

Architettura come un attore emergente del cambiamento

Architecture as an emerging Agent of Change

La sfida principale dell'architettura odierna è essere più rilevante come agente del cambiamento. C'è molto lavoro da fare per fare apprezzare l'architettura come socialmente e culturalmente rilevante. Il valore dell'architettura richiede di essere meglio compreso da un pubblico più vasto. Mentre le grandi città diventano il principale oggetto di interesse per l'avanzare della rilevanza dell'architettura, le città medie, la campagna, e le località più remote sono trascurate. Oggi il termine "design" è spesso confuso con "stile". Intendere il design come stile tralascia i metodi e i processi di concettualizzazione, mentre l'architettura offre un concetto più vasto del design che si espande oltre la volontà dello stesso autore. Necessaria alla vita e all'evoluzione della disciplina è dunque che una certa inquietudine e scetticismo siano coltivate nelle sue scuole.

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The most pressing challenge to architecture today is to be more relevant as an agent of change. There is much work needed in making architecture socially and culturally relevant. The value of architecture needs to be better understood by a wider public. As the big city increasingly becomes the subject of interest for advancing architecture's relevance, the mid-tier cities, countryside and even remote locales are overlooked. Today the term "Design" is often confused with Style. Understanding design as style skips the methods and processes of conceptualization while architecture offers a more complex understanding of design that expands beyond author's will. For the discipline to be alive and evolve, it is necessary that there be agitation and scepticism cultivated in school. LB



Mason White

Mason White is Associate Professor at University of Toronto and Partner at Lateral Office. His design practice has been recognized internationally, and he has lectured and exhibited worldwide. Most recently their exhibition "Arctic Adaptations" was recognized at the 2014 Venice Biennale in Architecture with a special mention. He is co-author of Pamphlet Architecture #30: Coupling (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010), Bracket #1: On Farming (Actar, 2010), and the forthcoming Many Norths: Spatial Practice in a Polar Territory (Actar, 2015) and Bracket #4: Takes Action (Actar, 2016).

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

The most pressing challenge to architecture today is to be more relevant as an agent of change. Architecture has a maligned history of elitism and the perpetual appearance as an exclusive service for the wealthy. There is much work needed in making architecture socially and culturally relevant, though there are many inspiring practitioners and advocates operating with that urgency today. Architects should strive to be more engaged in the advocacy of architecture — something often left to the practitioner associations — to promote the discipline's broader influence. This advocacy means that the value of architecture (and architects) needs to be better understood by a wider

public. This same public is often skeptical of architect, unclear of their role, or reduces the architect to a permit and drawing agency. Architects that have broken out of this mold are primarily working in the elite (museum and vanity projects), but this is a reductive interpretation of expanding the architect's agency. We see great potential in architects serving as agents of change and social advocacy, without consenting design innovation as the primary mode of communication.



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

Architecture is a central figure in the contemporary city. We have seen the positions of Le Corbusier, Aldo Rossi, Rem Koolhaas, and others demonstrate the inherent influence of the city on architecture and architecture on the city. Architecture is a catalyst of city-building, and often a catalyst of architectural transformation and advancement. The city has been host to many of architecture's most notable propositions. Landscape architecture has more recently also exerted a necessary influence on urbanism, and this has created an opportunity for more synthetic understandings of architecture, landscape, and urbanism. At the intersection of these is

an immense opportunity—different in each cultural context—for an improved resonance of architecture as an urban project. However, a compelling counter-point is that as the big city increasingly becomes the subject of interest for advancing architecture's relevance, the mid-tier cities, countryside, and even remote locales are overlooked. Added to this could also be the urban periphery, or exurban sites. Therefore, it is important to suggest that the impact of increasing focus on the city leaves in its wake regions of the built environment that have few advocates and design agents.



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?

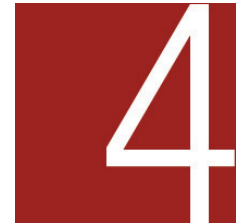


It is difficult to use the term “design” today. This term is now littered throughout so many disciplines; even politics, economics, and business regularly use the “design.” At its core, architecture demands the conceptualization and realization of an as-yet unimagined world; and this is an act of design, not only the materialization of buildings as objects. We would argue that each act of architecture should be an act of speculation.

In conceptualizing a world, people, nature, air, and other ephemeral aspects become part of the theatre of architecture. These are dynamics making architecture 4D, rather than defaulting to its 3D, visual attributes

perpetuated in the eager consumption of architectural images.

Central to the debate on “design,” is that the term is often confused in architecture with style. Understanding design as style overlooks the methods and processes of conceptualization. We would sympathize with design in art, graphic arts, furniture, but believe that architecture offers a more complex understanding of design that expands beyond author’s (designer’s) will.



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

There really are too many things to acquire in their short time as a student in architecture school. Many students (and unfortunately, practitioners) believe that the role of architecture school should be focused on the technical aspects so that a student is immediately a desirable employee. Though this bias misses the opportunity for education serving as a platform to evolve and advance the discipline and practice. And this treats the academy as a factory for known and existing modes of practice. For the discipline to be alive and evolve, it is necessary that there be agitation and skepticism cultivated in school. For success, we must facilitate and embrace environments for failure, also

known as experimentation.

In parallel with this, I have increasingly found that a central effort in my teaching is to encourage curiosity and confidence in the student, along with a deep awareness of architecture's overlap with other fields and facets of life. This offers a foundation that transcends time and its attendant technological (and stylistic) trends.