

Relationships

The editorial activity of the magazine has sought, since its inception in 2011, to collect those contributions of greatest interest to society made from the field of architecture. The preparation of the contents has not always been based on a specific and closed theme; rather, it has been organized around a surrounding set of interests that, when confronted, create an emergent coherence, a script without a predetermined ending, and whose ideology arises from the relationships between different texts and projects. In this issue 27, this shared perspective unfolds specifically in the so-called territory of research, a space continuously questioned, in which we present some of its many manifestations.

The “contra” section reflects the theoretical perspective of the renowned critic William Curtis through his masterclass at the ETSAB, where the architectural work, as the repository of the discipline’s knowledge, serves as the basis for tracing multiple relationships and reflections around the masters of the modern movement and their resonances in contemporary times. The reevaluation of Mies’s figure highlights the spiritualization of the innovative technology of the time that, in a sort of ebb and flow, dialogues with the firm position expressed in an extensive interview with the Catalan architect Jordi Badia, in favor of craftsmanship, the value of pre-existence, and emotion. However, a deep reading of both texts allows for the analysis of this supposed opposition, even supported by the contrasting views of figures like Alejandro de la Sota, although questioned by multiple remarks, such as Curtis’s quote attributed to Valery, where certainty coexists with its opposite: “the role of architecture is to lie to tell the truth.”

Badia calls on universities to undertake research more committed to the discipline and local culture, aligning with some of the contributions from the “Research by Design” event led by Daniel García-Escudero and Berta Bardí-Milà. After establishing its objectives and with the support of texts like that of Bruce Archer, three examples are presented, developed in universities of the English-speaking world: at London Metropolitan University, with Pau Bajet’s research on time as a project material in the South of Barcelona; at the Royal College of Art, also in London, with Raül Avilla-Royo’s interpretation of the architect as facilitator in his thesis “Community Architecture Barcelona”; or finally, at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, with the advocacy of the client’s figure in the project-based research of the well-known professional practice of Eva Prats. The contribution of four professors from the ETSAB—Marta Domènech, David López, Ignacio López, and Nuria Arredondo—completes this role of research as a project, in this case at the urban and even historical scale, through Siza’s operation in the 1980s IBA, inscribed in the urban processes of Berlin’s stitching and at the same time catalyzing its transformation.

The passage of time is one of the main themes of Elisabet Quintana and Javier Pérez Igualada’s work on the garden of the painter José Benlliure’s house in Valencia, a surprising retreat where the project blends with multidisciplinary research. Behind this unpublished work developed at the ETSAB are reflections that transcend the discovery itself, not only in the consideration of time as a project material but also in the impact that climate change has on all scales—from this small garden to the surrounding territory: a river recovered after a tragedy tragically repeated during the October 2024 DANA flooding, which was likely exacerbated by an incomplete territorial operation, a product of the strictly infrastructural vision of the 1960s.

The multiple relationships between the different texts lead us to the research of Eduard Gascón Alvarez, recently presented at MIT, where he applies Mies’s attitude to the environmental crisis. His thesis “Cool with Less,” where he investigates three environmental project mechanisms, also refers to the substitution of technology with knowledge, the unifying role of geometry as form and efficiency, and the updating of traditional passive systems through a profound and realistic investigation, distanced from some dogmas of decarbonization.

All of this contributes to improving our living environments, perhaps the ultimate goal and best justification for research in any discipline. Professor Dario Costi, from the University of Parma, solidifies this conviction in a profound and cultured text that updates some of the parameters of urban regeneration. The new urban and territorial project establishes multiple relationships also between its voids, which acquire new meanings in light of parameters such as renaturalization, digitalization, or social regeneration, awaiting a new type of project, perhaps another language.

The enigma of its resolution, supported by research of multiple relationships such as those revealed in this issue, may lead to reversing the dynamics initiated since the mid-20th century and sketching responses with a more extensive and territorial regenerative vision to the question posed in the popular song by Celentano in 1966, *E quella casa in mezzo al verde ormai/ Dove sarà?*

Summary

An interview with Jordi Badia

Carlos Ferrater, Alberto Peñín
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The interview takes place during the first days after the return of the summer of 2024 in the office of Carlos Ferrater in Barcelona. Around his round table and surrounded by drawings, a three-way conversation begins with Jordi Badia, architect, founder of BAAS and professor at ETSAB. The dialogue runs through his origins, his interests, concerns and his commitment to his time, to his profession and to the university.

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The historic garden in a contemporary context of climate crisis Garden of the Benlliure House-Museum in Valencia

Elisabet Quintana Seguí, Javier Pérez Igualada
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The study of the historic garden of the Casa-Museo Benlliure in Valencia raises important questions about its conservation in the current context of climate crisis. This garden, dating back to the late 19th century and belonging to a family of artists, has undergone various transformations over the years. The research highlights the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach that considers the garden’s cultural, architectural, and natural aspects, as well as changes in its use from a private to a public space. The Florence Charter, a key document for the protection of historic gardens since 1981, emphasizes the need to preserve both the material and immaterial elements of these spaces. However, in recent decades, there has been debate about the urgency of updating its principles to address contemporary challenges such as climate change and social transformation. The research emphasizes the need for sustainable strategies that respond to the environmental crisis and preserve the garden’s dynamic authenticity, where natural elements evolve. It also proposes restoring the garden’s original features, such as the traditional irrigation system and the variety of species, to improve its capacity to function as an urban climate refuge. In this way, historic gardens, in addition to being testimonies of the past, can play a crucial role in urban green infrastructure, helping to mitigate the effects of global warming and offering spaces of well-being for the community.

Key words: Historic garden; Casa-Museo Benlliure; Florence Charter; Landscape Architecture; Climate crisis; Green infrastructure.

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Álvaro Siza in divided Berlin Bonjour Tristesse on the margins (1982-1988)

Marta Domènech Rodríguez, David López López,
Nuria Arredondo Vergara, Ignacio López Alonso
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This article examines the involvement of Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza in the reconstruction of West Berlin, specifically in the project of the Bonjour Tristesse block in the Kreuzberg neighborhood between 1982 and 1988. The study investigates the urban and social context of the time, marked by post-war tensions and neighborhood mobilizations, which influenced the direction of the International Building Exhibition IBA ‘84. It highlights how Siza had to mediate between various political and economic forces while addressing the challenges of maintaining the identity and social cohesion of the area. The study methodology includes a documentary analysis of the projects and correspondence between the stakeholders involved. The conclusions underline the relevance of Siza’s work, both for his sensitive approach to the urban environment and his ability to adapt to the project’s complexities without losing an architectural strategy.

Key words: Álvaro Siza; Berlin; Bonjour Tristesse; Block 121; IBA ‘84.

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Cooling with less Construction systems for heat-resilient and low-environmental-impact architecture

Eduardo Gascón Álvarez
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This text is a summary of the doctoral thesis presented on September 9, 2024 for the Building Technology doctoral program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The thesis, supervised by professors Caitlin Mueller and Leslie Norford, is the result of five years of research focused on the design of construction elements that integrate passive cooling strategies such as thermoclay blocks with high thermal inertia, radiant concrete slabs and integrated heat sinks. The results obtained demonstrate how, through geometry and design, it is possible to improve the thermal behavior of these components using the least possible material, thus improving the heat resilience of buildings while mitigating their environmental impact.

Key words: resilience; environmental impact; construction systems.

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Research by Design Reflections on architectural research

Daniel García-Escudero, Berta Bardí-Milà
Texts by Pau Bajet, Raül Avilla-Royo and Eva Prats
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The aim of this paper is to concisely contextualize the Research by Design (RbD) methodology and its impact on architectural research and academic training. RbD has proven to be a relevant methodology in contemporary architectural programs, as it links theory and practice within an interdisciplinary research framework. This approach is crucial in addressing the challenges of the 21st century, as it enables creative processes to focus not only on design but also on knowledge generation. The text succinctly references the theoretical contributions of authors such as Christopher Frayling, Leonard Bruce Archer, and Jeremy Till, whose perspectives are essential to understanding the relationship between design, creativity, and research practices. The methodology employed includes a brief critical review of these key texts, allowing for the positioning of RbD’s relevance in both university education and professional practice. The conclusions highlight that RbD coherently integrates theory and practice, fostering rigorous and creative research that enhances both student learning and professional practice. Ultimately, RbD is a key tool that drives innovation in both academic and professional environments.

Key words: interdisciplinary methodology; architectural education; creative process; professional innovation.

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Enigma of urban regeneration

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What priorities should be given to Urban Regeneration? Shifting our gaze on the city from full to empty means identifying a new and unprecedented morphology of places that can become a fundamental network of relationships where urban communities can coagulate again. In the season of regeneration, renaturation and application of digital innovation, the new tasks of the urban project must start from here, from the identification of a new system of public spaces around which to create the city of people 4.0. Architecture, experimenting with a new language consistent with the times we are living in, will be able to interpret this unprecedented mandate.

Key words: urban regeneration; renaturation; digital innovation.

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