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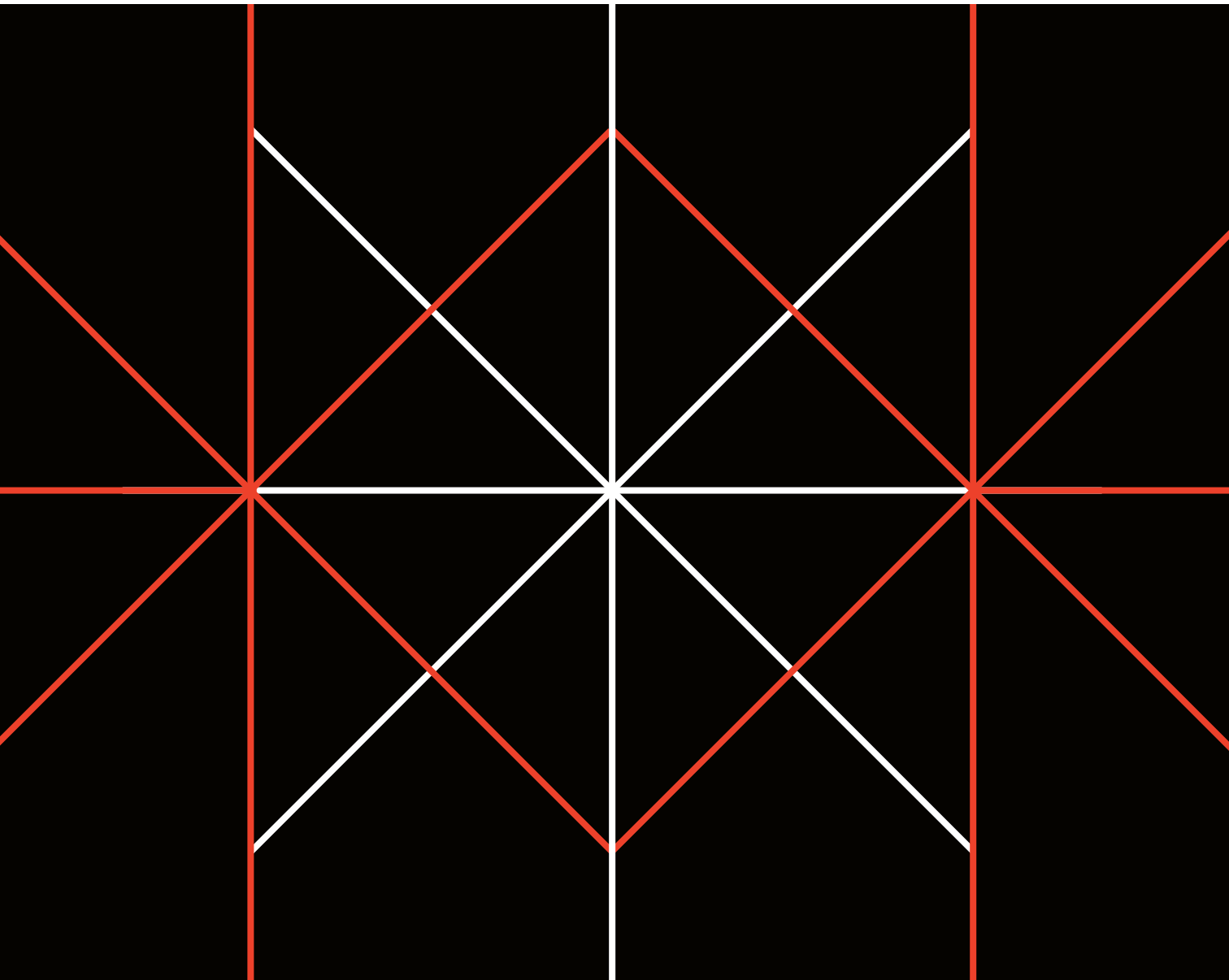
SPACE

DASP Yearbook 2023



SPACE

DASP Yearbook 2023

SPACE

SPACE

DASP Yearbook 2023

PhD in Architecture.
History and Project

Politecnico di Torino
DAD - Department of Architecture and Design

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INTRO-
DUCTION

TORINO 10125. OUT OF THE DASP-HOME.* AN INTRODUCTION

Marco Trisciuoglio

*"But the designer does not usually construct a history with the rigor expected of a historian, and we expect the design to display other qualities of subjectivity as well. A design is also equivalent to a novel, convincing the user to suspend disbelief. Part-novelist, part-historian, the architect is 'the history man'. We expect a history or a novel to be written in words, but they can also be cast in concrete. An architectural book can be history and a novel, and so can a building"**.*

Jonathan Hill (Director of the PhD Architectural Design at UCL), 2014

The PhD Program in Architecture. History and Project (DASP) was born out of two long lasting traditions of doctoral level studies and research in the area of Architecture at Politecnico di Torino. The PhD Program programmatically investigates the complexity of architectural cultures starting from the multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary interweaving between the history and the design of buildings, cities, territories. On the one hand, in fact, urban and architectural composition and technology of architecture favor an interpretation of the project as a tool for measuring the stratifications of theoretical elaborations, technical innovations and modifications of built environment. On the other hand, the historical disciplines for architecture and the city, far from a local vision and thanks to the cooperation with other histories (the economic, social, anthropological and aesthetic ones), trace paths that can be traveled by architects and urban planners, but also by other humanities scholars, such as philosophers and linguists. The intertwining of the two research traditions on which it was founded has thus made the DASP in recent years, precisely starting from these premises, the most advanced doctoral space in which to cultivate humanistic studies within the context of a technical European university as Politecnico di Torino is.

The activities of the DASP are characterized by a push towards internationalization, built starting from the vast network of scientific projects established by the members of its Council (named Collegio), which becomes fundamental both in the definition of new strategies in the architectural and urban fields (in the two areas of design and historiography) and to face the professional and working challenges that derive from it.
The PhD Program shares the study objectives of numerous laboratories, centers and research groups based in the University (such as the China Room, the Future Urban Legacy Lab interdepartmental center, the Institute of Mountain Architecture and, more recently, the Construction History Group and the Transitional Morphologies Joint Research Unit): often the thesis proposals are built in agreement with these subjects or are open to the world of entrepreneurship and innovation, involving public administrations, companies, trade associations, non-profit organizations. Equipped with a teaching staff made up of over a third of teachers from other Italian universities and from foreign universities, alongside the Italian language the DASP has equally chosen (both in internal communication and in the didactic offer) the English language, considered as the lingua franca of scientific research.

Recognized by the Department of Architecture and Design DAD, in its Strategic Plan, as the joint instrument of third level learning and research training in the field of Architecture, the DASP is the main place where that fundamental (or "curiosity driven") research is cultivated which is useful for feeding apparatuses of knowledge and skills to be spent on applied (or "mission oriented") research and on participation in competitive challenges in the European research framework (nowadays Horizon Europe).

The main purpose of the DASP as a pedagogical institution remains that of research training, whatever the occupational and professional outlet that this specific training will allow for the PhD. The PhD in Architecture. History and Project provides PhD students with tools and methods to address and resolve specific research questions related to design and historiography of buildings and their contexts (topographical, technical-constructive production, symbolic and socio-economic), of cities and their characteristics (of form, functioning, strategic role), of territories and their narratives (in the game of the processes of representation, interpretation, transformation). The DASP aims to keep this research training at a high level and with broad horizons of attention in order to make the skills acquired usable, also and above all, in fields of competencies that are not strictly and purely academic, in line with the profile of skills that today it is required, both in Italy and in Europe, from those who obtain the title of PhD.

The DASP PhD gets in fact the competencies to become a researcher at universities and at research institutions (either public or private, either Italian or foreign) in the fields of history and documentation of architecture and cities, of buildings' design processes management, of infrastructures and urban spaces design, of control and development of technologies and especially construction techniques, working in the domain of abstract and applied sciences in the main fields of design and technological innovation. The future of the PhDs foresees a career as a researcher and teacher, as a manager in national or international public bodies, in all those sectors responsible for architectural quality, the enhancement of the historical heritage, the address of urban and territorial transformations, because of them having the necessary skills to also deal with the organization and promotion of cultural events and the management of complex design processes at various scales.The PhD training allows access to the liberal professions in architecture, where high quality skills are required, but also the ability to critically analyze phenomena and decision-making processes, and also in other parallel fields, such as urban and territorial planning, the management of capitalization phenomena and specialized publishing.

The objectives of the DASP are clarified in the accreditation document, compiled every year by Coordinator upon request of the Italian Ministry of University and Research and made available to the Academic Board and DASP PhD students.The same objectives are part of the introductory report that Coordinator and Council hold every year on a date located between the first two weeks of November to welcome the new members (Opening Day): it is an occasion that is not only formal, but which serves to better define, by periodically refining it, the scientific and educational agenda of the PhD in Architecture.

The identity of the DASP is also made explicit on the two doctoral websites: the official one on the Politecnico di Torino platform (https://www.polito.it/didattica/dottorato-di-ricerca-e-scuola-di-specialization/active-courses/architecture-history-and-design/research-themes), and the one external to the university system, traditionally self-managed by PhD students (https://daspstudents.org). Today, this DASP Yearbook is added to those communication tools, as the first result of a passionate initiative by DASP PhD students, once more interested in socializing the content of their researches and offering it to the widest possible comparison, cultivating the precise project of building a scientific community ready to face future challenges.

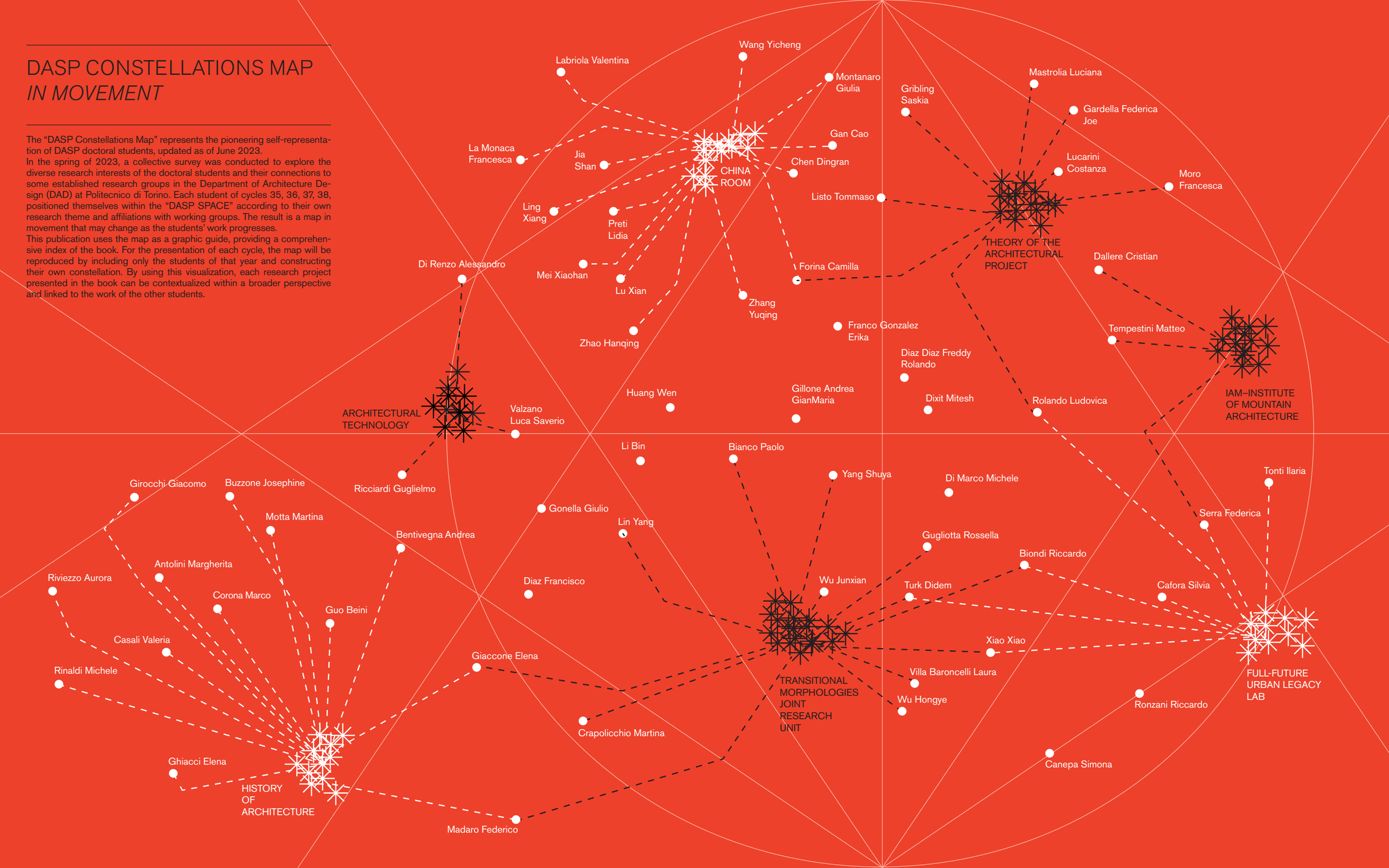
Even out of the comfort zone of their physical headquarters DASP-Home (at Istituto Galileo Ferraris), Torino 10125.

* The text of this introduction is taken from the document *Proposal for the accreditation of doctorates - a.y. 2023/2024*, presented to the Italian Ministry of University and Research on June 5th, 2023.

** Jonathan Hill, History by Design, in Ian Borden, Murray Fraser and Barbara Penner (eds), *Forty Ways To Think About Architecture. Architectural history and theory today*, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, London 2014, p. 166.

DASP CONSTELLATIONS MAP *IN MOVEMENT*

The “DASP Constellations Map” represents the pioneering self-representation of DASP doctoral students, updated as of June 2023.
In the spring of 2023, a collective survey was conducted to explore the diverse research interests of the doctoral students and their connections to some established research groups in the Department of Architecture Design (DAD) at Politecnico di Torino. Each student of cycles 35, 36, 37, 38, positioned themselves within the “DASP SPACE” according to their own research theme and affiliations with working groups. The result is a map in movement that may change as the students’ work progresses.
This publication uses the map as a graphic guide, providing a comprehensive index of the book. For the presentation of each cycle, the map will be reproduced by including only the students of that year and constructing their own constellation. By using this visualization, each research project presented in the book can be contextualized within a broader perspective and linked to the work of the other students.



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DASP ACTIVI-TIES

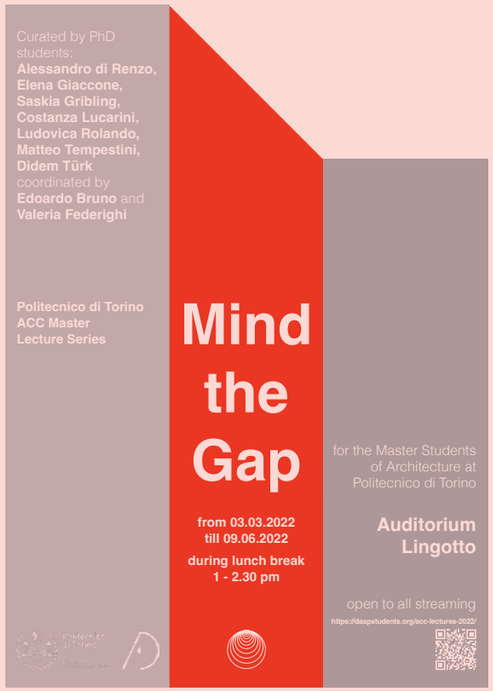
ACC LECTURES

Riccardo Biondi, Saskia Gribling, Francesca La Monaca

The ACC (Architecture Construction City) Lecture Series is an open cycle of conferences offered as an elective course within the Bachelor and Master curricula in Architecture at Politecnico di Torino. Since 2019, each year it is curated by a group of DASP PhD students who have the opportunity to thoroughly propose and organize it with a twofold purpose and effect. On the one hand, it represents a direct teaching experience within the PhD curriculum, where all aspects, from the discussed topics to the student's assignments, are self-organized and managed by the doctoral candidates; on the other, it is thought of as a "bridge course" where a hands-on approach and strong involvement of practitioners brings the academic conversation to be confronted with the practice and its common issues. The talk series was born to stimulate a common debate within the architecture department across years and disciplines, aiming to be accessible not only to students involved in the course. That is why it keeps being held weekly during the lunch break on a chosen day, available also through a live youtube channel, to open up the possibility for professors and interested people to participate in a triggering discussion.

Renowned international scholars and practitioners are invited to give clear-cut and sometimes provocative speeches according to the edition's themes. Among others, radical architect, artist and educator Sandi Hilal, the Belgian multi-disciplinary collective Traumnouvelle, and the Italian collective Fosbury Architecture have been guests in the recent editions. The discussion which usually follows encompasses a greater spectrum of topics, from the role of architecture as a discipline in a constant climatic crisis regime to the disciplinary, linguistic or ontological gaps it could encounter, as well as challenges and dilemmas typical of the architectural practice, which often elicit a complex relationship characterized by both admiration and dissatisfaction with the profession.

These lectures not only address the pressing concerns of the younger generation but also introduce alternative pedagogical approaches by systematically integrating practitioners into the academic realm. In this sense, the ACC Lecture Series has brought forward something relatively uncommon in the Italian university, fostering an inclusive dialogue among students from various academic backgrounds, allowing them to engage actively with specialists who can bring diverse perspectives beyond the conventional academic instruction offered by the university.

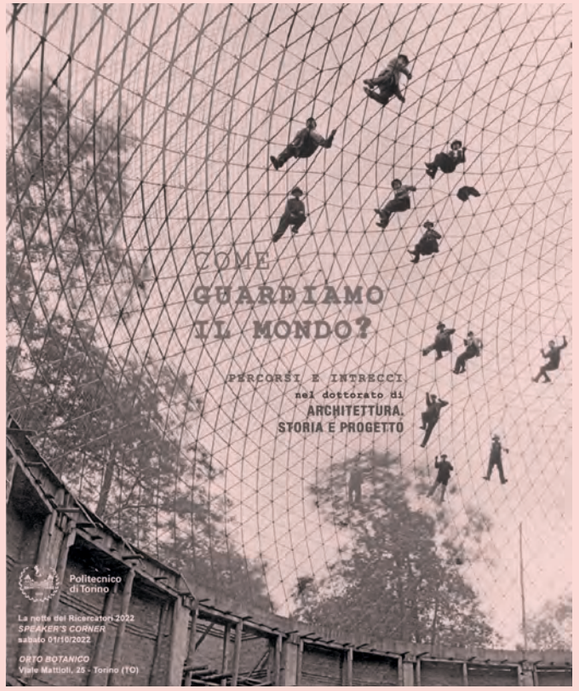


EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS' NIGHT

Elena Giaccone

The U*Night (the European Researchers' Night) has been an occasion to present the doctoral program in Architecture. History and Project to a wider audience and as part of a broad network of learning and cultural institutions operating in Turin. Some Ph.D. students participated in the Researchers' Corner on the 1st of October 2022, aiming to shape a place of discussion between researchers from diverse disciplines, future students interested in the teaching paths offered by Politecnico, and the citizenship at large. The moment was conceived, in particular, to highlight and raise awareness about the character of a learning community that the Ph.D. program aims to acquire both internally and, on a larger scale, as an active element capable of significantly communicating and contributing to the city's everyday life. Indeed, the work of a doctoral program remains often confined to the "hidden places" (the library, the archives, the laboratories…) where the research is mainly conducted.

The doctoral program in Architecture. History and Project has a multidisciplinary character, dealing with building and architecture discipline, urban studies, design theory, and knowledge from different perspectives. Taking up the challenge to capture the attention of the public by presenting a differentiated spectrum of research in a nutshell, some Ph.D. students gave voice to the diverse research groups existing within the department, shaping the image of an archipelago of heterogeneous but interconnected topics, also involving institutions beyond the Politecnico di Torino.



DASP LUNCH SEMINARS

Federica Joe Gardella, Ludovica Rolando

Cultivating basic (curiosity-driven) research is one of the purposes of a doctoral program, along with training in the methods of inquiry that are specific to each knowledge and practice. However, a doctoral program also has the purpose of educating and igniting peer-to-peer dialogue on topics that are significant, either because *-innovative-* they await us in the future, or because *-far removed in traditions of study-* they prompt us from the past.
In the spring semester of 2022, the "DASP Lunch Seminars" initiative opened the doctoral activities for discussion, first of all among the doctoral students of the different cycles with each other and with the members of the teaching board, but also with researchers, experts and scholars from outside the doctoral community.

In a sequence of 12 meetings, at Friday lunchtime, the seminars provided a platform for public discussions on projects and histories, cities and processes, techniques and societies, models, innovation, and much more. During each session, three or four doctoral students representing each cycle (the XXXV in the closing phase, the XXXVI in the crucial study phase, and the XXXVI in the exploratory phase), presented their research progress while establishing thematic connections among the three investigations, so as to share and discuss them with specially invited speakers and other meeting participants.

The professors and invited external guests played the role of discussants, offering valuable comments and feedbacks on the doctoral students' work. The purpose of these seminars was to engage in operational discussions about the ongoing research, particularly with individuals who may not be familiar with the methods or topics being studied.

The main characteristic and challenge of the DASP Lunch Seminars was to identify methodological or thematic similarities among research projects from different cycles, belonging to different research groups, and dealing with different methodologies and topics. The doctoral students, therefore, had the opportunity to exchange views with their peers to find commonalities to build a shared discourse. While this aspect presented difficulties, it also offered an opportunity for comparison, enrichment, and clarity regarding the research's cornerstones, the specificities of each work, and the cross-cutting issues. Although attendance was not mandatory, all the doctoral students participated in the seminars with great enthusiasm.

"PROGETTI & STORIE" PUBLICATION SERIES

Costanza Lucarini

As a PhD program, we recently evaluated the idea to establish our own publishing series. "Progetti & Storie. Ricerche e materiali dal dottorato in architettura" was born to collect studies, research and considerations both on architectural project and architectural history. Its focus, indeed, is on methods and practices concerning the whole architectural process: how to conceive it, how to draw it, how to build it, how to deal with it. These topics are in fact at the heart of the contemporary scientific debate in the architectural field, thus representing an ideal background and the epistemological foundation of this publishing series. Among the editorial products, the series is aimed at gathering: collective volumes on specific topics that have emerged during PhD initiatives; original research developed in the PhD program; re-editions and translations of works that have once again been brought to light by that research.

The series first volume, published in 2022, is the final result of a PhD course concerning architectural design pedagogy. It takes its cue from seven laboratories that took place in Politecnico di Torino during 2020-21 in order to discuss how to teach architectural design theory and, ultimately, what can be considered architectural design theory. It is devised in four sections: the first hosts essays written by academics from Italian and foreign universities; the second focuses on the aforementioned laboratories; the third consists in a visual atlas that collects a sample of exercises produced by students during the seven laboratories; and the fourth combines some further considerations suggested by the book's editors.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Martina Crapolicchio, Rossella Gugliotta

Participation in workshops and conferences is a constitutive experience for PhD candidates. The workshops allow participants to engage in practical sessions to acquire specific skills and discuss their work. Conferences involve a wide range of participants worldwide. They serve as platforms where PhD students can present parts or complete research results and show their contribution to the academic architectural community in specific scientific sectors. With those initiatives, the DASP community actively shares the diversity of research at national and international levels. Among others, some workshops are to be mentioned, such as TACK Communities of Tacit Knowledge, which organised a summer school that explores the significance of tacit knowledge in architectural education, and Cres Moise Architectural Seminar, a collaborative space for engaging discussions and exchanging insights within the academic community. Some noteworthy conferences involving doctoral students' active participation concern both architectural and urban studies aimed at history and design, such as AISU (Italian Urban History Association), SAH (Society of Architectural Historians) and EAHN (European architecture history network); but also ISUF (International Seminar of Urban Form), EAAE (European Association of Architectural Education) and La ricerca che Cambia, a national conference of Italian PhDs in architecture, planning and design. These are just a few initiatives that offer the opportunity to share the research, interact with colleagues worldwide and stay up-to-date on methodologies, experiments and explorations in the architectural disciplines.

006

COLOPHON

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DASP. PhD in Architecture.
History and Project

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