

DISORDER

On the legacy of Giancarlo De Carlo

Research conference

Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge, UK

6th -7th November 2026

In 1993, when Giancarlo De Carlo was awarded the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Colin St John Wilson described him as 'the Master of the Resistance' and 'the most lucid of his generation of architect-philosophers-in-action'. Wilson praised his critical position within the modern movement and suggested that 'his point of departure lay in the work of Kropotkin and Patrick Geddes and above all perhaps William Morris,' whose work he had translated into Italian at the beginning of his career. Practising architect, editor, curator, writer and educator: on all these levels of De Carlo's activity, beyond key pre-modernist thinkers, the Anglophone world and the British scene in particular played an important role through a long list of friendships and exchanges.

Held in Cambridge on 6th and 7th November 2026, this conference takes these relationships as a point of departure to examine Giancarlo De Carlo's profound and enduring international legacy on contemporary architectural scholarship and practice. While 'participation' is arguably the keyword that has left the most indelible mark on De Carlo's joint investigations into architectural, urban, and social form, this conference seeks to expand his architectural legacy to other areas and themes of enquiry. Moving beyond participation, we invite contributors to explore 'disorder', another foundational concept in De Carlo's work, as a critical lens for navigating today's increasingly complex social and political landscapes.

Contributions are encouraged from doctoral students and early career researchers who embrace the ideas of participation and disorder and discuss them in relation, but not limited to, some key themes applied to contemporary debates and case studies:

1. Participation as Method and Ideology;
2. Housing, Power, and Everyday Life;
3. Institutions, Education, and Authority.

This conference seeks to bridge De Carlo's thought with broader contemporary research. As such, we welcome submissions from scholars who may not specialize in De Carlo, but whose work intersects with his core themes. Contributions examining these ideas within the Global South are especially encouraged, offering an opportunity to test the relevance of his ethos in new contexts. To establish a shared vocabulary for the event, shortlisted participants will be asked to review a few short, foundational texts by De Carlo to ground our collective peer discussions.

The conference is designed as an intimate space for dialogue, bringing together cutting-edge, thought-provoking research that crosses disciplinary and geographical boundaries to explore De Carlo's enduring legacy. To foster deep engagement with the material, the conference is structured as two daily sessions (morning and afternoon), each consisting of four 20-minute presentations, culminating in an extended roundtable discussion rooted in De Carlo's work.



Giancarlo De Carlo attending a City Council meeting in Urbino, 1963 © Comune di Urbino Urban Archive

Scientific and Organising Committee:

Felipe Hernández

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Contributions

The conference will be **in person**.
Proposals (300-words abstract plus a 100-words biography) should be sent to disorder.gdc@gmail.com by

30 September 2026

Acceptance will be announced by
10 October 2026