



QUESTIONS 11

Architectures of Learning

Cluj-Napoca

7-8 May 2026

International Architecture Conference

Call for Abstracts

Questions is the scientific conference organized by the Faculty of Architecture in Cluj since 2012. The first edition focused on a theme related to architectural education, followed by a series of editions exploring different, yet timely and inclusive topics: from urban interferences and sustainability to the relationship between architecture, technology, and the city. The 11th edition of the conference returns to the original theme of architectural education and proposes a timely update.

Architectural education finds itself at a crossroads. In a world shaped by rapid change, climate crises, socio-economic transformations, and technological advances, the architecture school must respond to essential challenges: How do we train architects to adapt to an unpredictable future? Which educational methodologies are most relevant for developing critical thinking, social awareness, and technical skills? What constitutes relevant pedagogy in architecture today? How do we balance tradition and experiment, theory and practice, physical and digital?

In 2022, the volume *Radical Pedagogies* was published, as a result of a collaborative research project conducted at Princeton. This work documents around 300 experimental pedagogical initiatives from the 1950s to the present, worldwide. Architectural education underwent a global revolution through these experimental practices, which challenged dominant norms and opened the discipline to new forms of thought, responsibility, and action. These “radical pedagogies” did not follow fixed methods, but stood out for their unstable, heterogeneous, and oppositional character. Though often ephemeral, they had a lasting impact on architectural education. Some were absorbed, while others were dismissed, but all contributed to reshaping the discipline as an open, interconnected, and continually evolving system.

In its original sense, being radical means getting to the root of things—that is, questioning the foundations, premises, or basic structures of a system, an idea, or a practice. Radicality can refer not only to the content or format of study but also to a stance of resistance against standardization, instrumentalization, or self-referentiality.

What does radical pedagogy in architecture mean in 2026? What does a generous school of architecture mean today? Should it be generous, as proposed by Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, a school deep-rooted in social and spatial justice, environmental awareness and gender equality, a school for non-extractive architecture or for architecture as resource stewardship?? In today’s socio-political and climatic context, radical pedagogy is no longer defined merely by a rupture from institutionalized models, but by its ability to construct critical frameworks and alternative epistemologies that interrogate the structures through which architectural knowledge is produced and transmitted. It no longer operates solely through spectacular gestures or isolated events, but through the reformulation of educational processes in terms of epistemic justice, transdisciplinarity, and decolonization of the curriculum. To be radical does not mean proposing a universal method, but rather maintaining an open reflective framework in which conflict, difference, and instability become pedagogical resources. In this sense, radical pedagogy becomes a critical device in itself, capable of generating new ways of thinking about space, power relations, and the role of the architect in society.

Questions 11 is structured around the following themes, designed to support varied perspectives and discussions:

Experimentation

radical pedagogies and critical methodologies in architectural education

How is radicality expressed within design studios? What forms does experimentation take in today's architectural education? How can pedagogical practices be reimaged to go beyond conventional frameworks? What new working formats can challenge and transform the learning process? What does an unconventional studio mean today? Is there a need for radical approaches or rather for preserving viable principles? In what ways can critical pedagogies help reframe traditional norms? How can hierarchical structures and standard teaching methods in architectural education be reconfigured through alternative forms of teaching and learning?

Integration

bridging theory and practice through real projects and reflective action

How can theoretical reflection and practical applicability be better balanced in architectural education? Or as Malterre-Barthes puts it, how can we eliminate the theory-practice split, and the dichotomy between those who build and those who don't, as it questions the very essence of what it means to be an architect and how to educate one? What defines an integrative pedagogy in architecture? Through which strategies can real-life projects become an active part of the learning process? How can design-build workshops serve as pedagogical tools? In what ways can architecture competitions contribute to student learning?

Augmentation

digital tools, AI, and emerging systems reshaping learning

How are digital technologies transforming the way we teach and learn architecture? What is the role of artificial intelligence, BIM modeling, augmented reality, or other digital tools in pedagogy? Are they extensions of architectural thinking or substitutes

for it? What kinds of positive transformations could technology bring to education and our profession in order to mitigate inequities, overwork, and speculative labor? How can we integrate AI into the learning process? How can the curriculum be reconfigured to better respond to current challenges in the profession and society? What subjects or skill sets should be introduced, restructured, or removed from existing programs to respond to the new role of architects?

Intersection

interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches expanding architectural education

How can knowledge and practices from other disciplines be integrated into architectural education? What forms can hybrid pedagogies take, combining architecture with social sciences, arts, engineering, ecology, or technology? How can interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary collaboration be embedded into studio and lecture structures? How can we borrow actively from all other disciplines, including the most pragmatic, modest, radical, political and hands-on spatial practices? What examples of international collaboration can bring new perspectives to architectural training? How can design&build summer schools, community-based workshops, or temporary interventions expand the traditional educational framework?

Through these thematic areas, the conference aims to create a space for collective reflection on its central theme and to bring together diverse perspectives on teaching and learning processes. It encourages new pedagogical initiatives, interdisciplinary approaches, and critical reflections on the role of architecture schools in society. The conference seeks to contribute to long-term discussions of architectural education, going beyond the momentary inspiration of the event, by fostering collaboration, applied pedagogical research, and potential curricular reforms. It aims to facilitate the exchange of practices and ideas among educators, researchers, and students, providing a platform for exploring both current and emerging teaching methodologies. Moreover, the conference intends to examine the impact of new technologies, including artificial intelligence—and of climate change and social challenges on the training of future professionals, promoting an architectural education more closely connected to the real needs of both the profession and the community. Thus, *Questions 11* aims to be an open forum for educators, researchers, doctoral candidates, and students interested in architectural education and related fields.

Guidelines for authors

Abstracts are welcome at the following address questions@arch.utcluj.ro. To apply, please send **one PDF file** containing the following information:

- **Title** (maximum 100 characters)
- **Subtitle** (maximum 150 characters)
- **Author information:** Name and surname, institutional affiliation, and email address
- **Short biography** (maximum 300 characters)
- **Keywords** (up to 3)
- **Abstract text** (maximum 2000 characters, including spaces)
- **One image** representative of the proposal (preferably an original image by the author)

Calendar

- **February 2nd, 2026**
Deadline for Abstract Submission
- **Starting February 17th, 2026**
Notification of Acceptance
- **May 7–8th, 2026**
Conference Dates