

Habitat  
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28.03.2022  
13:30 - 18:30  
Foyer SG + Zoom  
ID 626 5169 6527

Baukultur and the culture of Transition  
Public Seminar

EPFL Architecture  
[habitat@epfl.ch](mailto:habitat@epfl.ch)





# Baukultur and the Culture of Transition Public Seminar

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The notion of *Baukultur* marked a fundamental step towards a comprehensive understanding of the environment. The idea that landscape, historical architectural heritage and existing built environment could converge to portray the richness and complexity of our future habitat is now pointing to a comprehensive strategical approach to design. Nevertheless, the culture of the built environment, as inherited from the last century, is not yet aligned with the emerging culture of the socio-ecological transition. At the same time, the critical condition we are now facing demands an imaginative effort. This particular crisis affects the design process very specifically, putting at risk its chance to evolve into a new form of practice. The struggle to emerge from an impellent ecological emergency has pushed the architectural discipline towards techno/normative quick fixes, leaving aside a broader reflection on long-term thinking.

**Transition is not an unprecedented nor unexpected condition. The unlikely scenario that describes this passage as a gentle conversion from one condition to another, and the consequent effort to mitigate its contradictions, does not contribute to a reliable understanding of the situation we are now facing. On the other side, the alternative scenario of a neat fracture performs the clearance of fundamental cultural continuities. What if we rather imagine transition as recurring opportunity for awakening and reaction, for reading and redefinition, accommodating both tensions and fruitful vitalities? Then how to recognize and balance the inherent conflict to every changeover? And how a critical gaze on the existing built environment can inform the project of contemporary and future transition(s)?**

**Architectural and urban design has proved to be an effective tool to understand the complexity of the existing context while unveiling how variously its materials and elements react to manipulations. What values and criteria this transition gaze should mobilize? How can we explore the unfolding of scalar, technological, and formal issues within the culture of a built environment?**

The public seminar intends to put forward the ongoing reflection carried on by a group of EPFL Laboratories with the coordination of HRC and widen the debate through lectures, open discussions, and round tables during one long afternoon dedicated to architecture value in the context of emerging transitions.

13:30 **Welcome and introduction**  
Valentin Bourdon and Anna Livia Friel  
(Habitat Research Center, EPFL)

## SESSION 1 – Baukultur and the socio-ecological Transition

13:40 **KEYNOTES**  
Pierre Caye (CNRS, Centre Jean Pépin)  
Ludovic Pépion (Centre Jean Pépin UMR 8230)  
Sylvain Malfroy (Zurich University of Applied Sciences)

14:40 **OPEN DISCUSSION**  
with Sébastien Marot (EPFL)  
moderated by Paola Viganò (Habitat Research Center, EPFL)

15:20 **Coffee break**

## SESSION 2 – Architecture revalued

15:30 **KEYNOTE**  
Karin Raith (Universität für Angewandte Kunst Wien)

15:50 **5 EXPLORATIONS**  
Corentin Fivet – *Structural Xploration Lab*  
Martin Fröhlich – *Elementary Architecture and Studies of Types*  
Franz Graf – *Techniques and Preservation of Modern Architecture*  
Jo Taillieu – *Lab of Imagination and Fabrication*  
Paola Viganò – *Laboratory of Urbanism*

16:50 **OPEN DISCUSSION**  
with Muck Petzet (USI, Accademia di Architettura Mendrisio)  
Tom Avermaete (ETH Zürich)  
and previous speakers  
moderated by Valentin Bourdon and Anna Livia Friel

18:00 **Reactions from the public and research perspectives**

