Intergenerational Cities
Navigating Urban Lifeworlds between Past and Future

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Man as the measure of all things: A misunderstanding?
High modernist images of man in Ernst Neufert's Bauentwurfslehre and Bauordnungslehre

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In my presentation I will raise two rather tricky questions: Firstly, for whom are architects really designing? And secondly how do designers know about the appropriate human scale or human dimensions of a proposed building or construction? The first question generally does not cause much concern within the professional community. The answer unavoidably is: Drawings and buildings are made for the client. A second commonplace occasionally follows whenever a friendly, human-centered, atmosphere of the building is promised. Man (human scale) is the measure of the building design. The good old Protagorean leitmotif so common since Renaissance humanism however is extremely ambiguous, contested and by no means universal. It depends on assumptions about man ("woman", "client", "user", …), and measure likewise. Both concepts are and have been open to multiple interpretations which are frequently not made explicit by the designers.

This is why two points will be critically investigated here: Who is forming the persona of the client and secondly: how do architects find or define human scale relations? How do designers know about the appropriateness of the artwork in terms of its human scale?

I will limit the scope of the analysis to a historical case of a mid-20th century German architect: Ernst Neufert, who died near Lausanne in 1986. Some address his well-known book Bauentwurfslehre (Architect's Data) as the bible of functionalism. The 1936 first edition has been reedited and even posthumously updated and revised until recently (44th German edition in 2024) and translated into many world languages. It is fair to say that this manual was the bestselling architectural book of the 20th century. It was conceptualized by an early Bauhaus-apprentice and later site manager of the Bauhaus building in Dessau in the studio of Walter Gropius.

Neufert mentions "man as a measure and aim" of all architectural design even in the book's lengthy subtitle. His writings, illustrated manuals more than text books, were frequently referring to human scale problems in architecture and they seem to stand in a long humanistic tradition since the Protagorean homo-mensura" interpretations of Renaissance architectural theory.

The author delivers a pragmatic approach to these delicate architect-client and human scale relations in architectural design. His main idea was, as Walter Gropius wrote in a review of the manual in 1936, to discuss "...the dimensions of all manner of utensils, furniture, rooms, and means of transport in our daily life as well as geometrical proportions in relation to our human body;" Gropius did not forget to praise the author for "...avoiding any theoretical aesthetic speculation" . Neufert delivers in his comic-like graphics of modern "man" all necessary dimensions of the plethora of objects and spaces he or she is surrounded with. From tableware to Zeppelins, from gardens to theatres, hospital beds to church benches, not to forget urns and crematoria. All minimum dimensions are compiled in an encyclopedia of measured objects. Whenever appropriate dimensions of a horse stable door for a medium-size horse and its rider are required on the drawing table, the answer can be quickly found on the relevant pages of the book.

But which assumptions are forming Neuferts' knowledge of human scale? How is this knowledge established, and who defines its appropriateness? Why are theoretical speculations to be avoided in such core questions of architecture? And which client did the author imagine for his human-centered architecture? I will elaborate some exemplary cases how client and human measure are the product of historic and contemporary discourses defined within and outside of the architectural expert circles.

One preliminary conclusion of the inquiry is: Whenever architects are singing the popular tune of the human-centeredness of their designs and its appropriateness for the client, a critical inquiry is urgently recommended. A closer analysis of professional knowledge and its time-bound discourses may help to better understand the implicit ideological assumptions of the human-centeredness in architecture production. These questions are too relevant to leave them to a rather hermetic circle of professionals alone.

Ethics of Dwelling and Positive Situation Work in Dementia Care

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Plessner writes that the human being is constitutively homeless. We find similar thoughts more generally in philosophical anthropology and phenomenology. This in turn means that it is an on-going task – posed to human beings on an ontological level – to create homely ways of being in the world. I will take my point of departure in such ideas and expand on various ways of translating this general existential pressure of world-open existence into more concrete notions of the ethics of dwelling. Then I will turn to the field of dementia care research in which I currently run a large research and practice development project in collaboration with a municipality in Denmark. I will argue that we need to supplement the paradigmatic person-centered care practices, that dominate the landscape of institutional dementia care, with a world-open and situation-oriented care ethical framework. Where the person-centered approach in quite concrete ways (e.g. by means of conceptual models and metaphors) orients care practices toward tending to the psychological needs of this or that individual, situational care orients explicitly toward the constitutive features of the situational space that more fundamentally affords care practices and interpersonal relations with a place to unfold. Positive situation work (vs. Kitwood's positive person work) offers a terminology of concrete kinds of generative engagement with care environments, which are conducive to a dynamic and spontaneous everyday life, and ultimately to the feeling of dwelling meaningfully in the world with dementia.

Designing for and with people with dementia: on materiality, the body and the relational

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This presentation starts from design research for people with dementia but places an even stronger emphasis on designing with them. The work is grounded in the Scandinavian tradition of Participatory Design (PD), in which participation is viewed not only as a pragmatic choice, but as a fundamentally political act. Central to this talk is the question of 'connectedness': a deep dive into the inextricable relationship between the design, its materiality, the person with dementia and their environment.

This lecture starts from the concept of the 'embodied self' and the 'self-in-the-now'. The person with dementia is not an isolated individual defined by cognitive failure, but a situated embodied agent: a networked individual existing through relationships with both people and things. Starting from seeing the person with dementia as a situated embodied agent asks for a critical re-examination of how their involvement in (participatory) design practices is perceived or measured (when does participation happen and how much participation did happen). Participation is not a matter of quantification, but a 'starting point' (or end goal) wherein explicit forms of participation are valued alongside implicit forms and embodied interactions. This requires a specific relational expertise from the designer-researcher. The designer does not stand outside the process but becomes an integral part of the relationship; our own subjectivity and 'backstage work' act as essential instruments. Drawing on the work of colleague-researcher Amber De Coen and Yoni Lefèvre as well as my own experience working embedded in the contexts of daily living and care of people with dementia, I illustrate how this 'constitutive entanglement' (referencing Orlikowski) operates in practice. In De Coen's work, we see how the 'subject' in non-verbal individuals only emerges through interaction with a material cue; the person and the object together 'perform' the act of communication. Lefèvre's work on sexuality and intimacy demonstrates how the current material arrangements of care homes (single beds, medicalized aesthetics) but also the larger care ecology actively construct an 'asexual elderly person'. By introducing new, sometimes provocative artifacts, we do not merely gather user requirements that work towards, but actively reconfigure the material reality of the person with dementia and the ones surrounding them. Design thus becomes performative: it holds the power to transcend the limited medical gaze and create conditions in which the person with dementia is seen as a unique individual. These insights into the micro-materiality of care offer valuable lessons for architectural and urban design interventions aiming to foster inclusive, caring environments for all.

Dwelling Between Transience and Permanence; Spaces Between Private and Public

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In the contemporary city, shaped by demographic, climatic, and economic transformations, the traditional notion of the home as a permanent and private asset confronts the growing mobility of today's populations. Students, migrants, seasonal workers, families, and other transient groups inhabit spaces temporarily, reshaping the typological and morphological structures of the city. The neighborhood thus becomes a critical scale, mediating between permanence and transience, and between individual and collective life.

Paris has emerged as a laboratory for such explorations through diverse architectural interventions that address transitory and intergenerational housing while engaging with the wider urban fabric. The Résidence pour étudiants et parking réversible at Paris-Saclay (Bruther & Baukunst, 2020) demonstrates how adaptability and a mixed community of users can respond to future needs. Students, residents, and other users coexist within the same building, engaging with the surrounding context through collective and shared spaces on the ground floor.

The Migrant Workers' Social Housing (Atelier Philéas, 2017) is organized into three distinct blocks providing 131 fully equipped studio units. The building is carefully integrated into the urban fabric, creating a village-like environment where individual living and communal life coexist, while the project remains an active part of the neighborhood.

Finally, A Common House in Pantin (Plan Común, 2023), following the studio's Common Places research project, emphasizes the political and social role of shared facilities, laundry, kitchen, greenhouse, and terraces, as instruments of resistance to the commodification of housing. The coexistence of private units and collective amenities produces permeability between domestic and public realms, strengthening community bonds.

Taken together, these three cases exemplify diverse strategies that demonstrate how architecture can mediate between transitory conditions and stable communities. By structuring the relationship between private and collective space, these interventions connect residents with the neighborhood, support a diverse mix of users across ages, abilities, and cultures, and provide insights for the development of intergenerational cities.

Flexible Homes for Intergenerational Cities: Contemporary Lessons from Milan and Barcelona

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This research examines how housing can adapt to the evolving needs of urban populations, focusing on flexibility, inclusivity, and intergenerational usability. Drawing on case studies in Milan and Barcelona, it identifies six spatial strategies—sequence, geometry, rotation, structure, freedom, and efficiency—that support adaptable domestic environments capable of accommodating diverse household sizes, ages, and abilities.

Contemporary analysis reveals that flexible floor plans enhance circulation, blur rigid boundaries between private and communal spaces, and enable multifunctional use of rooms. Modular structures and geometric adjustments create long-term adaptability, while rotational and sequential arrangements improve spatial intelligibility and legibility, allowing inhabitants to navigate and co-create their environment. These strategies directly address demographic shifts, including ageing populations, smaller households, and multicultural urban communities, demonstrating how housing can support well-being, social interaction, and intergenerational cohabitation.

Interpreted through phenomenology, embodied cognition, and affordance theory, the findings highlight how domestic spaces shape lived experience and interaction across generations. Importantly, these principles extend beyond individual apartments: they inform neighborhood-scale design by fostering walkable, adaptable, and socially inclusive urban environments.

This poster presents contemporary insights into designing domestic and urban space that is responsive to evolving life patterns. By foregrounding adaptability, legibility, and inclusivity, it illustrates how architecture can support cities where people of all ages and abilities can thrive, navigate, and co-create the social and cultural fabric of the urban environment.

Transitional Spaces as Intergenerational Encounters: Creating Inclusive Community-Based Healthcare Environments

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Against the backdrop of global ageing, healthcare architecture faces the challenge of moving beyond a mono-functional, age-segregated model towards one that fosters community integration. While gerontological design research has often focused exclusively on the elderly, this research proposes that community-based healthcare facilities for ageing populations can serve as vital nodes within the intergenerational city. It specifically examines the potential of strategically designing transitional spaces as catalysts for intergenerational encounters.

This research is underpinned by a combined theory-driven and design-driven approach. Theoretically, it brings together concepts from environmental gerontology and space syntax to establish a framework centered on "movement," "proximity," and "inclusivity." Through a systematic analysis of European case studies including daycare centres and nursing homes categorized into distinct spatial configurations (linear, radial, loop, composite)—the research identifies ten key elements of transitional spaces. These are analysed as Circulation Spaces (e.g., corridors, ramps) and Threshold Spaces (e.g., entrances, arcades), with particular attention to their role in fulfilling socio-spatial needs.

Findings indicate that well-designed transitional spaces not only support elderly mobility but also enhance spatial connectivity and permeability. By creating intelligible, safe, and accessible environments, such spaces become prerequisites for intergenerational use. Rethinking these "in-between" spaces allows healthcare architecture to evolve from a destination focused solely on care into a broader community resource. The outcome offers a design toolkit that translates empirical and theoretical insights into spatial principles, encouraging spontaneous encounters and sustained engagement among the elderly, families, staff, and the wider community. Ultimately, this research contends that such community-based healthcare environments—bridging the micro-scale of building design and the meso-scale of neighbourhood planning—can serve as prototypes for an inclusive, navigable, and socially cohesive intergenerational city.
Keywords: Ageing Community, Healthcare Architectural Design, Transitional Spaces, Intergenerational Encounter

Interdisciplinary Justices and how they relate to intergenerational cities

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Housing in the UK has become weaponized and a major barrier to unlocking housing development is the commodification of the housing sector. Research to date on housing, health and ageing recognizes a tension between age-friendly principles and ideologies of urban regeneration. Similarly, research suggests that successful sustainable housing development occurs when priority is given to space equity and intergenerational living concepts. Such positions are theorized through frameworks of spatial and intergenerational justice. However, against the backdrop of the climate emergency and an ageing population, consideration of a third justice – environmental justice – offers new perspectives on the design of cities and spaces of intergenerational environmental resilience. This paper explores the intersections of three interdisciplinary justices and the possibilities which they present to intergenerational cities.

Neighborhoods of Memory

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Historical urban environments play a crucial role in maintaining spatial and social orientation, especially for individuals who are ageing or experiencing cognitive decline. This presentation addresses the growing challenge of disorientation associated with dementia, examining how neighborhoods can function as familiar environments that promote orientation, trust and a sense of belonging. It argues that disorientation is not only a cognitive issue, but also a spatial and cultural one, triggered by radical urban transformations. Conceptually, the research integrates insights from urban morphology, phenomenology and affordance-based approaches to human–environment relations. It explores how familiarity emerges through the continuity of urban form and habitual situational types. The proposition is that neighborhoods act as external repositories of collective and individual memory, facilitating orientation even when personal memory deteriorates. The findings suggest that historically evolved urban forms and situational types provide a rich landscape of affordances that can mitigate disorientation by supporting embodied habits and social interaction. The presentation concludes that rethinking neighborhoods as caring environments of familiarity provides an alternative to isolated institutional care and purely individualized domestic settings. This approach has implications for urban design, heritage practice and care policy, advocating neighbourhood-based intergenerational coexistence.

Space syntax and user experience: Co-presence, social interaction and the need for some loneliness

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This lecture revisits the concept of *co-presence* within the discipline of space syntax: a central theoretical tenet of this field, co-presence results from the spatial configuration of cities with movement acting as a critical mediator in its creation. It is often regarded as the least demanding form of social interaction AND a precondition for social interaction - an affordance for a 'meaningful' exchange to potentially occur and the raw material for the creation of a community.

Space syntax as a theory proposes that space is intrinsic to human activities and, as a method, it embeds human perception and experience in its representation and analysis of space by modelling what can be seen and experienced by a human within a space. It implicitly addresses the relation between humans and physical form, aligned with evidence from cognitive science showing that geometric and topological factors are involved in navigation, leading to specific patterns of aggregated movement, and varying degrees of opportunity for social interactions.

In this lecture, I will review recent empirical studies using space syntax to understand the relationship between urban form, sociability, social activities and interactions, and behaviours that take place in public space. While the state of the art certainly shows that spatial configuration can and does influence social encounters and exchanges – suggesting that sociability can also be designed – the quality of such encounters, the demographics and cultural norms of those interacting are not often studied or well understood. Integration with other disciplines such as sociology, environmental psychology and phenomenology would enrich the understanding of social interactions in public space.

Furthermore, conflict among co-present groups and avoidance of co-presence either through residential location choices or public space use is a much less studied topic in space syntax scholarship, but an equally important part of how people structure their use of space and how this relates to cultural norms, gender, age and neurodiversity.

While co-awareness and peaceful co-presence in space remain fundamental elements of social cohesion, inclusive and intergenerational cities should provide spatial affordances meeting the needs of different groups, as well as sustaining mixed uses in cities' cores.

Perception of place identity through sensations

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The research was designed based on the recognition that urban aging involves multiple dimensions that go beyond physical infrastructure. Although elements such as accessible sidewalks, safe crossings, and adequate public transportation are fundamental, but not cover all the dimensions necessary for healthy aging. Urban space needs also be understood as a place of social bonds, memories, and symbolic meanings, which directly influence the active permanence of older adults in their living environments.

But how the urban environment—understood as the set of perceptions, experiences, and relationships established in space—is linked to walkability for the promotion of healthy aging. This approach allowed us to advance beyond previous approaches, which often focused on the physical aspects of urban infrastructure, by also considering subjective and affective factors that shape the experience of aging in cities.

The study revealed that urban aging cannot be understood exclusively on the basis of physical infrastructure indicators, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage, but demonstrated that the meanings attributed for the:

1. Sense of belonging to the urban space – Tsai et al. (2019), who highlight the role of collective memory and urban identity in keeping older adults in their territories.

2. Subjective and emotional well-being – as in Wang et al. (2020), who highlight the influence of urban vegetation on environmental comfort and the perception of well-being.

3. Social and community ties – as in Lee et al. (2021), who analyze community interventions aimed at the social and emotional engagement of older adults.

4. Symbolic ambience and urban memory – studies such as Araújo & Silva (2020) highlight the emotional value of aging in a community, reinforcing the affective and cultural continuity of the territory, while Choi et al. (2020) show how urban spaces can be perceived as places of emotional belonging, even in the face of physical limitations.

Micro Productive Devices for a Shared City

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Contemporary cities, shaped by zoning and functional segregation, often exclude rather than include: productive spaces are pushed to the periphery, while housing, education and public facilities are designed for isolated age groups. This fragmentation undermines both social interaction and intergenerational exchange. In contrast, the intergenerational city requires infrastructures that enable proximity, accessibility, and mutual care across different age groups and abilities. This poster proposes a design strategy based on small-scale productive devices, such as modular micro vertical farms, that act as social condensers in the urban fabric. Far from being merely technological artifacts, these devices reintroduce everyday production into the city, making cultivation a shared practice that fosters sociality and awareness of food cycles. Their accessibility and adaptability allow them to function as inclusive spaces for children, students, elderly people and residents with different bodily or cognitive abilities.

Two scales of implementation are explored. On the building scale, these devices can be integrated within student housing, schools, or public facilities, strengthening the concept of social housing by providing common grounds for interaction, learning and care. On the neighborhood scale, they can be installed in courtyards, vacant lots, or semi-public thresholds, becoming nodes of community life that regenerate underused spaces and stimulate intergenerational encounters in everyday urban settings.

Through a series of selected case studies, the poster illustrates how such devices can connect architectural design with ecological technologies and community practices, addressing the meso-scale of the city – the scale often overlooked between individual buildings and global sustainability indicators. It argues that accessible, legible, and productive devices can act as affordances for intergenerationality, inviting diverse groups to co-create and navigate their lifeworlds together. In doing so, the poster contributes to rethinking how technology and architecture can support inclusive, walkable and sustainable urban futures.

La Esperanza: an intergenerational corridor for ecological and social reconnection

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La Esperanza proposes the regeneration of the Monjas River corridor in Quito, Ecuador, transforming a landscape of environmental risk and social exclusion into an intergenerational urban fabric. The project redefines the river as social infrastructure and a carrier of collective memory: an axis that stitches together native-species reforestation, risk mitigation, resettlement solutions, and a continuous green belt of naturalized parks and urban gardens.

The intervention prioritizes neighborhood scale and accessibility within the logic of the "15-minute city," enabling people of all ages and abilities to live, move and participate autonomously. Its methodological core is participatory workshops: across generations, residents identified the activities they value most (from children's play to productive practices and communal rituals) and these demands were translated directly into the project's objects and interventions. Rather than imposing foreign uses, the proposal formalizes and enhances what already functions in everyday life, giving it space, form and governance.

Spatially, La Esperanza materializes collective memory through thresholds, pedestrian bridges and gathering places that make the site legible to different generations and multiply opportunities for use for children, older adults and people with reduced mobility. By weaving together ecology, urban health and cultural practice, the project offers a replicable meso-urban strategy: a neighborhood that relearns how to be habitat, promoting wellbeing, environmental justice and intergenerational continuity.

This abstract refers to my project, the winner of 2025 edition of the international urban design competition: Students Reinventing Cities, by C40.

Surveying the city's 'ripped backsides':
Explorations in contemporary archaeology

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In Iggy Pop's (1977) well-known and phenomenologically-themed album track, The Passenger', he describes how he 'rides and he rides' in a friend's car, reportedly in North America and Europe, taking in the ocean, dawn and dusk, the night sky and, most famously, the 'ripped backsides' of those cities they must have frequently passed through. One could assume the term 'ripped backsides' to have negative connotations, implying post-industrial decline, poverty, and the semi- (if not total) abandonment of those areas known to often experience social problems such as poor levels of education, crime and poverty, all of which are inevitably interconnected. The term probably describes urban districts shortly prior to regeneration programs and also, therefore, their gentrification, having been labelled as areas in urgent need of 'improvement'. But given Iggy Pop's long career as a punk musician, it is more likely the opposite. He is probably celebrating the 'ripped backsides', not lamenting them, recognizing their distinct character, and their significance as cultural landscapes to the forgotten and marginalized people who live there, often under the radar.

In this paper I use my background as a contemporary archaeologist and heritage specialist with particular interests in the ordinary and the everyday, to explore some of these areas that one might characterize as the 'ripped backsides' of cities, focusing on three in particular: Bristol (UK), Berlin (Germany), and Valletta (Malta). In undertaking this exploration, I will demonstrate how an archaeological lens can shed new light on urban change and help to recognize and document continuity, highlighting issues including the embodiment of memory and the legibility and the persistence of character, even where buildings are lost. I will draw influence from architect and theorist Jane Jacobs, architect Greg Keeffe, from phenomenology, and from Historic England's characterization work, to frame these three examples. I will also discuss the contemporary meaning and role of heritage and how a broader definition of what constitutes heritage (drawn from the 2005 Council of Europe 'Faro' Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society) can ensure that all people retain access to their heritage of choice, giving them a stronger sense of identity and of belonging, and therefore also of ontological security. For some people, the 'ripped backsides' are meaningful, significant and often vital heritage places, not least because they are also, often, their homes.

Mourning Places

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This paper examines how place-making scaffolds collective processes of mourning within the living environment by creating places that invite storytelling, reflection, and shared experience in the aftermath of loss. We follow writer Geerteke van Lierop in the documentary Landscapes of Resilience, tracing her journey from personal grief after the death of her partner to encounters with tsunami memorial practices in Japan. Along the way, she engages with places created for public recollection of disaster as well as sites that foster intimate acts of remembrance, such as making a phone call to someone who is no longer there.

We introduce a novel qualitative narrative analysis that integrates architectural methodologies into the textual analysis of van Lierop's interviews with the makers of these sites. Through this approach, we show how such places foster imaginative dialogue, material endurance, and communal narration.

We analyse three sites of mourning: the Wind Phone, the Ruins of a Utility Store, and the Houraikan Inn, by attending to: (1) their material and spatial arrangements, (2) the ways these places shape the narrative flow of interviews, and (3) the phenomenological orientations toward presence and absence that emerge within them. Our aim is to understand how places invite and sustain both collective and individual mourning by scaffolding storytelling. We conceptualize these sites as intimate places (Habets et al., 2024).

We argue that such places orient mourners toward absence not as a void, but as a dynamic field of presence–absence that enables the working through of thoughts, memories, and feelings that might otherwise be suppressed, avoided, or resisted. In doing so, these places provide scaffolding for meaning-making, resilience, and the integration of loss into everyday life. They reveal how living environments that bear the scars of loss can transform landscapes of grief into landscapes of resilience.

Urban Space, Cultural Memory, and Street Art: WASTA as an Intergenerational Project

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What does an inclusive urban environment look like, and how can street art contribute to making the history of contemporary cities more legible and their spaces more socially accessible? This paper addresses these questions through the case study of the WASTA Project, a street art festival organized by the University of Cologne in 2024. It examines the roles of street art as both an aesthetic practice and an expression of agency in public space with significant social reach.

Developed in an academic context and implemented directly in the urban environment, WASTA sought to connect research with practice by providing opportunities for participation to university staff, students, independent artists, cultural institutions, local residents, and tourists. At the same time, it established a dialogue between historical materials and contemporary artistic expression, thereby bridging generational and cultural gaps.

The project's main challenge – and at the same time its most innovative feature – was to connect a two-hundred-year-old historical framework and current urban realities. It set the weight of archival and scholarly material from a German figure of Goethe's era against the immediacy and visibility of contemporary street art, which created a productive confrontation between academic knowledge and artistic experimentation.

WASTA was "intergenerational" not only because it brought together people of different ages and social backgrounds take part in a street art festival, but also because it staged an encounter between the values of an intellectual world of the past and the concerns of contemporary society. The central problem it addressed was how to integrate the memory of an influential historical figure into the modern city in a sustainable and contextually meaningful way. More broadly, the project raised the question of whether street art as a mediating practice in urban space can foster critical engagement with public history.

Atmospheric Legacies: A New-Phenomenological Study of Intergenerational Memory in Cologne's Aachener Berg and Kalkberg

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How do the material traces of past generations in urban landscapes shape (and become shaped by) the memory and identity of living communities? Our research begins from the idea that urban landscapes are layered narratives (Iovino, 2014) that sustain public memory (Hayden, 1995), and that generations, understood as distinct "mnemonic communities" (Pieck, 2023), engage with this memory, particularly traumatic memory, in different ways.

We examine two prototypical "intergenerational landforms" in Cologne: Aachener Berg, a rubble hill created from the WWII bombing, and Kalkberg, a mound of industrial waste accumulated by the Chemische Fabrik Kalk. These sites function as dynamic archives rather than static monuments, continually incorporating the past (Ingold, 2013).

We propose that generations constitute distinct mnemonic communities that experience the same place differently. To investigate this, we apply a phenomenological atmospheric framework inspired by Tonino Griffero (Griffero, 2014a). This approach analyses the mounds not as collections of elements, but as expressive, gestaltic atmospheres.

Their intergenerational significance, we argue, emerges as an affectively charged quality grounded in the lived body, understood here as resonant "sounding board" (Griffero, 2020, 79). Griffero's explicit theorization of "earthy atmospheres" (2020, 150–156) further informs our analysis.

Our central question is: How does the specific atmospheric charge of these landscapes mediate the transmission of intergenerational histories, especially traumatic ones?

Methodologically, we combine phenomenological analysis with archival research, walking interviews, and sensory ethnography. We contrast Aachener Berg, now part of Cologne's Green Belt, with the inaccessible, contested Kalkberg. This comparison allows us to study processes of forgetting (Sebald, 2003) and memorialization not only in official markers but in the felt quality of place.

The poster will present findings on how these material atmospheres shape intergenerational dialogue, proposing a model for urban landscapes as a phatic, living interface between past and present.

Gardens, Parks and Recreation: intergenerational wellbeing through an enactive lens

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From a global perspective, humanity is faced both with an ageing population and reported decline in wellbeing across diverse age groups. One means of addressing this is via the creation of purpose-built intergenerational spaces for recreation, especially gardens and parks. Such spaces cultivate a range of well-researched sociological benefits, particularly for elderly persons and young children, including knowledge exchange, positive (inter-)affectivity, access to diverse social milieu, increased resilience, intergenerational respect, and empowerment through creating-a-culture-in-action (Heslop and Caes, 2025). Alongside these sociological benefits, there exist a range of wider cultural advantages to intergenerational spaces. For instance, as well as directly catering to an elderly population and thereby reducing pressure on overburdened health & social care systems, there is a reinvocation of what is seen as 'lost' community spirit, with such spaces offering younger generations an escape from pervasive virtual immersion whilst simultaneously offering older persons an escape from the isolation of Western modernity.

What remains underexplored, however, are the cognitive underpinnings of the aforementioned benefits. Focusing on older persons and children, and by leveraging an enactive perspective, it will be shown that the interactional dynamics that unfold in intergenerational gardens and parks tend to be inclusive due to egalitarian forms of participatory sense-making (De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007). This is significant in that such demographics often implicitly assume subordinate roles within interaction dynamics, which may impact negatively on wellbeing. Moreover, once this stance is taken, a range of pedagogical benefits are also uncovered, such as metacognitive self-regulation, misconception-centred learning, 'peer' feedback, and socio-embodied memory associations.

Consequently, intergenerational spaces are beneficial beyond a sociological perspective; they are also places in which wellbeing is protected and enhanced through cognitive dynamics.

Narrative Interactions as a Practice of Critical Art of Living: Intergenerational Coexistence in Urban Space

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How can vulnerable individuality be protected within urban coexistence without this protection turning into paternalism or loneliness? Our poster shows, from the perspective of phenomenology and Critical Art of Living (Kritische Lebenskunst), how narrative interactions in urban space can enable intergenerational understanding while maintaining a balance between protection and self-determination for vulnerable individuals.

Reformulating a concise remark by Wilhelm Schapp in contemporary terms, one may say: "History stands for the human being." Human beings are always already entangled in stories (in Geschichten verstrickt) that begin before their own birth, accompany them throughout life, and extend beyond their lifetime. We always enter an already narrated world. Stories are, in this sense, Ur-phenomena (Urphänomene). The spaces of these intergenerational entanglements permeate urban lifeworlds: in schools, neighborhoods, hospitals, or care facilities, the life stories of different generations intersect, offering the possibility of deepened mutual understanding.

Despite these entanglements, we remain, as Leibniz insists, individuals. Especially in urban environments shaped by general solutions and standardized, purpose-bound "what-for things" ("Wozu-Dinge"), the individual risks becoming unrecognizable. In this context, what Locke identified as a fundamental dimension of personhood is easily overlooked: the concern for one's own happiness. This is where the approach of Critical Art of Living connects: it understands self-care not as a purely private project but as an intersubjective—and thus also intergenerational—competence that unfolds in interaction with others. This dimension of Critical Art of Living becomes particularly crucial in vulnerable situations such as old age, illness, or social precarity—and should be supported by urban spaces.

We argue that intergenerational storytelling and listening represent a central urban resource for enabling this interplay. To achieve this, cities must be designed as spaces that allow for dialogue and resonance while preserving the temporal depth of life stories. Building such spaces is a shared task—a we-project, a Wir-Geschichte—that can only be accomplished together.

Social circularity for Intergenerational Engagement in Urban Precincts

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Urban environments face mounting pressures from demographic ageing, climate change, and socio-economic inequalities, demanding approaches that foster both ecological resilience and social inclusivity. While circular economy (CE) research has emphasized material and environmental loops, its social dimension, particularly intergenerational engagement (IGE), remains underexplored. One fast-emerging strand within this social turn explores intergenerational engagement programs that invite children, youth, adults, and older people to co-learn, co-create, and co-govern urban spaces. This poster presents ongoing doctoral research investigating how social circularity can be intentionally integrated into urban systems through design, policy frameworks, and community-led initiatives.

The study positions IGE as a driver of urban resilience, moving beyond age-segregated approaches and one-off participatory practices. Drawing on urban sociology, planning theory, and policy strategies, the research develops an eight-value framework of social circularity: intergenerational interaction, inclusivity and accessibility, community resilience, co-creation, shared resources, cultural transfer, policy integration, and identity-building. Methodologically, it applies a grounded theory approach, combining literature synthesis with case study analysis in Victorian neighborhoods, with a focus on neutral and democratic spaces where generational diversity converges.

Preliminary findings highlight that design affordances alone are insufficient; sustained IGE requires active programming, cross-sector partnerships, and supportive policy mechanisms. The research contributes to ongoing debates on how cities can operationalize intergenerationally as a structural principle of urban planning rather than a demographic afterthought. By identifying barriers and showcasing emerging practices, it proposes a data-driven framework for embedding intergenerational values in circular precincts.

This contribution is relevant by linking CE principles with intergenerational theory; the poster invites dialogue on how cities might regenerate not only materials and energy but also social relations across generations, an essential step toward inclusive, walkable, and sustainable urban futures.

Co-designing cities for mental health

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Urban mental health has in recent years become a research field where interesting and contested new alliances between the life sciences and the social sciences have been established. On the one hand, over the past twenty years, a growing number of studies in psychiatry have investigated urban dimensions of psychosis ('urbanicity'). This research has progressively moved beyond classic forms of spatial epidemiology to investigate urban mental health in situ, using for instance smartphone-enabled momentary assessments. On the other hand, building on previous work on the ethnographies, sociologies and geographies of mental health, studies in the social sciences have recently begun to develop mobile biosocial methods to study urban ecologies of mental health. Situated at this interdisciplinary juncture between life sciences and social sciences, my talk will first draw on two previous projects, using video-recorded walk-alongs and bio-sensory ethnographies, to study how participants living with a diagnosis of psychosis experience urban milieus. Second, I will explain how we moved from the results of these studies to a present participatory action research where we are implementing an urban living lab in the city of Lausanne, Switzerland. This living lab uses participatory mapping to elaborate and experiment urban interventions aiming to foster a milieu more favorable for a recovery from psychosis. I will conclude reflecting on three broader issues related to this research: porous boundaries between bodies and environments in new geographies of health, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the development of 'psy commons'.

Between Childhood and Care: Mediating Communities and Environments in Modern Architecture

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The 1949 issue of L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui dedicated to architecture and the child attests to the multiplicity of functional typologies, formal expressions, and scales encompassed by this architectural stance, including examples such as Figini and Pollini's nursery school for Olivetti in Ivrea, André Lurçat's open-air colony in Mériel, and Patroklos Karantinos's school buildings in Athens. These projects formed part of an exceptionally diverse spectrum of architectural approaches to design for children in those decades – embodying Modern Movement principles through regional appropriations – that reflected both the complexity and urgency of the matter. Aimed at strengthening the bodies and spirits of the young during temporary stays away from home through exposure to nature, sunlight, and fresh air, some of the presented categories embraced more than one function – ranging from hospitality to disease prevention and alleviation, physical training and education, play and recreation – and, therefore, intersected between the individual and collective scales.

By adopting a comparative approach, this paper explores the architectural development of hybrid buildings for the child, focusing on modernist projects in Italy and Greece, among them children's villages, heliotherapy colonies, holiday camps and paidopoleis. In particular, it examines architectural design strategies – shaped by prevalent healthcare treatments, as well as shifting social and political contexts – which centered on childcare, formation, and nurture, seeking to define efficient educational, medical, and formative spatial environments. By expressing recurrent typological and architectural principles, as well as renewed means of representation, the presented examples testify to the in-depth, coordinated, and interdisciplinary attention that design for children and youth received in the inter- and postwar periods, addressing both health-inducing and educational dimensions.

Within this framework, the paper examines the role of the design project in organizing the transitions between building and context, nature and artifice, inside and outside, toward the broader aim of providing efficient, stimulating, and participatory spaces for childhood. It explores how specific children-based projects, through their spatial and formal qualities, contributed to the emergence of design approaches oriented toward the environmental dimension of collective buildings.

Particular attention is placed on how the architectural project addressed the relationship between architecture and the natural environment in both operational and perceptual terms – mediating between built form and environmental performance – with the aim of mitigating the impact of disease, enhancing spatial experience, and fostering engagement.
As contemporary care-based architectures for the child increasingly emerge as interfaces between urban and natural contexts, in light of pressing sustainability demands, these aims remain highly relevant today. Revisiting modern visions of an enhanced relationship between users, environments, and communities may hold the key to expanding a design stance which, by centering on programs for the youth, informed new approaches to architectural functionalism.

Promoting Inclusive Urban Accessibility and Walkability through Digital Technologies

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People with mobility restrictions, including wheelchair users, older adults, and individuals with situational mobility challenges, frequently encounter barriers when using standard digital maps to plan walking routes in urban environments. Most mapping and routing services are designed for the general population and therefore overlook built environment elements that critically influence movement, such as sidewalk width, pavement condition, curb ramps, slopes, and crossings. To address this gap, enriched and regularly updated datasets capturing spatial accessibility are required. However, traditional field surveys for such data collection are costly, time-intensive, and difficult to scale, whereas participatory mapping represents a more efficient, inclusive, and scalable approach.

The community science project ZuriACT, a collaboration between the City of Zurich and the University of Zurich, established the foundation for enriching accessibility data in District 1. Using web applications such as Project Sidewalk and an enhanced Infra3D platform, ZuriACT enabled remote accessibility data collection based on street-view imagery. People with diverse mobility needs were involved in the design and data collection process itself, ensuring the resulting datasets reflected actual priorities and real-world barriers. This demonstrated that participatory mapping can produce more inclusive, user-centered digital maps.

Building on this foundation, the follow-up project ZuReach (Zurich Urban Reachability & Accessibility Enhancement through Digital Technology, Nov. 2024–Oct 2026) scales ZuriACT city-wide using co-creative participatory methods. ZuReach will develop a new web-based platform for virtual crowdsourcing of sidewalk accessibility information that integrates and extends previous tools. The supplementary data generated by this new web tool will serve as the cornerstone for future applications, including personalized routing services and advancing toward the partial automation of sidewalk accessibility data detection through the utilization of deep learning as a needed basis for scaling up the project findings generated at a lower level. By embedding mobility-restricted populations into the design, use, and evaluation of the system, ZuReach aims to improve urban reachability, strengthen social inclusion, and create a sustainable framework for accessibility-enriched digital maps that can be adopted across Zurich and transferable to other cities and regions.

Accessibility Mapping Methodology: Experiences in Urban and Rural Contexts

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This research focuses on the implementation of knowledge about disability in architectural education, on the one hand, and the evaluation of built space, on the other. At this conference, a methodology for mapping barriers will be presented. The past research focused on a comparative analysis of the neighbourhoods Cerak Vinogradi and Višnjička Banja in Belgrade, Serbia, and the smaller spa settlement of Sokobanja in southern Serbia. One of the goals of the presentation is to compare experiences and differences in mapping between dense urban and less-dense rural neighbourhoods.

The mapping methodology explores the alignment of infrastructure with wheelchairs. Assistive technologies (AT) are specialised technologies people use to adapt how they perform tasks. AT, combined with properly designed spaces, enable access for people with disabilities. The use of assistive technologies is accompanied by a series of challenges caused by disorganised and non-adapted buildings and outdoor spaces. Mapping as a research methodology is based on a mechanism for identifying activities that can improve accessibility in a report on accessibility in Mongolia (Patrick, McKinnon, & Austin, 2020). The essence of this approach lies in identifying a barrier, determining the conditions and requirements for its removal, identifying responsible actors, and implementing appropriate measures in accordance with these requirements.

The main objective of the developing mapping methodology is to identify barriers, while the results define the conditions and requirements for overcoming them. The results of this methodology can be used by local authorities to invest in removing barriers and to provide accessibility maps for users.

Out of the Woods: Revitalization project of Sanatorium Brestovac

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This project investigates the adaptive reuse of disused healthcare architecture, beginning with an extensive study of sanatorium typologies that contextualizes the evolution of these modernist healing environments and their entanglement with landscape, medicine, and community. What began as an ideology of "healing through nature, sun, and air" – from early "nature communes" such as Monte Verità – developed into the institutionalized practice of tuberculosis treatment in the early and mid-20th century.

Within this broader context, the Brestovac Sanatorium in Zagreb (Croatia) emerges as a significant case study and the focus of the project. Built in 1909 in the Medvednica forest, Brestovac was a groundbreaking early 20th-century tuberculosis facility that combined modernist ideals of light, air, and nature with utilitarian design. Once a symbol of medical progress in Southeast Europe, today it stands in ruins within the Medvednica forest, charged with cultural memory and emotional significance for the local community.

This adaptive reuse project proposes a transformation of the surviving sanatorium building into a "collaborative residence for longevity" – a model of senior living that goes beyond accommodation to foster intergenerational interaction and community engagement. Rooted in the site's historical ethos of care and healing, the design integrates forest surroundings with architectural renewal, creating transparent, communal spaces that invite encounters between residents, nature park visitors, and the local population in general.

Drawing on Fred Scott's concept of adaptive reuse as an ongoing dialogue with the past, the thesis argues that architectural heritage should be engaged as a dynamic resource rather than a static artifact. The intervention preserves modernist features such as horizontality, terraces, and openness, while reimagining them for contemporary needs. At the same time, Robert Geddes' notion of reciprocal relationships between architecture and landscape informs a design approach that blurs boundaries between interior and exterior, reinforcing the therapeutic role of nature.

By addressing challenges of aging such as loneliness and vulnerability within a restorative, community-oriented setting, the project demonstrates how adaptive reuse can support social sustainability. The Brestovac redevelopment thus offers a framework for intergenerational cities, where memory, architecture, and landscape converge to create inclusive environments that enhance well-being and continuity across generations.