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Designing Neighbourhoods

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Editorial: Designing neighbourhoods

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Based on architectural and urban design issues, this theme track reflects on how to create more sustainable and fair cities by addressing environmental and social issues. Although the topics were not limited, the recommendation focused on research on domesticity, new housing typologies, alternative modes of collective housing, coexistence-centred community spaces, urban networks of proximity, and the always interesting, relationship between the neighbourhood and the city. This wide open scope of topics gave the opportunity to the authors to analyse and explore different possibilities for the future development of our habitats.

Under these premises, the different proposals submitted focused on state-of-the-art topics within two main sub-themes. Firstly, different ways of public **participation** in design processes, and secondly, the inherent **sustainability** that should guide these disciplines. Let us not forget that our common future as a global society will be decided in urban scenarios whose activities must pursue more and more sustainable actions. Some of these actions are proposed, described and thoroughly analysed in the different texts submitted.

The first sub-theme explored participatory architecture and community design throughout different case studies. Several papers offered convincing alternatives to conventional approaches to architecture, which typically exclude people from the design process. Using a bottom-up approach, the authors discovered uncharted territories and established new uses that can bring joy and closeness to neighbours, who in turn can be part of co-creative processes in placemaking.

Calvo et al's 'Strategies and Tactics of Participatory Architecture' makes a comparative analysis of four emergent projects in Spain, France, Norway and England. The paper argues that contemporary participatory architecture can overcome the issues associated with conventional approaches to architecture that exclude people from the design process. Echaniz et



al's 'A participatory approach in urban development: co-designing resilient coastal neighbourhoods' analyses a case study conducted in the coastal areas of the Philippines. This paper takes a closer look at how co-design can help close-knit cultures deal with fragile living situations caused by challenging environmental and social conditions, especially under the new coming challenges caused by global warming. In 'Playful co-creation in urban space: Igniting activation, closeness, and collective intervention of residents in neighbourhoods' Arthur and Sopjani explore a playful co-creation approach of temporary urban spaces, taking a Swedish community as a case study. In this paper, playfulness and co-creation demonstrate multiple benefits in terms of facilitating creativity and bringing people together. The conclusion about this sub-theme shows the effectiveness of integrating different strategic approaches of participation in projects. These strategies can include different degrees of involvement of public authorities and different levels of public participation in the decision-making processes. As a result, these processes can provide designers with insights that can later generate places socially accepted by the community.

The second sub-theme explores new ways to achieve more sustainable cities. Gomez Beldarrain et al's paper 'Framing resilience in public transportation systems, inspired by biomimicry' dives into how nature's wisdom can be used as an inspiration for the creation of resilient mobility. With the final objective to shed light on future public transport developments under a systemic organization, the paper proposes a multidisciplinary approach, integrating experts from public transportation, biomimicry, and biology. The paper highlights the importance of operating performance, information management, and subsystem integration as functions backing up each other when disruptions happen. Finally, 'Birds, bees and bats: Exploring possibilities for cohabitation in the more-than-human city' by Edwards et al opens a wide range of design possibilities in construction, architecture and urban design, going one step beyond flora and into the fauna. The paper reflects on the idea that not only humans inhabit cities, and therefore cities should be acknowledged as multispecies spaces or more-than-human cities. Different possibilities for proximate cohabitation are explored according to the range of species addressed, from domesticated (chickens), to semi-domesticated (bees), through to wild (bats), within a same Nordic town. These cohabitation possibilities are analysed through specific architectural or urban design solutions for cohabitations to create more sustainable multispecies cities.

All the papers of this theme track are based on using different forms of public participation, and design interventions to search for more sustainable solutions. These papers explore new avenues for neighbourhood design that reflect on participation and sustainability. Two topics that will definitely be of great interest in the years to come. In addition, some of these papers raise new lines of research to be addressed in the future.