

CREATIVITY and REALITY

THE ART OF BUILDING FUTURE CITIES

P R O C E E D I N G S



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CREATIVITY and REALITY
The art of building *future* cities

edited by

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Anna Irene Del Monaco | Francesco Menegatti
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DAY ONE | 18 december

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Opening Ceremony **Anna Maria Giovenale**
Dean of Faculty of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome

Opening Speech **Orazio Carpenzano**
Director of Department of Architecture and Design, Sapienza University of Rome

Lectures **GIORGIO DE RITA** *Secretary General of CENSIS*

MARC AUGÉ *Ethnologist and anthropologist*

Interlude *speaker* **Anna Irene Del Monaco** *IConA Curator*

Lectures **RUBEN OTERO** *Drucker Arquitetos Associados | Brazil*

JOSHUA BOLCHOVER *Rufwork Architects | China*

Discussant **Alessandra Capanna** *IConA Curator*

1st PARALLEL TABLES *PT 1.1 | PT 1.2 | PT 1.3*

DAY TWO | 19 december

2nd PARALLEL TABLES PT 2.1 | PT 2.2 | PT 2.3 | PT 2.4

PLENARY SESSION THE ART OF BUILDING FUTURE CITIES

Renato Masiani

Senior Deputy Rector, Sapienza University of Rome

Lecture

LUCIANO VIOLANTE *Judge, Politician and Academic*

Round Table

speaker **Dina Nencini** *ICoNA Curator*

Giovanni Maria Flick *Jurist, Politician and Academic*

Orazio Carpenzano *Director of DIAP*

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PLENARY SESSION CREATIVITY AND REALITY

speaker **Francesco Menegatti** *ICoNA Curator*

Lectures

PIER VITTORIO AURELI *(Dogma: Aureli + Tattara)*

RAFFAELLA NERI *Full Professor Politecnico of Milan*

Final Round Table

speakers **Alessandra Capanna** and **Dina Nencini** + *All Chairs of Parallel Tables*

Closing Speech

Orazio Carpenzano *Director of DIAP, Sapienza University of Rome*

Abstract Selected:
158 Authors
121 Contributions
51 Institutions

Abstract Received:
252 Authors
196 Contributions
73 Institutions

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Luigi Savio
Margagliotta



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Space and matter. A solid void for a weak monumentality

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architecture and construction | tectonics | iconic massiveness | space-measure-structure

ABSTRACT

Following this essay one can say that the immaterial icon of the building perpetuated over the last three decades, characterized by a shiny and evanescent materiality, seems to re-reflect a deep tiredness today, featuring an increasingly rapid obsolescence of its image. As a result, there is a need for a major review of the interpretation process of the requests coming from the market and geared toward a new exegesis of the tectonic detail for a formal and material interpretation of the soundness of a financial system looking for validation. This condition, while proposing a healthy come-back toward a conscious control of the tectonic dimension of the building, re-interprets, in its typological and topological definition, an unexpected importance of the Italian tradition which has always featured an approach to composition with a directness of the tectonic detail associated with a consideration on material facts and a thoughtful measure of its inner consciousness as contents carrying a poetic nature. Such assumptions, reiterating the future end of the liquid anti-material evanescence of the building, today the prevailing expression of large Eastern numbers, when interpreting the demand for a strong compactness of the economic dimension, revalue the formal and constructive statutes of the local Western Latin area. It follows that the theoretical and physical soundness of the Modern, the liquidity of the “post-modern condition”, the free evaporation from increasingly recurring to the contemporary aesthetics of disappearance, in characterizing the evolution of the entropy of architectural matter, entail a cyclical return to the solid state of matter outlining in sculptural massiveness of the building, the basic assumption of the research around the terms Structure and Form in architecture. To paraphrase the title of an essay by Franco Purini of a few years ago envisioning the return to a solidity of the building, there appear on the horizon important news that have been expected for some time that define precisely in a new mono-materiality and in a more intrinsic relationship to art, particularly sculpture, the theoretical assumption of contemporary language. In this context the space between things is assumed as an active subject. It configures the positioning of a presence aimed at reverberating, in the whole organic of a composition, an icastic dimension.

Foreword

The topics covered in this essay aim to offer a reflection around the terms *Structure* and *Form* in architecture to recognize a *change in status* of the languages and tectonic dimension of the construction matching a change in both physical and conceptual *density* of the matter. By narrowing down the reflection to the evolutions of modernity and analysing the twentieth century as a time in which important achievements influenced the contemporary architectural production, one can draw a model time line of the evolution of the relationship between the two terms which, by connecting to the evolution with an entropic nature, is characterized by a consequent and copious waste of energy.

Density of the modern

The connection of the terms *Structure* [lat. *structura*, der. of *struere* “build, pile”] and *Form*, [from lat. *Fōrma*, which is the external appearance of a body, object or any of its representation] while referring to the integral procedure of the building, to its appearance and material dimension, expresses a reflexion on the match and consequentiality of architecture-building combination as it involves the syntactical processes of architectural composition. From the ideas of Gottfried Semper, revisited by Kenneth Frampton in his studies (Frampton, K., 1999), it is possible to see two fundamental developments in the syntactical proceedings of architectural composition: one connected to a *trilithic idea* of construction, in line with a *tectonic* procedure concerning the Greek archetype and a second one relative to a *massive* dimension in line with a *stereotomic* principle peculiar to Roman architecture (Messina, B., 2008). The attention towards a coherent consequentiality between the structural dimension, understood as the primary fabric, and the formal establishment of an object, features in architecture the subject specific of the Modern movement masters who fuelled the trial on the use of new techniques and new materials in the first half of the 20th century. Starting from the prototype of *la maison domino* proposed by Le Corbusier in 1914, one can see in the modern movement an obvious connection between a structural detail, provided through the testing of serial use of the reinforced concrete framework, and *the shape of the building*, given by the recurring construction *box* of the living unit. It follows an urban model that re-interprets the city as a logical arrangement of *parts* arranged according to the functions of *living, working, moving and entertainment*, as a legible overview of the serial reproduction process of an assembly line. Encoded in the *Athens Charter* of 1942 the model of the Modern city defines the monofunctional compartmentalization of urban areas a compositional deployment that imposes its rules to the scale of the building.

The Italian situation

In the path of the avant-garde that found their European centre of gravity in the axis initiated by Dutch neoplasticism in the early decades of the twentieth century, from the Bauhaus school’s operational methodology and by the a-scale visions of Swiss French *Le Corbusier*- a side note is the Italian situation that, in the very relationship between *structure* and *form* acknowledges its own history as a mediation link between *wood/elastic* interpretations of Nordic countries and the *plastic/concrete* matrix of Latin areas in the Mediterranean. In the early decades of the twentieth century the rhetoric of the articles in *Gruppo7*, published in “Rassegna Italiana” between 1926 and 1927, defines the margins of an original linguistic outcome of the building that makes the relationship between a settlement matrix, structure and space the information forming an autonomous and recognizable identity. In this context takes an important place the production of Adalberto Libera who, as founder and leader of the Rome-based *school*, invested most of his energy into the formal and linguistic variation of the public building.



Fig. 1

*Adalberto Libera,
Palazzo dei
Ricevimenti e
dei Congressi
all'E42, Roma,
1937/57*



Fig. 2

*Daniel Libeskind,
Padiglione
Vanke, Milano,
Italia 2015*

The Palazzo dei Ricevimenti e dei Congressi in the EUR area in Rome (1937-57) outlines the statutory traits of an Italian metric that recognizes the syntactical outcome of a base *idea-shape* of the building (Ciucci, G., 1989). The clarity of its landscape choices immediately outlines the expressing of the interconnection between close volumes that associate to an immediate recognition of the tectonic logic a significant complexity of its internal spaces. In the same year, in Milan, the work by Giuseppe Terragni also focussed to express an original reflection on the *public building* as an Italian contribution to the growing debate around issues of statutory questions concerning the modern language. In 1933 the *Casa del Fascio* of Como stands as the alter-ego to the creation of Le Corbusier's *five points* listed a few years earlier in the *manifesto* of the villa Savoie in Poissy. Well rooted to the ground, characterized by a layout organised by a rigorous structure framed by several openings on each side, by an internal space wrapped around a double-height hall, covered with a roof terrace, the white *box* in Como used the stratification contrasting the different-height horizontal beams to decline an *additional* process that outlines the reiteration of the span the introduction of unexpected changes that subvert the metric rule of the building (Eisenman P., 2004). In the work of Giuseppe Terragni the declination of the structural frame outlines a very personal interpretation of the relationship between *structure* and *form* by animating the outcomes of a poetics that characterizes the outlook for the competition for the *Palace of the Littorio* (1934), the various drafts of the projects for the *New headquarters of the Brera Academy* (1935-1940), the achievements of the *Sant'Elia Pre-school* (1936) and the *Casa Giuliani Frigerio* (1939-1940). The connection between the structural matrix and the formal dimension entirely marks the work of Luigi Moretti both in his prewar Euclidean works and in the plastic evolutions of its production after World War II. The space inside *Casa delle Armi* in Rome (1933-1937) embodies the monumental nature of public buildings through the juxtaposition of two standalone volumes, the library and the fencing hall. In a brief classification that can be defined as *classics* of construction, plastic-material details reveal the most expressionist evolutions of its postwar production that see the complex of the *Boniface VIII Spa in Fiuggi* (1964-1965) an explicit and eloquent manifest.

- *Structure and form in the Italian post-war debate*

In Italy the question of buildings, in the decades following the war was characterized by a marked reduction of monumental outbursts, guilty of being the means to support dictatorial power. In this context the work of designers working to use structural assessment to find the key to an interpretation of the linguistic dimension of construction, outlines in Europe a new variation of the relationship between the terms *structure* and *form*. It follows a line of research that sees the trials by Pier Luigi Nervi, by Riccardo Morandi, Carlo Cestelli Guidi, Sergio Musmeci, Silvano Zorzi the central data of a debate on the expression potential of reinforced concrete in both its traditional application and that as *prestressed concrete*. In an urban scale, the crisis of models prepared by the Modern movement moves the scene for a trial on the issue of *big sizes* in architecture by involving the topics of language sciences that study the territory (Purini F., 2008). See in this respect the territorial perspective by Franco Purini on the project of the new building of the *University of Calabria* (1973) and the *University of Florence* (1971), designs of which were drawn up by a large group of designers led by Vittorio Gregotti. The outcome of the relationship between *structure* and *form* aimed in those years at redeeming the national scale that intersects the scale of the building with the trials on collective residence. It recognizes in the *Corviale* dam by Mario Fiorentino in Rome (1973-1981), in the typological and formal developments of the *Gallaratese* di Carlo Aymonino and Aldo Rossi in Milan (1967-1974), in the human materialization of the level curves in the area arranged in *Forte Quezzi* by Luigi Carlo Daneri and Eugenio Fuselli in Genoa (1956-1968), in the geometric assertiveness of the *Quadrilatero* by Rozzoli Melara in Trieste (1969-1982), in isolation, including social isolation, of the *Vele* in Scampia and Secondigliano in Naples (1968-1974) an experiment on the living dimension as an independent collective place, posthumous legacy of functional autonomy arranged in *Le Corbusier's* self-sufficient living unit.

Fig. 3

*Diller e Scofidio
+ Renfro,
Blur Building,
Neuchatel,
Svizzera 2010*



Fig. 4

*Franco Purini e
Laura Thermes,
Torre Euroskey,
Roma, Italia
2013*



Liquidity of the post modern

Supported by the publication of important books on the evolution of the city (in 1966 publications included *The city's architecture* by Aldo Rossi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* by Robert Venturi and *The shape of the area in "Edilizia Moderna"* by Vittorio Gregotti) the debate in the last decades of the twentieth century reiterates in the relationship between the terms *structure* and *form* a balance between the urban component and the scale of the building.

In this context the theories about communication issues arranged by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour in *Learning From Las Vegas* (1972) focus their attention on the communicative dimension of the advertising image, laying the foundations for an echo in the universe of the media icon of the building as a place of composition (Thermes L., 2000). The *deconstructivist* perspective, shifting the viewpoint outside the building, projected to infinity the themes concerning the language in aesthetics of destabilization which rearranges the balance between *structure* and *form* and anticipates the spectacularization of a growing *a-tectonicity* of contemporary design and construction. One recognizes in the current production a research that addresses a progressive aestheticization of the *unformed* with the tendency to represent, in the image of the building, not so much the result of a shape, whether about a concluded state or a fragment, but rather a snapshot of a process of *de-formation*. In that category we find examples connected to the explosion of a biological image of the building that, as an organic texture with life of its own, seems to pick up the shattered pieces of a deconstructivist culture moving towards a partial implosion of its very own principles reaching *the liquefaction* in a new process of disintegration of the form. In support of these considerations, we recognize biological evolution of Gregg Lynn's *blobs*, the concretions of the UN Studio (Ben Van Berkel and Caroline Bos), the recent anti-formal production of Coop Himmelb(l)au, by Daniel Libeskind, the pile-ups by Frank O. Gehry, the fluid liquefactions of Zaha Hadid, that is the evolution of the top representatives that are part of the global *star system*, that, starting from an interpretation of the metropolitan paths, represent interferences, connections and urban streams as information that guide the project without ever defining it. There follow immediate reference to biological bodies that direct the composition toward an artificial and affected complication that often results in a formalistic manipulation of the outer casing alone.

Evaporation of the postmodern condition

Along this theoretical line is, without contrasting it, a dimension that interprets the building as a medium, i.e. as a device that can magnify the environmental characteristics and allow the user to develop specific feelings of an emotional nature. Tending to a progressive dematerialization of the anthropic nature of the building, such research displays a progressive *aesthetics of disappearance* of architecture in *green camouflage* (Nicolin P., 2012) fed by environmental petitions. The mystification of construction materiality finds its limit in the immaterial *blur* of the *Blur Building* of Diller and Scofidio at the Expo Suisse in 2002. As it takes the form of a fuzzy and antiformal cloud, achieved by spraying water droplets of Lake Neuchatel, characterizes its architecture as a sensory space apparatus which tends, in its evanescent antimaterial nature, to dissolve the very concept of the building to propose a conceptual discipline weight shift towards an *aesthetics of reception*, supported, or even opposed to that of construction.

News expected for some time

In this context, featuring a growing *evaporation* of the very concept of architecture, Latin areas of the Western universe witness a form of *resistance* of disciplinary identity leading to a focus on reassessing control processes of form and construction, structural and material component issues of the building. Revisiting theories on space by Gaston Bachelard,

on Martin Heidegger's concept of living, the Genius Loci of Cristian Norberg-Schulz, rediscovering *architecture as body* sees its most important representatives in the Mediterranean area (Gregory, P., 2010). Represented by the Hispanic motions by Alvaro Siza, Aires Mateus, Eduardo Souto De Moura, Alberto Campo Baeza, by the German serialism of Oswald Mathias Ungers, Max Dudler, Walter Arno Noebel, Hans Kolhoff, the *sensory* testimonials of Swiss Peter Zumthor, Livio Vacchini, Mario Botta, but also by a leading Italian dimension represented by the *antiformal theories* of Antonio Monestiroli and Giorgio Grassi, the outcome of a mediation between *model* and *context* of the works by Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Paolo Zermani, Francesco Venezia, but also the *massive* interpretations of Bruno Messina and Carlo Moccia, in the transpositions of Cino Zucchi and Cherubino Gambardella, in the themes and languages of Barozzi/Veiga, Labics, Iotti and Pavarani, the rediscovery of architecture as a *body* reassess the relationship between man and nature as separate entities that are at the same time interconnected by a search that locates in the singularity of each specific situation and character of the work the information needed for a principle of constitution of form that is capable of renewing itself every time. Far from the formal assertive assumptions of the Modern movement, such modes, linked to various research lines, outline emerging characteristics that counter any *affiliation* to the post-modern line of the global market in the *particularity*, *individuality* and *identification*. In that scenario, the contemporary situation seems to formulate a broader theoretical series of progressions looking for an interpretation of new motions that the same inadequate economic situation seems to require.

Conclusion

Following this essay one can say that the immaterial icon of the building perpetuated over the last three decades, characterized by a *shiny* and evanescent materiality, seems to reflect a deep *tiredness* today, featuring an increasingly rapid obsolescence of its image. As a result, there is a need for a major review of the interpretation process of the requests coming from the market and geared toward a new exegesis of the tectonic detail for a formal and material interpretation of the soundness of a financial system looking for validation. This condition, while proposing a healthy come-back toward a conscious control of the tectonic dimension of the building, re-interprets, in its typological and topological definition, an unexpected importance of the Italian tradition which has always featured an approach to composition with a directness of the tectonic detail associated with a consideration on material facts and a thoughtful *measure* of its *inner consciousness* as contents carrying a poetic nature. Such assumptions, reiterating the future end of the *liquid* anti-material evanescence of the building, today the prevailing expression of large Eastern numbers, when interpreting the demand for a strong compactness of the economic dimension, revalue the formal and constructive statutes of the local Western Latin area. It follows that the theoretical and physical *soundness* of the Modern, the *liquidity* of the "*post-modern condition*", the free *evaporation* from increasingly recurring to the contemporary *aesthetics of disappearance*, in characterizing the evolution of the entropy of architectural matter, entail a cyclical return to the *solid state of matter* outlining in *sculptural massiveness* of the building, the basic assumption of the research around the terms *Structure* and *Form* in architecture. To paraphrase the title of an essay by Franco Purini of a few years ago envisioning the return to a *solidity* of the building, there appear on the horizon important *news that have been expected for some time* (Purini F., 2000) that define precisely in a new *mono-materiality* and in a more intrinsic relationship to art, particularly sculpture, the theoretical assumption of contemporary language. In this context the space between things is assumed as an active subject. It configures the positioning of a presence aimed at reverberating, in the whole organic of a composition, an icastic dimension.

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The field of knowledge defined by the terms “creativity” and “reality” may be considered the permanent framework for a reflection on innovation and the transformation of architecture and cities. However, it should be noted that in current decades, creativity as the engine of human invention and reality as a response to human needs have had, as their dominant field of application, technological innovation rather than the development of new city images. In recent times architecture and world cities have been especially “designed” by neoliberal, global and urban policies following the realization of mega-events, shopping malls, gated communities, large scale facilities, urban villages, spectacular architectural objects, territorial infrastructure and immaterial networks.

Moreover, while the urban transformations of the European cities are still designed according to the tradition of the last two-centuries, the challenge to design within informal contexts emerged as an inevitable need to match and support the cultural and social identities of the enormous “informal” and “illegal” communities, to deal with inequalities and “expulsions”, to improve living conditions and make urban space more democratic, technological and dialogic. Within this framework of “Plural Urbanism” rethinking the concepts of Creativity and Reality can be an important contribution to the construction of an “open city” in which sympathetic imagination, realistic and bold innovation will still be considered the architect’s principal means and can still feed the art of building the future city and architecture according to its actual realities, needs, emergencies, for pursuing a widespread human wellbeing and tackling the forces hidden in the global changes.



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