Envisioning Transitions

Bodies, buildings, and boundaries

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA

Call for abstracts
Deadline
22nd May 2022

Conference
16th December 2022

eventi.unibo.it/transitions

"Transition" is the dynamic process of changing state, going beyond, crossing over, and passing from one point to the next. The signification of the word is close to that of evolution, modification, mutation, and transformation, all of which are confined into a strictly restricted timeframe. Etymologically, "transitions" can be nothing else than temporary: they appear silently, burst, violently establish, and gradually disappear into reality. In their blinding momentariness, "transitions" bear with them the positive undertone of change and renewal, along with the hopefulness of that which is unknown.

If the term "transition" recurs regularly in the contemporary vocabulary of architecture and design cultures, this repetition reveals a period characterized by overlapping and sequential changes. The word is without a doubt overused, but not without reason. Indeed, we find ourselves in an unusually extended period of consecutive "transitions", overwhelmingly undefined in temporality and ambitions. As we are witnessing societies go through stark demographic, political, economic, and cultural changes, the intersecting problematics (e.g., ecological, digital, pandemic, etc.) form a rather complex topography of change, negatively charged by the instability of dilated time and the uncertainty of undefined destination.

"Transitions" are, in fact, inevitable. However, the contemporary situation of prolonged and composite mutations has formed a collective consciousness of uncritical obedience to precariousness, deforming the passage from one swirling crisis to the next through the optimistic lens of "transition". The word is employed with the confidence of a natural process, as if it were a storm, and while we affirm our existence in "transition", we nod our troubled times away.

Whether positively or negatively perceived, "transitions" form bridges between histories. Yet, what does it actually mean to be in "transition"? Can we define it as an autonomous and productive period whose importance could go beyond a starting and an ending date? How are "transitions" impacting and being impacted by human spaces, the built environment, and design cultures? What are some concrete, practical case studies that demonstrate how "transitions" could affect architecture and design cultures while emphasizing the role that these disciplines play in transitional processes?

It is within this backdrop that we put forward the theme of "transition"—in all its simplicity and complexity. **ENVISIONING TRANSITIONS: Bodies, buildings, and boundaries** is an interdisciplinary conference organised by the PhD programme in Architecture and Design Cultures, Department of Architecture, University of Bologna.

We invite scholars to think with us about "envisioning transitions". Submissions are welcome from PhD students, architects, designers, engineers, planners, urbanists, geographers, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and all researchers interested in the topic.

In order to open up paths of research on a multitude of scales—from the interactions of human bodies with small, everyday objects, to urban environments and global networks at large—the conference is structured in three tracks: **bodies, buildings, and boundaries**. Submissions must adhere to one of these tracks.

Track 1. Bodies

Reflections can be made about the sense of precarity and uncertainty that transitions embed, leading to initially temporary phenomena that invest the different spheres of the social dimension but then seem to become permanently adopted in the society.

How are people's habits and lifestyles changing, both individually and collectively? How do design cultures take this into account? Thinking about the somatic dimension of humans' experience, how are technologies perceived and accepted in the digital transition? (e.g., the performative construction of the identity, the artistic display of somatic experiences in the context of new technologies).

How to relate bodies and transitions? Perhaps we should first ask what the body is perceiving? And what is the position we occupy in relation to what is happening? Inner, outer, near, far, centre, periphery. What is the temporal and spatial dimension of this particular transition? How is it affecting our perception and representation of time and space, of our "self", of our relationships with the Other? If by transition we mean the perception that something is changing, that we are changing, that we need a different attitude towards the way we are living, the duty to produce different forms and different relations that question the assumptions that have led us so far (e.g., economic, technic, scientific), what would aesthetics of transition be about?

Track 2. Buildings

Many changes have taken place in recent years for what concerns all levels of the building process. Aspiring towards more conscious and responsible design and construction choices, criteria that were previously overlooked have now become ever more salient (e.g., life cycle thinking, circularity, carbon neutrality, km0, low environmental impact).

How is architecture adapting to the demanding framework of transition? What are the new paradigms that are emerging in the actual transitions, and what forms can we envision for a future-proof architecture? What role do technologies and design play in this passage?

Track 3. Boundaries

Global networks, territories, cities, and various spaces of interactions are transforming and hence the boundaries between people and objects, spaces, and different relational dimensions are challenged. How can we take account of these changes on the larger scale?

How are these spatial realities adapting and changing with respect to the current challenges (e.g., digital and climate-neutral transitions)? We seek contributions addressing strategies and their spatial territorialization, aiming to understand how transitions are concretely realized and how they change territories, objects, and relations with human beings.

Suggested Bibliography

Berlingieri, F., & Valente, I. (2021), Beyond the green new deal: Contemporary design strategies and emerging aesthetics in times of urban transitions, in Annales: Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies. Series Historia et Sociologia, 31(1), pp. 1-16.

Boschung, D., Shapiro, H.A., & Wascheck, F. (eds.) (2015), Bodies in transition: Dissolving the boundaries of embodied knowledge, Paderborn: Fink.

Butera, F.M. (2021), Affrontare la complessità: Per governare la transizione ecologica, Milano: Ambiente.

Butler, J., & Braidotti, R. (2010), Out of bounds: Philosophy in an age of transition, in R. Braidotti (ed.), The History of Continental Philosophy, Vol. 7. After Poststructuralism: Transitions and transformations, Durham: Acumen, pp. 307-335.

Cipolletta, G. (2014), Passages metrocorporei: Il corpo-dispositivo per un'estetica della transizione, Macerata: Eum.

Cvoro, U. (2018), Transitional aesthetics: Contemporary art at the edge of Europe, London: Bloomsbury.

Di Giuda, G.M., & Pattini, G. (2021), Transizione digitale per l'ambiente costruito, Napoli: ESI.

Doxiades, C.A. (1963), Architecture in transition, London: Hutchinson.

European Commission (2019), The European Green Deal, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/europe-an-green-deal-communication_en.pdf.

European Commission (2021), New European Bauhaus Commission Communication, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_4627.

Gasparski, W.W. (ed.) (2013), Transition Redesigned: A Practical Philosophy Perspective, London: Routledge.

Gismondi, M. (2018), Historicizing transitions: The value of historical theory to energy transition research, in Energy & Social Science, 38, pp. 193-198.

Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (2021), Global Status Report 2021 for Buildings and Construction: Towards a Zero-emission, Efficient, and Resilient Buildings and Construction Sector, https://www.unep.org/resources/report/2021-global-status-report-buildings-and-construction.

Hopkins, O., & Mckellar E. (eds.) (2021), Multiform: Architecture in an Age of Transition, 91 (1).

Hopkins T.K., Wallerstein I., et al. (1996), The Age of Transition: Trajectory of the World-System, 1945-2025, London: Bloomsbury.

Huovila, A., et al. (2022), Carbon-neutral cities: Critical review of theory and practice, in Journal of Cleaner Production, 341, 130912.

Irwin, T. (2015), Transition Design: A proposal for a New Area of Design Practice, Study and Research, in Design and Culture, 7(2), pp. 229-246.

Kenis, A., & Lievens, M. (2017), Imagining the carbon neutral city: The (post)politics of time and space, in Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, 49(8), pp. 1762–1778.

Nepravishta F., & Maliqari A. (cur.) (2018), Cities in Transition: Sustainability, Formal and Informal Settlements, Memory of Place, Napoli: La scuola di Pitagora.

Pombeni, P. (ed.) (2016), The Historiography of Transition. Critical Phases in the Development of Modernity (1494-1973), London: Routledge.

Preciado, P.B. (2020), An Apartment on Uranus: Chronicles on Crossing, Cambridge: MIT.

Ramos, P.I., & Lindo, B.M. (eds.) (2021), Toward an eco-social transition: Transatlantic environmental humanities, Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2021.

Svasek, M, & Meyer, B. (2016), Creativity in Transition: Politics and Aesthetics of Cultural Production Across the Globe, Oxford-New York: Berghahn.

Swyngedouw, E. (2010), Apocalypse Forever?, in Theory, Culture & Society, 27(2–3), pp. 213–232.

Thorburn, D., & Jenkins, H. (2003), Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition, Cambridge: MIT

Eligible Participants

Submissions are welcome from PhD students, architects, designers, engineers, planners, urbanists, geographers, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and all researchers interested in the topic.

Application Process

Authors are invited to submit their applications by 22nd May 2022 through this link.
The document must be in **.doc format**, including:
• **Title** of the proposed contribution;
• The **conference track** to which you would like to apply;
• Information about the **author(s)**: full name, affiliation, email address;
• A short biography of **maximum 120 words** (for each author);
• An abstract of **3,000-5,000 characters** and **3-5 keywords**;
• A short list of **bibliographic references** in APA style;
• If applicable, **one image** (in .tif or .jpg format) including captions with titles, dates & copyright information.

There are **no conference fees**. All texts must be submitted in **English**.

The proposals will be evaluated based on their originality, scholarly quality, and relevance to the conference themes and topics. **Acceptance notifications** will be sent out within 30th June 2022 after the application deadline.

The authors of the selected abstracts must proceed to submit their full papers in a definitive form no later than **18th September 2022**. Full papers will go through a **double-blind peer-review** process. The editing guidelines to be followed for the definitive version of the full paper will be available on the conference website.

The authors of the selected full papers will be invited to present their work at the conference to be held **online**, on 16th December 2022, in the manner that will be indicated.

Following the conference, the proceedings will be published by Unibo AMSActa, in an open-access edited volume. **AMS Acta** is the institutional open access repository which enables the researchers of the Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna to share, preserve and showcase their scientific works making them easily accessible, citable and reusable.

For updates and more details on deadlines, please refer to the website of the conference at:
eventi.unibo.it/transitions

All questions should be addressed to **transitions@unibo.it**

Scientific Committee

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

More information: https://phd.unibo.it/architettura/en/people

Organising Committee

XXXVI PhD Cycle in Architecture and Design Cultures: Andrea Cattabriga, Valentina De Matteo, Francesco Di Maio, Lorna Dragonetti, Arshia Eghbali, Clara Giardina, Marco Iannantuono, Zou Jing, Giulia Marzani, Angelo Massafra, Claudia Nigrelli, Serena Pagliula, Marco Palma, Dafni Retzepi, Zhu Yuqing.

Call for abstracts
Deadline
22nd May 2022

Conference
16th December 2022

Envisioning Transitions

Bodies, buildings, and boundaries

Alma Mater Studiorum
University of Bologna
Department of Architecture

Architecture and Design
Cultures PhD Programme