



Politecnico  
di Torino



DAD  
Dipartimento  
di Architettura  
e Design

Castello  
del Valentino  
*Dialogue*

**TENTACULAR  
THINKING!  
TENTACULAR  
WRITING?**

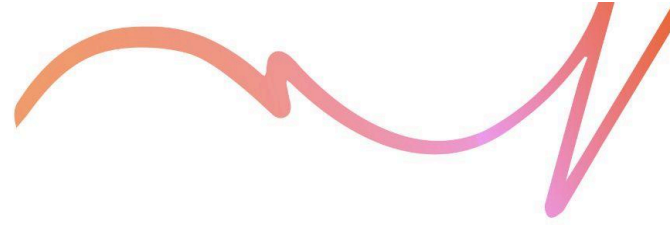
**Call for  
Participants**

**Summer school**

**June 23–26, 2025**

Castello del Valentino  
– Viale Mattioli 39, 10125 Torino

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Call for Participants

***Castello del Valentino Dialogue***  
**“Tentacular Thinking! Tentacular Writing?”**

June 23–26, 2025

Torino, Castello del Valentino

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**Keynote speakers**

Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen (Yale School of Architecture),

Adam Sharr (University of Newcastle & Routledge)

and Albena Yaneva (Politecnico di Torino & GSAPP, Columbia University)

**Invited tutors**

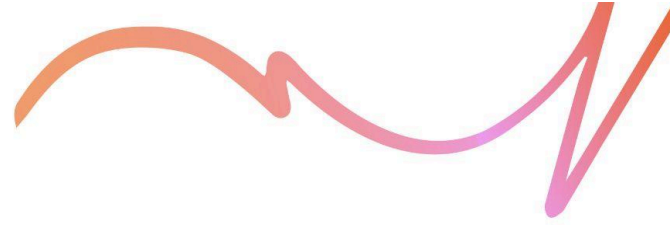
Demetra Kourri and Benjamin Blackwell

(Manchester School of Architecture)

**Organising committee**

Alessandro Armando and Sofia Nannini

(Politecnico di Torino)



## **Platform**

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The *Castello del Valentino Dialogues* is a platform that aims at creating a dynamic forum for crafting alternative ways of thinking, exploring and writing the urban. Bringing together PhD students and early career researchers with an interest in Architecture and Urbanism along with established scholars, writers and publishers, it invites a reflection that can challenge conventional modes of thinking and research. Participants will debate topical issues in the field of urban and architectural studies, try out new creative writing techniques and methodological tactics, and enhance their skills for presenting and publishing research.

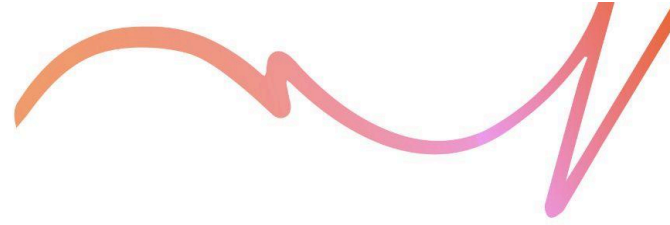
## **Content**

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The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of *the Castello Dialogues* is inspired by Donna Haraway's appeal to "tentacular thinking" (2016), promoted also by Isabelle Stengers, Bruno Latour, Anna Tsing, Richard Sennett, Marilyn Strathern, Tim Ingold, among others. Unlike the critical and cultural thinking, the "tentacular thinking" is one that does not rely on determinisms, but is relational, makes attachments and detachments, traces cuts and knots, and weaves paths and consequences. One that is open and entwined. One that is also able to make a difference.

The *Castello Dialogue 2025* engages with the questions: "How to think of the urban in a tentacular way?" "How to draw on a multiverse of articulating and interfering disciplinary offerings, passions and languages to explore the urban differently?" "How can tentacular thinkers become tentacular writers?" "How can the tentacular approach affect the way we design and transform the city?"

In an urban world broken by extractivism and social and climate disparities, the many "intrusions of Gaia" (Stengers 2017) compels us to re-invent the tactics of research and writing: to craft new strategies for mundane re-description of assemblages through



situated work, to better articulate the various alliances of all ontological sorts (technologies, colleagues, molecules, other species), and to thoroughly commit to an ecology of practice. How to do this? By fashioning new methodological tactics? By envisioning new writing techniques? Can traditional histories give way to alternative ways of figuring and storytelling – geostories, Gaia stories, symchthonic stories, ethnographic stories of urban living or design, multi-layered, webbed, braided and tentacular archival narratives of architecture?

We welcome applications from PhD candidates in the history and theory of architecture, urbanism, and urban planning, as well as design practitioners with expertise in the relevant areas. We also invite applications from doctoral candidates and early career scholars in adjacent disciplines such as human geography, design studies, urban anthropology, philosophy, science and technology studies, and the arts.

The workshop will consolidate the theoretical knowledge of researchers and will animate their methodological and field-specific creativity. Combining lectures, discussions, writing exercises and field tasks, it will offer a great opportunity to jump-start a research project or advance knowledge on an existing one in a supportive environment by benefiting from peer analysis, constructive critique and debate.

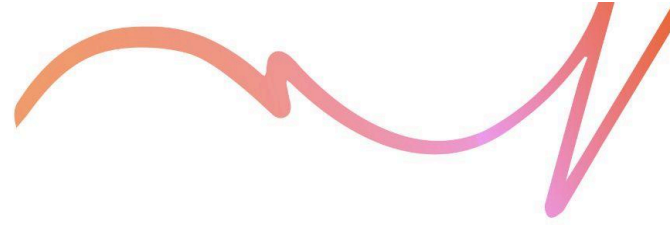
## **Learning outcome**

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In this workshop, participants will:

- Become familiar with debates on relational thinking and its recent translations into architectural scholarship and develop an epistemic sensibility attentive to its spatial and material implications.
- Learn from and experiment with unconventional techniques for urban research to be able to question commonplace considerations that shape their design and urban choices.

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- Advance knowledge on different styles of academic and creative writing on urban and design topics. Hone their writing and critical thinking skills based on introspection, reflection and “slow” observation of design experiences and urban processes.

## **Research outcome**

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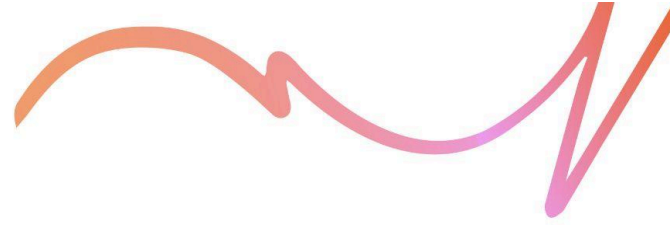
Each participant will have the opportunity to develop their research position as proposed in their original “Expression of Interest”, to address a specific methodological or theoretical problem related to the workshop theme and construct a new piece of writing based on original empirics that will contribute in some way to their current ongoing research project. This text will be considered for publication in the journal [Ardeth](#).

## **Format**

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A maximum of twenty five participants will be selected to attend the residential workshop, which spans 4 days and will contain the following strands:

- **Presentations of work-in-progress:** participants are invited to present on aspects of their own work, with a view to encouraging discussion of theoretical frameworks and empirical results, and supporting publication.
- **Writing ateliers:** participants will engage in a set of exercises in “tentacular writing”, especially designed for them. They will work in small groups with expert tutors to discuss narrative techniques and writing style.



- **Methodological experiments:** participants will conduct small methodological experiments, which will help them reflect on the conventional repertoire of methods used in urban and architectural research.
- **Debates (i.e. film screenings, lectures, meeting with publishers):** hosted in the sumptuous Castello del Valentino overlooking the river Po, the debates will provide a relaxed atmosphere, allowing for speculative and shared reflections.

Students can choose to enrol both in the writing ateliers and methodological experiments, or alternatively dedicate more time to one of these strands.

## **Admission**

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The Workshop will be held in Turin, Italy and hosted by the newly founded **Invisible Cities Lab, DAD, Politecnico di Torino**. The participation fee is 250€, including a welcome aperitivo, conference dinner, sandwich lunches, and specific workshop materials. Participants are expected to organize and pay for their own travel and accommodation. Nevertheless, we are happy to assist you with planning your stay. Some discounts and bursaries may be available if you apply early and for those suffering from financial hardship.

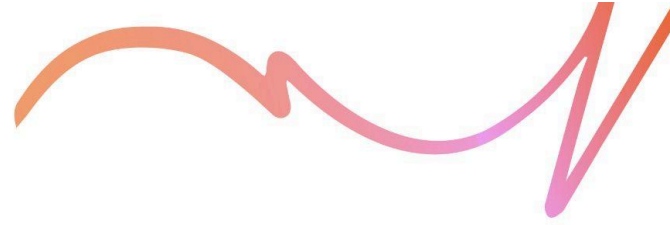
Situated in the city of Turin, the [Politecnico di Torino](#) provides an inspiring location for scholars to come together from across disciplines and geographies. The programme is also supplemented with a guided tour of the city of Torino.

## **Application documents**

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Send an email to [castello\\_dialogues@icloud.com](mailto:castello_dialogues@icloud.com) with the following attachments:

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1. A short “Expression of Interest” providing an outline of your current research/PhD project, tracing connections with the theme of *the Castello Dialogue 2025* and explaining your motivation [<1000 words]. If you are a PhD student, please, include the name(s) of the supervisor(s).
2. Curriculum Vitae, detailing education, professional experience, publications, awards, and working languages, as well as any other relevant information.

Application deadline: **20 January 2025.**

## **Prerequisites**

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### Formal prerequisite knowledge

It will be necessary for participants to have a basic knowledge of the work of some relational thinkers (i.e. Donna Haraway, Isabelle Stengers, Bruno Latour, Anna Tsing, Richard Sennett, Marilyn Strathern, Tim Ingold, Gilbert Simondon) and willingness to learn more through the proposed *Dialogue*.

We are looking for students who have methodological queries and specific questions to these relational thinkers.

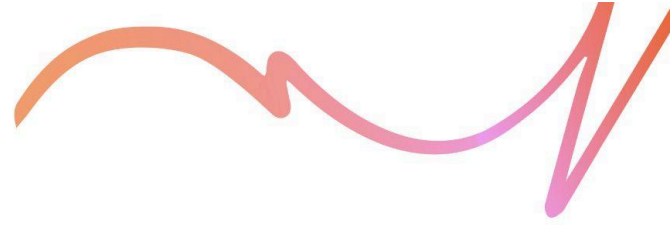
We encourage students to share an intricate methodological problem or a writing challenge.

We also welcome researchers who have fresh and interesting empirics that can be analysed with new conceptual tools.

### Recommended previous knowledge

Some previous experience in creative writing or curiosity about experimental writing techniques and motivation to advance existing skills.

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Readiness to experiment with conventional methods and research tactics for urban and architectural research.

Courage to apply new fieldwork techniques *ad hoc* would be appreciated, although not indispensable.

**Credits**

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This workshop will qualify for 5 credits or 2.5 ECTS points.