

Circular Design: An Urban Perspective

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Keywords

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This contribution discusses knowledge on circularity in a perspective of urban transformation, as inherent urban dynamic and as construction of desirable futures. Circularity and circular economy are understood not only as important factor to achieve resource saving and climate neutrality in all processes regarding the built environment but also as factor towards social and economic resilience in increasing global uncertainties. With this backdrop, knowledge on circularity will be discussed in two directions: (1) a new thinking about concepts, modes, and roles of research from a design perspective. While research on circularity in a material and technological perspective is widely established, it will be here about opening up new fields and methods, between design, arts, architecture, and planning. (2) how knowledge is driven by and driving a change of academic and professional paradigms. In conclusion, it will be examined whether extending circularity to an urban perspective calls for a new role of creativity, culture and arts to extend architectural-urbanistic knowledge towards climate-neutrality and sustainability. How can an urban perspective trigger understanding and upscaling of context-based practices and experiments? How can performativity-oriented practices foster activation and engagement? Thus, new forms of organising economy in a circular sense is seen to be bound to knowledge production and exchange as well as to a change of paradigms and approaches in education and research of architecture and urbanism. The contribution is based on the results and experiences from the Circular Design Innovation Alliance (CiD), funded by European Union 2023-26 and developed by 11 partners across Europe. Bringing together actors from Universities, Research institutes, Vocational education providers, enterprises, business incubators, civil society organisations and NGOs, CiD fosters interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration. The establishment of six observatories at local and European levels connects these activities to broader socio-economic contexts, supporting challenge-based approaches to learning and knowledge production.