

## Fostering Design Driven Research: Next generation researchers take centre stage

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# CA<sup>2</sup>RE+

## 1 STRATEGIES OF DESIGN-DRIVEN RESEARCH



## **COLOPHON**

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**Fostering Design Driven  
Research:  
Next generation  
researchers take  
centre stage**

Roberto Cavallo  
Urs Hirschberg

ARENA is an open and inclusive network that offers a shared platform aiming at promoting, supporting, developing, and disseminating high-quality research in all fields of architecture in the broadest sense, including its links with building technology, environmental design, interior design, landscape architecture, urban design, and urbanism, and operating in areas ranging from science and technology to the arts and humanities. ARENA encourages the exploration of emerging transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research fields and supports the European architectural research culture by creating cross-connections between established academics and professionals in the field. It further develops European architectural research by providing regular forums for the exchange of ideas, rigorous peer review processes, and clear definitions of research terms and methods, and by establishing strong links between partner universities and architectural firms in Europe and beyond. One of the main objectives of the ARENA network is to provide information resources to help the development of doctoral students and early-career researchers.

ARENA has been a fervent supporter of CA<sup>2</sup>RE since the very beginning. Many members of the ARENA network have been involved with the establishment of CA<sup>2</sup>RE. First and foremost, our dear colleague Johan Verbeke, who passed away much too soon, but whose legacy plays an important role for both ARENA and the CA<sup>2</sup>RE network. Through the Architecture Research Moment (ARM) conferences, the predecessor of CA<sup>2</sup>RE, Johan brought together research in the fields of architecture and arts. The number '2' in CA<sup>2</sup>RE

stands for the two A's of 'architectural' and 'artistic' research. We are very glad that the CA<sup>2</sup>RE community has been growing, gaining more substance and impact, and that people affiliated with ARENA are part of the core group. With the start of the CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ project, Design Driven Doctoral research claimed a central position on the agenda of many of our colleagues. It is a development that ARENA welcomes very much, as design is one of the main drivers of our discipline and the focus on doctoral research is at the top of the ARENA network agenda.

There are many ways in which the CA<sup>2</sup>RE and CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ initiatives are exemplary. In 2020, when so many of our activities were stalled or slowed down, this became particularly clear. The thoughtful, sustained, in-person discussion and support of research and researchers is at the heart of CA<sup>2</sup>RE's mission. Held at participating universities all over Europe, the CA<sup>2</sup>RE conferences have established a format for this that puts the individual researchers at centre stage. The format gives participants time to reflect and fosters community by letting them mingle outside the sessions. When the pandemic made it impossible to continue in this format, though, the CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ organisers were remarkably quick in finding alternative solutions. The CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ conferences in Trondheim and Milan were successful even as online events, because it was obvious how much the people behind the CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ project indeed cared about the participants, about taking time for meaningful debate and feedback.

The times when research in architecture was not taken very seriously are over. Not least of all

because—the pandemic notwithstanding—we find ourselves in a global ecological crisis in which architecture and construction and the way we manage our cities are of critical importance. There is now an urgent need for substantial and reliable knowledge about how we can make buildings and cities more resource-efficient, how we can restore ecological balance, and how we can create more sustainable and socially just communities. And because all of these questions are inextricably linked with design, there is an equally urgent need for research into design. Reaching out and finding common ground with artistic research is essential for this quest.

For all these reasons and many more, CA<sup>2</sup>RE and CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ are important and ARENA is proud to support them. We invite the CA<sup>2</sup>RE and CA<sup>2</sup>RE+ communities to also participate in our other activities, which we announce on the ARENA webpage at [www.arena-architecture.eu](http://www.arena-architecture.eu), and to publish in AJAR, the peer-reviewed ARENA Journal of Architectural Research ([ajar.arena-architecture.eu](http://ajar.arena-architecture.eu)). There is much more we need to do, and we can do much more when we do it together.



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