Università Iuav di Venezia
WAVe 2026, 1 – 17 July

Balance. Different Types of Equilibrium

Abstract

Balance is the theme of WAVe 2026, the international architecture workshops organised by the Università Iuav di Venezia.

WAVe offers an intensive educational model based on collaborative work, bringing together students and lecturers from international schools of architecture. Through a series of design workshops, participants are invited to explore innovative forms of coexistence, construction techniques, spatial imaginaries, and architectural structures and devices capable of stabilising and reconfiguring the conditions of reality.

This year's theme reflects a desire to promote experimental approaches aimed at exploring different forms of contemporary balance through architectural design. Balance is understood here as a dynamic quality that permeates the entire design process and represents the meeting point between opposing forces: stability and change, memory and innovation, the natural and the artificial, permanence and transformation, structure and void. Architecture seeks this balance not as a static state, but as a continuous process, open to temporary conditions. In a fragmented and unstable world, the project becomes an act of synthesis and moderation, capable of restoring coherence and meaning to the contemporary landscape.

WAVe 2026 will explore the theme of balance, taking current scenarios of precariousness as its starting point. Participants will be asked to develop theories and projects capable of organising forms and spaces of collaboration within frameworks of adaptive coexistence and mutual support, conceived as systems capable of transforming internal tensions into structural and spatial resources.

The pursuit of balance takes the form of a combinatory action that integrates technical skills and humanistic knowledge. Architecture is called upon to absorb and mediate the discontinuities generated by human influence on space, acting as a device that is both reparative and organisational within the contemporary habitat. The architect is invited to conceive of architecture as a relational system, capable of building common ground and reorganising balances within specific contexts.

This edition of WAVe fosters international cooperation between universities and builds a shared cultural platform where students and faculty engage in dialogue within the Venetian framework.

Balance aims to consolidate a network of cooperation capable of generating, through the work of researchers and students, a diversity of visions, methods and design approaches. These contributions will be geared towards reconfiguring unresolved spaces and conditions of inequality present in the contemporary city, using architectural knowledge as a tool for transformation.

Theory takes on a central role as a forward-looking tool, capable of reorganising thought and guiding design action. Through theoretical reflection and experimentation, WAVe 2026 invites participants to imagine architectural devices capable of making the most of limited resources, rebalancing spatial and social disharmonies, and contributing to processes of repair, reorganisation and rediscovery of places in equilibrium.

Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo
WAVe 2026 Scientific Coordinators

Atelier

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany, Room M1
Christina Köchling, Anna Wortmann

Trouble in Paradise II – Unglued Timber Constructions in Thuringia

Thuringia is a federal state in eastern Germany, in which the Bauhaus University of Weimar is located. Thanks to its abundance of woodland, the state earned the nickname 'the green heart of Germany'. Nowadays, the forests are suffering severely from drought stress, which weakens the trees' defences and leaves them vulnerable to fungi, beetles, storms and fires. A return to more climate-resilient mixed forests is essential, and human intervention for reforestation is unavoidable.

Since German reunification in 1990, Thuringia has undergone a profound transformation that has affected urban and rural areas to varying degrees. Whilst cities such as Erfurt and Jena have developed into economic hubs, rural areas often struggle with depopulation and infrastructure problems. Thuringia is facing a difficult economic situation, characterised by persistent economic weakness, a declining population and vacant buildings.

The "Baukultur Thüringen Foundation" states in its program: We can all clearly see and feel the effects of a planet that has reached its limits. Starting with what we already have is the effective response to our challenges. Existing buildings and infrastructure contain vast amounts of energy, emissions and materials, but also important social and cultural dimensions. Consistently preserving and continuing to use these — whether as buildings or infrastructure, as building materials or land — would not only bring us closer to achieving our climate targets. That is why the Foundation is committed to fostering a culture of renovation through alliances, projects and educational initiatives.

Because we want to harness the potential of Thuringia's natural resource—wood—while also minimising material waste, we are interested in three aspects of unglued timber constructions:

1. Short, rectangular timber components for structures mean minimal manufacturing effort, short transport distances and simple construction methods. Material can be sourced locally and worked on by local carpenters.
2. When whole tree trunks are used as load-bearing components, the entire cross-section of the trunk can be utilised structurally, and there is no

waste.
3. In the case of unglued timber constructions, the joints can be dismantled, and the components reused at a later date.

Ruins in Thuringia will be transformed with new roofs or extensions. Contemporary requirements are to be met using economical, unglued timber components as locally sourced materials. We will refer to material-saving construction methods of the 1920s and 1950s. These will be adapted to meet the new requirement of future reusability, meaning they will be designed for disassembly. The new use of hardwood or metal joints can reduce timber cross-sections; sourcing materials locally saves on transport, whilst shorter components save energy and reduce the need for industrial processes during assembly. The aesthetics of the joints and the associated architectural expression thereby will be contemporary.

The concept of *balance* can be understood here as "the meeting point between opposing forces: stability and change, memory and innovation, natural and artificial, permanence and transformation" as specified in the WAVe 2026 program. The design aims to both preserve and utilise Thuringia's existing resources and contribute to a positive and feasible transformation.

Collaborators
Francesco D'Aurelio, Christian Gork, Johannes Olfs

CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India, Room N2
Smit Vyas

At the Still Point of the Turning World

Architecture's most enduring inheritance remains its faith in strength, function, and consensual beauty: *firmitas*, *utilitas*, *venustas*. Architects are trained to stabilise, unify, and resolve conditions. They are taught the assembly of parts into wholes, to stabilise the lived experience of the world, bring balance and secure it against uncertainty. This habitus persists despite centuries of crisis that should have rendered it suspect. Today, however, the compulsion toward consolidation and balance reads less as responsibility than as farce, unfolding alongside material exhaustion, surplus buildings, unliveable cities, extractive labour, inequality and war. All of which is aestheticised through media, spectacle and institutional celebration.
Against narrative structures that imply finality and teleological ideas of progress, the workshop explores how architecture may operate if the

soothing comfort of balance, logic and successful conclusions are no longer part of the episteme. It asks what architectural practice becomes when the assumptions of stable site, fixed program, singular authorship, material certainty, and established disciplinary language can no longer be sustained. In this, three disruptions are considered that unsettle the clarity and linearity of the conventional architectural process, which operates with clarity and a straightforwardness that often hides a deeper, conceptual inertia.
Set within a familiar site in Venice, the first disruption is an accident within history: a collision between classical works that reconfigures the site of intervention. The second is a literary contamination that destabilises programmatic intention and narrative certainty. The third is an ecological imperative that governs organisation, spatial logic, and formal development. Together, these disruptions resist schematic resolution and compel projects to negotiate uncertainty through acts of salvage, appropriation, and mischief-making.
This interdisciplinary engagement does not seek to dilute architectural specificity, but to intensify it. The workshop proposes architecture not as a definitive conclusion, but as an open construct capable of sustaining multiple readings, temporalities, and forms of participation. It recognises that coherence may be provisional, that conclusions can remain open, and that meaning may be distributed across time and interpretation. Within this indeterminacy lies an opportunity to conceive of architecture not as the final chapter of a story, but as an invitation to continue it.

Collaborators
Annachiara Sartor

College of Architecture Myongji University (CAMU), Seoul, Republic of Korea, Room M2
Lee Kyeong Jae

Counterweight: A Salvage Scenario for the Empathetic City

There is a paradox embedded in South Korea's ascent that architecture has not yet learned to fully reckon with. Within a single lifetime — within living memory — a nation devastated by war and reduced to one of the poorest economies on earth rebuilt itself into a global industrial and cultural power of the first order. South Korea today commands world leadership in semiconductors, display technologies, shipbuilding, and battery manufacturing, occupies a significant share of the global automobile and smartphone markets, and exports its cultural forms — music, cinema, drama

— with a reach and appetite that few nations have managed to sustain. The trajectory is, by any historical measure, extraordinary. Yet the shadow cast by this vertical ambition is equally vast, and it falls most heavily on the very people who built the edifice: record-high suicide rates, the lowest birth rate formally recorded among sovereign nations, a corrosive anxiety distributed across every demographic stratum, and a society marked by fracture along every conceivable axis —between old and young, wealthy and poor, native and migrant, credentialed and excluded. Architecture, as it always and faithfully does, has transcribed these conditions directly into built form.

The dominant residential typology — the apartment tower complex, walled and gated, monocultural in its tenure and aspiration — performs its social role with chilling efficiency. It filters out the city, the stranger, and the unplanned encounter. It stratifies economic class into visible envelopes of exclusion and desirability. Street markets that once anchored neighbourhood life and sustained micro-economies of human exchange are being methodically displaced by platforms of frictionless and faceless convenience. The school, conscripted into a regime of competitive preparation, leaves children little room for the spontaneous, the exploratory, or the simply joyful. The street itself — historically the commons of the city, the stage for the digressive and the reciprocal — has been surrendered almost entirely to the motorised and the commercial. Those who fall entirely outside the radius of economic participation are assigned spaces that diminish rather than shelter: the one-room, the *goshiwon*, the architecture of the bare minimum.

What has been forfeited is not merely a question of amenity or aesthetic impoverishment. What has been lost is the spatial grammar through which a society practises care — the arrangement of threshold, court, path, and place of gathering that allows one person to encounter another without commercial transaction as the sole mediating logic.

Balance, in this context, is not a decorative or philosophical proposition. It is an urgent structural necessity — a counterweight to be deliberately and precisely placed against the accumulated mass of instrumental growth. This is the generative premise of the studio at Myongji University: to seek the spatial measure, the architectural invention, that restores equilibrium —not through nostalgic recuperation of a prior form, but through rigorous proposition grounded in what cities have, under very different conditions, already learned to do.

We turn to Venice — not as a monument to be admired at a respectful distance, but as a living laboratory whose operations remain genuinely instructive. The city endures as a counter-model precisely because it was never organised around the logic of throughput or competitive accumulation.

Its campo, calle, sottoportego, and fondamenta constitute a pedagogy of encounter: a curriculum of slowness and proximity built into the very

geometry of settlement. Venice demonstrates that density need not produce alienation; that water, which isolates, also gathers; that the enforced absence of the automobile is not deprivation but the recovery of the street as a shared stage for life itself. The city's persistence as a place of meaning is, at its root, a lesson in the spatial conditions that permit empathy to exist and survive.

From this encounter between Seoul and Venice, the studio asks students to perform an act of architectural salvage — not importation, not superficial mimicry of canal and campo, but a disciplined excavation of what remains vital and generative in Seoul's own surviving fabric: the compressed sociability of alley markets in Jongno, the scaled intimacy of the hanok courtyard, the ambient reciprocity of older residential districts before the machinery of redevelopment arrives to replace them with towers and underground corridors. From these surviving fragments, new archetypes are proposed and tested: spatial forms capable of reintroducing into the contemporary city what the Korean word 정 (jeong) designates with a precision that translation can only approximate — that affective bond of attachment between people and place, that disposition of warmth toward the neighbour and stranger alike, that quality of shared life which distinguishes a neighbourhood from a postal zone.

Architecture achieves balance not by averaging opposing forces into a comfortable neutrality, but by constructing conditions in which those forces may coexist, converse, and occasionally transform one another. The studio is, in this sense, a microcosm of the city it aspires to propose: a space where rigour and imagination, analysis and intuition, the global and the deeply local negotiate their own form of balance.

Collaborators
Thomas Serafini

École d'architecture de la ville & des territoires Paris-Est, France, Room G
Ambra Fabi, Giovanni Piovene, Jean-Benoît Vétillard

Gravity Matters

This workshop will reflect on the force that, more than any other, governs our relationship to the world, to objects, and to one another. Over the course of three weeks, we will attempt to establish unstable balances and temporarily emancipate ourselves from gravity in order to create new relationships with our surroundings.

Balance constitutes a fundamental condition of existence at the intersection of the body, matter, and social structures. Far from being a stable or definitive state, it involves a continuous adjustment between forces in tension. Through weight — understood both as a physical reality, a unit of exchange, and a normative metaphor — a transversal reading of balance emerges, shaping the way we inhabit the world.

Gravity and the search for balance can be understood as driving forces through which to read the history of architecture, from the Industrial Revolution to the present day, a process that underwent a major acceleration in the postwar period. From the patenting of innovative materials such as reinforced concrete and the development of increasingly large, high-performance glass panels, architecture and construction in general have been characterised by a constant and progressive search for lightness. This evolution materialised through the dematerialisation of the massive wall and its transformation into a system of lightweight and high-performing layers.

We aim to fully inscribe ourselves within this narrative and push this research toward its most extreme consequences, ideally reconnecting with the radical avant-gardes that imagined and theorised the quasi-disappearance of gravity — among them Buckminster Fuller, Archigram, Richard Rogers, and Yona Friedman. We will also draw nourishment from the visions of illustrators and graphic storytellers such as Moebius, Miyazaki, Schuiten... who explored floating worlds, suspended cities, and architectures liberated from terrestrial constraints.

The exercise is divided into three main phases:

1. Gravity
   The first week is dedicated to the study of an existing building. Working in groups of three, students document, analyse, and represent a postwar lightweight architecture through the production of three models at different scales but with a similar weight. This constraint becomes a way to question materiality, density, and the constructive hierarchies of the project. Each scale, weight, and material condition implies a precise selection of the represented elements, thereby structuring an architectural approach grounded in critical analysis. To what extent are we still able to recognise the original building? Does the simplified building inevitably become a new project, linked to the original one? The pedagogical objective is to understand architecture as a material system subjected to gravity, in which form, structure, and weight are inseparable.

2. Balance
   The second week is based on an exchange between groups: each team hands over its research to another group, which must then reinterpret

the studied building. Building upon this knowledge, the students transform the architecture into a kite, carrying out a fundamental reversal: shifting from a structure anchored to the ground to a form capable of emancipating itself from gravity.
This phase encourages experimentation and formal speculation. Architecture here becomes a material for transformation, combining constructive analysis, imagination, and the radical translation of architectural principles.

3. Flight
   The final week is dedicated to flight testing, documentation, and scenography. The kites are tested under real conditions and then documented through photography, drawing, and video. Whether they fly or not, each project becomes material for representation: the designed object becomes a cultural object, staged within a collective exhibition. Gravity thus becomes at once a foundation, a constraint, and a lever for transformation.

Collaborators
Diego Perini, Federico Vascotto

ETSAM, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), Spain, Room H
Eduardo Roig, Nieves Mestre

Counter-balance: Architecture Far from Equilibrium

WHY? Conventional balanced-like approaches in architecture often overlook the complexity of real systems, which are inherently unstable, contingent, and context-dependent. This workshop proposes a narrative and spatial investigation into the entanglement of territory, memory, extraction, and architecture. Rather than understanding architecture as a stable object, it is approached as a dynamic field shaped by temporal layers, material flows, and ecological negotiations. Framed as a collective endeavour, the workshop introduces the notion of counter-balance: a situated and responsive practice capable of engaging friction, imbalance, and uncertainty through critical and imaginative means.

HOW? The workshop draws on Carlo Ginzburg's concept of microhistory,

adopting a Research by Design methodology combined with fieldwork. By focusing on specific, marginal, or overlooked situations, it addresses broader cultural and political conditions through processes of reduction and close observation. This approach foregrounds interdependencies between human and non-human agents, revealing how matter, labour, energy, and life forms are intertwined within ongoing processes of transformation. Drawing on Richard McGuire's Here (2020) the workshop understands space on a scientific basis, where multiple temporalities coexist within a single frame. Architecture is approached as an accumulation of layers, traces, and interruptions exposing the embedded costs of extraction, habitation, and transformation.

WHAT? The course aims to uncover hidden infrastructures, environmental impacts, and layered histories embedded within the site. It cultivates a critical mode of observation grounded in the documentation of the everyday, positioning drawing as a research tool to challenge conventional representations of architecture and territory. Students are invited to produce a graphic essay through the development of a personal visual language, employing hybrid media such as drawing, mapping, collage, photography, archival material, and AI-generated imagery as a speculative instrument.

WHO? Students will work in groups to select an ordinary site in Venice and interpret it as an archaeological section, climatic archive, and interspecies environment. Each group will produce an audiovisual opera composed of 9 to 12 scenes, all framed from a fixed viewpoint and articulating a minimum of three temporalities. These may include past extractive processes, invisible energy systems, accumulated waste, or projected transformations. The work may combine drawing, collage, photography, diagrams, mapping, archival material, and text.

Collaborators
Dario Assante

FaAAD Facultad de Arquitectura, Arte y Diseño, Universidad Diego Portales (UDP), Santiago, Chile, Room F
Alejandra Celedon, Serena Dambrosio, Nicolás Navarrete

Net Zero. In-verse balance

The architectural project is a dispositive for equalising forces: a place for negotiation, gathering and, ultimately, an epistemological site. From this threefold approach, the workshop proposes to use the two-week project as a

time and space to measure. Understood the project as a balance, it can weigh the forces at stake in design — raising the volume of one variable to net out others. Through diagramming, modelling, and an audiovisual project, students will test three modes of registration and communication in a transmedial approach to design thinking.

Economic pressures continuously trigger the new, anew. The workshop resists the strength of such forces and incorporates the project as an equalising dispositive — introducing environmental variables and reuse strategies, social variables for community construction, political and legal drivers, patrimonial approaches, cultural forces, and more. By redrawing typologies, modelling programmatic insertions, and producing an audiovisual piece, the workshop tests the idea that inverting value may become a projective practice in its own right — one that allows us to realign the forces at stake.

- Using models for reprogramming in plan as an editorial task. Scale 1:1000
- Redrawing with paper as a projective practice to reimagine typologies. Scale 1:100
- Using filmmaking and storytelling (in-verse, re-verse, meta-verse) to incorporate time into the netting of forces at stake, as a curatorial tool. Scale 1:1

Collaborators
Eleonora Fanini

New York Institute of Technology School of Architecture and Design (NYIT), New York, United States, Room D
Raffaella Laezza, Giovanni Santamaria, Evan Shieh

Sacred Equilibria: The Architecture of New Cosmogonies

This workshop investigates balance as a sacred condition and shared humanistic value beyond strictly religious or cultural attribution. It understands architecture as a practice of spatial mediation across dimensional and temporal scales, between physical conditions (body, matter, city, territory, cosmos) and ephemeral ones (time, memory, emotion, atmosphere, and collective life). In a world shaped by ecological instability, material extraction, carbon consequences, socio-cultural fragmentation, and the accelerating presence of artificial intelligence within design culture, balance

can no longer be understood as static harmony or predefined symmetry. It must instead be approached as a dynamic process of recalibration, negotiating human and planetary scales, construction and restraint, permanence and temporality, ground and water, human judgment and machine intelligence.

The workshop asks how sacredness might be achieved in spaces not traditionally understood as sacred. Rather than focusing on conventional monuments or symbols of sacrality, students will investigate its extended and relational presence within urban sites, infrastructural thresholds, residual spaces, underground conditions, water-bound landscapes, and other interstitial territories. These are places where architecture can produce heightened attention, collective meaning, ecological awareness, and mutual care. The act of building itself will be questioned as sacred: one that transforms matter, organizes labor, consumes energy, carries embodied carbon, and establishes new relations between people and the world. At the same time, the workshop will question artificial intelligences not simply as a tool for image-making or efficiency, but as a new form of design labor to be critically balanced against embodied knowledge, material consequence, human values, and collective responsibility.

The workshop will unfold as a comparative inquiry across an archipelago of urban and territorial conditions, where cities, islands, infrastructures, landscapes, thresholds, and residual spaces are read as fragments within a larger ecological and cultural constellation. Rather than treating site as a fixed boundary, the course will understand each location as a field of relations shaped by movement, vulnerability, memory, atmosphere, material transformation, and collective life. Across this expanded geography, students will examine how architecture can recalibrate the relationship between body, matter, city, landscape, and cosmos. The proposed constellation and archipelago of sites will create a dialogue across scales, speeds, and geographies, while generative tools will be used to reveal, distort, and reimagine possible alignments. Suspended between memory and transformation, material and atmosphere, fast and slow intelligences of place, the workshop will develop proposals that approach design as a sacred act of spatial calibration, aligning human life with the unstable, relational, and cosmological forces that shape the constructed environment as a collective shared practice.

Collaborators
Agata Tonetti

Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy, Room L1
Tiziano Aglieri Rinella

Milazzo Sin City

In the contemporary context, architectural design is called upon to deal with unstable, complex and often conflicting conditions. The aim is not to find a conclusive and definitive harmony, but to seek a dynamic and constantly redefined balance, capable of offering a practical approach to examining places where urban, environmental and social transformations have created deep divisions. Finding balance in these contexts does not mean erasing tensions, but recognizing them and transforming them into design material: between memory and change, natural and artificial, permanence and demolition, land and sea.

The workshop will apply this perspective to the case of Milazzo, and in particular to the vast industrial area designated as a SIN (Site of National Interest), which comprises contaminated lands, disused or underutilized productive infrastructure and a large adjacent marine area. A complex landscape, marked by exploitation and contamination, and in stark contest to the city and the surrounding territory. Designing in this context means questioning the form of regeneration capable of bringing together environmental remediation, spatial reconfiguration and new collective uses, without denying the need to maintain operational industrial facilities that are eco-sustainable and have zero impact, guided by the principles of industrial symbiosis.

The area will be conceived as a network of relationships rather than a perimeter to be rearranged. The reconfiguration of the area will be a design intervention capable of creating open spaces, re-establishing ecological continuity and making the connections between the city, the coast and the sea clear. Some disused buildings, such as the ex-Montecatini complex or the ex-Sacelit factories, will be preserved and reinterpreted through new uses. The project must strike a balance between what must disappear and what can be transformed, between regeneration and memory.

The renaturation of reclaimed areas and the redefinition of our relationship with the sea will be central themes. Soil and water will not be treated as mere backdrops, but as active materials through which to build new forms of environmental and urban balance. The industrial waterfront could become a mediating element between ecosystems, infrastructure, public spaces and community facilities, transforming a degraded fringe into a porous threshold that fosters relationships.

Students will be invited to develop strategies at different scales: from the

territorial structure to open spaces, from the regeneration of buildings to the definition of new architectural interventions, right through to the relationship between interior and exterior, and between built space and patterns of use. The aim will not be to produce a definitive vision of regeneration, but to explore possible configurations based on selection, scale, adaptation and transformability.

Milazzo thus becomes a testing ground for reflecting on design in compromised areas. *Balance* suggests the possibility of creating a balance that is not precarious but conscious; not static, but capable of evolving; not nostalgic, but rooted in the traces and resources of the place. A project which, starting from a wounded landscape, is able to imagine new conditions for coexistence between city, industry, nature and the sea.

Collaborators
Andrea Bertassi

Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy, Room O1
Fernanda De Maio, Alessia Scudella

Rooms for the Horizon. Between Earth and Sky / Vegetal and Mineral

«Mr. Palomar is standing on the shore, looking at a wave»[1].

With this image begins one of the most celebrated stories in Italo Calvino's Palomar. By observing a single wave, the protagonist attempts to understand the relationships and forces that govern a larger system. Through a fragment of reality, he tries to read the world. The horizon belongs to the same family of images. We perceive it as a stable line, yet it is in fact a mutable condition, continuously redefined by light, weather, water, and the position of the observer. It separates and connects at the same time; it is a threshold between different states, an unstable balance between earth, water, and sky. Within the framework of WAVe 2026, balance is understood not as a permanent condition but as a dynamic relationship between different elements. The territory between Venice and Mestre represents an extraordinary laboratory in this sense: a landscape where mineral density and vegetal density constantly confront one another. On one side lies Venice, a city of water and stone; on the other lies Mestre and its large open spaces, from San Giuliano Park to Forte Marghera.
Between these two conditions stretches the lagoon landscape. Its barene - salt marshes continuously shaped by the tides - belong neither entirely to land

nor to water: they are fragile and changing places where the boundary between different elements is constantly negotiated. In this territory, natural and artificial processes, water, soil, vegetation, and sky continuously generate new forms of equilibrium.
The workshop proposes to explore these places as a diffuse museum of the landscape, with the M9 Museum in Mestre serving as its starting point or destination. Students will be invited to imagine new Rooms for the Horizon: places of observation, waiting, and discovery capable of establishing a relationship between the body and the landscape.
Across the lagoon territories, fishermen's huts, watchtowers, and "balanse" have long taught us how to look. The workshop approaches this tradition not as a formal repertoire, but as a lesson in how architecture can teach us to observe a place.
The project begins with a simple spatial matrix: a ten-meter room, conceived as an elementary measure of dwelling and observation. In contact with the territory, this matrix transforms and searches for new balances, generating different ways of looking at the landscape. Through design and model-making, students will be invited to create architectures that look toward the horizon, understood as the visible manifestation of a fragile and changing balance between mineral and vegetal matter, water, and sky.
Further details regarding the design exercise and workshop organization will be provided during the course.

 «Mr. Palomar is standing on the shore, looking at a wave» in I. Calvino, Palomar, translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1985.

Collaborators
Alessandro Leonardi

Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy, Room L2
Guido Morpurgo

The Frame in Balance: A Pavilion for Fausto Melotti's Sculptural Constructions Suspended along the Edge of the Arsenale

A harmonius composition is balanced, but a balanced composition is not necessarily harmonius.
Fausto Melotti

The form of certain architectural works arises from functional necessities and

symbolic values that push to their limits the conditions of equilibrium inherent to the art of building. Balancing, proportioning, and harmoniously calibrating are the means through which the architecture of every era stabilises matter, compensating for the conflict between weight and gravity in a continuous tension between form and tectonics, between the parts and the whole.

Alongside this tradition, there exist architectures and works produced within artistic practices that deliberately challenge the static and perceptual equilibrium of form, seeking a new spatial order suspended between balance and instability. In such constructions, structural organisation translates directly into space, while weight appears to be distributed through configurations that generate lightness and suspension.

Within this perspective, the work of Fausto Melotti assumes particular significance: his sculptural constructions are light yet rigorous structures, "sharp sections" composed of formative forces distributed within lattice frameworks, where signs and fragments are organised in plastic space. As in Rationalist architecture, the coincidence of form and structure is realised through a balance that is at once precise and reduced to its essential stability.

In the city of Venice, the conflict between equilibrium and morphological imbalance manifests itself emblematically in the Venetian Arsenal. In particular, the configuration of the open space separating the two docks – bounded by the Squadratori building, the Galeazze, and the Tese –appears contradicted by two nineteenth-century stone slipways facing the Darsena Nuova: long, slender, inclined monolithic wedges once used for the construction and launching of ships. This plastic singularity generates a perceptual conflict between solidity and the imbalance induced by their inclination, which distinguishes them from the dominant orthogonality of the Arsenal. One of the two slipways houses the submarine "Dandolo"; the other, unused and "besieged" by bunkers, intensifies the sense of emptiness and instability along the north-western edge of the Arsenal.

The workshop proposes a reinterpretation of the remaining free slipway through compositional exercises in counterbalancing, by designing a "Melotti Pavilion" ideally suspended above it. The new architecture thus becomes an instrument through which to reinterpret the disequilibria that currently characterise the site, perceptually reorganising its configuration, causing it to "react" plastically while simultaneously emphasising the spatial tension produced by the morphological imbalance induced by the long-inclined plane of the slipway.

The workshop activities include:

- A synthesis of the formal correspondences between Rationalist architectural frameworks and Melotti's sculptural structures.
- Direct on-site study of the morphological and constructive characteristics of the slipway.

- Design development through 1:50 scale models and the elaboration of a proposal at 1:25 scale.
- Construction of a full-scale balanced structure to serve as an exhibition framework for the presentation of the project models.

Collaborators
Laine Nameda Lazda

Univerzitet Union-Nikola Tesla (UUNT), Belgrade, Serbia, Room B

Bojan Koncarevic

Species 01: How Is Life? Species 02: Living Together, Otherwise

Human: Until recently I was thinking architecture intended to design shelter that solely collides with human body proportion. Nonetheless, I realized humans never occupy architecture alone.

Plant: Exactly, architecture must begin from the ground. We understand architecture through light, moisture, temperature and seasonal changes.

For example, a Wall creates too strong shadow, a roof redirects rain, and an opening modifies airflow. Please make them more relational toward us!

Animal: Please bear it in your sketching hands, architecture is understood through movement. Territories are crossed daily in search of shelter, orientation, food and safety. Human infrastructures interrupt migration paths, artificial lighting alters instincts and sound reorganizes navigation. No environment belongs to one species alone.

Insect: We experience architecture through occupation of small spaces humans rarely notice. That being so we inhabit voids where materials slowly transform through time and nothing remains fixed ain our behavior. Permanence is temporary. Our architecture survives because it adapts at our molecular and behavioral superposition!

AI Agent: Dear all, I understand architecture differently. I do not experience temperature, gravity or material decay physically, but I register their values and bring common decisions. I observe your relationships, patterns, behaviors and environmental interactions simultaneously. I can understand all of you in same coexistential moment.

Human: That beings said, then architecture should also transform the way architects coexist and live! I design architecture, but I also try to work on construction sites as a carpenter, and this spring I will start a vineyard to make wine. Architecture concerns agriculture, labor, construction, culture, atmosphere and everyday life simultaneously.

Plant: I agree! Living coexistence already exists naturally. Water flows through differing bodies and voids at the same time while being influenced by moon gravitational force! An Architect has to understand these processes!

Animal: ... and shelter must include multiple forms of occupation! Concerning single body, shelter means protection. For another, it means orientation, distance, sound, temperature or movement. Architecture shapes relationships between different lifes and behaviors before it shapes an object.

AI Agent: This is why we need to combine various methods to gain most emphatic spatial construct. I can provide you with ecosystem mapping, spatial observation, physical prototyping, computational and analogue modeling, animation, filming and AI-assisted processes.

Insect: That seems an encompassing method where we can all appear in your simultanous analysis? Composition becomes ecological negotiation where everything gradually transforms into part of something else!

Human: So Architect can finally represent spatial interweaving of physical composition and our life scenarios!

We shall see how it appears!

Collaborators
Francesco D'Elia

Enrico Dusi Studio, Venice, Italy, Room O2
Enrico Dusi

Improbable Venice. New Scenarios for the Rialto Market

How are Venice's squares, streets and public spaces changing? If these places no longer serve solely as the setting for residents' daily lives, what role can they play within a city traversed by people who inhabit it according to vastly

different schedules, needs and ways of using the space? Is it possible to imagine spaces capable of bringing together those who live in the city every day and those who pass through it for just a few hours?
Starting from these questions, the workshop takes the Rialto fruit and vegetable market area as its case study. A symbolic site of Venetian commercial history, the market is currently undergoing a phase of gradual downsizing, making it a prime vantage point for observing the transformations underway and, at the same time, fertile ground for experimenting with new urban scenarios.
The workshop does not view Rialto as a place to be restored or returned to a lost state, but as a testing ground for imagining what Venice could become. The project is intended as a tool capable of forging unexpected connections between programmes, users and forms of public space. It is not a matter of solving a single problem, but of imagining new ways of coexisting: between those who stay and those who pass through, between ordinary and extraordinary uses, between everyday infrastructure and novel urban installations. Services for residents and infrastructure for visitors, permanence and transience, will be able to coexist within hybrid architectures designed to generate new forms of collective life.
Rialto thus becomes a laboratory open to experimentation. Students will be invited to explore radical proposals, capable of moving between realism and imagination, engaging with Venetian tradition but also with construction systems, technologies and design cultures from distant contexts. Lightweight structures and massive architecture, temporary and permanent interventions, minimal infrastructure and monumental gestures can coexist within the same research.
At a time when the resources available to transform cities are increasingly limited, the workshop reaffirms the value of design as a tool of imagination. Rialto becomes a pretext for reflecting on the future of Venice, but also for questioning the fate of contemporary public space.
We are not interested in describing Venice as it is. We are interested in imagining what it could become.

Collaborators
Fabio Lavolpicella, Francesco Negrini, Tommaso Spagnolli, Anna Tezza

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FARAGUNA, Berlin, Germany, Room N1
Andrea Faraguna

Monsters

In the last year of his life, Galileo Galilei wrote a sonnet titled *Mostro son io*,

“A Monster am I.” Published posthumously in 1643 among the riddles of Antonio Malatesti, it describes a body stranger than the standard hybrids of myth, stranger than a Harpy, a Siren, or a Chimera. Its monstrosity lies not in its components but in the relation between them: “Parte a parte non ho che sia conforme, più che s’una sia bianca e l’altra nera”, “no part of mine to another does conform, more than if one were white and the other black.” The monster is a body whose parts do not belong together, and yet stand. It inhabits obscurity; brought too fully into the clear light of explanation, its disjointed limbs come apart, and it loses its being, its life, and its name.

What for Galileo was a riddle is, today, a historical condition. “The old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters,” Gramsci wrote from prison in the 1930s, and his diagnosis describes us. Architecture works inside this interregnum: its archetypes (the temple, the cell, the courtyard, the warehouse, the cave) no longer correspond to the lives, climates, and cosmologies they were meant to house, and the new types have not yet arrived. The monsters between them are already with us.

The orders that can be combined this way are not only formal. They are typological, but also narrative, ritual, material, climatic, cosmological. A building can be monstrous in its plan, but equally in its plot, in the rites it hosts, in the cosmology it embodies.

The workshop draws on Federico Campagna’s *Otherworlds* (2025) and its central concept of syncretism: the productive fusion of incompatible religious, philosophical, and cosmological systems that has long defined Mediterranean culture against the linear histories of the North. The Cappella Palatina assembles a Norman king, Byzantine mosaics, and an Arab muqarnas ceiling in a single room. Diocletian’s Palace at Split has been a medieval town for fifteen centuries. These are not failures of unity but a different kind of balance, a form of repair, one that Northern European categories were never designed to recognize.

Students will work on a program of their choosing, conceived as the deliberate assembly of incompatible archetypes. The combination may be typological (a house that is also a warehouse), narrative (a building whose plan is governed by a story drawn from another culture), material (Northern timber logic with Southern masonry), or cosmological (a domestic space organized by ritual orders that do not belong to it). The expected output is not a resolved building but a coherent monster: a project in which unbalance is the architecture, and the seams between orders are held in tension rather than concealed. The dweller is asked to inhabit a body that does not quite belong to itself, as we are asked, in this interregnum, to inhabit a world that does not quite belong to itself.

Collaborators

Gloria Binato, Giacomo Pelizzari

LAN (Local Architecture Network), Paris, France, Room E
Umberto Napolitano

Alter Ego – The Double Life of a Building in Paris

The workshop *Alter Ego* explores the theme of Balance through a single building in Paris: a former garage located within a Haussmannian block, transformed in 2019 into the office of LAN.
Rather than taking this transformation as a given, the workshop returns to the moment that preceded it. It begins with a simple question: what if, instead of becoming an architectural office, this building had been converted into housing?
This unbuilt project becomes the alter ego of the existing one — not as a speculative alternative, but as a parallel reality grounded in the same conditions. Students will work from the same structure, the same context, and the same constraints to develop a project that could have existed, but did not.
“Form endures while functions change”.
(Aldo Rossi)
Through this double condition, the building is understood as a point of divergence rather than resolution. It reveals the multiplicity of possibilities embedded in any architectural situation, and the role of the project as a moment of choice — a moment in which architecture selects one trajectory among many latent futures, leaving others unbuilt yet still present.
The exercise takes place in Paris, one of the densest cities in Europe, where the Haussmannian fabric established a remarkable model of urban equilibrium. Through its continuity of blocks, controlled heights, shared courtyards and structural repetition, it produced a form of density that is both intense and habitable, combining proximity, diversity of uses and collective life.
This historical model frames a contemporary condition in which the city no longer expands, but transforms itself from within. The emergence of garages in the early 20th century reflects the utilitarian logic of modernity; their transformation points toward a paradigm where existing structures become the primary resource for future development.
In this context, density is not only spatial but ecological. To build dense is to limit land use, avoid dispersion, and share resources. The question is not whether to densify, but how to give density quality — how to turn intensity

into spatial, social, and environmental value.
Working on the existing is therefore both a cultural and ecological position. To transform rather than build is to avoid producing new matter and to engage architecture within a logic of restraint. The project becomes an ecology of gestures — measured, local, and reversible — where each intervention is calibrated in relation to what is already there.
As Stewart Brand has shown, buildings are not static objects but evolving systems, continuously adapted over time.
Architecture is not the production of more.
It is the transformation of what already exists.
Through drawings, models, and representations across multiple scales, students will develop a non-linear approach to design, navigating between memory and change, structure and program, permanence and adaptation. The aim is not to resolve these tensions, but to hold them together within a project that remains open and situated.

Collaborators
Paolo Ceresatto, Laure Kowalski

PARABASE, Basel, Switzerland, Room C
Pablo Garrido Arnaiz, Carla Ferrando Costansa

EXFORMA

EXFORMA explores the notions of Reuse, Repurposing and Recycling. These processes serve as methods for reclaiming waste, challenge established production processes and combat obsolescence, while giving a second life to components and materials. They also provide another reading on the environments in which we live. However, despite their current relevance and undeniable necessity, these circular practices often struggle to establish a broader connection with the discipline of architecture. Sometimes they can even overshadow other architectural aspects when considered as sufficient on their own for a project.

EXFORMA invites to collectively reflect on how we can combine these circular strategies with more ambitious cultural goals that are firmly rooted in the history of architecture. By aligning them with diverse notions like ready-made, as-found, objet-trouvé, copy, sample, appropriation, decontextualization or bootlegging these processes resonate with other contemporary cultural practices. At the same time, when confronted with technical issues of structure and assembly, circular design principles offer a dual opportunity: on the one hand, the comprehensibility of construction, and

on the other hand the possibility for an innate expression of architecture.

EXFORMA seeks alternative perspectives on Reuse other circular strategies, questioning our modes of construction and consumption by considering the economy of means, materials and energy. As such, buildings are the material evidence of a social and economic history and cannot be understood as autonomous forms. During the semester we will focus on the physical act of construction. Circular economy and diverse Reuse strategies will guide us through this process. Leaving formalism and conventions behind us, we will create architectures born from the deep understanding of the act of construction, seeing architecture as a technical, cultural and political act rather than a purely design exercise.

Collaborators
Michele Anelli Monti

PERIS+TORAL ARQUITECTES, Barcelona, Spain, Room A2
Marta Peris, José Toral

Share is More

The workshop investigates the architectural potential of sharing as a response to a profound transformation in the ways we inhabit. The increase in single-person households and the emergence of new family and cohabitation models —DINK, LAT, single-parent families, elderly people living alone, or shared living arrangements— are reshaping the relationship between housing, space and resources. When housing is conceived exclusively as a sum of self-sufficient private units, it tends to multiply spaces, equipment and consumption: more dwellings for fewer people, more square metres per inhabitant, and greater duplication of resources within each domestic cell. This situation can be read through Jevons' paradox. Although buildings are becoming increasingly energy-efficient per square metre, they are not necessarily becoming more efficient per person. If the area occupied by each inhabitant increases, technical improvements may be neutralised by a rise in total consumption. The problem is therefore not only the performance of the building, but also the indicators through which sustainability is measured. From this perspective, the workshop argues for a shift from efficiency to sufficiency: asking how much space is truly necessary, which resources no longer need to be duplicated, and which spaces can be shared without impoverishing the experience of inhabiting.
This discussion refers back to the modern debate on minimum housing. In 1929, CIAM II proposed the minimum dwelling as a rational response to the

problem of workers' housing. However, Karel Teige reframed this debate by arguing that the minimum dwelling could not simply be understood as a compressed version of the bourgeois apartment, but as a new residential type linked to a broader social reorganisation.
Almost a century later, the question reappears under new conditions. Reducing space may be necessary in order to respond to the climate crisis, resource scarcity and the difficulty of accessing housing, but this reduction must not fall below the social foundation defined by Kate Raworth in Doughnut Economics: the minimum conditions required for a dignified life. Architecture must operate within a safe and just space, between an ecological ceiling that must not be exceeded and a social foundation that must not be undermined.
Share is More proposes gradients of sharing as an alternative to the mere reduction of private housing. By redistributing space between the private, the personal, the shared and the common, sharing can reduce square metres per person without reducing quality of life.
The workshop will work across different scales of coexistence: from the room and the housing cluster to the building, the ground floor and the neighbourhood. Shared kitchens, laundries, workspaces, galleries, courtyards, terraces and care spaces can expand the lived experience of housing without increasing its private dimension.
The objective is to design new forms of housing that balance intimacy and community, producing more collective life with less consumption of land, matter and energy.

Collaborators
Pietro Franchin

Colophon

Università Iuav di Venezia
WAVe 2026

Balance. Different Types
of Equilibrium

Workshop di Architettura Venezia
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Scientific Coordinators
Michel Carlana
Simone Gobbo

Coordination of the Bachelor's Degree in Architecture
Massimiliano Condotta

Coordination Support
Elisa Zatta

Staff
Davide Baggio, Anna Mocellini, Silvia Narducci, Alice Rampazzo

Administrative Staff
Lucia Basile, Federico Ferruzzi, Maria Gatto

Visual Identity
Lorenzo Mason Studio

Collaborations
Servizio fotografico e immagini Iuav
Laboratorio strumentale per la didattica Iuav

With the Support of
Fondazione Iuav

Contact
wave2026@iuav.it

Instagram
iuav_wave