CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Intention, Life, Value: A multidisciplinary approach to understanding architectural quality in the city

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• Abstract (300 words):
The wicked problem of sustainability with its underlying and interconnected environmental, social, and economic issues pose a complex challenge for architectural practice, on how to describe the quality of our built environment as well as on how to holistically develop and assess its value. Nevertheless, economic considerations related primarily to construction costs that do not capture the complex long-term social and socio-economic potentials of architectural design often dominate the design process.

This knowledge gap provides the point of departure for this paper, aiming to explore and describe a systematic method for acquiring knowledge on architectural quality and its resulting social and socio-economic value, based on a phenomenological understanding of architectural spaces. The research aims to formulate a common theoretical framework across architecture, anthropology and economics by
investigating the potential of tectonic theory and method as a link between architectural quality (what architecture is and how it is constructed) and its value (what it does and how it is experienced).

Tectonics, we argue, enables a critical discussion of the choice of specific architectural means in relation to the social and socio-economic context of the architectural work by understanding the process of architectural design as a way of communication. A communication between architect and user, where the meaning is coded by the architect in a gesturing form (construction) and decoded by the user through sensory engagement with this form (experience).

Through methodological and theoretical explorations, present paper discusses this potential of tectonic theory in describing the interaction between architecture and people as a spatial dialogue, in the form of 'gestures' (intended, lived and valued), and its suitability to be applied as a multidisciplinary framework to describe architectural quality and value, across the disciplines of architecture, anthropology and economics.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

**Eszter Sántha** is an Industrial PhD student at Department of Architecture, Design & Media Technology, Aalborg University, Denmark, employed by the architectural company AART architects A/S, Denmark where she, as part of a multidisciplinary research team, is carrying out a 3-year long PhD research project on Architecture as a catalyst for social and socio-economic value creation. The project is a collaboration between Aalborg University, AART architects and the University of Copenhagen. The research project explores the relation between architectural quality and socio-economic value for different interest groups (eg. users and developers of the building, as well as society as a whole) in the context of sustainable urban development. By modeling the specific economic consequences of a certain architectural instrument chosen in the design phase, the research project intends to describe and develop architectural quality based upon the value that it actually creates. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Landscape Architecture (2015) from Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary and a master’s degree in Forest and Nature Management (2018) from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Her research interests lie in understanding the value of the built and natural environment and thereby contribute to creating high quality living space for both people and nature.

**Marie Frier Hvejsel** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Architecture, Design & Media Technology, Aalborg University, Denmark where she is heading the Research Group for Tectonics in Architecture. She holds an MSc (2007) and a PhD (2011) in Architecture from Aalborg University. Her research interests span across (and seeks to
join); interior studies, learning, tectonic architectural theory and method, everyday architecture. Marie Frier Hvejsel is the author and editor of a number of research publications exploring tectonic theory as a critical method in architecture. Her publications include ‘Everyday Tectonics?’ from 2015, a special issue of the Nordic Journal of Architectural research and the anthology ‘Reader on Tectonics in Architecture’ from 2018 collecting a series of key texts on the topic including her own paper; ‘Gesture & Principle: Tectonics as a critical method in architecture’. For a full list of her publications, see https://vbn.aau.dk/da/persons/112289. She is co-chairing the upcoming 5th International Conference for Structures and Architecture (www.icsa2022.com) and she is a founding member and Vice President of the International Association for Structures and Architecture, IASA (https://www.structures-architecture.org/). Alongside her academic career, Marie Frier Hvejsel is a practicing architect in the design practice Frier Architecture based in Aarhus (www.frierarchitecture.dk).

**Mia Kruse Rasmussen** is Head of Impact at AART architects A/S, Denmark. She holds an MSc in Anthropology from Aarhus University, and has been working as an anthropologist in industry since 2012, where she has been engaged in a variety of different cross disciplinary research- and innovation projects within the fields of sustainability, energy, indoor climate, technology design, and the use of buildings. Her main research interests center around understanding the complex entanglements of people and environments, and how we can use this knowledge to create more sustainable futures. She has conducted qualitative analyses and evaluations in diverse contexts, such as private homes, offices, hospitals, schools, and public spaces. She has published several research papers on qualitative method and cross disciplinary sustainability studies in peer reviewed journals and conference proceedings. She has also given guest lectures at Aarhus University, Copenhagen University, and the IT University in Denmark on applied anthropology, user involvement and innovation. At AART she uses her anthropological expertise to document the effects of architecture from a human perspective and works to integrate this knowledge into future AART projects to ensure that AART continuously creates sustainable environments that have a positive impact on people’s lives.