QUESTIONS 11

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Architectures of Learning

Cluj-Napoca 7-8 May 2026

International Architecture Conference

PROGRAM AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS
The Eleven International Conference

QUESTIONS

ARCHITECTURES OF LEARNING

Organizer:
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA
Location:
Hub UTCN, George Barițiu Street no. 4-8, Cluj-Napoca

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WELCOMING NOTE FROM THE ORGANIZING AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Organizing and Scientific Committees, we are pleased to welcome you to the 11th edition of the **Questions International Architecture Conference**, *Questions – Architectures of Learning* held in Cluj-Napoca on May 7–8, 2026. Since 2012, *Questions* has created a space for reflection and dialogue on architectural and its evolving role in society. This year, the conference returns to this foundational theme, proposing a timely and necessary update.

Architectural education is currently facing a moment of transformation. Rapid technological change, climate challenges, and shifting socio-economic realities are redefining both the profession and the way it is taught. These conditions raise essential questions: how do we train architects for an unpredictable future, and what forms of knowledge and pedagogy remain relevant today?

In response, this edition of *Questions – Architectures of Learning* invites participants to reconsider the foundations of architectural education. Drawing from the legacy of experimental and critical pedagogies, the conference encourages approaches that go beyond established models and engage with broader issues such as social responsibility, environmental awareness, and the evolving role of the architect.

The conference is structured around four thematic directions—*Experimentation, Integration, Augmentation, and Intersection*. These themes open discussions on innovative teaching methods, the relationship between theory and practice, the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, and the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration in shaping new forms of learning.

Questions – Architectures of Learning aims to provide a platform for educators, researchers, and students to exchange ideas, share experiences, and reflect on the future of architectural education. By bringing together diverse perspectives, the conference seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions on pedagogical innovation and the role of architecture schools in addressing contemporary challenges.

We thank all participants for their contributions and for being part of this collective effort.
We wish you an inspiring and productive conference.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

Professor Șerban Țigănaș, PhD – Dean
Associate Professor Mihai Racu, PhD – Vice Dean

Associate Teacher Camelia Sisak, PhDc – Conference coordinator
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Associate Professor Smaranda Todoran, PhD
Associate Professor Imola Kirizsan, PhD
Lecturer Alice Oprică, PhD
Assistant Lecturer Silviu Borș, PhD
Lecturer Silviu Aldea, PhD

GENERAL INFORMATION

This book contains original working abstracts presented at the 11th edition of the International Conference "Questions: Architectures of Learning", May 7–8, 2026.

Editor's Note:
The authors are fully responsible for the entire content of their abstracts.

The conference program and Book of Abstracts are available on the website:
https://fau.utcluj.ro/educatie/questions-2026.html

Organizing Partners

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This project is supported by the Romanian Order of Architects, through the Architectural Stamp Duty.

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ARCHITECTURES OF LEARNING

Questions is the scientific conference organized by the Faculty of Architecture in Cluj since 2012. The first edition focused on a theme related to architectural education, followed by a series of editions exploring different, yet timely and inclusive topics: from urban interferences and sustainability to the relationship between architecture, technology, and the city. The 11th edition of the conference returns to the original theme of architectural education and proposes a timely update.

Architectural education finds itself at a crossroads. In a world shaped by rapid change, climate crises, socio-economic transformations, and technological advances, the architecture school must respond to essential challenges: How do we train architects to adapt to an unpredictable future? Which educational methodologies are most relevant for developing critical thinking, social awareness, and technical skills? What constitutes relevant pedagogy in architecture today? How do we balance tradition and experiment, theory and practice, physical and digital?

In 2022, the volume Radical Pedagogies was published, as a result of a collaborative research project conducted at Princeton. This work documents around 300 experimental pedagogical initiatives from the 1950s to the present, worldwide. Architectural education underwent a global revolution through these experimental practices, which challenged dominant norms and opened the discipline to new forms of thought, responsibility, and action. These "radical pedagogies" did not follow fixed methods, but stood out for their unstable, heterogeneous, and oppositional character. Though often ephemeral, they had a lasting impact on architectural education. Some were absorbed, while others were dismissed, but all contributed to reshaping the discipline as an open, interconnected, and continually evolving system.

In its original sense, being radical means getting to the root of things—that is, questioning the foundations, premises, or basic structures of a system, an idea, or a practice. Radicality can refer not only to the content or format of study but also to a stance of resistance against standardization, instrumentalization, or self-referentiality.

What does radical pedagogy in architecture mean in 2026? What does a generous school of architecture mean today? Should it be generous, as proposed by Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, a school deep-rooted in social and spatial justice, environmental awareness and gender equality, a school for non-extractive architecture or for architecture as resource stewardship?

In today's socio-political and climatic context, radical pedagogy is no longer defined merely by a rupture from institutionalized models, but by its ability to construct critical frameworks and alternative epistemologies that interrogate the structures through which architectural knowledge is produced and transmitted. It no longer operates solely through spectacular gestures or isolated events, but through the reformulation of educational processes in terms of epistemic justice, transdisciplinarity, and decolonization of the curriculum. To be radical does not mean proposing a universal method, but rather maintaining an open reflective framework in which conflict, difference, and instability become pedagogical resources. In this sense, radical pedagogy becomes a critical device in itself, capable of generating new ways of thinking about space, power relations, and the role of the architect in society.

Questions 11 is structured around the following themes, designed to support varied perspectives and discussions:

Experimentation
radical pedagogies and critical methodologies in architectural education

How is radicality expressed within design studios? What forms does experimentation take in today's architectural education? How can pedagogical practices be reimagined to go beyond conventional frameworks? What new working formats can challenge and transform the learning process? What does an unconventional studio mean today? Is there a need for radical approaches or rather for preserving viable principles? In what ways can critical pedagogies help reframe traditional norms? How can hierarchical structures and standard teaching methods in architectural education be reconfigured through alternative forms of teaching and learning?

Integration
bridging theory and practice through real projects and reflective action

How can theoretical reflection and practical applicability be better balanced in architectural education? Or as Malterre-Barthes puts it, how can we eliminate the theory-practice split, and the dichotomy between those who build and those who don't, as it questions the very essence of what it means to be an architect and how to educate one? What defines an integrative pedagogy in architecture? Through which strategies can real-life projects become an active part of the learning process? How can design-build workshops serve as pedagogical tools? In what ways can architecture competitions contribute to student learning?

Augmentation
digital tools, AI, and emerging systems reshaping learning

How are digital technologies transforming the way we teach and learn architecture? What is the role of artificial intelligence, BIM modeling, augmented reality, or other digital tools in pedagogy? Are they extensions of architectural thinking or substitutes for it? What kinds of positive transformations could technology bring to education and our profession in order to mitigate inequities, overwork, and speculative labor? How can we integrate AI into the learning process? How can the curriculum be reconfigured to better respond to current challenges in the profession and society? What subjects or skill sets should be introduced, restructured, or removed from existing programs to respond to the new role of architects?

Intersection
interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches expanding architectural education

How can knowledge and practices from other disciplines be integrated into architectural education? What forms can hybrid pedagogies take, combining architecture with social sciences, arts, engineering, ecology, or technology? How can interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary collaboration be embedded into studio and lecture structures? How can we borrow actively from all other disciplines, including the most pragmatic, modest, radical, political and hands-on spatial practices? What examples of international collaboration can bring new perspectives to architectural training?

PROGRAM

DAY 1 – Thursday, 7 May 2026

9:00-9:30 – Registration

9:30-11:00 – Keynote Speakers Session

9:30–10:00 – **Prof. Șerban Țigănaș PhD,** Dean (Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning in Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
WELCOME ADDRESS

10:00–10:30 – **Assoc. Prof. Fabrizio Finucci, PhD** (Roma Tre University, Italy)
TEACHING AND EVALUATING ARCHITECTURE WITH EMERGING COMMUNITIES

10:30–11:00 – **Arch. Principal In-Souk Cho** (DaaRee Architect & Associates, Seoul, Korea)
LEARNING FROM WOOD
Timber Heritage and the Education of Architects in Korea

11:00–11:30 – Coffee Break

11:30–13:30 - Session 1: Experimentation

Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Smaranda Todoran, PhD; Lect. Daniel Șerban, PhD (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Eleonora Antoniadou (Royal College of Art, UK)
LEARNING IN THE MAKING
Feminist Self-Organisation and the Transformation of Studio Culture

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From archive to studio: design objects as pedagogical and research infrastructure

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Roberta Vasnic (Void Studios Architecture + Research Ltd, UK)
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Chairs: Lect. Adriana Măgerușan, PhD; Assist. Teach. Camelia Sisak, PhDc (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Henrietta Kovacs (Politehnica University of Timișoara, Romania)
INTEGRATING CONSTRUCTION LITERACY: CRAFT-BASED LEARNING AS RADICAL PEDAGOGYReframing hands on building as an intellectual framework for cultivating competence and responsibility in future architects

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ARCHITECTURAL PEDAGOGY BUILT OTHERWISE Experimental and Practice-Based Learning as a Possible Curriculum in Romania

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Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Mihai Racu PhD – Vice Dean; Assist. Tech. Camelia Sisak, PhD (Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Participants:

Prof. Șerban Țigănaș, PhD - Dean	*Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania*
Lect. Vladimir Vinea, PhD - Dean	*Faculty of Architecture, "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism Bucharest, Romania*
Assoc. Prof. Tudor Grădinaru, PhD - Dean	*"G.M. Cantacuzino" Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Iași, Romania*
Assoc. Prof. Cristian Pușcaș, PhD – Head of the Architecture Department	*Faculty of Construction, Cadastre and Architecture, University of Oradea, Romania*
Assoc. Prof. Cristian Blidariu, PhD - Dean	*Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Politechnica University of Timișoara, Romania*

DAY 2 – Friday, 8 May 2026

9:30-11:00 – Keynote Speakers Session

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"REZIDUAL" PROJECT

10:00–10:30 – **Prof. Pedro García Martínez, PhD** (Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena, Spain)
ARCH(I)VE-TECTURE
Interferences between Designing, Teaching, and Research in Architecture

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WORKING WITH OUR HEADS
On Teaching Architecture as a Practice of Thinking

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From a House of the Future towards the Future of Architectural Education

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Chairs: Assoc. Prof. Imola Kirizsán, PhD; Lect. Silviu Aldea, PhD (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Alex-Gabriel Bolasz (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
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Literature, Urban History, and Critical Approaches in Architectural Education

Larisa-Lara Latis (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
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A brief history of mathematical interference with architectural education in Europe

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(Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
LIVING ON CAMPUS
A discussion on the international collaboration's ability to catalyze change

Marius Indrei (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
LEARNING THROUGH UNCERTAINTY

Ana Ileana Abos (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
ARCHITECTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY AS PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AWARENESS

Sándor Tárkányi (University of Sopron, Hungary)
INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN CONTEMPORARY HERITAGE CONSERVATION TRAINING IN SOPRON
Innovative Educational Models for the Sustainable Preservation of Built Heritage

Anca-Andreia Fati (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
POST-INDUSTRIAL CONTEXTS AS SITES OF LEARNING
The Case of Anina

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17:00–18:00– Student Debate: Learning Architecture Today

Chairs: stud. Sabrina Dâscă, arch. Vlad Andrei Chiorean (Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Participants: stud. David Alexandrescu, stud. Iarina Ungureanu, stud. Robert Starjil, stud. Davide Neculcea, stud. Rusu George, stud. Grădinaru Daria, stud. Mitocaru Silviu, stud. Daria Țâră

18:00–18:30 – Closing Remarks and Conference Conclusions

Chair: Prof. Șerban Țigănaș PhD, Dean (Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Participants: Assoc. Prof. Smaranda Todoran, PhD; Lect. Adriana Măgerușan, PhD; Lect. Alice Oprică; Assoc. Prof. Imola Kirizsán, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Mihai Racu, PhD; stud. Sabrina Dâscă.

KEY SPEAKERS

In-Souk Cho
PhD (Architectural history and theory) Architect | Principal, DaaRee Architects & Associates, Seoul, Korea (1986-present) | APEC Architect
E-mail: choinsouk@gmail.com

In-Souk Cho is a Seoul-based architect, heritage conservator, and scholar with over five decades of practice. She founded DaaRee Architects & Associates in 1986, developing expertise in historic timber structures, Buddhist monastery complexes, and Hanok design. Her doctoral research at Sungkyunkwan University focused on the conservation of Buddhist Three Jewel Monasteries. She has served as Co-President of the ICOMOS, International Wood Committee, Vice-President of ISCARSAH, and represented Korea at UNESCO World Heritage Committee sessions. A committed educator and prolific author, she was named one of the Ten Women in Architecture in 2021. She lectures internationally in Korean, English, and German.

Learning from Wood

Timber Heritage and the Education of Architects in Korea

Abstract

In the early 1970s, the curriculum of Korean university schools of architecture was dominated by the pursuit of creativity and technical knowledge — structural engineering, construction methods, and all matters pertaining to the built work. One studied the architecture of ancient Egypt and Greece, yet was never taught — nor prompted to consider — what manner of architecture had existed in the very land one inhabited. Korea's own built

heritage, rooted overwhelmingly in a sophisticated tradition of timber construction, was absent from the classroom entirely.
More than fifty years on, that absence has not been adequately addressed. Vernacular architecture — born from intimate familiarity with land, climate, and material, producing structures unmistakably of their place — is increasingly regarded as outmoded, a relic rather than a living inheritance. The architectural language spoken today is, with remarkable uniformity, much the same the world over. This homogenisation carries a quiet but consequential erosion of cultural identity. In Korea, where timber has historically been the primary vehicle of indigenous spatial philosophy, structural ingenuity, and craft knowledge, this erosion is particularly acute.
This paper examines what is at stake and what must be done, across three equally weighted areas of inquiry.

Heritage Education and Training addresses the most urgent concern: the persistent marginalisation of built heritage — and timber construction in particular — within mainstream architectural education. A practitioner who cannot read a timber structure, understand its joinery, or appreciate its cultural logic is ill-equipped to care for it. Yet conservation remains peripheral in most curricula, treated as elective rather than essential. Beyond formal education, professional training for conservators and craft specialists demands equal attention. The timber joiners, carpenters, and material specialists who carry traditional building knowledge in their hands represent an irreplaceable living heritage. When they retire without trained successors, that knowledge vanishes entirely. Coordinated apprenticeship programmes and professional certification pathways are not optional refinements — they are matters of cultural urgency.
Heritage Care Works examines the practical dimension of sustaining Korea's timber-built environment over time. Traditional and contemporary conservation methods are considered alongside the significant challenges of sourcing appropriate timber species, maintaining craft standards, and securing institutional continuity for long-term maintenance programmes. Timber structures are unforgiving of neglect; they demand regular, skilled attention. Collaborative efforts between domestic institutions and international partners have yielded valuable knowledge exchange, and the lessons of such partnerships — what they achieve and where they fall short — are examined with attention to their implications for future practice.

Raising Awareness of Heritage considers how appreciation for timber heritage is cultivated among the broader public. Government policy, non-governmental initiatives, community engagement, and media all play a role in making the case that these buildings matter. Case studies of notable projects illustrate how timber heritage, when made legible and accessible to non-specialists, can become a genuine resource for communities rather than a burden upon them.
Together, these three dimensions form a single argument: that timber heritage is not a footnote to architectural education in Korea, but its most instructive and most overlooked chapter.

Pedro García Martínez
Associate Professor PhD Arch.
Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena (UPCT), Spain
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Pedro García Martínez is an Associate Professor of Architectural Design at Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena, where he directs the Department of Architecture and Building Technology. His work connects architectural design, graphic analysis, housing research and design methodology, with academic and professional experience in Spain and abroad. In 2025, he played a central role in organizing the JIDA'25 conference, which foregrounded Research by Design as a key framework for experimentation and critical reflection in architectural education.

Arch(i)ve-tecture

Interferences between Designing, Teaching, and Research in Architecture

Abstract

The lecture explores the interferences that emerge between designing, teaching, and researching when these practices are no longer understood as separate domains, but as interrelated processes within the architectural discipline.
In contrast to research approaches based primarily on the study of the archive as an external and pre-existing source, the lecture proposes positioning the architectural project, understood as a critical, analytical, and productive process, at the core of research activity. From this perspective to research implies to design, and designing becomes a means to formulate questions, produce knowledge, and construct new frameworks for architectural interpretation.
The presentation is structured around several case studies that illustrate different yet complementary methodologies: **a diachronic study of contemporary housing** based on the project-based analysis of works by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa; **a synchronic study** focused on the modular logic of the Escombreras Thermal Power Plant; and a third line of work related to **the analysis of structural patents and to teaching experiences based on prototyping**, in dialogue with contemporary practices such as Tyin Tegnestue, where designing, building, and teaching form part of a single, continuous process.
In this latter case, teaching is conceived as a space in which the project operates simultaneously as a pedagogical tool and as a research device, blurring the boundaries between learning, practice, and the production of knowledge. Through these experiences, the lecture argues that architectural research can be developed from within the project itself, reducing dependence on the traditional archive and activating design processes capable of generating their own frameworks of knowledge. The interferences between project, teaching, and research are not presented as conflicts, but as a fertile territory in which architecture is conceived, taught, and investigated in a transversal manner.

Andra Ionel
Lecturer
Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland

Andra Ionel lives and works between Leipzig, Mendrisio, and Bucharest, three diverse environments that inspire her and constantly shift her perspective. Since 2020, she has been a lecturer at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio, where she teaches a first-year bachelor's design studio under the guidance of the architect Valerio Olgiati. Together with Elena Zara, she has founded ZEIA Studio, an office that seeks to create memorable spaces that go beyond standardized solutions. As an architect, she most enjoys being on construction sites, in close contact with the reality of building. Andra believes that every project is a reflection of the world one wants to inhabit.

Working with Our Heads

On Teaching Architecture as a Practice of Thinking

Abstract
This lecture reflects on teaching architecture today through the experience of the first-year studio in Mendrisio, developed under the direction of Valerio Olgiati. Starting from a personal perspective, the talk explores a pedagogical approach that places thinking at the center of architectural education. Rather than focusing on form or predefined methods, the studio encourages students to develop their own ideas and translate them into spatial proposals.
Through fundamental themes such as dwelling and working, students are invited to question how they want to live and operate in space. The lecture emphasizes the role of an idea as the driving force behind architectural decisions. In a broader context, the talk addresses the role of the university today, advocating for it as a space of intellectual freedom where independent thinking can develop beyond the pressures of market logic and rapid image production. Ultimately, the lecture argues that teaching architecture is not about transmitting knowledge, but about helping students construct their own position in the world.

Fabrizio Finucci
Associate Professor PhD Arch.
Roma Tre, Italy

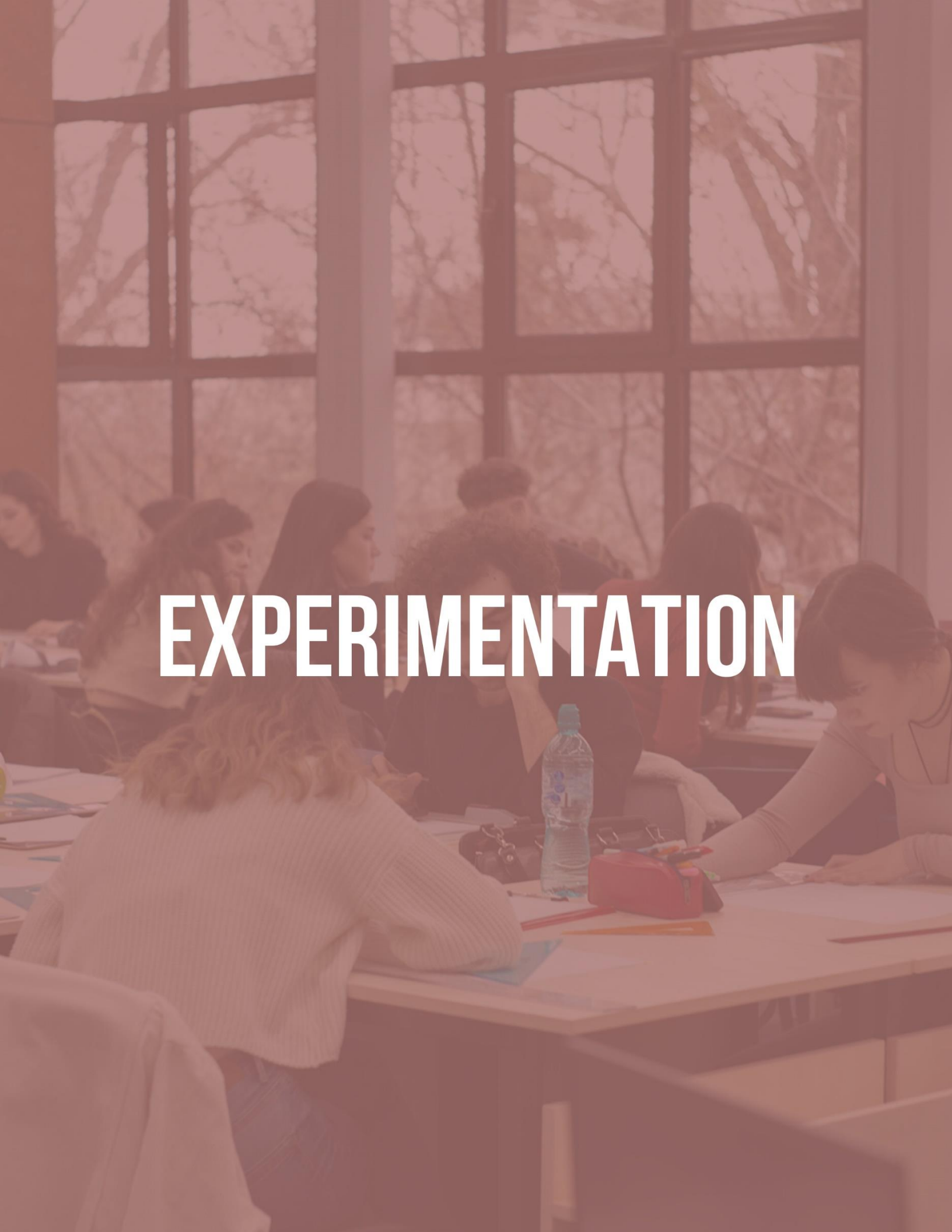
Architect and PhD, he is Associate Professor in Appraisal and Project Evaluation at Roma Tre University, Department of Architecture. Since 2026, he has been Honorary Professor at University of Pécs (Hungary). He was affiliated with Sapienza University of Rome, where he served as Adjunct Professor since 2012. He has been Visiting Professor at several European and South American universities and is a member of the CeSET – Research Center for Appraisal and Territorial Economics, and SIEV – Italian Society of Appraisal and Valuation. He is the author of numerous national and international publications. His research and teaching activities focus on evaluation techniques developed through inclusive and dialogic approaches, grounded in stakeholders' perspectives and promoting the active involvement of communities in urban and social transformation and regeneration processes.

Teaching and Evaluating Architecture with Emerging Communities

Abstract

The presentation outlines the work of an Integrated Architectural and Urban Design Studio within the Master's Degree Programme in Urban Design at the Department of Architecture of Roma Tre University. Since 2017, the studio has been working with what the literature has recently begun to define as emerging communities. These are segments of civil society that self-organize to reclaim abandoned urban spaces, with the aim of providing complementary and subsidiary welfare services that are accessible and based on innovative and hybrid economic models.
Over the years, the studio has placed students in close interaction with several of these groups, which are highly active and present across the city of Rome. This has led to the development of a teaching pathway and a methodological stance progressively refined over time, enabling this form of social architecture to be taught directly in the field.
Indeterminate design, normogenesis, inclusive evaluation practices, the relocation of studio activities into real contexts, and the continuous involvement of emerging communities are among the key elements that define a pedagogy grounded in real-world conditions.
In conclusion, the contribution focuses on one of the projects, an housing for 53 intercultural families, developed with students, which has been implemented thanks to funding from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

ABSTRACTS



EXPERIMENTATION

Learning in the Making:

Feminist Self-Organisation and the Transformation of Studio Culture

Eleonora Antoniadou
Royal College of Art

Keywords: Feminist Pedagogy, Self-Organised Learning, Collective Knowledge

Abstract

This paper investigates feminist self-organised learning as a transferable experimental methodology for rethinking the architectural design studio. Through the case of SPACEGirls—a collective of architects, educators, and students who collaboratively designed and constructed temporary installations between 2019 and 2025—the research examines how studio culture can be restructured through shifts in authority, critique, spatial setting, and labour organisation.

Rather than proposing an alternative format, the study analyses experimentation at the level of pedagogical conditions. Educator and student hierarchies were replaced by role fluidity; critique unfolded as continuous peer exchange rather than episodic juries; and learning extended beyond the studio into construction sites, shared domestic environments, and informal collective routines. Material engagement, improvisation, and collective decision-making structured the design process, positioning uncertainty and failure as generative components of inquiry.

What renders this approach radical is not collaboration or making alone, but the reorganisation of evaluative logics and knowledge circulation. Detached from grading systems and professional benchmarking, the studio became a distributed learning infrastructure sustained through care, shared responsibility, and embodied practice. Intellectual, physical, and reproductive labour were recognised as co-constitutive of architectural knowledge.

By identifying recurring principles such as role fluidity, distributed critique, integration of everyday practices, collective authorship, and process-oriented reflection, the paper articulates a transferable set of pedagogical principles capable of reconfiguring how architectural learning is organised and sustained. Radical experimentation, it argues, lies in transforming the underlying structures through which learning, authority, and collective responsibility are enacted.

Biography: Eleonora Antoniadou is an architect, educator, and researcher. She is a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art and a Lecturer at UCL and the University of Brighton.

Her work explores bodies as learning tools in architectural pedagogy and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange.

Learning from Objects: The Collections of FAU as Object-Based Pedagogy

From archive to studio: design objects as pedagogical and research infrastructure

Paul-Mihai Moldovan, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, paul.moldovan@arch.utcluj.ro

Keywords: object-based learning, architectural pedagogy, material culture

Abstract

Architectural education is increasingly mediated through digital representations, while direct engagement with material culture and built precedents is becoming less frequent. This shift raises questions about how students develop design literacy, critical judgment, and an understanding of values embedded in architectural production.

This paper investigates the potential of object-based learning as an alternative pedagogical approach in architectural education. Its main objective is to examine how curated design objects can function as tools for teaching architectural thinking, bridging the gap between abstract representation and material understanding.

The research is grounded in the development of The Collections of FAU, an educational platform initiated within the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning in Cluj-Napoca. The collection consists of iconic design objects, many created by architects, selected for their capacity to embody structural logic, material intelligence, and coherent value systems. These objects are integrated into studio teaching through observation, comparison, and hands-on analysis.

The paper argues that object-based pedagogies can reconfigure the design studio as a hybrid environment between archive, workshop, and exhibition space. By positioning objects as carriers of knowledge rather than as display items, the study highlights their role in transmitting architectural values through critical storytelling and facilitating the connection between theory and practice. The contribution of the paper lies in proposing small-scale, object-centered infrastructures as a relevant and transferable model for enhancing architectural education in a context dominated by digital mediation.

Biography: Paul-Mihai Moldovan is an architect, educator, and associate professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning in Cluj-Napoca. He graduated from FAUP in 2007 and also studied at ENSA Grenoble. He holds a PhD in Architecture from the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca and teaches Design Studio and Interior Architecture.

High-Rise, Low Fall: Cinematic Dystopia and the Fate of Collective Housing

Dystopia as Pedagogy: Rethinking Collective Housing Through Cinema

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Keywords: cinematic pedagogy, collective housing, late modernism, dystopia, brutalism

Biography: Nely Vînău: Co-founder of the ALT+A and coordinator of SF(a) – Society. Film. Architecture, Nely is an architect and T.A. at the Faculty of Architecture in Iași. Her academic and cultural interests revolve around the intersections of architectural theory, dystopia, and cinematography.

Tiberiu Teodor-Stanciu: An architect driven by optimism and a strong passion for graphic design, wayfinding, and cultural memory, Tiberiu is the founder of Atelier Spre and Memorat. He has authored several books on the history of Iași and is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture. His work bridges historical research, visual storytelling, and design experimentation.

Abstract

Can dystopian cinema become a radical pedagogical tool for rethinking collective housing? This paper explores the potential of film as a critical instrument in architectural education, focusing on Ben Wheatley's *High-Rise* (2015) and its integration within *SF(a) – Society. Film. Architecture,* an interdisciplinary platform that systematically employs cinematography for critical exploration of architecture, collective memory, and urban development. J.G. Ballard's 1975 novel, inspired by Ernő Goldfinger's brutalist towers, offers a starting point for examining the failures of modernist social housing.

The theoretical framework expands through Anthony Vidler's architectural uncanny, Henri Lefebvre's *production of space*, and Michel Foucault's *heterotopia*. Through these lenses, *High-Rise* emerges as a multilayered text: the building operates as a social actor, verticality becomes a metaphor for class stratification, and spatial configuration determines human behavior. The film stages the collapse of modernist utopia — a narrative that resonates profoundly with late modernist housing estates that remain dominant in Romanian and Eastern European urban landscapes.

The paper argues that cinematic analysis offers architecture students critical tools often absent from conventional curricula. By examining how *High-Rise* constructs space as both physical environment and social determinant, students develop a deeper understanding of the ideological dimensions embedded in collective housing design. This approach bridges theory and practice: film becomes a catalyst for questioning how architects might design — or redesign — collective housing that avoids dystopian failures depicted on screen. The intersection of cinema, critical theory, and architectural education creates space for experimentation where students confront urgent challenges of density, segregation, sustainability, and the right to decent housing. Ultimately, film becomes a pedagogical lens through which social housing is examined as a case study in architecture's power to shape — or shatter — community.

Building the Bridge
From Secondary Education to Architectural Thinking

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Keywords: cognitive development, design thinking, learning transition

Biography: Dana Opincariu, associate professor at F.A.U.P, has extensive experience with first-year students and a long-standing research interest in improving first-year architectural education. She coordinates the Design Studio and tutors the Admission Preparation Course. Both Andreea Pop and Laura Patachi are lecturers and tutoring the 1st year students.

Abstract

How does a student's way of thinking transform during the transition from secondary education to university, within a vocational field of study? As architects and teachers involved in both the admission training process and the first-year Architecture Design Studio, we are particularly concerned how experiences acquired during the training period translate into mechanisms that enable students to respond to a new set of academic requirements.

This study offers an insight into this process. It analyses the teaching environment in which a student's way of thinking is formed prior to university and the way his mindset must adapt to the highly specific field of architecture. We seek to identify the mechanisms that enable students to transition from pre-university way of thinking to the specific design thinking, one in which the association, interpretation, and application of information are guided by architectural logic, spatial reasoning, and design intent. In the first project, we often observe the emergence of certain creative impulses in the design process; however, we also note that a sequence of small, technically correct steps does not necessarily result in positive or successful outcomes. So we ask ourselves which aspects of their prior training support a better adaptation, and how can their development be fostered in the most effective and natural way? We thus seek to explain and synthesize a set of principles related to the formation of this bridge between a mindset shaped by one way of learning and a mindset that must develop into that of an architect.

Critical Thinking and Adaptive Learning in Architectural Design Studios

Navigating tool diversity and fostering continuous self-learning

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Keywords: adaptive learning, self-regulation, critical thinking, reflection

Biography: I graduated in 2021 from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Cluj-Napoca, and completed an internship at ateliercetrei (2021–2024) under Assoc. Prof. Arh. Paul Mihai Moldovan. Since 2022, I have been pursuing a PhD, supervised in Romania by Prof. Dr. Arh. Virgil Pop and in Spain at UPCT by Prof. Dr. Arh. Pedro García Martínez, as part of a cotutelle program.

Abstract

Architectural education today faces a paradox: students have access to an unprecedented range of tools, from hand drawing and model-making to advanced digital design software. While this diversity expands creative possibilities, it also challenges teaching, as no single method can cover all competencies required in contemporary architectural practice.

This paper draws on experiences from a design studio at ETSAE | Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena, where students worked on three projects in one semester. One project was real-world: an exhibition stand developed with a materials company, using a catalog of approved materials for construction and display. The other two projects included an artists' center, developed as part of a Pladur competition, integrating concrete structures and drywall, and a small rowing center in Zaragoza using brick. Students were encouraged to choose freely the methods and tools best suited to each project, balancing traditional and digital techniques.

The study highlights the central role of critical thinking and self-regulated learning in design education, emphasizing the diversity of projects at the second-year level. Beyond mastering specific tools, students must learn to evaluate, select, and combine techniques independently, fostering a mindset of continuous learning beyond the classroom. This approach equips them to adapt to rapid changes in practice and to innovate responsibly.

Drawing on pedagogical insights from Zumthor (2006), Colomina (2012), and Claxon (1999), the paper argues that architectural education should focus less on teaching individual tools and more on developing autonomous, reflective, and adaptive professionals capable of addressing complex, open-ended problems.

What does the equator teach? Design-build education, indigenous knowledge, and regenerative practice between the Ecuadorian Amazon and the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem

One line, two worlds, two pedagogies

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Keywords:
regenerative architecture, indigeneity, biocultural pedagogy

Abstract

This presentation asks what architectural education can learn from two design-build projects situated on the equator: Shimaka, a school conceived for the Sapara indigenous community in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and the Mara Centre, a conservation centre designed within the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem in Kenya. Both projects sit within ancient biocultural landscapes where human culture and ecosystem co-evolved over millennia, and both were designed from deep research into the indigenous knowledge systems, spatial traditions, and ecological principles of the communities they serve. Together, they form a comparative pedagogical framework for rethinking the epistemological foundations of architectural education. The research introduces the concept of biocultural pedagogy as a design-build practice in which the site, the ecosystem, and the indigenous community function as the primary teachers. It argues that both the Sapara and the Maasai operate from knowledge systems in which the health of the community and the health of the land are inseparable. That architecture designed within these frameworks is not sustainable in the limited sense of reducing environmental impact but regenerative in the full sense of actively contributing to the renewal of the biocultural systems within which it sits. Through comparative analysis, the research identifies shared ontological and socio-political conditions across both projects: collective governance, intergenerational knowledge transmission, relational land stewardship, and the existential pressure of cultural erosion under extractive economic development. It equally examines the radical differences between the two sites, in ecology, cosmology, spatial organisation, and relationship to land, arguing that these differences demonstrate that biocultural pedagogy does not produce a universal architectural method but a practice of rigorous, place-specific responsiveness. The presentation concludes by turning this argument toward Romania, framing it as a question for the conference audience. Romania holds the largest remaining areas of primaeval and old-growth forest in Europe, a vernacular architectural tradition of exceptional regional diversity, and a biocultural inheritance of continental significance. All of it is under pressure from the pace of economic development. Drawing a direct structural parallel between the conditions facing the Sapara and the Maasai and those facing Romanian ecology and culture, the research argues that architects bear a specific responsibility toward the biocultural knowledge embedded in the landscapes they build within. The central question the paper poses to architects, academics, and students is this: What would it mean to design a building that knows exactly where it is?

Biography: Roberta Vasnic is a Romanian-born architect, researcher and educator in cultural and ecological preservation, and the co-founder of Void Studios. She explores regenerative practices and the intersection of architecture, community, and indigenous knowledge. Roberta sits on the board of Naku Foundation as director of architecture.

INTEGRATION

Integrating Construction Literacy: Craft-Based Learning as Radical Pedagogy

Reframing hands-on building as an intellectual framework for cultivating competence and responsibility in future architects

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Keywords: hands-on learning, pedagogical integration, experiential learning

Abstract

Architectural education often positions design as intellectual work and construction as secondary labour. This hierarchy weakens students' capacity to understand how buildings come together and limits their ability to act responsibly once they become practitioners. Drawing on pedagogical exercises in which students built small pavilions, exhibition structures, and urban furniture, this paper reflects on a recurring issue: many students perceive hands-on construction as "low-priority work," a task to complete rather than a meaningful learning process. This reveals a structural gap in architectural training, where real-world making is rarely integrated as a reflective learning experience.

The proposed radical pedagogy reframes craft-based building tasks not as manual exercises but as intellectual laboratories for cultivating architectural competence. Through direct engagement with materials, tools, sequencing, and errors, students develop embodied knowledge that cannot be acquired through drawings or digital models alone. Such experiences teach them to anticipate errors, understand technical constraints, communicate with workers, and coordinate construction processes with clarity and empathy. This embodied reasoning also enables them to evaluate construction processes even when they are not physically on site—anticipating failures, identifying inconsistencies, and understanding the logic of assembly from plans, photos, or models.

Hands-on building thus becomes a critical method for strengthening professional responsibility and bridging the divide between theory and practice. Integrating reflective construction experiences expands architectural intelligence by reconnecting design, craftsmanship, and construction realities, better preparing architects for contemporary practice.

Biography: Architect and teaching assistant pursuing a PhD on the architect–beneficiary relationship. Her applied practice and design-build pedagogy investigate how direct engagement with the built environment shapes future architects' perception and critical understanding.

Architectural Pedagogy Built Otherwise

Experimental and Practice-Based Learning as a Possible Curriculum in Romania

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Keywords: practice-based, experimental learning, alternative curricula, design and build

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Alexandru-Nicolae Fleșeriu: Alexandru is an architect and assistant at FAU Cluj-Napoca. His interests focus on architectural education.

Abstract

This paper investigates the potential transition of experimental pedagogical initiatives from the periphery of extracurricular activities toward the formal institutional frameworks of Romanian architectural education. While practice-based learning, as theorized by John Dewey, has traditionally been situated outside the formal curriculum, this research focuses on a recent possible shift toward institutional integration. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the pedagogical value and institutional legitimacy of "Design and Build" workshops. Using the workshops developed within FAST – the Festival for Architecture Schools of Tomorrow as a case study, the paper examines how built interventions addressing real campus needs transform the academic environment into a site for experiential learning. The methodology involves analyzing the pedagogical organization and educational impact of these initiatives, specifically focusing on how students engage with material experimentation, multidisciplinary collaboration, and the management of uncertainty. These elements constitute a form of research-driven knowledge that is difficult to replicate within conventional studio-based instruction. The main argument posits that these workshops serve as productive laboratories for testing alternative pedagogies, informing ongoing debates on the evolution of architectural curricula while maintaining necessary experimental autonomy. The original contribution of this work lies in demonstrating how such formats act as critical devices to bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering a viable model for curricular reform that responds to the unpredictable challenges of the profession nowadays.

Hybrid Pedagogies for Architectural Education: Bridging Hierarchical and Community-Based Practices Subtitle, if necessary

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Keywords: architectural education; experiential learning; hybrid pedagogy

Abstract

In the context of the New European Bauhaus, which promotes sustainability, beauty, and inclusivity, the role of the architect is being redefined, especially in Romania, where architectural education remains shaped by a modernist, hierarchical approach.

However, in recent years, alternative initiatives such as summer schools have promoted a relational, experiential approach based on hands-on learning and direct engagement with local communities. This approach contrasts with the hierarchical pedagogical model specific to architecture schools, favoring a horizontal learning process and knowledge exchange with craftsmen and residents.

While both approaches generate valuable results in the training of future architects, there is currently no formal link between them within university education.

Starting from this gap, we propose examining how architectural education can be updated and improved by officially integrating an experiential element into the learning process.

The methodology is structured in two phases. First, we will document teaching methods used in workshops at international schools to identify how they were created and their pedagogical principles. Second, we will critically analyse several case studies from the schools of Architecture in Cluj and Oradea: a pedagogical research exercise designed to familiarize fifth-year students with qualitative research methods, a pilot project-based research experiment in Petrinzel village focused on reactivating an abandoned school as a community center and a summer school in Cacuciu village (Bihor County) centered on co-making rural architectural commons with local communities.

The goal is to identify the challenges of these experiments and assess the potential for integrating the academic, hierarchical approach with the experiential, applied approach. Drawing inspiration from internationally documented lessons, this paper aims to formulate a new hybrid educational method to contribute to the training of future architects by teaching them to work with the new vernacular.

Biography: Diana Galoș is an architect and urban studies researcher, PhD Paris Nanterre & UTCN. Silviu Medeșan is an architect, researcher and urban activist, PhD UTCN, lecturer at the University of Oradea and author.

Educational Living Lab for Architectural Recycling through Cultural-Community Reuse

An experimental environment where education is redefined through real interactivity, allowing creativity to be tested in authentic projects and contexts

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Keywords: 1.Living lab methodology; 2. Adaptive & Creative reuse; 3. Urban regeneration through culture; 4. Experimental Learning

Biography: I graduated in 1996 from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU) at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (TUCN). I am the president of the Urbannect NGO, focused on urban reconversion and public space use. Since 2024, I have been pursuing a PhD in architectural recycling through cultural-community reuse, supervised by Prof. Dr. habil. arch. Dragoș Șerban Ion Țigănaș.

Abstract

The article supports the opportunity of using the Living Lab (LL) as an experimental pedagogical tool in the school of architecture, serving as a bridge between theory and practice. The recycling of abandoned spaces through cultural-community reuse is the core of this LL, as it provides a fertile ground to connect theoretical approaches with practical application in architectural education.

The study defines the functional framework of a Living Lab by examining experiences from examples such as Aalto Living+ Hub, EnoLL - European Network of Living Labs, KU Leuven Living Lab. The objective is to assess the replicability of this educational approach within the context of cultural and community-based adaptive reuse. We seek to identify applicable methods, common challenges, and implementation mechanisms that can support the definition of the Living Lab as an educational resource within the architectural learning process.

The research employs a qualitative, exploratory approach based on case study analysis, comparative evaluation, and dialogue with project organizers. These methods are complemented by research-by-design and action research practices, alongside participatory and collaborative mapping tools used in architectural and urban experimentation.

The novelty of this approach lies in framing the living lab around the adaptive reuse of vacant spaces—a timely and challenging theme in contemporary architecture. Building on insights from existing living lab models, the article proposes a locally adapted framework at faculty scale, grounded in real practices of spatial activation, as illustrated by examples as Fabrica de Pensule, The Ark, Uzina de Apă, and H33.

Expected results include assessing the integration of the lab into the study plan and consolidating the LL as an interdisciplinary educational practice.

Title 3rd Place D: 3D Printing as a Pedagogy of Lived Space

A pedagogy of Possible Space: Critical Theory and Digital Materialization

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Keywords: Thirdspace, digital making, experimental pedagogy, third place

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Tiberiu Teodor-Stanciu: An architect driven by optimism and a strong passion for graphic design, wayfinding, and cultural memory. He is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture. His work bridges historical research, visual storytelling, and design experimentation.

Răzvan Mircea Nica: Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Architecture from Iași, he is the founder and curator of ArchSynopsis, a digital platform dedicated to interpretive drawings and non-hierarchical connections between architectural references.

Abstract

Can digital making become an instrument of critical thinking about social space? The "3rd Place D" workshop proposed a pedagogical exploration at the intersection of 3D printing technology and spatial theory, testing the potential of extracurricular learning as a form of radical education in architecture.

The theoretical grounding began with Ray Oldenburg's concept of "third place": those informal spaces that generate chance encounters and social cohesion—cafés, plazas, steps, and activated urban corners. However, the approach moved beyond this sociological reading by integrating Edward Soja's "Thirdspace" perspective. For Soja, lived space is neither exclusively physical nor exclusively mental, but a dialectical synthesis that enables the contestation and reimagination of reality. This dual theoretical foundation transformed the exercise into a reflection on how architecture can produce spaces of the possible, beyond functionalist conventions.

The creative process invited participants to imagine spatial fragments capable of generating human connections: a step that becomes a place for conversation, a niche that offers intimacy amid urban bustle, a platform that brings people together. Each vision was translated into a vertical section and materialized through 3D printing into monochrome models that highlight volume, texture, and the essence of the concept. The rapid transition from idea to physical object enabled an accelerated cycle of testing and reflection, anchoring abstract thinking in material experience.

The paper argues that extracurricular learning, freed from traditional curricular constraints, can become fertile ground for radical pedagogies. Integrating digital making into theoretical exploration serves not only technical acquisition but also cultivates critical thinking about social space. This approach demonstrates how theory, spatial experimentation, and accessible technology can converge to shape architects capable of reimagining the places where human connections are born.

Developing Visual Literacy: Photography as a Pedagogical Tool in Architectural Education

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Keywords:
photography, architectural education, visual literacy

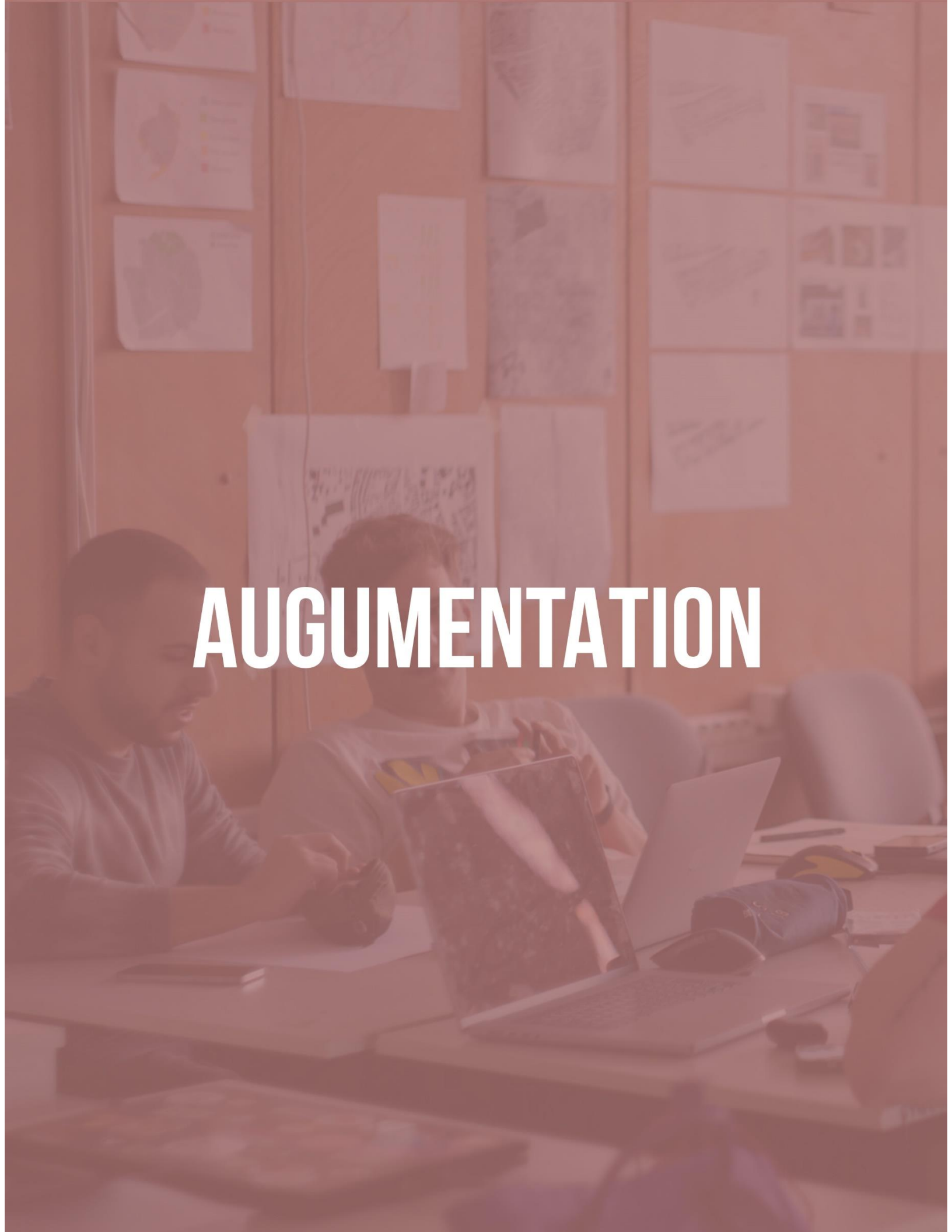
Biography: Miruna Moldovan is a licensed architect from Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She is a founding partner of *viewcatchers*, a company specializing in architecture photography, has her own individual architecture office *atelier menou* and is a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, within the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca. As of 2024, she is a co-founder of the scientific journal *COTAA - Collection of Texts about Architecture*.

Abstract

Although it is not a new method at all and it is used almost daily by most architects, photography is little used professionally as a tool in architectural education. In all design education, physical models serve as essential tools for exploration, iteration, and communication of ideas. This paper investigates the role of photography as a medium through which students engage with, analyze, and document their model-making processes and therefore their architecture.

Almost all architects study their reference buildings, the spaces they produce or simply, the public space, through direct photography (even if it's with a professional camera or just with their phone). But most of the time when architectural photography is done professionally, it is only upon completion of an architectural object or, even more rarely, when tracking and storing information from various stages of the construction site. This study explores how or if photography could be introduced as a tool in architectural education, in order to develop spatial understanding and visual literacy and to facilitate practical decision-making (the one that is so necessary during the design process), in an attempt to bridge the gap between physical and digital representation for architecture students, but also for the tutors.

By integrating the photographic documentation of their own models, second year students from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism Cluj-Napoca had the opportunity to experiment with lighting scenarios, proportions and spatiality, materiality and textures, so they would eventually understand more easily the scenography of the objects they created. This study highlights the pedagogical value of photography as both a creative and analytical tool within design education, emphasizing its potential to enhance communication, self-evaluation, and the storytelling dimension of architecture.



AUGUMENTATION

Remixing Images and Distributed Authorship

Speed, Enforced Slowness and Cross-Media Translation in AI-Augmented Education

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Keywords: Visual Generative AI, Architectural Pedagogy, Cross-Media Translation

Biography: Patrick Pazdzior studied in Muenster and Vienna (Academy for Fine Arts), co-founded GANG Atelier, and taught at TU Vienna before joining TU Graz as an Assistant Professor and PhD candidate in 2025.

He explores multi-disciplinary, image based and AI-enhanced architecture design and education.

Abstract

Authorship in AI-augmented design studios is distributed across human, AI, and precedent – a condition that challenges individualist design paradigms and raises questions for radical pedagogy about the way AI workflows substitute or constitute knowledge. This study examines how that distribution can be made legible and critically productive. Following Bratton's distinction between 'orienting' and 'aligning' AI, students learn to decide when to guide, when to accept, and how to curate productive tensions (Bratton, *After Alignment,* 2023). The study asks how a structured studio pedagogy can build that capacity systematically.

In the Master's studio at TU Graz, students used visual generative AI to remix architectural precedents with one another and with their own imagery, creating recursive cycles that produce a new kind of authorship compared to traditional collage techniques. To develop both atmospheric sensibility and constructional understanding, the pedagogical approach embraced radical oscillation: between computational speed and enforced slowness, large-scale and detail, automated and manual. After learning open-source software (Blender) in the first two weeks, students photographed existing building details, navigated 3D models, and created oil pastel drawings – constantly translating between media. A four-checkpoint protocol progressively translated images toward constructability, confronting students with the gap between atmospheric outputs and architectural specification – a gap that proved revealing.

The study argues that architectural competency in AI-augmented studios depends less on tool mastery than on cross-media translation – the capacity to move critically between registers of knowledge. AI acts as both substitute and extension: it accelerates atmospheric generation while obscuring constructional specificity, requiring active curation rather than passive acceptance. The protocol provides a transferable model for AI-augmented education that navigates this duality through structured oscillation between automated and manual methods.

Radical Afterlives: AI-Augmented Polyvocality as Architectural Pedagogy

From Photogrammetry to Posthuman Storytelling in the Design Studio

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Keywords:

AI-Augmented Pedagogy; Digital Heritage; Polyvocal Narrative

Abstract

Architectural education stands at a critical juncture, challenged simultaneously by endangered twentieth-century heritage and the rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence. This paper proposes a radical pedagogical model that reframes digital tools not as neutral instruments of representation, but as epistemological agents in the production of architectural knowledge. "Radical Afterlives" presents a module developed through the research Frames of McMahon Hall, which constructs a "digital afterlife" for a contested Brutalist dormitory at the University of Washington. The methodology combines drone-based photogrammetry and 3D modelling with Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) and persona-driven AI storytelling. Quantitative spatial data is treated as an anchor, while curated, ethically governed generative AI operates as a collaborator in a process of contrapuntal co-authorship. The pedagogical innovation lies in its polyvocal narrative framework: five interwoven voices destabilize the Authorized Heritage Discourse and adopt a posthumanist stance that decentres the human subject. In this scenario, students can act as both technical operators and ethical governors, curating knowledge stacks, mitigating AI hallucination, and critically shaping narrative outputs. Structured in four phases (site research, data acquisition, narrative development, and audio-visual synthesis) the module integrates remote sensing, digital modelling, AI literacy, and storytelling into a cohesive workflow. In doing so, it bridges theory and practice, balances digital augmentation with material awareness, and transforms preservation from static documentation into imaginative re-creation. This approach advances a mixed-methods epistemology in architectural education and prepares students for an unpredictable future by cultivating technical fluency, critical reflection, and social responsibility.

Biography:

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Radical Afterlives: AI-Augmented Polyvocality as Architectural Pedagogy

From Photogrammetry to Posthuman Storytelling in the Design Studio

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Keywords:

AI-Augmented Pedagogy; Digital Heritage; Polyvocal Narrative

Abstract

Architectural education stands at a critical juncture, challenged simultaneously by endangered twentieth-century heritage and the rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence. This paper proposes a radical pedagogical model that reframes digital tools not as neutral instruments of representation, but as epistemological agents in the production of architectural knowledge. "Radical Afterlives" presents a module developed through the research Frames of McMahon Hall, which constructs a "digital afterlife" for a contested Brutalist dormitory at the University of Washington. The methodology combines drone-based photogrammetry and 3D modelling with Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) and persona-driven AI storytelling. Quantitative spatial data is treated as an anchor, while curated, ethically governed generative AI operates as a collaborator in a process of contrapuntal co-authorship. The pedagogical innovation lies in its polyvocal narrative framework: five interwoven voices destabilize the Authorized Heritage Discourse and adopt a posthumanist stance that decentres the human subject. In this scenario, students can act as both technical operators and ethical governors, curating knowledge stacks, mitigating AI hallucination, and critically shaping narrative outputs. Structured in four phases (site research, data acquisition, narrative development, and audio-visual synthesis) the module integrates remote sensing, digital modelling, AI literacy, and storytelling into a cohesive workflow. In doing so, it bridges theory and practice, balances digital augmentation with material awareness, and transforms preservation from static documentation into imaginative re-creation. This approach advances a mixed-methods epistemology in architectural education and prepares students for an unpredictable future by cultivating technical fluency, critical reflection, and social responsibility.

Learning Architecture without Access: Virtual Reality as Pedagogical Experiment

Atmosphere, perception and experimental learning in architectural education

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Keywords:
architectural atmospheres, spatial perception, experimental pedagogy, virtual reality in architectural education

Abstract

My proposal is aimed at today's students, for whom static images are becoming less and less interesting, being replaced by short videos through which they can receive — and, in turn, convey — more information about moods, sounds, light, space, place, and social context. Moreover, in the contemporary world, the architect must make themselves understood and provide the client with useful information, so that the client can build a knowledge base that allows them to choose architecture as a cultural act, rather than a formal-aesthetic one. Therefore, the architecture student must be more attuned to current realities and the pragmatism of the contemporary world, rather than creating ideal scenarios and utopian projects.

To ensure that the future architect's engagement with real-world practice incorporates a greater sense of foresight, we propose that architecture students be taught to focus on the details of the building and its context, to learn about the people of a place, to understand its culture and traditions and the changes they have undergone, and to be made aware of how light alters spatial perception — for how long does the type of light for which the space was created exist?

It would be worth exploring how an architecture student's perception of space might evolve if, during theoretical courses, they were provided with a VR headset that would allow them to experience the space described and shown to them in 2D projections by the professor. The courses would become a continuous dialogue about space, thanks to the assimilation of concepts and elements that students internalize and master through virtual tours of buildings or public spaces.

Creating a platform featuring video footage of landmark buildings that captures the concepts highlighted above would represent a huge step forward in understanding spaces and contexts.

Situated at the intersection of experimentation and technological augmentation, this approach frames VR as a pedagogical tool for epistemic access rather than visual substitution. It argues that immersive technologies, when critically employed, can expand architectural education toward a more inclusive, reflective, and embodied understanding of space.

Biography: Andreea-Ioana Calma studied architecture in Bucharest and Reggio Calabria. The subject of her research is the way of manifestation for the concept of critical regionalism in the architectural culture in Romania, after 1989.

A House for 2125 – An Architectural Design Studio Experiment

From a House of the Future towards the Future of Architectural Education

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Keywords: Future Architecture, Narrative Experiment

Biography: All authors are part of FAU Cluj-Napoca's 1st Year Architectural Design Studio, with Dana Opincariu being the head of the discipline. Marius Indrei is currently conducting a Ph.D. exchange at KU Leuven.

Abstract

At Cluj-Napoca's Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, 1st Year Architectural Design Studio, the second semester of the 2024-2025 academic year was a hero's journey . We proposed a complex project, which relied on a role-playing game based on a fictional narrative text (written by Silviu Bors and Dana Opincariu) and a series of hand-made drawings (crafted by Marius Indrei), at the end of which the future architects would create a house for the year 2125. The fictional text and the series of drawings, resembling an illustrated short-story, represented the premise of the exercise, setting the tone for the atmosphere of this context from a distant future. This experiment came as a response to our preoccupation that the development of a house from/for the future represented a difficult challenge in itself, and, consequently, we did not want our students to bear the task of also choreographing the social and cultural fabrics of the imagined scenario, but rather to concentrate their imaginative capacity towards novel architectural objects. The graphic novella sets the temporal and atmospheric characteristics of the fictional environment, by creating a mirror of the Architectural Studio in writing and illustrations. The studio becomes a spaceship, the students become researchers, the academic staff become senior researchers, with the collaborative manner of the story emphasizing the two-way nature of the Architectural Design discipline and the academic staff's focus on contemporary and innovative ways of learning. The proposed article aims to unravel the many layers of this Architectural Studio brief, highlighting both the challenging exercise, as well as its rewarding conclusions on what the future can bring – in regards to both architecture and education.

The Architect in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Prompt Engineer or Curator / Critical Filter?

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, form-finding, form-sampling, prompt engineer, human-in-the-loop, augmentation, critical filter, curator, hybrid

Biography: Ferencz Bakos is a graduate of FAU UTCN Cluj (2006) and holds a Master's degree in Urbanism from UAUIM (2022). He co-founded the architectural practice SQM Architecture and currently leads Meta Morphosis Architecture Studio. Since 2023, he has been teaching architecture at UMFST Târgu Mureș. Since 2024, he is a PhD candidate at FAU Cluj, where his research focuses on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on architectural practice and education.

Abstract

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in architecture signals a paradigm shift in the relationship between design processes, authorship, and tools. This paper investigates how AI is currently adopted, perceived, and applied in both architectural practice and education in Romania, positioning the findings within a broader global context.

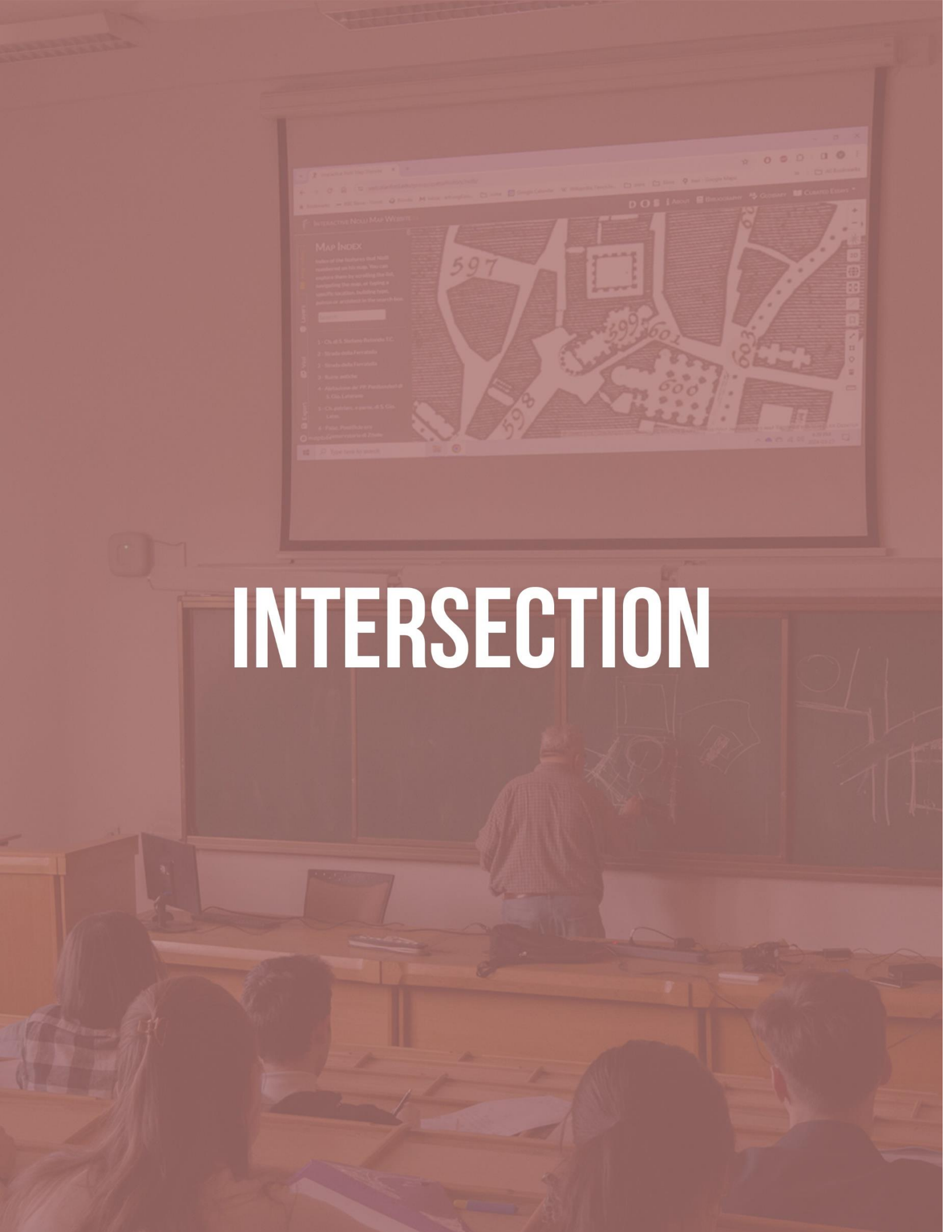
The research aims to map the current state of AI adoption and its impact on design workflows and the evolving role of the architect. It combines theoretical analysis (Leach; Bernstein; Chaillou) with an empirical study based on two surveys targeting architectural offices and the academic environment. These examine usage patterns, perceptions, and gaps in skills and training.

Findings indicate that AI is primarily used experimentally, especially in early design stages such as concept generation and visualization, while remaining limited in later, technical phases. A key issue identified is the gap between rapid technological adoption and the lack of coherent critical, ethical, and educational frameworks.

The paper argues that AI should be understood not as a replacement for human creativity, but as part of an "extended intelligence" system, redefining the architect's role as a critical curator of generative processes. The contribution lies in linking theoretical discourse with empirical data, offering a grounded perspective on how AI is reshaping architectural practice and education.

By situating these findings within ongoing disciplinary debates, the study highlights the need for a more structured integration of AI in both professional workflows and academic curricula, emphasizing the importance of critical literacy, ethical awareness, and methodological clarity in navigating this transition.

Furthermore, the research underscores the necessity of bridging the gap between experimentation and systematic implementation, in order to move from isolated uses of AI toward coherent design methodologies.



INTERSECTION

The Literary City as Pedagogical Instrument:

Literature, Urban History, and Critical Approaches in Architectural Education

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Keywords: Literature, Urban History, Literary Analysis, Architectural Education

Biography: Bolasz Alex-Gabriel is an architect and a doctoral student at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism in Cluj-Napoca. His research interests focus on the representation of architecture and urbanism in literary fiction and on the potential of narrative forms to contribute to a deeper understanding of the development and transformation of the modern city

Abstract

In contemporary architectural education, the need to address historical, social, and epistemic dimensions of urban development calls for expanded methodological tools. This paper proposes literary analysis as a pedagogical approach for studying urban history, advancing the novel as an operative instrument for understanding how cities are shaped, perceived, and contested over time.

The research draws on two contrasting literary frameworks: the realist and naturalist perspective of Émile Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle and the romantic vision articulated in the works of Victor Hugo. Zola's novels, *Le Ventre de Paris*, *La Curée*, and *Au Bonheur des Dames*, document the emergence of the modern city through processes of infrastructural development, consumption, and social control. In contrast, Hugo's writings, particularly *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables*, preserve the atmospheric and experiential qualities of pre-modern urban space, foregrounding memory and spatial continuity disrupted by modernization.

Methodologically, the paper proposes a comparative reading of literary texts alongside urban plans, using narrative as a means to interpret the social consequences of urban development. While urbanism tends to describe spatial transformation, literature reveals its impact on lived experience, perception, and social structures. By confronting textual narratives with planning documents, the study reconstructs the broader societal implications of nineteenth-century urban change.

The paper argues that integrating literary sources into architectural education enables a more nuanced understanding of the city as a socio-spatial construct shaped by both material interventions and cultural narratives, offering an original interdisciplinary framework aligned with contemporary pedagogical challenges.

Revolutionary, reactionary and revivalism.

A brief history of mathematical interference with architectural education in Europe.

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Keywords: architecture education, mathematics, paradigm

Abstract

Relationship between mathematics and architecture goes without saying since the oldest times. When it comes to architecture education, the end of the medieval era was an important shifting point, thus becoming the starting point of the research. As a counter-reaction to the medieval guilds, Italy was the first one to introduce higher education in arts through Academia del Disegno (1563), architectural studies being contained in the curricula of Academia, but not as an independent department or school. As from the second half of the seventeenth century, France was the leading nation regarding the European trends and models both in architecture and architecture education, starting with the inauguration of Architecture Academie in 1671 in Paris. Over the next 200 years, French architectural education was marked by multiple personalities, who, through their courses, generated design models that used mathematics in various ways, such as the use of proportions, different geometric shapes or modules. France is the main focus during this period, but we cannot overlook countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Austria or England which, starting from the French model, began to expand the architectural educational network at a European level. They are joined by Italy which, starting from the second half of the 17th century, restructured and established new schools of architecture.

In order to assess and evaluate those changes in the European architecture education and its relationship with mathematics, the study focuses on the important moments also known as paradigm shifts. Starting with the theories posed by Thomas Khun, Karl Popper and Bruno Latour, where the paradigm is defined as a term to describe the structure of scientific revolutions, Michael Ostwald and Kim Williams (editors of the Nexus Network Journal. Architecture and Mathematics) identified three stages in the evolution of the relationship between mathematics and architecture: the revolutionary – appears with the paradigm change, the reactionary – refines and tests the ideas imposed by the new paradigm, and the revivalism – which intervenes when the paradigm shift is necessary but does not occur, and the change is created artificially by the resurrection of an old one. This paper aims to generate a historical background of architectural education and its relationship with mathematics in Europe, from the end of medieval era until the end of the nineteenth century, using the method of evaluation introduced by Ostwald and Williams.

Biography: Larisa is a practitioner architect in a private office in Cluj-Napoca and finished her architecture studies in 2023 at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning from Cluj-Napoca.

Her interests are linked to mathematical and scientifical approach of architecture.

Living on campus

A discussion on the international collaboration's ability to catalyze change.

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Keywords: 1st year Studio, education, experimental-project

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Adrian Niculaș is a romanian architect, based in Cluj-Napoca, a Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning alumnus.

Laura Patachi is an architect and lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, TUCN.

Abstract

Architecture is a domain about collaboration, interdisciplinarity and a high degree of international openness and diversity. The proposed paper will present the process and the long-term conclusions of a pilot project carried out between the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning of Technical University of Cluj-Napoca and the University of Applied Sciences Windesheim (Department of Built Environment), as an alternative approach to the design studio running in parallel to the conventional first year design studio, in 2024.

At an incipient stage in their architectural education, students were met with the challenge to carry out their first two-person group project in an international setting, with efforts to bridge the cultural gap and manage hybrid work sessions to see the project through.

This research investigates the collaboration and its subsequent effects and impact on the students involved using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data measurement. Surveys, as well as interviews, are carried out on students to determine how a project of such nature is perceived. By complementing quantitative data with deeper insight from qualitative evaluation, a deeper understanding can be gained.

The aim of the article is to analyse the results and identify trends within students' further directions in their architectural education, impacts on self-perception within academia, as well as willingness to take part in other international endeavours. By evaluating the influence of a project carried out in the first year of architecture education through the lenses

Learning through Uncertainty

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Keywords: home, uncertainty, precedent

Abstract

In his 3(33) 33(3) 333 (T)Huis design studio presentation, the Belgian architect Bart Hollanders presented the site plan of the *Hexenhaus*, designed and built by Alison and Peter Smithson between 1982 and 2002. In his words, "the ever-changing character of this particular building by the Smithsons represents the fundamental quality of a home." The second, and final, slide showed a photograph of the two British architects with a black highlight mark drawn across their eyes; next to them, Aldo van Eyck and Hermann Czech could be identified by the name tags placed below their images. "These three architects shall become your friends for this semester!" Bart concluded. The presentation lasted ten minutes.

This article reflects on both the process and the results of the students in this master studio, taught together with Bart at KU Leuven, Belgium. The students were first asked to study the writings and projects of the architects. Afterwards, they were given complete freedom. The purpose of the studio was to work—using almost any tool the students felt comfortable with—and then to reflect, together with the teachers, on what had been created. Each session ended with a single question: "What is next?" Through continuous debates and weekly work, the students were required to address the meaning of home. There was no predefined list of drawings or design models that had to be produced in order to pass the studio; it thus functioned as a radical pedagogical framework, in which learning emerged through uncertainty rather than through predefined objectives.

During difficult moments, we returned to a remark by Denise Scott Brown, who, when asked by one of her students at the AA how one should write about architecture, replied: "It would be better for us, as architects, to first build and afterwards write something about our buildings." (Scott Brown, 2009)

Biography: The author is a Ph.D. student at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, currently conducting a Ph.D. exchange at KU Leuven, Belgium, under the supervision of Thierry Lagrange. He graduated in architecture and urban planning in TU Cluj, with additional studies in Venice and Rome.

Architecture and Photography as Pedagogical Tools for Public Engagement and Cultural Landscape Awareness

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Keywords:
architecture; photography; cultural landscape

Abstract

This paper examines how photography can function as a pedagogical tool that mediates the relationship between architecture and the public, contributing to the development of critical awareness and social responsibility toward cultural heritage. The research focuses on former noble residences and historic parks in the Mureș Valley (Transylvania), many of which are currently abandoned or endangered. Its main objective is to explore how photographic practices can make architectural heritage more accessible and intelligible to a wider audience, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural landscapes shaped by historical transformations and processes of neglect.

The methodology combines field observation, photographic documentation, and interpretative analysis. Within this framework, photography operates not only as a recording device but also as a critical medium that reveals spatial, historical, and social layers often overlooked. By translating complex architectural realities into visual narratives, it enables a more direct and intuitive engagement with heritage. The paper argues that such practices constitute a form of informal and interdisciplinary pedagogy, situated at the intersection of architecture, visual studies, and heritage research. It contributes to current debates on architectural education by demonstrating how visual methods can expand the disciplinary field and strengthen the connection between architectural knowledge and society. By reframing photography as a pedagogical interface between architecture and society, the paper advocates for more inclusive and publicly engaged forms of architectural knowledge.

Interdisciplinary Approaches in Contemporary Heritage Conservation Training in Sopron

Innovative Educational Models for the Sustainable Preservation of Built Heritage

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Keywords:
interdisciplinary, education, heritage, sustainability

Abstract

In my paper, I intend to provide insight into the interdisciplinary, practical training methods at the University of Sopron. At the Institute of Creative Industries (within the Faculty of Wood Engineering and Creative Industries), students of architecture, industrial design, graphic design, media arts, and wood engineering study together.

The theoretical courses I teach - History of Architecture and Complex Monument Design - are complemented by practical training. During these sessions, architecture, industrial design, and wood engineering students collaborate to perform surveys of Baroque doors in Sopron.

While architecture students record the general appearance of a door, industrial design students model the ironwork and locks, and wood engineering students reconstruct the structural buildup of the joinery. Thus, within the framework of a semester-long project, students examine the same protected historical asset from various perspectives and present their results collectively at the end of the term.

Throughout their studies, architecture students survey heritage doors, facades, and roof structures. As a design task, they create plans for small public buildings on vacant lots (infill sites) within the historical urban fabric, placing a strong emphasis on the question of architectural integration. Upon defending their theses, they collaborate with media arts students to produce a 3-5 minute film. Consequently, during their studies, they have the opportunity to become familiar with the practices of various disciplines and gain experience in interdisciplinary cooperation and the implementation of joint projects.

The objective of this methodology is to ensure that students not only deepen their expertise in their own fields but also become capable of engaging in dialogue across various disciplines. This prepares them for project-based collaboration, which is essential in contemporary heritage conservation practice.

Biography: I was born in Cluj-Napoca; I hold a master's degree in architecture from the University of Pécs and a 2015 summa cum laude DLA. Since 2010, I've been Sopron's inner-city Monument Protection Inspector. Since 2022, I have also served as an Associate Professor at the University of Sopron.

POST-INDUSTRIAL CONTEXTS AS SITES OF LEARNING:

The Case of Anina

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Keywords:
architectural learning, urban context, integration

Abstract

Architectural education influences professional development through engagement with territories shaped by long-term transformation. In post-industrial contexts, where systems of production have receded, the built environment continues to reflect processes of adaptation and reconfiguration. This condition is exemplified by Anina, a former coal-mining town in Romania, where industrial heritage and collective memory remain embedded in the spatial and socio-economic structure.

The paper develops a contextual analysis based on historical data and on-site observation, through which the area is understood as a support for learning. In this framework, *Integration* is articulated as the link between theoretical reflection and practical applicability. Initiatives such as "*Mines of Ideas Anina*", developed over several years under the coordination of the architects Oana Țiganea and Marius Barbieri, can be seen as field-based actions. They demonstrate how direct engagement with the site can transform contextual knowledge into an operational basis for intervention, connecting diagnosis to proposal. At the same time, the process operates through Intersection, incorporating perspectives from social sciences, environmental studies and other practices. These inputs expand the disciplinary scope of architectural education and enable a more comprehensive understanding of post-industrial conditions. Within this context, uncertainty and incompleteness are approached as deliberate pedagogical tools, as they establish working conditions that require iterative thinking, hypothesis testing and adaptive strategies, contributing to the formation of architects capable of acting in diverse environments.

In relation to the conference theme, the paper argues that contexts such as Anina supported by observed practices, function as sites of transdisciplinary learning, where *Integration* and *Intersection* actively shape architectural education.

Biography: Anca-Andreia Fati is a PhD student at the Doctoral School of Architecture in Cluj-Napoca. Her research examines post-industrial urban contexts from the Banat region, focusing on architectural transformation and spatial processes in the town of Anina – a place where built heritage shaped the local identity.