

Conference Session

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In 1964, reflecting on the “goodness of fit,” Christopher Alexander proposed that form emerges from a dual coherence between the internal logic of its structure and its consistency with the surrounding context. In this sense, it was understood as the result of interacting forces, where the form is the solution to the problem; the context defines the problem. The diagram thus became a key instrument of design knowledge, enabling architects to verify fitting through the interplay between contextual forces and spatial configurations. Although later eclipsed by other theories that challenged its deterministic implications, revisiting the goodness of fit appears particularly relevant in light of current conditions and emerging paradigms of contemporary design. In today’s shrinking and rarefied landscapes, the force lines that once structured relationships between form and context—between people and places—are increasingly weakened and eroded by processes of social and economic contraction. In those territories affected by deindustrialization and seemingly irreversible depopulation, architecture is compelled to operate within conditions of depletion, incompleteness, and suspension. However, a crucial question emerges regarding the contemporary role of architecture, that is, how can form actively and productively address these processes, rather than remain a marginal outcome of formless or purely strategic responses?

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To pose this question is to reaffirm architectural and landscape formations as operative fields capable of rearticulating relationships, intensities, and spatial hierarchies. In this perspective, shrinkage and contraction do not imply the absence of form but the necessity of rethinking these processes through forms able to give measure, structure, and direction to territories marked by depletion and suspension. In other words, reinterpreting the goodness of fit today means engaging a spectrum of approaches aimed at condensing those weak force lines that shape the built and natural environments of rarefied yet deeply stratified territories:

theoretical and critical positions grounded in design research;

architectural and landscape design practices emerging
from conditions of shrinkage and contraction;

territorial and urban strategies whose spatial effects
materialize as small-and-medium-scale interventions;

drawings, diagrams, and artifacts as tools of inquiry
in architectural pedagogy and education;

aesthetics of incompleteness, adaptation, and deliberate
suspension of architecture