

RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE

EAAE Charter 2010

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Architecture is a discipline focusing on the physical articulation of space on different scale levels, which deeply affects our life environment. It involves bodies of knowledge and practices that are wide-ranging in nature and scope, as was already noticed, for example by Vitruvius, when he pointed towards *firmitas, utilitas* and *venustas* – firmness, commodity and delight – as basic dimensions of architecture. In the present age the domain of architecture continues to develop, since the new media also evoke architectural questions of how to articulate virtual and immaterial spaces (cinematic settings, network spaces, datascares, etc.). Accordingly, research in architecture is multi faceted.

Because of this multidimensionality, studying architecture can be done from many different perspectives, with different methods and different focuses. Engineering sciences, social sciences and humanities all have to offer something valuable to the study of architecture. The vast area of architectural research therefore encompasses variable approaches which range from building physics and construction technology over design theory and CAAD to architectural history and architectural theory.

Whereas the different fields mentioned thus far display affinities with well established and scholarly structured domains, *design* constitutes a core characteristic of architecture, which is more rarely encountered in other disciplines. Typically, design engages different dimensions of architecture simultaneously. It constitutes a field of practical and theoretical knowledge that forms the basis for specific, practice-based research methodologies, which are oriented towards exploring and testing new articulations of space (material as well as immaterial) and ways of inhabiting it.

Taken together the different dimensions of architecture evoke issues of sustainability and ecology – the need to reflect upon the interaction between different scale levels in terms of their impact on the environment, in order to secure the long-term survival chances for people on our planet. The interaction between different scale levels also has to do with the relations of buildings to their contexts – socially, culturally, historically, geographically, economically and politically. Fields specifically addressing these contextual realities, such as urbanism, planning or conservation, engage and expand architectural knowledge and practices.

Research in architecture can therefore deploy in different ways, according to diverse methodologies and within a wide range of paradigms. EAAE wishes to confirm the trans-disciplinary nature of research in architecture, recognizing the validity of such different approaches and acknowledging research by design as a legitimate way to extend the diversity of methods with which to study architecture.

Architecture needs and deserves research. It is both a field and a topic for researchers.