

FCTCF

International
Conference

**Further
Crisis
Towards
Conceivable
Futures**

A collection of Europe's sustainable and inclusive paths

Call for Abstracts



Introduction

We are in a historical moment of severe environmental, economic, social and geopolitical crisis. Although the complex term crisis does not originally have a negative etymological meaning, it has assumed it over time because of man's difficulty in dealing with change and transformation (Koselleck 2012).

In particular, the simultaneous occurrence of all these epochal changes in different fields on which our civilisation was built, is creating a situation that is particularly complex and difficult to approach. Of all these, the most alarming and urgent seems to be the ecological-environmental one.

It was in the nineties that we became conscious of the destructive impact humans were having on Earth's delicate equilibrium. Indeed, the 1992 Report, published after the inaugural gathering dedicated to Climate Change, explicitly outlines our responsibility in this respect. Time after time, it is reiterated that the construction industry carries a substantial amount of this responsibility. As architects, urban planners, designers and at the same time researchers, our role as a bridge between past and future, research and practice seems even more crucial currently (Furlong 2023).

Albeit the situation is truly worrying, steps have been taken to improve it with the implementation of projects, initiation of policies and the proposal of raising awareness measures. And it is precisely on these positive and propulsive initiatives for enhancement that our conference originates from.

Citing, for example, the best-known policies at European level, the Kyoto Protocol (in force since 2005) and the European Green Deal (disseminated from 2019) represent nodal steps for the environmental, energy and economic transition that is needed. The most successful activities implemented have shown that their key lies in maintaining an optimistic and constructive mindset, prioritizing compromise over the pursuit of absolute good (Granata 2019). While environmental sustainability must be the crucial driver of transformation, the social dimension of the crisis and the change needed cannot be overlooked. In this context, the most promising initiatives are those that integrate principles of social inclusion, gender equality, and territorial cohesion as essential pillars of sustainable development.

As a mirror to this, many international magazines are proposing the theme of what will happen in the future. To name but one, Domus, in one of its annual thematic series in 2024, has lined up, for example, three issues on the future of urbanism, education

and history, and the city. Even in the case of the aforementioned periodical, it is not a question of solving the problem from a merely technocratic point of view. Indeed, among the specificities of the city and of the urban phenomenon in general are the fact that local transformations are determined by changes in both global geo-political conditions and man's social relations with everything he interacts with (Lefebvre 1968).

This reflection led to the idea of the conference to gather paths to discuss possible directions for conceivable futures.

The theme proposed by the conference and the call for abstracts is intended to initiate a critical and optimistic discussion on the good practices in **Europe** that have been made in the **last 50 years**, at the turn of the old and the new century. The discussion tracks will mainly concern 3 macro-themes of practices, that have been introduced and executed successfully in the European continent, which have led to territorial, urban and design transformations, inevitably involving the socio-cultural aspect. The choice to apply for one or the other track should be partly related to the scale at which the presented good practice has generated transformation but also considering the issues that will be explained below.

Contributions that have a multidisciplinary and multiscalar development while maintaining a clear territorial/urban/design character will be particularly appreciated in the selection process.

Following the conference, we aim to compile an Atlas showcasing successful practices for future use that can be implemented, reflecting on not just the negative consequences but also the positive outcomes of our anthropic actions.

Europe, 50 years, Conceivable Futures, Transformations, Atlas

Abstracts Deadline
June 15th 2025

Territorial actions/transformations_ **Strategic visions/policy analysis and** **systemic transformations in the supra-** **urban territory**

In recent years, the concept of territory has regained centrality in spatial discourse—not only as a physical or administrative space, but as a relational and dynamic construct, shaped by social, cultural and political processes (Massey 2005). This track invites critical reflection on cases of transformation of non-urban, rural, peripheral, and cross-border areas, which are often structurally fragile and symbolically marginalised.

Rural and peripheral areas face significant challenges, including depopulation, ageing populations, geographic dispersion, economic disparities, limited access to essential services, and inadequate infrastructure. While these issues affect the general population, they disproportionately impact specific demographic groups such as youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities—and affect women in a transversal way, particularly those with care responsibilities.

Territorial regeneration today requires going beyond sectoral policies. It must embrace integrated and inclusive models that consider environmental, social, cultural, and gender dimensions, and that strengthen spatial justice, territorial cohesion, and the right to inhabit. As outlined in the Long-Term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas (European Commission 2021), building a stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous future for all territories calls for place-based, multi-level, and participatory approaches, especially in the face of growing territorial divides.

In this sense, regeneration is also about re-signifying places, restoring connections, and activating collective knowledge. Territories must be understood as living environments, where local communities become protagonists of care, innovation and social reproduction. Rural and marginal areas can become laboratories for new models of development that are more just equitable and ecologically aware.

However, both at the Italian and European level, there are more and more situations of re-appropriation of abandoned land by small communities (De Rossi 2018). These situations demonstrate a possible way forward and make us question how local initiatives can be extended to regional and state level.

We welcome contributions that explore how territories—especially those considered marginal or in crisis—can be or already have been reimagined as spaces of experimentation, innovation, resilience, and transformation.

Proposals may include theoretical reflections, territorial analyses, methodological frameworks, or case studies.

Strategic visions, Territorial re-signification, Rural/Non-rural regeneration

Urban actions/transformations_ **Sustainable projects/strategies for the future city**

The evolution of contemporary cities represents a crucial focal point in academic and professional discourse (Venturi, Izenour & Scott Brown 1972), given the pressing challenges of accelerated urbanization, environmental crises, and the imperative to promote sustainable and resilient development.

More than ever, urban environments are being conceived as dynamic laboratories for architectural and urban experimentation, where regeneration policies, technological innovation, and active civic participation contribute to the redefinition of the urban fabric and its socio-spatial structures. It seems essential to promote and disseminate best practices that can be adapted to diverse urban contexts. So, this track invites critical reflection on cases of transformation inside cities, or in the relation between cities and their landscapes.

A particularly significant contribution to the debate on the city as a space for experimentation was provided by the Venice Biennale 2023, titled *The Laboratory of the Future*, which once again embraces the theme of the future. The event emphasized the socio-environmental contingencies that define our time, underscoring the necessity of rethinking urban development through models capable of adapting to climate change, economic transformations, and social shifts.

Taking into consideration this peculiar example, the most significant experiences will be selected to highlight the importance of cross-sectoral engagement, demonstrating that, in addition to architects and urban planners, the contributions of ecologists and technologists are indispensable. Urban transformations over recent decades have demonstrated that the future of cities depends on their ability to integrate innovation, sustainability, and social inclusion. However, significant challenges persist, particularly considering the climate crisis and growing economic inequalities.

Considering the importance and complexity of this topic, the selection will address the contribution by answering the following themes/questions.

Territory investigation practices: How can land study and analysis practices be improved to be more useful for enhancing the quality of the urban and non-urban landscape and their relationship?

Reorganization and regeneration of public spaces: how can abandoned or crisis-impacted public spaces be reimagined as inclusive hubs that foster social cohesion and resilience?

Heritage-nature symbiosis: how can cities transform cultural heritage and degraded ecosystems into regenerative assets to adapt to climate change? How can the more natural and the heavily man-made areas be restored to a dialogue and coexistence?

Spatial equity: how can urban transformation projects prioritize spatial equity for vulnerable groups within urban environments?

The cases may be analysed and presented both from a methodological and historical point of view and a morphological-compositional ones.

Urban environments, Natural-Cultural Heritage, Space regeneration

Design actions/transformations_ **Site-specific design experiments**

In the face of pressing global challenges, including the climate change crisis and structural issues within society, design has increasingly moved beyond aesthetic form, becoming a strategic tool for addressing complex contemporary problems. Design actions are now regarded as a key driving force in promoting social transformation, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

Over the past decade, design practices have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and foresight. Whether through fostering community engagement, enhancing public well-being, or exploring new materials, processes, and collaborative models, design has shown its capacity for meaningful intervention across diverse contexts.

In this evolving landscape, emerging technologies are also reshaping how we work. Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models (LLMs) are no longer just technical aids—they are becoming active parts of the design process. These systems influence how we frame problems, imagine futures, and make decisions. We invite contributions that explore how these tools are changing not only the way we design, but also the way we think. What happens when we co-design with AI? What does it mean for creativity, responsibility, and authorship in spatial practices?

This track focuses on how design actions as a mechanism of transformation in today's global landscape. From design practice to systematic research-driven approaches. We are expecting contributions that highlight interdisciplinary collaboration, civic participation, and cross-cultural perspectives. Exploring how design can integrate technological innovation, social engagement, and cultural values to build more resilient, equitable, and imaginative pathways for the future.

In the process of exploring how design can drive social transformation, equity should be considered a central and indispensable issue.

Design equity goes beyond aesthetic considerations; it must be achieved through concrete strategies that respond to the needs of marginalized groups and the multiplicity of contemporary lifestyles. This reflection on equity urges a shift from design that serves the mainstream to inclusive practices that aim to serve everyone.

We therefore also encourage contributions that reflect on design equity as a critical lens, and that present outstanding practices using design as a tool to enhance social inclusion, support participatory engagement, and challenge dominant spatial norms.

These reflections can further enrich the discussion on how design shapes a more just and resilient future.

Adapting/Foresighted design, Plural city, Digital Heritage

References

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Submission

Eligible Participants

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

Application Process

Authors are invited to submit their applications by email to **fctcf2025@unibo.it**.

The deadline for abstracts submission is **June 15th 2025**.

Please write as the subject line in the email: **Abstract Submission_fctcf25**. In the attachment, please name the file: **TrackN_ShortTitle_fctcf25** (instead of N indicate the Track number from 1 to 3).

The document must be in PDF format.

We invite submissions of abstracts with the following structure:

- Title of the contribution;
- Conference track to which you would like to apply;
- Abstract of 3,000–5,000 characters and 3–5 keywords;
- A selected list of bibliographic references in APA style;
- If applicable, one image (in .tif or .jpg format) including captions with titles, date & copyright information;
- The availability (or not) to attend the conference, to be held in the **beginning of December 2025 in Bologna**.

Please upload in the attachment another document including information about the author(s):

- Name and surname;
- Affiliation, email address, disciplinary area;
- Short biography of maximum 100 words for each author.

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's themes and topics.

Acceptance or refusal notifications will be sent out **by July 13th**.

All selected authors will be asked to submit their full paper no later than **September 30th**. Following the selection, the authors will be notified of the editorial rules to be complied for the final version of the paper. Contributions selected will be evaluated through a double-blind peer review process, by the Organising Committee of the Conference.

A sub-group of authors of selected papers will be invited to present their work at the International Conference in December 2025 and will be notified in a further communication. The Conference will be held in Bologna; location and details will be announced following the selection of contributions.

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 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:

<https://eventi.unibo.it/fctcf-conference-phdarchitecture-bologna-2025/>

For all your questions and requests, please contact:
fctcf2025@unibo.it

Scientific Committee

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

Organising Committee

XXXIX PhD Cycle in Architecture and Design Cultures: Alessia Bertuca, Fangyu Chen, Zhouyan He, Noemi Irmì, Yannick Cornelis Petronella Henriette Johannes Joosten, Iuliia Kozlova, Yehui Peng, Martino Pietropoli, Haruna Saito, Emma Veronese.

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