

Creative Adjacencies

New Challenges for Architecture, Design and Urbanism for updating, modernizing and synchronizing the university curricula.



**ALFA III project:
“ADU_2020
(Architecture,
Design &
Urbanism)
The Restructuring of
the Higher Education
for the 21st century
in the Expanded
Field of Architecture,
Design & Urbanism.”**



ALFA PROGRAMME
CO-FINANCED BY
EUROPEAID



Higher Education in Architecture, Design and Urbanism

Conference ADU_2020, June 3rd - 6th 2014, Ghent, Belgium

Manila North Cemetery—

A cemetery home to 10,000 living residents (source [http://www.atlasobscura.com /place/manilla-north-cemetery](http://www.atlasobscura.com/place/manilla-north-cemetery))



A Changing Context

During recent years Latin America and Europe have been subject to a complex social, economic and spatial process that has imposed new expectations and demands on the built environment. Cities in Europe have been transformed into a post-industrial landscape, presenting acute economic and social challenges for designers and planners who are continuously confronted with the redevelopment, regeneration and renewal of the existing urban fabric. This new landscape defines a new framework for urban and architectural design, taking into account the attendant socio-economic and cultural dimensions. In Latin America, rapid urbanisation processes have changed the environment and the lives of most inhabitants. Although in general terms the urbanisation process brings better education, health, and access to culture and facilities to the population involved, in Latin American cities this has not always been the case. Many of these cities have grown inorganically, creating vast areas with insufficient urban services and equipment, while many of their central areas have suffered from abandonment and decay. The process has left a footprint of physical, economic and social

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will focus on unexpected phenomena of emergent liaisons, on urban contrasts and conflicts, on unusual professional collaborations or creative joined forces as the generator of new possibilities, new strategies in a dynamic contemporary environment. Conference themes will engage in different and divers approaches in the new curricula-development of Architecture, Design and Urbanism. The sessions will address a range of research, design and educational reflections and strategies on creative solutions for complex situations.

challenges which will take years to deal with, to turn the existing environment into a proper and enriched sustainable urban fabric. Furthermore, new technologies have developed exponentially and have changed Latin American major cities –intelligent buildings, communication networks, sophisticated infrastructure– creating isolated areas of prosperity and development. At the same time the region has been affected by a string of natural disasters –earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and tornados– and instability (displaced communities) that have damaged many urban areas forcing instant responses from the authorities and professionals. This new environment has certainly changed the way design, architecture and urbanism is made and perceived.

The aforementioned phenomena can be seen as a multiplicity of intermingling layers, creating a complex multiple-reality that defines the daily working dynamics of professionals and researchers. Designing is responding to, or at least interacting with, those different layers. As a consequence, the designer is forced to rely upon additional insight from a growing group of specialised professionals. It would seem to be impossible to conceive of the expertise being held by one person—impossible to be able to control all layers and intensities in one single mind. This multiple reality presses the architect to not only rethink the fundamental basis of the discipline but also the required competences. Intercultural aspects, with the combination of global and local competences, are essential requirements for both ensuring critical practice and also the coherent development of architectural or urban project/s. On the one hand there seems to be an increasing need to form teams—to share authorship—without imposing traditional hierarchical structures that no longer allow a qualitative project to be coherently conceived or developed. On the other hand we detect within some young firms the necessity to go back to the roots of the craftsmanship.

This conference is part of an European ALFA project, ADU_2020, (www.adu2020.org) that focuses on future education for Architects, Designers and Urbanists to meet the demands of this new context: identifying “renewed professional areas” for the twenty-first century in a regional and international contexts in order to raise the employability of ADU graduates; clarifying the new skills and competences required in accordance with public authorities, as well as professional and economic bodies; refining the “common and regional-specific competences” for the different educational programs in ADU in relation to current challenges; describing the indicators and guidelines for implementation in a renewed curriculum; and assessing and describing “new practices on competence-based creative teaching.” It is important to detect and explore new ways of reading and intervening in the field of Architecture, Design and Urbanism; to reveal changing practises beyond conventional approaches. The project determined four questions to tackle those issues:

- *Which are the future challenges for ADU in the framework of the new professional fields? How does the discipline of architecture, design and urbanism change?*
- *Which is the impact of interdisciplinarity, design thinking, research by design on ADU education?*
- *Which are the common and local competences to achieve success in the different tracks?*
- *Which are the new educational strategies in function of the changes in the professional world?*

A changing response: **Creative Adjacencies**

Societal, political and cultural differences, tensions and contrasts are part of today's everyday life and therefore of increasing influence in contemporary discourses in Architecture, Design and Urbanism (ADU). It seems as if the aforementioned phenomena of a changing context are squeezed in two (apparently) opposite directions: increasing formalisation on the one hand and informal, emergent projects that are less dependent on traditional development scenarios on the other. **Multiplicity, simultaneity** and **contrast** could be the words to describe best the characteristics of our changing environment. This means that new challenges for ADU appear to be: that the political and socio-cultural debate becomes a protagonist of design, architectural and urban discourses, demanding a more critical attitude of all actors involved. On a more operative level, increasing technological, environmental, administrative, legal, and financial demands create highly complex working conditions for the architect, urban planner or designer in which to conceive and develop coherent projects, increasingly often and commonly more quickly. Related to the increasing complexity of the environment we inhabit, new answers are needed and indeed provided to respond to the mentioned challenges and potentials. Contrary to the past planning and design models, alternative approaches emerge in the field of Architecture, Design and Urbanism. More than ever, research and design approaches seem surprisingly **provocative**, rather **unexpected** or even **edgy**: stereotype interventions based on problem solving and blueprint thinking are avoided in many new practices of design and research. New ways of appropriating space, designing objects, defining interior spaces or restructuring urban areas seem to look for alternative and creative solutions, in many cases based on what is already there, ie on existing **adjacencies**. **Unplanned** hybridism, spontaneous use, ambiguous appropriation of space, unexpected or weird combinations of activities, contrasting elements or alternative forms of delimiting and using space seem to occur increasingly, at different scales and on a global scale.

At the same time, research and design consortiums have developed similar characteristics: of new emerging alliances, defining new partnerships, focusing on new ways of trans-disciplinary thinking, of setting up new kinds of joint professional or academic projects. The sum of these new phenomena in Architecture, Design and Urbanism and its new ways of joining forces will be the main conference topic: this ADU2020 conference focuses on **Creative Adjacencies**.

Creative adjacencies, unusual combinations or alternative scenarios can and do generate interesting and unique visions, new openings, possibilities and constructive solutions. By looking at these phenomena, schools for Architecture, Design and Urbanism might realise that their students lack the needed specific skills and competences new professionals should have to meet current and future challenges, whilst at the same time, might discover skills in design ability, and design thinking that could open up the much needed innovative vision and potential solutions in this ever-changing context.

The aim is to explore, analyse and discuss through “case studies on creative adjacencies” the ADU questions and distract strategies for updating and modernising the university curricula in Architecture, Design and Urbanism.

Call for submissions

ADU 2020: Creative Adjacencies invites submissions under a series of **thematic tracks that are understood as open ways of aligning or contrasting reflections related to different “exemplary cases” of Architecture Design and Urbanism, coherent with the general theme of “Creative Adjacencies”**. Submission types include individual or group presentations and full papers. Authors may submit multiple proposals to multiple tracks however, following blind reviews, the number of accepted presentations per author will be limited to 2 total presentations at the conference, and 1 per track. The same submission may not be submitted to multiple tracks. Authors of accepted presentations must be registered and be present at the conference to be included in the program and conference proceedings and to allow a profound discussion at all times on the main theme of the conference. Interactive participation of all participants will be demanded throughout the whole conference.

Track 1/ Public Space: spaces for all? – Public space is becoming more and more complex and is ever more challenged, while at the same time gaining increased importance as the most democratic and community building space. It is the space of encounter where people of all creeds and ideas have equal rights, where co-presence can be the first form of social relation, where un-programmed interaction can take place. Nevertheless in recent years we have seen it privatised, appropriated by groups and in some cases replaced by collective space. Public space is defined by and dependent upon systems of adjacencies, and integrated territories, interacted by multiple agents. Do territoriality, permeability, and proximity indeed become the real protagonists of urban life and transformation, and how does it affect social networks? Focus may be laid on the collective use of public space, interaction between public and private domains, living experiences, urban agriculture, urban landscapes, commercialisation of public space, the political dimension of public space, ways of appropriation, safety and other emergent perspectives.

Track 2/ Heritage and Local Identity: fragile scenarios? – Locality, as an element of social sustainability, plays a significant role in a world of growing globalisation. More and more researchers and professionals realise that the identity of the city is not solely constructed by the monumental heritage but also by modest heritage, referring to those aspects of a city that, while not related to monumental buildings or spaces, are nevertheless responsible for a large part of its identity, quality and social cohesion. On the other hand the excessive protection of heritage buildings and their surrounding areas can make the adaptation of the place to contemporary functions difficult and not allow for its renewal. How can we relate the different heritage declarations with today’s multi reality and rapid changes? What is the status of heritage as a social construct in deprived areas? How can we detect intangible and informal aspects of that heritage and its relation to the social construct? What is the role of heritage in a multicultural society where the appropriation of the existing fabric is much more complex than solely national or regional identity? What is the way of intervening in heritage areas, allowing for new uses while at the same time protecting its values? How can it interact with the different stakeholders, and what kind of scenarios could be set up?

Track 3/ Social Housing: new collective spaces? – In this track new perspectives and challenges on housing can be elaborated. Possible topics are: new typologies in social housing; new typology for a changing societal structure beyond the classical family; housing and community development; housing and urban poverty; privacy and exposure in housing scheme; non-traditional urban households; housing for minorities; incremental housing; and neighborhood upgrading programs. Starting from real cases focus can be laid on the process of participation; teamwork and interaction of non-experts and experts; etc.

Track 4/ Urban Growth and Density: the political dimension? – Whereas higher density generates many advantages, many regions do not have the luxury to build cities from scratch, and remain to a large extent a vast anomic suburbia. Suburbia is there and makes up a considerable asset. However, the challenges suburbia is facing within the perspective of an aging and/or shrinking population, and an increasing demand to curb energy consumption and CO2 emissions are very substantial and hitherto little explored. This includes cases on, amongst others, alternative transportation, infrastructure and urban quality of life, problems of densification and intensifying the suburban areas, elaboration of diffuse models of growth, diversification of mono-functional low-dense landscapes, models of proximity, densification in areas well connected by public transport systems, and other possibilities in this line.

Track 5/ Emergent Systems: wanted tolerance or needed guidance? – How can potential urban micro-strategies be developed through exploring alternative urban/architectural solutions and simulations in a given emergent context? How can they take into account the larger social impact of architecture through small-scale projects within a complex urban context in transition? How can informality (e.g. Emergent Systems, Informal Settlements) and formality define creative adjacencies?

Track 6/ Community Buildings: blending in or contrasting scenarios? – The role of community buildings has certainly changed due to secularisation processes in western society, radicalisation of the religious dimension of community services in non-western contexts, the fall-back of the cultural sector as a result of the financial crisis, the challenged accessibility because of more severe security conditions, the needed hybridity of complex programs. This track will focus on the near surrounding of community buildings (in a contextual as well as in a non-contextual way) and discuss the new challenges new adjacencies can bring. Active community engagement in planning, building and experiencing community buildings is another possible angle.

Track 7/ Open Track – This track is an open session on different aspects of creative adjacencies that are not grasped in the other tracks: for examples (& not limited to): adjacencies of different disciplines as source for new creativity; unexpected aspects created by crisis and unusual circumstances, accidents as opportunity; new professional challenges born by adjacencies; creative adjacencies as new education strategy, etc....

IMPORTANT All submissions in the tracks will be cross-checked by the 4 ADU-questions in the elaboration of the topic, discussions, reflections and conclusions. THEY ARE THE USED CRITERIA TO MEASURE THE ABSTRACTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ADU_2020 CONFERENCE.

- *Which are the future challenges for ADU in the framework of the new professional fields? How does the discipline of architecture, design and urbanism change?*
- *Which is the impact of interdisciplinarity, design thinking, research by design on ADU education?*
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- *Which are the new educational strategies in function of the changes in the professional world?*

Proposals

Cases in the tracks can be used to elaborate on one or more of the ADU questions.

An ADU question can be elaborated using a case belonging to one of the tracks.

IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE ABSTRACTS SHOW A CLEAR RELATION TOWARDS THE CENTRAL

THEME **Creative Adjacencies**

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Timeline:

14th of December: Launching Call

1th of February: Submission abstract, online submission and online reviewed (blind peer reviewed)

15th of February: Feedback abstract

31th of March: Submission Full paper

28th of April Feedback full paper

19th of May: Submission full paper

The conference will have plenum sessions and round tables discussion - using opponents & discussion feeders. Internal ADU Reporters as well as external Reporters will link the discussions and reflections towards the ADU aims.

A number of grants will be given to accepted abstract and papers (flight cost economy fare, hotel and registration fee), for post-doc, young professors and young professionals in Design, Architecture or Urbanism of Latin America. Details will follow by the end of January 2014.

The conference is funded by the ALFA program – Europe Aid

(<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/alfa/>).

Questions can be send to adu2020.architecture@kuleuven.be