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 **For from design and through design and for design are all things**









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Editorial

João Menezes de Sequeira

The Architectural Department (DARQ) of the School of Communication, Architecture, Arts and Information Technologies (ECATI) at Lusófona University (ULHT) -- with the intensive collaboration of the Architectural Lab. Research Centre (LabART), in partnership with both the Architectural Research in Europe Network Association (ARENA) and the Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém / Garagem Sul (CCB), have hosted the Fourth International Conference on Architectural Research by Design, where we seek to reflect on the interactions between academia and practice through the concept of Research by Design.

Research by design is a broader concept that includes “practice-based research” and “practice-led research” which means that we are talking about two kinds of methodologies of research: one involves research through practice and the other involves research about practice. The difference is methodological, because one is research where the inquiry is leading to new understandings about and within the processes of design conception while the other is research about something that does not yet exist and which uses architectural practice as the research method.

In terms of the general concept of architectural research, this conference adopts the definition given in the EAAE Research Charter (2012), which we helped to develop: “Architectural research is original investigation undertaken in order to generate knowledge, insights and understanding based on competences, methods and tools proper to the discipline of architecture. It has its own particular knowledge base, mode, scope, tactics and strategies.” And in turn, research by design is defined as “any kind of inquiry in which (...) the architectural design process forms the pathway through which new insights, knowledge, practices or products come into being. It generates critical inquiry through design work.”

According to this conception, and in light of the Dublin Descriptors (2004) for the Third Cycle¹, we consider that there are four main subjects to discuss and define in

¹ The Dublin Descriptors are the level descriptors adopted in the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area under the EU Bologna Process. *Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle, i.e. doctoral level, are awarded to students who:*

A. have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills

this issue of AE Jornal, namely:

Theme I: Knowledge

- Architectural knowledge: What kinds of knowledge are we talking about when we consider research by design? Is it insight specific to architectural knowledge, or is it about method?

Theme II: Methods

- Transparent processes of inquiry: What is the “process of inquiry” in architectural practice? In what way can we talk about a research process that is based on the design process? And in what way can we use the notion of transparency in relation to research by design? Is it possible to demonstrate the value of research by design? How can we promote research by design as an important methodology for spatial design and the creation of public space?

Theme III: Communication and notation

- What kind of modes of communication should be considered to be adequate to the scientific community? Architectural practice uses different types of notation, mainly drawings and physical models, and nowadays a range of digital media, for communicating to the various agents within the architectural industry, whereas traditional academic research tends to use mainly verbal forms of communication. What type of notations can be used, and what kind of weight should be given to each type, in architectural research by design?
- How can we communicate the creative process? Is it even possible to do so? Or should we assume that in research by design only the more descriptive part of research can be explicitly communicated?

and methods of research associated with that field; B. have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; C. have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication; D. are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas; E. can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise; F. can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.

Theme IV: Evaluation and assessment

- How can we evaluate data and outcomes in the context of research by design? Should originality, significance and rigour be the same in architectural practice as it is within research? Who should make the assessment? Should recognized practicing architects, with no academic positions, be appointed as members in the assessment process? Should relevance for practice, theoretical and procedural consistency, transparency of the processes and outcomes, inter-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity, engagement with architectural competences and experiences, be included as part of the assessment?
- It is in the nature of research by design that it should be useful and have more engagement with the world outside academia; therefore should 'impact' on society be a measure?
- Also, what can we learn about research by design from other fields where it is more developed, such as in industrial design?