

10 YEARS
OF THE
CHINA ROOM
RESEARCH
GROUP AT
POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

CHINA BEYOND EXCEPTION

Spatial Entanglements
across Architecture and
Urban Studies

Castello del Valentino, Turin

JANUARY 20TH-22ND 2027

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

DEADLINE EXTENDED UNTIL JUNE 15TH

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OPEN CALL

On the occasion of her tenth anniversary, the China Room research group at Politecnico di Torino announces the conference ***China Beyond Exception. Spatial Entanglements across Architecture and Urban Studies***.

Over the past decade, the group has brought together scholars in architecture, urbanism, and geography to investigate Chinese urbanisation precesses and the impact of Global China on the spatial dynamics worldwide. Moving beyond the idea of China as an isolated exception, the conference approaches it as a critical lens through which broader spatial processes can be interrogated. The call invites theoretical, empirical, and design-oriented contributions engaging three thematic axes:

SESSION 1

THE UNSTABLE PROFESSION**Pedagogy, Practice, and the Reconfiguration of Architectural Knowledge**

The architectural profession is entering a phase of structural instability marked by shifting markets, hybrid roles, and expanding domains of practice. Recent transformations in China's architectural profession—particularly the contraction of real estate markets and the consequent impact on education—make these dynamics especially visible. Rather than framing this condition as a crisis, this session approaches instability as a productive terrain of debate where architectural knowledge, pedagogy, and professional identities are renegotiated. Taking the Chinese case as a starting point, we invite contributions from diverse contexts that explore how changing professional realities reshape competencies, redefine expertise, and generate new forms of architectural subjectivity.

SESSION 2

RURALISM(S)**Spatial Dynamics and Everyday Practices from China to Planetary Perspectives**

Ruralism(s) calls for a radical epistemological rethinking of the rural beyond urban subordination, crisis and nostalgia. Refusing binary hierarchies, it situates ruralities along a relational rural–urban continuum and as an active planetary condition shaping uneven spatial transformations. From China to planetary perspectives, this session invites critical, situated, and more-than-human approaches that unveil multiple ways to understand and design rural spatial dynamics and everyday practices. By foregrounding *repair* and *care* as experimental and adaptive forces in planning, design, and reuse strategies, we call for envisioning new imaginaries of plural and heterogeneous rural futures.

SESSION 3

INFRASTRUCTURE-LED URBANITIES**After the Chinese Boom**

Infrastructure-led urbanities explores the urban afterlives of Chinese-related infrastructure projects. As geopolitical conditions shift, this session examines how initiatives such as the Belt and Road reshape cities beyond their initial moment of expansion. The session focuses on emerging infrastructure-led urbanities, the urban projects and design visions that frame them, and the multiple temporalities (delay, anticipation, incompleteness) through which infrastructure produces lasting spatial, governance, and social transformations.

Download the open call on: <https://chinaroom.polito.it/open-call/>
For additional inquiries please contact us at: china.beyond@polito.it

