

Branches of Architecture: Ways of Practice

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Michela Barosio
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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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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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