



Pages on
Arts & Design

PAD. Pages on Arts & Design
Scientific journal
www.padjournal.net
ISSN 1972-7887

Call for Paper PAD#28

Dwelling on the move

By Arianna Bionda¹, Andrea Ratti¹, Massimo Piccioni¹ (Guest Editors)

PAD Pages on Art and Design, Issue Number 28 will be published in June 2025.

Introduction

In an era characterized by a constant evolution of relations and societal norms, the essence of dwelling undergoes a profound transformation. Traditional notions of permanence give way to a fluid, adaptable concept of living and working. The growing phenomenon of digital nomadism and dwelling on the move embodies this paradigm.

In the late 1990s, with the publication of "Digital Nomads" by Makimoto and Manners, the vision of a globalized world with blurring distinctions between leisure-work-home-travel started to get real. However, only after the pandemic did this phenomenon become the symbol of the contemporary liquid society in which individuals are continuously "on the move", as Andrea Branzi already formalized.

Contemporary architecture now embraces movement: it rolls, flows, inflates, breathes, expands, multiplies, and seeks its following user, drawing inspiration from the provocative scenarios of Futurism and avant-garde architectural groups. In this context, the call focus extends beyond the physical structure of mobile architecture to encompass broader technological, socio-cultural, experiential, and environmental implications of dwelling on the move. Through research, testimonies, ongoing experiments, or anticipatory visions, the contributions will explore how design and art shape spaces and memories of dwelling within the context of artefacts that serve as destinations for temporary mobilities.

Explanatory text of the call

How long does a house last? Permanence and stability have defined our dwelling culture for centuries, yet architecture has always incorporated elements of lightness, flexibility, nomadicity, and mobility. This is more than ever the case today. The concept of mobile spaces worldwide revolves around accommodating specific needs through relocation, enabling the comparison and comprehension of how various environments impact society and shape unique demands among their inhabitants.

Moving architectures are among the earliest human-made artefacts, predating vehicles, and they maintain a persistent relevance (Kronenburg, 2014). Historical examples of mobile architectures depict a world not bound to place but characterized by itinerant and nomadic responses to permanence (Siegal, 2002). Nomadic cultures moved for various reasons: locating migrant food sources, adapting to changing climate conditions, trading goods, finding communal protection, discovering new cultures, or

¹ Politecnico di Milano, Design Department.

exploring the unknown. With the advent of the information age and the widespread connectivity technology, a new type of high-tech traveling lifestyle has become possible, giving rise to digital nomadism culture (Broek et al., 2023). Among these globally dispersed individuals, many face similar challenges in finding shelters that are durable, lightweight, flexible, self-sufficient and ultimately transportable by low-tech means.

Over the past few years, trends related to dwelling on the move have been rising, also triggered by the new challenges and opportunities highlighted by the pandemic. In the yachting sector, reports on chartering show a 12% increase in the number of weeks sold for the last two years compared to the same period before COVID-19. The recreational vehicle sector has experienced strong growth, and forecasts envision further improvement in the coming years (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). Even the world of camping is experiencing noticeable expansion. Within the next four years, its market will have an annual growth rate of 7.28% (Statista, 2024).

Pneumatic, tensile, kinetic, wheeled and floating structures are shaping the development of the new nomadism. They provide growing opportunities for architects, designers and artists who draw inspiration not only from the ancient cultures of Bedouins, Tuareg, and Gypsies but also from the experiences of Glenn Curtiss' Aerocar Land Yacht, Richard Buckminster Fuller's inflatable structures, Archigram's provocative visions (Herwig, 2003), and Studio-Orta speculative Refuge Wear and Body Architecture (Siegal, 2008). Moreover, contemporary advancements in lightweight, flexible, and responsive materials drive experimentation in developing adaptive mobile architectural systems. These systems prioritize modular spatial adaptability, versatile applications, and automated responses to evolving programmatic and environmental conditions.

Dwelling on the move could be represented not merely in terms of movable structures but rather as a way of inhabiting a specific environment at a particular time and place in a way that better reacts to increasingly frequent social shifts (Heingartner, 2001). Contributions are invited to explore both the physical aspect of mobile living spaces and broader social and cultural meanings, focusing on how architecture and products can shape experiences of temporary dwellings. Submissions profiling innovative case studies or envisioning future scenarios are encouraged. In particular, areas of interest specifically include all structures that have primary means of mobility (Roke, 2017): structures that can be relocated by hand and on foot, those that stack, fold, inflate, and move on or without wheels (personal and portable architectures, recreational vehicles, caravan), as well those that move on ice and snow (sleds), on waters (yachts, houseboat or floating architectures), and in air.

How can flexible dwelling contribute to redefining the concept of nomadism in contemporary society? How do advancements in technology and material design contribute to the experimentation of a flexible and responsive spatial ecosystem? What are the social and cultural expressions of designing mobile living spaces? What are the new relations with place and community making? How can mobile architecture respond to the fluidity of contemporary society and emerging human needs? How can design enhance the connection between human-artifact-nature?

The call aims to further current discourse by gathering diverse viewpoints and spurring new directions on inhabiting space through mobility. A multi-disciplinary approach is welcomed, with potential intersections including transportation design, urban planning, social science, and sustainability. In this perspective, the call seeks submissions of the following types:

- Essays and critical reflections, theoretical and cultural approaches to design on the move
- Field projects and experiments involving the design of mobile or adaptable dwelling spaces
- Forward-thinking research explores new mobile living opportunities through novel technological or material innovations.

Lines of theme development

The call aims to explore the role of design and art in enhancing the hard and soft features of dwelling on the move by reflecting on its creative forces and dichotomies:

- Accessibility and dynamism
- Technology and flexibility

- Perception and relationship
- Temporariness and sustainability

References

Estaji, H. (2017). A review of flexibility and adaptability in housing design. *International Journal of Contemporary Architecture*, 4(2), 37-49.

Hannonen, O. (2020). In search of a digital nomad: defining the phenomenon. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22, 335-353.

Heingartner, D. (2001). Mobile Homer. *Artbyte*, 3(04), 60-65.

Kronenburg, R. (2013). *Architecture in motion: the history and development of portable building*. Routledge.

Roke, R. (2017). *Mobitecture: Architecture on the move*. Phaidon

Siegal, J. (2002). *Mobile: the art of portable architecture*. Princeton Architectural Press.

To participate we ask you to send:

- Abstract proposals (from 2000 to 3000 characters, spaces included) will be in English by **January 31, 2025**;
- Full paper submission by **March 31, 2025** and then be subjected to double-blind peer review. The length of the contributions is 20.000/25.000 characters (abstract, notes, and bibliography excluded). Authors' affiliation and short bios (max 1000 characters, spaces included) must be attached in a separate Word file.

The final text must comply with the indications provided in the document:

<https://www.padjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PAD-GUIDELINES-AUTHORS-ENG-2022-1.docx>

- Illustrations (maximum 10 per article) must be collected in a .zip folder to be renamed by accompanying the author's surname and a progressive numbering corresponding to the captions (e.g. 01_Cognome, 02_Cognome). These should be listed in a document in the same font as the main text and written on a Word .doc document as follows Figure 1: Author's name and surname, Title of the work, date – minimum resolution of 300 dpi, .JPG file.
- Publication by the end of **June 2025**.

Abstract submission by mail to editors@padjournal.net

The Editor in Chief of PAD Journal

Marinella Ferrara