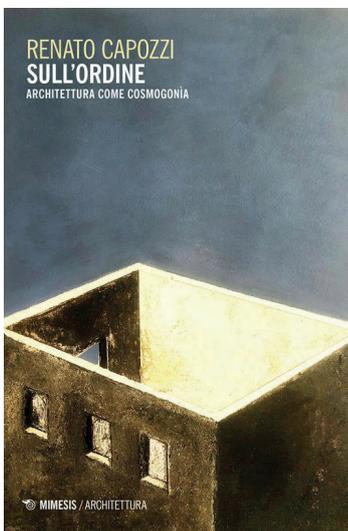


Pierpaolo Gallucci
The study of an architect

Author: *Renato Capozzi*
 Title: *Sull'ordine. Architettura come cosmogonia*
 Language: *Italian*
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After reading Renato Capozzi's latest book, one is sucked into a sense of vertigo, if not the same, at least similar to what one feels after getting up from one's desk as an architect: paperwork everywhere, notes, sketches; disorder, one would be led to think, and indeed this would be the case, except for the decisive detail that all this mass of reflections poured onto paper and scattered around is aimed at a purpose, that of giving rise to a form, through a project.

On the surface, the book takes the form of a descent into the Maelström, where instead of shipwrecks, wreckage and junk of all kinds, there are instead transcribed excerpts of other people's thoughts, at the foot of which comments are noted down, which may or may not turn into ideas, but which are there; clues that the mind searches for in order to find a direction, a way, a thread that binds them.

Notes and thoughts, fused together, like a sequence of works that have been constructed and even only thought about (as when the author mentions the succession of buildings that Mies designed without them being realised, including the pavilion for the Brussels International Exhibition, the 50x50 house, the Bacardi headquarters in Santiago de Cuba, the latter two prefigurations of what would find completed form in the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin), almost like a collage of passages elaborated in such a sequence as to induce one to investigate the possibility that the meaning of the quoted texts may have been slightly shifted, an operation that must be carried out while remaining extremely careful, because the risk always lurking is that of manipulating them for purposes quite different from those for which they were conceived.

This is not the case - at least it seems to me - in this very recent study, where the passages cited converge to establish an extended reflection on order, without, however, allowing oneself to be dazzled by the authority of those who formulated the propositions as if by dogma, and on the contrary finding a possible logical sequence among them, or at least offering scholars an attempt to reconstruct one, thus constituting very fertile material for investigation.

Certainly this book could be inscribed in the tradition dating back to the ancient era, of texts that scholars, philosophers and sages consulted to draw thoughts for quotation (one result among others: the letters that Seneca

wrote to Lucilius), and in this respect, the repertory presented by Capozzi is formidable; not a manual of composition, but something that is placed before it, identifying the prerequisites of coherence; nor, as some might believe, a text on an alleged mission of architecture, because at the end, the author leads a reflection on the order that he himself reserves the right to develop further, and we are certain that he will not miss the opportunity to read the future results of this development. Valuable in this respect is the reference to a text by Alberto Cuomo where he refers to Ernst Hans Gombrich, the author of a very full-bodied volume whose title Cuomo uses for his own writing, *Il senso dell'ordine* (translated into Italy by Einaudi forty years ago and unfortunately not reprinted since 1990), Gombrich being a historian, not an architect, and yet in his own way a composer - in the sense of the training as a classical musician with stringed instruments he received in his youth - coming from that Viennese milieu of a century ago, where much of contemporary thought (including architecture: for Adorno, Adolf Loos was the most revolutionary of architects) that is still an object of meditation took shape, and which will undoubtedly prompt future reflections on architecture.