

# Dessine-moi une ambiance

## Call for Papers

### Shaping the Future Living Places

Act 1. Defining Architectural and Urban Ambiances  
International Conference

We are pleased to invite researchers, practitioners, decision makers, and scholars from across disciplines to submit proposals for our upcoming international conference *Shaping the Future Living Places, Defining Architectural and Urban Ambiances* that will take place at Lusófona University on July 3-4, 2025, in Lisbon. As societal challenges become more complex, the concept of “ambiance” has emerged as a critical lens for understanding how the sensory, cultural, and spatial dimensions of built environments interrelate to shape human experience. Rooted in the fields of architecture and urban studies, this event - the inaugural conference of CA23145 - seeks to explore and refine Ambiance Theory, advancing our understanding of how we perceive and conceptualize the multifaceted qualities of architectural and urban environments - from initial conception through practice - and feeding those insights back to architects, urban planners, and the wider field of spatial design.

## Conference Focus and Guiding Questions

Submissions may address (but are not limited to) the following questions:

### State of the Art of Ambiance Theory:

What is the current theoretical framework for defining and studying ambiances?  
How have historical or emerging perspectives influenced the evolution of Ambiance Theory?

### Multi-Modal Observation of In-Situ Perception:

Why is in-situ, multi-sensory observation crucial for understanding ambiances?  
What methodologies best capture the complexity of lived, embodied experiences?

### Disciplinary Involvement:

Which disciplines—architecture, urban design, engineering, sociology, anthropology, art, among others—contribute significantly to the multiple existing Ambiances theories?  
How do these fields complement, challenge, or expand one another?

### Inter/Trans-Disciplinary Approaches:

Why are collaborative methods essential for studying and designing ambiances?  
In practice, how can we foster meaningful dialogue and synergy between diverse disciplines and professional domains?

### Measurability and Modelling of Ambiances:

Which aspects of ambiances can be quantitatively measured or qualitatively modelled, and which remain elusive?  
How do we distinguish what can be objectively captured, subjectively experienced, or only narratively described?

## Main Topic | Defining an Ambiance

Potential topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Epistemological and philosophical foundations of Ambiance Theories
- Methods for in-situ observation and data collection (e.g., sensor networks, ethnography, mapping)
- Case studies of researching ambiance in architecture, urban planning, or public space design
- Comparative analyses across cultural, geographical, or historical contexts
- Technological tools for simulating or visualizing multi-sensory experiences
- Policy implications for more human-centred urban design
- Ethical dimensions of measuring, modelling, or manipulating ambiances.

This call for papers invites contributions that interrogate “ambiance” through a range of complementary lenses, including (1) the *Ambiances, Architectures, Urbanités* Laboratory and Cresson research group works, which foregrounds situated, multisensory and culturally embedded spatial experience; (2) Central-European and North-American architectural phenomenology, which frames ambiance as an existential bond with place; (3) Japanese aesthetics, attentive to *ma*, light, void and spatial fluidity; (4) the Scandinavian “lived space” tradition, which examines domestic, climatic and sociopolitical atmospheres; (5) postcolonial and critical perspectives, viewing ambiance as a terrain of power, exclusion and resistance; (6) cognitive-science and neuro-architectural studies that quantify emotional and sensory responses; (7) interaction design and immersive arts, which stage technologically mediated sensory environments; and (8) transversal, ecosystemic approaches that conceive ambiance as a dynamic interface between material, symbolic and living systems. Proposals adopting other perspectives on ambiance are likewise warmly welcomed.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Topic | Data collection and archiving

To build a shared corpus that sustains our inquiry into architectural and urban ambiances, we invite submissions that address the challenges of gathering, organising, and preserving resources, which aim to tackle some of the following questions:

- What types of resources are essential for advancing our understanding of architectural and urban ambiances?
- How can we ensure that the corpus collected is diverse, inclusive, and representative of historical, contemporary, and interdisciplinary perspectives of ambiances?
- What sources (case studies, articles, interviews, regulations, oral history, etc.) offer the most reliable and relevant materials for our study of architectural and urban ambiances?
- How can we best structure, categorise, and index these resources for easy access and effective use?
- What quality criteria should guide the collection and validation of resources?
- How can we ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of these resources?
- What strategies can enhance user-friendly access for project members and researchers?
- How might we assess the broader impact of “Data Collection and Archiving” on the project’s goals and activities?

We invite submissions showcasing innovative data collection and archiving approaches, such as methodological reflections, workflow proposals, or case studies demonstrating their impact on architectural and urban ambiances.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Topic | Balancing and aligning

In this third topic, the upcoming first conference on defining Ambiance offers an important opportunity for members of the working group to begin reflecting on key challenges in our collaborative exploration of

architectural and urban ambiances. To foster a coherent and inclusive framework, we invite submissions that directly address the following questions:

- How to reach consensus on definitions?
- How to address and resolve divergences?
- How to unify terminology and concepts?
- How to identify points of convergence?

Contributions may propose conceptual frameworks, comparative studies, terminological tools, training methods, or collaborative practices that facilitate alignment without sacrificing diversity. Submissions may also present case studies, methodological experiments, or reflections on previous collaborative experiences that shed light on any of these challenges.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Topic | Innovation scouting

To broaden our understanding of sensory design and ambiances through concrete practices, we invite submissions that explore and document exemplary projects, tools, and methodologies that can inspire future developments. Contributions are encouraged to address the following questions:

- What about sustainability, inclusiveness, and low-cost solutions derived from traditional or innovative design techniques? Are there under-recognized practices that deserve to be highlighted?
- How can we bridge the epistemological gap between engineering sciences and phenomenological approaches to process both quantitative and qualitative data?
- How are artistic practices, such as dance, performance, music, and art in general, relevant to ambience-oriented design?
- How can participatory methods—such as interviews, sensory walks, and co-design workshops—be useful for ambience-oriented design?
- What digital or analogue tools and technologies are relevant to Ambience-Oriented Design? (e.g., simulation, modelling, virtual and augmented reality)
- How are ambiances included—or imposed—in project specifications, and what are the consequences for designers?
- What tools do we have to consider the interspecies complexity in the design of ambience?
- How can we identify and select outstanding projects related to sensory experiences and ambiances?
- What criteria should guide the categorization of these projects (e.g., domain of application, scale, geographic location, sensory or methodological approach)?
- What methods and sources can ensure comprehensive documentation of these projects (including texts, photos, evaluations, and user feedback)?
- How can we evaluate and prioritize the selected projects based on their innovation, sensory relevance, impact, and sustainability?
- How should the documentation of selected projects be organized and made available as a useful database for the working group and broader research community?
- How can exemplary projects be effectively showcased through publications, exhibitions, presentations, or workshops within the network?
- What impact can this “Innovation Scouting” task have on the broader understanding and practical application of sensory design and ambiances in architectural and urban contexts?

Contributions may include project documentation, analytical comparisons, design research methods, or reflective critiques. We welcome both academic and practice-based inputs that support the identification and diffusion of innovative, ambience-sensitive approaches.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Topic | Outreaching and training

To expand the reach and applicability of our collective work on ambiances and lived spaces, we invite contributions that explore strategies for effective communication and knowledge transfer to various target audiences. The following questions may serve as a guide:

- How can we communicate what has been achieved so far in the most comprehensible and practicable way?
- What and how should we communicate about ambiances and lived spaces to **designers**, so that it supports design-oriented thinking and practice?
- What and how should we communicate about ambiances and lived spaces to **researchers**, in order to build transdisciplinary bridges and stimulate further studies?
- What and how should we communicate about ambiances and lived spaces to **end users**, to ensure their experiences, needs, and perceptions are acknowledged and integrated?
- What and how should we communicate about ambiances and lived spaces to **policymakers**, to foster better-informed decisions regarding spatial and urban policies?

Contributions may include communication tools, training models, didactic formats, co-creation experiences, exhibitions, participatory media, or any innovative form of outreach adapted to specific publics. We particularly welcome reflections on how to make ambiance-based knowledge actionable across disciplines and social roles.

## Submission Guidelines

Abstracts (500) should clearly state the research question, methodology, and anticipated findings or arguments. Presentation Papers (2000 words) are expected for accepted contributions and must align with the conference's central theme.

Accepted abstract for presentations and submitted papers before June 30<sup>th</sup> will be **eligible for travel and accommodation funding, subject to available places** and according to **COST reimbursement rules!**

Please submit your abstract or proposal via our online submission portal by May the 30<sup>th</sup>. Notifications of acceptance will be sent 15 days after the abstract submission, and full papers are due by June the 30<sup>th</sup>.

## Important Dates

Abstract Submission Deadline:	<b>May the 30<sup>th</sup></b>
Acceptance Notification:	15 days after the abstract submission.
Full Paper Deadline:	<b>June the 30<sup>th</sup></b> (Not Expendable!)
Conference Dates:	03rd and 04th of July

## Contact and Further Information

For questions or more details, please visit our website at [www.citysenz.eu](http://www.citysenz.eu) or contact the conference organizers at [infos@citysenz.eu](mailto:infos@citysenz.eu). We look forward to your contribution to this vibrant discussion on how to define, study, and create ambiances that meaningfully shape the future living places.