



University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia
University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty

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RCA REGIONAL CONTEXTUALISATION IN ARCHITECTURE

The Spirit of Place – Cultivating Identity in the Built Environment

CONFERENCE TRACKS

- T1: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Architecture: Preserving Local Identity**
- T2: Settlement Typologies in Contemporary Context**
- T3: Urban Density and the Image of Place**
- T4: The Role of Infrastructure in Shaping Regional Identity**
- T5: Ecology, Identity and the Built Environment: Integrating Ecology and Architectural Form**
- T6: Community-Based Design and its Influence on Identity of Place**
- T7: Economic Paradigms and Place Identity: Growth, Degrowth and Built Environments**
- T8: Identity by Design and Challenges of Climate Change**
- T9: Public Space and the Construction of Collective Identity**
- T10: Light and Built Environment: Shaping the Identity of Place**
- T11: Narratives Between Place and Space**

T1: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Architecture: Preserving Local Identity

Track chair: **prof. dr. Alenka Fikfak**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Track co-chair: **prof. mag. Tadej Glažar**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Exploration of the dynamic relationship between tradition and innovation in contemporary architectural practice will be debated within the wider context of preservation of distinctive local identities by design. The track examines how architects navigate the tension between respecting historical precedents and embracing new technologies and ideas. The focus is on how this interplay shapes and preserves local identity. Discussions will include the adaptation of vernacular forms, the use of local materials and the integration of contemporary design with traditional building practices. The track encourages exploration of case studies where tradition and innovation have successfully contributed to a strong sense of place. It also considers the challenges of balancing cultural preservation with the need for progress and development.

Keywords: tradition, innovation, local identity, sense of place, cultural preservation

T2: Settlement Typologies in Contemporary Context

Track chair: **assist. prof. dr. Tomaž Pipan**, University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty

Track co-chair: **assist. dr. Kristijan Lavtižar**

Historically local materials, climate, topography and production systems shaped the settlement pattern, its distinct character and its structure. In turn, the hamlets, villages and cities set the stage for distinct cultural identity. In contemporary times however, global production chains reproduce standardized materials, technologies and building approaches. This standardization brought about enlargement of historical settlements creating ever more complex and unreadable (sprawling?) spatial organizations. What are these new settlement types? Do these new typologies still support a contextual character and identity of landscape and its settlements? Does a contextual urban form exist in contemporary times? Can we create policies to support such contextualism?

Keywords: settlement typology, globalisation, local character

T3: Urban Density and the Image of Place

Track chair: **assoc. prof. dr. Ilka Čerpes**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Track co-chair: **assist. dr. Jernej Červek**, Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Republic of Slovenia

The complex relationship between urban density and the image of a place are in the focus of this track. It tackles how different densities affect the character, vibrancy and liveability of the cities. Discussions will cover the impact of density on social life and interactions, and the overall urban experience. The track also examines how density contributes to or detracts from a city's unique identity. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful approaches to urban density are welcome in this track. The track aims to understand how urban design and planning can manage density to create positive and distinctive urban environments.

Keywords: urban density, livability of cities, urban experience, urban environments

T4: The Role of Infrastructure in Shaping Regional Identity

Track chair: **assist. prof. dr. Luka Mladenovič**, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

Track co-chair: **assoc. prof. dr. Lea Petrovič Krajnik**, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Architecture

Track 3 examines the often-overlooked influence of infrastructure on regional identity. It investigates how transportation networks, energy systems, communication technologies, and other infrastructure elements shape a region's character and connectivity. The track will consider how infrastructure investments can support regional development while also respecting and reinforcing local identities. Discussions will cover the social, economic and environmental impacts of infrastructure projects. The track encourages the exploration of innovative approaches to infrastructure design that contribute to a stronger sense of place.

Keywords: regional identity, connectivity, infrastructure, infrastructure design

T5: Ecology, Identity and the Built Environment: Integrating Ecology and Architectural Form

Track chair: **prof. dr. Saja Kosanović**, University of Priština in Kosovska Mitrovica, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Department of Architecture

Track co-chair: **prof. dr. Martina Zbašnik Senegačnik**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture
The link between ecology, identity and the built environment is explored through understanding how integrating ecological principles into architectural and urban form can contribute to both environmental sustainability and a stronger sense of place. The track will cover topics such as biophilic design, green infrastructure, nature-based solutions and the use of natural systems in urban planning. Discussions aim to focus on how ecological design can enhance biodiversity, improve air and water quality and create more liveable and resilient cities. The track encourages exploration of case studies where ecological design has successfully contributed to a unique and sustainable place identity.

Keywords: ecology, biodiversity, identity, built environment, environmental sustainability, resilient cities, sense of place

T6: Community-Based Design and its Influence on Identity of Place

Track chair: **assoc. prof. dr. Blaž Križnik**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Asian studies

Track co-chair: **Manca Gjura Godec**, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

Community engagement plays a vital role in shaping the identity of place. The track explores how participatory design processes can empower local residents and ensure that the built environment reflects their needs, values and aspirations. Different models of community-based design and their impact on architectural and urban form are examined. Discussions will cover the challenges and opportunities of involving diverse communities and stakeholders in the design process and put light into question how community participation can contribute to a stronger sense of ownership and belonging, and ultimately, a more authentic and meaningful place identity.

Keywords: community, participatory design, sense of ownership and belonging, place identity

T7: Economic Paradigms and Place Identity: Growth, Degrowth and Built Environments

Track chair: **assist. prof. dr. Janez Peter Grom**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Track co-chair: **assoc. prof. dr. Samo Drobne**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering

Relationships between economic paradigms, growth/degrowth and their impact on place identity are usually complex and dynamic. The track examines how economic forces shape the built environment and how these changes, in turn, affect how we perceive and experience place. The track will consider the social, cultural and environmental consequences of different economic models and how they influence the identity of place. Discussions will focus on how architecture and urban design can respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by economic shifts. The track aims to understand how to create built environments that are both economically viable and contribute to a strong sense of place.

Keywords: economic paradigms, growth/degrowth, influence on the identity of place

T8: Identity by Design and Challenges of Climate Change

Track chair: assist. prof. dr. **Domen Kušar**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Track co-chair: **Barbara Mušič**, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

The intersection of identity by design and the urgent challenges of climate change are put in focus in this track. It explores how architectural and urban design can respond to climate change while preserving and strengthening local identities. The track will examine strategies for creating resilient and sustainable built environments adapted to changing environmental conditions. Special attention is given to the role of design in mitigating climate change and adapting to its effects within a wider discussion on how design can foster a sense of place in a rapidly changing world. The track encourages the exploration of innovative design solutions that address both climate change and preservation of the cultural heritage.

Keywords: climate change, mitigation, preserving and strengthening local identities, innovative design solutions

T9: Public Space and the Construction of Collective Identity

Track chair: dr. **Chritine Mady**, Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Department of Architecture

Track co-chair: **Marina Lovrič**, Geodetic Institute of Slovenia

Public spaces have crucial role in shaping and reflecting collective identity. The track explores how public spaces such as streets, parks, squares and other typologies of public spaces contribute to a sense of belonging, community, shared experience and not least – place. Discussions will cover the design, management and social dynamics of public spaces, examining how they foster social interaction, cultural expression and civic engagement. The track will also consider the challenges facing public spaces in the 21st century, such as privatization, security concerns and the impact of digital technologies. The overall goal is to understand how spatial professionals and communities can collaborate to create vibrant and inclusive public spaces that strengthen collective identity and contribute to a sense of place. This includes considering the historical evolution of public spaces, their role in social movements and their potential to promote social equity and cultural diversity.

Keywords: collective identity, public spaces, historical evolution, social movements, interaction, cultural expression and civic engagement

T10: Light and Built Environment: Shaping the Identity of Place

Track chair: assoc. prof. dr. **Tomaž Novljan**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Track co-chair: assist. prof. dr. **Matej Nikšič**, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

This track delves into the powerful role of light in shaping the identity of place within the built environment. It explores how natural and artificial light can be used to create atmosphere, evoke emotions and define architectural spaces. The track will examine the cultural and regional variations in the use of light in architecture and urban design. Discussions will focus on how lighting design can contribute to a stronger sense of place, enhance public spaces and celebrate local traditions. The track encourages exploration of innovative lighting strategies that are both aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsible.

Keywords: lightening, built environment, natural and artificial light, aesthetics and environmentally responsible

T11: Narratives Between Place and Space

Track chair: **assist. prof. dr. Matevž Juvančič**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Track co-chair: **assoc. prof. dr. Polona Filipič Gorenšek**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture

Movement of people and goods creates numerous encounters between users and built environment, expanding its social, cultural and political significance. The track will examine what provides a comprehensive and yet detailed insight into processes that enable creation of narrative to interpret and re-construct the spatial, social and cultural experiences while confronted with their newly established identities. Discussions will focus on how people create, through their personal and collective narratives, their multiple identities and social status. We are interested in research and papers that describe a shift from place-based and prescribed identities to newly acquired identities – the identity seen as dynamic, hybrid, complex flow of movements defining processes between morphology and typology, built and voids, open and close, place and space etc.

Keywords: personal and collective narratives, identity, social and cultural significance