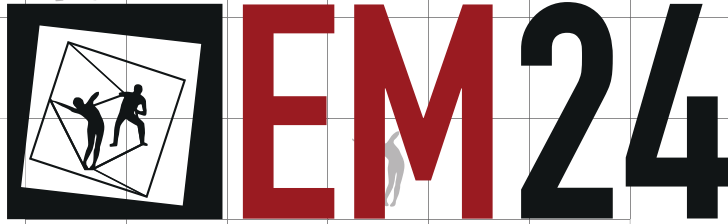


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EURAU - EUROPEAN RESEARCH ON ARCHITECTURE
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**IN-PRESENCE /
THE BODY AND
THE SPACE**

The role of corporeity in the era of virtualization

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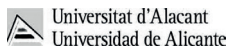
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The Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Politecnico di Milano organises at the School of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering (AUIC), EURAU Milan 2024 "IN-PRESENCE / THE BODY AND THE SPACE - The role of corporeity in the era of virtualization", the eleventh edition of the international conference, which takes place from 19 to 22 June 2024.



/ EURAU Milan 2024

11th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

EUROPEAN RESEARCH ON ARCHITECTURE
AND URBANISM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

IN-PRESENCE / THE BODY AND THE SPACE

The role of corporeity in the era of virtualization

For those who deal with the city and the territory, space refers to the body
(C. Bianchetti)

The EURAU Milan 2024 Conference aims to unpack the significance of corporeality in contemporary times and its relevance for the upcoming years. Specifically, the focus is on the relation between body and space and how this relates to architecture, the city and the environment, interpreted as physical facts and processes. Within the background of a technological turn, the focus is now on what has changed or will further change in this relationship and what, on the opposite, remains unalterable, inherently bound to the material and impervious to the virtual.

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2 / INTER-ACTIVE

/ On the dynamics of active interaction in the body-space and bodies in the space relationship, highlighting the role of presence, co-presence, movement, gestures, and sensory engagement in terms of embodied experience.

Today, we understand space neither as a Cartesian entity merely defined by coordinates nor as a passive element identified by voids that we can occupy, observe, and cross. In addition to proportions, measures, and geometry, we now incorporate as aesthetic categories but not only actions, movement, and experience to appreciate and interpret contemporary spaces. It implies that bodies are acting and active agents affecting the connotation of space. The inter-active session interprets the relationship between body and space as mutually influencing, where their interactions nurture distinctive living habitats. Beyond a subject that produces space, the body is also a medium that, moving away from the tyranny of 'oculacentrism', perceives its tangible and intangible qualities. Therefore, we can understand what stands between the body and space, a realm of filters that affect our sensing capacity. Such filters, which emphasize, mediate, or negate body-space intertwining, are often the result of an architectural choice materializing with anything that can be perceived by our senses, from sight to touch and smell.

The encounter of multiple bodies in space and their material experience converge in the construction of a space, resulting from an articulated and multifaceted, mediated and shared practice, where bodies become agents of transformation on different physical-spatial levels: bodies as actors in practices and actions, their interactive capacity; bodies active in the design of space (the eye, the hand, the sign); bodies and the construction of space (the survey, the construction site); bodies, space and didactics between presence and virtuality. With these premises, we can frame the production of space via architecture as an increasingly inter-active practice that involves a plurality of actors and actions through time.

The session welcomes contributions which include but are not limited to:

- / Bodies as modification of living space;
- / Bodies perceiving space through the senses;
- / The eye, the hand, the sign: the active bodies in the design of space;
- / Bodies and spaces as mediated relationship by filters, skins, dressings, envelopes, or other mediums and sensing tools;
- / Interaction practices between bodies and temporality, e.g., theatre performances and others;
- / Collaborative practices for the transformation of space, e.g., as co-design and others;
- / The bodies and the construction of space: the survey, the building site, the journey;
- / Bodies and didactics between real and virtual space.

2 / INTER-ACTIVE ENDNOTES

Stefano Sartorio e Francesco Airoldi
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Understanding the relationship between the body and the space implies addressing the importance of presence, movement, gestures, sensorial experiences and people's perceptions. As stated in the introduction of the session, space cannot be considered just as a set of cartesian coordinates, or an empty area ready to be filled; it is reasonably possible to perceive and describe it through actions, movement, or personal experiences, and in relation to multiple entities, making human bodies a key factor in this process. Indeed, bodies are often seen not as mere moving entities, but as media: interacting with the environment – both physical and intangible ones – they influence humans' perceptions and conditionate its description.

Authors from all over the world participate to the session "Inter-active", that invites reflection on the reciprocal and active link between body and space, contributing to the debate proposed by the EURAU Milan 2024 call with short papers that presents some similar topics, although approached with originality and observed from personal and specific research perspectives. In this sense, the key to reading of atmosphere, the possible declinations in pedagogy and education, the agent context of fragile systems, the lens of performativity, the discussion of the project-city pair, the interpretation of these relationships, and the investigations on the body experiences can be identified as recurring themes.

Specifically, in many of the contributions collected in the session it emerges how different disciplines as psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy can help in understanding the essence of spatial perception, discussing on the concept of atmosphere as a main aspect for humans' emotional responses. This suggests the efficacy of a multidisciplinary gaze at the subject, combining the physicality of space with an emotional and introspective component.

The session investigates how body's interaction can directly transform physical spaces too: it is the case of those authors who focused on the educational-formative dimension, which recently is increasingly integrated with the digital "presence" as experienced during the pandemic time. They often interpret the topic of interactivity by investigating not only the relationship between the subject and the physical sphere of the built environment, but also the additional value that space can give to pedagogy and education.

Furthermore, when multiple bodies interact in a space, they also contribute to its construction through dynamic practices, as it can happen in social groups or communities, especially in fragile contexts. Following this logical thinking, it is possible to identify a shared narrative of meanings which embodies identity factors of a place through the interactive relationship between people and space.

Other important declinations of the main theme are the temporal practices such as theatrical performances, which provide a further insight into how movement and time transform not only space itself, but also our perception of it.

Some contributors investigate how bodies modify urban spaces through their presence and action, transforming them according to their needs and daily activities, whether referring to an open space of a city or to a specific building typology. In these cases, the focus is on the role of bodies in space design (architectural, urban, landscape etc.), from surveying and construction sites to exploration pathways, analyzing how they interact with real-virtual spaces, and contributing to a broader and integrated understanding of the environments in which we live.

Another recurring aspect in the texts is the importance of the different scales in urban and territorial analysis, with exercises ranging from the study of models to the understanding of the invisible elements of the urban landscape: these can be used as lenses of inquiry for the restitution of interesting interpretations of the relationship between body and space, as

some researchers pointed out.

Finally, the section also highlights the perception of space through the senses: sight, touch, smell and other senses play a key role in the bodily experience of the surrounding environments.

The richness of contents of "Inter-active" session is due to the geographical and disciplinary plurality of the participants, who come from different parts of the globe and from various fields of research. Moreover, a variety of contexts around the world are investigated, offering an overview of the contemporary where spatial and social systems intertwine and add layers of complexity to the relationship between body and space: urban contexts, marginal territories, peripheral areas, etc. The case studies analyzed by the authors in their texts exemplify this richness, shaping up as interesting experiences from all over: from Melbourne markets to São Paulo museums, from art installations in a desert to urban studies in Indian cities.

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