

EAAE PRESIDENT'S PREFACE

OYA ATALAY FRANCK, EAAE PRESIDENT 2017-2024

Uncertainty and change have always been part of our lives. In recent years, however, we have witnessed a series of disruptive developments and events—some long in the making—that have left us both stunned and disoriented.

Climate change has been on the agenda of scientists, governments, and the media worldwide for decades. Yet the persistent inability—and perhaps lack of political will—to honor the 2016 Paris Agreement and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (a threshold already surpassed) places us at, or even beyond, the point of no return. The Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing war in Ukraine, the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, the alarming loss of biodiversity, the deepening inequalities, and global migration—the list of challenges is daunting, and the problems are vast and complex. What can architecture contribute in these times? What is the role of the architect and of architectural education when technological advances—especially in AI—are challenging the very core of our societies and our roles as individuals? Is, to paraphrase Marshall Berman's 1982 book title, "everything that is solid melting into air"?

We have left the certainties of modernity far behind and now live in the era of the Anthropocene—a term proposed by scientists to describe the age in which human activity has become the dominant force shaping the biological, geological, and atmospheric processes of our planet.

At the Aarhus School of Architecture, two communities—the Architectural Research Centers Consortium (ARCC) and the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE)—have come together for our twelfth joint international conference. Since 2002, these biennial conferences have brought together researchers, educators, and practitioners to exchange ideas, reflect on research findings and methods, and discuss pressing topics related to architecture and the built environment.

The 2024 EAAE-ARCC Conference theme, *Architecture into the Unknown*, is more timely than ever. In the face of today's challenges, change is essential: in how we design and build, collaborate as societies, and live our lives. To be an agent of change is to care—care for others, for our communities, and for the biosphere. It also means taking action—not only for our own sake but for the well-being of all. We must also recognize that the challenges driving this need for change are, at the same time, profound opportunities. It is time to seize these opportunities—to act creatively, decisively, and with critical optimism—by embracing new, sustainable, and ethical approaches and ensuring they are accessible to all.

I wish to thank the Aarhus School of Architecture, especially its conference chair, Claus Peder Pedersen, and the entire organizing team for hosting us so generously. I also thank my colleagues at ARCC and EAAE, and all of you who are committed to working toward a better future and the well-being of all through architectural research and education.



Photos: Niels Rysz Olsen