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Call for articles PAD #32

Communication × Space.
Designing for the regeneration of public spaces

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The Call

Contemporary cities are increasingly shaped by rapid transformations, fragmented patterns of spatial use, and growing cultural and social diversity, alongside persistent inequalities in whose needs, identities and ways of using space are recognised. Within these contexts, public spaces can become underused, difficult to interpret in terms of their potential, or marginal to the everyday life of communities. At the same time, their regeneration increasingly extends beyond permanent physical transformation and develops through gradual, reversible, adaptive and participatory interventions.

In this context, communication design can operate as an integral dimension of spatial transformation rather than as a subsequent or merely complementary intervention. Visual, informational, narrative and environmental systems can contribute to making places perceptible, legible, accessible and usable, while enabling relationships between different communities and supporting new practices of use and appropriation. At the same time, communication systems can also reproduce exclusions, privileging particular languages, cultural codes, bodies, identities or forms of spatial practice over others.

Communication can therefore be understood as an important design dimension for public space. Beyond orienting, informing, signalling and visualising, communication design can reveal latent opportunities, anticipate future uses, mediate between different actors, support collective memory, foster a sense of belonging and contribute to the construction of shared urban identities, while raising questions about whose identities, histories and narratives are represented, and whose may remain absent or contested.

A distinctive aspect of communication design also lies in its temporality. Communication interventions may operate through short, experimental, adaptable, reversible and iterative timescales, allowing them to anticipate, accompany or complement the slower processes typically associated with architectural and urban transformation. Temporary installations, identity systems, information artefacts, wayfinding, narratives, urban media, digital platforms and participatory tools can interact with spatial devices such as street furniture, tactical interventions, exhibitions and ephemeral architectures, contributing to processes of reactivation and regeneration.

Communication × Space invites scholars, researchers, educators and practitioners to investigate the intersections between communication design, spatial design, urban regeneration, and design for social and cultural systems.
The thematic issue seeks theoretical, historical, empirical, methodological and practice-based contributions examining how communication and spatial interventions interact within processes of

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public-space transformation. The issue is also interested in contributions that critically examine the emergence of digital, data-driven and AI-enhanced systems, and the social, cultural, political and ethical implications of communication-based approaches to public space. Case studies, design practices, research methods, theoretical frameworks, critical tools, educational experiments and professional experiences are particularly welcome.

Themes to be covered can be, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- **Communication design as a design dimension of public space:** visual, narrative, informational and environmental systems that make public spaces legible, usable and shareable.
- **Reactivation, reclaiming and stewardship of public spaces:** case studies, temporary practices, tactical interventions and communication-driven placemaking processes.
- **Temporalities of communication design and spatial adaptive reuse:** speed, reversibility, adaptability, duration, maintenance, obsolescence and relationships with the longer timescales of spatial transformation.
- **Inclusion, accessibility and difference:** communication devices for diverse audiences, languages, codes and sensory experiences, addressing participation, proximity, co-construction of meaning, as well as exclusion, misrepresentation, invisibility and unequal access to public space.
- **Wayfinding, orientation and spatial perception:** signage systems, maps, environmental interfaces, information design and experience design.
- **Digital devices, spatial media and AI-enhanced systems:** data, digital platforms, interactive installations, augmented reality, artificial intelligence and emerging forms of mediation between spaces and communities.
- **Methods, taxonomies and interpretative frameworks:** analytical and design tools for understanding and classifying relationships between communication, space, actors, patterns of use and spatial conditions.
- **Ethics, governance and the politics of communicated space:** design responsibilities, conflicts, power and representation, symbolic appropriation, economic sustainability, and collaboration with institutions, public authorities and local communities.

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We ask to send:

- **Abstract proposals** (2,000–3,000 characters, spaces included), written in English, must be submitted **by January 17, 2027**;
- After Abstract acceptance, **full papers** must be submitted by **April 11, 2027**, and will then undergo double-blind peer review. Contributions must be between 20,000 and 25,000 characters (excluding abstract, notes, and bibliography). Authors' affiliations and short biographical notes (maximum 1,000 characters, spaces included) must be provided in a separate Word file.
- The final text must comply with the guidelines available at: https://www.padjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PAD-GUIDELINES-AUTHORS-ENG-2022-1.docx;
- **Illustrations and images** (maximum 10 per article) must be collected in a .zip folder, to be renamed using the author's surname and progressive numbering corresponding to the captions (e.g. 01_Surname, 02_Surname). The list of illustrations must be provided in a Word (.doc) file, written in the same font as the main text, using the following format: Figure 1: Author's first name and surname, title of the work, date.
- Images must have a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and be supplied in .JPG format.

Timing

Launch of the Call	November 2026
Deadline for Abstracts	**17 January 2027**
Acceptance of Proposals	21 February 2027
Full Paper Submission	**11 April 2027**
Double-blind Peer Review and Revision	April - May 2027
Camera-ready Submission	June 2027
Publication	**July 2027**

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