

(the) **CURE** International Conference



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

Converging Viewpoints.

Holding Complexity in Architecture and Design Cultures.



Call for Abstracts



introduction

Cure carries more than one meaning. In its medical sense, it is the act of healing — restoring what has been broken or diminished. In its Latin root, cura, it is care: attention, the deliberate act of tending to something or someone. In its architectural and curatorial register, it is the act of selection and composition: giving coherent form to what was scattered.

This conference takes all three meanings seriously and refuses to choose among them.

We find ourselves in a historical moment defined by simultaneity: environmental emergency and technological acceleration, the fragility of cultural memory and the urgency of spatial justice, the expanding capacity of digital tools and the deepening need for human care. These are not separate crises and they demand a strong dialogue among disciplines. They are facets of a single, extraordinarily complex condition — one that architecture and design cultures are uniquely positioned to address, provided they are willing to hold that complexity rather than resolve it prematurely.

The conference proposes a convergent gaze: a way of looking that overcomes partition finding a common focus. Architecture, urban planning, design, ecology, technology and social science are not adjacent fields speaking different languages. They are different registers of a single act of care directed at the built, natural and social environments we share. Cure names both the diagnosis and the method.

The conference begins from the conviction that something generative is already underway. Across European territories, within historic city centres and peripheral landscapes, in laboratories and community workshops, practices of care are emerging that integrate environmental sustainability with social inclusion, technological intelligence with cultural memory, formal innovation with the right to inhabit. The challenge is to make these practices visible, legible and transferable.

THE CURE invites contributions that explore how architecture and design cultures can act as instruments of convergence — not by eliminating difference, but by creating conditions in which different kinds of knowledge can work together toward conceivable, livable, equitable futures.



introduction introduction

Scope and structure

The three tracks of the conference are conceived not as silos but as entry points into a shared field of inquiry. Authors are invited to situate their work within one track while acknowledging the resonances across all three.

Following the conference, proceedings will be published as an open-access edited volume, assembling a record of practices, methods and reflections that can inform future work across disciplines and geographies.



Abstracts Deadline July 3rd 2026



track 1

cura technica



Cura Technica_The Healing Interface

Technologies as instruments of convergence.

Technological interfaces are no longer auxiliary to architectural and urban practice: they are reshaping how the built environment is conceived, analyzed, built, managed and inhabited. Artificial intelligence, parametric design, digital twins, immersive environments, spatial data platforms and machine learning are not merely accelerating existing methods, they are opening questions about the nature of knowledge, authorship and responsibility in spatial disciplines. By considering technology as a broad ecosystem of tools, systems, materials, and practices, the track explores its capacity to foster integration across design, engineering, construction, conservation, governance, and everyday life.

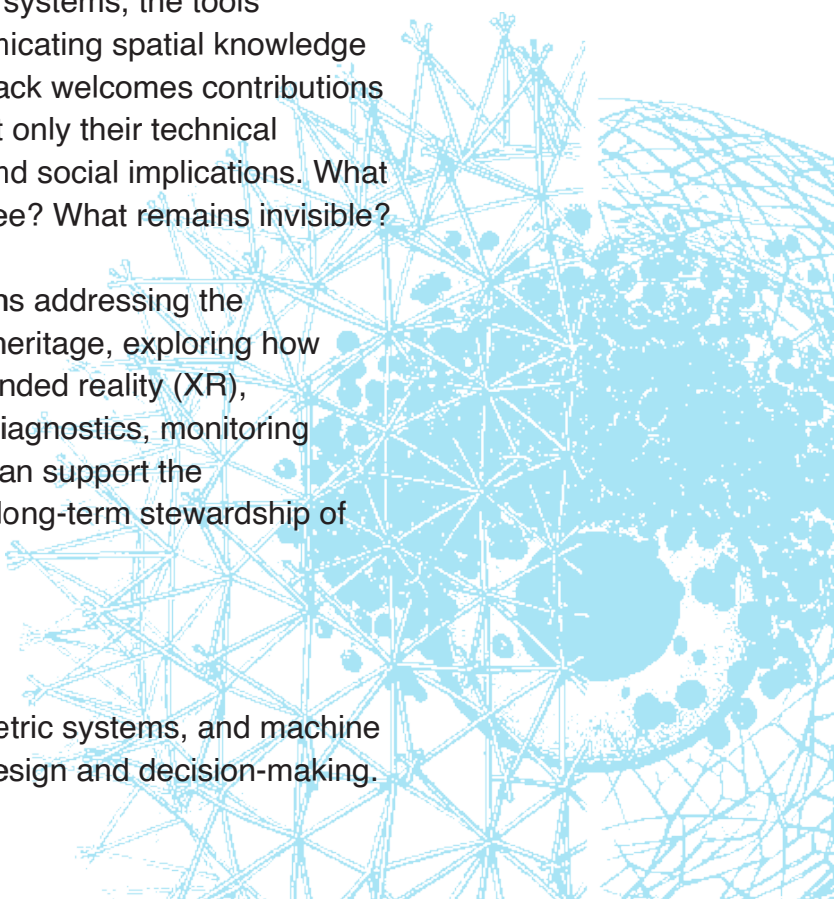
Technologies for knowledge and representation

Digitalization has transformed the way we know and document the built and natural environment. From photogrammetric survey to laser scanning, from BIM to geographic information systems, the tools available for recording, analyzing and communicating spatial knowledge have multiplied in range and precision. This track welcomes contributions that reflect critically on these technologies, not only their technical capacities but their epistemological, cultural and social implications. What do different technological lenses allow us to see? What remains invisible?

Particular attention will be given to contributions addressing the relationship between technology and cultural heritage, exploring how digital documentation, 3D reconstruction, extended reality (XR), advanced conservation techniques, material diagnostics, monitoring systems, and territorial knowledge platforms can support the preservation, interpretation, accessibility, and long-term stewardship of heritage assets.

AI, automation, and design practice

Generative AI, large language models, parametric systems, and machine learning are becoming active participants in design and decision-making.



track 1

cura technica

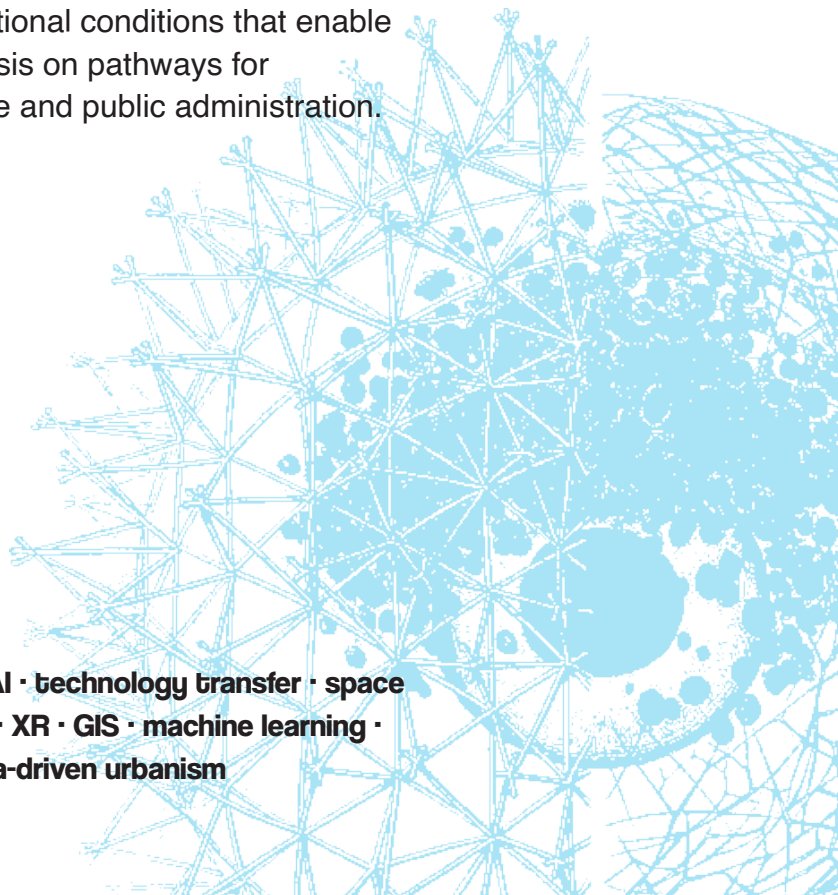
This strand explores how these systems reshape creativity, authorship, responsibility, and the framing of design problems. We welcome critical investigations that treat AI as an epistemological actor, rather than a neutral tool. Submissions may examine generative design workflows, algorithmic and parametric approaches, city digital twins as governance instruments, or AI in simulation and scenario planning. Across contributions, the central question is: whose interests do these algorithms serve, and who is excluded?

Energy transition, environmental governance, and technology transfer

Digital technologies are increasingly central to the governance of energy systems and management of the built environment at multiple scales, from building energy performance to district-level metabolic monitoring. This strand welcomes research and projects that explore how digital strategies can support the transition to energy-efficient, climate-resilient and ecologically responsible environments.

Topics include monitoring and control systems, integrated operation and maintenance strategies, environmental technologies, circular resource management, and systemic approaches that connect design, construction, and governance. We also encourage work addressing the institutional, political, economic, and organizational conditions that enable or inhibit technology adoption, with an emphasis on pathways for transferring research into professional practice and public administration.

**digital surveying · city digital twin · generative AI · technology transfer · space
syntax analysis · circular resource management · XR · GIS · machine learning ·
BIM · parametric design · energy transition · data-driven urbanism**



track 2

cura memoriae



Cura Memoriae_Tending What Remains

Cultural heritage as living practice

Heritage is not a static deposit to be preserved in isolation. It is a living field that demands continuous acts of care, reinterpretation and reactivation. This track explores the convergence of conservation, community, narrative and technology in keeping memory productive. It asks how heritage can become a resource for future-making rather than a boundary around the past. And it insists that heritage practices are never neutral: they encode values, reproduce hierarchies, and include or exclude.

Historical-critical analysis and the ethics of conservation


The discourse of conservation has evolved substantially since Ruskin identified the building as a document of civilisation irreplaceable in any facsimile. This track welcomes contributions that examine the theoretical and methodological foundations of conservation.

Particular attention will be given to contributions that address vernacular buildings and vernacular knowledge: the architectures of ordinary life that are rarely protected by formal heritage instruments but that carry dense cultural identity and ecological intelligence. How do we tend to what has never been officially recognised as worthy of tending?

Post-war architecture and the politics of memory

The built heritage of the twentieth century presents distinctive challenges. Post-war architecture, now frequently in physical and institutional decay, poses questions about how we evaluate significance, manage transformation and negotiate between preservation and adaptation. This track invites contributions that examine specific cases of post-war heritage in Europe, exploring the historiographic, political and design dimensions of their conservation or transformation.

Atlases, mappings and comparative surveys of heritage at risk offer methodological models for addressing these questions at scale.



track 2

cura memoriae

Contributions that develop or critically evaluate such instruments, whether in print or digital form, are especially welcome.

Gender planning, spatial equity and the right to inhabit

Heritage and memory are not only about buildings. They are about whom has inhabited space. The gender dimensions of the built environment, from the design of domestic space to the governance of public space, constitute a critical lens for heritage practice.

This track welcomes contributions that bring together gender-sensitive planning, sociospatial analysis and heritage research: exploring how policies and practices for urban and territorial transformation can address the legacies of exclusion encoded in the built environment. From participatory planning approaches in historic centres to the regeneration of marginal and rural areas, the question of who benefits from heritage investment must be held centrally. Contributions engaging with intersectional justice, walkability and the everyday experience of public space are especially encouraged.

cultural identity · vernacular buildings · conservation · post-war architecture · archival research · historical-critical analysis · memory · Ruskin · museology, atlases · gender planning · spatial equity · gender-sensitive planning · territorial development · walkability · historic centres · public spaces · rural areas



track 3

cura vitae



Cura Vitae_Space That Heals

Health and wellbeing as a design brief for every scale

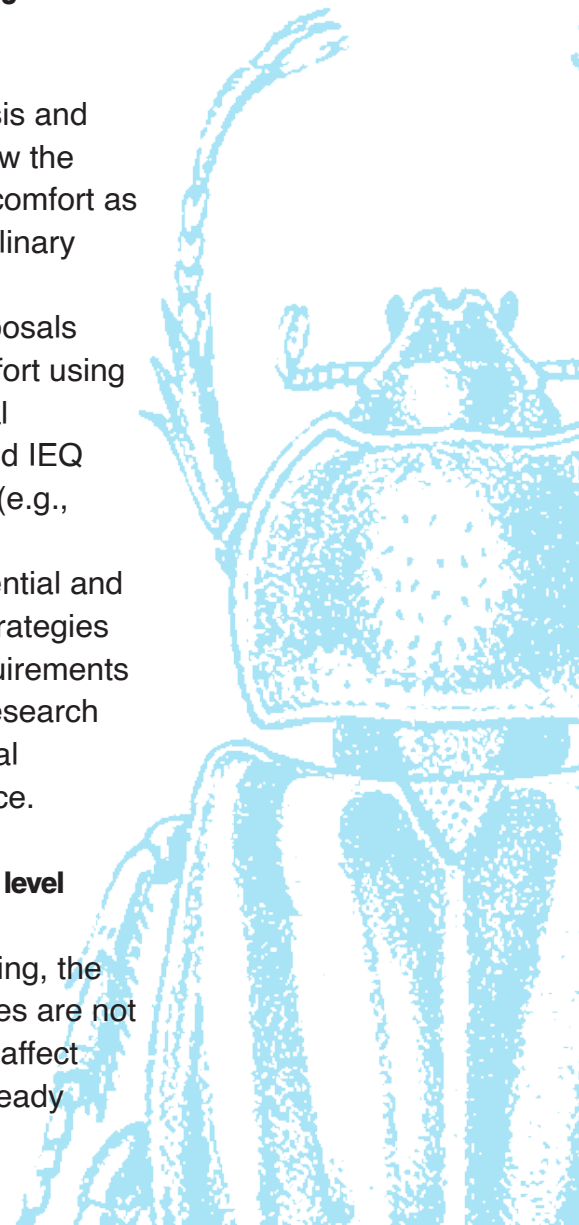
This track treats wellbeing not as a niche concern, but as the ground of spatial practice: the condition that every act of design either supports or undermines. From the quality of light to the availability of green space in a dense urban neighbourhood, from the acoustics of a school to the thermal resilience of a city under climate stress: every spatial decision is a decision about health.

The relationship between space, body and health: an interdisciplinary perspective

Neuroarchitecture, environmental psychology, perceptual analysis and sensory urbanism have opened new paths for understanding how the built environment acts on humans. This strand aims to reframe comfort as an embodied, affective phenomenon and to stimulate interdisciplinary research and design that place human well-being at the core of environmental and architectural decision-making. We invite proposals that: investigate multisensory and embodied dimensions of comfort using mixed methods (physiological measures, self-report, behavioural observation, perceptual analysis); explore how spatial design and IEQ influence performance, satisfaction, and health across contexts (e.g., offices, hospitals, schools, public spaces); critically assess the effectiveness of certifications and standards in capturing experiential and affective aspects of well-being; propose design or operational strategies that integrate emotional and cognitive needs with functional requirements to promote well-being; present interdisciplinary frameworks or research programs that bridge neuroscience, psychology, and architectural practice to generate testable hypotheses and actionable guidance.

Climate adaptation and mitigation strategies at urban and regional level

The climate crisis is a health crisis. Heat stress, air quality, flooding, the erosion of biodiversity and the degradation of urban microclimates are not abstract environmental problems. They are lived conditions that affect bodies differentially, with the greatest burden falling on those already



track 3

cura vitae

most vulnerable. Architecture and urban planning have a central role to play in climate adaptation and mitigation: from the design of thermally resilient buildings to the restructuring of urban morphology in ways that moderate temperature, manage water and support ecological function.

This track invites contributions that examine climate design strategies at multiple scales, not with the goal of technical optimisation alone, but the design of environments where adaptation and wellbeing are genuinely inseparable.

The project as a tool for reconnecting the natural and built environments

The reintroduction of ecological processes, living systems and natural cycles into built and degraded environments is possibly one of the most promising design frontiers of our time. This track welcomes contributions that explore specific projects or methodologies through which architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning are working to restore a productive dialogue between the natural and the heavily man-made: blue-green infrastructure, urban forestry, ecological corridors, regenerative landscapes, climate adaptation parks. Contributions that reflect on the governance, participation and policy dimensions of such projects, as well as their formal and spatial dimensions, are especially valued.

urban health · comfort and wellbeing · hospital spaces · thermal resilience · urban lighting · perceptual analysis · neuroarchitecture · healing spaces · climate adaptation · urban microclimates · climate design · zero net land take · Nature-Based Solutions · hydrogeological balance · biophilic design.



submission submission

Eligible Participants

Submissions are welcome from PhD students, architects, designers, engineers, urbanists, planners, geographers, historians, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists and all researchers and professionals interested in the themes of the conference.

Submission Procedure

Contributions will be submitted via email: thecure@unibo.it

All the contributions needs to be written in English, and submitted in both PDF and word format.

Conference oral presentation may be delivered both in Italian and in English, prior communication.

There are no conference fees.

Initial submission of the abstract:

Authors are invited to submit their abstract in a blind version, without names and affiliations, by email.

The subject line of the email should read: **Abstract Submission_ THECURE- Abstract.**

The attached file should be named: **TrackN_ShortTitle_ THECURE** (replacing N with the track number, 1 to 3).

Abstracts should include the following elements:

- Title of the contribution
- Conference track to which the proposal is addressed (Track 01, 02 or 03)
- Abstract of 3,000–5,000 characters and 3–5 keywords
- A selected list of bibliographic references in APA style

When submitting their paper, authors must indicate whether they are willing to attend the conference in person and whether they wish to have the full paper or just the abstract published

First paper submission:

Once the abstract has been accepted, authors will be invited to



submission submission

submit the full paper by **5 October**, blind version, without names or affiliations.

Final submission:

Following final acceptance, and based on the reviewers' suggestions, authors re-upload the abstract file and the full paper file, including names and affiliations.

Final extension of the full text of the paper must not exceed 30.000 characters (including spaces). For each contribution is requested a minimum of one and a maximum of five images (pictures, drawings or diagrams).

Biographical details for each author must be also provided in a separate document, including:

- First name and surname of all authors.
- Affiliation, email address and field of study.
- A brief biography of no more than 100 words.
- Name of the corresponding author.



review and selection

Proposed abstracts will be evaluated through a double-blind peer-review process conducted by the Conference Organising Committee.

The evaluation will be based on originality, scientific quality, and relevance to the conference's themes and topics.

Notifications of abstract acceptance will be sent by **27 July**, following the deadline for submissions.

All selected authors will be required to submit their full paper by **5 October** at the latest. Full papers will undergo a double-blind peer review process by the Conference Scientific Committee, and feedback will be sent by **26 October**.

Following selection, authors will be informed of the editorial guidelines to be followed for the final version of the paper.

Authors of selected full papers will be invited to present their work at the International Conference on **15 December 2026**.

publication

Following the conference, the proceedings will be published as an open-access edited volume, making all selected contributions freely available, citable and reusable by the research community, in Unibo AMSActa, the institutional open access repository.



organizing committee

The Organising Committee is composed of the members of the XL PhD Cycle in Architecture and Design Cultures.

For more information:

<https://phd.unibo.it/architettura/it/persone/dottorandi>

scientific committee

The Scientific Committee is composed of the members of the Academic Board of the PhD Programme in Architecture and Design Culture, Department of Architecture, Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna.

For more information: <https://phd.unibo.it/architettura/en/people>

technica



memoriae



For updates and more details on deadlines, please refer to the website of the conference at:

<https://eventi.unibo.it/the-cure-phd-architecture-conference-bologna-2026>

For all your questions and requests, please contact: thecure@unibo.it

vitae

