COTAA

Call for Papers
Isuue No. 3/2026

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Submission deadline
August 10th, 2026

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3/2026

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Architecture is a discipline of consequences. Buildings organise forms of life, consume resources, shape territories, and materialise political, economic, and cultural decisions. By projecting itself into the future, architecture also projects consequences into the future. The question of what architecture builds can therefore never be separated from the question of what architecture enables, excludes, preserves, or destroys.

As Robin Evans observed, architects work from an anterior position, articulating ideas of buildings before they are built. Architecture operates through anticipation, it makes space for possibilities, expectations, desires, and fears. Yet every anticipation is also an act of selection. To imagine one future means to abandon or neglect others. Projections establish priorities, planning privileges certain forms of life over others.

Anticipation presupposes a degree of confidence in the future. It assumes a future to be imagined, planned, shaped, and improved. Such confidence has become increasingly difficult to sustain. Ecological crises, resource depletion, social inequalities, technological transformations, political instability, and the persistence of colonial structures challenge not only the futures architecture projects but also the concepts, methods, institutions, and forms of knowledge through which those futures are imagined. Concepts, methods, institutions, and forms of knowledge through which architecture projects futures have themselves become objects of scrutiny.

In response, architectural discourse increasingly turns toward a family of operations gathered around a simple prefix: un-.

Unlearning. Undoing. Unbuilding. Unsettling. Unauthoring. Unmaking.

To undo is not merely to destroy. To unlearn is not simply to forget. To uncover does not create something new but reveals what was already there. The “un-” names movements that begin from within existing conditions. It questions, exposes, loosens, dismantles, revises, and reorients. It describes a process rather than a destination. In architecture, these movements are more than linguistic operations. They challenge the ways in which the discipline imagines, teaches, researches, builds, inhabits, and ultimately anticipates the world.

Unlearning

Learning is often associated with accumulation. Yet every form of knowledge also establishes boundaries. It privileges certain histories, methods, and perspectives while rendering others less visible. Unlearning is not the abandonment of knowledge but the difficult work of recognising how assumptions, privileges, and forms of subjectivity are themselves produced. This is the challenge that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak formulates when she calls for the difficult work of unlearning one's own privilege as one's loss. Within architecture, unlearning opens inherited histories, theories, pedagogies, and institutions to critical reflection, making visible the exclusions and hierarchies through which architectural knowledge has been produced.

Undoing

Undoing begins by asking whether inherited structures can be transformed through inherited tools. Audre Lorde's claim that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" becomes, for Jane Rendell, the starting point for a further question: what other tools remain at our disposal? Drawing on feminist theory, she imagines undoing not as a new method but as another position from which to think and practice architecture. Rather than separating theory from practice or writing from building, she works from the thresholds between them, questioning architectures of appropriation, ownership, and authorship. Undoing becomes a feminist practice of reimagining architecture through relations of use and misuse, generosity and reciprocity, opening the discipline to other ways of making, inhabiting, and writing architecture.

Unbuilding

At a moment marked by ecological limits and material constraints, the production of the new is no longer architecture's only horizon. Repair, adaptation, maintenance, preservation, reuse, and demolition have become central architectural concerns. What forms of practice emerge when architecture works with what already exists? How do ecological limits challenge assumptions of growth, expansion, and novelty? What can architecture learn from care, maintenance, and stewardship?

Unsettling
Many of architecture’s methods rely upon prediction, expertise, and control. Yet ecological, political, and technological transformations increasingly unsettle the conditions under which such claims can be made. Donna Haraway argues not for mastery or withdrawal, but for situated forms of knowing that remain accountable to their own positions and entanglements. From this perspective, uncertainty is not a problem to be overcome but a condition from which architectural thought and practice must proceed. Unsettling invites architecture to work with complexity, contradiction, and partial perspectives, engaging futures that remain open, contested, and unresolved.

Unauthoring
Architecture continues to privilege the figure of the architect as the author of buildings, projects, and ideas. Yet architectural work is always the result of many forms of labour, negotiation, maintenance, inhabitation, and care that often remain unacknowledged. Unauthoring does not deny responsibility. It questions how authorship is attributed, whose work becomes visible, and whose contributions remain invisible. It shifts attention from the singular author to the relations through which architecture is collectively produced, maintained, and transformed.

Unmaking
Unmaking asks what architecture itself may need to relinquish. Assumptions of progress, extraction, growth, authorship, expertise, and professional autonomy continue to shape the discipline’s understanding of its own role. Yet contemporary debates on decarbonisation, restitution, reparation, care, maintenance, and material life cycles increasingly suggest that architecture cannot simply add new concerns to existing practices. Certitudes and assumptions may first have to be undone before other ways of knowing, designing, building, and inhabiting become possible.

The “un-” unfolds across architectural thought, practice, research, and education. It moves between different scales, from the individual to the institutional, from buildings and materials to labour, knowledge, and the discipline itself. The operations gathered here mark only some of the trajectories through which architecture can be reconsidered, leaving space for others to emerge.

COTAA #3 invites researchers, practitioners, historians, theorists, educators, doctoral researchers, artists, and independent scholars to contribute to this ongoing conversation. We welcome theoretical, historical, methodological, and practice-based contributions that engage with the “un-” in architecture, whether through the operations proposed here or through others that challenge inherited assumptions and expand the possibilities of architectural thought, practice, and research.

Guidelines for authors:

The third issue of COTAA welcomes abstract submissions of no more than **300 words**, including references, bibliography, and image descriptions. Images should be submitted in **black and white**, in **JPEG (.jpeg) format**. All materials should be compiled into a single editable Microsoft Word file or a Microsoft Word-compatible document, using minimal formatting. All submissions to COTAA must be written in **English UK**.

Abstracts and review proposals should be sent by e-mail at **office@cotaa.ro** no later than **10th August 2026**.

Authors will be notified of the outcome of their submissions on **17th August 2026**.

The final version of accepted papers should be between **5,000 and 6,000 words** and will undergo a double-blind peer review process.

Review proposals should be submitted in the same format as abstract submissions and according to the same submission schedule. The final version of accepted reviews should not exceed **2,000 words**.

Calendar:

Brief launch: **1st of July, 2026**
Submission of abstracts: **10th of August, 2026**
Notification of acceptance: **17th of August, 2026**
Full paper submission for double-blind peer review: **10th of October, 2026**
Peer review results sent to authors: **10th of November, 2026**
Final paper submission: **15th of December, 2026**
Journal publication: **1st of February, 2027**.

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