
TRANSHISTORICAL PEDAGOGIES

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The Barcelona School of Architecture is honoured to host the 2025 EAAE Annual Conference, an event that coincides with the 150th anniversary of the school's foundation. This milestone provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the pedagogies of European architecture schools and their role in shaping the architects of tomorrow.

As we navigate the complexities of contemporary architecture, four key themes emerge as guiding principles for a more conscious and responsive practice. Architecture as Synthesis challenges us to reconnect with fundamental architectural principles while adapting to an ever-evolving world. Learning from Archives explores how historical records shape our understanding of architecture, offering fresh interpretations of the discipline's past, present, and future. No Demolish urges us to reconsider the environmental and social costs of construction, advocating for sustainable, regenerative practices that prioritise reuse over destruction. Finally, Skills and Crafts reaffirms the importance of slow, hands-on learning, countering the mechanised efficiency of contemporary production with a renewed focus on human-centred design. Together, these perspectives encourage a critical reassessment of how we teach, build, and create in the 21st century.

Although it may seem distant, the Roman architect Vitruvius posed two fundamental questions that continue to resonate today: What is architecture? and What should architects know? These questions remain central to architectural education, underscoring the need for a curriculum that embraces complexity rather than simplifying it. Architecture schools must equip students with a multi-layered education that connects disciplines, scales, and temporalities, fostering a broad and critical perspective. Our graduates will not only become

skilled professionals but also active contributors to the ongoing narrative of architecture – a discipline in constant transformation.

Professors and students from architecture schools across Europe were invited to present their pedagogical experiences. The contributions in this Book of Abstracts contextualize a rich diversity of methods and approaches in architectural education, while also fostering critical reflection on how academic practice can engage with the pressing challenges faced by contemporary societies.

As part of this event, the celebration of the conference will highlight ETSAB's rich educational heritage through a curated collection of original documents that exemplify its long-standing tradition. The archive includes materials from the school's teaching activities, featuring graduation projects dating back to 1875. Additionally, it preserves projects from earlier institutions that trained master builders and surveyors between 1850 and 1872, even before ETSAB's official foundation.

The Arxiu EtsaB·Càtedra Gaudí serves as a specialised documentary archive, housing a vast array of materials, including photographs, objects, maps, models, and original drawings. Beyond its role as a repository, it functions as a dedicated research unit focused on the study of 19th- and 20th-century architecture, offering valuable insights into the evolution of architectural thought and practice.

By engaging with historical knowledge while embracing contemporary challenges, this conference invites us to rethink the future of architectural education, ensuring that it remains a dynamic and transformative force in shaping the built environment.

SESSION 1

Learning from archives

Over the last two centuries, architecture schools have produced a diverse range of physical and digital materials, formats and techniques that constitute a veritable transhistorical archaeology of media. The Barcelona School of Architecture Archive has collected over 100,000 registered items since it was created in 1817: drawings, photographs, transcripts, models, audiovisuals and plaster casts by teachers, from Antoni Celles to Rafael Moneo, and the exercises of architecture students such as Antoni Gaudí and Enric Miralles. All are subjects of exchange networks with European and American Schools that suggest far-reaching interpretations for the future.

If changes in archival research are influencing the production of architectural history, they also offer a way to re-witness the past. The session will address these issues in an attempt to transcend historical boundaries in teaching and explore nonlinear temporalities. How does the notion of architecture differ from those expounded in other periods? Where is the limit between analogue and digital? Do digital techniques function as evidence of new historical narratives?

SESSION 2

It's time!

Architecture as synthesis

The current paradigm shift, which is characteristic of the cyclical culture of the collapse of capitalism, has resulted in the relegation of architectural synthesis to the background. It is frequently asserted that the current educational system is inadequately preparing students to navigate the complexities of the 21st century. Has this been the first occasion on which architects have perceived a loss of connection with the prevailing 'Zeitgeist', the advances of technology or the crucial demands of society?

As a dynamic and evolving discipline, architecture should awaken as a crucible where fundamentals are reforged. It is therefore incumbent upon us to address the challenges inherent in reconciling the traditions and inertia of architectural schools with the complexity of the present.

It is a matter of survival and transformation, tackling how architecture could embody a new existential anthem to life. As the renowned philosopher Rüdiger Safranski posited, every aspect of our earthly existence, including inhabiting, should be perceived as unique.

TITLE

The Shifting Logic of Computational Design Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Computational design has reshaped architectural education over the past five decades, yet its current trajectory reveals a conceptual drift. Early experiments, from the spatial analytics of Warntz (1965) to Negroponte's vision of the Architecture Machine (1970), treated computation as a means to model complexity and support human-environment interaction. These initiatives engaged systems thinking, anticipating today's imperative for adaptive, ethical, and context-responsive design approaches (Bertalanffy 1969; Meadows 2008).

This paper argues that the pedagogical crisis facing computational design is not primarily technological but epistemological. While recent curricula emphasize scripting, automation, and parametric formalism, they often neglect deeper questions of agency, scale, and systems integration (Cantrell and Mekies 2018). Drawing from both archival analysis and contemporary teaching experiments, the paper traces a shift from cybernetic and ecological paradigms toward reductive tool-based training, and calls for a renewed synthesis that reconnects design methods with critical thinking and spatial reasoning.

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computational design pedagogy; architectural synthesis; systems thinking; critical spatial reasoning; design education futures

Landscape architecture's legacy of geospatial layering and dynamic modeling (McHarg 1971) offers valuable but underutilized strategies for architecture education. Reintegrating these with computational tools can open pathways for design to operate as a reflexive system, capable of engaging climate, society, and technology not as abstract data points but as co-evolving conditions.

This contribution outlines a framework for rethinking computational pedagogy as a field of synthesis. It advocates for education that prepares architects to shape the future through systems awareness, rather than just operate within existing ones.

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Meadows, Donella H. *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*. Edited by Diana Wright. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008.

Negroponte, Nicholas. *The Architecture Machine: Toward a More Human Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970.

Warntz, William. *Macrogeography and Income Fronts*. Philadelphia: Regional Science Research Institute, 1965.

SESSION 3

No demolish

Under pressure from profit-driven economies, global construction practices are expanding relentlessly, impacting the environment, water systems, communities and countless ecosystems. Moving towards a more sustainable future requires a shift from extraction to regeneration, relying on what already exists. Rather than demolish and rebuild, we can focus on building less, reusing what's here, inhabiting it in new ways and nurturing its value.

What if we stopped building by destroying and opened up new possibilities? From redistributing existing buildings and rethinking the nature of value creation, to implementing anti-extractive policies, embracing structural change, updating educational frameworks and dismantling exploitative industrial norms. Such shifts point to an overhaul in the way we design and build.

SESSION 4

Skills and crafts

Critical thinking and design processes applied to architecture, cities and landscapes require a slow pace. True understanding in these fields requires depth of learning and sedimentation. In a society that values quick results and instant gratification, this commitment to a more deliberate process is radical, even subversive.

Artisanship is emerging as a critical antidote to the dehumanizing effects of artificial intelligence and mechanised learning. The artisan's approach – one that values hands-on skill, intimate material knowledge and a slower, more immersive process – is an implicit critique of the 'faster, cheaper' ethos that defines much of contemporary design and production. A work that bears the imprint of human labour, care and individuality. It's an act of defiance against the encroaching standardisation and algorithmic thinking that is stripping architecture of its humanity.