



NAF/NAAR Symposium 2026

Architecture of Tomorrow

The need for sustainable, future-oriented knowledge in architecture, crafts and heritage

Call for Papers

The Nordic Association of Architectural Research (NAF/NAAR) and the Craft Laboratory at the Department of Conservation, University of Gothenburg, proudly join forces in organizing the NAF/NAAR Symposium 2026. The symposium will take place on the University Campus in the city of Mariestad, Sweden, from 22 to 23 October 2026.

Partners

NAF/NAAR is an independent association of architectural researchers from universities and schools of architecture in the Nordic countries, which has existed since 1987. NAF/NAAR symposia are held once a year. They are important platforms for critical reflection on architectural research within the fields of architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture. To ensure their dynamic and fruitful exchange of knowledge, the events are conceptualized and organized in collaboration with various partners and hosted by a different institution each year.

The Craft Laboratory is a national centre for crafts and craft professionals. It is part of the Department of Conservation at University of Gothenburg, and strives to document, safeguard, and develop traditional craft skills and knowledge in the fields of building crafts, cultural landscapes, and gardening crafts. The Craft Laboratory promotes knowledge that is essential for the care and development of cultural environments and architectural heritage. This knowledge is, however, also crucial for contemporary and future architecture and working towards a sustainable future. The craft research at the Department of Conservation employs a variety of theories and methods dealing with different temporalities, from the study of history and examination of present materials and practices, to the forecasting, designing, or making of heritage futures.

The Overall Topic

The symposium's overall topic is the architecture of tomorrow. It takes up the principles of the International Union of Architects (UIA) World Congress in Copenhagen in 2023, stating that 'existing built structures must always be reused first', 'no new development should erase green fields', and 'no virgin mineral material should be used in construction when reuse is possible'. Sustainable architecture – and the sustainable transformation of architecture – thus stand out as key concepts and global objectives for the future development of our built environment. How architects, planners, and landscape architects address and understand the concept of sustainability in their work has a crucial impact on our planetary boundaries and on human and non-human wellbeing. Architecture, crafts, and cultural heritage as disciplines, research fields, academic educations, practices, and professions need to work in close collaboration in order to face new complex, and all-encompassing challenges such as climate change, pollution, and material scarcity.

With this symposium we ask: What are the future perspectives of our built environment? Could architecture and planning be addressed and turned into an act of care? In what way can we learn from history based on past and present craft practices? How can we rethink our relationship to resources, production, consumption, economy, progress, and growth by reconsidering past epistemologies? And furthermore: What new forms of design and maintenance could derive from examining these questions?

Invitation and Tracks

We invite scholars and practitioners in the fields of architecture (including landscape architecture and urban design), craft, and cultural heritage to address the overall topic of the symposium from innovative and diverse standpoints. We welcome presentations of research and practice-based case studies and reflections concerning sustainable, future-oriented knowledge in architecture, crafts, and cultural heritage. We also look forward to explorations of heritages across different scales and historical epochs. All authors should reflect on their research methods and positioning, contextualizing their contributions with respect to the following five specific symposium tracks:

Track 1: Architecture for Diverse Building Cultures

The concept of building culture, as emphasized in the Davos Declaration of Baukultur and the New European Bauhaus, recognizes the social, environmental, and cultural values embedded in the act of building. Yet in practice, the construction sector remains highly globalized, relying on standardized systems and technologies that often diminish the significance of place and undermine cultural diversity. This track explores how architecture can meaningfully engage with diverse ways of building, making, and inhabiting. Topics may include place-based approaches to architecture in globalized contexts, revitalizing vernacular traditions and community-based practices, education, policy, and procurement that foster cultural plurality, or tools for architects to act as mediators between standardization and situated knowledge.

Track 2: Adaptive Reuse or Heritage Preservation?

A recent study of the professional architecture sector in Europe shows that approximately 60 per

cent of architects' workload is dedicated to heritage preservation and the refurbishment of existing buildings (Architects' Council of Europe 2024). This track invites discussion on the complex challenges of both preserving and transforming the built environment. Heritage preservation often aims to maintain buildings in a static, past-oriented state, which may conflict with the historically adaptive and evolving nature of architecture. At the same time, the most commonly applied circular strategy in the industry remains demolition, followed by material recycling or/and energy extraction, practices that frequently undermine long-term sustainability goals. Both approaches nonetheless often foresee the associated social aspects and community-up approaches. This session will explore the questions: What are the dominant approaches to adaptive reuse and preservation today? How can we navigate the tension between preservation and transformation? What can we learn from best practices that balance architectural heritage, sustainability, and contemporary needs?

Track 3: Architecture for Longevity

The construction sector accounts for approximately 40 per cent of all anthropogenic CO₂ emissions, making it one of the largest contributors to global warming (UN Environmental Programme 2022). Extending the lifespan of a building significantly increases the value of embodied energy over time and is one of the most efficient actions for reducing environmental impact. This track invites discussion on the challenges and opportunities of designing for longevity. While entropy affects all materials, which factors leading to decay can be anticipated and managed through architectural design, material choices, and maintenance strategies? We also ask: What lessons can be drawn from historic buildings and environments that have endured for centuries, adapting to changing functions, evolving socio-cultural patterns, and shifting aesthetic ideals?

Track 4: Local Materials and Nature-Based Solutions

The construction sector increasingly relies on branded, composite materials delivered through complex and opaque supply chains. This track explores how local materials and nature-based solutions can offer more transparent, resilient, and culturally grounded alternatives. Working with local resources strengthens regional value chains, supports direct feedback loops, and fosters accountability. Nature-based solutions, often low-tech and intelligible, can promote community involvement, long-term adaptability, and ecological integration. This track invites contributions that examine the role of local materials in building cultural and environmental value, and ways to support transparent, regenerative material flows through architectural design or design policy. How can craft-based practices inform sustainable design? What are the potential and limitations of scaling up nature-based solutions?

Track 5: Nordic Language Presentations

This track is open to presentations addressing the themes of tracks 1 to 4 in the Nordic languages – Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Sami, Greenlandic, Faroese, and Icelandic.

Recognizing language as a crucial element of intangible cultural heritage that acts as a vehicle for transmitting cultural identity, knowledge, and traditions across generations, this track welcomes presentations that include Nordic words and key concepts that cannot be translated into English.

According to UNESCO, language preservation is vital for maintaining cultural diversity and ensuring that future generations are able to connect with their heritage.

Keynote Speakers

Five scholars with special expertise will give keynote lectures at the symposium:

Keynote lecture by **Tim Ingold**

Tim Ingold is Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen and one of the most influential anthropologists of our time. His work spans anthropology, archaeology, art, and architecture, with a particular focus on the relationships between humans, materials, environments, and practices of making and knowing. Ingold is renowned for developing theoretical frameworks that challenge conventional distinctions between nature and culture, mind and body, and the material and the immaterial.

Keynote lecture by **Mari Lending**

Mari Lending is Professor of Architectural Theory and History at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO). Her work bridges architecture, visual culture, media theory, and critical historiography, with a particular focus on how buildings, archives, and knowledge systems are constructed, circulated, and preserved. Among her books are *Plaster Monuments: Architecture and the Power of Reproduction* (Princeton University Press, 2017), *A Feeling of History*, with Peter Zumthor (Scheidegger & Spiess, 2018), *Sverre Fehn, Nordic Pavilion, Venice: Voices from the Archives*, with Erik Langdalen (Lars Müller/Pax, 2021), and *Warburg Models: Buildings as Bilderfahrzeuge*, with Tim Anstey (Hatje Cantz, 2023). She directs the research project ‘*Provenance Projected, Architecture Past and Future in the Era of Circularity*’, and is the co-editor of *Provenance in Architecture: A Dictionary* (Hatje Cantz, 2025).

Keynote performance by **Joar Nilsson**

Joar Nilsson is a roof thatcher in traditional and contemporary building crafts dedicated to re-innovating and transferring knowledge in thatching with reed and straw. Nilsson collaborates with architects on both restoration and design projects using local materials for regenerative building.

Keynote lecture by **Gunnar Almevik** and **Linda Lindblad**

Gunnar Almevik and Linda Lindblad founded the Craft Laboratory as means to bridge research and practice in the crafts involved in the preservation and transformation of built environments. In this keynote lecture, they will outline the epistemology of craft research and showcase how craft can serve as a regenerative technology in the building culture of tomorrow.

Submission

Submit your abstract in British English (max. 300 words, excluding 4 keywords and references) by **15 January 2026** at the latest. Indicate the preferred track and whether you plan to develop your contribution into a scientific article or an academic essay. Your abstract must be anonymized by you (the author/s). We therefore urge you to remove all traces and references that might reveal your

identity as the author/s of the abstract. The abstract title as well as the author's/authors' name(s) and email address(es) should be sent (by email) in a separate document to the symposium email address (cc: aet@aarch.dk and magnus.ronn.arch@gmail.com) no later than **15 January 2026**. Authors who would like to present in track five must also submit an abstract in British English. Note: a maximum of only three authors per abstract!

Author Guidelines

Authors whose abstracts are approved will be asked to submit a *full paper* in British English no later than **20 September 2026**. The (anonymized) papers submitted should have a minimum of 6,000 words but not exceed 8,000 words (excluding the abstract, references, and figures). Note: a maximum of only three authors per paper! Authors should use endnotes (rather than a reference list), with a maximum of 50 notes. Further guidelines will be sent at a later date to authors whose abstracts have been approved. Please also indicate the preferred track and whether your contribution should be peer-reviewed as a scientific article or an academic essay.

Language

Both the abstract and the full paper must be submitted in British English. Authors presenting in track five should submit their full paper in one of the Nordic languages.

AI Statement

NAF/NAAR allows authors to use generative AI tools to improve spelling, grammar, and general editing. AI tools cannot be listed as an author or co-author of an article/essay. NAF/NAAR allows generative AI tools to be used neither for the creation and manipulation of images, figures, or artwork, nor to analyze or draw insights from original research as part of the research process.

Key Dates and Deadlines

Call for papers: 6 October 2025

Deadline for submission of abstract: 15 January 2026

Notification of abstract acceptance: 1 March 2026

Deadline för submission of full paper and authors registration: 20 September 2026

Deadline for participation without presentation: 20 September 2026

Get-together in Mariestad: 21 October 2026

Symposium in Mariestad: 22–23 October 2026

Organizing Committee

Representatives of the Craft Laboratory, University of Gothenburg:

Gunnar Almevik, Professor, Department of Conservation

Linda Lindblad, Senior Lecture, Department of Conservation

Representatives of the Nordic Association of Architectural Research NAF/NAAR:

Anne Elisabeth Toft, Associate Professor, Aarhus School of Architecture

Magnus Rönn, NAF/NAAR

Proceedings publication:

A double-blind, peer-reviewed proceedings publication will follow the symposium. The proceedings will be published in British English, both in print and online.

Symposium Fee:

Teachers and researchers €360, PhD students €200. The fee includes a double-blind peer review process for full papers published in the resulting proceedings publication.

Email:

Send abstracts and conference papers to naf-symposium2026@gu.se (cc: aet@aarch and magnus.ronn.arch@gmail.com)

Homepage:

<https://www.gu.se/hantverkslaboratoriet/architecture-of-tomorrow-the-need-for-sustainable-future-oriented-knowledge-in-architecture-crafts-and-heritage>

Getting to Mariestad

Mariestad is located 180 km from Gothenburg and 300 km from Stockholm. The closest airport is Landvetter Airport outside Gothenburg. Mariestad is easily accessible by train from Gothenburg and Stockholm via a connection in Skövde. From there, you take a 35-minute bus ride to Mariestad, bus nos. 500 or 500x. If travelling from Stockholm, the connection point can also be Hallsberg or Töreboda. Train and bus tickets can be purchased at SJ.