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Architecture Between Autonomy and Engagement

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- An anthology of accessible essays on distinctive design languages and contextual integration in architecture
- Demonstrates through selected buildings and analyses that outstanding architecture is always a synthesis of individuality and integration into the built and cultural context
- Offers a wealth of critical perspectives on architecture that are only sporadically found in professional journals
- The annual CICA International Conference on Architectural Criticism has established itself as a center for competent and independent architectural criticism

The fourth anthology of contributions to the CICA International Conference on Architectural Criticism bridges the gap between the occasionally enigmatic world of untouchable architecture and a public that demands plain answers. Much like modern art, some buildings have evolved into independent objects that explicitly stand out from their surroundings. Yet an architecture's raison d'être is often derived purely from its context.

Architecture between Autonomy and Engagement illuminates the entire spectrum of this defining design matrix. Drawing on examples by Denise Scott Brown, Álvaro Siza, Nzinga Mboup, Lyndon Neri, and Rossana Hu, the volume demonstrates how contemporary architecture succeeds in engaging intensely with design languages and contextual integration. Distinguished international architects and critics highlight that the contemporary trend toward abstraction by no means implies a breakdown in communication: simplification of appearance is in some cases precisely what makes ambiguity and connectivity possible in the first place.

Ruth Verde Zein (1955–2025) was a Brazilian architect and urban designer. She served as an editor at the architecture magazine Projeto and taught as professor of theory and design at the School of Architecture and Urbanism of São Paulo's Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie. **Giovanna Renzetti** is a São Paulo-based architect conducting research as a doctoral candidate at the local Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie's School of Architecture and Urbanism. **Wilfried Wang** is a Berlin-based architect and researcher and president of the International Committee of Architectural Critics (CICA). He also teaches as a Changjiang Distinguished Scholar and professor at Tongji University in Shanghai.

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