Call for Participation
Critical Practices

The International Conference on Structures and Architecture is the world's leading and largest global conference, bridging the gap between Structures and Architecture. The conference is organised by the International Association of Structures and Architecture, IASA and will be held at the Faculty of Design Sciences at the University of Antwerp from 8-11 July 2025.

ICSA2025 comprises research and the latest developments in the field, blending the perspectives from research, practice and teaching. The conference enables the gathering of international participants interested in the recent advances in the art, practice and theory of designing and building (infra)structures in which the structural and architectonic values are consciously combined and the contribution of each other is mutually enhanced. Hence, each contribution shall relate to the relationship between Structures and Architecture.

This conference calls for a re-imagination of current practices regarding structures and architecture. As a response to the pressing global climate and energy crisis and with new settings and tools, the design and construction of our built environment should be reconsidered and extended. We invite all researchers and practitioners to contribute their research and expertise to the effort.

The Call for Participation is for contributions in two categories: — A Call for Research Papers. and — B Call for Critical Practices. This document is for the Call for Critical Practices.

B. Call for Critical Practices

We invite researchers and practitioners to submit their work for the Critical Practices track at ICSA2025. The Critical Practices track aims to uncover and showcase work that breaks boundaries and demonstrates engagement with the frictions inherent in architectural and engineering practice. The final submission in this track is a prototype at a scale that has been critical in a development process.

Critical Practices is an intrinsic part of the ICSA conference. Its contributions represent part of a dedicated exhibition displayed during the entire conference, an exhibition publication, and a special issue of selected works published afterwards.

The central part of each Critical Practices submission is a prototype. Each prototype is accompanied by a video that contextualises, describes, and reflects on the work. The submission is directly tied to the overall theme of ICSA2025: REstructure REmaterialize REthink REuse.

Critical Practice

Critical Practices is framed as the avant-garde of knowledge and method creation in applied modes of working, such as applied research or research by design.

Submissions are expected to be intimately linked to the practices of architecture and engineering. Work produced in this category may be situated in industry practices, or it may have emerged through an operative collaboration across the academic–industry bounds.

The friction that arises from considering design factors such as economy, longevity, liability, and maintenance is inherent in industry processes and is considered critical for driving change. The output of such thinking may in some cases directly lead to built work, but often remains in the stage of knowledge creation. The Critical Practices track aims to provide a platform for sharing any such knowledge.

Prototype

The primary submission in the Critical Practices track is a prototype that will be featured in an exhibition during the ICSA2025 conference. The prototype is accompanied by a video that gives a precise description of the process and the prototype as an instrument for innovation. The video provides a reflective examination that contextualises the work and articulates its contribution to the field.

Our definition of prototype is deliberately broad and inclusive of early-stage developments and more developed concepts—of demonstrators and mock-ups. Prototypes may encapsulate the complete work and the thinking that led to it, or capture an aspect of the work, as a biopsy or detail.

Prototypes should therefore be interpreted as critical steps in a design or development process. In *Prototyping Architecture*, Michael Stacey wonders if it is "the prototype or the author who is tested within the experimental process of research design and development" and adds "prototypes are a clear demonstration of the iterative process that is essential when designing" (Stacey, 2013). In their introduction to *Prototyping for Architects*, Mark and Jane Burry explain: "Designers prototype their designs in order to test them. Whether the prototype actually works is not the issue: prototyping is the revelatory process through which a designer gains insight into how well their experiment is proceeding." (Burry & Burry, 2017).

Prototypes in the Critical Practices track may include, for example, stand-alone physical installations, virtual or hybrid experiences, software, organisational structures, or interventions in existing buildings. A prototype must, however, have a dedicated purpose and present specific investigations and contributions.

Mark Burry, Jane Burry (2017). *Prototyping for Architects*. Thames & Hudson.
Michael Stacey (2013). *Prototyping Architecture*. Riverside Architectural Press.

Submission Timeline and Formats

The review of this track is conducted by peers from academia and practice and will include an element of curation and direction. To comply with the conference submission format, there will be two rounds of peer review followed by coordination meetings between the Critical Practices track committee and the contributors.

A final review of the prototypes that will be included in the exhibition during the ICSA conference will take place in January 2025. This final submission has to be accompanied by a video that provides a visual representation and technical description of the prototype, as well as a reflection on the critical role of the prototype in the design or research process.

The first review will be based on a representational abstract that follows an open submission format, as detailed below.

First-Round Submission—Representational Abstract

Submission deadline: 28 February 2024
A representational abstract can be anything that explains the prototype and its critical role in a design or research process. Examples are narrated or documentary video; static visual formats such as presentation boards, or collages; or written forms such as traditional academic writing or patent writing illustrated by drawings (PDF/JPG/MP4/ZIP). Contributions must be in English.

In addition, the following points are required in writing, submitted through the ConfTool platform:
1. Introduction: challenge or objective of the prototype (50 words)
2. Background or context of the field, topic, and prototype (100 words)
3. Description of the prototype (200 words)
4. Impact or contribution (100 words)

For peer review, the following restrictions are in place:
- Submissions need to be uploaded in digital form;

- Videos should not exceed 5 minutes;
- Presentation boards should not exceed one board on A0 or two boards A1, with a maximum of 500 words of text;
- Text-based submissions are restricted to 500 words including references and should be accompanied by drawings.

You have to create an account in ConfTool, before you can submit your contribution
https://www.conftool.net/icsa2025/

For questions about other formats, please consult the Critical Practices Committee before submission.
The first-round of reviews take place from March–April 2024 and result in a tentative **accept** or **decline**.

Second-Round Submission—Prototype and Video

January 2025
The second-round submission is a video of 6-10 minutes maximum that provides a visual representation and technical description of the prototype, as well as a reflection on the critical role of the prototype in a design or research process. The video will be shown during the conference.
The video should include the following elements:
1. A 30-second abstract
2. Introduction: challenge or objective of the prototype
3. Background or context of the field, topic, and prototype
4. Detailed visual description of the prototype
5. Discussion and reflection
6. Contributions and conclusions

Specific guidelines for the video submissions will be made available closer to the date. Review criteria include the explanatory and visual quality of the video.
The second-round review for final acceptance takes place from February–March 2025.

Alignment Contributors and Conference

March–April 2025
(online) meetings between ICSA2025—CP Committee and contributors to discuss the development of the prototype and preparation for the exhibition.

ICSA Conference and Exhibition
Beginning of July 2025: Prototype transport and exhibition setup
8-11 July 2025: Exhibition

ICSA Critical Practices Committee

- Isak Worre Foged – The Royal Danish Academy
- Hugo Mulder – University of Southern Denmark
- Anne-Catrin Schultz – Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Filip Van de Voorde – University of Antwerp / Denkbar
- Mario Rinke – University of Antwerp