

Robocoop

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KEYWORDS

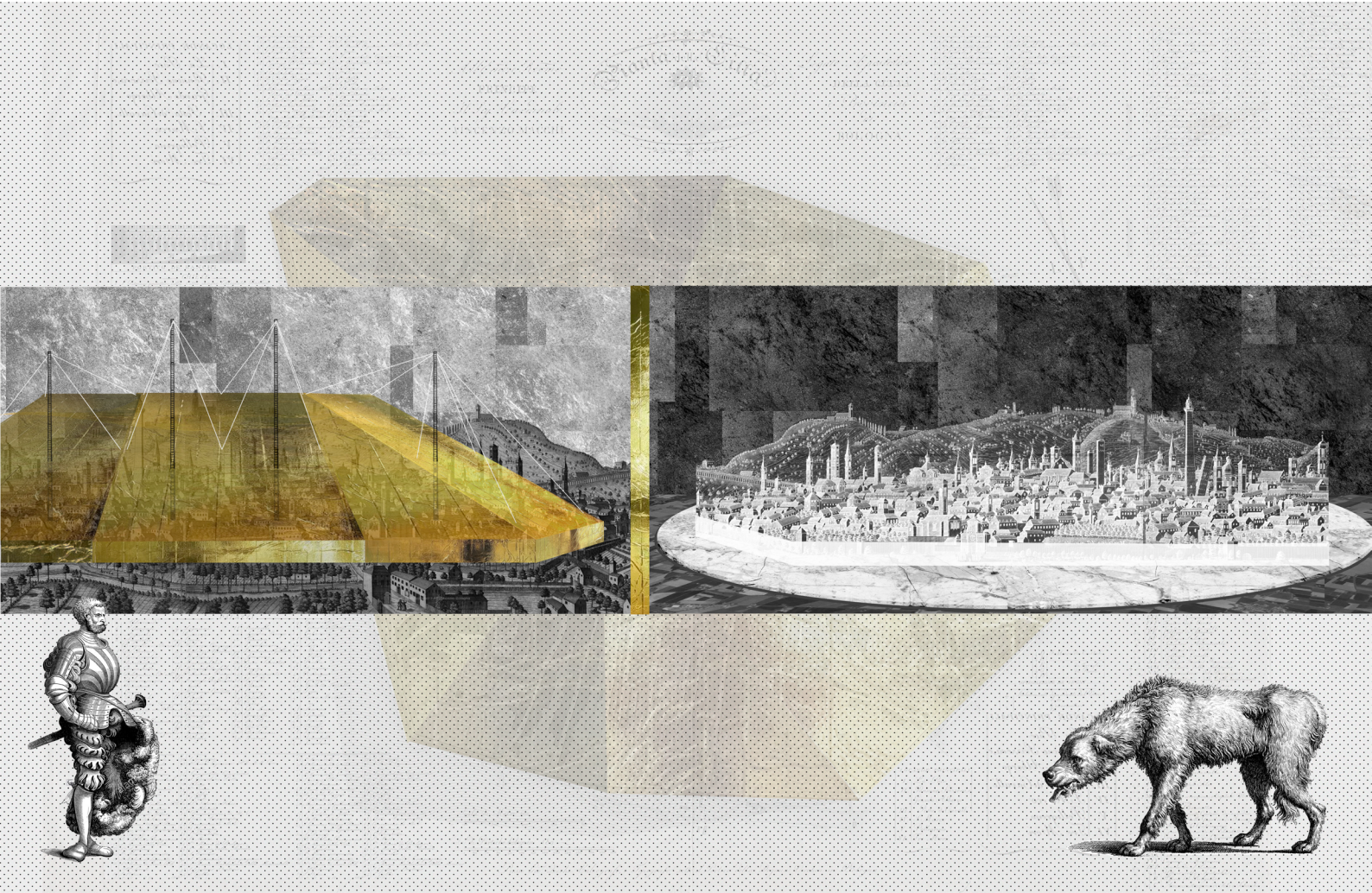
Ruins; Narrative Friction; Collages; Catastrophe; Modernity; History

ABSTRACT

A series of four images, accompanied by a text in three acts, stages the story of a city and its double, rebuilt after an earthquake. Starting from the image of a city hit by a trauma, ROBOCCOP's collages reconstruct the fragments of its ruins, reopening the fate of buildings, both modern and ancient. The shaking of the ground on which the city is founded builds two urban forms: the first is what remains, scars onto which the authors lay a golden veil; the second is the reconstruction allowed by the earthquake's tabula rasa, a city born from a lateral passage that allows the development (without the constraints of the first urban form) of a modern, technological, efficient city. In the narration of this urban doppelganger, the authors find the opportunity to materialize the overlap, sometimes contradictory and conflictual, of the urban narratives that take place in the contemporary and historical city. To choose what to preserve, what to forget, how to overwrite the ancient to install the present and the future: in the images of ROBOCCOP the word 'catastrophe' returns to its Greek etymology. καταστρέφω, overturning, movement that tells a point of irreversible inflection, able to raise (like the telluric wave) questions which lay submerged since ancient times. After the earthquake, nothing will be the same.

The three-act script accompanies the four images through personal memories, rubble and dreams, completing the construction of a global narrative capable of embracing the fate of the two cities.

Metadati in italiano in fondo





THE EARTH TREMBLED

My task is to stay here, guarding the ruins. I protect the ruins from people and vice versa.

I am a guardian, that's how people see me. I keep people out of the perimeter.

A gold veil has been hoisted from the walls to the towers. It protects. A gold veil has been lowered from the walls to the towers. It hides.

One day the earth trembled just not like the other usual times. Whole portions of the city were erased. Those left standing have permanent structural damages. Ancient buildings suffered more or less irreparable damage. Modern buildings

stand among the ruins, as they are stele in the necropolis.

Since that day there have been competitions, projects and contracts for reconstruction. But the economic effort had to be far superior to the past causing private investors to pull back, attracted by something else. The project remained on paper: the city was evacuated and isolated. A quarantine. Now the reconstruction process has stopped because a new center has been rebuilt where they have transferred those who have lost their homes. There is now a second city, which imitates the old one in size and spaces. The ghost of the old city. A new city was planned and developed with new mobility technologies, environment and energy efficiency.



If the countryside trembles, the flap still remains. The life of the island continues as normal. New citizens live free of worries among the aseptic metal structures of their new city.

They are the same ones born and raised between the terracotta and the selenite of the historic walls. Between *sagramatura* and *stilatura* of the bricks.

A sense of loss has crept into these settlers. Over time it has become increasingly unbearable. More than often, some of them are caught while trying to tear the cloth and go beyond the perimeter. I found some of them walking among the remains. I discovered others while they were stealing fragments of collapsed buildings. They suffer from an identity deprivation

and need the places where they grew up.

Very few have access to the old city: I am among the few people who have got permission.

Some without permission enter during the night: I get phone calls late at night and I am ordered to guide groups of people. They are rich people on the command of convoys of trucks. They fill the containers with everything: statues, capitals and frescoes. But also splinters of marble, fragments of porticoes, portions of friezes, columns of trifora.

The city under the cloth is dismantled and stolen. It slowly disappears. At the beginning, I did not pay much attention to it. Then it started to disturb me.



IMAGES AND MEMORIES

One morning a guy came to see me. Since he was a child, he lived on a street in the center. Now, just over sixty, he lived in the new city. He asked me why I let happen what actually happened. I did not answer and soon he left. The following weeks he visited me during my work time, just to visit at the beginning. Later he began to tell stories. Only later I discovered that they were his memories. He carried with him old photographs taken by him in the city, as reference sets for his stories.

As a child, I had also lived in the old town. But some details of those people, those houses, and those streets have always remained vivid in my mind. Until that moment of my life when I had begun to witness nightly thefts.

I remember that I was happy when they assigned me to the guard here in this city. I was to know that man through the stories of his past life. We spoke little of his present life, within the new city, as if adjectives to describe it was missing while his stories of the past were colourful and vivid.

He spoke of the old town with the joy and the emotion of someone talking about a loved and then missing person. But also with anger, for the insulted memory. One afternoon he visited me bringing with him a gift, a camera. In return, he asked me to photograph the old town.

During my visit to the old city, I began to take images: they portrayed the misery of those fragments of history that have



been abandoned.

During that time my friend's stories and memories became increasingly faded, more and more details in his descriptions of the old city became inaccurate. And together with his memories, even my memories lost color. The more the city disappeared, the more the memory went with her. It was as if they were stealing memories from our minds.

All guardians received favours and money in exchange for silence. I seemed the only sick and tired of that story. So I started to document the thefts with the initial idea to bring everything to light. But it would take me a long time, too much time.

Night-time theft became more frequent and increasingly heavy. I fired myself with an idea, greeted the man pretending to go far away.





SOMETHING APPEARED

One morning, some remains of our ancient walls appeared. Fragments scattered on the wall, like pieces of a puzzle.

A few days later, fragments of Venetian floor were found glued to the ground, under the modern arcades of the new city: and shreds of capitals, attached to the pillars of the new arcades.

Then a couple of Ghibelline battlements appeared at the top of the square building and blocks of selenite at the base of the tower and red marble slabs on the large square and simple bricks on the walls of the houses. Every week the new city woke up with a different gift that came from under the tarpaulin.

The authorities were looking for the responsible person,

accusing him of the thefts that took place in the old city, while many citizens happily welcomed what he was doing. Many of them took from the hiding place of their houses the fragments that, in those years, had taken away and brought with them to the new city, and in the night they began to fix them on the walls and on the streets.

The new city, the ghost of the old one, started dressing its fragments, becoming a hybrid of the two cities. In the eyes of visitors, it presented itself as a living collage of ancient and contemporary architecture.

B. ROBOCOOP

PAROLE CHIAVE

macerie; conflitto tra narrazioni; collages; catastrofe; modernità, storia

COMMENTO

Una serie di quattro immagini, accompagnate da un testo in tre atti, mette in scena la storia di una città e del suo doppio, ricostruito successivamente ad un terremoto. Partendo dall'immagine di una città colpita da un trauma, i collages di ROBOCOOP ricostruiscono i frammenti delle sue rovine, riaprendo il destino degli edifici, sia moderni che antichi. La scossa del suolo su cui si fonda la città costruisce due forme urbane: la prima è ciò che resta, cicatrici sulle quali gli autori depongono un velo dorato; la seconda è la ricostruzione permessa dalla tabula rasa del terremoto, una città nata da un passaggio laterale che consente lo svolgimento (senza i vincoli della prima forma urbana) di una città moderna, tecnologica, efficiente. Nella narrazione di questo doppio urbano, gli autori trovano l'occasione per materializzare la sovrapposizione, talvolta contraddittoria e conflittuale, delle narrazioni urbane che investono la città contemporanea e storica. Scegliere cosa conservare, cosa dimenticare, come sovrascrivere l'antico per insediare il presente ed il futuro: nelle immagini di ROBOCOOP la parola 'catastrofe' torna alla sua etimologia greca. καταστρέφω, capovolgimento, movimento che racconta un punto di flesso irreversibile, capace di risollevare (come l'onda tellurica) sommersi antichissimi. dopo il terremoto, niente sarà più come prima.

Lo scritto in tre atti accompagna attraverso memorie personali, macerie, sogni le quattro immagini, completando la costruzione di una narrazione globale capace di abbracciare i destini delle due città.

ROBOCOOP

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ROBOCOOP è un progetto di ricerca e sperimentazione artistica, nato nell'ambito dell'arte urbana ma attivo dal 2012 in quella contemporanea, che offre attraverso immaginari digitali e reali una chiave di lettura dell'attuale paesaggio architettonico ed urbano e della sua evoluzione, attraverso un metodo approccio riflessivo, provocatorio e comparativo con il passato.

ROBOCOOP is an experimental and research art duo project with a background in architecture, currently living between Rome and London. Working mainly in the urban context of the city, their aim is using different tools – as installations, photographs, engravings, drawings etc - with a provocative approach.