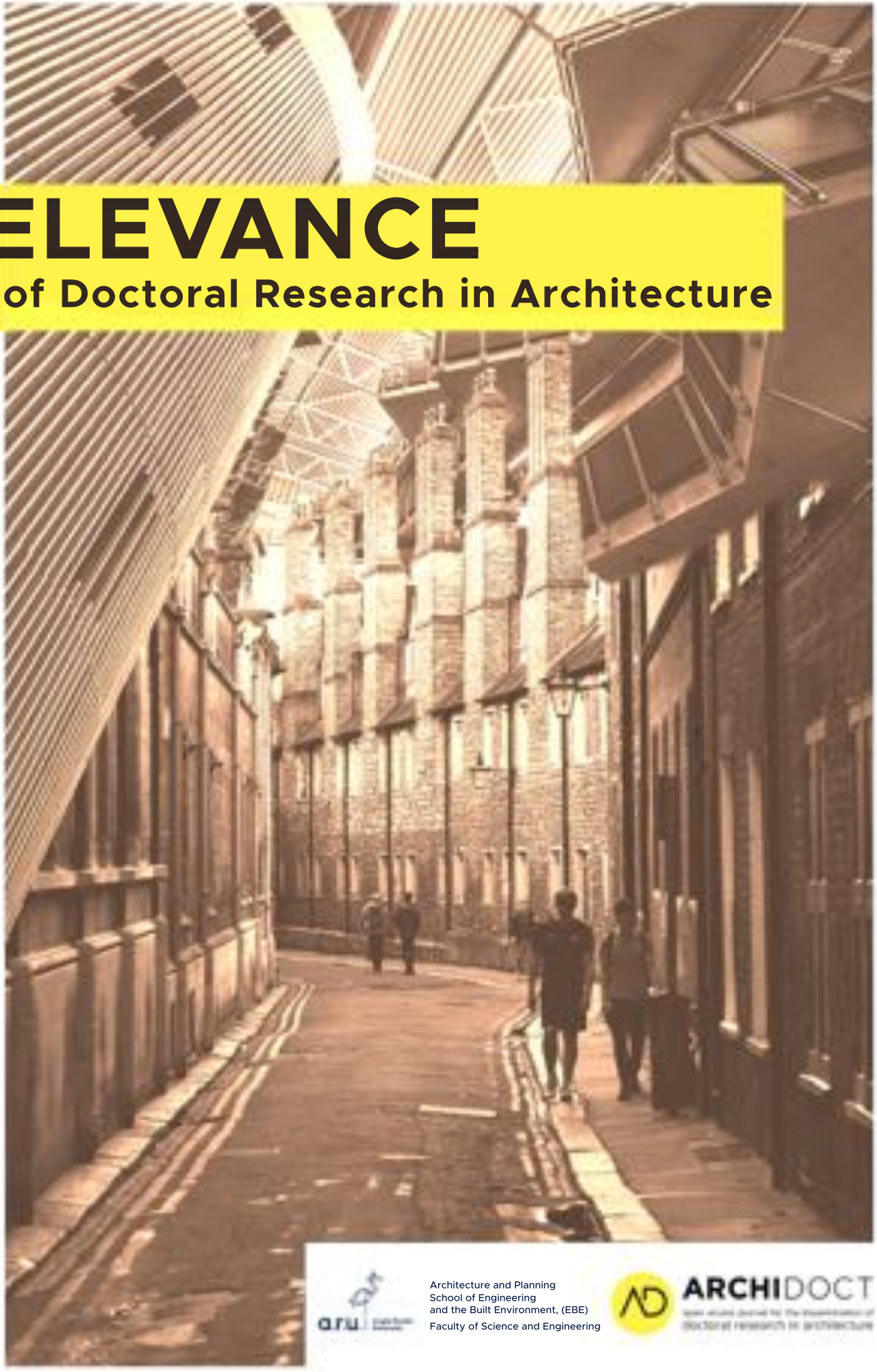
RELEVANCE
of Doctoral Research in Architecture



Architecture and Planning
School of Engineering
and the Built Environment, (EBE)
Faculty of Science and Engineering

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RELEVANCE OF DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE

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Navigating the Nexus of Relevance in Doctoral Research in Architecture

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Keywords: relevance, doctoral research, architecture, urban environment, values

Lede: The text adeptly contextualizes the discourse surrounding relevance in architectural research, drawing upon the insights gleaned from the dedicated academic conference hosted at Anglia Ruskin University in July 2023

In the dynamic and ever-evolving field of architecture, the quest for relevance stands as a guiding beacon, illuminating paths that bridge theoretical exploration with practical application. The international conference "Relevance and Doctoral Research in Architecture," under the auspices of Anglia Ruskin University, UK, and its distinguished journal archiDOCT, serves as a vibrant platform for this exploration. The conference has successfully congregated an eclectic mix of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers, early-career scholars, and esteemed research supervisors from across the globe, all united by a common pursuit: to delve into the core of 'relevance' both as a concept and as an actual value within current architectural research.

The call for papers for this conference provocatively questioned the intrinsic relationship between architecture and the shifting cultural values it embodies. As a spatial manifestation of societal values, architecture is inherently bound to the principles of innovation and the continuous reevaluation of these values in response to the changing tides of societal challenges, priorities, and concerns. This intricate dance between tradition and innovation, between established values and the quest for the new, forms the crux of the research endeavors showcased at this conference.

The abstracts submitted and meticulously reviewed for inclusion in this book of proceedings reflect a rich tapestry made out of inquiries into the multifaceted notion of relevance in architecture. From the emancipation of architectural contemplation from the grips of other disciplines to the embrace of Gaia-centered thinking in the face of post-human challenges, the papers traverse a wide spectrum of theoretical and practical landscapes. They grapple with the ontological redefinitions necessitated by a world in flux, where technological advancements, environmental crises, and global socio-economic upheavals demand a radical rethinking of architectural research's role and relevance. They question the ways in which we should reposition architectural research – and architecture per se – in order to re-establish its relevance to the sociopolitical field that it tries to address, and to which keeps referring despite its autonomous character. Architectural research, while being an independent and autonomous field, is always related to the world that it codifies and is therefore governed by the need to remain relevant to it.

This introduction synthesizes the vibrant discussions, innovative research methodologies, and diverse theoretical perspectives that have emerged from the conference. It underscores the collective endeavor to redefine the mission of architecture in serving society amidst the backdrop of global challenges such as climate change, technological disruption, and the aftermath of a global pandemic. The proceedings encapsulate a shared vision for an architecture that is proactive, speculative, and radical in its approach to addressing the pressing issues of our time. A shared vision for an architecture that urges to be relevant again.

As we navigate through the themes that have organically emerged from the submissions—ranging from the theoretical underpinnings of relevance in architectural research to the practical implications of technological advancements—the book of proceedings stands as a testament to the vibrant intellectual exchange that characterizes this conference. It not only captures the current state of doctoral research in architecture but also charts a course for its future trajectory, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary dialogue, theoretical rigor, and practical relevance.

In this era of unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the book of proceedings from the "Relevance and Doctoral Research in Architecture" conference emerges as a crucial reference point. It offers insights, reflections, and provocations that invite readers to contemplate the evolving role of architecture in shaping not just physical spaces, but the very fabric of our societal values and aspirations. As we turn the pages, we are reminded of the enduring power of architecture to reflect, respond to, and indeed, redefine the world around us.

The research by *Alexandros Mpantogias* delves into the concept of "Landscapes of Variability," highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our perception and interaction with landscapes. The pandemic has accelerated the integration of digital technologies in our experience of space, pushing us towards an aesthetic-digital perception of our environment. This shift underscores the need for architectural research to consider the mutable and multifaceted nature of landscapes in the digital age.

Angelos Psilopoulos' work on "Gesture" within architecture examines the complex relationship between narrative or embodied action and architectural value. This research suggests that architecture and gesture are entwined, each informing the perception of the other, thus advocating for a more nuanced understanding of how architectural forms convey meaning and engage with their users.

Ashok Ganapathy Iyer's exploration of pedagogical approaches in architectural education addresses the need to understand and adapt to the diverse learning approaches of architecture students. This research emphasizes the importance of pedagogical innovation in nurturing the next generation of architects, particularly in the context of emerging

technologies like AI and AR.

Benedetta Tamburrini's investigation into "Inflection as a relational strategy in architecture" offers a fresh perspective on the role of formal relations and adaptation strategies in addressing the complexities of contemporary architectural practice. This research highlights the need for architectural strategies that are responsive to the intricate interconnections within urban environments.

Bianca Felicori's study on the conceptual foundations of Superstudio's Continuous Monument and the influence of Paul Klee's theories reveals the deep interconnections between art and architecture. This research underscores the importance of conceptual exploration in architectural design, pushing the boundaries of traditional practice.

Carlo Vannini's work on digital models for the sustainable renewal of social housing in Rome demonstrates the potential of digital technologies to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and socio-cultural relevance of architectural interventions. This research points to the growing importance of digital tools in addressing the challenges of urban renewal and sustainability.

Cerek Dogan's examination of the hidden curriculum in architectural education highlights the implicit learning outcomes that shape the educational experience of architecture students. This research calls for a more explicit recognition and integration of these hidden elements into architectural pedagogy.

David Pérez Royo, Alicia Llorca Ponce, and Fernando García Martínez's analysis of real estate investment methodologies stresses the need for a structured approach that accounts for the complexities of the real estate market. This research highlights the potential of AI and big data in refining investment strategies and decision-making processes.

Dilara Yaratgan's exploration of ethical engagements in the design of urban spaces challenges traditional notions of authorship in landscape design. This research advocates for a more inclusive and multi-faceted approach to designing urban spaces, recognizing the diverse actors and processes that contribute to the creation and maintenance of these environments.

Dina Al Qusous, Anastasia Karandinou, and Renee Tobe's work on culturally adapted dementia care environments in the MENA region underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity and the potential for cross-cultural learning in the design of care spaces. This research highlights the need for design practices that are attuned to the specific cultural and contextual needs of their users.

Alexiou Theodota's investigation into "Fragmentation to Wholeness" through digital morphogenesis presents a novel approach to architectural design that embraces complexity and variability. This research challenges traditional notions of form and coherence in architecture, advocating for a more dynamic and responsive design process.

Elena Martínez-Millana's comparative analysis of De Koepel and the Oost III projects by Koolhaas/OMA offers insights into the role of small housing units in contemporary urban environments. This research explores the potential of small housing to address the growing demand for non-family households and the challenges of urban density.

Elena Ogliani's study on the interplay between rural and urban models of settlement highlights the need for architectural strategies that bridge the gap between urban expansion and rural revitalization. This research calls for a reevaluation of settlement principles in light of contemporary social and environmental challenges.

Eymard Ahern's work on an architectural framework for compliance certification in Ireland to enhance energy efficiency emphasizes the role of architects in ensuring the sustainability and energy efficiency of buildings. This research highlights the need for comprehensive design and inspection processes that are aligned with sustainability goals.

Federico Marcolini's investigation into the Mantua-Peschiera branch line as a palimpsest offers a historical and analytical perspective on the role of infrastructure in shaping geographical and cultural landscapes. This research underscores the potential of historical infrastructure to inform and inspire contemporary urban and regional development strategies.

Florian Hendrik Liedtke's study on the typological framework for Tokyo's architectures of a home away from home examines the role of commercial spaces in providing alternative forms of domesticity in high-density urban environments. This research highlights the importance of understanding and designing for the diverse needs and preferences of urban dwellers.

Yoon J. Han and Toni Kotnik's work on the aesthetic dynamics of experiential space in architecture through computational frameworks presents a novel approach to understanding the interplay between form, space, and perception in architectural design. This research underscores the potential of computational tools in exploring and articulating the complex relationships that define architectural experiences.

Hester Buck's examination of multi-species ethnography in participatory design processes challenges traditional approaches to design by incorporating more-than-human perspectives. This research advocates for a broader, more inclusive understanding of environmental care and engagement in architectural practice.

Josep Eixerés Ros and Ivan Cabrera i Fausto's analysis of the representation of architecture through the work of Joaquín Sorolla and new hyperrealities explores the tension between traditional and digital methods of architectural representation. This research highlights the importance of maintaining a critical and reflective approach to the use of AI and other digital technologies in architectural visualization and design.

Júlia Beltran Borràs's research on the reuse of buildings in Portugal emphasizes the potential value of architectural pre-existences in urban transformation. This research advocates for a sensitive and creative approach to integrating historical elements into contemporary design, enriching the urban fabric and preserving cultural heritage.

Marcel Rosaleny-Gamón and Ivan Cabrera i Fausto's discussion on vernacular architecture in the context of a degrowth scenario highlights the relevance of traditional architectural practices in addressing contemporary environmental and social challenges. This research calls for a reevaluation of architectural values and practices in light of the need for sustainable and responsible development.

Maria Piqueras, Ivan Cabrera i Fausto, and Diego Sanz's exploration of over-elevation as a practice for cities addresses the challenges of urban density and heritage conservation. This research presents over-elevation as a strategy for sustainable urban development that respects and revitalizes existing built environments.

Mark Rego's reading of architecture through Bergson's schema of memory offers a philosophical perspective on the role of memory and time in architectural experience. This research advocates for a more nuanced understanding of architectural works as dynamic entities shaped by and shaping human experience

over time.

Michele Bianchi's work on restoring fundamental values to address contemporary architectural issues presents a methodological approach to reconciling technological advancements with the core values of architectural practice. This research emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between innovation and tradition in the face of evolving societal and environmental challenges.

Milica Radović's investigation into new mortar solutions for the conservation of the buildings of Medieval Rhode underscores the importance of material innovation in the preservation of cultural heritage. This research highlights the potential of integrating traditional and innovative materials to address the specific needs of heritage conservation in a sustainable manner.

Nefeli Chatzimina's research on 'AI Bacon' architecture explores the speculative potential of combining autonomous form in architecture with the artistic expressions of Francis Bacon. This research challenges traditional boundaries of architectural design and representation, advocating for a more speculative and allusive approach to architectural creativity.

Nicolò Chierichetti's examination of the relational and linguistic origins of architectural research emphasizes the importance of a clear and structured approach to research within the diverse and flexible field of architecture. This research advocates for a methodological clarity that respects the unique characteristics of architectural inquiry.

Piet De Kock's work on the invisible city and visual sustainability in urban design strategy presents a novel approach to understanding and designing for the less tangible aspects of urban environments. This research highlights the importance of considering the dynamic and experiential dimensions of cities in urban design and planning.

Pinar Sefkatli's exploration of rhythm analysis in architecture offers a new framework for understanding the temporal and spatial dynamics of urban life. This research underscores the potential of rhythm analysis to inform design interventions that are attuned to the complex rhythms of city life.

Rafael Sousa Santo's discussion on qualitative and mixed research methods in architectural education emphasizes the importance of methodological rigor and diversity in architectural research and pedagogy. This research advocates for an integrated approach to research that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative methods to enrich architectural education and practice.

Sofia Prokopova's investigation into materiality and representation in the architectural environment of the Arctic city addresses the unique challenges and opportunities of designing in extreme environments. This research highlights the need for innovative approaches that balance material efficiency with cultural and environmental sensitivity in Arctic urban development.

Styliani (Stella) Salta and *Miltiadis Katsaros*'s study on the role of artificial intelligence in architectural visualizations examines the impact of Text-to-Image generative AI on the practice and theory of architectural representation. This research challenges traditional notions of authorship and creativity in architecture, highlighting the potential of AI to enrich and expand the field's creative possibilities.

The backdrop of this discourse is the profound changes experienced by societies over the past decades—technological revolutions, climate emergencies, and the recent global pandemic. These events have not only reshaped the fabric of our societies but have also posed existential questions about the role and relevance of architectural research. The papers presented at this conference grapple with these questions, exploring the potential of architectural research to be proactive, speculative, and, at times, radical in its approach to addressing contemporary and future challenges.

This book of proceedings, therefore, is not merely a collection of academic papers. It is a mosaic of ideas, hypotheses, and explorations that collectively argue for a reimagined understanding of relevance in architectural research. It advocates for an architecture that is deeply embedded in the context of changing values, one that offers insightful responses to societal challenges and contributes to the shaping of sustainable, resilient, and inclusive futures.

In essence, this introduction and the proceedings it prefaces serve as a compass for navigating the complex and ever-expanding universe of architectural research. They invite readers to engage with the diverse perspectives and insights offered by the contributors, encouraging a reflective and forward-looking engagement with the question of what makes research in architecture truly relevant in our contemporary and future societies.

Notwithstanding their acknowledgment, certain articles have undergone a rigorous selection process and are slated for publication in the archiDOCT journal. These selected contributions will be featured in two dedicated issues, providing an in-depth exploration of the Relevance of Doctoral Research in Architecture. Soon to be accessible online, these publications promise to contribute valuable insights to the scholarly discourse in the field.

Overall, the synthesis and discussion of these abstracts reveal a vibrant and multifaceted field of architectural research that is deeply engaged with a wide range of contemporary challenges. From technological advancements and sustainability concerns to pedagogical innovations and the reinterpretation of cultural heritage, the research presented reflects a discipline that is both reflective of its traditions and forward-looking in its aspirations. The conclusions drawn from these diverse investigations emphasize the importance of a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to architectural research, one that is attuned to the complex interplay between human experience, technological possibilities, and environmental imperatives.