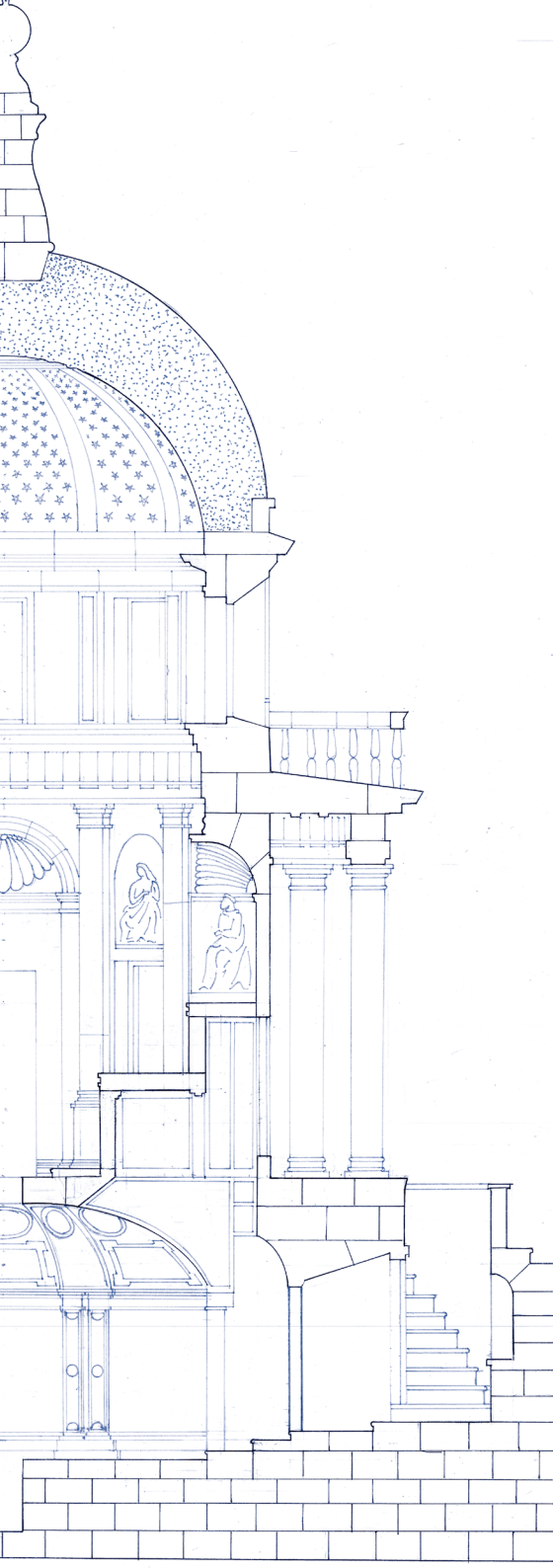




International Conference
on Architecture and Design
ROME | DELHI | ROMANIA

Genius Loci Revisited

**From essence
to process**

Call for abstracts
ROME/ 28-30
NOVEMBER 2026

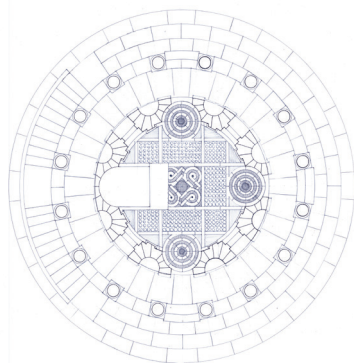
Venue: Sala degli Affreschi,
Faculty of Civil and Industrial
Engineering, Sapienza
University of Rome, San Pietro
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OF DESIGN**



Tempietto del Bramante
Donato Bramante Drawing
atelier 14: Barbat Flavius

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Genius Loci Revisited

From essence to process

In a world that is in constant motion, to pause within a place in order to listen to the place does not mean interrupting compressed time, but understanding a temporal continuity unfolding in the present. Discovering the nature of a place begins with listening, sensing, and understanding the historical and cultural trajectory embedded in its very evolution.

The spirit of place reveals itself beyond its physical qualities and implies time both as formation and as a continuous process of becoming.

Grounded in Heidegger's notion of dwelling and Christian Norberg-Schulz's phenomenological approach, this inquiry traces a progression:

from **listening**, understood as an immersion in the atmosphere of place,

to **reading**, as the deciphering of its physical, historical and cultural layers,

to **time**, as the continuous becoming of place and the constitution of its character,

and finally to **design**, where understanding the process through which character is constituted becomes an operative instrument.

The character of a place thus emerges as the result of a historical, cultural and existential continuity, in whose constitution time plays a fundamental role.

Today, architecture, urban design, art and material culture confront a condition shaped by rapid urban transformation, contested heritage, ecological pressure and the loss of contextual specificity in a globalised built environment. These challenges require a decisive shift: from understanding genius loci as a fixed essence to be uncovered, sensed, read and understood, towards recognising it as a living process through which the character of place is continuously constituted and which can, in turn, inform contemporary design practice.

The shift from revealing the spirit of place to understanding how the spirit of place is configured through time is, in itself, the shift from discovering essence to understanding process.

From this perspective arise two fundamental questions:

How can the character of a place be discovered through listening and sensitive reading?

and

How does this character, constituted through time, become an operative instrument of design?

Moving from genius loci as a recognisable character to genius loci as a process through which meaning is constituted over time, from phenomenology to operationalisation, we propose four successive levels of engaging with the spirit of place. These trace the path from the sensitive experience of place and

the understanding of the genesis of its character to the conscious participation in its becoming through architectural design. It is therefore not only a discourse on genius loci, but a reflection on the method through which genius loci can become an instrument. Genius loci is not the method; it is the object of the method.

In this way, rather than proposing four independent themes, the conference is structured as four successive stages of a single methodological journey — from encountering place to designing through an understanding of its becoming.

This is a discourse concerned with the becoming of character, through which genius loci acquires both a temporal and an operational dimension.

The four thematic sections correspond to four successive levels of engaging with genius loci:

Listening

"Pause within a place and listen"

The first sensitive encounter with place, an immersion in its atmosphere and in the direct experience of presence.

Reading

"Reading the visible and invisible layers of place"

The deciphering of the physical, historical, cultural and symbolic layers that compose the character of place.

Time

"The becoming of place and the constitution of character"

Understanding character as the result of a continuous process of constitution, sedimentation and transformation, in which memory and becoming coexist.

Design

"From understanding to operative instrument"

Transforming the understanding of the process through which character is constituted into an instrument of architectural intervention.

Listening

"Pause within a place and listen"

Place tells a story. Listening is an attitude, a disposition towards place. Listening creates the relationship with place.

Place tells its story and preserves, within both physical and sensory memory, every stage through which it has passed, every layer that has contributed to its formation. Even when a place has undergone significant erasures over time, its story continues to be felt and transmitted. To listen to place is to immerse oneself in what it has to say, to enter it without the intention of extracting information, but rather to sense the atmosphere it conveys. Whether it is a place rich in meaning and dense in presence, a wounded place, a landscape, a fragment of the city, or a work of architecture, listening establishes a subsequent relationship with place through the very discovery of what it communicates. Place does not speak through words, but through presence, and listening is part of being present before the presence of place.

Listening is the first stage in which place manifests itself, and the relationship unfolds according to one's willingness to listen. Listening creates relationship; relationship creates understanding; understanding leads to interpretation; and interpretation determines the gesture upon place. Listening thus becomes, and remains, the very foundation of every gesture

upon place. Listening does not mean contemplation; it means conscious engagement with place, as the first act of design.

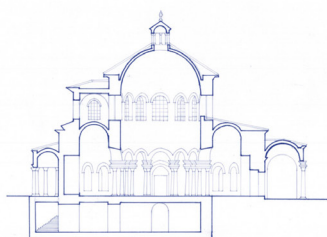
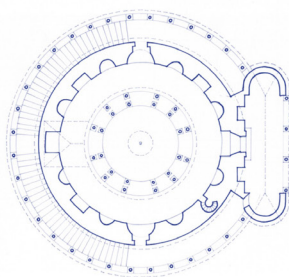
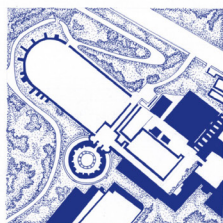
Focus

Sensory Perception of Place

The first sensitive encounter with place — immersion in atmosphere, presence, and conscious engagement with place prior to analysis.

Topics invited

- » Presence as the first manifestation of place
- » Listening as the beginning of the relationship with place
- » The relationship with place as the foundation of understanding
- » Presence beyond language: how places communicate
- » Atmosphere and the sensory experience of place
- » Embodied experience and phenomenological engagement with place
- » The sensory dimensions of place: sound, light, texture and smell
- » Silence, stillness and slowness in the experience of place
- » Physical and sensory memory as expressions of place



Mausoleu di Santa Costanza
 Drawing atelier 14; Balasoiu Anca Elena

Reading

“Reading the visible and invisible layers of place”

Place unveils itself. Reading means discovering the place in depth, layer by layer. Reading enables the understanding of place and reveals its character.

To read is to unveil, through successive, adjacent and juxtaposed layers, what place brings into visibility. The physical layers, which emerge together or separately, partially or in their entirety, and the sensory layers, perceived fragmentarily or as a whole, together constitute a material palimpsest of meanings. Reading—and above all understanding—these layers refers back to each of them individually, seeking to decipher the underlying inscriptions and, often, their different scripts.

The urban parchment is continuously written and rewritten, as the city, or place, is read anew, with each reading revealing new meanings. To understand through reading is to approach the deeper dimension of place, once it has first been listened to. Reading means attentive discovery, bringing to light the traces that made this writing possible. It is a conscious gaze that allows place to manifest itself together with its history, culture and continuous evolution. Reading deciphers relationships, continuities and tensions that do not emerge at first sight but gradually reveal themselves.

Reading extends beyond exploration or documentation; it in-forms our understanding of the relationships through which place is constituted and enables the passage from what allows itself to become visible to that

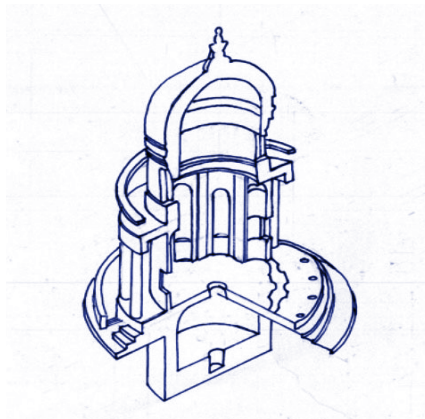
which gives coherence to the visible. Thus, reading reveals, partially or entirely, the internal logic of the becoming of place: the becoming of its character and the process through which that character has been constituted.

Focus

The deciphering of the physical, historical, cultural and symbolic layers through which the character of place is constituted.

Topics invited

- » Reading as the deciphering of the layers of place
- » The palimpsest of material and meaning
- » Traces and inscriptions as expressions of place
- » Mapping and representing the layers of place
- » Morphological and typological readings of urban and architectural forms
- » Archival and historical research in the interpretation of temporal layers
- » Symbolic and cultural interpretations of place
- » The revelation of the character of place through reading



Tempietto del Bramante, Donato Bramante
X Drawing atelier 14: Moldoveanu Alexandra Giulia

Time

"The becoming of place and the constitution of character"

Character becomes. Time constitutes place. Continuity gives meaning.

Reading reveals the process through which character has been constituted. Time is the dimension through which this process unfolds. Time is becoming. Through time, and with time, layers overlap and settle into successive strata. Through time, character is formed and continuously transformed.

Time belongs to the very moment of origin. It is the time of making, inherent in evolution, carrying memory within itself and giving rise to continuity. A continuity that may be fluid, fragmented, interrupted or oscillating, yet one that defines the trajectory of place. It is this trajectory that gradually shapes and nuances its character. Ultimately, time is the formative force of place.

Time is present in the formation of the layers of place, while place, together with its sediments, remains in a continuous state of transformation. Each new layer informs the preceding one, which, in turn, determines the one that follows. The continuous shaping of character is influenced by this superimposition of layers and partial memories. Time produces character as the result of continuous accumulation and transformation, in which the past and becoming coexist.

To discover time, to unravel the past of a place, means to understand the process through which it continues

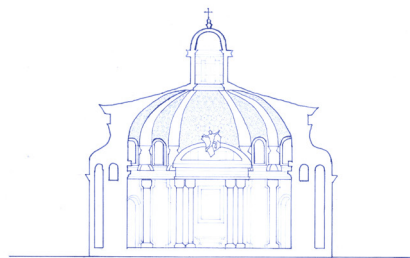
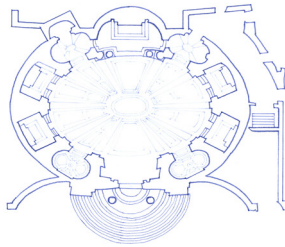
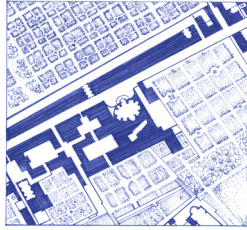
to become. The challenge lies in understanding time as the becoming of character, and character as becoming through time. Place exists as process, and its character is the expression of this continuous becoming.

Focus

Continuity and becoming
Character understood as the outcome of continuous constitution — sedimentation, memory, transformation and becoming.

Topics invited

- » Time as process
- » Character becomes
- » Time as the constitutive dimension of place
- » Continuity and transformation in the evolution of place
- » Memory as the continuity of place
- » Place as palimpsest: layered histories and meanings
- » Historiography and narrative construction of place
- » Cyclical time in the becoming of place



Chiesa di Sant'Andrea al Quirinale
Gian Lorenzo Bernini ; Drawing atelier 14: Lazar Andrei

Design

"From understanding to operative instrument"

Design participates in the becoming of place. Design writes and rewrites place in a continuous process. Design participates in the becoming of character.

To design means to participate consciously in the becoming of place. While listening presupposes openness and a willingness towards place, and reading consciously informs understanding, time serves as the instrument through which becoming can be understood in relation to both the past and the future. The gesture of a new writing is thus inscribed within the continuity of preserving or transforming character. Thus, to design means to enter into a relationship with place, to understand place, to understand becoming, and to participate consciously in the shaping of character.

Every gesture becomes a new layer of place within a continuous process of writing, and linear time is transformed into cyclical time. In the same way that cyclical time is the time of return, of turning back upon itself, and of the reactualisation of meanings within a perpetual present, marking place constitutes only a moment in the process of becoming—a continuous process that adds layer upon layer to what already exists.

Thus, listening, reading and time are once again contained within the very act of writing itself. By returning to the original meaning of *genius loci*, the manner in which this writing is carried out becomes

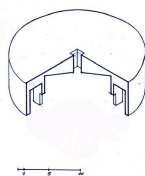
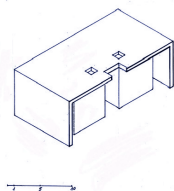
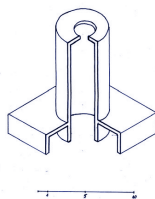
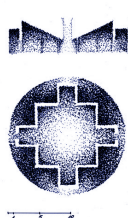
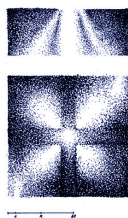
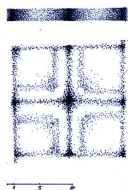
the essence of the process and the possibility of revealing the good spirit of place. Design is not an act that brings the process of place to an end, but a moment in which the process of its becoming becomes meaningful.

Focus

Transforming the understanding of becoming into a conscious act of architectural intervention.

Topics invited

- » From understanding character to architectural intervention
- » Design as participation in the becoming of place
- » Architecture as a new layer in the continuous writing of place
- » Cyclical time and continuity in architectural design
- » Materiality and architectural expression of place
- » Regeneration, transformation and continuity through design
- » Contextual methodologies and place-based design education



Call for abstracts



Abstract Template

Abstract submission email ID -

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» **Title of the Paper Abstract** (Times New Roman 12Pt., Bold)

» **Name 1, Name and Name** (10 Pt., Times New Roman, Bold, Italics)

» **Department/Laboratory, University name, State** (10 Pt., Times New Roman, Italics)

» **Author names and affiliations:**

All authors names participating in the research paper should be written, the name of the presenting author must be underlined.

» **Conference Theme** (Times New Roman, 10 Pt., Bold)

Please indicate the conference theme under which the abstract is submitted by selecting one of the four thematic sections:

- **Listening** – Pause within a place and listen
- **Reading** – Reading the visible and invisible layers of place
- **Time** – The becoming of place and the constitution of character
- **Design** – From understanding to operative instrument

(Please indicate only one conference theme)

» **Abstract** (Times New Roman, 10 Pt., Bold)

An abstract must be submitted for oral presentations. Each abstract will be reviewed and selected by the Scientific Committee. The abstract must be written in English. The length of the abstract should be up to 500 words. The general layout rules are:

•

- Times New Roman, 10 Point, Normal, set to single line spacing
- Paragraphs should be justified.
- Page format: A4

» **Keywords**

3 keywords highlighting the focus areas of the study.

» **Figures**

No figures necessary for abstract submission.

» Corresponding Author

The corresponding author data must be written at the end of the abstract

- Name Surname (10 Pt., Times New Roman, Normal)
- Faculty, Department/Laboratory, University (10 Pt., Times New Roman, Normal)
- E-mail: (10 Pt., Times New Roman, Normal)

» Abstract submission

Please save the abstract under name of the corresponding author:

Surname_Name_GLR2026.doc

Please submit the abstract as a **Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) document**.

The abstracts should be sent to the following email id- **glr2026@wud.ac.in**
no later than 12:00 GMT on September 7th, 2026.

Accepted authors are requested to complete the registration process by submitting the applicable registration fee within the notified schedule. Registration will be confirmed only after receipt of payment.

» Registration Fee Categories:

Category	Registration Fee
Academicians	INR 5,000
Industry Professionals	INR 7,000
PhD Scholars /	INR 4,000
Non-PhD Students	

Payment instructions, payment schedule and bank details will be shared separately with all accepted authors. Kindly retain the proof of payment for verification during registration.

» Important Dates:

- Abstract Submission Opens: **1 August 2026**
- Abstract Submission Deadline: **7 September 2026**
- Notification of Acceptance: **20 September 2026**
- Early Bird Registration: **30 September 2026**
- Regular Registration: **15 October 2026**
- Conference Dates: **28 - 30 November 2026**

GENIUS LOCI REVISITED

“The genius loci is not a state to be uncovered once, but a process to be sensed, read, understood, and designed with, again and again.”

**ROME · 28-30 NOVEMBER 2026
HYBRID CONFERENCE**

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS OPENS 1 AUGUST 2026

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