

URBAN AI SUMMIT

PLANNING SYMBIOSIS



September 10-11, 2026

BEXCO / BUSAN — SOUTH KOREA

FOREWORD

In 1967, Lynn Margulis published a paper that was destined to change how we perceive the world. In her article “*On the Origin of Mitosing Cells*”, the young microbiologist grounded the hypothesis that our cellular complexity came from an initial symbiosis between a bacteria and a prokaryotic cell. Evolution was not only the result of random mutations and natural selection but also the fruit of a mutualistic fusion between two organisms.

Lynn Margulis’ symbiotic hypothesis didn’t only alter the story of life but also the very fundamentals of modern society. Modernity taught us that life is a race where only the most adapted individuals survive and, by doing so, make the society in it whole stronger. For one to win, others have to lose.

Individuals against individuals. Societies against societies. Species against species.

Yet Lynn Margulis brings some nuances to this narrative. Yes, evolution is made of situated adversity and contextual, inevitable, conflicts. But that’s not the whole story. There are also mechanisms of negotiation and cooperation that complexify life and, ultimately, make it more resilient, diverse, and beautiful.

Almost sixty years later, as new autonomous and intelligent agents are entering the city, Lynn Margulis’s legacy offers us some powerful insights on how to plan virtuous cohabitations — or as she might have said “symbiosis”.

Such vision is more than ever critical. We already see how machines are competing with human beings for water, energy, attention. We already see how AIs bring new conflicts. New winners and losers.

Yet another script can be written. The integration of autonomous agents and AIs in our lives doesn’t have to follow the incomplete law of conflictual evolution. It could also be founded on complementarity and mutualistic cooperation. What if AI didn’t enclose us in synthetic and isolated cocoons but connected us to the world and with each other? What if machines didn’t steal our attention but gave us time to grow? What if robots didn’t extract natural resources but generated new symbiosis? All those questions have in common to shift the paradigm from agents to relationships. They weave the foundations of an expanded ecology where human beings, machines, animals, plants, fungi are not seen as rivals but as symbiotes that are augmented by each other’s singularities.

Through this inaugural URBAN AI Summit we aim at posing the foundation of a new research agenda for Urban Artificial Intelligence. This is an honor to launch this initiative in close collaboration with the Republic of Korea, one of the most advanced societies in robotics development, as well as with URBAN AI friends and some of the brightest minds in this field. May we together work on building joyful and symbiotic relationships.



Hubert Beroche
President of URBAN AI

AUGMENTATION

Root nodules are small, specialized structures that form on the roots of legumes such as beans and peas through a symbiotic relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria. The plant creates a dedicated organ (the nodule) where thousands of those bacteria can live and function within its tissues, integrating their metabolism with its own. The plant provides sugars and a protected environment, while the bacteria convert nitrogen from the air into usable plant nutrients. This partnership involves coordinated biological processes, from bacterial entry into the root to changes in the plant's gene expression and metabolism. Through this mutual exchange, the association effectively augments the plant's metabolic capacities, giving it access to atmospheric nitrogen that it cannot directly use on its own.



ILLUSTRATION — ROOT NODULES

PROGRAM

DAY 1 · AUGMENTATION · 10 SEPTEMBER 2026

9:30

Opening Keynote

Hubert Beroche, President of URBAN AI

10:00 – 11:15

Decoding Urban Complexity with AI

HOSTED BY THE ISI FOUNDATION

Riccardo Di Clemente, Director of Complex Connections Lab and Affiliated Researcher at ISI Foundation · Panel Chair

Federico Fernandez, CEO of URBANLY

Angelos Chronis, CEO of Infrared.City

Keemon Jang, Assistant Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

11:15 – 12:00

AI Mutualism: Evolving the Social Contract through Local Adaptation

KEYNOTE

Emily Binet Royall, Assistant Director at Partners for Public Good

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch Break

13:00 – 13:30

Republic of Korea's K-AI City Strategy

KEYNOTE

Dr Sewon Lee, Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements

13:30 – 15:00

URBAN AI Asia Launch Forum: Co-Creating the Future of AI Cities

HOSTED BY URBAN AI ASIA

Sung Jin Park, CEO of SPARKCITY, Founding Member of URBAN AI Asia · Panel Chair

Jung Hoon Lee, Professor of Technology & Innovation Management, Graduate School of Information, Yonsei University, Founding Member of URBAN AI Asia

Jungmin Han, Associate Professor, Yonsei University, Founding Member of URBAN AI Asia

Reazul Ahsan, Associate Professor and Urban Ecology Program Lead at University of Utah

Hubert Beroche, President of URBAN AI

Rafael Luna, Director of Infra-Architecture Lab and Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney

15:00 – 16:00

Civitas in the Age of AI

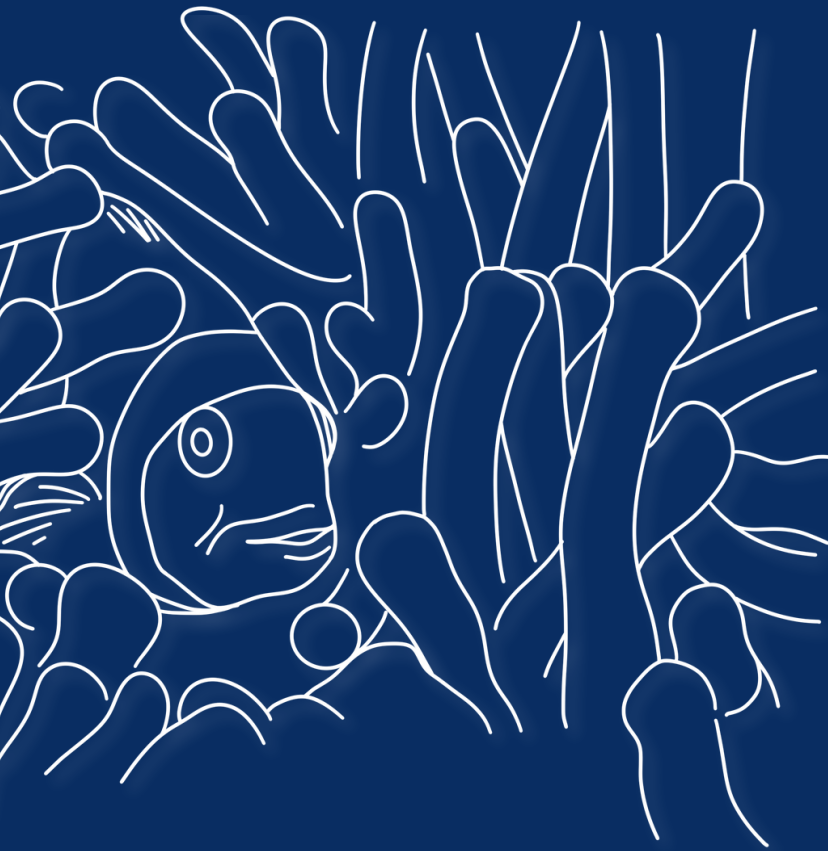
HOSTED BY UN-HABITAT

Livia Schaeffer Nonos, UN-Habitat Technology & Innovation Specialist · Panel Chair

Sampo Ruoppila, Co-Founder of CoPlanAI and Senior Researcher at the University of Helsinki

Minwook Kang, Research Associate at MIT Norman B. Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism

COHABITATION



The partnership between clownfish and sea anemones is a form of symbiotic cohabitation in which two species live closely together and exchange multiple benefits. Sea anemones are predatory invertebrates whose tentacles are covered with nematocysts, stinging cells that inject toxins into other animals. Clownfish can live within this otherwise dangerous environment thanks to a specialized mucus coating and a gradual acclimation process. Interestingly, this process is often described as an “acclimation dance”, during which the fish progressively touches the anemone’s tentacles to adapt its protective mucus and reduce the likelihood of triggering the anemone’s stinging response. The venomous tentacles then become a protective habitat, sheltering the clownfish from predators such as groupers and eels, providing access to food scraps, and protecting its eggs, which are laid close to the host anemone. In return, the territorial clownfish helps drive away anemone predators such as butterflyfish, removes parasites and debris, and increases water and oxygen circulation by swimming through the tentacles.

Both species can survive independently, but their cohabitation creates mutual benefits that allow them to better thrive together.

ILLUSTRATION — CLOWNFISH & ANEMONE

PROGRAM

DAY 2 · COHABITATION · 11 SEPTEMBER 2026

10:00 – 11:30

Planning with Robots: An Urban Perspective on Physical AI

Raphael Languillon, Senior Researcher at Expertise France and Senior Lecturer · Panel Chair

Rajesh Elara Mohan, Chair Professor at Singapore University of Technology and Design, Co-Founder of LionsBot International

Bahia Guellai, Professor in Developmental Psychology, UMR CNRS CLLE lab, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, Co-Lead PI of WP6, CNRS@CREATE DesCartes Program

Rafael Luna, Director of Infra-Architecture Lab and Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney

Jérémie Jae-Yoon Kim, Manager, Smart City Solution Cell at Hyundai Motor Group

11:15 – 12:30

Art, Cities & Robotics: Imagining the Future of Urban Life

Hubert Beroche, President of URBAN AI · Panel Chair

Byungjun Kwon, Media Artist & Hardware Researcher

Todd Asher, Deputy Principal, Media & Technology at Bloomberg Associates

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch Break

13:30 – 14:00

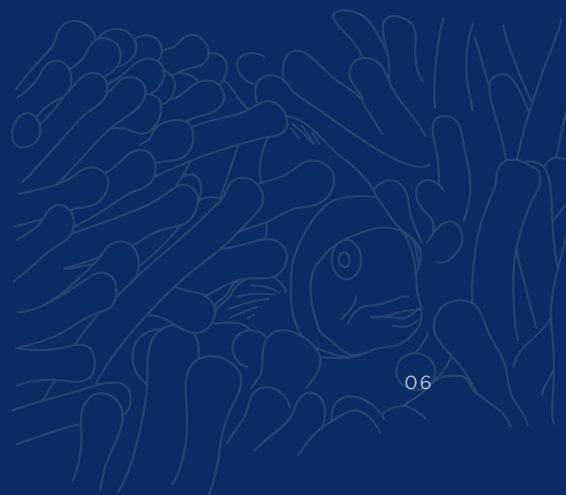
Designing Cognitive Refuges Amid AI Overload

Annabelle Schneider, Visual Artist & Experience Designer

14:00 – 15:00

Cultivating More-Than-Human Cities with AI

Titus Venerloo, Seoul & Amsterdam Lead at MIT Senseable City Lab · Panel Chair



PARTNERS

HOST PARTNERS



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