

Architecture and the public sphere in contemporary Sweden

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For the General Public

**ARCHITECTURE BETWEEN DEBATE, DISSEMINATION,
AND NARRATIVE STRATEGIES**

Edited by Chiara Baglione and Fabio Marino



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA
INGEGNERIA DELLE COSTRUZIONI
E AMBIENTE COSTRUITO

Communicating architecture to a non-specialist audience means not only interpreting and clarifying complex ideas but also developing accessible narratives capable of engaging and stimulating. Positioning architecture as a matter of collective relevance, and raising awareness among non-experts about the quality of design, construction, and the urban environment, has required a continuous evolution of narrative strategies over time.

In the past, architectural dissemination relied primarily on specialists or on the mediation of intellectuals. Today, however, media have multiplied and diversified, embracing visual, audiovisual, performative, and digital languages.

The conference aims to foster a historically grounded and critically engaged reflection on the impact that the evolution of languages, formats, and communication platforms has had — and continues to have — on the construction of architectural narratives intended for the general public. It seeks to examine case studies and models that reveal processes of transformation, continuity, and emerging challenges in architectural communication, spanning a timeline from the early 20th century to today's diverse and complex media environment, characterized by a multiplicity of languages and platforms.

This is therefore an invitation for a critical examination of how the relationship between architecture and the general public has transformed and continues to evolve, considering the ways in which architectural narratives and modes of dissemination have been constructed and conveyed across various traditional and digital media.

Chiara Baglione and Fabio Marino

Program

DECEMBER 2nd

9:00-9:15 / INSTITUTIONAL GREETINGS

Andrea Campioli, Dean of the AUIC School (Politecnico di Milano)
Stefano Capolongo, Head of ABC Department (Politecnico di Milano)
Emilio Faroldi, Executive Vice Rector (Politecnico di Milano)

9:15-9:30 / THE REASONS FOR A CONFERENCE

Chiara Baglione (Politecnico di Milano), Fabio Marino (Politecnico di Milano)

9:30-11:30 / SESSION 1. MEDIA, CRITICISM AND PARTICIPATION

Chair: Paolo Scrivano (Politecnico di Milano)

Hélène Jannièrè (Université Rennes 2)

In search of the "general public" in France in the 1950s-1970s: the many media, the many rhetorics of criticism of the grands ensembles.

Christos-Georgios Kritikos (Institute for Mediterranean Studies)

Tasianna Kechrakou (NTUA / ENSA Paris-Val de Seine)

Reconstructing the architectural imaginary in postwar Greece: modernization, class aspirations and security through local and international media.

Gabriele Neri (Politecnico di Torino)

The cartoon as a form of public architectural criticism.

Mark Bessoudo (Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL)

Letters to the editor as public engagement in architectural criticism.

Aliaksandr Shuba (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)

The collective Soviet and state socialist narrating of the world history of architecture and urban development for emerging architects and general audience.

Gemma Belli (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

Images from Il Mondo (1949-1966).

11:30-12:00 / COFFEE BREAK

12:00-13:30 / SESSION 2. DISSEMINATION BETWEEN WORDS AND IMAGES

Chair: Elisa Boeri (Politecnico di Milano)

Massimiliano Savorra (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

Architecture, eugenics, and consent. Motherhood, childhood, and the health of the race in fascist Italy's periodicals.

Giacomo Usai (Politecnico di Milano)

Architecture through images. Visual strategies for architectural dissemination in the work of Agnoldomenico Pica.

Cecilia Rostagni (Università degli Studi di Sassari)

Educating about architecture: Gio Ponti and the daily press.

Eleonora Caggiati (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

Not "belle fotografie" but "esatte fotografie": Renato Buzzoni's commitment to the knowledge of architecture.

Fernanda De Maio (Università Iuav di Venezia)

Architecture through the lens of Engramma.

13:30-14:45 / LUNCH BREAK

14:45-15:30 / SESSION 3. ARCHITECTURE AND DIGITAL NARRATIVES (PART I)

Chair: Francesca Giudetti (Politecnico di Milano)

Andrea Capriolo (Università degli Studi di Udine)

Architectural kitsch in the space of social media: the case of Architerror.

Abantika Duttgaur (Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra)

From Domus to Dank Lloyd Wright: architecture narratives across media.

Qing Tang (Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL)

Lettres-moches: modes of architectural criticism in memic image macros.

**15:30-17:30 / SESSION 4. COMMUNICATING ARCHITECTURE THROUGH
INSTALLATIONS AND PERFORMANCES**

Chair: Sergio Pace (Politecnico di Torino)

Orietta Lanzarini (Università degli Studi di Udine)

The ambiguous narrative of BBPR. The Coerenza and Priorità Italiche rooms at the VI Triennale di Milano in 1936.

Natália Correia Brandão (Technical University of Munich)

"à la canadese": Phyllis Lambert's quest of architecture, its mediation and resonance.

Holger Schurk (Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW)

The underestimated image! OMA's early phase reflected in its visual strategies.

Claudia Mainardi (Libera Università di Bolzano)

Roberto Gigliotti (Libera Università di Bolzano)

Towards a disneyfication of the Venice Biennale.

Alessandro Pasero (Politecnico di Milano / Centro Studi Triennale di Milano)

Staging the architecture drama. Performance as narrative strategy of the 21st century.

Giovanni Carli (Università degli Studi di Genova)

The Balenciaga event. Architecture and fashion for humanistic sustainability.

17:30-18:00 / DEBATE

Discussant: Marco Biraghi (Politecnico di Milano)

DECEMBER 3rd

9:30-11:30 / SESSION 5. ARCHITECTURE ON SCREEN:

TELEVISION, CINEMA, VIDEO (PART I)

Chair: Michela Rosso (Politecnico di Torino)

Damiano Iacobone (Politecnico di Milano)

Civilisation: Kenneth Clark and the "transmission" of art and architecture.

Lorenzo Mingardi (Università degli Studi di Firenze)

Inventing Naples. Giancarlo Basili's sets for My Brilliant Friend.

Lucia Nicolai (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Off-screen architecture: Julio Lafuente's works in Italian cinema as a narrative of space for the general public.

Giusi Ciotoli (Independent Researcher)

Japanese Video Stars: the myth of architecture in Japanese media from Kenzo Tange to the present day.

11:30-12:00 / COFFEE BREAK

12:00-13:15 / SESSION 5. ARCHITECTURE ON SCREEN:

TELEVISION, CINEMA, VIDEO (PART II)

Chair: Michela Rosso (Politecnico di Torino)

Eugenio Lux (Politecnico di Torino)

Elin Filipsson (Independent Researcher)

Architecture and the public sphere in contemporary Sweden.

Ermanno Bizzarri (Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli)

A ride of Carosello: Barilla and Mina for the Italian contemporary architecture (1965-1970).

Alexandra Areia (DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte)

Broadcasting architecture: television as a tool for public architectural debate, the Portuguese case (1974-2005).

Andrea Dechamps (Politecnico di Milano)

Maria Pilar Vettori (Politecnico di Milano)

Didactics on air: Piano's Lessons at Politecnico di Milano.

13:15-14:30 / LUNCH BREAK

14:30-15:15 / SESSION 6. ARCHITECTURE AND DIGITAL NARRATIVES (PART II)

Chair: Francesca Giudetti (Politecnico di Milano)

Rashi Karkoon (Independent Researcher)

Cities on screen: architecture as storyteller in Bollywood's public imagination.

Ermioni Anastasiadi (University of Cyprus)

Rethinking urban history: citizen storytelling and cyber topoi as challenges to historiographical methodologies.

Ghassan Alserayhi (Virginia Tech)

Playable worksites: Notre-Dame de Paris as a public exhibitionary apparatus.

15:15-17:15 / SESSION 7. CULTURE OF LIVING: MANUALS, CATALOGS, AND LIFESTYLE

Chair: Chiara Baglione (Politecnico di Milano)

Benedetta Patella (Politecnico di Milano)

Typological storytelling and cultural mediation: constructing modern domesticity through Italian exhibitions and media (1920–1940).

Anastasia Gkoliomyti (Tokyo Gakugei University / Wenzhou-Kean University)

Subjects and objects in epistemic hiding: pragmatism in Satō Koichi's science of living (1915–1935).

Thodoris Chalvatzoglou (National Technical University of Athens)

Housekeeping manuals and the construction of the modern interior.

Martin Søberg (Royal Danish Academy)

How should I live? Architectural dissemination in modern Danish advice literary.

Francesca Zanotto (Politecnico di Milano)

Andrea Dutto (University of Idaho)

From the handbook to the catalogue: sharing knowledge with a non-expert audience.

Saurajeeta Bose Paul (Politecnico di Torino / Tsinghua University)

Advertising architecture and lifestyle aspirations in India.

17:15-18:00 / FINAL DEBATE

Coordinators, session chairs and scientific committee

Conference abstracts



- Eugenio Lux (Politecnico di Torino)
- Elin Filipsson (Independent researcher)

Architecture and the public sphere in contemporary Sweden

Communicating architecture to a non-specialist audience means not only interpreting and clarifying complex ideas but also creating accessible narratives capable of engaging and stimulating the general public. In Sweden, this process has been closely linked to the role of mass media, particularly public service television. Already in *acceptera* (1931), television was foreshadowed as a possible cultural tool: if cinema and the automobile tended to distance people from home, while the radio kept them within, “television might become even more important in this latter direction”. This insight anticipated its educational role in Sweden since the establishment of Sveriges Radio’s television service in 1956 — later reorganized as Sveriges Television (SVT) in 1979 — architecture has been presented to the public not as an exclusive discipline, but as a shared cultural and social concern. Unlike in many other countries, Swedish television has offered space to substantial architectural themes and to moments of international significance in modern architecture. From early programs such as *Arkitekter berättar* (1976) to the long-running *K-märkt* (1992-97), and more recent series like *Arkitekturens pärlor* (2014-23), *Hemma hos inredningsarkitekten* (2022-23), *Husdrömmar* (2025), *Nordisk design – en*

kärlekshistoria (2025) and *Så byggdes Sverige* (2025), architecture has been framed through a mix of education, entertainment, and spectacle. Documentaries have further consolidated this role, with monographic works dedicated to Ragnar Östberg (1866-1945), Gunnar Asplund (1885-1940), Sigurd Lewerentz (1885-1975), Sven Markelius (1889-1972), Ralph Erskine (1914-2005), Eric Sigfrid Persson (1898-1903), Eric Svenning (1901-1974), and Peter Celsing (1920-1974) among others. This contribution examines how Sweden’s “media ecology” has sustained a continuous architectural debate over seven decades, fostering both public appreciation and criticism. The grassroots movement *Arkitektupproret* (*Architectural Uprising*), active in TV and radio debates, illustrates how mass communication has amplified popular concerns about architectural quality and identity. The analysis will focus especially on the last twenty years, culminating in *En sista kväll för Folkets hus* (2024) and the two-day national broadcast of the church relocation on 19-20 August 2025: a spectacular event that made visible the negotiation between heritage, urban transformation, and collective memory. Sweden showcases how mass media narratives can make architectural knowledge accessible and place it in the public sphere.



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