



NAF/NAAR Symposium 2021

3–4 November 2021 at the Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark

Call for Papers Concepts of Transformation

The Nordic Association of Architectural Research (NAF/NAAR) and the Aarhus School of Architecture (AAA) have proudly joined forces in organizing the NAF/NAAR 2021 Symposium.

The NAF/NAAR Symposium 2021 is dedicated to the theme of “Concepts of Transformation” in architecture, landscape, and urban form. Discussions involve how the concept has been used in theory and design processes, the results of transformation projects, and transformation as a strategic approach in solving future societal challenges.

Transformation can be understood as an act or process of transforming or being transformed. From this perspective, a transformative process in architecture, landscape, and urban form may be a sequence of activities whereby change to existing structures or situations is brought about.

As discussions of sustainability and architecture have evolved, the concept of transformation has gained significance as an approach to developing the built environment more broadly. We have seen transformation emerge as a key concept with strong normative connotations across different fields of architecture and scales. In this development, transformation is related to ethics of reuse and to the idea of reducing the footprint of the built and the expanding cities.

But transformation is highly relevant even without the link to these values or overarching goals outside the discourse of architecture. Transformation can also be understood and discussed within the discipline of architecture as a certain approach to the production and analysis of architecture. This discussion involves questions of how architecture can be conceptualized, and how in practice it engages and reacts to its contexts, and which representation methods are used.

The aim of the symposium is to engage in these discussions and to foster new insights so as to help shed light on the concepts of transformation in architecture, landscape, and urban form. And to bring forward new perspectives and knowledge that can contribute to development in both research and practice.

TRACKS

1. Cases of transformation
2. Transformation as a process / Actors of transformation
3. Representation and architectural transformations
4. Transforming experiences

1. CASES OF TRANSFORMATION

Transformation as a concept and an architectural practice concerns alterations, additions, subtractions, retrofitting, and changes to places, functions, constructions, or patterns of use. As such, every architectural intervention can be perceived as a transformation. Significantly, physical transformation on an urban, landscape, or building scale is formed and informed by perceptions of better use, of place, by specific physical characteristics, and notably by particular understandings of inherent qualities and values. Arguably, transformation projects translate as physical manifestations of specific intentions or agendas, e.g. sustainability, inclusivity, mixed-use, aesthetics, or heritage.

The understanding of such aspects, aims, and elements often differs among the parties involved in architectural transformations, resulting in the prioritizing of qualities and values against each other as they seldomly can be treated as equally important. This calls for assessment of qualities, values, and, in most cases, for negotiation and compromise, all of which influence the result of the transformation project. Such valuation and compromise have been methodologically and theoretically discussed and developed within the field of architectural heritage preservation. However, the assessment of qualities and sought-after values is implicit in all architectural transformations and is done in a more or less reflected way and by choice of a particular theoretical stance or method.

This track invites papers that explore cases of transformation on a building, urban, and landscape scale, with reflection on how quality and value discussions have informed the transformation project, on whether this implied compromising other agendas, and on how this manifests in the physical results. Furthermore, the track welcomes discussion on the significance, pitfalls, and advantages of valuation in cases of transformation from a methodological and theoretical perspective.

2. TRANSFORMATION AS A PROCESS / ACTORS OF TRANSFORMATION

Time is not static but is dynamic: demanding changes. Transformation embraces time, and in transformative projects, the act of transforming is not dependent on a static and definitive result. Consequently, transformation can be distinguished as a process. Transformations can be physical alterations, part of unavoidable societal developments, or mental changes in perception. Transformation as a process is interlinked with actors taking action in the transformation in relation to time: personal experiences, societal changes, etc.

This track will address this aliveness of transformation as equivalent to the actors in and around the subject of transformation. Hence, the concept of transformation is understood to depend on actors: as part of the intentional physical and/or mental changes and/or as part of the context that perceives and experiences the subject of transformation. In each case of transformation, a discourse remains: Who are the actors in the process of transformation, and for whom is the transformation performed?

This track is open to different perspectives, theoretically or methodically, on the issues that address transformation as a process and/or the actors of transformation within the fields of architectural heritage and preservation, urban planning and design, art and landscape architecture.

3. REPRESENTATION AND ARCHITECTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Architecture is most often intended to be experienced in a one-to-one physical reality. However, more often than not, our dealings with architecture happen through some sort of medium. The architect develops proposals through analogue and digital representations; proposals are communicated to both the public and the profession through a diversity of media; and, most likely, our first—sometimes only—encounter with a realized project takes place by means of representations.

As Robin Evans has suggested, the power of the drawing is in its ‘distinctness from and unlikeness to the thing that is represented, rather than its likeness to it.’¹ Following this statement, we could argue that not only the drawing but any representation involves transformation: that the distinction or gap between representation and the represented results implies some sort of change. Important information might get lost in the ‘translation’ of representation, just as new qualities can emerge. We may think of the design process as a series of transformations where representations are essential. And we may think of the representations that precede the actual physical design as powerful tools which can define our understanding of the finished work. Moreover, new representations of existing architecture might change our reading of what we thought we knew very well.

This track welcomes contributions which discuss the implications of the ubiquitous representations in architecture, inviting reflection on the challenges and the potentials of the many different media which communicate spatial conditions and transform architecture.

4. TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCES

This fourth track is interested in research into how transformations of built environments affect life experiences. Inspiration comes from the rise of a broad field of research concerned with affect, feeling, emotion, experience, ambiance, and atmosphere. An “affective turn” has spread in the humanities and the social sciences, and an “atmospheric turn” within this turn has been indicated. Research on affect, atmosphere, and ambiance has been conducted from different perspectives: a phenomenological approach to atmosphere in a German-Italian context (Schmitz, Böhme, Griffero), a pragmatic, sociological, and technical approach to ambiance in France (Thibaud, Siret), and a ‘deleuzianizing’ approach to affect and atmosphere in the Anglo-Saxon context (Anderson). Inspired by this broad background, the track asks researchers to *focalize upon the experiential effects of transforming built environments*.

The track welcomes contributions that address the transformation of experiences through the transformation of built environments. Contributions may present methods of registering and evaluating experiences before and after transformations. They may discuss the ontology of atmospheres, and the extent to which atmospheres can be designed. Professional projects aiming at atmospheric transformation are welcome, as are contributions critiquing the concept of atmosphere.

Contributors may wish to demonstrate how transformations of built environments can favour the sensual experiences of some groups or classes and exclude others (e.g. through gentrification), and how this can give rise to political struggle. They may interrogate the relationship of atmospheric transformations to climate change and the Anthropocene, and they may focus on the interconnection of affective collective memory and the problems of (dissonant) heritage when it comes to transformational shifts.

KEYNOTE LECTURES

The symposium offers world-class keynote lectures from the following experts:

Mo Michelsen Stochholm Krag, Associate Professor, Aarhus School of Architecture
<https://adk.elsevierpure.com/en/persons/mo-michelsen-stochholm-krag>

Ellen Braae, Professor, University of Copenhagen
<https://ign.ku.dk/english/employees/landscape-architecture-planning/?pure=en/persons/299202>

Sven-Olov Wallenstein, Professor, Södertörn University
<https://www.sh.se/kontakt/forskare/sven-olov-wallenstein>

Key Dates and Deadlines

Call for papers: 15 November 2020

Submission of abstract of 300 words maximum: 15 January 2021

Notification of abstract acceptance: 15 February 2021

Submission of full paper of 6,000 words minimum and 8,000 words maximum—and deadline for presenters' registration: 1 October 2021

Late registration deadline for audience: 14 October 2021

Get-together in Aarhus: evening of 2 November 2021

Symposium: 3–4 November 2021

Organizing Committee

Tom Nielsen, PhD, Professor, AAA

Mogens A. Morgen, Professor, AAA

Magnus Rönn, PhD, Associate Professor, NAF/NAAR

Anne Elisabeth Toft, PhD, Associate Professor, NAF/NAAR

Venue

The NAF/NAAR symposium will take place at the new Aarhus School of Architecture at Exners Plads, Aarhus.

Scientific Committee

A scientific committee for reviewing abstracts and papers will be appointed.

Submission

Submit your abstract (max. 300 words, excluding keywords and references) by 15 January 2021 at the latest and indicate the preferred track. Send your abstract to: CoT2021@aarch.dk

Guidelines

The guidelines (full paper) for authors will be provided by 15 February 2021 at the same time as the notification of acceptance of abstracts is sent to the respective authors.

Language

The abstract and the full paper must both be submitted in English, which is the official symposium language. Papers must be marked as either a) scientific article or b) academic essay.

Fee

Symposium fee (€250, PhD students €150), which includes the double-blind peer review process for full papers.

Publication

Papers are processed according to the *NAF/NAAR Proceedings Series* guidelines with the aim of being published in this series. See: <http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/issue/publishing>

Editors

NAF/NAAR will appoint editors for the publication after the symposium.

Information and website

The symposium website is under construction.

Please direct enquiries to CoT2021@aarch.dk

About the Organizers

The Aarhus School of Architecture: <https://aarch.dk/en/>

The Nordic Association of Architectural Research: <http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/index>

Practical and Contact Information

Further practical information will be provided at a later stage. It will be published on an official symposium website and on the website of NAF/NAAR.

¹ Robin Evans, 'Translations from Drawing to Building', in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association Publications, 1997), p. 154.