

PRESS RELEASE

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**13TH BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL OF LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE**
"¿Natural Intelligence?!" – Exploring Multiple Forms of Knowing in the AI Era

Barcelona becomes global epicenter for landscape architecture discourse

November 17-21, 2025

Fira de Barcelona | COAC | ETSAB | Palau de la Música Catalana

BARCELONA, November 2025 – The 13th Barcelona International Biennial of Landscape Architecture returns November 17-21, 2025, bringing together leading professionals, academics, and students from around the world under the thought-provoking theme "¿Natural Intelligence?!" This sold-out edition challenges the conventional dichotomy between natural and artificial, inviting exploration of the rich ecosystem of intelligences that shape our landscapes.

THE THEME: ¿NATURAL INTELLIGENCE?!

In an era where artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming our relationship with design, this year's theme poses a question that is simultaneously interrogative and exclamatory. "¿Natural Intelligence?!" invites participants to look beyond familiar binaries, exploring a territory where computation meets botany, where indigenous wisdom converses with algorithmic learning, and where art serves as translator between otherwise disconnected forms of knowledge.

The theme positions landscape architecture not merely as a technical discipline, but as a practice of translation—revealing the multiple intelligences already inscribed in our environments. It encompasses plant intelligence (which comprises 99.7% of terrestrial biomass), indigenous knowledge systems that understand landscapes as integrated cultural-ecological 'biomes', and the sophisticated problem-solving capabilities of distributed natural networks.

DISTINGUISHED INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS

The symposium features exceptional keynote speakers who embody interdisciplinary approaches to landscape intelligence:

James Bridle, writer, artist, and technologist, will explore how intelligence is not simply something we possess or create, but something in which we are "inextricably entangled and imbued." His work at the intersection of technology, ecology, and art provides a critical framework for understanding our contemporary moment.

Thomas Woltz, Senior Principal of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, brings decades of professional excellence in landscape design that honors the stories, meanings, and memories embedded in the land itself. His work demonstrates how landscapes are "full, full of narratives" waiting to be discovered through careful observation and respectful engagement.

Divya Shah, PhD researcher at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL), contributes crucial perspectives on indigenous knowledge systems, reframing environments as cultural-ecological 'biomes' where "forests, monsoons, and mountains are key mediators" in community cosmology.

The dialogue between Woltz and Shah, moderated by **Tim Waterman**, Professor of Landscape Theory and Inter-Programme Collaboration Director at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL), will explore the intersection between indigenous wisdom, ecology, and contemporary landscape practice—demonstrating how landscape architecture can facilitate conversations between different intelligences.

ROSA BARBA CASANOVAS INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE PRIZE: GLOBAL RECOGNITION

The Rosa Barba Casanovas International Landscape Prize, endowed with €15,000 and supported by the Banc Sabadell Foundation, stands as one of the most prestigious recognitions in landscape architecture worldwide. This year's competition has attracted exceptional projects that demonstrate innovative and sustainable approaches to contemporary environmental, social, and urban challenges.

Eight finalists from leading international studios will present their work:

- Turenscape
- PROAP + Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF)
- PAN Associati + Studio Franco Zagari +EMF + ITS Engineering Company
- Michelle&Miquel (Michèle Orliac + Miquel Batlle)
- SLA (Sune Rieper)
- DFLA (Dermot Foley)
- Edward Conde Serna
- PWP Landscape Architecture (Adam Greenspan)

These projects, developed between 2019 and 2024, represent excellence and innovation in contemporary landscape architecture from around the globe. All finalists will benefit from extensive international dissemination through the official Biennial catalogue, dedicated exhibition space, and presentation during the symposium.

The prestigious international jury comprises five distinguished professionals:

- Kate Orff – Professor and Director of Urban Design Program at Columbia GSAPP + Founder of SCAPE
- Laura Zampieri – Professor at IUAV Venice + CZstudio
- Henry Crothers – Founding Director of LandLAB, Auckland
- Bruno Marques – Associate Dean at Victoria University of Wellington + President of IFLA
- Michel Desvigne – Michel Desvigne Paysagiste (MDP), Paris + Visiting Professor at Harvard GSD and ENSP Versailles

The winner will be announced during the award ceremony on November 21st, 2025, in the presence of the Honorable Sra. Sílvia Paneque, Minister of the Government of Catalonia.

MANUEL RIBAS PIERA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PRIZE: EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Manuel Ribas Piera International Schools Prize celebrates academic excellence and innovation in landscape architecture education. With the support of the Banco Sabadell Foundation, the winning university receives a financial award of €1,500, and the overall teaching carried out by the institution in the field of landscape project over the past five years is recognized. This year, ten universities from around the world will compete, representing the future of the discipline:

- University of Greenwich
- Politecnico di Milano
- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- University of Virginia
- Central Universidad de Chile
- University of Cagliari
- Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
- ETH Zurich
- Cornell University
- Università degli Studi Roma Tre

The academic jury, composed of five international experts, brings diverse perspectives:

- Gary Hilderbrand – Chair of Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard GSD + Founding Principal of Reed Hilderbrand
- Hayriye Esbah-Tunçay – Professor and Chair of Landscape Architecture at Istanbul Technical University
- Huang Wenjing – Founding Partner of OPEN Architecture + Kenzo Tange Design Critic in Architecture at Harvard GSD
- Luis Callejas – Professor at Oslo School of Architecture and Design + Visiting Professor at Harvard GSD
- Eulàlia Gómez-Escoda – Associate Professor at ETSAB-UPC Barcelona

This prize not only recognizes outstanding student work but also strengthens global connections between landscape architecture programs, fostering knowledge exchange and establishing Barcelona as a crucial platform for emerging professionals.

GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AWARDS

The Rosa Barba and Ribas Piera Prizes have established Barcelona as an international reference point for landscape architecture, creating a platform where:

Professional Excellence Meets Academic Innovation: The dual structure of awards bridges the gap between established practice and emerging voices, ensuring the discipline's continued evolution.

Global Exchange Flourishes: With submissions from every continent, the prizes facilitate international dialogue, bringing diverse cultural perspectives and innovative approaches into conversation.

Quality Standards are Elevated: The rigorous selection process by internationally renowned juries sets benchmarks for excellence that influence the profession worldwide.

Knowledge is Disseminated: Through publications, exhibitions, and online platforms like the Biennial ATLAS, winning and finalist projects reach global audiences, inspiring practitioners and students internationally.

Barcelona's Position is Consolidated: The Biennial and its prizes have transformed Barcelona into the world's most important meeting point for landscape architecture discourse, attracting professionals, academics, and students from across the globe every two years.

A WEEK ACROSS BARCELONA: FOUR VENUES, ONE VISION

The 13th Biennial unfolds across four iconic Barcelona locations, each hosting complementary aspects of this comprehensive exploration of landscape intelligence:

Fira de Barcelona (November 17-18) – The Biennial opens with free collateral events at Piscina Barcelona 2025, Europe's most international fair for pool, wellness, and outdoor sectors:

- November 17, 15:00-16:00: "IFLA Reflections and Steps Forward: IFLA Standards 2030" – Internal session moderated by Ed Wall (University of Greenwich) with Alessandro Martinelli (IFLA EAA Chair), Rose Monacella (Harvard GSD), Nina Marie Lister (PLANDFORM), and Henri Bava (Agence Ter)
- November 17, 16:00-18:00: "Insight the Project: Academia, Profession, Enterprise" – A dialogue fostering exchange between academic, professional, and business sectors, moderated by Maria Goula (Cornell University)
- November 18, 16:00-19:00: "Book Launch – Recent Publications on Landscape, Territory, and City" moderated by architect Octavi Mestre with La Capell bookstore

COAC – Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya – The professional college hosts the Rosa Barba Prize Exhibition and provides free streaming of all symposium sessions, making the content accessible to broader audiences and providing a hub for professional dialogue throughout the week.

ETSAB – Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona (UPC) – The architecture school of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya hosts the Ribas Piera Prize Exhibition, reflecting the Biennial's commitment to education and the formation of future landscape architects.

Palau de la Música Catalana (November 19-21) – The stunning UNESCO World Heritage site hosts the main symposium:

- Keynote presentations by James Bridle, Thomas Woltz, and Divya Shah
- Presentation of eight Rosa Barba Prize finalist projects
- Presentation of ten Ribas Piera Prize finalist projects
- Theoretical symposium with international experts
- November 21: Award ceremonies for Rosa Barba Prize, Ribas Piera Prize, Public Opinion Prizes, and IFLA Prize

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The 13th Biennial is organized by the Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya (COAC) and Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), with support from:

- Ajuntament de Barcelona
- Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona
- Diputació de Barcelona
- Generalitat de Catalunya
- Fundació Banc Sabadell
- International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)
- International Federation of Landscape Architects of Europe (IFLA Europe)
- New European Bauhaus

The innovative collaboration with Piscina Barcelona 2025 expands the Biennial's reach, connecting landscape discourse with related industries focused on sustainable design, wellness, and outdoor living.

ABOUT THE BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Since 1999, the Barcelona International Biennial of Landscape Architecture has served as a global reference platform for landscape architecture discourse. As a non-profit organization, it brings together professionals, academics, and students from around the world to share knowledge, celebrate innovation, and shape the future of landscape planning and design. The quality and diversity of international participation continue to demonstrate the vitality and innovation within the landscape architecture profession.

MEDIA CONTACT

Marina Cervera

Executive Director

13th Barcelona International Biennial of Landscape Architecture

Tel: +34 678 622 297

Email: biennial@coac.net

Web: <https://landscape.coac.net>

DIGITAL RESOURCES:

- Barcelona International Biennial Presentation, aims and values (25 years):
https://landscape.coac.net/sites/default/files/2024-07/25%20ANY%20DE%20BIENNAL_2.pdf
- Rosa Barba Prize Finalists 2025: <https://landscape.coac.net/en/finalists-rosa-barba-prize-2025>
- Ribas Piera Prize Finalists 2025: <https://landscape.coac.net/en/ribas-piera-prize-2025-finalists>
- Natural Intelligence...?! 13th edition motto 2025: <https://landscape.coac.net/en/noticies/natural-intelligence-embracing-multifaceted-knowledge-age-ai>

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