

ARCHITECTURE AND DEMOCRACY

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DEBATE

Democracy and Urbicide

Carlo Olmo

War, or rather wars, for now more than two decades, have put the historic city back at the center of a not only political but also disciplinary discussion. At the center because the destruction of the historic city has become the most visible symbolic gesture, even more so for those cities, like Aleppo, that have been since the 12th century the places of study and transmission of the texts about religion, culture and art. A destruction that has also come to affect major archaeological excavations, such as Palmyra or Bamian.

This essay seeks to investigate how what is now called “urbicide” will condition the central nodes on which democratic society has grown and its relations with space, an essential founding element of its very existence.

Between Skill and Representation

Giovanni Caudo

Politics and cities are intertwined and feed each other. Politics is shaped by how the problems of the city are addressed, and this takes shape to answer the question of how to live together in the city. The article puts this assumption in the background and reconstructs, through some salient moments, how competence is related to political representation. The disinterest with which the 1972 “Limits of Development Report” was adopted, the attention to government and thus consensus even before the values and issues that should be placed at the centre of politics, to the direct participation of professors in the government of the city, in the role of planning councilors, are some of the salient facts considered in the text. Facts also outline the parable of the evolution of the relationship between urban planning and politics and help to reflect on how this relationship is constitutive of democracy. The text refers to the context of the Rome, but the reflections are described in their general value.

Social Housing and the Fight for Home: Contributions from Iberoamerica

Sergio Martín Blas, Guiomar Martín Domínguez

This paper looks into a possible displacement of the most innovative contributions to the research on social housing from central and northern Europe and the United States – where exemplary solutions were conceived in the 20th century up to the 1970s – towards the Ibero-American context. In this latter region, the struggle for housing is still very much alive – thanks to the scale of public investments, the impact of social movements, the quality of specific proposals, and the enduring interest on the top-

ic by practicing architects and theorists. This hypothesis prompts a discussion on two key themes for the history of social housing. On the one hand, the corridor type and its evolution to the concept of “streets-in-the-air”, still stigmatized and often dismissed in conventional projects but with great potential in terms of promoting cohabitation. On the other hand, the “low-rise high-density” urban model, which has proved to be especially suitable in situations with scarce resources and a strong tradition of local construction techniques. Moreover, this model has pointed to the urgent need of reconnecting architecture with its users, namely through processes of spatial negotiation.

Building for Communities. Strategies for Inclusive and Fair Housing

Gianluca Frediani

Housing is a primary good and an important instrument for social integration. The EU has affirmed its importance in the 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights. Our idea of a common and democratic home reflects on a concrete model of inclusive housing where all and everyone can find adequate spaces for living and expression.

The essay argues for the strategic value of inclusive housing by discussing some of the most innovative examples of recent years. Analysis leads up to urban regeneration interventions to increase inclusivity and democracy in the contemporary city. On this path of social improvement, architects can play an important role in defining new interactions between housing and the city, public and private. It is finally the very paradigm of the city as “outside” versus the traditional “inside” of residential buildings that is being challenged by new mixed residential models based on flexible and inclusive typologies.

Schools to Be Inhabited. Considerations and Proposals for the Schools of Tomorrow

Alberto Ferlenga

The essay deals with the theme of school in Italy as an opportunity for urban and pedagogical renewal. Its first part traces the history of the school building to demonstrate its aptitude for openness towards the city and nature. The second part deals with the issue of post-war Italian reconstruction as a lost opportunity, with respect to urban and architectural quality, and considers the current situation of the school building panorama.

In particular, the presence of a few cases of architecturally significant school buildings is highlighted compared to a large number of buildings lacking architectural quality and largely in need of renovation.

Finally, the third part of the essay lists the necessary actions with respect to the existing situation and which mainly consist of: the restoration of a role of the school as an urban centrality, within the suburbs of the cities; the reunification of architectural and pedagogical aspects, within an innova-

tive idea of the school; the conservation of buildings with architectural quality and the general renewal of the existing school; the need to create schools, both new and existing, that are sustainable, innovative and open to the local area.

Learning from Team 10

Piero Ostilio Rossi

The essay critically reflects, more than four decades later, on the legacy of the Team 10 architects; the group – promoted by, among others, Alison and Peter Smithson, Aldo van Eyck, Jaap Bakema, Georges Candilis, Alexis Josic, Shadrach Woods, John Voelcker, and José Antonio Coderch – emerged to international prominence at the IX CIAM in Aix-en-Provence (1953), was commissioned to organize the X CIAM in Dubrovnik in 1956, and contributed decisively to the dissolution of CIAM itself at the XI CIAM in Otterlo (1959).

A number of themes emerge from the projects, works and writings of the members of Team 10 that are still relevant today; in particular, the following are examined: Alison and Peter Smithson: Conglomerate Ordering and the As Found principle; Aldo van Eyck: the in-between realm and anti-authoritarian architecture; Georges Candilis, Alexis Josic, Shadrach Woods: mat-building; Giancarlo De Carlo: sociality with the site and rootedness in the urban context; Ralph Erskine: building locality.

The Design Research of Herman Hertzberger. Confidence in Questions of Method

Andrea Vidotto

The Dutch architect and professor Herman Hertzberger is a leading figure among those who are engaged with the practice of architecture constantly supported by theoretical thinking and open debate.

This essay rises from the meeting he arranged the 08.07.2017 for his 85th birthday in Amsterdam, when he took the advantage of this opportunity for resuming with a quite simple/complex approach – as if these were confidences among friends – the roots of his inspiration. Main subject is how space reacts to the users and viceversa and which are the consequences of human behavior in terms of predictable and un-predictable effects. If we quote the rich comprehensive monograph written by Robert McCarter on HH we will find schools, theatres, office buildings, housing schemes etc, generating various opportunities in the field of built architecture between individuals and the social communities involved. As we get closer to the process of manipulating forms we find out that organizing functions with a responsible task for human beings, as it happens for HH, is a matter of values which we are not permitted to forget.

Architecture, the City and Creativity for the Masses. Three Exhibitions of the Work of Giancarlo De Carlo

Sara Marini

In 1951, at the 9th Milan Triennale, Giancarlo De Carlo curated with Giuseppe Samonà and Ezio Cerutti the Spontaneous Architecture Exhibition aimed at “discovering,

recording, illustrating with drawings and photographs, the most interesting episodes of popular architecture”; in 1954, at the 10th Milan Triennale, he presented with Carlo Doglio and Ludovico Quaroni the Urban Planning Exhibition, which emphasized the need to involve multiple actors, including citizens, in the analysis and in the project of the city; in 1968, at the 14th Milan Triennale, he directed The Large Number International Exhibition, which was destroyed by demonstrators two hours after its inauguration. Looking at the three exhibitions in sequence, they draw a progressive path that starts from the observation of the architecture of the people, proceeds to harshly attack the current instruments of city building for their dogmatic and non-participatory character, and culminates in the construction of a body of design experiences that empower the creativity of the large number.

The Test of Time in the Life of Works of Architecture

Vieri Quilici

The author takes up the theme of The Durability of Architectural Works making appropriate additions and adding a presentation to clarify the genesis of the thought, dating back to the scope of his personal memories.

In answering the two fundamental questions – of how long works of architecture last materially and how long the meaning and significance of their design is preserved – the question is from the outset referred to the life of the works themselves, thus seen in their existence as a changing and transient phenomenon.

The endurance of architecture to time can therefore only consist of a variable and finite measure, subjected to the test of a succession of events, as is generally the case with all forms of existence, of “things” as well as living beings.

Every work of architecture therefore has its age and must measure itself against time. This is its destiny, which doesn't necessarily have to coincide only with the exercise of its practical function. Assuming, then, that the project consists of a “program” of spatiotemporal organization, it would present itself as a traversal of the times of “dwelling” (Heidegger) and as a *récit* (Morin) of a dialogue with the world in which a succession of “things” and events would be projected into the time of an imaginable, but not definitive, future.

IN MEMORY OF CARLO MELOGRANI

When Architecture Was a Cause

Jean-Louis Cohen

For eight decades, Carlo Melograni has passed through all the troubled times of Italian politics and culture, from Fascism to Mario Draghi's government, including their exciting moments and depressing episodes, always with elegance. His longevity has allowed him to think about time in two ways. First, he has dealt synchronically with his times, with the contemporaneity of Italian politics and architecture, intervening in public debates or provoking them with his positions. But he also never stopped think-

ing diachronically about their relationship with the long time of the history of the 20th century. The articulation of Carlo Melograni's two relationships to time – the moment and duration – is at the center of the polemic that opposed him in 1971-72 to Renato Nicolini, Aldo Rossi and Paolo Portoghesi. These impassioned texts announce the debates which will accompany less than ten years later the irruption of the postmodernism, following the 1980 Venice Biennale. Neither reducible to a politically determined architecture, nor to an architecture of pure composition, Carlo Melograni's work tended towards the search for relevant and intelligible forms for all city travelers.

Carlo Melograni, the Architect's Craft

Giorgio Ciucci

The text is inspired by two books about Le Corbusier published in 2015 in France (by De Jarcy and Perelman). The two publications retrace Le Corbusier's relationship, during the early 1920s, with Pierre Winter. Writing in 1922 for *L'Esprit Nouveau*, Winter developed the theory of the decline of "the French race," which he countered with the "discovery of hygiene" as the means for elevating the "French race" through sport and a familiarity with the human body. Le Corbusier's relationship with Winter spawned his interest in fascism, and led to the successful presentation of the *Plan Voisin* in the headquarters of the Fascist Party (early 1927). A second crucial moment in Le Corbusier's life would be his presence in Vichy in 1942, the seat of the government "collaborating" with the German occupiers of France.

This information about Le Corbusier offers a contrasting frame to Carlo Melograni's ideas about architecture. Not for an impossible comparison between the two, but for their diverse manner of approaching architecture: on the one hand Le Corbusier's "Cartesian manifesto" with its "messianic" content; on the other hand, Melograni's "practice" which produced the "craft" of an architect who "designed for those who ride the tram."

A Reasoned and Civil Historiography

Pasquale Belfiore

Carlo Melograni's studies draw an original line of research in the Italian architectural historiography. His books and essays mainly investigated the period 1926-

1960 and are the products of a connoisseur and a witness – as he liked to call himself – rather than of a professional historian. The focal characters of his working method were: a narration centered on facts and historical events, from which he derived the historiographical problems; the role of political ideology in guiding his choices, and hence his interest in public housing and facilities; certain and irreplaceable historiographical principles, such as the clear distinction between academic architecture and modern architecture, autonomy of judgment, distrust of bizarre projects or naive experimentalisms, and the re-evaluation of functionalism; the primacy of modernity, a concept different from that of modernization which has imposed unacceptable principles and values; a passionate and reasonable critique – like that of Baudelaire – which allows him to point out architects and works of the highest quality, while showing their limits or unresolved design problems. The texts in which these principles have been most developed are the two essays that examine Italian architecture "under" fascism (1926-1945) and the architecture of post-war reconstruction (1946-1960). Together they form his historiographical core.

1965. The Proposal for an Architecture and Urban Planning Magazine by Carlo Melograni

Andrea Bruschi

In February 1965 Carlo Melograni outlined the editorial lines of a new architecture and urban planning magazine. It was much more than an editorial project. An opportunity for a critical reflection on the contemporary architectural research and on the state of profession in a rapidly evolving society. In this adventure Melograni was not alone. The Proposal was previously discussed with Leonardo Benevolo, Antonio Cederna, Tommaso Giura Longo and Italo Insolera. Five forty years old friends fully involved in an all-encompassing dimension of work, extended to life and civil commitment. The Proposal was centered around the problem of architecture as transition tool from elite to mass production. Purpose of the magazine was "to inform and research in order to be interesting not only to construction workers but to that part of qualified public opinion heedful to issues concerning the development of modern city too." This program was argued in four paragraphs concerning architecture and mass production, magazine potential influence on mass architectural production, characteristics of Italian magazines and editorial organization.