

21-22 November 2025

Palazzo Michiel

Following the success of previous editions in Venice, Chicago and New Orleans, *Shaping the City* is returning to the floating city for two days of conversations focusing on housing and community. The sixth edition of the conference, curated by ECC Italy in the context of its biennial architecture exhibition *Time Space Existence*, will take place at Palazzo Michiel on 21 and 22 November 2025, and streamed online on the [YouTube channel of ECC Italy](#). Free admission upon [registration on Eventbrite](#).

The event brings together local and international academics, urban planners, designers, architects, policymakers and organisations, with the aim to address challenges facing today's cities and their communities. The conference recognises the crucial role that architecture and urban planning play in shaping people's interaction with their cities and their well-being.

Previous editions of the conference have involved international architects and institutions including Odile Decq, Kengo Kuma, Snøhetta, Aldayjover, MIT, IOM International Organisation for Migration, and UNDP.

This year's conference turns its focus to two of the most urgent and interconnected challenges facing cities today: housing and community. Across the globe, from long-established urban cores to emerging cities at the frontlines of growth, questions of affordability, resilience, and belonging are reshaping how communities are living together. By bringing to the table examples of housing models and community-led initiatives from different contexts around the world, this year's edition of the forum highlights how shared struggles, rising inequality, climate pressures, and spatial fragmentation, are met with innovative responses that blend design, governance, and civic agency. The conversations emphasise that housing and community are not separate entities, but deeply intertwined foundations for building more just, inclusive, and sustainable urban futures.

The Panels

Housing for a Shared Future

Where we live shapes how we live. In the face of growing inequality, climate challenges, and a severe shortage of affordable homes, the urgency to redefine housing globally is clear. This panel explores housing not simply as shelter, but as a civic right that supports dignity, agency, and collective well-being. The discussion moves beyond technical solutions, situating the housing crisis within its political, cultural, and architectural dimensions.

Key questions anchor the conversation: What defines good housing today? What policies and governance structures can support equitable, adaptable, and accessible living environments? How can architecture improve quality of life without increasing costs? The panel will examine innovative strategies such as incremental housing, co-living and modular models, together with the reuse and transformation of existing spaces, positioning housing as a tool for social and environmental change.

Community: Building Together

In an era where cities face deepening social divides and rapid urban transformations, community-led development emerges as a powerful model for reclaiming agency and fostering equity. This panel explores how collective agency can reshape the

built environment and strengthen bonds of belonging, examining how residents can co-design their neighborhoods, emphasising participation, co-creation, and the role of the user in shaping environments. It highlights collaborations between governments, developers, and citizens, asking how new governance and financing models can place communities at the centre of decision-making processes.

Public space is approached as a common good and an essential place for building identity, inclusion and solidarity, with strategies for designing inclusive, multigenerational and resilient environments. The panel promotes a vision of community-led urban change, in which collaboration, belonging and social justice are at the heart of the development of tomorrow's cities.

The final agenda and list of speakers of Shaping the City Venice will be released in the following weeks. The latest updates will be posted on the dedicated website shapingthecity.org/venice-2025.

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About ECC Italy

The European Cultural Centre Italy (ECC Italy) is part of the non-profit association ECC Worldwide based in the Netherlands. ECC is dedicated to fostering cultural and intellectual exchange through exhibitions, cultural projects, publications, video series, and educational programmes around the world. In Venice, we restore and care for historic venues, opening them to the public free of charge and sharing art, culture, and beauty with everyone.

About *Time Space Existence* 2025

The seventh edition of *Time Space Existence*, the biennial architecture exhibition organised by ECC Italy in Venice, welcomes visitors from 10 May to 23 November, 2025. The group show takes place across the three iconic venues of Palazzo Bembo, Palazzo Mora, and the Marinaressa Gardens, offering a unique stage to highlight the vital role of architects and designers as agents of positive change, leading the way toward more sustainable, inclusive, and regenerative ways of living.

This year's iteration of the show focuses on the themes of *Repair, Regenerate, and Reuse*. The exhibition moves beyond merely questioning how to build more sustainably; it seeks to showcase tangible applications, seeing architecture as a force for environmental and social repair.

Discover more about [Time Space Existence 2025](#).