negotiate
meet, compare, discuss and design a new visual composition on 28.08
24 participants
4 tutors
12 research pairs
96 research images submitted
24 to 48 interpretative images added
120 to 144 images printed and displayed
1 shared exhibition space
∞ possible interpretations
cudero

Corte d'appello
ground floor

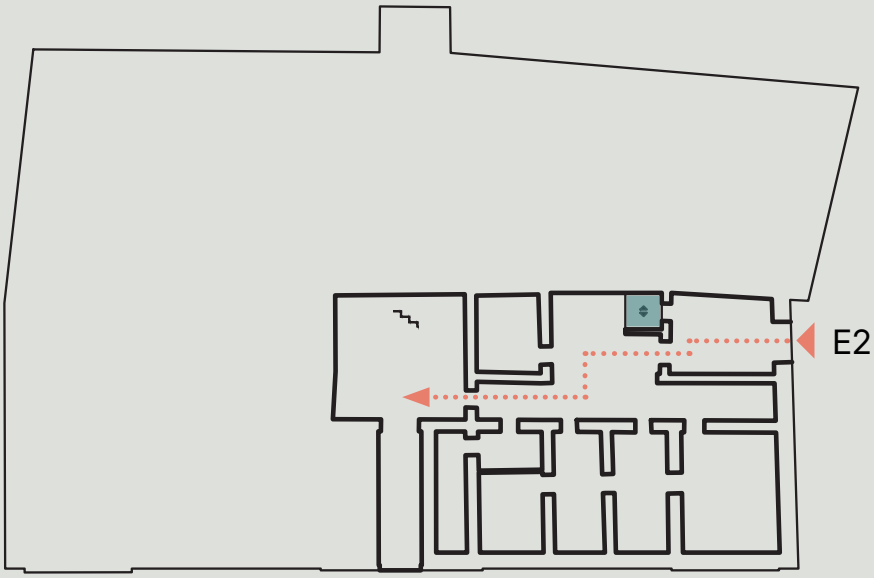


1st floor - 2nd floor

E1. Via Corte d'appello 87
1. Atrio delle Colonne
2. Giardino
3. Aula A
4. Aula B
5. Chiostro S. Croce
6. Corridoio Esposizioni
7. Aula Magna "Gaetano Cima"
8. Aula Verde
9. Aula Rossa
c. Corridoio Aule

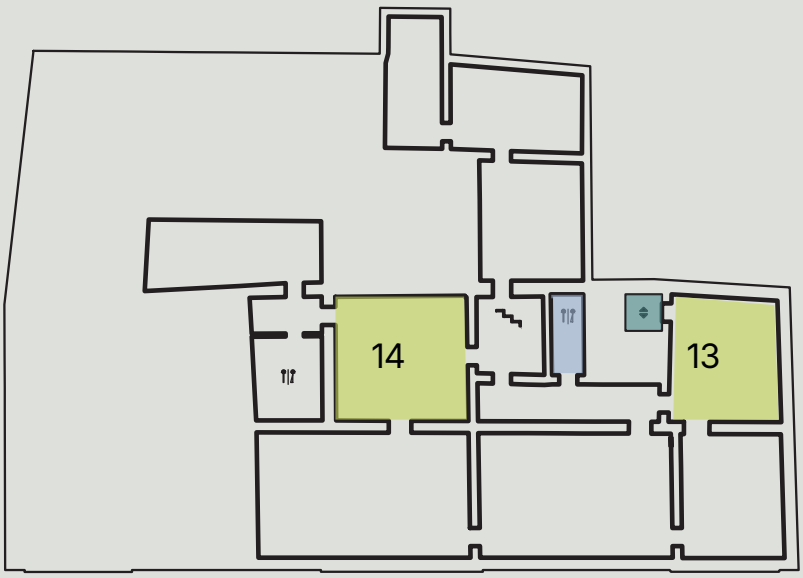
entrance
lift
restroom

Palazzo Cugia
ground floor



2nd floor

3rd floor



E2. Via Santa Croce 67
10. Aula “Enrico Corti”
11. Aula Didattica 1
12. Aula Didattica 2
13. Aula Attico
14. Aula Master


Campidano di Oristano
Campidano di Cagliari
CAGLIARI
GOLFO DI CAGLIARI
GOLFO DI PALMAS
Capo Teulada

Conference Tours Saturday 29. 08. 2026

Historical Landscape

Cattedrale - Torre di San Pancrazio - Cittadella dei Musei - Bastioni

This pre-Conference self-guided tour offers participants an introduction to the historical and cultural landscape of Cagliari and its Castello district. The itinerary unfolds through its narrow streets including the medieval towers, Piazza Palazzo, the Cathedral, and the panoramic bastions. Along the route, participants will encounter the different layers of Cagliari's urban history, from its medieval fortifications and religious architecture to the civic spaces and panoramic terraces that define the relationship between the historic city and its surrounding landscape by freely exploring the sites before the Opening Ceremony at 5:00 PM.

Mining Landscape

Masua – Porto Flavia – Carbonia

189

This guided tour explores the extraordinary mining landscapes of south-western Sardinia, where industrial archaeology, infrastructure, and territory merge into a unique cultural environment. The itinerary includes visits to Masua and Porto Flavia, the iconic suspended mining port carved into the coastal cliffs, as well as the town of Carbonia, one of Italy's most significant twentieth-century "città di fondazione". The tour offers participants the opportunity to reflect on landscape transformations connecting Sardinia's industrial heritage with broader questions of architecture, territory, and social history.

Nuragic Landscape

Pozzo di Santa Cristina – Nuraghe Losa

This guided tour explores the ancient landscapes of Sardinia through two of the island's most remarkable Nuragic archaeological sites. The itinerary includes the sacred well of Santa Cristina, an extraordinary example of Nuragic architecture and cosmological design, renowned for its geometric precision and spatial symbolism, and Nuraghe Losa, one of the best-preserved megalithic fortresses in Sardinia. The tour offers participants an immersive experience into the relationship between architecture, ritual, and landscape, highlighting the cultural significance of the island's archaeological heritage within the Mediterranean context.

Coastal City Walk

Via Roma – Lungomare Su Siccu – Padiglione Nervi –
Parco degli Anelli – Lazzaretto

This walking tour explores the modern and contemporary architectural landscape of Cagliari's waterfront, starting from Via Roma and continuing along the Su Siccu seafront promenade, which runs alongside the historic Fiera Campionaria district and its modernist buildings designed by Adalberto Libera. Along the route, participants will encounter different stages of Cagliari's relationship with its waterfront, from post-war modernist architecture to recent processes of urban regeneration. The tour offers an opportunity to reflect on contemporary urban transformations and the evolving identity of Cagliari's coastal landscape.

Ph. Cédric Dasesson

Annual Conference + General Meeting

EAAE 2026

XS-S-M
ARCHITECTURE OF THE FITTING
Cagliari 26-29. 08. 2026

architetturacagliari

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eaae.eu