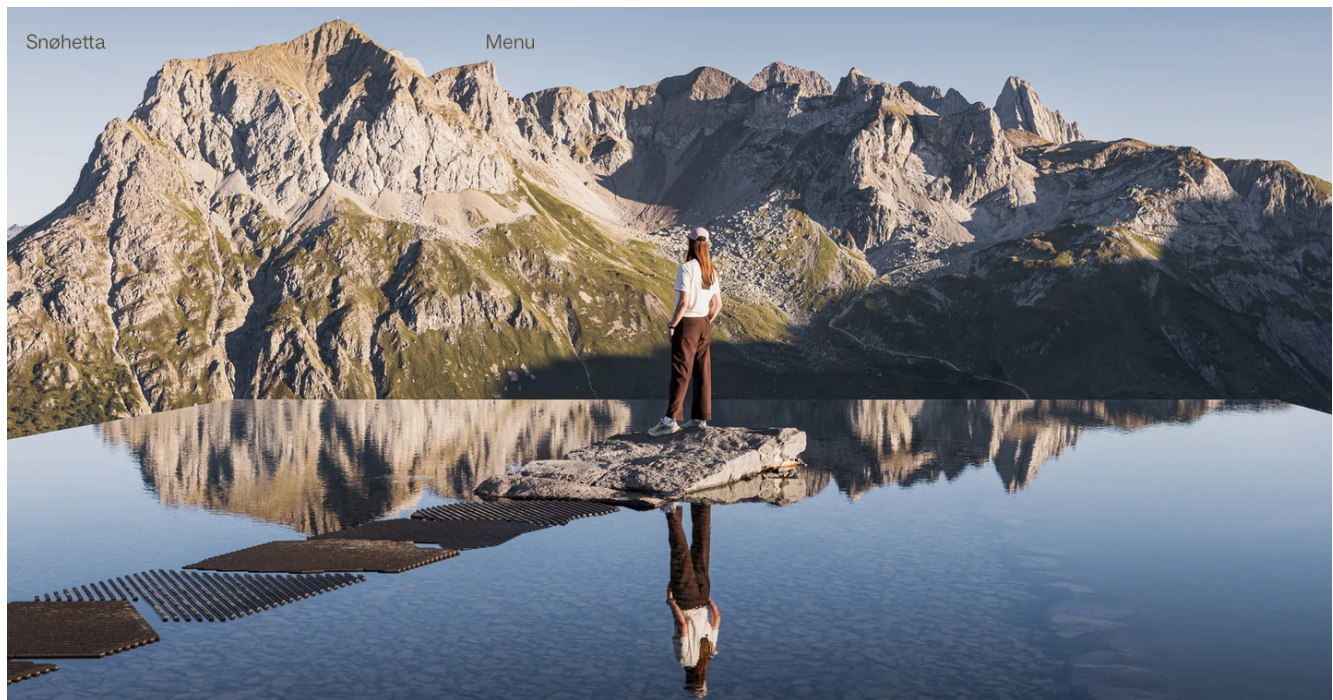


Architecture Now: *New Trends, Recent Triumphs and a Few More Terrible Ideas*

OLLI Fall 2026, Week 4 handout

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Week Four: Culture, Creativity, and Carbon Copies (or The Creativity Question)



Snøhetta, Lech Mountain Mirror, Austria, 2026 (Photo © Christian Flatscher)

We examine contemporary architecture and ask about its relationship to culture. We try to understand what the architect was thinking or trying to do in specific projects. Sometimes we have the architect's own words, and we will compare those written ideas with what we can see in the built project. We ask about creativity, its value in different cultures, and what that has meant for architecture. We boldly ask about AI and creativity!

To note: Apparently the first Monday of October is World Architecture Day, established by the International Union of Architects (UIA) in 1985. It's also World Habitat Day, established in 1985 and recognized by the United Nations in 1986. This year World Architecture Day was Monday, Oct. 5, and its theme was "Housing is a human right. Build it."

Goals

Investigate what we mean by creativity
Consider creativity with respect to the Vitruvian trio
Contemplate creativity and culture

Part I: Creativity as a human quality

Framing questions

What do we mean by creativity?

Is creativity dependent on culture? Or vice-versa?

How might we integrate creativity into our architecture inquiry?

Commodity – Firmness – Delight ... what role for Creativity?

Part II: Carbon Copies

Framing questions

What is the relationship between influence and creativity?

How do we feel about copies, and why?

Vocabulary List

Commodity, Firmness, Delight Dwelling

Program, Site and Context Vernacular

Design and Form Social Justice (in architecture) Material and Technology

Resource Intentions

Narrative and Emotional Power **Creativity and Culture**

Quote

On drawing as essential to creativity in architecture: "Architecture students often make the mistake of thinking they are thinking, when they are not, and that is usually when they are not drawing." Attributed to Louis Kahn by Norman Millar, both architects and educators, but a generation apart.

More websites

<https://www.archdaily.com/>

Some readings related to creativity

McDonough, William, & Michael Braungart. *Cradle to Cradle*. 2002. North Point Press.

Robinson, Ken. *Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*. 2001. Capstone.

Zumthor, Peter. *Thinking Architecture*. 2006, 2nd expanded edition. Birkhäuser.