



Teaching Intelligence / Intelligens natural artificial collective

Speakers Corner Arsenale 20.11.25 at 11:00-12:00 Venice Biennale Architettura 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure to welcome you here in Venice for the discussion on the theme “Teaching intelligence” and I want to thank curator Carlo Ratti for this invitation.

Education is a main thematic area the International Union of Architects is working on. The UNESCO-UIA Charter on Architectural Education and the Validation System for Architectural Schools and Systems are **the** international reference on the matter.

Architecture education must take under consideration the needs of society, the evolution of the profession and the role of the architect within the particular context of the era.

Let us have a look at the international landscape

Climate crises, frequent natural disasters, and wars in many parts of the world threaten both the environmental, social and economic balance of the globe but also our relation to nature, biodiversity and humanity.

Ten years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, we realise that we cannot achieve the SDG's. By 2050, two-thirds of humanity will live in cities. While we are talking about post-growth, regeneration or shrinking of cities in the northern hemisphere, we are also confronted with uncontrolled urbanisation, continuous expansion of mega-cities and creation of new cities in other parts of the world. Never before have coexisted simultaneously more extremes and contrasts. Rapid advances in digitalisation and artificial intelligence fundamentally question the professional world, endanger our determination capacity and relativise our individual competence.

Democracy and multilateralism are in crisis. Institutions are being weakened, international law is not respected, inequalities are increasing, manipulative operations are flourishing and we struggle between over-information and disinformation, local and global interests.

The world is changing at an unprecedented speed and is losing its ethical foundations and its humanity. We are in an era of transition with unclear direction.

How to respond to the above challenges?

All professions must give their part of the answer.

Architecture is a discipline of public interest. It is not only about providing shelter but also about planning territories, preserving memory, and protecting the environment. It is about balancing cultural, social, economic, and ecological values.

Traditionally the architect is a generalist and a specialist at the same time.

Architects are trained to coordinate the knowhow of other disciplines, to find solutions within the given economic and legal frame. But, within the interdisciplinary team, they are the only specialists for design, challenged to understand the needs of both users and investors and interpret them in the interest of society.

Architects are mediators between private interests and the common good, and agents for the development of the built environment, for social cohesion and for the preservation of cultural

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heritage. In this sense, architects do not have only an aesthetic, but also a social and ethical responsibility.

What are the particular challenges architects face today?

The profession is particularly challenged today because

- the problems to solve are complex
- the boundaries with other related professions get diffuse and antagonistic
- practice conditions are hard and many architects struggle to survive
- the future of architecture in the era of artificial intelligence is uncertain

Architects are asked to reinvent their practices, learn to use AI intelligently as a tool that augments but does not replace professional judgement and creative responsibility.

Appropriate education is supposed to prepare students for their future roles as professionals.

But we do not really know what the future role of architects will be.

Knowledge has never been more accessible but we must be concerned because it can be and often is manipulated.

Education is something that may happen to one or not. It does not always happen in schools.

With this I think “Teaching Intelligence” is about awakening sensibility and responsibility, about recognising the relevant and essential, about cultural and ethical awareness.

Important is to provoke what is fundamental in education, namely how to critically approach problems in order to ask the right questions and find responsible and innovative solutions.

The answer is in the question said by the ancient Greeks. But if this sounds too simple to confront today's polycrisis, Edgar Morin with his “pensée complexe -” offers a methodological shift in approaching knowledge by connecting disciplines. Crucial is to understand the interconnections between the elements of a system.

Knowledge is not to reduce complexity but to affront it. We should not be afraid of this confrontation. Knowledge is Intelligence and Intelligence the way towards Knowledge.

Thank you
RG 19.11.25

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