

DEBATE

A Juror's Memories

Pippo Ciorra

As a member of the jury I had the unusual privilege (or punishment) of seeing the exhibition very thoroughly, a real new experience and a new way of looking at the density and size of the whole event. Here's some of my first reactions. The first note is about quantity. If you put together the curator's show, the pavilions and tens of «collateral» and independent events around Venice you may sum up to a multitude of ideas and a scary budget. On the one hand it makes you doubt if it makes sense on the other you realize architecture still matters. The second point is the final impression I received of the curator's exhibition. After scanning nearly 150 reports from the front we can finally say – however considering my not entirely objective condition – that Aravena succeeded in offering a good selection of contemporary architects and in softly (and with many contradictions) reminding us of the many active roles architecture can still play in the global scene. The two final comments I want to share have then to do with two strong impressions. One is that the architects were able to deal with Aravena's apparently «militant» brief better (and more freely) than the national pavilions; the other that the real task of the curator was at the end of the day to [re]establish a sense of empathy between the architecture and the world.

On Our Hands

Solano Benítez, interview by Maria Argenti

In this interview the Paraguayan architect Solano Benítez speaks about the relationship between architecture and people. Bringing quality to communities that are not excluded – he claims – is an investment in the future of the profession and the global community; it is a means for inverting the paradigm that sees economic progress tied to the widening of the division between the haves and the have nots.

According to Benítez, if there is one characteristic that should permeate the work of architects, it is that of re-composing the social body. While separate beauty is an elite and disoriented self-referential exercise in style that is incapable of transcending itself.

Solano's projects combine primary materials, linear constructions and widespread quality; they seek the precision of form in extreme structural simplicity; they refute the equivalence between simple-banal; they reconnect tradition and innovation, and the common knowledge of communities with the research of the individual designer.

Creating – Solano claims – is not about inventing something from nothing, but about changing the way we see, think and connect things. The human hand is the most sophisticated assembly line the world has ever known. It represents the true starting point.

Unfinished

Carlos Quintáns Eiras

The remains of the constructed presence and the inconclusive remains of what was the largest building enterprise in history in Spanish territory. Fast, insensitive and clumsy construction that sought rapid profits at any cost and which has left a built footprint that will not be easily assimilated by this or future generations. The demise of this overwhelming growth due to the bursting of the real estate bubble has left a fabric that will be difficult to integrate, with partially-built and unconsolidated volumes.

In reaction to this situation, architects have responded with architecture that organizes not only space, but also time; without the former necessity to broadcast the project's authorship. An architecture capable of synthesizing multiple and complex interferences and channelling them as contributions, windows of opportunity. It is an Architecture that in order to be built doesn't hide its materiality, uses non-physical materials such as time, transformation or adaptability; in other words, it is an architecture diametrically opposed to that which was developed in the years leading up to the crisis.

The Spanish Pavilion for the 2016 Venice Biennale wants to focus on the *Unfinished Architectures* that can be found in Spain. To this end, the exhibition will promote the display of creative speculations on the subversion of the former condition into a positive contemporary action.

Mexico Pavilion: Unfoldings and Assemblages

María Margarita Segarra Lagunes

Unfoldings and Assemblages: a double title that, on the one hand, deploys a broad and diverse spectrum of experiences and, on the other, emphasises the idea of a *work in progress*. This is the spirit that has guided the curator Pablo Landa Ruiloba and the Technical Committee that has collaborate in the selection of proposals to be exhibited at the Mexican Pavilion during the 15th International Architecture Exhibition. Responding to the call of Alejandro Aravena, Mexico has made a decisive and unconventional choice, selecting the work of those who, for many years, have been engaged on the social front, far away from the seductions of contemporary architecture. The works form a surprising mosaic, both for their origin and for their different nature: from North Baja California until Yucatán, the proposals display the efforts of architects, engineers, students, economists, anthropologists, sociologists and communities to improve the conditions of architecture and environment, not only in distant and isolated rural settlements, but also in those peripheral areas grew spontaneously around large metropolises.

The Science of the Household

Jack Self

For the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale the British Pavilion exhibition the curators took up the subject «home economics» as the science of the household. Through the first exhibition ever to be curated through time spent in the home, they proposed five new models for domestic life, which were presented as full-scale and immersive interiors.

Taking Care: The Italy Pavilion at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale

Studio TAMassociati (Massimo Lepore, Raul Pantaleo, Simone Sfriso)

In an era of great change architecture cannot shy away from strategic issues such as the protection of the environment, climate change, rampant urbanisation, migratory phenomena and the rational use of resources; however, it can be part of a process focused on ensuring access to a higher degree of social justice.

The choices made by the curators of the Italy Pavilion with the exhibition *Taking Care - Progettare per il Bene Comune*, propose a synthetic analysis and an interpretation of these themes, at the heart of the exhibition, beginning with an attention toward peripheral areas, both geographic and cultural.

This backdrop was used to present a truly novel idea that, for the first time, brought 5 important national associations to the Biennale (AIB, Emergency, Legambiente, Libera, UISP), invited to develop an intervention in the peripheries of Italy, together with a team of 5 architects. Each team was assigned a vehicular module measuring 2.20 x 5.00 meters, which could be used to host different items depending on different programmes.

The Italia Pavilion thus offered a proactive answer to the theme *Reporting from the Front*, made of replicable examples and projects that brings the social forces working from the bottom up into play.

What «Beauty» Are We Referring to When We Speak of the City?

Enzo Scandurra

The recent encyclical *Laudato si* issued by Pope Francis reads:

«It is not enough to seek the beauty of design. More precious still is the service we offer to another kind of beauty: people's quality of life, their adaptation to the environment, encounter and mutual assistance.» (*Laudato si*, § 150). Though this affirmation may seem banal, or predictable, in reality it assumes particular significance for the academic and scientific community of architects and engineers. Can a designer be satisfied with having developed projects that respond to formal and architectural criteria of excellence? Or must he or she (as a designer) be concerned with social and cultural issues, or with the needs and requirements of the future inhabitants of the spaces designed? Put in other words, can beauty exist without qualifications? What beauty do we require to-

day? This essay examines the theme of «beauty» (architectural or urban as the case may be), demonstrating that it does not «exist» without being correlated to its social, economic of civil context.

RESEARCHES

Alfredo Lambertucci's Missed Opportunities

Pisana Posocco

2016 will be the 20th anniversary of Alfredo Lambertucci's death.

According to many scholars and colleagues, and among them is also Carlo Melograni, his architectural work, though not very copious in terms of effectively built structures, should receive «a larger appreciation within a national context, the same it spontaneously received in Rome and in those places where he taught and worked».

Some of the works he realised, alone or with other architects, are well known; in those years sector press published almost exclusively built works, whereas the projects that did not reach the building stage were ignored. Many of Lambertucci's projects remained on the paper, some of them were studied up to the working drawings. Among these «missed opportunities» three have a greater relevance both for their architectural quality and for the appreciation they received by the few who knew them (Melograni, Bruschi, De Licio). They are the project for the Retirement Home in Macerata, 1969, a softer version of English neo-brutalism, the competition's entry for the Multifunctional Cultural Centre of Messina, 1976, and the Town Hall of Artena, 1980. These projects propose a new poetical realism, an abstract version of the typological and morphological studies of those years. Lambertucci operated a personal synthesis, rich in terms of shapes and original compared to the Italian context.

For a Genealogy of the Traveling IBM Pavilion: Renzo Piano and Zygmunt Makowski

Lorenzo Ciccarelli

The IBM Traveling Pavilion (1983-86) represents the final step of a long research path, started with the first prefabricated structures developed by Renzo Piano (b. 1937) in Genoa between 1964 and 1965. As in the IBM Traveling Pavilion these structures were composed by assembling prefabricated pyramidal «pieces» of reinforced polyester. The shape and the thickness of the «piece» were decided through several model tests: a design method that would become characteristic of Renzo Piano in the following decades. In developing these first structures Piano carefully observed the analogous experiments made by the Polish engineer Zygmunt Makowski (1922-2005), first at the Battersea Institute of Technology in London and then at the University of Surrey in Guildford where Piano went to meet him in 1967. The encounter with Makowski, the possibility of observing him at work in his workshop represents a major opportunity for the young Italian architect. Moreover, this first visit in England anticipates the decision of moving permanently to London from 1969 to 1971.

An American Way to Mies. The Ellwood Version

Manuela Raitano

Quite strangely Ellwood is an architect not much studied, if we think of the quality of its architecture. In only two monographs concerning him, his work is framed through the filter of the obvious critical Miesian ancestry. Yet there are many other issues that are intertwined. Among them: the constant research on the type of house; the expressive use of wood and steel frame construction. We propose here a reflection on this second theme, through the comparison of three works of different public/private gradient: an house, an office building and a building for higher education. In all, Ellwood works for sequences of structural bays which, by of modular cages, sometime filled up, other times remain empty to configure the so-called porch those of the American tradition. This expressive research so adherent to itself, which follows so closely the iterative principle of prefabrication, produces a unique result: the size and the public status of the work does not increase its monumentality, but only increases his «physical dimension». It does not vary greatly the pitch of the span but the number of times that it is repeated.

This constructive pragmatism, which excludes the presence of *God in detail*, separates Ellwood from the master from Aachen and, more generally, helps us to measure the distance between European thought and american constructive ways.

Gustavo Giovannoni's Urban Planning Theories Reflected by Angiolo Mazzoni's Architectural Design

Katrin Albrecht

For Angiolo Mazzoni (1894-1979), architect and engineer at the building department of the Ministry of Communications in Rome during fascism, Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947) and his urban planning theories constituted a basic key reference throughout his professional education. As a student, he followed Giovannoni's lectures on architecture and urban design at the engineering school in Rome. They started an intense correspondence on artistic issues and the preservation of historical sites and monuments when Mazzoni was staying in Bologna during the First World War.

After being employed by the Italian State Railways at the beginning of the 1920ies, the young architect became responsible for the design and execution of important train stations and post offices as well as other infrastructure projects in Italy. He was obviously still referring to Giovannoni's general lessons about restoration, vernacular architecture, urbanistics and, particularly, the notion of «ambiente». However, Mazzoni developed his individual interpretation of the established theories, strongly relying on his scenographic perception of urban space and considering also other artistic impacts such as the futurist conception of motion. This paper focuses on the architect's personal approach to the urban planning practice and asks how he expressed it in his extensive built work.

Giovanni Muzio and the Club of Urban Planners: Classical References for the Modern City

Adele Simioli

The paper examines, Giovanni Muzio's activity as city planner through the classical tradition. The text focus on his theoretic positions and his attendance at the Club of Urban Planners about the Twenties in Milan, and then it also focuses on *Forma urbis Mediolani*, the Club's project for Milan's Master Plan competition (1926-27). In order to investigate the work's classical references, already suggested by the choice of the name, Simioli examines the relationships regarding the classical and the neoclassical plans in Milan. The Club's work, is titled with the same name of the research project called *Forma urbis Mediolani* promoted since 1900 by the Milan's monuments Superintendence and aimed to reconstruct the city plan in Roman times on archaeological remains basis. Classical and neoclassical sources have been taken by the Club as models for the development of a project that allows to escape from Milan's historic monocentric scheme, with the creation of alternative poles for the modern lifestyle.

This article is connected to the Simioli's PhD thesis about the relationship between architecture and urbanism in Muzio (*Architecture and forma urbis in Giovanni Muzio's work in Milan*, Tutor Prof. Alessandra Muntoni, La Sapienza University of Rome, 2011) and to the papers *Actuality of Muzio's design method* («Rivista dell'Istituto per la Storia dell'Arte Lombarda», 6, 2012, pp. 119-120) and *Restoration at the Catholic University* («Arte Lombarda», 46-47-48, 2006, pp. 295-297).

Interpretative Reconstructions: The Case of Hans Döllgast in Munich

Maria Irene Lattarulo

Post-war reconstruction in the 20th century in Europe was the chance to reflect on the relationship between architecture of the past and contemporary projects. The large destruction caused by the wars sparked debates about the *ways* of the reconstruction. In Germany, the so-called «interpretative reconstructions» – intermediate works between conservative reconstructions and completely new projects – represent a third way of intervention on architectural heritage. Countless examples of reconstruction can be referred to this approach since the adoption of the same architectural principles led to different outcomes. The subject of this essay is an analysis of the «interpretative reconstructions» through the study of some buildings in Munich that were reconstructed by architect Hans Döllgast (1891-1974). He was the author of some important works such as the reconstruction of the Alte Pinakothek, the chapel in Ostfriedhof, old cemeteries, symbols of a particular approach towards the architecture of the past. In the reconstructions made by Hans Döllgast every architectural element is expression of structural criteria and is charged with a formal meaning that exceeds the simplified revival of forms. The lack of decorative elements makes every architecture «poetically barren», but not for this reason less eloquent.

Architecture of Lands with a Sea in Between. Porosity as a Mediterranean Character

Raffaele Marone

In 1925 Walter Benjamin defined Naples a «porous city». Considering the German philosopher's intuition, porosity can be interpreted as one of the characters of the architecture of the Mediterranean basin, starting from the geography of its coastline. The analysis of several cases highlights those elements that best define the porosity in space systems, that is, the extremely significant relationship between *inside* and *outside*, *shell* and *interior space*, and the role of time on the transformation of living spaces.

In recent decades, economic, social and, most interestingly, cultural conditions, determined by the so-called globalization, have inevitably led to the redefinition of the contemporary ways of making architecture. The millennial experience of living that has been accumulated on lands in the Mediterranean area, projected to a global scale, becomes a formidable contribution to the architecture of the present world. A thought that nourishes building and living, not subject to the icons of the mainstream culture, is leading to a new era for the architecture of the world, to *southern architecture* that can express specificity and universality of the sense of places, at the same time.

Alberti in Rome: from Eugene IV to Nicholas V

Andrea Buchidid Loewen

In 2013 Anna Modigliani has published an essay on «Albertiana» (vol. XVI) dedicated to the problem of the dating of the *De re aedificatoria* in which she discusses the hypothesis – hitherto almost consensually accepted by historiography – of a presentation or offering of the already completed work to Pope Nicholas V in 1452. Undertaking a rigorous analysis of two documentary sources of that time, such as Mattia Palmieri's *Opus de temporibus suis* and Poliziano's dedication letter of the treatise's *editio princeps* to Lorenzo de' Medici, as well as some other references in the treatise itself, the author suggests considering the *De re aedificatoria* as a «work in progress», extending from the pontificate of Nicholas V to the beginning of that of Sixtus IV; that is, a *codex* to which Alberti is devoted until the end of his life.

In light of these considerations, this essay intends to revisit Alberti's permanence in Rome in order to provide an understanding concerning not so much his controversial collaboration in the pope's architectural program, but rather how his perception of the city and the significant events and the process of transformations and interventions started under Eugene IV, along with the direct study of Antiquity and his relationship with other humanists and members of the papal court, may have reflected not only in his greatest work, his books on architecture, but even before that in other significant text of his, the *Descriptio urbis Romae*; a work that reveals not only his mathematical skills, but his peculiar vision of the past and of the city's values.