

Architectures and rural landscapes in transition

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This contribution is developed within the framework of a research grant funded by the Marche Region and engages with the debate on the extra-urban, proposing a reflection centered on the role of architecture as the minimum unit of intervention in the redefinition of territorial hierarchies. From this perspective, rural architectures can be understood as active nodes within a multiscale territorial network, capable of activating alternative forms of “glocal” development.

Starting from an investigation of rural productive architectures and the agri-food supply chain in the Vallesina area, the study explores the role of dispersed heritage—often abandoned or underutilized—as a material and cultural infrastructure capable of reactivating relationships between communities, resources, and landscape. Wineries, mills, and farmhouses are reinterpreted as productive, collective, and hospitality-oriented devices, able to accommodate contemporary uses through adaptive reuse strategies and to respond to ongoing environmental, economic, and social changes. The study further develops a situated experimental approach based on empirical practices, co-design, and 1:1 self-construction of temporary and ephemeral architectures which—by integrating local traditional knowledge and interdisciplinary expertise—reactivate spaces. In this perspective, the architectural project engages multiple dimensions—social, cultural, economic, and touristic—and becomes a tool to “empathize” with places, foster collective learning processes, and strengthen territorial cohesion. Synergies among local actors, institutions, and agri-food enterprises represent an operational condition to promote local resources and circularity. Within this process, the community also assumes an active role in the co-creation and shared management of new forms of habitat and production, reinterpreting the existing architectural heritage as a new commons. In this sense, architecture—through practices of reuse, adaptation, and experimentation—emerges as a critical and operative device capable of connecting different scales and guiding a transition toward more equitable and sustainable development models in rural contexts.