14,00 euro

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Balance. Different Types of Equilibrium, is a small book, a compendium of perspectives on the theme of equilibrium in architecture, in relation to the society and the time in which we live. International universities and leading architecture firms were invited to reflect on the meaning of the word *Balance*, the central theme of the 26th edition of WAVe (International Architecture Workshops) at the Università Iuav di Venezia.

Edited by Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo

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Quaderni Iuav. Esperienze

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Quaderni Iuav. Esperienze
Collana “Quaderni Iuav” dell’Università Iuav di Venezia

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Progetto grafico
Centro Editoria Pard / Infrastruttura di ricerca Ir.Ide
Dipartimento di Culture del progetto, Università Iuav di Venezia

Balance. Different Types of Equilibrium
edited by Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo
ISBN 979-12-5953-265-7
First edition: June 2026

Layout: Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo
Tutors WAVe 2026: Davide Baggio, Anna Mocellini, Silvia Narducci, Alice Rampazzo

Cover picture
Bêka & Lemoine, Koolhaas Houselife, 2008. Courtesy Bêka & Lemoine.

Anteferma Edizioni Srl, via Asolo 12, Conegliano, TV
Print: Digital Team, Fano, PU

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Università
Iuav
di Venezia

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Balance Within the Storm

Balance is a temporary embodied condition, dependent on the environment and on our spatial relationship with it. Rather than a stable or universal principle, it emerges as a situational and contingent state, continuously negotiated between the subject and the spatial field[1]. This introduces a fundamental epistemological uncertainty, undermining any attempt to define architecture as a fixed or universally applicable discipline. Instead, architecture can be understood as a material and operative structure that unfolds within events, constantly shaped by conditions of instability, transformation, and interaction.

Balance is therefore intrinsically transitory and constructed. It does not pre-exist the architectural project but is produced through it. The project itself becomes the device through which temporal, spatial, and perceptual conditions are articulated, calibrated, and temporarily stabilized. In this sense, architectural design operates as an instrument of mediation between bodies, space, and time, rather than as a generator of static form.

This understanding of *balance* as tension rather than equilibrium can be productively reframed through the work of Walter De Maria, in particular *The Lightning Field* (1977)[2]. Here, a grid of 400 stainless steel poles installed in the desert of New Mexico does not produce an immediate or representational image, but rather establishes a field condition that unfolds over time. The work exists through duration and experience, defined by the interaction between the observer's body, the expansive landscape, and unpredictable atmospheric phenomena.

Within *The Lightning Field*, *balance* manifests as a fragile and continuously shifting equilibrium between geometric order and environmental indeterminacy. The strict Cartesian grid, apparently rational and stable, is constantly reconfigured by variations

1 The reference is to the condition of perception: M. Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, in A. Hofstadter (ed.), *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row, New York 1971, pp. 141-160.

2 Walter De Maria, *The Lightning Field* (1977), site-specific installation, western New Mexico, USA. The work operates not as a static object but as a temporal and environmental condition, activated through duration, atmospheric variation, and the embodied presence of the observer.

in light, wind, and weather. What emerges is not a closed composition, but an open system in which perception oscillates between control and its dissolution. The work does not represent *balance* as a resolved condition; rather, it exposes its fragility by transforming it into an experiential field.

From this perspective, the notion of space shifts toward that of an unstable and processual condition, suggesting an evolutionary understanding of habitat in which architectural design operates as a structured yet permeable framework. This framework is continuously exposed to external forces that alter, disrupt, and redefine its internal coherence. In this sense, Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project* offers a complementary articulation of similar principles. Within the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern, the exhibition space is reconfigured into an artificial atmospheric environment: a suspended sun, diffused mist, and reflective surfaces collectively dissolve spatial references, destabilizing conventional perceptions of scale, depth, and bodily orientation.

When read in relation, the works of Eliasson and De Maria allow *balance* to be redefined not as a structural attribute, but as an atmospheric and temporal condition. In both cases, space is never fully predetermined; instead, it is continuously constituted through embodied presence and fluctuating perceptual regimes. *Balance* is thus never definitive, but always provisional, contingent, and relational.

If this atmospheric understanding of open space is extended toward the enclosed condition of domesticity, the work of Gaston Bachelard becomes crucial. For Bachelard, space is never an objective or neutral given, but an imaginative and phenomenological construction. In *The Poetics of Space*, the house is described as a constellation of intimate images in which perception is inseparably intertwined with memory, reverie, and imagination. Within this framework, *balance* cannot be reduced to a geometric or compositional property, but must instead be understood as a poetic condition of dwelling.

From this perspective, balanced space is not defined by stability or symmetry, but by its capacity to sustain unresolved tensions. Interior and exterior, protection and exposure, permanence and instability coexist within a dynamic and non-hierarchical

relationship. As in the works of Eliasson and De Maria, Bachelardian space is never fully fixed or exhausted by form; rather, it is continuously activated through embodied and sensory experience[3].

The shift from artistic practice to theoretical discourse thus allows for a redefinition of *balance* in architecture as a relational rather than formal category. It is no longer a principle of static equilibrium, but the capacity of spatial configurations to sustain and modulate perceptual and temporal tensions. Space becomes less a closed structure than a field of forces in continuous negotiation.

This conception of *balance* as controlled instability within a field of forces finds a significant historical precedent in the paintings of J.M.W. Turner, particularly in his depictions of maritime storms and shipwrecks, such as *The Slave Ship* (1840) and *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (1842)[4]. In these works, the spatial and structural clarity of the maritime environment is progressively dissolved into light, movement, and atmospheric turbulence. Turner's painting thus introduces a fundamental proposition: space cannot be abstracted from its atmospheric conditions. The storm is not a background phenomenon, but an active and constitutive force that shapes perception itself. Within this framework, *balance* does not coincide with calm or resolution, but with the capacity of form to persist within conditions of instability.

Taken together, these trajectories suggest a reconfiguration of architecture as an environmental and relational apparatus: a system capable not only of organizing spatial conditions, but of producing and sustaining tensions within them. Architecture, in this sense, can be understood as a practice of positioning within fluctuating fields of forces, perpetually situated between stability and transformation, order and disruption, structure and event.

3 G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (1958), Beacon Press, Boston 1994.
4 J.M.W. Turner, *The Slave Ship*, 1840; *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, 1842. Oil on canvas. Also exhibited at Tate Britain, London.

Profiles

WAVe 2026, through its *Balance* edition, brought together numerous international realities with the aim of fostering a dialogue between universities, professionals, and territories. The visual contribution of Bêka & Lemoine completed this unprecedented geography through diverse narrative registers, highlighting the value of space, the bodies that inhabit it, and human relationships.

Bêka & Lemoine

Artists-filmmakers working at the intersection of visual arts and non-fiction cinema, Bêka & Lemoine have, for twenty years, explored how people experience, perceive, and relate to space on emotional, social, and cultural levels through innovative narrative and cinematic forms. Their films have been widely screened and awarded at major international documentary film festivals and exhibited in both solo and collective exhibitions at leading art and architecture institutions, including Fondation Beyeler (Basel), Fondation Cartier (Paris), Fondation Prada (Milan), MAXXI (Rome), the Venice Biennale (Venice), Barbican Art Gallery (London), among others. In 2016, MoMA (New York) acquired their complete body of work produced up to that date. Their films are part of other renowned collections including MAXXI (Rome), CNAP (Paris), and Fondazione Prada (Milan). They have directed over thirty films, including Koolhaas Houselife (2008), Barbicania (2014), The Infinite Happiness (2015), Moriyama San (2017), Tokyo Ride (2020), and the 14-film urban odyssey Homo Urbanus (2017-2025). In 2023, they published the book 'The Emotional Power of Space'.

***Balance. Different Types of Equilibrium* is a small book, a breviary conceived as an initial framework for comparison and discussion on the theme of balance in architecture, in relation to the society and the historical moment in which we live. An 'archipelago' of universities, together with a number of leading international architectural practices, reflected on the meaning of the word *Balance*, the central theme of the 26th edition of WAVe (International Architecture Workshops) at Università Iuav di Venezia.**

A broad research community engaged in writing and reflection through the contributions of scholars from different parts of the world and with diverse backgrounds, with the aim of outlining a shared picture of the various realities of architectural schools and professional practices, as well as the transversal teaching and working methodologies that characterise these highly specific approaches.

American University of Sharjah, College of Architecture, Art and Design, (AUS), Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

College of Architecture, Art and Design (CAAD) is a community of makers, scholars and industry partners who believe design changes lives. From studios and labs to exhibitions and public programs, CAAD advance creative leadership that addresses real challenges and sparks new possibilities. The faculty publish, exhibit and prototype at the highest levels, while mentoring students to think critically, design responsibly and collaborate across disciplines.

Jason Carlow
Jason Carlow (1974) is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture at American University in Sharjah. He has taught architecture and design at universities worldwide for 25 years and is the co-author of Cities of Repetition (AR+D Publications, 2024).

Igor Peraza Curiel
Igor Peraza Curiel graduated from the Universidad Central de Venezuela and holds a PhD from Kumamoto University, Japan. He is Professor of Practice at the American University of Sharjah and has worked with EMBT and Arata Isozaki, integrating practice, research, and teaching.

CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India

Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, is one of the vital centres of thought and education in the field of Architecture in India. It aims for excellence in its teaching and research programs. It aims to give its students a breadth of cultural exposure that shapes a reflective and critical outlook based on social and environmental awareness and responsiveness. The faculty enjoys an excellent reputation nationally as well as internationally.

Smit Vyas
Smit Vyas is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT. He offers design studios for the undergraduate and master's program and courses in architectural history, theory, drawing and documentation. Smit heads STUDIO 4000, an award-winning design practice based out of Ahmedabad.

College of Architecture Myongji University (CAMU), Seoul, South Korea

The College of Architecture in Myongji University, consists of the majors of Architecture, Traditional Architecture, and Space Design. Related topics are actively reinforced between majors. Specialized programs focused on architectural education have the advantage that human and physical competencies can focus on architectural design education and has the curriculum system to allow for a variety of elective courses and for advanced majors.

Kyeong Jae Lee
Kyeong Jae Lee (1982) is a registered architect (KIRA, AIA, NCARB) and Assistant Professor at Myongji University, trained at Yale under Gehry and Eisenman. A decade of practice and research has been devoted to marrying the tools of the present with the slow wisdom of architecture – for design that genuinely serves people.

ETSAM Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain

The ETS de Arquitectura de Madrid is the first Special School of Architecture established in Spain, founded in 1844 as the heir to the teaching of Architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, which began in 1744. ETSAM's mission is to transmit knowledge with a commitment to society, in relation to architecture, building and urban planning, as well as to the challenges of scientific and technological knowledge and innovation, serving as a leading reference institution.

Nieves Mestre
Nieves Mestre (1976) is a PhD architect and Associate Professor at the ETSAM School of Architecture, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. In 2007, she co founded Combolab with Eduardo Roig, a practice focused on the critical and ecological dimensions of architecture.

Eduardo Roig
Eduardo Roig (1974) is a PhD architect and Associate Professor at the ETSAM School of Architecture, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. In 2007, he co founded Combolab with Nieves Mestre, a practice focused on the critical and ecological dimensions of architecture.

FaAAD Facultad de Arquitectura, Arte y Diseño, Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile

The Facultad de Arquitectura, Arte y Diseño of the Universidad Diego Portales is part of a city campus, which allows students to engage with the complexity of urban life and drives the promotion of interdisciplinary learning also with other disciplines, units and centres within the University. The FaAAD has academic staff who are active leaders in their fields, complementing the curriculum with the regular participation of top-level international experts, the promotion of academic placements abroad, and a wide range of exchange agreements.

Alejandra Celedón
Alejandra Celedón is an architect, Universidad de Chile (Santiago, 2003). Master from The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL (London, 2007) and PhD in Architecture from the AA School of Architecture (London, 2014). Dean of the Facultad de Arquitectura, Arte y Diseño de la Universidad Diego Portales.

New York Institute of Technology School of Architecture and Design (NYIT), New York, United States

The mission within the New York Tech School of Architecture and Design is to provide a design- and technology-based 21st-century professional education that enables leadership in the profession and within the community. Three core values, or educational aspirations, guide its approach: Design Intelligence, Building Technology and Leadership. The history of the School of Architecture and Design has been closely associated with the development of New York Tech as an institution of higher education.

Evan Shieh
Evan Shieh is an architect, urbanist, Assistant Professor at New York Institute of Technology, founding director of Emergent Studio, and a graduate of Harvard University GSD. His research and professional practice lies at architecture's intersection with urbanism, landscape, and infrastructure.

Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy

Born in 1926 as the Higher School of Architecture of Venice, Università Iuav di Venezia is today a small-sized university with a strong experimental vocation: the first among Italian universities to introduce design laboratories, its didactic model combines theoretical training in the humanities with laboratory work oriented towards making and experimentation, coordinated by architects, artists and designers.

Benno Albrecht
Benno Albrecht has been Rector of Università Iuav di Venezia since 2021. He completed his studies at Iuav with Vittorio de Feo and he then worked with Vittorio Gregotti and Leonardo Benevolo. He received architectural prizes for his projects and buildings, he won design competitions and his projects were shown in Italy and abroad.

Angelo Maggi
Angelo Maggi is professor of Architectural History, History of Architectural photography at Università Iuav di Venezia. He earned his PhD in Architecture and Visual Studies at the Edinburgh College of Art. He is full member of the PhD School in History of the Arts (Ca' Foscari University Venice) and he is acting as Vice-Rector Iuav for International Relations.

Tiziano Aglieri Rinella
Tiziano Aglieri Rinella, architect and PhD, is Associate Professor of Interior Architecture at IUAV University in Venice. He previously held academic positions in Dubai and Milan, was a Le Corbusier Foundation fellow and UNESCO consultant, and has authored over 100 publications on architecture, interiors, and Modern Heritage.

Michel Carlana
Michel Carlana (1980) graduated from the Università Iuav di Venezia, where he currently carries out collaborative and research activities. With Luca Mezzalira and Curzio Pentimalli, in 2010, he founded the architectural office Carlana Mezzalira Pentimalli based in Treviso, Italy.

Fernanda De Maio
Architect and PhD in Urban Design. Full Professor of Architectural Design at the Università Iuav di Venezia. She was co-founder of the architectural office Na.o Mi. and from 2008 Consultant for Architecture of the Im.Ing Engineering based in Naples. Among her academic publications, the recent Sebastian Irarrazaval. Scritti e Architettura, Lettera22, 2025, in Italian and Spanish, is particularly noteworthy.

Simone Gobbo
Simone Gobbo (1980) graduated from the Università Iuav di Venezia, where he currently carry out collaborative and research activities. With Alberto Mottola and Davide De Marchi, in 2007, he founded the architectural office DEMOGO based in Treviso, Italy.

Guido Morpurgo
Architect (PhD) and National Academician of San Luca, he is an associate professor of interior and exhibition design at Iuav. After having been associate in the firm Gregotti Associati, he founded in Milan the studio Morpurgo de Curtis Architetti whose works have received several awards.

Univerzitet Union-Nikola Tesla (UUNT), Belgrade, Serbia

As a community of higher education institutions, the University Union-Nikola Tesla enables the exchange of knowledge and experiences in various educational and scientific fields, potentially opening up space for multidisciplinary studies. The mission is to encourage high academic standards and enable the acquisition of knowledge aligned with social needs and national development. It is focused on the education of experts in construction, architecture, urban planning, management, business, ecology and environmental protection, real estate management, and international politics and security.

Bojan Končarević
Bojan Končarević (b. 1984, Sarajevo) is an architect navigating between continents, research and practice. Formed in Belgrade and Tokyo (Ito scholar, PhD KumaLab UTokyo), his work spans cultures and scales. Based in Belgrade, he teaches, designs and operates within local and global.

FARAGUNA

FARAGUNA is an office dedicated to architecture, adaptive reuse, scenography, and behavioral design. Its work explores the transformation of existing structures and the design of new environments across a range of scales and contexts, investigating how space can shape experience, negotiate its surroundings, and adapt to changing environmental and cultural conditions. The studio's approach is inherently interdisciplinary, integrating architectural vision with external expertise, and combining theoretical, technological, and artistic knowledge within the design process.

Andrea Faraguna
Andrea Faraguna (1981) graduated from the Università Iuav di Venezia, where he later completed his PhD. He runs the studio FARAGUNA based in Berlin. In 2025 he received the Golden Lion at the Biennale Architettura for the National Pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Felgendreher Olfs Köchling

Christian Felgendreher (Bremen, 1980), Johannes Olfs (Breddorf, 1979) and Christina Köchling (Unna, 1979) graduated in 2008 from the Universität der Künste in Berlin. Between 2010 and 2015 they trained at some of the most renowned architecture practices in Basel, Zurich, London and Berlin. In 2015 they founded Felgendreher Olfs Köchling Architekten, an office based in Berlin. Alongside their professional practice, they are engaged in teaching at the Technische Universität Hannover, the Technische Universität München, the Technische Universität Dresden and the Technische Universität Cottbus.

Christina Köchling
Christina Köchling (1979) did an apprenticeship as carpenter, studied architecture at the University of Arts Berlin and worked in Basel before she founded Felgendreher Olfs Köchling Berlin in 2015. She was guest professor at TU Dresden and BTU Cottbus and has lead the studio Bauentwurfslehre at Bauhaus-University since 2023.

Jean-Benoît Vétillard architecture

The projects developed by the atelier Jean-Benoît Vétillard architecture have all begun or ended their lives in the form of drawing. Some are being built, others are under construction. The atelier questions the architectural design process as much as the built reality, explores the causes as well as the consequences, the course as well as the destination. He strives to deal with different scales, architecture, scenography and design, without preconceived hierarchy.

Jean-Benoît Vétillard
Jean-Benoît Vétillard (1984) teaches design studio at ENSA Paris Est. Graduated from the ENSA Bretagne (France), he founded his own architectural studio in Paris in 2014, across architecture, scenography, and design.

Piovenefabi

Piovenefabi is an architecture studio founded by Ambra Fabi and Giovanni Piovene, based in Milan and Brussels. The studio produces architecture, urban research, territorial visions, and public design works regardless of the size, commission, or client. When dealing with a shared context and its almost infinite interpretations, Piovenefabi believes spaces and objects can act as supports for both personal and collective experiences.

Ambra Fabi
Ambra Fabi (1981) studied in Mendrisio and Paris Belleville. She worked at Architekturbüro Peter Zumthor und Partner. She has been teaching assistant in Mendrisio (CH) and professor at IED Cagliari and KU Leuven Sint Lucas Brussels. She is currently teaching at École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture in Marne-la-Vallée Paris Est, UCL LOCI St Gilles et ULB La Cambre.

Giovanni Piovene
Giovanni Piovene (1981) graduated in architecture from IUAV in Venice. He co-founded Salottobuono (2007-2012) and the San Rocco magazine, and curated the book and exhibition Book of Copies. Together with Ambra Fabi he founded Piovenefabi studio in 2012. He is currently professor at École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture in Marne-la-Vallée Paris Est.

LAN (Local Architecture Network)

LAN (Local Architecture Network) was created by Benoit Jallon and Umberto Napolitano in 2002, with the idea of exploring architecture as an area of activity at the intersection of several disciplines. This attitude, which has now become a methodology, allows the agency to explore new territories in search of a vision involving social, urban, ecological and functional issues.

Umberto Napolitano
Umberto Napolitano (1975) studied architecture in Naples and Paris. Co-founder of LAN in 2002 with Benoit Jallon, he works between practice, research and international lectures. He has taught at Columbia GSAPP, AA London, TU Vienna and Politecnico di Milano. He is a member of the French Academy of Architecture and Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.

PARABASE

PARABASE is an entity registered by Carla Ferrando and Pablo Garrido Arnaiz. PARABASE combines the development and construction of architectural projects with research and teaching. They have been visiting Professors at the Bauhaus University in Weimar and ETH Zürich and currently they are visiting Professors at TU Wien.

Carla Ferrando
Carla Ferrando studied architecture at ETSAV, Barcelona and at the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). She collaborated with firms such as Diener & Diener Architekten, Basel, and Herzog & de Meuron, Basel, before cofounding PARABASE together with Pablo Garrido Arnaiz in 2021.

Pablo Garrido Arnaiz
Pablo Garrido Arnaiz studied architecture at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona (ETSAB) and at the Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio. In 2021, he cofounded PARABASE together with Carla Ferrando, following professional experience at Foster & Partners, Madrid; Miller & Maranta, Basel; and Herzog & de Meuron, Basel. Since 2014, Pablo Garrido Arnaiz has been a cofounder and editor of Cartha Magazine.

PERIS+TORAL ARQUITECTES

PERIS+TORAL ARQUITECTES is a Barcelona-based studio formed by Marta Peris and José Toral. Their work focuses on collective housing, new ways of living, and construction systems that respond to social and climate challenges, combining research, practice and teaching.

Marta Peris
Marta Peris holds a PhD in architecture and has been a lecturer at ETSAB since 2002. She presented her doctoral thesis in 2016, entitled *The Japanese house through the cinema of Yasujiro Ozu*, published in 2019 under the name *Ozu's House*.

José Toral
José Toral has been an associate professor in the Department of Architectural Projects at the ETSAB UPC since 2016, specialising in the study of public space and urban projects. His work has been recognised with the RIBA International Prize 2024, the Detail Award 2024, the Wood Design & Building Award, being finalist of the EU Mies Award 2022 and shortlisted in 2018 and 2024.

Quaderni Iuav. Esperienze

Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo (edited by), *Balance. Different Types of Equilibrium*, 2026.