

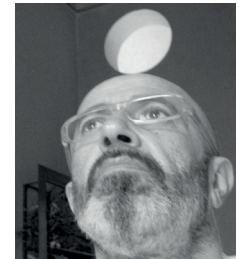
Lo spazio della vulnerabilità

The space of vulnerability

L'Archi-tettura ha perso il riferimento alla sua preposizione "archi" per sviluppare maggiormente la sua "tettura": una forma ingannevole di nichilismo che ha dato pieno credito ad un uragano di strumenti dei quali non conosciamo lo scopo. Ogni distinzione tra città e architettura è puramente contingente. La contingenza è rilevante solo fino a quando permette di perdere ogni senso della differenza di scala. Molte delle nostre città non funzionano perché il nostro stile di vita sradica il senso dell'ospitalità. La città diviene lo spazio nel quale disimpariamo a vivere insieme. Ospitalità significa vulnerabilità- la costruzione della vulnerabilità è la vera bellezza, il solo deterrente contro la stupidità. Imparare a vivere con gli altri, imparare ad avvicinare l'alterità e la sua imprevedibilità. Gli strumenti fondamentali per la convivialità sono i beni comuni della interdisciplinarietà. Imparare a coltivarsi ed educarsi alla incompletezza fenomenica.

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Archi-tecture has lost the reference to its prop "Archi" to develop mostly its "Tecture": a deceitful form of nihilism, which has given full credit to a hurricane of instruments for which we know no purpose. Any distinction between city and architecture is purely contingent. Contingency is relevant but only in so far as it makes one lose any sense of scale. Many of our cities do not work because our style of life eradicates the sense of hospitality. The city becomes the place where we un-learn how to live together. Hospitality is vulnerability – the construction of vulnerability is the true beauty, the only deterrent against stupidity. Learn to live with the others, to approximate the alterity and its unpredictability. The basic tools of conviviality are the common goods of inter-disciplinarity. Learn to cultivate and educate yourself to phenomenal incompleteness. LB



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Parole chiave: **Ospitalità; Convivialità; Nichilismo; Tecnica; Vulnerabilità.**

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What is the most pressing challenge that architecture is asked to resolve today?

The challenge is still rooted in the meaning and the destiny of the word archi-ecture. The word was invented in a farce, for comic purposes, but it was taken too seriously and finally has slipped into a tragedy. The comic "archi" is a conspicuous prop for "ecture", that is a primary form of technique and of its discourse, technology. There are no more questions left about technology; there are only overt certainties and an overcooked truth, so evident that we must perform a gorgeous occultation in order to avoid it (often veiling it behind "poetics"). It is even too evident that its operative structure is the creation of means without ends, emptied of any sense and meaning. In front of us we

see a theatrical hurricane of instruments, apparatus and systems piling up technical stuff upon technical stuff for which we know no purpose. A deceitful form of nihilism has given full credit to this technique that finds its logic within itself. Confronted with our own menacing crisis we build catastrophic hyper-structures to hide our desires for uncertainty and our precious privations. And even our mythology waits for us at the breach; in an illusory flight to escape our labyrinths, we keep sacrificing our sons, to continue to head toward other destinations, where we will build other labyrinths, to imprison other monsters that we ourselves have created. We become the artificers of the

obsolescence we flee. Our poetic pride in our *daedalea* is blinding. We have to find out the conflicting otherness of our technique: its own necessary limits, the intimate negation of the fallow spaces of its time.



With respect to the design of the contemporary city; what is the role of architecture in managing urban phenomena

Architecture's role is fundamental, and any distinction between city and architecture is purely contingent. Contingency is relevant but only in so far as it makes one lose any sense of scale: to be so much into *it* that I experience the impossibility to measure *it* because I am not outside *it*. A little box is *like* a room that is *like* a small house that is *like* a big house, that is *like* a memory palace, that is *like* a city and vice-versa. The smaller can even contain the bigger! This is a game of proportions that opens up many abysses. What is this likeness, and where does its surveyor stand? There are unfathomable distances and deep differences, the spaces of the *mise en abyme*. Proportionality teaches

us to pursue virtue, the art of doing good. This is the role of the project we must learn to comprehend: feeling "just" in thinking these proportions. For example, many of our cities do not work because our style of life eradicates the sense of hospitality. The city becomes the place where we un-learn how to live together: charitable meta-structure for the impaired, who have forgotten how to help each other, a place where punishments are inflicted with care. Problems are institutionalized: assisted care, sustainable integration, rehabilitation of the poor, creation of social centers, immigration care facilities and so on, have nothing to do with con-passion. How far do you think are you

accepting to put yourself fully into play? Hospitality is vulnerability – the construction of vulnerability is the true beauty, the only deterrent against stupidity. The architecture of the city is not dangerous enough. This is an abyss where to architect.



Architecture and design have established an exchange that is both operational and perceptive; buildings are conceived as objects and objects are conceived by those who design buildings. Between architecture and design, is it possible to define boundaries or intersections?



To know how to make something well is essential for any possible specialization. Design is an essential theme for architecture. We should try to define the boundaries and intersections between *architecture* and *industrial-design*: to confront the principles of [poetic] construction and construing with the principles of industrial (that is, capitalistic) production. Construction and construing are acousmatic enchantments of means without ends and capitalistic production is controlled scarcity. So, there is a contradiction and even incommensurability between the two, but we obstinately try to make them look compatible. The conflict must remain flagrant. Unfortunately the idea of scarcity has invaded both intellectual

reasoning and poetic/artistic/technical desires. Enchantments cannot be means of industrial production. Scarcity is a virus infecting our thoughts: it is the very essence of the industrial production where the relation between objects and subjects is the same that exists between slaves and masters: a tie of pure corruption. For the architect the magic instant is the departure (the leave of absence), the moment when the object is separated from the subject: the objects must remain mysterious as the Coca-Cola bottle that fell from the sky in *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. In the very moment the objects start to look scarce they must be returned empty.



When giving advice to students, what is the most valuable tool that an architecture or design student ought to acquire during their studies?

All the architecture and design students are planning to graduate from an institution that goes under a certain kind of administrative control. Our common task is to comprehend the *ratio* of the *machina* that generates layers of negation.

The most valuable tool for this purpose is conviviality: a full reliance on shared and tacit knowledge, the sense that creates community. Twenty years ago the drawings the architects made were called “tavole” that is “tables” - dinner pieces, as a dear friend called them, evoking their magic alchemy. Many different important things can be done on a table and many of them are convivial. To call it “table” was an important metonymy:

the essence of what-is-made still belongs to the essence of its support, from which we are condemned to be estranged. The support is now a screen – but what we make always belong to the space of its deference and approximation. Our commodity culture has crippled us. But, there is a way around this instrumental relationship. We, with our phantasmagoric bodies, can become responsible arteficers. Learn to live with the others, to approximate the alterity and its unpredictability. The university represents an absolutely unique space to share the world of our flesh in a community of other personae, inside (hopefully) an heterogeneous environment. The basic tools of conviviality

are the common goods of inter-disciplinarity. Learn to cultivate and educate yourself to phenomenal incompleteness. Architects love procrastination. The *charette* was and still is our nightmare. But, its turmoil has an uncanny resemblance to a building site, *sub specie aeternitatis*.