

Branches of Architecture: Ways of Practice

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School of Architecture(s) – New Frontiers of Architectural Education

EAAE Annual Conference—Turin 2023

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Santiago Gomes
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Contents

Impact of Architecture(s)

Impact of Architecture(s)	3
<i>Andrea Āeko, Martina Crapolicchio, and Rossella Gugliotta</i>	

Speculating Beyond Academia. A Critical Reflection in the Light of the Experience of the PhD Workshop Held During the EAAE 23 Annual Conference	7
<i>Sotiria Inetzi, Carlo Vannini, and Diana Salahieh</i>	

Seeds of Architecture: Ways of Teaching

Seeds of Architecture: Ways of Teaching	15
<i>Michela Barosio</i>	

“Self-efficacy” as a Value in Architectural Pedagogy	17
<i>Naima Esra Akin</i>	

Means Oriented or Goals-Oriented Architectural Education	29
<i>Ahmed K. Ali</i>	

Architectural Thresholds: Critical Theory as <i>soglia</i> in Teaching Architecture and Urban Design	37
<i>Camillo Boano</i>	

How to Tackle Crisis in Architectural Education? Truth or Dare	47
<i>Hazal Āaęlar Tüniür and Göksenin İnalhan</i>	

Demolition(s) in Question: A Pedagogical Approach Case Study: Toulouse Le Mirail	56
<i>Isabel Concheiro Guisan</i>	

Studio Life: Mechanisms of Competition and Collaboration in Architectural Labour Processes	64
<i>Camilo Vladimir de Lima Amaral</i>	

Socially Situated Pedagogies as a Strategy to Innovate Architectural Curricula: The Case Study of SARPe and Its Design Studio Experimentation at the University of Pavia	77
<i>Ioanni Delsante, Tabassum Ahmed, Maddalena Giovanna Anita Duse, and Linda Migliavacca</i>	
Architectural Pedagogy in the Age of AI: The Transformation of a Domain	87
<i>Mustapha El Moussaoui and Kris Krois</i>	
Teaching Architecture in the Age of Fragility	94
<i>Camillo Frattari</i>	
Risk, Trust and Big Beautiful Mistakes*: Keys to Innovation in Architectural Education	102
<i>Johanna S. Gullberg and Gro Rødne</i>	
Transformations of Public Spaces - Sustainable and Ethical Approach to Architectural and Urban Design Using Mixed Cultural Background	112
<i>Patrycja Haupt, Mariusz Twardowski, Luca Maria Francesco Fabris, Riccardo M. Banzarotti, Andres Ros Campos, J. L. Gisbert, and Pedro Verdejo Gimeno</i>	
Building a Community Through a Design Build Studio Program	122
<i>Arda Inceoglu</i>	
Affirmation of a Discipline: Ephemeral Tectonics of Architecture Lesson	132
<i>Sinsa Justic</i>	
Stumbling as a Praxis of Design Practice. A Pedagogical Experiment in “Theory and Criticism of Architectural Action”	142
<i>Caterina Quaglio and Edoardo Bruno</i>	
A Cosmopolitan Architectural Education	152
<i>Massimo Santanicchia</i>	
Bridging Methods and Disciplines: An Architectural Pedagogy for Rural Areas Community	161
<i>Stefano Sartorio</i>	
The Merits of Teaching Architecture as General Education	171
<i>Arno Suzuki</i>	

Roots of Architecture: Ways of Research

Roots of Architecture: Ways of Research	185
<i>Elena Vigliocco</i>	
Practicing Care Through Architecture: Participatory Research as a Tool to Subvert Power Structures	187
<i>Nadia Bertolino</i>	
Who is in?: Non-Living and Hybrid Constituents in More-Than-Living Ecosystem of the Studio	197
<i>Erenalp Büyüktopcu and Ayşe Şentürer</i>	
Action Based Research for Capacity Building of Neighborhood Communities	208
<i>Daniela Calciu, Vera Marin, and Oana Pavăl</i>	
Research by Design at the Crossroads of Architecture and Visual Arts: Exploring the Epistemological Reconfigurations	219
<i>Marianna Charitonidou</i>	
Topological Deformability in Architecture, or How to Learn About Differences	232
<i>Maja Dragišić</i>	
The Complexity Conflict in Research and Practice: The Case of Public-Private Interface Configuration	242
<i>Šárka Jahodová</i>	
Regenerating Public Housing in Italy with the Support of the Next Generation EU Fund. Lessons Learned from a Research by Design Experience	251
<i>Fabio Lepratto and Giuliana Miglierina</i>	
Interscalar and Interdisciplinary Approaches for a Valley Community. The Case of Sappada	263
<i>Alessandro Massarente, Alessandro Tessari, and Elena Guidetti</i>	
Architectural Design Studio: Embracing a Transdisciplinary Approach	273
<i>Christina Panayi, Effrosyni Roussou, and Nadia Charalambous</i>	
Mountains in Motion, Visions in Nutshells. The Alpine Way for Common Living	283
<i>Alisia Tognon</i>	

Research on Environmental Perception and Preferences of Traditional Villages from the Perspective of Local Gaze: A Chinese Case Study 294
Wei Xintong and Zhou Haoming

Rethinking Architecture in the Digital Age: From Parametric Design Thinking to Philosophical Perspectives 306
Hongye Wu

Branches of Architecture: Ways of Practice

Branches of Architecture: Ways of Practice 317
Santiago Gomes

Level II Training and Development of Scientific and Didactic Content. The Case of Executive Master: Mountain-Able. Planning and Design for the Sustainable Development of Mountain 319
Emilia Corradi

The Glass House Revisited 329
Stamatina Kousidi

Participation of Stakeholders in Open Architectural and Urban Planning Competitions. Procedure Model and Application in Croatian Context 339
Rene Lisac and Kristina Careva

Architectural practice in the Digital Age: Balancing Adoption and Adaptation 349
Damir Mance

Aligning the Pedagogy of Postgraduate Professional Practice Courses to Develop the Meta-competencies Required of Architects Today 362
Claire Mullally and Catherine Brown-Molloy

Design Institutes and Design Studios: Cases of Permeability Between Teaching and Practice (Including Research) 375
Marco Trisciuglio and Bao Li

Ways of Architecture(s)

A New Form of Practice: *La Rivoluzione delle Seppie* 389
Rita Elvira Adamo

Everyone Belongs to Everyone Else 394
*Giacomo Ardesio, Alessandro Bonizzoni, Nicola Campri,
Veronica Caprino, and Claudia Mainardi*

Assemblage and Rituals 400
Giovanni Glorialanza

New Territorial Narratives 405
Viviana Rubbo and Alessandro Guida

Author Index 411

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In the session dedicated to Ways of Practice, the contributions explored the domains of professional activity in architecture today. Starting from the investigation of the relationship between the different knowledge systems (not exclusively belonging to the disciplinary field of architecture) that characterise the work of architects in the contemporary condition [1], at least two levels, two complementary themes or questions emerge. On the one hand, the question of the redefinition of the very concept of architectural practice and the updating of the objectives of a professional knowledge that, while changing its physiognomy and expanding its boundaries [2], seems to maintain a certain relationship with the traditional education and teaching system [3]. On the other hand, a reflection on the role of academia, teaching, and design-based research in a panorama in the face of which the question of refuge in disciplinary autonomy or the dissolution of the figure of the architect within complex multidisciplinary processes could appear as the only possible paths.

The role of communities in the processes of evaluation, construction, and validation of design practice, as well as the interaction with stakeholders and thus their contributions to the project, are all issues that influence the two levels just mentioned. In this sense, the contributions have, through the presentation of case studies, investigated transversally from a methodological point of view the methods deployed by professionals and educators in order to succeed in integrating and holding together all these contributions, working on research topics, innovative functional programmes, the use and implications of new digital technologies and the two-way contamination between professional and academic research activities.

If these changes in everyday professional practice seem to be consolidated or seem to have been forcibly incorporated into the work of architects within architecture schools, the debate is animated and far from over. Several interventions, in fact, focus on the opportunity (or the possible effectiveness) of rethinking the curricula and the university educational offer in order to consolidate and develop the adaptive behaviour of the architect as a coordinator, solicitor and stimulator of design activities that go far beyond the boundaries that traditionally defined the architect's action within the processes of habitat transformation and global sustainability challenges.

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Author Index

A

Adamo, Rita Elvira 389
Ahmed, Tabassum 77
Akin, Naime Esra 17
Ali, Ahmed K. 29
Ardesio, Giacomo 394

B

Banzarotti, Riccardo M. 112
Barosio, Michela 15
Bertolino, Nadia 187
Boano, Camillo 37
Bonizzoni, Alessandro 394
Brown-Molloy, Catherine 362
Bruno, Edoardo 142
Büyüktopcu, Erenalp 197

C

Calciu, Daniela 208
Campos, Andres Ros 112
Campri, Nicola 394
Caprino, Veronica 394
Careva, Kristina 339
Čeko, Andrea 3
Charalambous, Nadia 273
Charitonidou, Marianna 219
Concheiro Guisan, Isabel 56
Corradi, Emilia 319
Crapolicchio, Martina 3

D

de Lima Amaral, Camilo Vladimir 64
Delsante, Ioanni 77
Dragišić, Maja 232
Duse, Maddalena Giovanna Anita 77

E

El Moussaoui, Mustapha 87

F

Fabris, Luca Maria Francesco 112
Frattari, Camillo 94

G

Gimeno, Pedro Verdejo 112
Gisbert, J. L. 112
Glorialanza, Giovanni 400
Gomes, Santiago 317
Gugliotta, Rossella 3
Guida, Alessandro 405
Guidetti, Elena 263
Gullberg, Johanna S. 102

H

Haoming, Zhou 294
Haupt, Patrycja 112

I

İnalhan, Gökseven 47
Inceoglu, Arda 122
Inetzi, Sotiria 7

J

Jahodová, Šárka 242
Justic, Sinsa 132

K

Kousidi, Stamatina 329
Krois, Kris 87

L

Lepratto, Fabio 251
Li, Bao 375
Lisac, Rene 339

M

Mainardi, Claudia 394
Mance, Damir 349
Marin, Vera 208
Massarente, Alessandro 263
Migliavacca, Linda 77
Miglierina, Giuliana 251
Mullally, Claire 362

P

Panayi, Christina 273
Pavăl, Oana 208

Q

Quaglio, Caterina 142

R

Rødne, Gro 102
Roussou, Effrosyni 273
Rubbo, Viviana 405

S

Salahieh, Diana 7
Santanicchia, Massimo 152
Sartorio, Stefano 161
Şentürer, Ayşe 197
Suzuki, Arno 171

T

Tessari, Alessandro 263
Tognon, Alisia 283
Trisciuglio, Marco 375
Tünür, Hazal Çağlar 47
Twardowski, Mariusz 112

V

Vannini, Carlo 7
Vigliocco, Elena 185

W

Wu, Hongye 306

X

Xintong, Wei 294