FAM

61

Oblivion and revival of identity and regional architecture in the age of globalisation

Scientific Committee

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FAMagazine comes out with 4 issues a year and all the articles, with the exception of those commissioned by the Direction to renowned scholars, are subjected to a peer review procedure using the double blind system.

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The call for papers provide authors with the possibility to choose between two types of essays:
a) short essays between 12,000 and 14,000 characters (including spaces), which will be submitted directly to the double blind peer review procedure;
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ARTICLES SUMMARY TABLE

61 July-September 2022.
Oblivion and revival of identity and regional architecture in the age of globalisation

n.	Id Code	date	Type essay	Evaluation		Publication
1	925	set-21	Long	Peer (A)		Yes
2	927	set-21	Long	Peer (C)	Peer (B)	Yes
3	928	set-21	Long	Peer (A)		Yes
4	923	set-21	Long	Peer (A)		Yes

NEXT ISSUE

62 October-December 2022.

Rural modern. Themes and contexts
edited by Cristina Pallini

When approached from a design-oriented viewpoint, the notion of modernisation is frequently associated with urban and industrial contexts against a "backward countryside", whereby the quest for rationalisation of space calls for the concerted integration of architecture, planning and urban design. However, the modernisation of rural regions by way of technical interventions, which subverted the natural order through the combined effect of political programmes, scientific knowledge and up-to-date technology, spanned the whole of the 20th century in different socio-political contexts, from Fascist Italy of the 1930s to the Baltic Countries under Soviet occupation until 1991. Interestingly, an increasing number of scholars from different disciplines now deal with the impact of technology and infrastructure onto the rural world. In his seminal article about the Spanish countryside, Belgian geographer Erick Swyngedouw (1999), goes so far as to argue that modernity is deeply and inevitably a geographical project. Accordingly, we might well ask to what extent modernist rural landscapes are necessarily also "technical." Aimed at modernizing the countryside, these pivotal experiments in nation-building policies, became a testing ground for the ideas, and tools, of environmental and social scientists, architects and engineers, planners and landscape architects, as well as artists, who converged around the common challenge.

A number of recent publications (Sabatino 2011, Dremaite 2017, Lejeune 2021) confirm the relevance of the theme for spatial and design-related disciplines. Yet, as the concept of "manmade landscape" imposes itself as a unifying paradigm, we cannot but try to focus the specific role played by architecture, namely the emergence of design problems that had never previously existed or, if they did, were of subordinate importance. To name a few we may consider the emergence of new building types, along with problems of repeatability, cost-efficiency, compliance with standards, prefabrication, comfort, efficiency. As the boundary between architecture and mere construction becomes a difficult one to set, the allegedly common search for "expressive truthfulness" away from historicist styles seems all too often confined to architectural language, overshadowing other important aspects.

Yet, Le Corbusier believed that the "era of the road" was to bring people back to the land, polarizing modern rural settlements as catchment areas potentially sharing an urban standard of living. His "radiant village" met the basic needs of circulation, storage, handling, housing and related services in a single organism, the spatial translation of a diagram with a clear concern for the balance of masses, separation of functions and functional legibility. According to Giuseppe Pagano instead, the Italian path to modern architecture was to pass through the rural world, an immense "dictionary of man's constructive logic" free from representative intents, a world where the house was a necessity rather than an aesthetic game.

Just as recent studies on the export of Western models to the colonies and developing countries generated the concepts of "other" and "hybrid" modernism, similarly, the adoption of modernism in the countryside caused modern canons to blur, leaving room for many questions.

     - What distinctive elements made the settlements legible as 'new'? Was it about form or function? Where, when and why did the symbolic dimension come back into play? To what extent has architecture made the order imposed by urban planning perceptible? To what extent have collective buildings and public spaces contributed to the theatricalisation of new lifestyles? Which specific themes emerged from the encounter with the materiality, and imagination, of the rural world?

     - While hovering between the past, alleged vernacular authenticity, and idealised visions of a possible future, what did "old" and "new" actually mean in each different context?

     - Some modernist rural landscapes include bold architectural experiments, some instead are characterised by innovative landscape features, others deserve our attention for their cultural impact (on literature, folk music, etc.). Which key agents contributed in shaping a new "place identity"?

- What is the present legacy of modernist rural landscapes? Is this mainly consisting of the built environment, or rather is it a form of "intangible heritage"?

- Bearing in mind the current refugee crisis, can modernist rural landscapes be a precedent to envisage new ways to combine welfare, planning and re(settlement) policies, or more sustainable settlement patterns?

In this issue, the reasoning focuses on the new problems/design themes, which came along with large-scale reclamation and agricultural colonisation scheme.
The present issue invites contributors to reflect upon the following points: experimentation on the typology and character of the rural house; the definition of the village between layout and architecture; the possibility of extending the observatory to different geographical contexts, historical periods and political systems, the present relevance of the case studies concerned.

61 Oblivion and revival of identity and regional architecture in the age of globalisation

Editorial 1

Enrico Prandi
On globalization, regionalism and the Smart City

Abstract
In addition to the specific editorial by the editor of the monographic issue, this article critically examines the positions of the different invited authors. To this is added indirectly the personal reflection on the themes proposed by the curator through a grid of twelve questions.

With this issue, 61 edited by Ugo Rossi, FAM delves into the broader reflection on the globalization of cultures, regionalism and the Smart City. The method with which the curator has constructed his palimpsest is a grid of twelve questions provided to the authors together with an introductory text: the guests were asked to «provide reflections, studies and research, experiences and testimonials addressing the questions, or to extend the problems». Questionnaire questions, which can be read in the curator's article below, range from regional architecture (its existence, purpose and meaning) versus global architecture and the Smart City model as a proposition for architecture in developing contexts. In the palimpsest of questions, it is not difficult to understand the equation between the capitalist global city and the Smart City and the danger that developing contexts run in pursuing these universal models.

In the brevity of an editorial that critically introduces the theme, I don't shy away from providing my personal point of view indirectly starting from the essays by the various authors.

Critical Regionalism and its (alleged) rebirth guide the reader in the various contributions which have the merit of fueling the discussion around one of the moments in the recent history of architecture, such as the attempt to overcome the Postmodern. The evolution of the term Critical Regionalism and its relevance after a period of oblivion, the thesis here subject to critical verification, demonstrates how it can accommodate examples that are also very distant from each other.

Therefore, some clarification is appropriate starting from the origins of the concept itself at the end of the 1970s interpolated with the current reflections of Kenneth Frampton (the militant critic of Critical Regionali-

sm) interviewed for the occasion by Ugo Rossi himself.

Like other terms, as courageous in the attempt to define attitudes as labile in specific definitions, also Critical Regionalism – which Frampton himself (1984) invites us not to understand either as a style or as a historical period – can be better understood by difference, also clarifying what it is not: Critical Regionalism is not vernacular; Critical Regionalism is not the spontaneous product of the multiple interaction between climate, culture, myth and craft (that is, spontaneity must be replaced by the intentionality of critically measuring oneself with the elements of transformation). Critical Regionalism is linked to the "Schools"; Critical Regionalism is anti-centrist (and therefore against globalization); Critical Regionalism aspires towards forms of cultural, economic and political (therefore even more anti-global) independence. (Frampton 1980, p. 313).

With the exception of the question on the Schools, we have outlined the majority of "good contemporary architecture" as regionalist architecture, meaning as such that which is attentive to the different contexts and their characteristics (thus excluding architecture indifferent to the context, interchangeable which does not seize the opportunity to introject and re-elaborate stylistic, formal, typological, symbolic and so on characteristics typical of the place of belonging). But if we reintroduce the criterion of the Schools then the concept immediately becomes more complicated if not contradictory. The proliferation of Schools, their hybridization with topical issues, the often spurious character of a supra-regional dimension makes the application of this principle inapplicable in the contemporary world. What could be, for example in the Italian context, the "[recently formed] regional schools, whose main aspiration is to reflect and deal with the specific constituent elements on which they are based"? (Frampton 1982, p.371). None. If we extend the reasoning to the vast international context, probably some exist.

At the end of an intense *Post Scriptum* to the interview published in this issue, which begins as an ancient epistle, Kenneth Frampton proposes the myth of Critical Regionalism as a «hypothetical terrain on which to create a microcosm again», an alternative modernity such as that of Alvar Aalto. Even the theme of other modernity is a road already taken at the level of international critical literature to define irregular figures of modernity.

Beyond the theoretical implications of a debate that lasted almost twenty years – and in some ways sterile in focusing too much on the attempt to define something elusive – we can understand a "Critical Regionalism of return" if it can be defined in this way, in a broad sense as a attention to contexts (an attitude that still characterizes a large part of Italian architecture) but above all, as Ugo Rossi underlines in his essay on the USA, as a "cultural resistance" in antithesis to a globalizing and internationalist (consumerist) approach: a balanced planning between an instinctive and spontaneous attitude that flows into the vernacular and, on the contrary, an attitude indifferent to the context, culture and specific identities.

In the succession of critical contributions Luigi Coccia proposes as a regionalist a manifesto work by Peter Zumthor such as the Terme di Vals judging it with good reason as a «design experimentation that favors the development of a strong culture full of identity, which nevertheless keeps open contacts with the universal technique» (Frampton 1983): although a solitary experience not ascribable to a specific school, the analysis is particularly interesting also thanks to Peter Handke's theoretical-interpretative filter. While Ettore Vadini analyzing some points of Framptonian precepts

verifies the hypothesis that the Paulista School in its decline of modernism in a specific way could be, yes in the vastness of the overall production, attributable to regionalist architecture.

As demonstrated by his article, Nicola Pagnano imports into China a contextual critical attitude that derives from an Italian and in particular Venetian training, while on the contrary the Chinese majors are exporting an uncritical attitude to the new Asian markets (India and Africa in primis). acontextual and linguistically homogenizing in reducing the different characters to banality.

Also for this reason the weighty theme of the globalization of cultures will be taken up indirectly in one of the next issues (for which the call for papers is still open) dedicated to tropical architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa, i.e. that form of contextualism typical of tropical band that finds in the geographical and climatic conditions the reason for resistance to a real estate market also managed from the planning point of view by foreign investors. A new form of «economic neo-colonialism» as defined by Anna Bruna Menghini which is part of that cyclical process of colonization and decolonization of which the author clearly explains the historical reasons for a loss of cultural identity and stylistic-figurative hybridization. In anticipation of a new «African identity» – perhaps it would be appropriate to speak in the plural of specific identities for a vast and composite continent such as Africa – projects by a (relatively) young and effervescent generation of architects working in Africa are presented, whether they are indigenous such as the Pritzker 2022 Diébédo Francis Kéré (from Burkina Faso but trained in Germany) and David Adjade (from Tanzania but trained in Great Britain) as well as allochthonous such as TAM, the Caravatti brothers and others.

Not without reason Ludovico Micara appeals to the «compromise between global thrusts linked to modernization [...] and resistances, or rather, "existences", of identities, traditions, customs, uses». Thus, taking the theme of Islamic architecture as an example (Islamic, of Islamic countries, etc.), the author presents some of his projects in Tripoli in Libya and Yazd in Iran demonstrating patient research between historical reasons and contextual that make the interpretation of the place in its complexity and vastness the origin of every transformation intervention.

Finally, Costantinos Doxiadis' Ekistica is the background to the contribution of Ray Bromley who summarizes the principles of a "science of human settlements" as a premise for the development of a city on a human scale. Beyond the implicit visionary nature of ekistic thought, the most significant contribution of Doxiadis' experience is the audacity of the attempt to plan the future of settlements in the complexity and totality of aspects. As history teaches, visionaries, in addition to exerting a certain charm, have the advantage of promoting discussion and stimulating innovation.

Faced with the current conditions of crisis (environmental, social and urban), Alberto Ferlenga proposes a "new realism" instead of a "new regionalism" (hence the title *End of Regionalism*) based on the analysis of urban phenomena taking as a case study the Italian city and therefore placing itself in continuity with the tradition of studies interrupted half a century ago. "Learning from the Italian city" to paraphrase the title of Francesco Tentori's book on Venice, in turn derived from the more famous "Learning from Las Vegas" by Venturi-Scott Brown.

I consider a final clarification necessary on a term as slippery as it is abused and misunderstood even by many insiders such as that of Smart City: after

the first phase that psychoanalysts would call the "honeymoon" between scholars, architects and the digital world (the city of Bits, Smart City 2./3./4.0, etc.), the time is ripe for the return to the responsibility of the architectural project in the transformation of the city.

I already had the opportunity to express this concept a few years ago by arguing that the truly intelligent city is one in which the project is intelligent in its traditional, classic and ever-present forms (*Smart Design for a Smart City*, N. 33 (2015)) . No technological-IT superstructure will be able to beat the architectural project in terms of intelligence and efficiency (and in this we also include the concept of sustainability, another often abused term), if it is born contextually to the place and if it is not spoiled by speculative pressures.

The traditional city, which arises from the balanced interaction between climate, culture, myth and craft (i.e. mediated by the ability of the architect), is the intelligent city par excellence. Calling it a city of cultural resistance, a city of Critical Regionalism or a city of New Realism, at this point is indifferent; the important thing is that, as the latest Frampton underlines, "it can still make possible the creation of a microcosm" that reflects the identity characteristics of different cultures.

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Enrico Prandi (Mantua, 1969), architect, graduated with honors from the Faculty of Architecture in Milan with Guido Canella with whom he carried out teaching and research activities. He has a PhD in Architectural and Urban Composition at the IUAV of Venice, obtaining the title in 2003. He is currently Associate Professor in Architectural and Urban Composition at the Department of Engineering and Architecture of the University of Parma. He is director of the Parma Architecture Festival and founder-director of the international A-class scientific e-journal «FAMagazine. Rese-arch and projects on architecture and the city» (ISSN 2039-0491). He is scientific manager for the Parma unit of the *ArcheA. Architectural European Medium-Sized City Arrangement* project (publi-shed in volumes Routledge, Aión and LetteraVentidue). Among his publications: *Luigi Vietti, scritti di architettura e urbanistica* (with PV. Dell'Aira, Altralinea, Florence 2022), *The project of the Polo per l'Infanzia. Architectural experiments between teaching and research* (Aión, Florence 2018); *The architecture of the linear city* (FrancoAngeli, Milan 2016); *European City Architecture*, (with L. Amistadi, FAEdizioni, Parma 2012); *Mantua. Saggio sull'architettura* (FAEdizioni, Parma 2005)

Editorial 2

Ugo Rossi
The centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere

Abstract
The current issue of the magazine is going to consider the role of several expressions of cultural diversity in the epoch of globalization that, on one side have contributed to promoting and sharing, under many aspects, a variety of cultural phenomena, but on the other have tended to indifferently assimilate them, consequently contributing to the erasure of their intrinsic differences. The progression of such a zeroing process, the one that Kenneth Frampton called Critical Regionalism, represents today a forcefully resurfacing phenomenon, contrasting somehow the wide spreading of a more linear and global development, that evidently, today more than ever, has demonstrated its inability not only to guarantee a better world but rather to be harmful to the future of the planet.

Que l'homme étant revenu à soi considère ce qu'il est au prix de ce qui est, qu'il se regarde comme égaré, et que de ce petit cachot où il se trouve logé, j'entends l'univers, il apprenne à estimer la terre, les royaumes, les villes, les maisons et soi-même, son juste prix.
Qu'est-ce qu'un homme, dans l'infini?[1]
Blaise Pascal

The current issue of FAM, springs from the intent to investigate the phenomenon of the rebirth of regional and identity representational architecture in the epoch of globalisation.

After the unmotivated euphoria for a planet totally connected and for possible worldwide financial growth, the success of economic and cultural policies, based on consumption and consensus – supported by the foolish delusion of inexhaustible resources and the prevailing global culture – have reached a blind alley. Not only the world has to deal with the many related geo-political and cultural issues, but also (for decades now) the entire stability of the planet has been put in grave danger, literally on the brink of disaster. The unstoppable rising of temperatures all over the world, the melting of glaciers and the ice cap, droughts, and pandemics, are only but a few of the most noticeable consequences of the economic development of mass consumption and globalisation. As well as that, it seems as though, nowadays, it has become very conspicuous the surfacing phenomenon of radicalization (often enough very extreme) for the protection of the identity roots of the countries to which the benefits and possibilities "guaranteed" by globalisation are precluded.

It is obvious then that globalisation, on one hand, has contributed to the partaking and the spreading, under very many aspects, of economic and

cultural growth, but on the other it has worked to assimilate them quite indiscriminately, contributing to the erasing of their differences. Within a such zeroing process, what Kenneth Frampton called Critical Regionalism, represents today a powerfully resurfacing trend, a contrasting force to a linear and global economic and cultural development, that evidently, today more than ever before, has demonstrated its inability to safeguard a better world and to be, on the contrary, dangerously harmful for the future of the planet (Schumacher 1973; Mattelart 2000).

In spite of the fact that the process of international globalisation goes back to ancient times, in its own way even to prehistoric ones (Childe 1974), it has become apparent, since the 1850s, that the "clash" between the ethnocentric convictions related to the linearity of the sequence westernisation-modernization-development-progress, and the convictions relating to the plurality of cultures has become unavoidable. Nonetheless, though, Ted Levitt observed that in the 1980s the problem related to the fact that markets started to operate on international levels was actually a problem that ignored any kind of plurality, to the point that we can actually say that the time of national and local differences is very far away, the very same differences that due to culture, norms and structures are now mere vestiges of the past.

Inevitably, the convergence, or the tendency of everything and anybody to become like anything else and everybody else, is going to orientate the market towards a global community. Not to mention the fact that everywhere and with increasing frequency, individuals' desires and behaviours start to evolve in the same way: Coca-Cola, microprocessors, jeans, pizza, beauty products or milling machines (Levitt 1983); getting to the point that, in 1980, the *International Federation of Institutes of Advanced Studies*, noticed that the classic approaches to general economic growth had actually violated the first principle of human dignity: the respect for humankind as individuals and for their culture. The majority of the ones responsible for the "bettering" of humanity, ultimately, had used individuals and cultures in general as mere instruments of economic growth or like pliable variables to achieve a certain change ascribable to specific objectives. The cultural roots of the vast majority of the peoples on the planet are inevitably bound to the geographical areas that they occupy and for that, they have their own distinctive history, norms and sets of values. The claim for one's cultural difference does not imply a rejection to partake in a more global responsibility nor it implies some sort of blind parochial spirit (Galtung 1980).

Where the cultural set-up postulated "traditional" societies in contrast with the "modern" ones, the overturning of that perspective, which recently has started to take place, has revealed that societies are essentially unstable and in perpetual motion, constantly elaborating their core elements because of the conflicting renegotiations of their identity (Lyotard 1979).

No matter how uncertain might be the outcome of that overturning, but it is going to be most obvious how very challenging that would be before the construction of a worldly sense of belonging and if the new ways of re-discussion of the notion of development/progress – with a resulting reflection on cultural identity as the matrix for an "alternative future" – will find it difficult to affirm itself. Decisive and unavoidable will be the breach of environmentalism as a cultural guide to acquire the global dimension of the complexity of the problems for the entire planet and all of humankind (Yilmaz 2021). It was in 1972 when, during the first environmental United

Nations Conference, in Stockholm, for the first time the finger was pointed toward the unequal and destructive quality of the model of growth and development, and on that same occasion it was clearly stated the need to redefine that very same model through the employment of resources less influenced by consumption and the intensive exploitation of nature.

Twentieth-century architectural culture addressed the issue – first internationally and then globally – by expressing and providing a series of proposals. If on one hand the stances essentially focused on confrontation and restoration, on the principle of conservation and on the continuity with any given past cultural heritage – such as the fascination with primitive societies, the reference to Mediterranean, cave, alpine and rural architectures of the Modern Movement – on the other, more recently, the historian Kenneth Frampton, taking from a text by Paul Ricoeur (1961), gave a definition of the concept of "Critical Regionalism", that later on, he elaborated in his book *Modern Architecture: a Critical History* (Frampton 1980).

In his book, Frampton discusses Critical Regionalism as one of the possible answers to the issue put forward by Ricoeur, and throws the foundations for a reflection on the unfolding of a regional form of architecture in which

> The term "Critical Regionalism" is not intended to denote the vernacular as this was once spontaneously produced by the combined interaction of climate, culture, myth and craft, but rather to identify those recent regional 'schools' whose primary aim has been to reflect and serve the limited constituencies in which they are grounded. Among other factors contributing to the emergence of a regionalism of this order is not only a certain prosperity but also some kind of anti-centrist consensus – an aspiration at least to some form of cultural, economic and political independence. (Frampton 1980, p. 313)

If the discussion on vernacular architecture originated from a local cultural and climatic tradition appears outdated, however, the larger one, linked to universalization and to the idea of «the spreading before our eyes of a mediocre civilization», explained in Ricoeur's text, remains to be investigated.

Moreover, what strikes Frampton, in Ricoeur's extract (1961), is that current regional and national culture should consist of local declinations of a more "worldly" expression. In the future, each and every single cultural expression should feed on the more vital forms of regional traditions, still absorbing external influences both in terms of civilization and culture, in which on one side it will be endorsed the models of universal civilization, and on the other, it will be heralded the values of a culture motivated by idiosyncratic elements. It is true though, that as Ricoeur wrote (1961),

> No one can say what will become of our civilization when it has really met different civilizations by means other than the shock of conquest and domination. But we have to admit that this encounter has not yet taken place at the level of an authentic dialogue […] There is that paradox: how to become modern and to return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization Ricoeur. (Ricoeur 1961, p. 283; Frampton 1980, p. 313)

If with such a paradox the issues of survival and of the intrinsic value of different cultures have been under for a long time under "world" scrutiny, another topic, – the survival of the planet – prevails on the global stage as a matter of urgency. Unfortunately, in reply to the environmental conferences and to the protocols for the safeguarding of the planet, in order to convert the model of linear development into a sustainable and circular

one, architects and urban planners, in conjunction with the scientists and researchers of the most important labs in the world[2], have come up with sophisticated technological proposals: smart homes, and *Smart Cities* (Song, Selim 2022; Biswas, Dey, 2022). Practically speaking, the use of power within the *Smart Cities* – as well as in smart homes – relies on the use of renewable resources, AI and highly advanced technologies and devices, capable of processing huge amounts of data applied to an efficient urban project, with passive planning elements, can reach up to 70% in energy saving in comparison with "traditional" homes and metropolises; however, the *Smart Cities* built from scratch and completely prescriptive – in them everything is regulated, calculated, monitored and defined – are actually extremely expensive products. In those cities, as explained by Richard Sennett (2018), instead of reducing the construction expenses and costs, these become much higher.

Forty years from the text by Frampton, and almost sixty from Ricoeur's one, after the process of simplification and cultural internationalization has assumed planetary proportions, that today we say to be "global", the authors of the essays have been asked the following questions as a conventional outline to refer to:

1. Does Regional architecture still exist?
2. What is the actual purpose, nowadays when discussing regional architecture?
3. What is today's meaning of Regional architecture?
4. Why, and in which context or occasion is regional architecture still topical today?
5. In terms of planning processes, what are the differences between regional architecture and international/global one?
6. Does a global architecture actually exist?
7. Can we say that specific and diversified solutions can coexist in order to achieve the survival of diversity amid different people and cultures of the world in contrast with global socio-economic problems?
8. Is it still possible to talk about authentic and autochthonous architecture in a time of global culture and consensus?
9. Is it possible to reconcile the "model" for a sustainable home with the one for the Smart City - and its technological systems - on a planet differently developed?
10. How can such a model be implemented in poorer countries?
11. How can such a "model" be implemented in those countries with a rich history and ancient forms of architecture? What is the actual fate of historical cities and architectures, that very often can not be turned into Smart Cities or in buildings with low power emissions, high technological efficiency, and low power consumption?
12. Which other models have already been implemented, or are about to be, in order to diversify the solutions regarding the specific site needs and possibilities of the many different countries?

The authors, Ray Bromley, Luigi Coccia, Alberto Ferlenga, Kenneth Frampton, Anna Bruna Menghini, Ludovico Micara, Nicola Pagnano, Ugo Rossi, Ettore Vadini, were asked to supply considerations, studies and investigations, experiences and actual evidence that would address those questions or that would amplify those issues.

Kenneth Frampton has taken part in this issue of the magazine by answer-

Notes

[1] Let man consider his own being compared with all that is; let him regard himself as wandering in this remote province of nature; and from the little dungeon in which he finds himself lodged, I mean the universe, let him learn to set a true value on the earth, on its kingdoms, its cities, and on himself.
What is a man in the infinite?
[2] See the studies and researchers carried out at the MIT'S Media Lab: Mitchell (1996).

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Alberto Ferlenga
The end of Regionalism

Abstract
The text will start from the origins of the "critical regionalism" denomination to investigate the consequences of the "operational" approach to the history of contemporary architecture. In particular, I will start from the new framework in which the role of architecture today arises and from how this derives a need for an overall "repositioning" of the architect and his culture which requires, in addition to a change in responsibility and age, tools also reconsideration of the architectural events that preceded us and of the approach to their analysis. I will consider how the "regionalistic" position of many characters has produced a double consideration of the events of a modernity that today more than ever appears unique, multifaceted and useful perhaps more for what it contained "marginal" than for its mainstream. Finally, I will deal with an attitude, in the past practiced by architects, that of the construction of a "history" useful for the trade, now almost completely abandoned, and the risks that derive from this.

Keywords
Constantinos Doxiadis — Ekistic — Megalopolis — Favelas

[…] In the last twenty or thirty years, new directions in contemporary architecture have not come from Europe alone: A Universal civilization is approaching, and its development shows no symptoms of international standardization. Its common element is its conception of space, which is in keeping with both the emotional structure and the outlook of the period […] There is yet another factor of equal importance, one that arises from an attitude shared by the best contemporary architects. These architects aim, above all, at taking full account of the changeless atmospheric and topographical conditions of a country, which are no longer obstacles but springboards for the creative imagination. It has often been observed that the painting of the present century has repeatedly taken soundings of the past in order to renew contact with kindred elements in mankind of earlier times and to derives strength from this contact. Neither I have elsewhere called this coming to terms with pre-existing atmospheric and topographical condition a "new regionalism" […] Within this common concept of space, many different forms of architecture are developing, leading to unexpected situations. (fig.a,b,c)

Thus wrote Sigfried Giedion in 1960 in his introduction to *The Works of Affonso Eduardo Reidy* by Frederick A. Praeger, (fig. 1) the first monograph on the work of the Brazilian architect whose works include the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro and the Assunciòn Experimental School in Paraguay (fig. 2). In his introduction, Giedion refers to ideas he had conceived of as early as the 1940s while a member of the CIAM (*Congrès Internationaux d'*Architecture *Moderne*). These would lead him to gradually detach himself from the more dogmatic interpretations of the Modern Movement and adhere to a new vision of architecture that was more attentive to its relationship with the local environment and history, as well as to the themes of urban sustainability and liveability. Themes that in those years began to emerge from the CIAM crisis, appearing in the the-
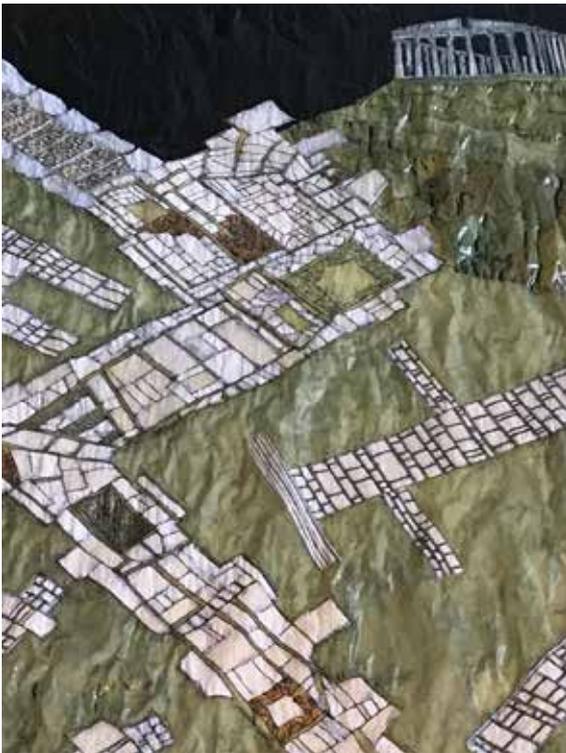
Fig. a
Alberto Ferlenga, drawing dedicated to Dimitris Pikionis, watercolour and fountain pen on yellow sketch paper.

Fig. b
Alberto Ferlenga, drawings dedicated to Fernand Pouillon, watercolour and fountain pen on yellow sketch paper.

Fig. c
Alberto Ferlenga, drawings dedicated to Joze Plecnik, watercolour and fountain pen on yellow sketch paper.

ories of well-known architects such as Richard Neutra or Aldo Van Eyck and which, in a more complete form, constituted the leitmotif of the work by the Greek architect Constantinos Doxiadis (fig. 3). Doxiadis was an internationally renowned urban planner who was consulted by the Democratic Establishment of the US and the United Nations for interventions in cities on the frontline of the Cold War. One of the first 'disciples' of Dimitris Pikionis at Athens Polytechnic, Doxiadis was, among other things, the proponent of *Ekistica*, a science based on the relationship between architecture and settlements which, despite its stretching of the facts and its ambiguities, had the merit of foreseeing current issues relating to urban sustainability. This was the premise for the (then) recent study of the expansion of cities, presented by Jean Gottmann in his *Megalopolis* of 1961 but also evident in the dramatic settlement problems that followed the Partition of India (1947) and, even earlier, the *Katastrophé* of the Greeks in Asia Minor (1923).

Giedion was introduced to Doxiadis' writings by Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (an English urban planner and fervent follower of Geddes and his theories but also an active member of CIAM) before embarking on significant research work with the '*Ekistic*' observatory in Athens. This brought together global and local themes with a study of ancient settlements already begun by Doxiadis in his doctoral thesis *Architectural Space in Ancient Greece* (fig. 4). The thesis, discussed in Berlin in 1936 and translated into English by Tyrwhitt in 1972, drew on ideas relating to the dynamic composition of the monuments of the Acropolis advanced by Auguste Choisy in his *Histoire de l'Architecture* (1899). In the chapter dedicated to the Greek Picturesque, Choisy's images were also used, as we know, by Le Corbusier in *Vers une architecture* (1923) and in Pikionis' considerations on the construction of the Greek sacral space through visual geometric systems. Doxiadis, however, extended the observations of the Acropolis to other cases of sacred enclosures and Greek cities, suggesting the reuse of ancient settlement principles to reiterate a dynamic relationship between public space and
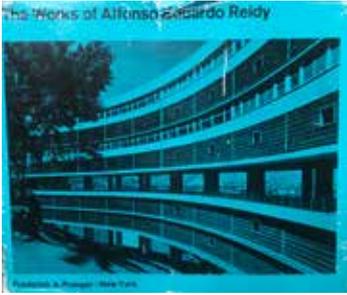
Fig. 1
Cover of The Works of Affonso Eduardo Reidy, 1960.

Fig. 2
View of the Experimental School in Assunciòn, Paraguay by A.E. Reidy, 1953.

Fig. 3
Cover of the book Architecture in Transition by C. Doxiadis, 1963.

Fig. 4
Cover of the English-language edition of C. Doxiadis's thesis Architectural Spaces in Ancient Greece, 1972.

architecture and, by doing so, improve quality of life. In addition to Gottmann, historians such as Arnold Toynbee, Margaret Mead, scientists such as Jonas Salk, landscape architects such as Lawrence Halprin, engineers such as Buckminster Fuller, and architects such as Fumihiko Maki or Hassan Fathy would go on to join the '*Ekistic*' group (fig. 5). Hassan Fathy 's experiments on materials and climate conducted in Egypt and Iraq are referred to explicitly in another passage of Giedion's introduction to *The Works of Affonso Eduardo Reidy*.

The concepts of linking architecture with the environment, of mega-cities that can be 'scaled down' to a human dimension by subdivision into smaller communities, the new forms of living, attention to climatic factors, traffic, and to environmental issues in general, were the subjects of in-depth discussion between 1963 and 1975 at the Delos Symposia, (fig. 6). These events – often cited but, today, not often studied – overtly referred to CIAM's itinerant conferences. Tyrwhitt and Giedion provided a sort of ideal continuity to these conferences while, at the same time, expanding the number and diversifying the type of participants; they may also have been the first to draw the attention of a broad spectrum of cultural figures to the new aspects of an urban world whose benchmarks were changing.

In an era that saw the thrust of the avant-gardes lose momentum in the face of new social and economic emergencies, as well as developments in communication that radically altered the exchange and transmission of ideas in social and urban fields, Giedion perceived the changes occurring in architecture. He had worked on these questions in Canada between 1951 and 1957 as part of the Exploration Group, together with McLuhan and Tyrwhitt herself, and went on to hone the definition of New Regionalism to describe a nascent attitude in architecture, thus attributing a positive meaning to this term. Despite this, his considerations reveal the ambiguous difference between a mainstream still influenced by CIAM and the avant-garde, and a new architecture that was still considered secondary in terms of geographical location and formal expression, even when it was capable of discerning and conjugating the new needs of the world. This was an architecture that encompassed local experiences, political involvement (frequent and often questionable), close relationships with existing cities, diversified languages, and complex relationships with technology. An architecture that cannot be traced back to

Fig. 5
H. Fathy, plan of the small town of New Bariz in the oasis of El Kharga in Egypt, 1965.

Fig. 6
Plenary meeting of the Delos Symposia in the Delos Island Theatre, 1968.

styles, schools or movements but rather finds its common trait in the relationship with what Pikionis called the 'only tradition of Architecture in the world' (fig. 7-8) conjugated in a thousand versions but substantially unitary in principles. And it is precisely the recognition of 'anomalous' protagonists like Reidy by attentive but 'conditioned' observers like Giedion that paradoxically highlights an act of obscuration. This act was perpetrated by the most advanced architectural culture against a new approach to architecture that could hold its own against more well-known methods but was branded outdated and not particularly significant.

Manuel de Solà Morales, in a 1987 essay published in Spain in *UR, urbanismo revista*, 5 and a few years later (1989) in Italy in *Lotus International* 64, entitled *Otra Tradiciòn Moderna*, was among the first to try to define within twentieth-century history the contours of this new and, in many ways, precursory tradition, especially as regards the urban context.

In Holland, the well-known works by Willem Dudok and J.J. Oud, and to the same extent the more classical works by Michel de Klerk or Hendrik Petrus Berlage, exemplify a style of urban project that can be considered an interference within an established context. Works by Giuseppe de Finetti, Emilio Lancia, or Giovanni Muzio in Milan, those of Kay Fisker, Carl Petersen or Ivar Bentsen in Copenhagen, those of Eliel Saarinen in Helsinki and Sven Markelius in Stockholm, those of Joze Plecnik in Ljubljana, and those of Francesc Folguera in Catalunya or Secondino Zuazo in Madrid, manipulate the city as a field of new architecture without ever losing sight of its role as an instrument for urban order. This is a wise discipline whose starting point is love rather than contempt for the existing city and, for this reason, makes its transformation even more challenging… It was a form of urban planning that measured itself against the distinct condition of each urban element, with the idea of the city as an increasingly rich, diverse, and complex artifact. I believe that it is here, in this complexity, that the true tradition of the modern city must be recognized [..] (Solà Morales 1989) (fig. 9)

Manuel de Solà Morales' point of view focuses primarily on the city but if we were to widen the discourse to what have become topical themes, such as those relating to the environment or to identity, the writings and projects of the last century would offer us a range of considerations that are similar in terms of foresight and usefulness.

These are less conspicuous and more realistic 'experiments' than those of overt modernity, revealed in often difficult formal expressions, and not always represented by iconic buildings, but capable of producing recognizable urban fragments that can lead to research into various aspects of traditional architecture and of cities: from Amsterdam to Ljubljana, from Hamburg to Athens, and from Sweden to Spain. They give us a picture of ideas and projects which, purged of cumbersome ideological ballast and the pretextual evaluation of critics, gradually proved to be both fertile and

Fig. 7
D. Pikionis, the tea pavilion and church in the complex of St. Dimitris Loumbardiaris in Athens in its present condition.

Fig. 8
D. Pikionis, the tea pavilion and church in the complex of St. Dimitris Loumbardiaris in Athens in its present condition.

boundless. A few years after Giedion, Kenneth Frampton recognised the existence of this approach but, in his eagerness to label the phenomenon, and to distinguish it from others, he ended up repeating the same error as the German historian. As in Giedion's case, but with the aggravating circumstance of a clearer historical situation, Frampton's interest in the less conventional developments in architecture of the last century, summarized in the definition of Critical Regionalism, cannot escape the intrinsically limiting character of its own denomination. This resulted in the pinpointing of niche urban areas, unrepeatable projects, and personal preferences. Thus, once again, a part of the complex history of twentieth century architecture – in which the avant-garde and the traditional are often intertwined in the creations of the same protagonists, and ideas pass through personal relationships that had little to do with architectural movements – is reduced to a background event and a showcase of isolated personalities who may be important figures, but who are left waiting to be recognised as part of an authentic surge of innovation.
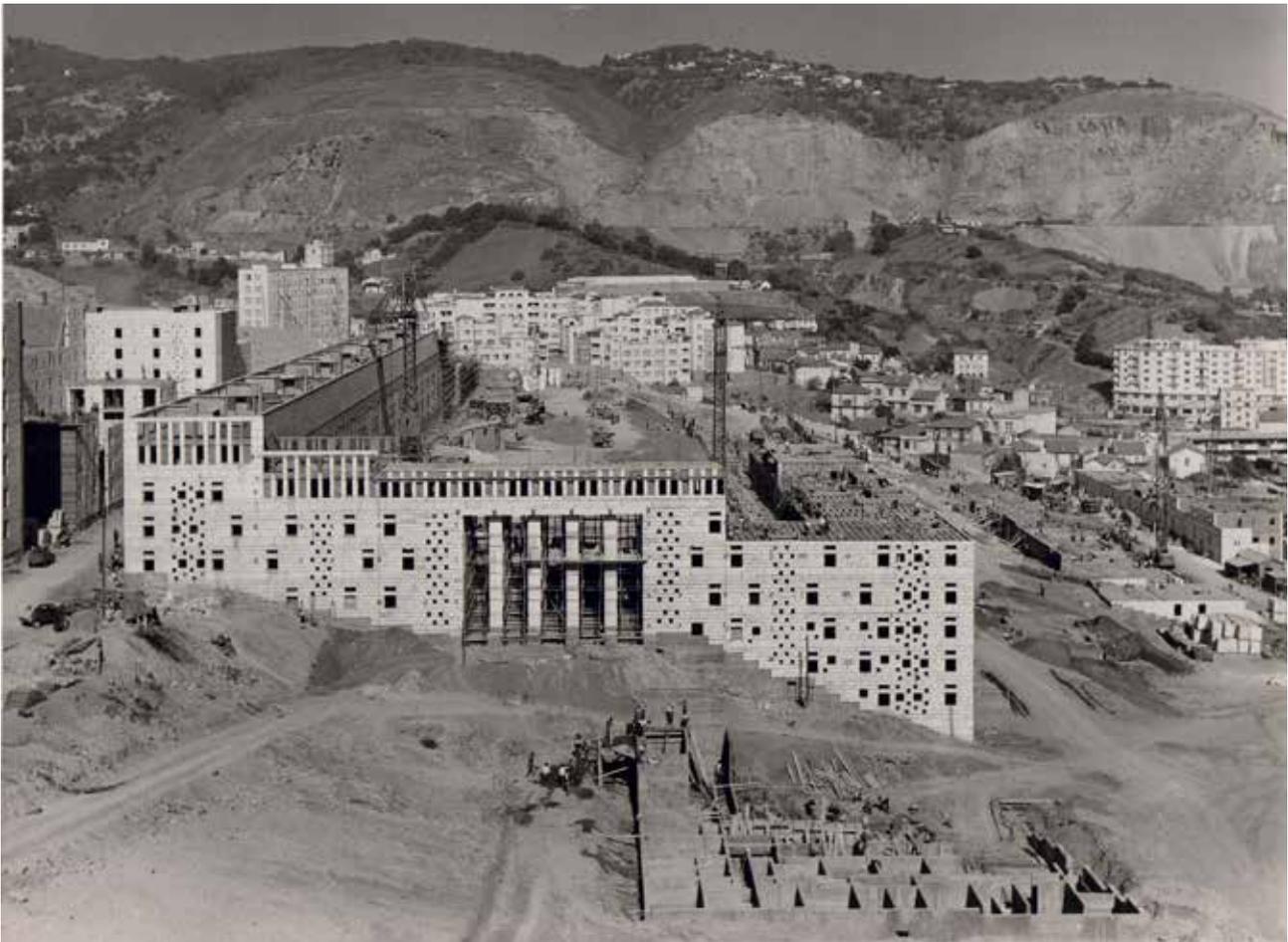
Fig. 9
F. Pouillon, Climat de France in Algeri, 1960.

Frampton writes:

Critical Regionalism necessarily presupposes a more explicitly didactic relationship with nature than that defined by the abstract and formal traditions of avant-garde architecture (Frampton, 1984)

but is it correct to apply this label to architects such as Plecnik, Pouillon (fig. 10) or Pikionis in Europe or Reidy and Vilanova Artigas in Brazil, just to name a few examples? Should we not, instead, consider their contributions as essential components of modernity in architecture – a single, multifaceted, and complex history, rather than as a catalogue of false connectedness or as a sum of complete opposites? If we accept the idea of a single, complex history as our starting point, an entire century of architecture that continues to influence us today can become an even more valuable terrain that has yet to be fully explored. And, again, using this view as our starting point, we should note how attention to places and identities has always been a constant throughout the history of twentieth-century architecture, even when futuristic intentions and the promotion of palingenetic concepts seemed to obscure everything else.

What has changed over time, however, is the degree of importance attributed to this research, and its usefulness in addressing today's issues. This awareness has increased alongside the difficulty of recognizing what the contemporary world has generated in terms of physical appearance in cities and in the environment, with the failure of large-scale design or control tools on one hand and, on the other, that of free-market-oriented solutions. The coexistence of globalization phenomena and local differences is now a consolidated fact, the latter frequently offering greater formal richness and capacity

Figg. 10, 11
Images of Venice during the 2020 lockdown, photos by U. Ferro and L. Pilot, from Venezia Vuota, by A. Ferlenga and F. De Maio, 2021.
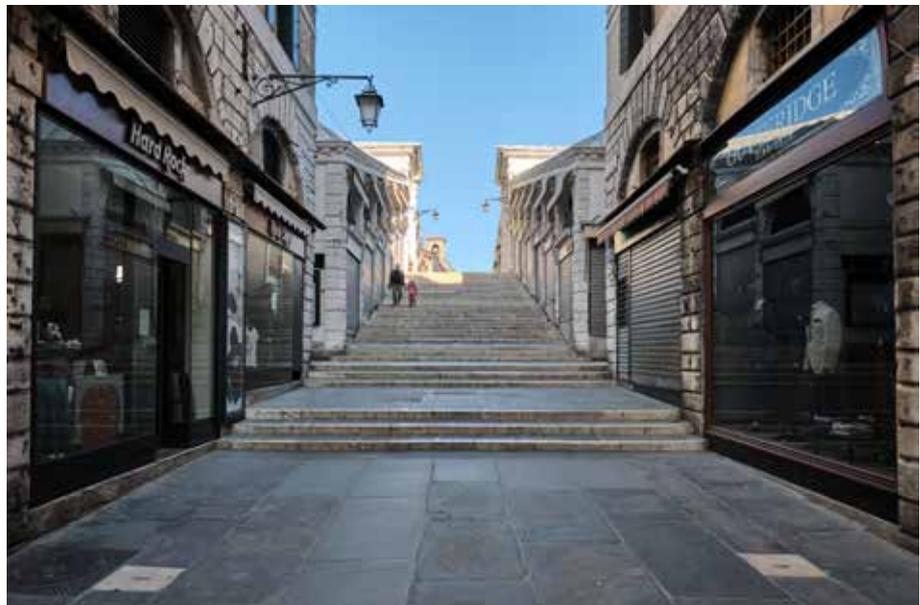
Fig. 12
Barrios Informales in the centre of Lima, photo: A. Ferlenga.

to adapt to the problems of our world than the former. Also, the framework within which we are moving is no longer that of economic progress and all-encompassing ideologies, but rather of transition and uncertainty within a major environmental, social, and urban crisis. This is a picture that atypical intellectuals such as Oswald Spengler, Patrick Geddes, Lewis Mumford, Jean Gottmann, and Doxiadis himself perceived as the priority of a new era. They are bearers of a culture whose intuitions about the future appeared much closer to reality than those prefigured by the leaps forward of the so-called avant-gardes: a *new realism* rather than a *new regionalism*.

Identifying a field of study within a forgotten history, however, is obviously not enough: present-day emergencies require more than the revival of anticipatory ideas conceived of in circumstances that have changed dramatically. They require forms of knowledge and practical and theoretical tools which together can form a 'secular' culture suitable for addressing today's world in all its contradictions. Within a dynamic history that saw different approaches to urban planning move in and out of favour, this means resuming the analytical, close-up reading of the phenomena in progress as regards the formal aspects of cities where architectures from
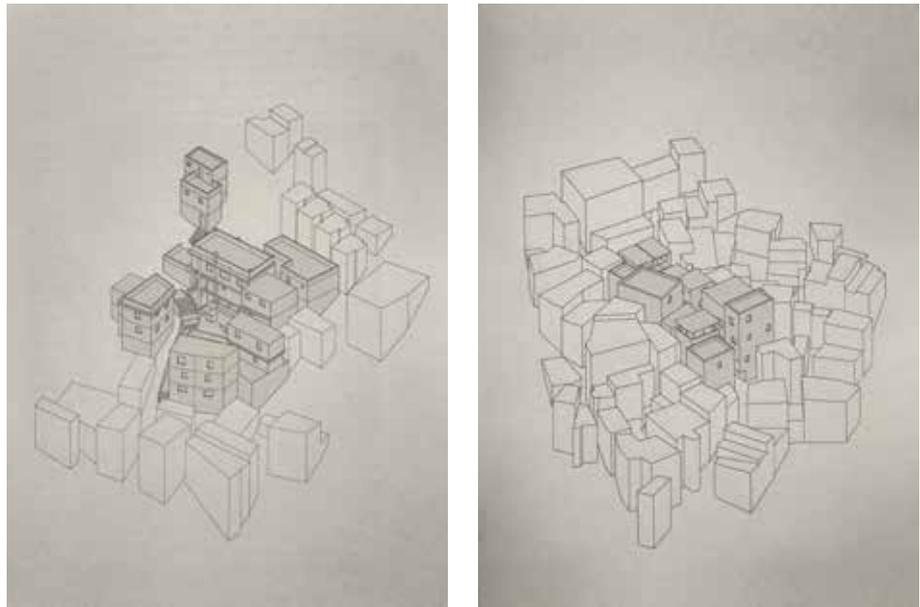
Figg. 13, 14
Surveys of housing aggregations in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, from: Informal rooting by A. Tessari, 2020.

different historical periods can merge, giving a special connotation to the idea of modernity. This was an interpretation of the world, its cities, and its landscapes that was interrupted for at least 50 years and which, to a great extent, was conceived and had its greatest development in Italy. This also implies returning to consider the exemplary value of areas that, like Italy, present themselves as living archives of urban-architectural values. Each Italian city has a unique character that was shaped by history, and its own identity that clearly cannot be reproduced. What can be replicated, however, are its dimensions, the extent of its public spaces, its relationship with topography or landscape, its being incorporated into larger metropolitan or natural areas, and its ability to produce a special well-being in terms of liveability and work. In this unique and tragic period of the Covid pandemic, Venice (fig. 11-12), for example, has amply demonstrated this. But it is not just history that continues to inform us. The need for identity also emerges in places – increasingly widespread in the world – where life is marked by temporariness and despair. Suketu Metha in his book *The Secret Life of Cities* (2016) dedicated to Italo Calvino, and ten years later in *Maximum City* returns to the same themes, re-reading the slums of Mumbai where the inhabitants, despite living in extremely precariousness conditions, reconstruct desperate forms of identity by naming sewer streams or heaps of garbage with the names of the rivers and hills of their distant villages, an attempt to create a reminder of their previous architectural and public spaces. The same thing could be said when considering the evolution of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro or of the *barrios informales* (fig. 13) of Lima where spaces and architectures re-aggregate to generate an evocative and social value that, inevitably and unconsciously, recalls the memory of the city, and where infrastructures (funiculars and stairways, for example) are transformed to mark the presence of new identities.

These are recurring themes, but the conditions and dimensions in which they occur now, and our greater sensitivity towards the environment, require an overall reconsideration of histories, theories and tools, and a new understanding of the contemporary conditions of urban living (fig. 14-15). With these, we will be able to identify the materials and tools that can give life to virtuous processes of transformation that affect the most densely inhabited parts of the world and not just the few square meters of indistinguishable Downtown metropolitan areas.

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Luigi Coccia
Factual Complex. Peter Zumthor's Thermal Baths

Abstract

The text will start from the origins of the "critical regionalism" denomination to investigate the consequences of the "operational" approach to the history of contemporary architecture. In particular, I will start from the new framework in which the role of architecture today arises and from how this derives a need for an overall "repositioning" of the architect and his culture which requires, in addition to a change in responsibility and age, tools also reconsideration of the architectural events that preceded us and of the approach to their analysis. I will consider how the "regionalistic" position of many characters has produced a double consideration of the events of a modernity that today more than ever appears unique, multifaceted and useful perhaps more for what it contained "marginal" than for its mainstream. Finally, I will deal with an attitude, in the past practiced by architects, that of the construction of a "history" useful for the trade, now almost completely abandoned, and the risks that derive from this.

Mountain, stone, water, building in stone, building with stone, building into the mountain, building out of the mountain, being inside the mountain – our attempts to give this chain of words an architectural interpretation […] guided our design for the building and step by step gave it form. (Zumthor 1997, p. 56)

Thirty years have passed since Peter Zumthor carried out hits first studies for the Thermal Baths at Vals: an exemplary project, a love story between stone and water. It is a project that immediately aroused the admiration of the critics and much has been written about it. By making use of evocative images associated with its realisation, the work is analysed to understand the sense of the atmosphere repeatedly recalled by the author and effectively expressed in the shaping of the design. Why talking about this design again? The time for the design and realisation of the work (1991-1996) allowed the author to question himself on the creative process, to meditate on the relationship between theory and practice, and to find the words to make the design explicit. *Architektur Denken* and *Atmosphäre* are the titles of two books published in 1999 and 2006, respectively (Zumthor 1999, 2006). They contain reflections on the author's way of understanding architecture, and on his passion for things that leads to things. The project for the Thermal Baths at Vals is an opportunity to explore the concept of the "factual complex" (Zumthor 2003, p. 26). developed by Peter Handke, often quoted by Peter Zumthor. It is a phrase associated with the recognition and experiencing of the site in terms of state of affairs, i.e., a condition in which things manifest themselves and contribute to the identification of a specific spatial context. Handke discusses fidelity to things, each time trying to turn the outcome of his observations into descriptions that can

be experienced as faithfulness to the narrated place, and by renouncing all that is superfluous. Zumthor appreciates Handke's effort to make texts and descriptions an integral part of the environment they refer to and, with the same approach, bases his research on acknowledging the factual complex. Drawings become instruments that reveal the essence of a place. They do not only describe the state of affairs, showing essential characteristics, but they also trigger an imaginative process. Imagination leads to concrete developments on the basis of the knowledge acquired, and to architectural reconfigurations on the basis of the original state of affairs. Conformity is considered as the adequacy of the form designed to the form experienced. It is conformity that particularly develops faithfulness to things, as posited by Handke. It is a search for a correspondence between architecture and reality.

Mountains, stones and water are physical entities identifying natural places; they are the same entities that have contributed to the formation and identification of artificial places and of the thermal baths architecture. The conformity of the work to the site is expressed by spatiality that can be likened to ground manipulation. It can also be compared to sophisticated excavations that produce habitable cavities absorbed in the context, not camouflaged. The facility does not show itself as a building complex but as a topography, i.e., as a geometric matrix organising internal and external space, materially homogeneous and made explicit by a tectonic fact.

The relationship between architecture and context is a controversial issue that has long been debated. It may have been eluded or little explored in recent architectural works. The issue is the background to the thesis on *Critical Regionalism* formulated by Kenneth Frampton in the early 1980s. His approach is oriented towards the valorisation of localistic aspects and site-specific factors that are in contrast with homologising trends – disruptive effects of globalisation. Frampton considers *Regionalism* as a critical concept rather than a style. He describes some works in which localistic aspects become evident. Thus, this critical investigation has a regionalist spirit and focuses on design research findings, not on architects' profiles or theories. The reinterpretation of the project developed by Zumthor for the Thermal Baths at Vals is an opportunity to verify the correspondence of the work to the requirements expressed by Frampton. Above all, the aim is to evaluate the topicality of an experimental design that favours the development of a strong culture with an identity, which, nevertheless, welcomes universal techniques (Frampton 1984, p. 22).

The Thermal Baths at Vals: architecture and context

The baths complex is located in the northern end of a small village that stretches along the Vals valley in the canton of Grisons in Switzerland. The area is surrounded by hotels and condominiums built in the 1960s. They are rather anonymous building artefacts which deviate from the typical buildings of the original setting. Originally, the architectural landscape was characterised by small isolated houses similar to old stone barns with wooden roofs. This does not seem to attract Zumthor's attention when focussing on the complex. No anthropic sign associated with the urban context is taken as a reference in the definition of the thermal establishment; yet the experimental design is not aimed at exploring an atopic space. The relationship with the context is revealed in the formulation of the following purpose: «the establishing of a special relationship with the mountain landscape, its natural power, geological substance and impressive topog-

raphy» (Zumthor 1997, p. 56). Zumthor undertook research on a new thermal baths establishment on a site marked by orography and hydrography, at an altitude of more than 1,200 metres. The site was close to a spring of water flowing out from the ground at 30° C. He renounced the idea of integrating the new structure with the ones already existing that had been built in the immediate surroundings.

The experimental design took shape from the very first sketches. The black strokes obtained through the application of a soft material, a charcoal, traced the first planimetric patterns. The graphic technique evokes a design idea that expresses an intent: creating space through a topographic reconfiguration of the site. The drawings are essential, the graphic lines are strictly controlled, the colour fields are measured and localised. Dark blocks arranged on an orthogonal grid emerge against a light background and allude to a mass being cut. The square-shaped figures vary in size and are emphasised by blue segments traced around the perimeter. The segments allude to water infiltrations among the stereometrically shaped stone blocks. The experimental design continues with other drawings which use the same technique. Masses move away, they thicken or dissipate. The interstitial gaps appear compressed or dilated, and are marked by blue and yellow chromatic surfaces which refer to specific areas: water basins, rest areas and passageways. The sequence of drawings describes the progressive deepening of the experience, whereas the connection of words (mountains-stones-water) reveals the design choices.

The drawings explore the establishment place, but they also recall other places that are geographically and historically known and are impressed in people's memory. They are «images of places that I know and that once impressed me», writes Zumthor, «images of ordinary or special places that I carry with me as inner vision of specific moods and qualities» (Zumthor 2003, p. 34). They are images of natural places shaped by water and wind or modelled by quarrying. They are marked by cutting phases that generate differences in height and levelling. They are geometrically marked by quarry faces. They are also images of places marked by the work of ancient civilisations, such as archaeological sites where the remains of massive walls are solidly anchored to the ground.

In its overall representation, the Thermal Baths at Vals project evokes a large porous stone placed on a sloping terrain. Upstream the volume disappears because it is completely absorbed into the soil, but downstream it emerges and shows its porosity to the outside world. Geography and history come together to create a soil architecture, and an artificial order of nature. This archaic environment resembles the temple foundations of the Roman times, such as the substructures of Latium sanctuaries: mighty masonry blocks as support bases for buildings. As the temples standing on the summit disappeared, the basement on the sloping terrain is what now remains of these sacred places. On the side facing the valley, the masonry blocks lose their forms, creating sequences of niches or cryptoporticus: resting or passage spaces covered by barrel vaults - cool places in summer and sheltered spaces in winter.

The Thermal Baths at Vals assimilate and process this ancient building principle, creating living spaces carved out of the thickness of the basement. «I wanted to build the walls of huge, solid blocks» asserts Zumthor,

I had imagined powerful rocks, and then even the largest ones turned out to be very small! I was absolutely disappointed. But walking around the quarry, I noticed stacks

of thin slabs, trimmed for flooring. The quarry was full of such thin panels. I saw that such treatment of rock is the simplest and the easiest. I understood that, out of the thinnest elements possible, I needed to build the massiveness homogeneity of a block of rock. (Stec 2004, p. 10).

Zumthor defines his architecture as a geometric cave system (Zumthor 2007, p. 41), a sequence of empty spaces imaginarily carved in a stone block. Such spaces are made by arranging concrete walls covered by bands of local stone, the green *gneiss*, which resembles a geological concretion. The stones are placed horizontally with almost imperceptible gaps. «You cannot plan emptiness», writes Zumthor, «but you can draw its boundaries and so empty comes to life» (Stec 2004, p. 8). The experimental design becomes an exercise of creating space boundaries that not only delimit the environment but also direct movements by tracing paths and marking places of rest. This is evident in the drawings that anticipate imagined spatiality. Such spatiality aims at being concrete and gives voice to something that has not yet found a place in the real world. Architectural representations can thus make manifest the absence of real objects within a specific context and feed the desire for something concrete. In this way, «architectural drawings try to express as accurately as possible the aura of the building in its intended place» (Zumthor 2003, p. 11) without being influenced by external or accidental elements.

This helps understand the role of architectural portrayals in Zumthor's research: only by absorbing the qualities of the desired object, do architectural portrayals anticipate the atmosphere that is created when the work is finished and becomes part of the concrete world. Such qualities arise from the interaction with the outer context. In order to acquire the qualities of the desired object, architectural portrayals do not have to resort to graphic virtuosity or realistic representations. «If they [architectural portrayals] lack 'open patches' where our imagination and curiosity about the reality of the drawing can penetrate the image, the portrayal itself becomes the object of our desire» (Zumthor 2003, p. 11). Zumthor insists on the need to always keep the desire alive for real objects, for what lies beyond representation, and argues that when the representation no longer evokes any promise, it vanishes.

The architectural portrayals created for the Thermal Baths at Vals are anything but realistic. They are synthetic and abstract, incisive and evocative, capable of conveying the idea that guides and directs the design choices. At the same time, the architectural portrayals show their formal development; they represent a description of the logical steps leading to the expected results. In this sense, architectural portrayals are premonitory: they anticipate what is about to come.

The sequence of the study sketches points out the founding principle of the thermal baths complex in the plan design and as a space creator. The architecture and the context coincide, as the one influences the other and vice-versa. Space is conceived at the base of the complex as it flows among large blocks and assumes a labyrinthine configuration. In some parts, it is closed and contained by the walls; it has an intimate and recondite character. In other parts, it is open, it escapes boundaries as it pervades the surrounding area, favouring exploration and interconnections. Zumthor argues that architecture knows two fundamental possibilities of spatial creation: «the closed architectural body that isolates space within itself, and the open body that embraces an area of space that is connected with the endless continuum» (Zumthor 2003, p. 16).
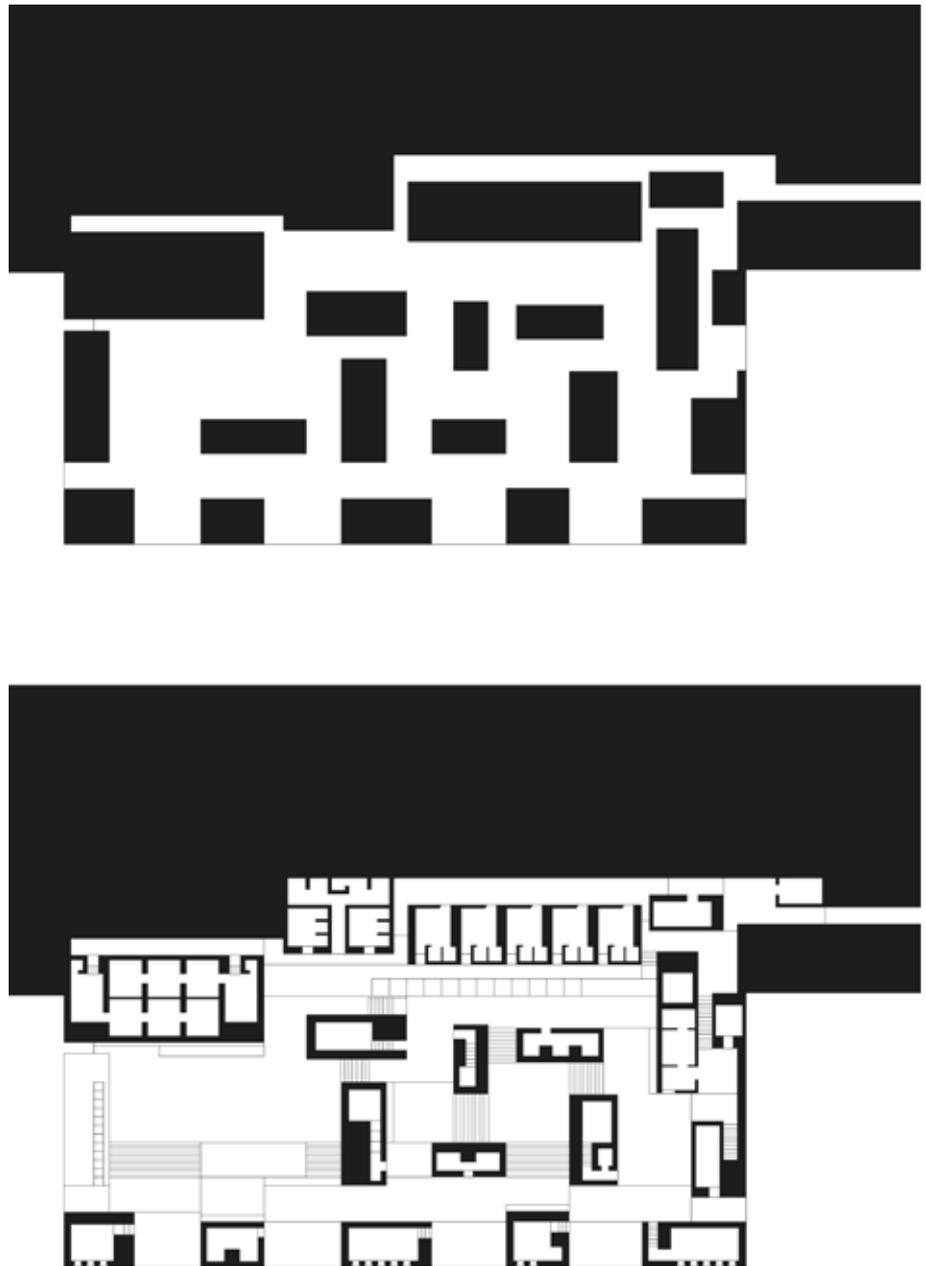
Fig. 1
Plan of the Thermal Baths at Vals, graphic elaboration by the author.

In the Thermal Baths at Vals, the two spatial concepts coexist: the changing rooms, the hot and the cold baths, the sauna and the Turkish shower, but also the "flower bath" and the "sounding stone", which are all small habitable caves. They are isolated "closed bodies" located on a plane marked by continuous altimetric variations connected by stairs and ramps which, in addition to showing the way, shape the water pools and accompany the progressive immersion of the body. The architectural portrayals envisage all this and describe the trajectories of the possible crossings of the thermal space. Unidirectional arrows invite the visitor to follow a solitary path; bidirectional arrows favour encounters. The space walked through is compressed or dilated depending on the trajectory followed. In passing from one room to another, the number of steps is never the same; the floor levels, the dimensions of the spaces and their heights vary, just as the width or the depth of the passages. Along the solitary paths, marked by small staircases cut out between the wall blocks, the vision field is limited. Along the other paths, marked by ramps and widening, the vision field expands, allowing a more extensive perception of space in its planimetry and altim-

etry. This conveys a sense of discovery; the pleasure of moving through an unknown place or exploring a natural space. «Let me give you an example, in connection with some thermal baths we built» writes Zumthor, «It was incredibly important for us to induce a sense of freedom of movement, a milieu for strolling, a mood that had less to do with directing people than seducing them» (Zumthor 2007, p. 42).

Seamlessly, the interior space extends outwards, generating "open bodies", such as islands and terraces built from the extensions of the walking surface. They emerge from the water of basins and pools, appearing as fluid intrusions into the monolith. Local green stones cover the walls made of thin slabs. The interior and exterior flooring is made of slabs of different sizes and is also patterned with green stones. It conveys the idea of being cut horizontally and, hence, of being larger in size. From an architectural point of view, the arrangement of the stones produces a monolithic impression: not only are the walking surfaces made of stone, but also the floors of the pools, the stairs, the seats and the door thresholds. Everything is developed according to the same principle of matter layering.

The predominantly introverted space acquires an extroverted character in the transition from indoors to outdoors when crossing the thresholds as points of interaction between architecture and landscape. The space opens up towards the overlooking mountain and creates a physical and visual contact with the surrounding nature.

The two spatial concepts explored by Zumthor in designing the thermal baths are further enhanced by light, either natural or artificial, which produces shadows on the stone blocks and reflections on water. In addition to light, sound contributes to enhancing the atmosphere of the place, as the sound of water against the walls during ablutions. Visitors walk through interior caves to reach the ones outside and are guided by the light coming from above through narrow slits – gaps in the roof slabs. Light and sound perceptions vary greatly according to space geometric features and their specific uses. The light and sound experience changes from the public central pool, where natural light from above and from the side windows is more intense and noise is more diffuse, to the warmer water pool, which is enclosed in a narrow but high space resembling a cave. Here the light is artificial; it comes from the bottom of the pool, it is filtered through the water and diffused into the steam-saturated air. The stone walls marking the space limits have no openings, so the sound produced inside is absorbed and creates evocative echoes, suitable for meditation. The darkness of the interior caves is contrasted by the light that floods from the open spaces and goes around the outdoor pool. Darkness is also contrasted by the open but covered spaces in the wall blocks that, going downward, mark the edges of the monolith set in the ground

The Thermal Baths at Vals: regionalist architecture
In 1980, Kennet Frampton published *Modern Architecture: a critical History* and laid the foundations for reflections on the development of regionalist architecture. Insights into the subject were later provided in a number of essays published in 1983 and in an additional chapter to his *History of Modern Architecture* entitled *Critical Regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity*, published in Italy in 1986. At the beginning of the fifth chapter of his book, Frampton quotes Paul Ricoeur at length on the phenomenon of universalization. Universalization leads to an advancement of mankind but, at the same time, it allows the destruction of the

Fig. 2
Thermal Baths at Vals, photograph by ©Fabrice Fouillet, 2018.

«creative nucleus of great civilizations and great cultures» around which life takes shape and meaning. In this way, it becomes the «ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind». «We have the feeling that this single world civilization at the same time exerts a sort of attrition or wearing away at the expense of the cultural resources which have made the great civilization of the past», asserts the French philosopher, arguing that participation in modern civilisation does not imply the erasure of the entire cultural past. Thus, according to Ricouer, the challenge is «how to become modern and return to the origins; how to revive an ancient, dormant civilization and be part of a universal civilization» (Frampton 1986, p. 371).

The answer to the questions raised by Paul Ricoeur can be searched in the theory posited by Kennet Frampton on Critical Regionalism. The concept of *region* is associated with a spatial sphere where it is possible to recognise a living and building culture passed down from generation to generation. The concept of *regionalism*, instead, refers to a contemporary design attitude which does not subdue to globalisation trends – often shaped in homologated and conformist forms. Regionalism pursues a critical intervention approach that, thanks to innovative building techniques, experiments with forms that are capable of rediscovering and enhancing the qualities of places and of specific identities. This is the ability to interact

with cultural resources, and it is often intrinsic in places or in the singular intertwining of natural and artificial landscape. Such ability allows the development of a design methodology that takes on a universal value, thus participating in modern civilisation. *Critical Regionalism* is not the expression of a vernacular architecture, or a spontaneous work resulting from the interaction among climate, culture, myth and craft. On the contrary, as Frampton argues, it identifies the newly created regional schools whose main ambition is to mirror and address the building blocks they are composed of. In pursuing this objective, *Critical Regionalism* experiments with an architecture that is rooted in modern tradition but is also connected with the geographical and cultural context. Thus, it proposes a progressive approach in design by mediating between localism and globalism.

The design experience supports the theory developed by Frampton in *Critical Regionalism* in which he formulates a list of characters or rather, as he specifies, "attitudes" recurring in a "critical conception". Starting from the enunciation of seven points in the fifth chapter of the *History of Modern Architecture* entitled *Critical Regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity*, Peter Zumthor's design for the Thermal Baths at Vals is now examined. The characteristics of such design are analysed in light of the theory outlined by Kennet Frampton.

The first point to analyse concerns the relationship with modernity. While opposing modernisation, *Critical Regionalism* «refuses to abandon the emancipatory and progressive aspects of modern architectural legacy», (Frampton 1986, p. 386) but moves away from normative optimisation, utopia and large-scale exploration. The thermal baths designed by Zumthor are a small-scale experimentation that looks at the past with a thoroughly modern spirit, and radically transforms it. There is a fascinating mix of tradition and innovation in the design. Zumthor uses materials based on the local culture and applies contemporary building techniques that draw on the modernist experience. Elements of the modernist experience are found in the architectural portrayals; from the dealing with space to serial building methods. In this way, he demonstrates that the craft aspect, as acknowledged by some critics, actually plays a marginal role.

The second point that distinguishes Critical Regionalism is that it does not focus on isolated elements, but it emphasizes the territory. In this regard, Frampton defines "place-form" as the sphere where the building action begins and ends. Experimenting with an architecture that starts from things and returns to things is Zumthor's stated aim, which is also put into practice. The alpine context, made explicit by the word chain "mountains, stones, water", confirms its key role in the built work. It is architectural spatiality that manifests itself not as an establishment, but as a context artificial fragment. Zumthor is attracted to buildings that give the impression of being solidly anchored to the ground and are an integral part of the environment they belong to. The thermal baths complex is the realisation of such an idea; it is a refined integration of architecture and context, a "place-form" that can be likened to those works that apparently say: «I am as you see me and I belong here» (Zumthor 2003, p. 14).

The third point is as follows: «Critical Regionalism favours the realisation of architecture as a tectonic fact rather than the reduction of the built environment to a series of ill-sorted scenographic episodes» (Frampton 1986, p. 387). Tectonics is a building art that keeps together structure, material and spatial perception. Tectonics characterises the Thermal Baths at Vals, conceived by Zumthor as a "geometric cave system". It is a complex

Fig. 3
Temple of Jupiter Anxur in Terracina, photograph by Rossana Coccia, 2022.

made of local stones: the green *gneiss*. The green *gneiss* gives the thermal baths architecture the image of a geological concretion thanks to its extraordinary framework. The tectonic idea is reinforced by anchoring the complex to the ground, and in the aim to place the new thermal bath in a particular relationship with the primal strength and geological substance of the mountain scenery and the impressive relief of the topography (Steiner 1997, p. 27).

Ultimately, the work is the result of an interaction with the specificity of the context; it is absorbed but not camouflaged in the place, it clearly shows its artificiality but renounces a purely scenographic manifestation.

The fourth point highlights the local nature of the work: *Critical Regionalism* emphasises certain site-specific factors. As mentioned, in the design of the Thermal Baths at Vals, the topography is considered as a three-dimensional matrix the complex fits in. In emphasising the specificity of the site, Frampton also considers local light as «the primary agent by which the volume and the tectonic value of the work are revealed» (Frampton 1986, p. 387).

Light, predominantly artificial, characterises interior spaces: «in a cave, artificial light must be used», writes Friedrich Achleitner, «and the lighting

methods used by Zumthor recall distant experiences of the Alpine world and the oldest memories of light in the mountains» (Achleitner 1997, p. 61). From the inside to the outside, the transition from half-light to full-light takes place. The "geometric cave system" obtained through excavations in the large monolith anchored to the ground is transformed into terraces and patios projecting towards the landscape. The different light sources emphasise the value of the environment. The light, either natural or artificial, contributes to the creation and perception of space.

The fifth point of *Critical Regionalism* revolves around the perception of space. Frampton believes that the qualities of an environment should be experienced not only visually but also tactilely. He describes the changing light intensity of certain environments; heat and cold sensations; the different degrees of humidity; air movement; the presence of odours, and the propagation of sound in geometrically different environments. These themes recur in the research developed by Peter Zumthor and lead to the definition of the concept of "atmosphere". Recollections, images and ideas embodied in personal memory guide the design process, leading to the realisation of what the architect likes to call "atmosphere". He often describes certain places associated with his childhood in an accurate and passionate way: «I remember the sound of gravel under my feet, the soft gleam of the waxed oak staircase, I can hear the heavy front door closing behind me as I walk along the dark corridor and enter the kitchen» (Zumthor 2003, p. 7). Zumthor questions himself on the "real magic" and asks himself the following: «can I achieve that, as an architect, an atmosphere like that, its intensity, its mood. And if so, how do I go about it?» (Zumthor 2007, p. 17). The design of the Thermal Baths at Vals can be considered a successful experiment.

In the sixth point, Frampton draws attention to the concept of "local vernacular", believing that *Critical Regionalism* can occasionally include «vernacular elements as disjunctive episodes within the whole» (Frampton 1986, p. 387). The form abstraction that characterises the thermal baths designed by Zumthor is so dominant that it leaves little room for vernacular elements. Undoubtedly, the texture of the stone of the massive walls recalls ancient retaining walls in mountain areas. However, the building technique is so refined and innovative that the traditional dry-stone walls are transformed into the so-called «Vals composite wall», where concrete adheres monolithically to thin slightly staggered stone slabs, thus resembling a fabric. This is an admirable reinterpretation of the dry-stone wall which pervades the architectural layout of the complex, and cannot be considered "vernacular". Other elements could be brought into this category. They appear as detached since they contrast with the dominant material – the green *gneiss* that covers the entire monolith. Thin pipes from where water gushes out are placed on the retaining walls at regular intervals; thin circular section railings are found on the edges of terraces and loggias, and elegant doors lead to therapy rooms. These are building elements made of an ancient material, brass, an oxidizable alloy composed of copper and zinc. The dark wood panelling used in the changing rooms is also unrelated to the whole environment. Techniques passed onto Zumthor by his father during his youthful apprenticeship as a cabinet-maker also emerge from the panelling. All these elements are not easily matched with the idea of vernacular, although they contrast with the dominant appearance of the complex and are evocative of ancient local traditions. Eventually, by analysing the whole complex, it is possible to notice some tension «in this

regard, it tends towards the paradoxical creation of regionally based world culture, almost as though this were a precondition for achieving a relevant form of contemporary practice» (Frampton 1986, p. 387).

The seventh and final point highlights that *Critical Regionalism* tends to thrive in cultural realities that escape the tension of universal civilisation. Also, *Critical Regionalism* eschews the subdued position imposed by the dominant global culture and by those dependent on or dominated by it. A design approach emerges from cultural gaps; it valorises places, history and tradition. In this way, it triggers an intellectual reaction to globalisation. The sensitivity demonstrated by Zumthor in the design of the Thermal Baths in Vals is an opportunity to emphasise a design methodology that goes beyond the specificity of the local context. His critical attitude escapes an «optimising tension» and assumes a universal value. The following statement by the architect is very effective as it addresses contemporary architectural research, singularity and universality, local and global dimensions:

When I come across a building that has developed a special presence in connection with the place it stand in, I sometimes feel that it is imbued with an inner tension that refers to something over and above the place itself. It seems to be part of the essence of its place, and at the same time it speaks of the world as a whole. When an architectural design draws solely from tradition and only repeats the dictates of its site, I sense a lack of genuine concern with the world and the emanations of contemporary life. If a work of architecture speaks only of contemporary trends and sophisticated visions without triggering vibrations in its place, this work is not anchored in its site, and I miss the specific gravity of the ground it stands on. (Zumthor 2003, p. 34)

Peter Zumthor opened his office in 1979 and his first important works date back to the mid-1980s. His works do not appear in the chapter on *Critical Regionalism* that Kennet Frampton added to the second edition of his *Modern Archiecture: a critical History* published in 1985. In 2012, Kennet Frampton visited the office of the "mountain man", as Zumthor is called in Haldenstein, a remote village in the Swiss canton of Graubünden surrounded by mountains, where he lives and works. The documentary *The Practice of Architecture: Visiting Peter Zumthor* (2012), directed by Michael Blackwood focuses on an interview Frampton had with Zumthor. Moving between models and drawings, starting with his early pioneering works, including the Thermal Baths at Vals, the architect dwells on his bent for minimalism, his appreciation of landscape, light and materials, and his theory on his extraordinarily precise style.

Peter Zumthor's design experience in recent years can be seen as the confirmation of the thesis put forward by Kennet Frampton in the mid-1980s in *Critical Regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity*. While well rooted and incorporating the specificities of the context, his works are capable of conveying universal content, and can ultimately be considered the expression of a fertile dialogue between a place and the world.

Switzerland, with its intricate linguistic boundaries and its tradition of cosmopolitanism, has always displayed strong regionalism tendencies. The cantonal principle of admission and exclusion has always favored extremely dense forms of expression, with the canton favouring local culture and the Federation facilitating the penetration and assimilation of foreign ideas. (Frampton 1986, p. 380)

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FAM

L. Coccia, Factual Complex. Peter Zumthor's Thermal Baths

39

Ludovico Micara
Globalism and Identity in Contemporary Mediterranean Architecture. Opposition or Coexistence?

Abstract
Globalization and identity are concepts too vague to describe the complexity of contemporary architecture and cities. In the past, for instance, some global integration processes turned into distinctive characteristics of particular contexts. The cardo-decuman layouts of the Hellenistic-Roman civilization are now part of the identity of most of the Western, Mediterranean and Levant urban fabrics.
The introduction of bastion fortification systems, as a defense after the invention of firearms, produced new artifacts and urban geometries that radically differ from those that characterized the pre-existing fabrics in European cities and beyond. Today, however, they have become components of new and more complex identities. It is therefore appropriate to take into account concrete instances of proximity and hybridization where the global and the local are intertwined, as it clearly appears in the Mediterranean architectural panorama.

The recent transformations of many cities show a continuous and progressive compromise between global pressures related to modernization processes (new infrastructures, new public or private services …) and resistance that comes from the very existence of identities, traditions, customs, uses still present and alive.

Let us take the case of the Mediterranean world, in which this phenomenon is particularly evident. One of the cultural, religious, anthropological components of this world, the Islamic one, which developed mainly in the southern coast of the Mediterranean and in the Levant, was once viewed as a global imprint on those regions.

When, around the 1960s, we were still talking of "Islamic architecture and cities", Paolo Portoghesi in 1982 decided to name the Second International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale *Architecture in Islamic countries* (Portoghesi 1982). That represented a profound change because it was then acknowledged that the simple adjective "Islamic" did not cover the complexity of the aspects the world of "Islamic countries" presented in the area of architecture and the city. Likewise, it is difficult today to attribute a unity to the term "Islamic world" if we think of the geographical differences, the historical and social development of the various regions, also in relation to the consequences of colonization and post-colonization, not to mention the different modalities with which globalization has taken place. As a consequence, the cities of Islamic formation incorporate parts of fabric, fragments, environments, still referable to the traditional "Islamic city", as it was theorized at the beginning of the last century, but now amalgamated and merged with the globalized city.

It would be interesting, today, to reconnect, at least virtually, the paths

Fig. 1
Tripoli. Libya: satellite view of the Medina. (DigitalGlobe 2005).
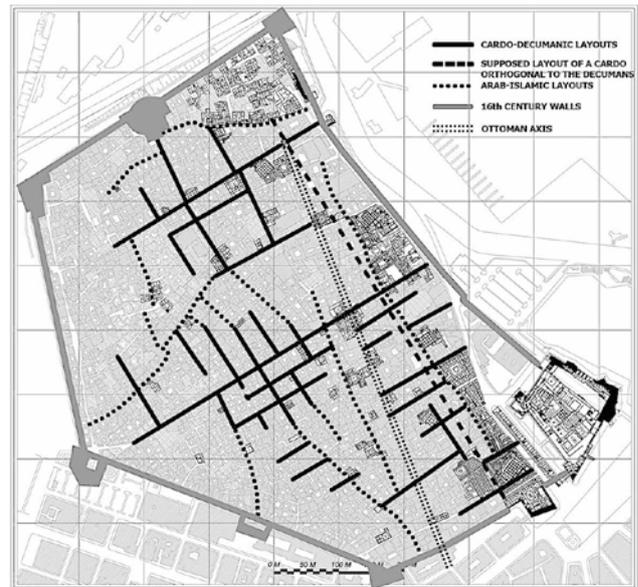
Fig. 2
Tripoli, Libya: historical urban layouts in the Medina (from Micara 2013a).

and the webs of Islamic fabrics beyond the fractures and contemporary transformations, to rediscover how much we still owe to this tradition in designing the identity and character of those cities.

Can we still rely on the historical-sociological analyses by Ibn Khaldun (Monteil 1967 [1378]) which oriented the subsequent studies by W. Marçais (Marçais 1928), G. Marçais (Marçais 1957), U. Monneret de Villard (Monneret de Villard 1966) G. E. von Grunebaum (von Grunebaum 1955), S. Bianca (Bianca 1964) in order to recognize a specific formal structure to the urban spaces of the so-called "Islamic world"? Or should we consider, instead, more recent field studies (Berardi 1979) to understand the complexity of today's cities in Islamic countries?

To this end, we will now analyze the case of the Tripoli's Medina in Libya (Micara 2013a), and the plan for the city of Yazd in Iran (Kowsar 2020).

Tripoli (Libya)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Medina of Tripoli (Micara 2008a) (Fig. 1) admirably represented most of the characteristics of the Mediterranean cities in Maghreb, namely, a successful synthesis between typical aspects of the Arab-Islamic cities and characters partly extraneous to that tradition deriving from the intense activity of commercial, demographic, religious and diplomatic exchanges with the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

For instance, next to the mosques, the high and pointed minarets that clearly manifest the cultural and religious identity of the city, and next to the dense and compact fabric of courtyard houses and narrow alleys, often *cul-de-sac*, one can perceive elements which are extraneous to the local urban tradition, such as the walls and the castle, with the 16th-century bastions, due to Charles the 5th Spanish globalization, and an unusual opening of the houses to the street.

The uncommon regularity of some roads is also evident (Fig. 2), which, after a more in-depth analysis, appears as a track of the *cardo-decumanus* order, based on the supposed *cardo*[1] and the two *decumanus* of the Roman progenitor of the city, i.e., Tripolis-Oea (The name 'Tripolis' means 'three cities', namely, Oea, Sabratha and Leptis Magna). Some urban characters, such as the breadth and airiness of the court-houses in Tripoli, mainly near the sea and the port and reminiscent of the size of the Roman *domus*, are

Fig. 3
Tripoli, Libya: 19th-century view of the seafront of the Medina from the port.

Fig. 4
Tripoli, Libya: view of the sea front and the port in the 30s of last century.

Fig. 5
Tripoli. Libya: today's view of the sea front; beyond the great road the Medina with the Castle, transformed by A. Brasini, and the past Bank of Libya, also by Brasini (picture Micara 2010).

also noteworthy. Likewise, the presence of the church and the bell tower of St. Mary of the Angels together with the many synagogues, later transformed into mosques, clearly illustrate the multi-ethnic and multi-religious dimension of the Medina in the past.

In addition, the prevailing orientation of the fabric toward the port unequivocally determined the Mediterranean character of the all the spaces of the city (Micara 2009). Today's Medina is therefore the result of a series of rewritings of the traditional settlement, from the Roman to the Arab-Islamic, to the Ottoman one, up to the Italian colonial city, and finally to the contemporary city. These rewritings have transformed an ancient settlement, born as a trading port in a large bay, in the pulsating heart of a metropolis of over one and a half million inhabitants.

This new dimension has completely changed the relationships between the different parts of the city. During Italian occupation, the demolition of parts of the city walls left traces in new streets, which favoured the integration of the Medina with the Italian city of the 1930's, giving rise to an unprecedented "historic center". Thus, the originality of this center results from the integration between a traditional Arab-Islamic urban pattern, based on the court houses fabric, and the early 20th century pattern, based on the typological and morphological relationship between streets and city blocks. Today, this historic core, much wider than the traditional Medina, is still easily recognizable with its architectures, ancient monuments, 20th century arcades, and the buildings of the "new" institutions of the colonial city. However, this integration is far from harmonious. While the attention of the colonizers was all focused on the so-called "Italian city" where the buildings of colonial power were located, and new urban axes were created, the labyrinthine urban fabric of the Medina was left on the background. A still little known and partly mysterious background, abandoned to its uncontrolled transformations and social and religious ways of life, whose presence constitutes however a fundamental component of the 20th century idea of the Mediterranean Levantine city.

As a consequence of this approach, the most significant transformations occurred in the areas of tangency and contact between the two urban systems and therefore in the edges of the Medina. The demolition of the walls made the resulting void area available for the construction of new streets and new public buildings, while parts of Medina's fabric, close to the edg-

Fig. 6
Tripoli, Libya: project of the new metropolitan dimension of "Greater Tripoli". (L. Micara: elaborated from Clément 2005)

Fig. 7
Tripoli, Libya: project for the new road that runs along the west walls of the Medina. (Micara 2015)

Fig. 8
Tripoli, Libya: a view of the project for the west walls of the Medina (Micara 2015).

es, became the object of the "normalizing" attention by the colonial administration. Even today, the problem of the edges of the Medina is still unsolved, and further aggravated by the presence of new buildings, such as large hotels in the north-western area of the city or new infrastructures, such as the beltway between the Medina and the port, which, by cutting the historical connections between the urban fabric and the sea, even more isolate the Medina itself.

Today's biggest problem in Tripoli is its new metropolitan dimension. If we now look at a satellite image of the city, we can see that its urban growth has taken place without any urban settlement rules, and that the relationship between residential fabrics and public spaces, so clear in the traditional Medina, has been lost.

The only ordering element of the "great Tripoli" is represented by the street infrastructures which partly retrace the ancient tracks connecting the Medina to the inland areas and other coastal centers, and partly define the new urban dimension through even wider ring-roads. In particular, the creation of a great highway, running along the waterfront between the Medina and the port (Fig. 3-4-5), is noteworthy.

This infrastructure, created to connect the port to the principal arteries of the city, has assumed the role of a great beltway which avoids the city and therefore runs along the seaside. This beltway heavily impacts on the structure of the Medina. What was, since the origins, an urban fabric oriented towards the port, does not find today an access towards the sea, and is now bounded and enclosed within a barrier, constituted by a highway which cannot easily be crossed (Micara 2013b, 2008b).

One of the original features of the urban fabric of the Medina is thus cancelled, which reduces its potential for rehabilitation. In prospect, the displacement of the commercial port towards east, where wider lands and infrastructure facilities are available, might entail the displacement of the beltway or the reconsideration of its relevance, which would leave room for a touristic port, and a possible residential rehabilitation of the Medina. The Medina could thus discover, by enhancing its links with the sea, one of its distinctive characters since its foundation.

In the new metropolitan dimension of "Greater Tripoli" it is however impossible to intervene with partial programs, and a new global strategic vi-

L. Micara, Globalism and Identity in Contemporary Mediterranean Architecture. Opposition or Coexistence?

43

Fig. 9
Top left: Tripoli, Libya: section of the urban park along the west walls of the Medina; on the left, the walls, with the rampart walk at their top; at the center, the promenade along the walls, and, on the right, the underground road and the connection bridge to the surrounding levels (Micara 2015).
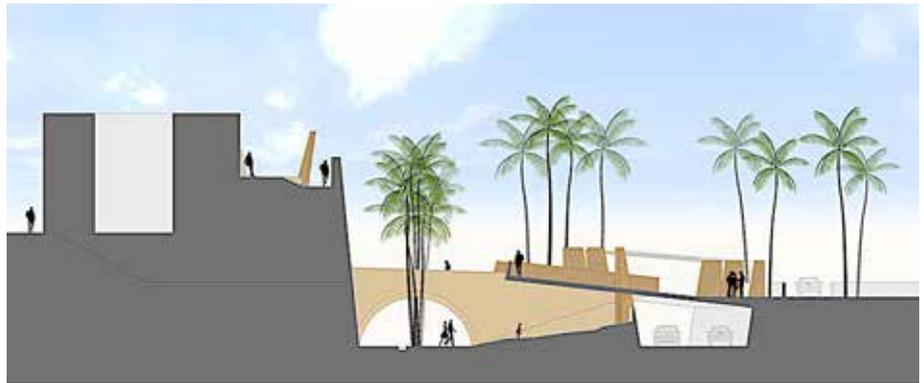
Fig. 10
Top right: Tripoli, Libya: current view of the western walls. (picture by Micara 2015)

Fig. 11
Tripoli, Libya: a view of the entrance to the walkway along the wall.(Micara 2015).

Fig. 12
Tripoli, Libya: the walkway along the walls, with shaded rest areas (Micara 2015).
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Fig. 13
Tripoli, Libya: the rampart pathway on top of the walls.
(picture by Micara 2015)

Fig. 14
Tripoli, Libya: the panoramic open market on the rampart pathway on top of the walls (Micara 2015).

sion is needed, likely to interpret the new geographical scale of the city. The urban project of the French landscape architect Gilles Clément (Clément 2005) demolishes a series of degraded and residual fabrics, *délaissés,* in Clément's terminology, integrating the voids resulting from demolishment with abandoned or not exploited areas, to create a large metropolitan belt consisting of gardens, public spaces and services (Fig. 6).

Developing Clément's suggestions, the extremities of such belt could reach the sea, welding also the current harbor with services of urban level in a single linear system. This process would thus reconstitute, at metropolitan scale, the relationship between residential areas and public spaces which is so important for the quality of the urban fabric of the Mediterranean Medina. If, at urban scale, the issue of great circulation raises the problem of the general transformation of the harbor system, in more limited areas it is possible to make the new infrastructures interact with the historical context of the Medina. This is the case of the west border of the Medina, where the ring road runs along the still existing walls (fig. 7). As an alternative to a solution of pure tangency between two entities extraneous to each other, it is thus possible to think and plan their mutual involvement to achieve that integration so characteristic of many Mediterranean urban fabrics (fig. 8).

The discovery of a picture of the Italian colonial period testifies to the presence of a moat along the ancient walls and an entrance gate to the Medina where the former Jewish ghetto was located, named *hara* in Arabic. It is then possible to recover this level, lower than the surrounding ones, to design a walkway and an urban park along the walls (fig. 9-10-11-12).

Making the highway subterranean will allow direct access to the Medina from the surrounding levels, while the rampart pathway on the top of the walls could become a panoramic open-air market (Fig. 13-14).

Yazd (Iran)

At Yazd (Kowsar 2020), an ancient Persian city at the edges of the central Iranian desert (fig. 15), a similar problem, related to the modernization of the historical centers related to new road infrastructures, is also present.

L. Micara, Globalism and Identity in Contemporary Mediterranean Architecture. Opposition or Coexistence?

45
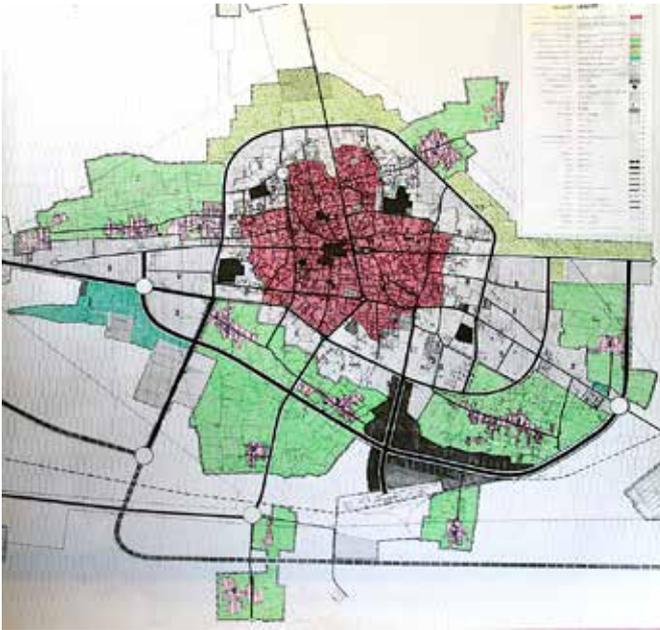
Fig. 15
Yazd, Iran: Master Plan. In 1978, the Plan was awaiting to be adopted, but this never happened. The green color indicates the villages and their farmland around the city. In light green, the proposed afforestation to prevent the advance of the desert. (Kowsar 2020).

Fig. 16
Yazd, Iran: aerial view of the Yazd old center cut by the new roads (Kowsar 2020).

In this case as well, the construction of new roads within the historical fabrics has been a type of urban intervention extensively adopted by the Iranian cities in the last century (Fig. 16). The interaction between the new infrastructures and the original features of an important ancient center would suggest an urban project implementing a new and more complex synthesis between preservation of identity and globalization.

We can distinguish two moments in which these interventions have been carried out in the past. The first one took place during Reza Shah Pahlavi's modernization period (1925-1944), to solve the issue of the access to dense and compact historical urban fabrics of Iranian cities. The second one, more recent, can be traced back to the 50s and 60s of last century, before the principles of conservation and restoration of the architectural heritage, not only related to the so-called "monuments", but also to the historical urban fabric, became established in the practice of urban design. While the "wounds" and "real cuts" produced in urban fabrics by the first demolitions were repaired with architectural systems characterized by continuous porticoed elevations with shops inside, the most recent demolitions are recognizable by other characteristics. For example, we can find random reconstruction of new street façades, or partially demolished buildings and houses, whose ruins, with interior spaces and courtyards, once kept jealously hidden, are now exposed to the prying eyes of passers-by.

The consequences of such "cutting" operations in the historical urban fabric of Iranian cities have had a double implication. The first is the interruption of the continuity of the network of pathways and alleys (*kuché*), historically connecting the houses or neighborhoods (*mahallah*) to the main axis (*rasteh*) of bazaars, caravanserais (*caravanserai*), public baths (*hammam*), religious schools (*madrasa*) and mosques. The strong unity and integration of the traditional fabric is thus broken, in the absence of an alternative settlement model.

The second effect is the loss of relevance of the bazaar, as the commercial traditional center of the city, in favor of new shopping streets, easily accessible by car. As a result, the bazaar has lost its main quality in the past, that was to be the most important public space of the city.

The objective of a possible redevelopment project (Micara 2020) (Fig.

FAM

L. Micara, Globalism and Identity in Contemporary Mediterranean
Architecture. Opposition or Coexistence?

46

Fig. 17
Yazd, Iran: project of rehabilitation of the ancient center. On the left, the course of the existing walls, the urban structure of the old city and the road plan, implemented after the 1972 demolition. On the right, the design for the Seied Golesorkh street; the project, in addition to proposing a solution for the destroyed urban parts with the integration of new services, redesigns the façades of the street (Kowsar 2020).

Fig. 18
Yazd, Iran: details of the new arrangement of the Seyed Golesorkh street, with the new services integrating the pre-existing ones with the historical urban fabric (Kowsar 2020).

17-18) is therefore not just to define and design the road fronts of new streets, such as Seied Golesorkh Street, but also to take advantage of the demolished areas to organize some services complementing those already present in the historical urban fabric.

The new urban façades have been designed (Micara 2020) by proposing one or two-level porticos, built with prefabricated elements, combined according to various configurations, and interrupted by large arched gates which introduce to the main paths of the traditional urban fabric. The new fronts of the street are not designed as a continuous and compact wall, separating the road from the historical center, but rather as a permeable and "porous" screen, integrating the new urban spaces with the pre-existing ones.

Global Identities: a contradiction?

The subject of a compact and continuous city, respectful of the nature of the cities of the Islamic world, and not resulting from the mere addition of autonomous and isolated buildings, fascinated many contemporary architects.

In *La torre di Babele*, Ludovico Quaroni wrote:

With modern means it is possible that our new unit is not a set of buildings, and not just a building (skyscraper or container). Of the single building it will have the feature of continuity: indeed, it can have it much more, precisely because it will be free from the limits of the body of building, of façades, of the site. Continuity, in a similar architectural subject, is the first and most important characteristic. The continuous building will be able to be crossed, and must be crossed in all directions, and not only horizontally, as we are used to think; it may have a thickness, only that which corresponds to the height of a floor, or that varies according to the different points; it may also generate clusters of skyscrapers; it can be flanked by a road, but it will more probably be distant from a road (highway), or instead it will have it above or below or will be crossed by the road from inside.

For air and light, holes and channels will be made in the continuous building to breathe the free air, all the times that natural light and ventilation will have to correct artificial ones, limited to what it will be needed (little) to maintain contact between man and the alternation of day and night, between man and the clear sky, between man and vegetation, openings. (Quaroni 1967)

How is it possible not to recognize the fascination of the *continuum*, of the "continuous fabric" of the Islamic Mediterranean in the images Klee painted after his trip to Tunisia at the beginning of the 9th century, or in the projects

Fig. 19
M. Safdie, Montreal Habitat '67 (picture by Micara 1970).

Fig. 20
M. Safdie, Montreal Habitat '67 (picture by Micara 1970).

of G. Candilis (Berlin Free University Project, 1963), Y. Friedman (Project for "The Spatial City", 1961), the Smithson (Project of a pedestrian continuous level upon the Berlin central area, 1958) or M. Safdie (Fig. 19-20)?

Therefore, one of the major identity elements of the cities of Islamic formation, namely continuity, can be inspiring for new and more complex urban sets. Isn't the very term "porosity"[2] ("porous" architectures, "porous" cities...), which identifies architectural systems where full and empty spaces are linked together by reciprocity and relationships, a good reference to the characters of the just analyzed Medinas?

Looking at the last images, and back to the title of this paragraph, "Global identities", we may say that the identity feature of the Mediterranean architectures and cities aspires to be global, thus reverting the initial opposition from which this study started.

Notes

[1] The currently accepted identification of the cardo of the Roman Tripoli-Oea, with the long straight road, called Sciara Arba'a Arsat and Sciara Jama el-Druj, raises some doubts. The latter, in fact, is oblique in relation to the axes of the arches of the Tetrapylon of Marcus Aurelius, then center and umbilicum of the city, unlike the decumanus that is perfectly oriented with the axis of the main fornix of the Tetrapylon itself. Moreover, the routes transverse to the supposed cardo are not orthogonal to it, as is usually the case for a Roman cardo-decumanus layout, but oriented like the decumanus. In absence and waiting for archaeological evidence, it can be assumed that the so-called cardo is an Ottoman transformation, due to the destructions made by the Spanish and the Knights of St. John in the urban area west of the Castle, in order to defend and reinforce it against the Ottoman attacks.

[2] Sometimes it is worth going back to the sources and to read again an exemplary text, not written by architects, that, back in 1924, suggested the "porosity" term (Benjamin and Lacis 2020).

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L. Micara, Globalism and Identity in Contemporary Mediterranean Architecture. Opposition or Coexistence?

49

Anna Bruna Menghini
Sub-Saharan Africa. Identity, Tradition, Memory

Abstract
Aside from economic and social questions, the African Continent is also now confronting the delicate question of cultural identity. The historical process marked by the phases of colonisation/decolonisation/globalisation-global colonisation, has had, and continues to have, a profound influence on African architectural culture, in which it is possible to recognise diverse attitudes. Urban culture is generating a complex and articulated reflection by artists and architects tackling the effects of contemporary globalisation, as well as the contradictory legacy of colonialism and stereotypes linked to African identity. Rural contexts, instead, are witnessing a renewed emergence of an approach that considers the needs of dwelling expressed by local communities, re-elaborating architectural culture and traditional construction.

Identity: cross-views between Africa and the West

Confronting the theme of new architecture in Africa implies a necessary reflection on current processes of globalisation, in an era that risks replicating, albeit in a diverse form, the colonial era of the past century. Today there is little doubt that the "global village" in which we are all interconnected has amplified, rather than resolving, material questions and inequalities resulting from past imbalances and exploitations at the global scale. In particular, in sub-Saharan areas, the migratory flows of populations in movement, which questions the very concept of "belonging to place", is exposing the criticalities of rural development, further aggravated by shortages of food and water.[1] Coupled with exponential population growth, this phenomenon is generating the uncontrolled growth of urban concentrations and informal settlements, and accentuating social disparities and housing emergencies, all exacerbated by environmental and health crises[2].

The understanding of these situations, which feel distant from the Western world, push us to reflect on now generalised and global questions, whose effects reverberate across the globe: the pandemic crisis and climate change offer dramatic examples.

Faced with primary needs and the problems arising from a situation of emergency, the question of how to properly approach indigenous cultures of dwelling to understand local identities may appear rather specious. Instead, it is as necessary as ever, considering that on the one hand these territories are subject to pervasive forms of economic neo-colonialism by European, American, and above all Asian superpowers, and that, on the other hand, through the "culture of cooperation", there is a risk of intervening in

Fig. 1
A Fulani village, Nigeria (from Oliver 1971)

Fig. 2
Kano Village, Nigeria (from Oliver 1971)

these contexts with a questionable attitude of charity, imposing, even with the best of intentions, models foreign to local cultures. Fortunately, "cooperation for development", which once tended to make choices that did not always bring impulses to the growth of communities, in recent experiences demonstrates a more territorially integrated approach, more attentive toward identity, to natural resources and to local systems of production.

The geopolitical, economic, cultural, social and humanitarian reasons driving the Western world to deal today with the African Continent, to the point of direct involvement, have deep roots.

There are still visible traces of the Western presence that began in the early 1900s with the overpowering colonisations imposed by nations destined to become the planet's richest powers. However, there are also positive and fecund legacies of that cultural and scientific attention toward the African Continent that developed thanks to the work of Western explorers, geographers, ethnologists, anthropologists, sociologists, architects and engineers, in contrast with colonial policies that fostered a consideration of Africa as a virgin terrain, ready to be exploited and lacking its own history (La Cecla 2019).

The most significant experiences include those of the German ethnologist Leo Frobenius. Using material gathered during the course of his twelve expeditions, he demonstrated to Europeans the multiplicity and richness of African arts and traditions. Frobenius interpreted ancient civilisations, and those of the so-called primitives, as a vast repertory of experiences, comprehensible only by assuming the "symbol" as the base of any culture

Fig. 3
"Maputopia". Models of colonial buildings in Maputo made by local artists. AAMatters and Bernard Groosjohan Collection (from Folkers).

and the origin of knowledge founded on "commotion" at the base of civilisation (*Ergriffenheit*) (Frobenius 1933).

Another milestone is represented by Claude Lévi-Strauss, the French anthropologist, sociologist and ethnologist who approached "primitive" cultures from a structuralist vantage point. His studies also questioned the presumed superiority of Western societies and revealed their link with tribal societies, consisting in those universal intellectual and atemporal structures underlying the identical psycho-cognitive dispositions adopted by diverse societies to develop myths, practice rituals, root themselves to territories and preside over social organisations. For Lévi-Strauss, "savage thinking" was a mental form peculiar to all humans – though characterising, for historical and structural reasons, above all of non-Western cultures – based on a particular attention toward the sensitive properties of what is real, and their capacity to function as signs, rather than abstraction and logical classification of ideal qualities and classes (Lévi-Strauss 1962).

As regards architecture, when occupying nations began urbanising and building infrastructures in African territories, they became one of the privileged means for affirming the civilising superiority of Western culture. In Africa, as in other colonial endeavours, the architectural language imposed by diverse foreign powers initially attempted a subtle penetration, by mixing with "exotic" idioms, aligned with the eclecticism found in Western architectural culture of the late 1800s; the colonial style was later progressively substituted by a normalised code, an emblem of a new imperialism, between monumental classicism and rationalist overtones.

Between the 1950s and '60s, in correspondence with the gradual process of decolonisation, a conspicuous demand developed in Africa for public works and infrastructures, essential tools for modernising expanding territories and cities. Responses were offered by architects, engineers and technicians from colonising as well as African nations. Renewed images and new symbols were offered to a post-colonial project, borrowed from the legacy of Western modernism, though revisited through local references[3]. In parallel, during the post-war period, Africa acquired a certain visibility in Western architecture and art, a role it had already played during the

Fig. 4
Pancho Guedes, Residences "Leão que Ri", Maputo [Lourenço Marques], Mozambique, 1954-58 (from Kultermann 1969).

early 1900s with neo-primitivism, which recognised the foundation of a modern sensibility in the aesthetic of archaic forms, beyond the limit of a cultural Euro-centrism that had yet to be questioned[4]. With the decline of the most avant-garde elements of the Modern Movement and the programme to spread the International Style, people began to look with new eyes at spontaneous autochthonous experiences, as the more authentic and rational origin of the modern language, arriving at a sort of "invention of tradition" as an expression of a new cultural *koine*[5]. In this context, the traditional architecture of sub-Saharan Africa had a significant influence on post-war modernism in Europe and North America; however, less for linguistic aspects – that of Arab origins in North Africa lent itself more to evoking the rational "white volumes under light" – than for structures of composition recognisable at the base of models of dwelling. For example, Team10, with the *Charter of Habitat* drawn up in 1953 during the CIAM IX, in particular through the research of Aldo Van Eyck, Georges Candilis, Alexis Josic and Shadrach Woods, all referenced traditional African architecture. Its particular, morphologies of settlement stimulated the search for new urban structures capable of guiding spontaneous developments, together with the experimentation with compositional systems of clusters and cells capable of growing through self-regulation and germinating spaces suitable for communities (Dainese 2020).

In the late 1970s, in the midst of the global oil crisis, the products of modernist technocracy, which continued to prosper in Africa, also drawing on postmodern architecture, began to slowly give way under the pressure of so-called "appropriate technology", a theory that questioned the Western paradigm centred on consumerism, big industry and centralised organisation. For new architecture it proposed making recourse to "intermediate" technologies, anticipating many ecological themes (Shumacher 1973).

It would be necessary to wait until the 1980s, and the arrival of Critical Regionalism theorised by Kenneth Frampton, partially a child of the "Unfinished Project of Modernity" of Jürgen Habermas, to recognise the role of the environment in architecture – intended in its ecological, historical and cultural dimension – and to discover and give value, without
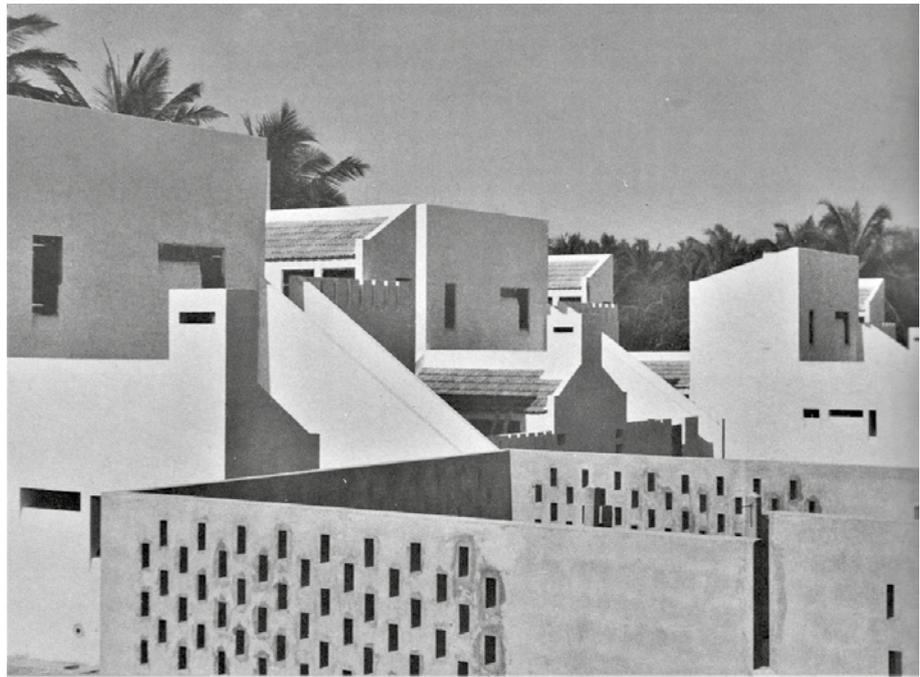
Fig. 5
D. A. Barrett and D.P.C., Dwelling Houses at Christiansborg Government Building, Accra, Ghana, 1962 (from Kultermann 1969)

forced ideologies and in response to postmodern eclecticism, the authentic contents and richness of regional schools (Frampton 1983; Frampton-Kultermann 1999).

The 1990s were characterised by a double register, accentuated the following decade and demonstrating with greater evidence the imbalances in territorial development; on the one hand, the exponential growth of megalopolises and medium-sized cities and, on the other hand, the abandonment of rural areas and villages.

With a creativity as visionary as it was standardising, gigantic master plans began to design virtual new towns, satellite cities and new insertions, for example the Cité du Fleuve in Kinshasa, Eko-Atlantic City in Lagos, Tatu City and Konza Techno City in Nairobi. They were accompanied by the construction of speculative projects by leading international practices, advertised under the banner of *smart* and eco-sustainable, based on the models of megalopolises like Dubai, Shanghai or Singapore and driven by real estate investments for society's mid to upper classes (Albrecht 2014).

The new face of Africa's megalopolises – the visible manifestation of vast economic capital – is taking shape in images influenced by Asian models, almost tribal in their paradoxical and hyper-coloured expressions, projected toward the future in search of a non-conventional "African identity"[6].

These operations, increasingly more tenacious and larger in scale, are cancelling informal areas, at least on paper, to make room for gated urban communities, islands and enclaves separated from the city of the poor. Yet, the flexible spaces of informality, modelled directly by inhabitants and with indefinite boundaries between public and private use, paradoxically appear to be a better representation of the authentic and contradictory nature of the contemporary African city (Sennett 2018). In opposition to the cultural and morphological standardisation that defines the growth of large cities, today we are beginning to confront the problem of what model of dwelling should be proposed in alternative to slums. A model that does not follow the logics of globalisation, but is born of local cultures, evaluating hypotheses of urban regeneration and the revisitation of spontaneous mod-

els of land occupation.

What is more, in antithesis to large urban concentrations, in the immense informal village spread across the territory – the sum, or better yet fractal development, of infinite micro-villages – we are now witness to small though widespread interventions connected with strategies of humanitarian aid, through *not-for-profit* projects, above all in the field of assistance, such as schools and healthcare facilities. The objective is to support the development of rural situations by involving local communities, also to help dissuade the mass exodus of populations toward metropolises where they find few real prospects for subsistence.

Tradition and Memory: The New Generation of African Architects

Beyond economic and social questions, actively being confronted through international cooperation, the African Continent is now facing the question, apparently less pressing though more delicate, of cultural identity. The multiplicity of many "Africas" present on the continent does not correspond with a geographic and political situation, nor does it coincide with national borders; instead it is the fruit of cultural and ethnic stratifications that make for a particularly complex and articulated identity of this continent, where we can recognise indigenous, Islamic and Judaic-Christian components (Holm-Kallehauge 2015).

The historical process marked by phases of colonisation-decolonisation-globalisation, to the current state of global colonisation, has had, and continues to have, a profound influence on African architectural culture. A culture that reveals diverse attitudes, the children of Pan-African pride and the revindication of pre-colonial cultural roots that characterised the *Négritude* movement.

On the one hand, metropolitan contexts generate a reflection that confronts the colonial legacy and the effects of contemporary globalisation, also using stereotypes linked to identity, or better yet, African identities. Contemporary artists and architects often refute the reference to "tradition" to produce works based on syncretism or hybridisation that, what is more, have always characterised this continent. Concentrating on the socio-cultural and geopolitical questions of our complex contemporary reality, they work with the contamination between cultures, including the "global village" and new metropolitan cosmopolitanism (Njami-Motisi 2018).

On the other hand, in rural contexts there is a renewed emergence of an approach, simple and authentic, to the needs of communities, founded on the relationship between architecture and place, and the revisitation of ritual, symbolic and archaic aspects of dwelling and building, still present in villages.

Beyond the historical-documentary attention toward architectural heritage in rural areas, concentrated for the most part in objects with aesthetic value and exceptional characteristics[7], in the recent past there has been a drop in economic interest in the conservation, not only physical, but above all cultural, of heritage, for the most part immaterial; traditional building is gradually disappearing and with it the values of historical memory and identity, but above all the survival of material culture and the technical-building know-how passed down through the generations (Oliver 1971; Denyer-MacClure 1976; Silberfein 1998).

Fortunately, a younger class of African architects is emerging alongside the new professionalism linked to the world of volunteering and large international humanitarian institutions: a generation of architects educated in

Western schools who have returned home to work, with a new awareness and a new sense of pride and belonging.

Operating in sub-Saharan Africa, these architects propose a regional architecture which is not limited to dealing with the pressing problems of emergencies, but instead confronts the universal theme of the relationship man-nature; a dyad that appears to have been resolved by Western civilisation using a strictly anthropocentric and rational approach imposed on the complexity of reality, whose imbalances are now beginning to show (Lepik 2013).

These architects pursue a diverse "modernity as a return to origins", in order to «revive an old, dormant civilisation and take part in universal civilisation» (Ricoeur 1965). They return to and reinterpret the vital and still actual characteristics of African traditions (Arecchi 1999) in projects linked to the specificity of place, morphology, vegetation and climate, and attribute a priority to the physical component of architecture and the expressive potential of building materials.

Their architecture is measured against the original elements of nature, which have always demonstrated their richness here, but also their indominable force that even the most technologically advanced powers area struggling with today. Their buildings model the ground, collect water, manage the air, conserve fire. We can recognise the archetypes of the "enclosure" and the "roof" in their arrangement as simple diaphragm walls beneath large elevated coverings. They are works of architecture that offer an original interpretation of the continuity between interior and exterior, and the mixture between public and private space, returning to models of building and settlement derived from local dwelling traditions.

In reality these recent examples of African architecture are born of a primarily pragmatic objective: providing above all the public structures required by communities living in villages, and together, training craftsmen directly on site, using traditional or intelligently innovative techniques.

These architects often make use of assisted self-construction, critically proposing an updated form of "architecture without architects", providing manuals and guidelines for those involved in both design and construction, in the wake of the passionate experience of Yona Friedman. They also experiment with entirely new models of dwelling and building, for certain verses closer to nomadic traditions, using lightweight and flexible structures built using industrial and standardised products or second hand materials.

They also introduce innovative elements in terms of environmental and energy sustainability, standards suited to contemporary well-being and lifestyles, always respectful of local socio-cultural characteristics and proposing solutions suitable for confronting ever more pressing hygienic-sanitary problems.

The architectural themes linked to the landscape, dwelling and building being explored by these are generating a common language, adopted also by non-African designers working in these territories. Models of settlement, typology and building, recurring and repeated with small variations and triggered by their integration with the site, adherence to material cultures and the needs of communities and individuals; they draw strength from the rituality of repeating ancient actions, renewed each time, thanks also to exchanges with other cultures, including Western.

These projects present us with a positive globalisation that shares essential
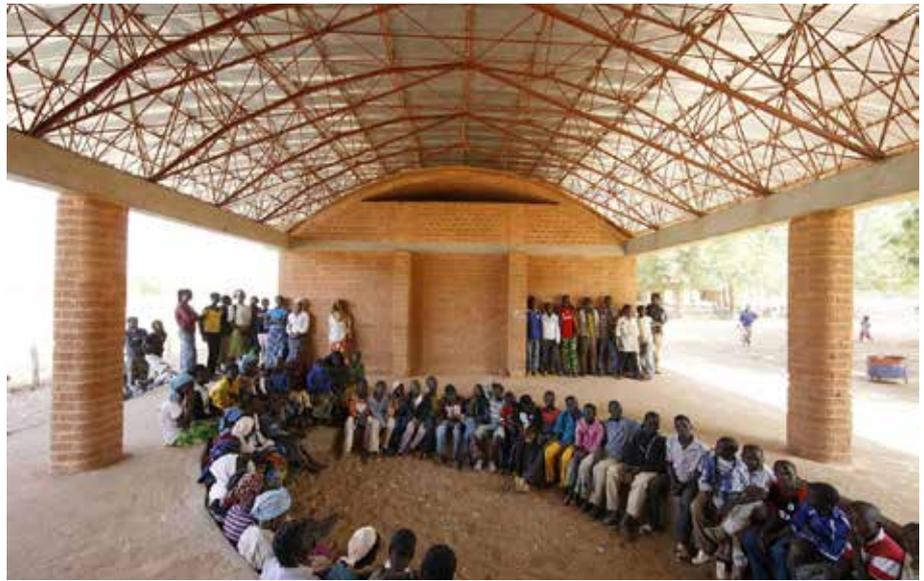
Fig. 6
Diébédo Francis Kéré, Extension of the Primary School in Gando, Burkina Faso, 2006-08 (© Iwan Baan).

and original architectural languages in the name of a cosmopolitan vision. This is a much needed openness, considering that new projects cannot avoid dealing with the penetration and influence of contemporary global culture, to which communities aspire to belong because they are associated with the idea of economic wellbeing and social development.

In particular, since the early 2000s a number of very interesting, and now internationally recognised architects have been working in the rural territories of sub-Saharan Africa.

On the one hand, we find African architects fully inserted within the international panorama, who combine a multicultural approach with an introspective look at identity: David Adjaye, born in Tanzania, with offices in London, New York and Accra, Ghana whose works include the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, the Ruby City Contemporary Art Center in San Antonio, Texas, the National Cathedral and District Hospitals in Ghana, the Martyrs Memorial in Niamey; the Nigerian architect Kunlé Adeyemi, who worked at OMA before opening his own practice NLÉ in Nigeria and The Netherlands, designer of the Makoko Floating School in Lagos; the Ghanian Joe Osae-Addo, with offices in Ghana and the United States, one of the leading promoters of current international debate on contemporary African architecture, through the organisation ArchiAfrika. Alongside them we find architects educated abroad and operating primarily in Africa: Diébédo Francis Kéré who reinvested what he had learned in Germany back home, experimenting with a renewal of local traditions beginning with the schools constructed in his native village of Gando in Burkina Faso; the Nigerian Mariam Kamara, a pupil of David Adjaye, who lives in Boston and runs an office in Niamey, author of the Niamey 2000 residential complex, the Hikma religious and laic centre and regional market in Dandaji, and the Cultural Centre in Niamey; Christian Benimana, director of MASS Design Group in Rwanda, the creator in Kigali of the first African Design Centre. Also interesting is the activity of such international groups as the Konkuey Design Initiative (KDI) whose primary office is in Nairobi, and Active Social Architecture (ASA) operating out of Kigali. Finally, other realities worthy of mention include the many architects working in South Africa, including: Peter Rich, Noero Wolff Architects, Makeka Design Lab, A4AC Architects, Local Studio, Tsai Design Studio, Studio[D]Tale, DesignSpaceAfrica.

Fig. 7
Diébédo Francis Kéré, Hight School Schorge, Koudougou, Burkina Faso, 2014-16 (© Iwan Baan).

Fig. 8
Diébédo Francis Kéré, Hight School Schorge, Koudougou, Burkina Faso, 2014-16 (© Iwan Baan).

Fig. 9
Diébédo Francis Kéré, Courtyard of the Center for Health and Social Care, Laongo, Burkina Faso, 2012-14 (© Kéré Architecture).

Fig. 10
Diébédo Francis Kéré, Teacher accommodation in Gando, Burkina Faso, 2004 (© Erik-Jan Ouwerkerk).

Fig. 11
United4design-Yasaman Es-maili, Elizabeth Golden, Mariam Kamara, Philip Straeter, Residential complex "Niamey 2000", Niamey, Niger, 2016 (© Torsten Seidel).

Fig. 12
Toshiko Mori, THREAD Artist residence and cultural center, Sinthian, Senegal, 2015 (© Iwan Baan).

One of the most significant experiences is that of Francis Kéré, working to provide the services required by communities in small villages, involving them directly in the phases of design and construction. Using a sustainable and low-cost approach to design, he adopts principles that promote the material and human resources present in a given territory. Hybridising materials and adapting advanced technologies to local contexts, he substitutes the common use of concrete with blocks of packed earth or local stone, uses double roof systems with large overhanging metal elements detached from the main volumes to ensure passive ventilation and cooling, protect against rainfall and collect water and create large areas of shade and places to spend time outdoors. Never vernacular, his now numerous works fuse the language of modern architecture with the clarity of "primitive" examples. The majority of his work is can be found in Burkina Faso, his homeland: the Gando school complex – two primary and one secondary schools, a library and staff lodgings –, the Dano secondary school, the Léo Medical Centre, the Noomdo Orphanage, the Lycée Schorge in Koudougou, Opera Village in Laongo. In Mozambique he designed a settlement for Benga Riverside residential

Fig. 13
caravatti_caravatti architetti, Jigiya So Psychomotor Rehabilitation Center, Mali, 2005-14 (© caravatti_caravatti architetti).

Fig. 14
caravatti_caravatti architetti, Primary school in Kobà, Mali, 2006-07 (© caravatti_caravatti architetti).

community and the Startup Lions Campus in Kenya.

In parallel, a growing number of foreign architects are working in African nations, sharing the same approach to design and using comparable languages. The most well-known include: Spain's Urko Sanchez Architects, with offices in Madrid and Nairobi, Albert Faus working out of Burkina Faso, Selgas Cano; the Dutch office LEVS Architecten in Mali; Portugal's ColectivoMEL; the German Studio Mzamba; New York-based Sharon Davis Design; the French Collectif Saga; the English Orkidstudio based in Nairobi; the Belgian practice BC architect.

Among Italian architects, TAMassociati is one of the most active professional practices in the construction of healthcare facilities in Sudan and Darfur, in collaboration con Emergency. The projects in Mali and Burkina Faso by the studio Caravatti, particularly attentive toward local context, introduce advances in technology such as, for example, the Nubian vault.

Each architect seems to read aspects of their own culture in the contexts presented in Africa: while Japan's Toshiko Mori (author of a cultural centre and school in in Senegal) and Shigeru Ban (who experimented

Fig. 15
TAMassociati, Pediatric Center, Nyala, South Darfur, Sudan, 2010 (© TAMassociati).

Fig. 16
FAREstudio, CBF_ Women's Health Center, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 2007 (© FAREstudio).

with shelters for refugees in Kenya) confront the refined traditions of wood and bamboo construction, weaving and lightweight materials, their Italian counterparts tend to look more at the solidity of masonry construction.

This brief excursus demonstrates how the approach to African architecture by the West has been, and continues to be, influenced inevitably by a Western point of view, even when it attempts to change its vantage point. This is also true in the contrary when African architects look Westward. Nonetheless, this reciprocal conditioning, when assumed with awareness, is at the origin of that enrichment of civilisation that is generated through an exchange of cross-views, and consents an interpretation of the concept of identity as a shifting condition, open to hybridisations.

Above all, we in the West are becoming aware, as Frobenius and Lévi-Strauss noted, that when we look to Africa and its most original and authentic expressions we indirectly observe ourselves and our origins. In fact, we can retrace many of the characters common to diverse cultures, deriving from the human condition of "being in the world". The study of African architecture consents us, for example, to approach the original and essential acts of dwelling and building, universal and at the same time linked to regional contexts. This same observation also directs us to reflect on forms of settlement and dwelling, alternatives to those consolidated in Western culture, founded on diverse ratios between public and private space and between spaces of dwelling and working.

Africa pushes, furthermore, toward even more radical considerations of the role of architecture as a "common good", diffused throughout society: necessary evaluations for Western civilisation, where architecture and the

building industry, apparently prospering, express a crisis of common sense and the very meanings of dwelling and building.

Further still, the awareness of African cultures stimulates us to reconsider the anonymous and collective condition of design and the permanence of material knowledge rooted in simple principles and sustainable technologies integrated with the environment. It also focuses on the development of participatory processes that unite the figures of the creator, the builder and the user.

The encounter and exchange among Western cultures and autochthonous cultures can also favour a reciprocal enrichment in terms of methodology. Cultures of dwelling and building founded on primary needs and spontaneous technologies, handed down from generation to generation, when interpreted using Western analytical and scientific methods, can produce interesting and innovative results. On the one hand, local communities can improve how they live and build, thanks to environmental and hygienic-sanitary best practices and through innovations applied to materials and building processes. On the other hand, for Western culture, the constantly growing attention toward sustainability and ecological reconversion, the need to guarantee an equilibrium between natural and artificial landscapes and biodiversity in man-made habitats, the trend toward minimalism, the essential, authenticity, naturality and the sharing of architecture, can find non-conventional answers by observing non-globalised cultures.

Inserted in this framework of questions, "learning from Africa" becomes more than a simple slogan that serves to pacify guilty consciences. Instead, it represents a real opportunity for reflecting, indirectly, on our model of progress, now in a state of crisis, and for imagining a new shared direction for global development that passes through the local.

Notes

1 Cf. *Rural Africa in motion. A Dynamics and drivers of migration South of the Sahara*, report edited by the FAO, 2017.

2 It is forecast that by 2050 Africa's urban population will account for 20% of the global population. African cities will be home to 950 million people more than today. Cf. *Africa's Urbanisation Dynamics 2020. Africapolis. Mapping a new urban geography*, a research that produced "Africapolis", an interactive online map that brings together information systems useful to the comprehension of the urban phenomenon of the African Continent (https://africapolis.org/en). Analyses and proposal for transforming Africa settlements are constantly documented in publications edited by UN-Habitat (https://unhabitat.org/).

3 Alongside the numerous architects active in North Africa (Fernand Pouillon, Roland Simounet, Jean Bossu, Louis Miquel, Pierre Bourlier and José Ferrer-Laloë, Oscar Niemeyer in Algeria, Hassan Fathy in Egypt, Michel Écochard, Jean-François Zevaco, Elie Azagury, Abdeslam Faraoui and Patrice de Mazières, Henri Tastemain in Morocco), many local architects also worked in sub-Saharan Africa, including: the Nigerian Demas Nwoko, the Tanzanians Anthony Almeida and Beda Amuli, the Portuguese-Mozambican Pancho Guedes, the Ethiopian Michael Tedros with the Israeli Zalman Enav, the Nigerian Oluwole Olumuyiwa, the South African Norman Eaton, and such European architects as: the French Henri Chomette, the Greek Constantinos Doxiadis, the English Edwin Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew −exponents of Tropical Architecture −and D. A. Barrett, the German Ernst May, the Italians Renato Severino, Marcello D'Olivo, Arturo Mezzedimi, as well as the more famous Pierluigi Nervi, Cesare Valle, Luigi Moretti and, some years later, Fabrizio Carola. In particular, the Italian interest matured during those years in new African architecture is demonstrated in the monographic issue dedicated to Africa of *Edilizia Moderna*, n. 89-90, published in 1967. Cf. Kultermann 1969; Folkers and Van Buiten 2019.

4 In 1905-06 the *Fauves* group began studying art in sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, in part under the influence of the works of Gauguin acquiring visibility at the time in Paris. Pablo Picasso, in particular during his "African period" (1907-1909), explored traditional sculpture and masks, recognising their important formal potential.

5 In Italy, the interest in Africa came with the re-evaluation of anonymous and popular tradition that – following Giuseppe Pagano's investigations of rural architecture – were affirmed in the 1950s. This interest culminated with *Architecture Without Architects*, published in 1964 by Bernard Rudofsky, which dedicates a great deal of space precisely to African architecture. In December 1954 Ernesto Nathan Rogers published a reportage in *Casabella Continuità* on traditional African architecture in equatorial Africa, commenting it in a critical text centred on the concept of "civilisation".

6 A condition expressed in the early 1990s in the utopian urban visions of the Congolese sculptor Bodys Isek Kingelez, in a pastiche of large coloured objects now a source of inspiration for Africa's megalopolises.

7 The study of the multiple forms of traditional dwelling is stimulated by the UNESCO action to protect *Indigenous peoples and intangible cultural heritag*e. The concept of "heritage" as it is expanding in Europe, is well adapted to the African context. Cf. the framework Convention of the European Council for the conservation of cultural heritage from 2011. Known as the "Faro Convention", it promotes a vision of heritage not as a collection of "objects", but as a "group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions".

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Nicola Pagnano
Experiences of critical regionalism in China

Abstract
The article testifies to some critical steps in architecture development in China through personal experiences related to the problematic relationship between atopic stereotypes and the specific culture of the places.

Keywords
China — Regionalism — Tectonic

In my 15 years of experience in China (from 2007 to 22) as an architect first and then as a teacher (at Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University), I have witnessed the development of new cultural interests and aesthetic orientations in the architecture field. After almost 40 years of architecture managed by prominent state-owned Design Institutes, the professional activity of private architectural firms began in China again in 1990.
The economic and technological progress of the last twenty years (2000-2020) has led to a change in architecture's constructive and aesthetic processes. Young architects are amplifying a trend that from 1950 to 1990 was very rare and carried on with discretion by a small number of architects, namely an architecture with its own identity that we could define as the beginning of modern Chinese architecture. (Xue and Ding, 2018)

The evolution of the professional practice of architects in China over the last century: from Design Institute to private architecture firm
British, American, and European architects dominated the architecture market at the turn of the twentieth century, until the arrival of the first generation of Chinese architects, who had just finished their studies and training at the best American and European institutions. At that time, architects in China start their studios like Western countries as a modern profession. (Xue, 2006; Rowe Kuan, 2006)
Between 1949-1976 most foreign companies were confiscated or nationalized. The Party gradually reduced the opportunity for private architectural firms in the professional market. Most Chinese architectural practitioners ceased their firms because they believed that joining a state-own Design Institute would provide stable income, secure their careers, and

offer more opportunities in architectural design. The Party and the state became both the project's clients and the contractors, so the architectural professionals became state employees. The design activities were seen as contributing to national modernization and the public good rather than following the architect's interests (Hu 2009).

In November 1984, the Ministry of Construction approved for the first time the private small-scale architectural design firm Wang Tianci.

The actual movement of private companies in the market started with Yung Ho Chang and his Atelier FCJZ in the 1990s. (Huang Yuan-Shao, 2010).

With the globalization of the world economy and China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), China's industrial structure and economic system are undergoing significant reforms, which have given architects and professional architectural firms a vital opportunity. Starting from 2002, The government allowed Foreign Invested firms to operate with local partners, and from 2006, it allowed Wholly Foreign Owned Enterprise architecture firms (Long Xiu).

In those years, however, the architecture was still managed by the Design Institutes and by foreign companies in partnership with local partners. Small and medium-sized private studios that operated independently and could focus on quality design were still few and unable to exert any influence in the cultural context of architecture.

Experience in China

The experiences of my first two years in China made me understand that my approach to the projects and the language I used to describe them did not entirely satisfy clients. In fact, they were not particularly interested in the themes of Chinese identity and culture or any case sensitive to social and environmental problems, but on the contrary, they were looking for projects with a strong staggering connotation, with concepts that are easy to understand and visualize: a formalist architecture that was in fact what was proposed by most Western architects. A trend that has not yet exhausted its course and continues to produce atopic architecture that is utterly alien to the context.

The classical architecture request by developers was a commercial strategy to sell to the new Chinese rich villas and palaces that expressed a concept of wealth. Calling it classic is certainly not the most applicable term, let's say a patchwork of orders and styles that spans all centuries and types. For example, a Gothic church enriched with Corinthian columns transformed into a villa. Traditional Chinese architecture was associated with the popular buildings where people of lower social classes lived who, although interpreted in a contemporary key, did not express a status symbol adequate to the needs of the new rich, inclined instead to demonstrate their wealth also through architecture.

The many design experiences in which I had the opportunity to participate are a demonstration of this difficult relationship, between the memory of Chinese architecture and oblivion, the search for internationalism and stereotypes of modernity.

One of the first design experiences I made in China was in a great site, the Inner Mongolia desert. I had to expand an existing resort and re-design the facilities building.

The strategy adopted was to get knowledge of the physical and cultural

Fig. 1
Traditional house of a village. Clay and mud walls mix with natural fibres, Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 2
Traditional house of a village. Clay and mud walls mix with natural fibres, Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 3
Sundry clay bricks. Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 4
Door entrance of a traditional house of a village in Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 5
Pigsty. Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

resources of the place; I started with a territory survey and a visit to the surrounding villages to discover the spontaneous architecture and meet the inhabitants to learn about the traditions of the place. I asked the client for a hydrogeological map to identify the aquifers, but I only managed to get an aerial photo of the area.

This image helped me visualize bands of vegetation that started from the lake and extended into the desert. I decided to design a planimetric system along the arid strips not to touch the humid vegetative bands. The designed buildings referred to traditional architecture amplified by bio-climatic architecture devices. Unfortunately, the client had little regard for the original buildings because, according to their aesthetic standards, they were not suitable for restoring an idea of an exclusive resort for wealthy tourists.

The result is a substantial atopic building surrounded by golf courses near the lake, the worst thing that could be achieved in this place both from an architectural and landscape point of view.

The metaphor

In 2012 I designed a resort in southwest China, in the territory of Yunnan, near the border with Thailand. This area is famous for producing Pu Er tea, a particular type of fermented tea, among the most expensive in the

Figg. 6 a-b
Top Aerial view of the project site; aerial view of the project site with landscape paths. Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 7
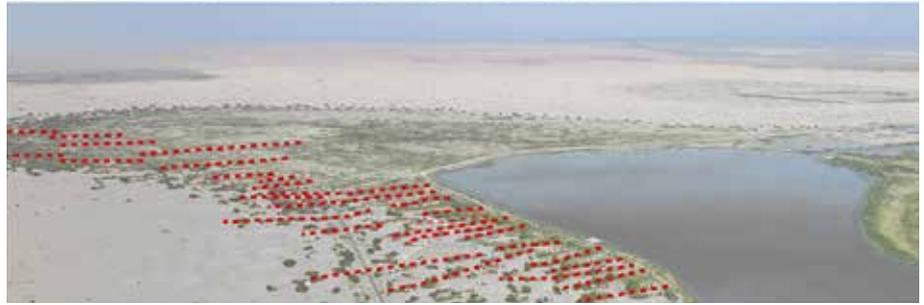Planimetry of the Resort, dark green colour indicates the existing vegetation. Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 8
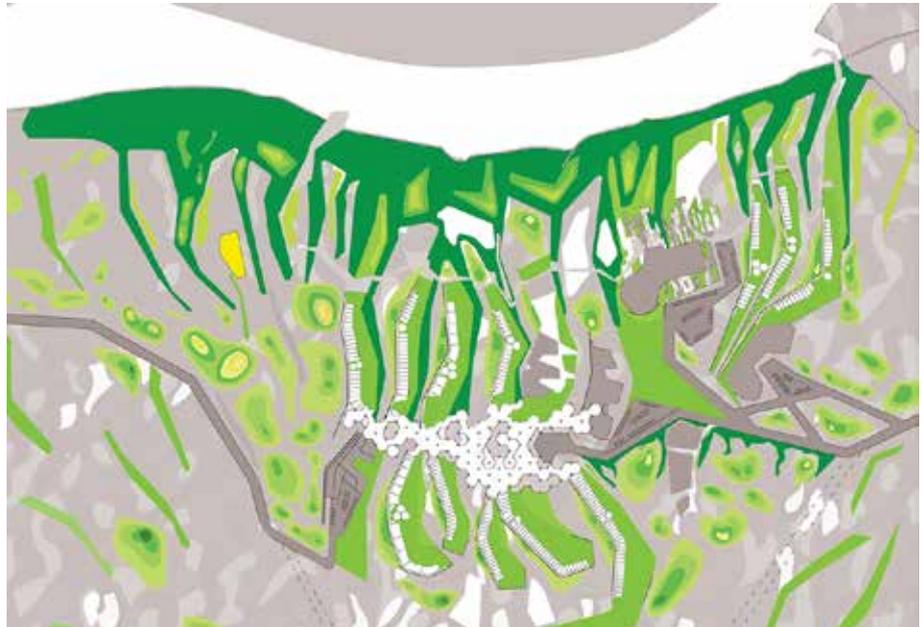Bird-eye view of the resort. Inner Mongolia, China 2007.

Fig. 9
Project site of a resort. Pu Er, Yunnan, Bai Ma Shan Mountain, China 2011.

Fig. 10
Section sketch of one unit of the resort. Pu Er, Yunnan, Bai Ma Shan Mountain, China 2011.

Fig. 11
3d realistic view of one unit of the resort. Pu Er, Yunnan, Bai Ma Shan Mountain, China 2011.

world. The project is located at the top of Bai Ma Shan's mountainous area (Mountain of the White Horse).

This time the project proposal originated from the reference to the mythical origins of the founding of Chinese cities.

We began to explore the territory and study local architecture. In this area of China, the influence of Thai architecture is perceived, especially in Buddhist temples. It was therefore decided to work on the tectonics of local architecture, particularly of temples, interpreting the complexity and heaviness of the roof as opposed to the lightness of the walls. The first proposal consisted of drawing a section of one of the resort's units.

The section had the task of strongly restoring the relationship between the ground and the relationships among the inside and the outside of the building. In addition, the section aided spatial visualization, scale and aspect ratio.

This process was not used in Chinese studios where management expects to see overall views, scenographic renders, and only later, floor plans and drawings.

In 2014 I worked on a project for a strategic plan for tourism development. I visited a project area at the border with Tibet, Shenmulei, in the Chinese region of Sichuan, where an ethnic Tibetan minority lives.

A water containment basin submerged the old town, and the new town was rebuilt with a patchwork architecture of local styles.

When I arrived at the site, I visited the areas affected by the tourism development plan in search of local architecture. They were all mountainous areas at 4000 meters. When the visit ended, I realized that the regional architecture had disappeared. Most of the original buildings had been submerged. However, during the territorial survey phase, it was possible to identify a few traditional buildings halfway up the mountains which were saved. A sectional drawing was drawn up among the various documents we delivered to the client, which took up the original types listed. The sketch depicted a street with shops, restaurants, small hotel buildings and chalets. It was an attempt to give guidelines for developing

Fig. 12
Typology of traditional Shen-mulei house. Baoxing, Sichuan, China 2011.

Fig. 13
Section sketch of guidelines for the master plan. Shenmulei, Baoxing, Sichuan, China 2014.

Fig. 14
Section sketch coloured of guidelines for the master plan. Shenmulei, Baoxing, Sichuan, China 2014.

new facilities for tourism, oriented towards an architecture that respects the characters and identity of the place.

The spread of critical regionalism

If, on the one hand, these experiences demonstrate the difficulties encountered with the Chinese clients, on the other hand, there are numerous testimonies of a changing process. The new generations of architects who recently operated widely in the territory, sometimes in remote places, pay greater attention to environmental values. They know the importance of the *Genius loci* and the relationship that architecture should have with the physical and cultural context. The large American and English formalist firms that dominated the market since the Olympic games of Beijing are now placed side by side by small Chinese, Italian, Spanish and French firms that helped change the formalist trend with an architecture that respects local cultures' identity. The individualist gesture has been replaced by a sense of identity, social and ethical responsibility. The beautiful form that seduces the great investor has been replaced by a simple architecture based on community values and recognizability.

In this new course of Chinese architecture, architects measure themselves against what can be considered traditional construction, in which the theme of tectonics is a determining aspect. Another not very well-known theme is the magic-propitiatory and auspicious aspect that implies Chinese architecture in which measures, proportions and specific tools regulated the construction of the building's tectonics. This a theme that, in some respects, could find a correlation with the conceptual experiments of Bernard Tschumi in The Manhattan Transcripts (1981) or with the musical proportions adopted by masters of the Renaissance (Foscari-Tafuri 1983).

At Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU), I was able to directly experience the changes that characterize the new course of Chinese architecture.

In the latter school and at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, teachers conduct research and experiment in design courses on the themes of tectonics and critical regionalism.

With Adam Brillhart[1], I worked on a design process with second-year students that relates to the tradition of carpentry. The design course, therefore, developed the theme of tectonics and carpentry in its more traditional aspects, from measurement systems to magical and propitiatory aspects.

The research involved a detailed investigation of the measurement tools

Fig. 15
Axonometric drawing of a villa placed in the painting context. Hongyi Zeng, Design studio ARC105 AY 2018 at XJTLU, Suzhou, China.

Fig. 16
Elevation, hand drawing. Hongyi Zeng, Design studio ARC105 AY 2018 at XJTLU, Suzhou, China.

Fig. 17
Interior panorama, hand drawing. Hongyi Zeng, Design studio ARC105 AY 2018 at XJTLU, Suzhou, China.
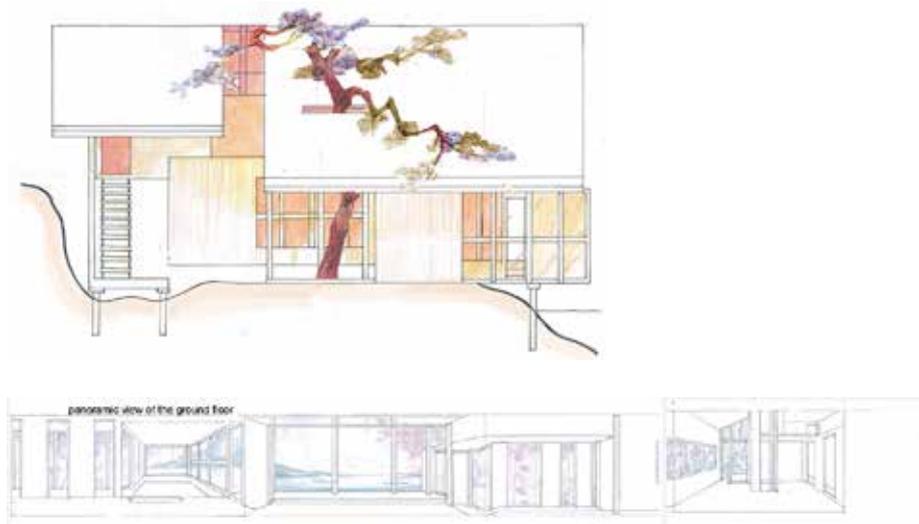
used in the carpentry of the buildings built by Lu Ban, a famous Chinese carpenter, engineer, philosopher, and inventor. He lived between 507 and 440 BC.

Brillhart explains in his research that many types of measuring instruments were used in traditional carpentry[2]. These not only allowed control of the buildings' forms and the elements that made them up but also reflected some characteristics of the culture of living in Chinese civilization.

Lu Ban's tools are the most famous among many measuring instruments in traditional Chinese carpentry culture. A commercial version of one of his rulers can be purchased on Tao Bao, the Chinese eBay.

There are three categories of tools associates with stages of construction. The compass instrument, for finding the orientation of the house and the position of the front door, the Gaochi ruler for the ratio of the wooden frames and the Lu Ban ruler for determining the size of doors and windows.

The compass instrument utilized for the orientation was based on omens related to the stars positions and some other seasonal phenomenon connected with the Chinese calendar. The geomancy master instrument was endowed with a magnetic needle that would indicate the south orientation of the building.

The Gaochi ruler was 5 to 6 meters high and a few centimetres wide; using this was possible to measure and build on a 1:1 scale. The meas-
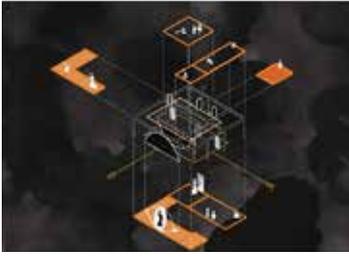
Fig. 18
Openings' auspices related to the Lu Ban omens' poems. Meilun Zhang, Design studio ARC105 AY 2018 at XJTLU, Suzhou, China.

Fig. 19
Openings' auspices related to the Lu Ban omens' poems. Yifan Qian, Design studio ARC105 AY 2018 at XJTLU, Suzhou, China.

Fig. 20
A survey using the Luban measurement system through the use of symbols, student Xu Zhan, ARC105 Architectural Composition Course, XJTLU, Suzhou, China 2019.

Fig. 21
Copper imitation of the Luban ruler available online on Aliexpress.

urements of the structural components were marked through symbols, and the carpenter will employ the ruler during the process of cutting and shaping the wooden elements. Subsequently, it was utilized to indicate the height or width of each tectonic part during the construction phase. The whole elevation ratio and measurements of a building were compressed into a small surface of ten centimetres width and six hundred centimetres high.

The dimensions were linked to poems that act as omens through proportional ratios in the Lu Ban ruler. The carpenter attributes to the openings a poem that will bring auspiciousness, luck, wealth, or happiness to those who live there. The omen remains a secret guarded by the carpenter and not revealed to the inhabitants of the house. The whole construction process, even the drawings, calculations, and tools, is kept secret by the master carpenter. The ruler was a personal tool of great value that the carpenter jealously guarded.

Here the experimentation with students on the theme of tectonics starts from traditional instruments and events (auspices): this approach has led to interesting results from the point of view of the design experience.
The design course develops tectonics in its most traditional aspects, from measurement systems to omens.
Students must build their tools for the spatial dimensioning of buildings, use the original poems of auspices, and translate them into events to be conceptualized to shape the structure. The project site is an ancient Chinese painting, inside which students define the location of their architecture. They identify the interior relationships with the landscape's elements represented in the painting through a prospective sequence.
This approach should sensitize students' architects to the importance of local culture to find principles or ideas for the project and thus direct them towards a creative process that blends tradition with the contemporary, favouring a propensity for tectonics rather than self-referential formalism.

Below are some recent examples of architecture in China, which stand out for the attention to the characters of the place and the interpretation of traditional architecture, as well as an interview with Yiping Dong. YD is an associate professor in the Department of Architecture of Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University.

John Lin, House for All Seasons, Shijia Village, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 2012
Shijia Village is located in Shaanxi province, in northwestern China.
Development in rural areas such as Shijia, typically abandons traditional styles in favour of more generic housing types. This is partly the result of the area's gradual shift away from economic self-reliance: as labour tends to migrate toward more urbanized centres, traditional collective self-construction is increasingly rendered unviable. As a result, outside labor and materials have become the driving force in defining the rural housing scene. Funded by the Luke Him Sau Charitable Trust with support from the Shaanxi Women's Federation and The University of Hong Kong, this project looks at the idea of the village house vernacular and proposes a contemporary prototype. By combining ideas from other regions of China as well as traditional and innovative technologies, the design is a model for the modern Chinese mud-brick courtyard house.
All the houses in the region around Shijia are constructed of mud brick and occupy land parcels of 10 meters by 30 meters. The design promotes a sustainable alternative within this framework by integrating rammed earth, biogas, rainwater storage, and reed bed cleansing systems.
Serving also as a centre for women's handicrafts, the Shijia House bridges the individual and collective identity of the village. Construction of the house has initiated a new phase for the local economy, developing a new cooperative business in traditional straw weaving. Overall, the project represents an architectural attempt to consciously evolve rural house dynamics in China.
(from the project report, John Lin 2012).

Fig. 22
Top view, A House for all seasons.

Fig. 23
Façade Construction Phases, A House for all seasons.

Fig. 24
Chinese traditional house.

Neri&Hu Design and Research Office, The Walled, Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, Yangzhou, 2017.

Adaptive re-use of existing buildings and a new proposal for 20 rooms boutique hotel.

Neri & Hu's project interprets the theme of Suzhou courtyard buildings and gardens, such as Han's residence on Dongbei road in Suzhou, Peng's residence in Shiia Alley in Suzhou and Pan's residence on Nanshizi road in Suzhou. In these types, the 'served spaces and serving spaces' can be read through the use of long service corridors that connect the rooms and a central path that develops along a sequence of courtyards and rooms that generally ends in a garden. This distinctive aspect of Suzhou noble residences is revisited in a modern key by architects with offices in Shanghai who manage to hold together different design themes such as recovery and new construction, modernity and tradition. All of this is through a rigorous planimetric system and a single complex which seems perfectly in balance with the context.

Fig. 25
Top view, Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, photo by Pedro Pegenaute.

Fig. 26
bird-eye view, Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, photo by Pedro Pegenaute.

Fig. 27
Courtyard, Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, photo by Pedro Pegenaute.

Fig. 28
Top left: Peng's Residence in Shijia Alley, Suzhou, Nicola Pagnano and Ruqinq Lyu 2020.

Fig. 29
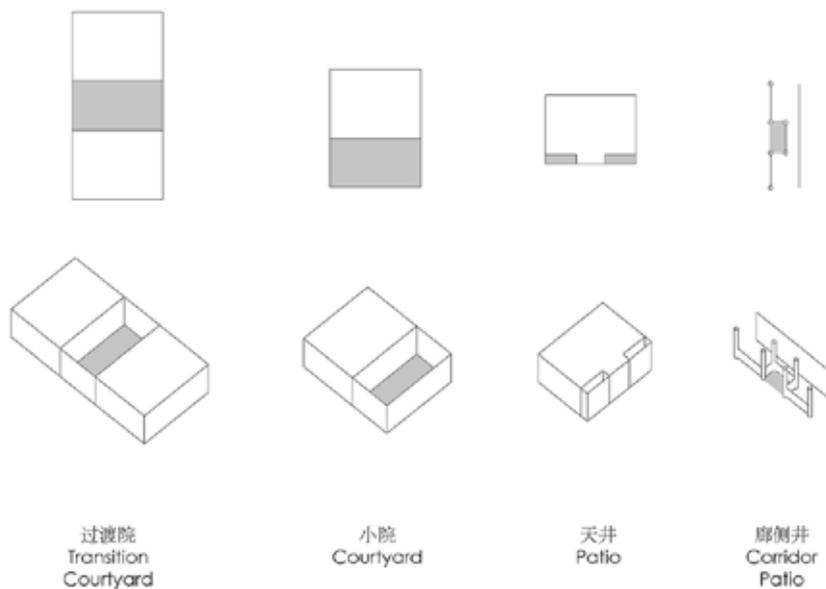Top right: Han's residence in Dongbei street, Suzhou, Nicola Pagnano and Ruqinq Lyu 2020.

Fig. 30
Zhang's residence in Dongbei street, Suzhou, Nicola Pagnano and Ruqinq Lyu 2020.

Fig. 31
System of courts in the residences of Suzhou, Nicola Pagnano and Ruqinq Lyu 2020.

过渡院
Transition
Courtyard

小院
Courtyard

天井
Patio

廊侧井
Corridor
Patio

Interview with Dr Yiping Dong[3]

Nicola Pagnano: *Dear Professor Dong, can you describe the relationship between Chinese regional architecture and the transition from the Drawing Institutes to the diffusion of small and medium-sized architectural firms?*

Yiping Dong: The great transformation from the economic point of view of the last twenty years also affects technology and consequently the construction process of the enterprises. Innovation in construction processes offers designers more technical solutions that were previously limited.
Thanks to the openness of the world, it is possible to access architectural information of the highest standards and consequently raise the awareness of critical education through the media, publishing, architecture exhibitions and open public competitions. The combination of these events leads to a broader understanding of architecture among young people, who have easier access to information, and large real estate companies or other investors.
The public's understanding of what is "good" architecture was very limited due to the lack of aesthetic education. The large-scale Design Institutes paid fewer interests to competitive design proposals, while most projects were commissioned until 2000. Being a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) opened the door for international design companies in the market of China.
I.M. Pei's architecture has been an important landmark in interpreting modern Chinese architecture; think of the Fragrant Hill Hotel built in 1982 in Beijing and the most recent museum in Suzhou constructed in 2006. However, between 1950 and 1990 were built, fascinating examples of modern Chinese architecture not attributable to a single architectural style.
These rarities testify to the presence of an elite of architects who have never stopped creating buildings with an aesthetic value and a particular identity. An example of this is the Peace Hotel in Beijing (Heping Hotel), arch. Yang Tingbao, 1953. The Baiyun Estate, 1962, and the Double Creeks Villas, 1963 were both realized in Guangzhou and led by Mo Bozhi for the Guangzhou Architecture Design Institute. These two projects combined the regional garden feature in South China with the modern architectural spatial approach.
Architecture with a character was not always accepted or well regarded by the institutions, and today many of these buildings are almost unknown. Perhaps these few realizations are the seeds of architecture that reflect the sense of belonging spreading among the new architects in recent years.
When Design Institutes changed their form from state own to independent companies, they hired foreign and young Chinese architects. This process raised the quality of the projects in the consistent production of architectural artefacts.
In addition, the media supported the new trend by showing examples of architecture with aesthetic value through television programs, a guide for public opinion.

NP: *I remember that the Wang Shu Pritzker Prize victory in 2012 was a special moment for the architects working in Shanghai. I think that the*

prize reveals to the world the existence of a modern Chinese style. Well-known architects and studios in China that believe in regional architecture were finally recognized in China and abroad. Consequently, many new studios of young architects have begun to propose architecture with a strong identity imprint, which respects the characters and culture of the place.

YD: Yes, he was very influential in the professional and academic world, conferences, and television programs and even the students wanted to know more about Wang Shu's architecture and understand the motivations that led a regionalism architecture to win the Pritzker Prize. The impact was significant, and some governments were looking to carry out similar projects in that region. But the social conscience is not yet mature for understanding the importance of embodying the culture of a place in the architecture design; most administrators are looking for a famous architect, more than a style representative of local culture. Critical regionalism, more than architecture with aesthetic values that can be traced back to artistic values, is considered practical architecture that belongs to constructions tectonic. In addition, there are emerging exhibitions that are still inside a relatively professional community instead of the general audience. Wang Shu is best known in the professional and academic world. People outside of academia and architecture are not so aware of the significance of his contribution. In Hangzhou, where Wang Shu works, perhaps people do not know the architect's name, but that type of architecture is now recognized as "good architecture".

Notes

[1] Dr Adam Brillhart is an Assistant Professor in the XJTLU Department of Architecture. In 2012 he received a scholarship from the Chinese government and was Wang Shu's first non-Chinese PhD student at the China Academy of Art.

[2] See: Brillhart, Adam, Dong Yiping, Zhang Yuyu. "Conservation Practice of the Wooden Gaochi Instrument, An Exploration in Architectural Tools and Design Inheritance". Xi'an Jiatong-Liverpool University SURF. Jul-Aug-2021.

[3] Dr Adam Brillhart is an Assistant Professor in the XJTLU Department of Architecture. In 2012 he received a scholarship from the Chinese government and was Wang Shu's first non-Chinese PhD student at the China Academy of Art.

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Nicola Pagnano was born in Treviso; he graduated from the IUAV with honour, with Bernardo Secchi and Carlo Magnani; he was selected as a member of the Ateliers led by Leonardo Benevolo to draft the current Venice Town Plan. He received the 6th Edition "City of Oderzo Architecture Award" and won national and international design competitions. He collaborated with Franco Purini in the architectural composition courses at the IUAV. He participated in the first three editions of WAVE, Architecture Workshop in Venice, with Benno Albrecht. From 2003 to 2006, he was a tutor at the design course in Architecture for Sustainability; in 2006, he was a tutor at the Master in Sustainability and organized the "Sustainable Cities" conference at the IUAV. In 2005 he exhibited at the International Architecture Exposition directed by Wonderland. In 2007 he moved to China, where he worked as Design Director for Architecture and Urban Planning firms such as Halcrow Group Ltd., IBI Group, and RMJM. He exhibits at the Milan-Shanghai 2017 furniture fair. Since 2020 he has been a Teaching Fellow at XJTLU University in Suzhou (China), where he teaches architectural composition and technology.

Ettore Vadini
The Paulist School: A Hypothesis for Critical Regionalism

Abstract
Since the early 1940s, Brazilian modernism has moved almost exclusively from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo, if we exclude the period in Brasilia and the little that will happen in the remaining "architectural" cities of Brazil. In those years, João Batista Vilanova Artigas began his profession in São Paulo, a leading personality with a vision of idealist architecture with a social background to whom critics would recognize, perhaps later, the paternity of the so-called Paulist School. After the first Wrightian houses, Vilanova Artigas starts a theoretical-practical research starting from the legacy of that Modern Carioca born for a nation in search of identity. Vilanova Artigas, through his "critique of modernization", will make the articulation of the structural form that dialogues with the topography of the place the distinctive feature of the Paulist School.

Keywords
Modernism — Paulist school — Brazilian identity

Premise
At a time when Europe was questioning the *Athens Charter* during the CIAM (from Aix-en-Provence in '53 to the epilogue in Otterlo in '59), Brazil, under President Kubitschek and with the founding of Brasilia, was instead consolidating an idea of modernism as the cultural and social vehicle of a grand Republic in search of an identity. This project to adapt Modernism to the characteristics of Brazil, was led, some 30 years prior to Brasilia, by a handful of Brazilian architects, including Lùcio Costa and Gregori Warchavchik with the *Manifesto of Rational Architecture* (1925), as well as Le Corbusier in the form of lectures (1929) and key projects, such as the New Ministry of Education and Hygiene in Rio (1936).

To this day the inheritances of modern architecture are very much alive in Brazil. They are the cultural paradigms atop which the work of diverse generations of Brazilian architects is founded, including the younger generations. In fact, appearing disenchanted with the globalising products of the archistars, they still manage to promote the lessons of their masters and their pupils: from Costa to Vilanova Artigas, from Lina Bo Bardi to Oscar Niemeyer, from João Filgueiras Lima to Paulo Mendes da Rocha. The legacy of a Modernism adapted to local characters, be they Carioca or Paulist, is still highly visible in contemporary Brazilian architecture. It remains so latent that it appears to protect young architects against the temptations of innovation for innovations sake. In their architecture we can capture the continuation of a phenomenon.

The theme of this review offers a particular occasion for reordering selected events in architecture from the past century, which unfolded between Europe and South America. They are useful for expanding our observation

of the panorama of works under the critical notion of "modern architecture and cultural identity", which Kenneth Frampton referred to as "Critical Regionalism". Thus they accompany a 'regionalist' reflection on the architecture of the Paulist School.

Before advancing any hypotheses, it is worth remembering what is intended by "Critical Regionalism". We can do this by referring to what Frampton wrote in the original edition of *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*:

The term "Critical Regionalism" is not intended to denote the vernacular as this was once spontaneously produced by the combined interaction of climate, culture, myth and craft, but rather to identity those recent regional 'schools' whose primary aim has been to reflect and serve the limited constituencies in which they are grounded. (Frampton 1980, p. 313)

Thus, rather than the vernacular, Frampton intended instead an architecture capable of reflecting a regional identity (in the world).

What is more, to trace the critical path, I note three effectively related, though apparently autonomous and distant concepts, which will be explained further on.

One: the seven characters, "or rather attitudes" (Frampton 1986, p. 327), indicated by Frampton to recognise the architecture of a regional school[1] appear in absolute adherence with the signs of a precise production of modernist architecture – that of the Paulist School – that I wish to explore here.

Second: after an initial period of "structuring" Modernism in Brazil, which lasted roughly twenty years, from the early '20s, and nurtured, in some cases directly, by Le Corbusier and a few local architects, from the early '40s an architectural practice began to develop in São Paulo. To use the words of Frampton, «critiques modernization [and, Author's Note] nonetheless still refuses to abandon the emancipatory and progressive aspects of the modern architectural legacy». This is the practice of the Paulist School, and there is a place built and organised *ad hoc* where it can still be learned: the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade di São Paulo by João Batista Vilanova Artigas, a concrete symbol of the Paulist School since 1961.

Third: as Carlo Gandolfi recently wrote in *Matter of space. Città e architettura in Paulo Mendes da Rocha,* a book that frames the figure of Mendes da Rocha within the Paulist School, «in order to comprehend the conceptual roots of this way of looking at the city and architecture, we must immediately dispel a historiographic and critical misunderstanding that arrives principally from Europe, that of the brutalist label» (Gandolfi 2018, p. 95). A position I fully share.

I will therefore proceed by examining these three concepts in the same number of paragraphs.

The Regionalist Notion and the "Attitudes" of South America
Kenneth Frampton joined the editorial board of *Architectural Design* (hereinafter AD) in May of '62 thanks to Theo Crosby. His first cover was issue was n.8 from August of the same year. The story goes that Crosby, again in '62, asked Frampton, in a rather original manner, to step into his position as technical director. This was in part due to the fact that Crosby had been impressed by a few reviews penned by Frampton for *Art News*, and in part following a suggestion from Monica Pidgeon, the magazine's historic and respected editor. In fact, in a 1999[2] interview with Charlotte

Benton, Pidgeon mentioned that at that time someone had certainly spoken to her highly of Frampton, though she could not recall who. The historian Jorge Otero-Pailos, for his part, observed how at this time Frampton was certainly involved with the group of British constructivists, like Crosby, and that these artists could represent a connection between the two. Frampton had this to say: «It is a sort of enigma for me. While I had met Theo, I did not belong to his circle, and I had never written for his review. What is more, at that time I had written very little»[3].

The direction of AD under Frampton, with a total of 31 issues published between July '62 and January '65, is bookended by his predecessor Crosby and his successor Robin Middleton. However, it is above all a discontinuity in editorial policy, also considering the short period of time granted him[4]. It would be better to refer to a "suspension", of the magazine's traditional content, with respect to the work of those who came before and after him, who instead can be considered similar. Crosby and Middleton, in fact, pushed for the generation of the neo-avant-garde and both had a strong influence through the magazine on a broader architectural culture, offering space for its ideologies and protagonists: the former with the Smithsons, and the latter with Cedric Price and Archigram. Frampton, instead, was primarily interested in "constructivism", as well as "peripheral" modernism; however, we must be aware of the ideas matured by the young editor after Pidgeon – a figure with the ability to persuade important editorial 'projects' such as that dedicated to South America[5] - and in the wake of diverse travels to regions he would refer to as "city states"[6].

Since the early '60s, Frampton's gaze was drawn beyond the confines of Europe. Given the opportunity to restructure AD, he would be the first to implement a practice of innovative 'encyclopaedic' editorial policy, as evidenced in his 31 issues traversing the development of modern architecture in peripheral situations in, and outside of, Europe. The "extra-European peripheries" were fundamental to the economy of this contribution as they looked to Mexico, Chile and above all Brazil. Thus, while architecture in Great Britain and the United States was still sufficiently represented in the magazine, under Frampton AD decisively shifted its attention toward continental Europe and Latin America.

Of particular interest here is that Frampton, as editor of AD and thanks to work trips, developed that «desire to resist against the trend to reduce architecture to images» (Hallen-Foster 2003, pp. 35-58) already during the 1960s. Nonetheless, it cannot be said at this time that Frampton's 'communication' had a similar impact on architectural culture to that of Crosby or Middleton, despite the revolutionary nature of his editorial work. What we can say, looking back, is that his brief though intense work was doubtless determinant to the "construction" of the theories of Critical Regionalism.

There are two attitudes, in particular, that mark Frampton's position on architecture during his time at AD: the importance and the creation of place through architecture and its realisation as a technical undertaking. Place and tectonics are conditioned by the physical nature of a building, by its material strength, by its authenticity. If we look closely, there are characters of a phenomenology rooted also in his limited number of built works, and to the ideas of Hannah Arendt, with whom he shared a bond.

During his time at AD, Frampton was clearly attracted to architecture with a certain structural materiality, often reproduced in black and white photographs, by projects offering social services or pure art, and in which it is clear that the aesthetic is part of the same ethic it expresses. Frampton

shared this thesis with Otero-Pailos in 2010: «making buildings where people could pursue aesthetic experiences was an ethical commitment dependent on, and appropriate to, progressive social politics» (Otero-Pailos 2010, p. 183). Frampton never abandoned his ideas, and during the 1960s he also provided space for the enormous technological changes influencing architecture at the time; better yet, after leaving AD to begin an academic career as an architectural historian, he developed the phenomenological principles at the core of the theory of Critical Regionalism. We are speaking of that architecture that never abandoned the vestiges of Modernism, which attributed importance to the territory to be settled, which is presented as a technical undertaking, which is identified with place and with the environment in which it is situated, which accentuates tactile and visual perception, which occasionally presents reinterpreted vernacular elements, «able to escape the optimizing thrust of universal civilization» (Frampton 1986, p. 327).

In 1964, prior to leaving AD, Frampton began frequenting Princeton University, where he continued teaching until 1972. The doors to Princeton were opened to Frampton by Peter Eisenman, following their meeting at Cambridge via Colin Rowe, with whom he would remain in contact. Together with the Argentinian Gandelsonas, they would co-found the review «Oppositions». In 1970, two years before Frampton went to Columbia University, Middleton commissioned Frampton to write the text that would be published ten years later under the title *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. A text that, it goes without saying, is now a global reference.

Modern Architecture and Identity in Brazil
In Brazil, prior to the arrival of Le Corbusier, an event that, as Giulio Carlo Argan wrote, «marked an era, as with the arrival of Serlio in France in the sixteenth century, or the return of Inigo Jones to Great Britain during the seventeenth century with the texts of Palladio and Scamozzi» (Argan 1954), the expressions of Modernism began to appear thanks to "Modern Art Week" in São Paulo. The "*Semana*", born in 1922 and from 1951 a "Biennale", proved above all an occasion for discussing modern architecture in Brazil. Some years later, in 1925, a group of young architects, which included Gregori Warchavchik and Lúcio Costa, decided to come together around a "Manifesto of Rational Architecture" promoting the adoption of European functionalist theories. Beyond ideologies, for Brazilians modernity represented above all a revindication of history, that is, a calculated forgetting of a colonial past. And Modernism, with its progressive change, well responded to this revindication.

It is worth remembering that during the 1920s and '30s, despite the fact that Brazilian culture was based in São Paulo – Brazil's most industrialised city – the world of the arts was centred in Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital, and for architecture we can immediately understand why. Rio was home, since 1896, to a course in Architecture at the School of Fine Arts, whose graduates include, among others, Lúcio Costa (1924), Affonso Eduardo Reidy (1930), Oscar Niemeyer (1934) and Roberto Burle Marx (1934): the most famous names of early Brazilian modernism.

Lúcio Costa, who spent his adolescence in Europe, where he fell in love with the avant-garde movements, became a powerful animator of modernist culture after graduating, in Rio. He was so taken by the progressive cause that in 1930, upon being named director of the School where he had studied, he hired all of those architects who, five years earlier, had signed

the "Manifesto" with him. In short, it was in Rio, thanks to Costa, that new modern ideals began to spread in Brazil, breaking with the conservative schemes of the Academic world. And his action, despite its brevity, would remain fundamental to the Carioca school. In fact, one year later, in 1931, Costa was forced to leave precisely due to these progressive ideas, which were not shared by national politics.

In 1929 Le Corbusier was officially invited to hold a cycle of lectures in Brazil, initially in Rio and later in São Paulo. On this occasion Lúcio Costa, professor of Architecture, and other Brazilian architects, and his most trusted collaborator Oscar Niemeyer, met the Swiss master, thanks to Alberto Monteiro de Carvalho, the organiser of the lectures. This "contact" would prove highly precious in a short period of time.

In 1936 Lúcio Costa, representing a team comprised of Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Ernâni Vasconcelos, Carlos Leão, Jorge Moreira, Roberto Burle Marx and Oscar Niemeyer, was commissioned by then Minster Gustavo Capanema to design the new Ministry of Education and Hygiene in Rio. Costa, leader of the group, proposed and obtained authorisation to nominate his friend Le Corbusier as a design consultant. The appointment would only last one month, however the project, for Le Corbusier as for many Brazilians, would represent a test bed outside of Europe for the concepts contained in the "five points for a new architecture". As we know, the Ministry of Education and Hygiene would mark the definitive launch of modern architecture in Brazil. However, what most interests us here is that with this project we can demonstrate how Brazilians needed to adopt the model of Le Corbusier's architecture, but also to 'alter it' to insert the *machine à habiter* in a tropical country. In short, Le Corbusier's lesson was flexible and left room for Brazilians to definitively break from their colonial past.

Costa's work in Rio would be presented to a broader public in 1939, when he, Niemeyer, Burle Marx and Paul Lester Wiener designed the Brazilian Pavilion for the World's Fair in New York: set among the pavilions of different regimes squaring off against one another in a prelude to the Second World War, the Brazilian Pavilion was like a breath of fresh air for its modern culture. Elevated on *pilotis* and connected to the ground by a sinuous ramp, the Pavilion was symptomatically organised around a court featuring an exotic garden designed by Burle Marx.

Fig. 2
Aereal view of the Superquadras of Brasilia (Relatório do Plano Piloto de Brasília, ArPDF, CO-DEPLAN, DePHA, Brasília: GDF, 1991).

In the 1940s, Brazilian architecture gained even more recognition.

In Europe – where the lessons of the Modern Movement were being lost, lacking, in particular political situations, the premises for an open cultural debate – when the first *reportages* on architecture in Brazil appeared, after 1945, at the end of the War, all European architects appeared to witness in these works the happy continuation of the experiences that had been so dramatically truncated, enriched by a new language, stimulating and full of ingenious suggestions. (Bracco 1967, p. 35)

A notable visibility came with the exhibition organised in 1943 by Philip L. Goodwin at the MoMA in New York, with a catalogue entitled *Brazil Builds*. Another important contribution to the spread of the Brazilian style came from architectural reviews. Aside from Lina Bo Bardi's «Habitat» and Oscar Niemeyer's «Modulo», I also mention «L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui», «Progressive Architecture» and «Zodiac». There was however no shortage of criticism, above all from Max Bill who, writing in the «Architectural Review», chastised Brazilian architects for having created a fashion.
All the same, after the Second World War, modern Brazilian architecture, from the Carioca or Paulist school, was appreciated around the world for its capacity to represent local characters and offered a valid alternative to the International Style. These exotic characters intrinsic to modern architecture interested multiple typologies, including public housing, which was already a social issue in Brazil. If Niemeyer at Pampulha confronted services, with the Baile restaurant, the Yacht Club and the Church of St. Francis, it would be Costa who realised an interesting integration between buildings and a park at Guinle (1948-50) in Rio, and later Henrique Mindlin and the Roberto brothers, respectively, with the Tres Leões residences
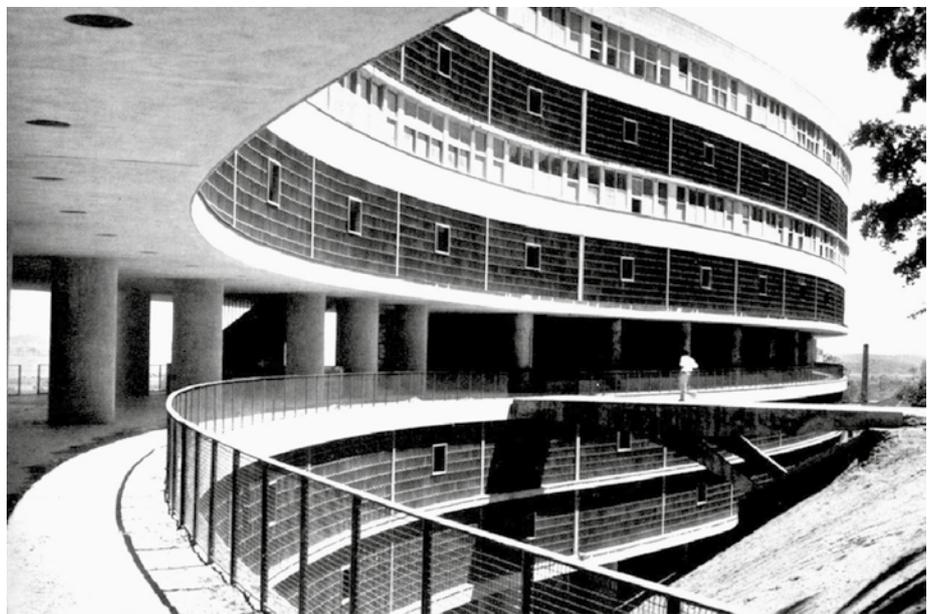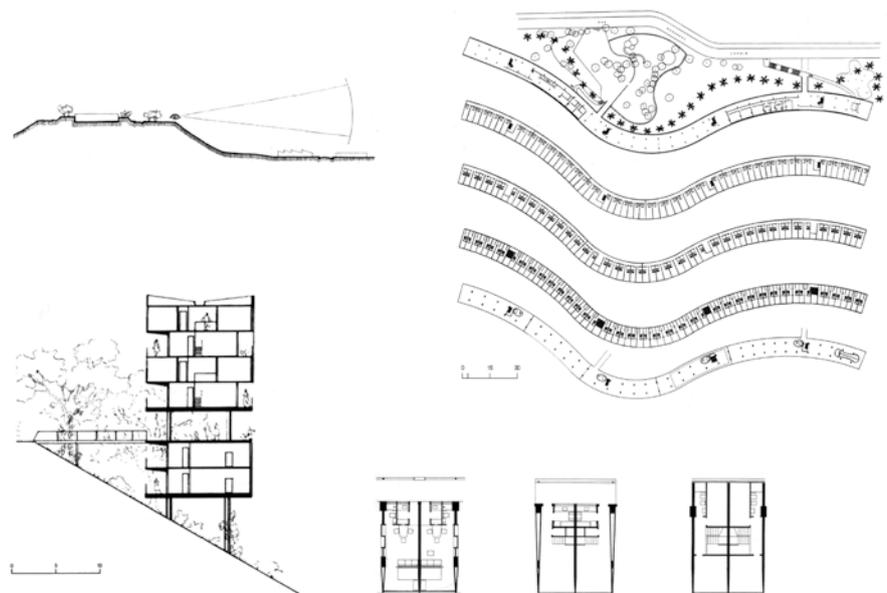
Fig. 3
Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Conjunto Habitacional Pedregulho, Rio de Janeiro, 1947-1950. Plan and section of the residential unit (© Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 4
Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Conjunto Habitacional Pedregulho, Rio de Janeiro, 1947-1950. Residential block, external view (© Ettore Vadini).

(1951) in São Paulo and Marques de Herval (1956) in Rio, and above all Affondo Eduardo Reidy with the Pedregulho complex (1947-50) and the quarter for state employees at Gàeva (1950-58) in Rio. Each of these projects contains an allusion to tropicalism, thanks also to external landscaping by Burle Marx and *murals* by Candido Portinari.

The Paulist School as a Critique of Modernisation
At the beginning of the 1940s, Brazilian modernism shifted almost exclusively to São Paulo, if we exclude the period of Brasilia, and if we make a comparison with what occurred in Brazil's other "cities of architecture": Rio, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba and Porto Alegre.
In the early '40s, São Paulo, where Gregori Warchavchik designed the first modernist homes, including the House in Rua Jtapolis (1930)[7], saw the return of Rino Levi (previously in Rome with Marcello Piacentini), followed by Bernard Rudofsky and Daniele Calabi. These three architects began designing homes based on the patio typology, arranging volumes around an open space with the clear intention of establishing a dialogue with nature[8]. This was also the same time and location of the beginnings of the career

Fig. 5
João Batista Vilanova Artigas, Casa Czapski, San Paolo, 1949. model (Photo by Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 6
João Batista Vilanova Artigas, Second house of the architect, São Paulo, 1949. Model (Photo by Ettore Vadini).

Nella pagina seguente:

Fig. 7
João Batista Vilanova Artigas, FAU-USP, San Paolo, 1961. Internal view (Photo by Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 8
João Batista Vilanova Artigas, FAU-USP, San Paolo, 1961. Cross section and plans of the four levels (© Ettore Vadini).
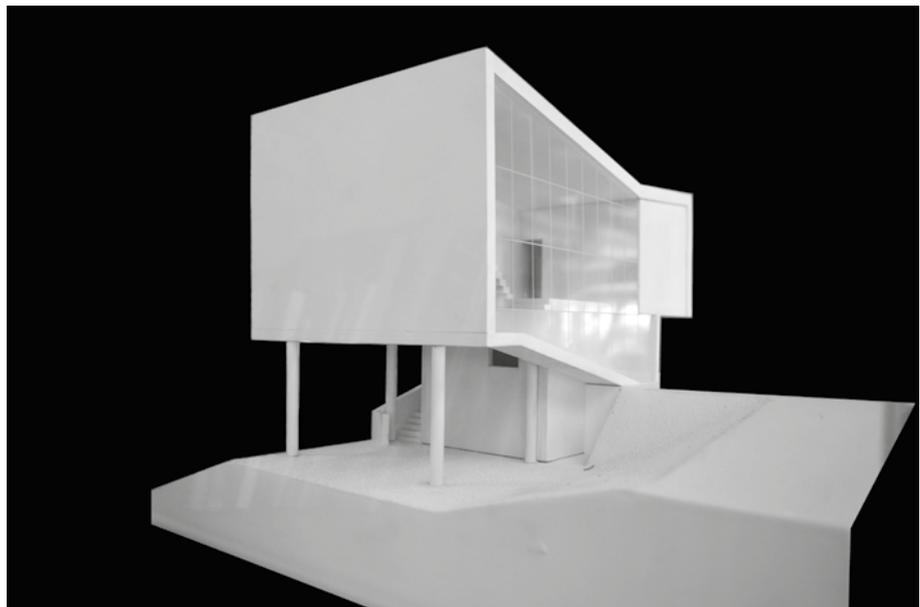
of João Batista Vilanova Artigas, a leading personality with an idealistic and socially founded vision. Born in Curitiba, he earned his degree as an engineer-architect in 1937 from the Escola Politécnica of the University of São Paulo. In 1948, Vilanova Artigas was also among the founders of the FAU-USP. Following his early homes characterised by a number of elements of Wrightian inspiration[9], it was the Louveira complex (1946-49) that first saw Vilanova Artigas present architectural-urban innovations of a certain depth, that is, with a public-private spatial continuity between two residential buildings and the street, which became one of the hallmarks of his research. During this period Vilanova Artigas began working with pilotis and long connecting ramps, a theme that can be found in the San Lucas hospital in Curitiba (1945), Czapski House (1949), the Second Artigas House (1949) and Londrina bus station (1950). Even these two elements would play an important in the evolution of Artigas' architecture, in a more rigorous and monumental manner with respect to Niemeyer, toward an articulation of structural form that dialogues increasingly more with the topography of the site, and which would become the stylistic hallmark of the Paulist School. As Frampton wrote, «What the Paulist School added to this exuberant topographic language was a more tectonically rigorous

Fig. 9
João Batista Vilanova Artigas, Bus Station in Jaù, San Paolo, 1973. Internal view (© Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 10
João Batista Vilanova Artigas, Stazione Bus a Jaù, San Paolo, 1973. Longitudinal section and plan of the first level (© Ettore Vadini).
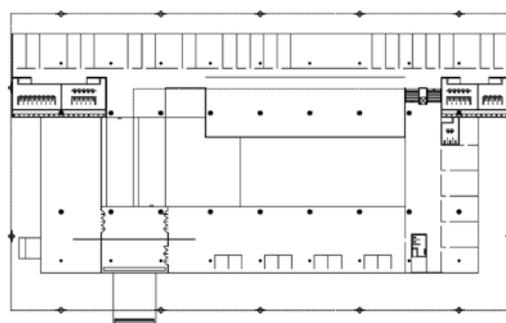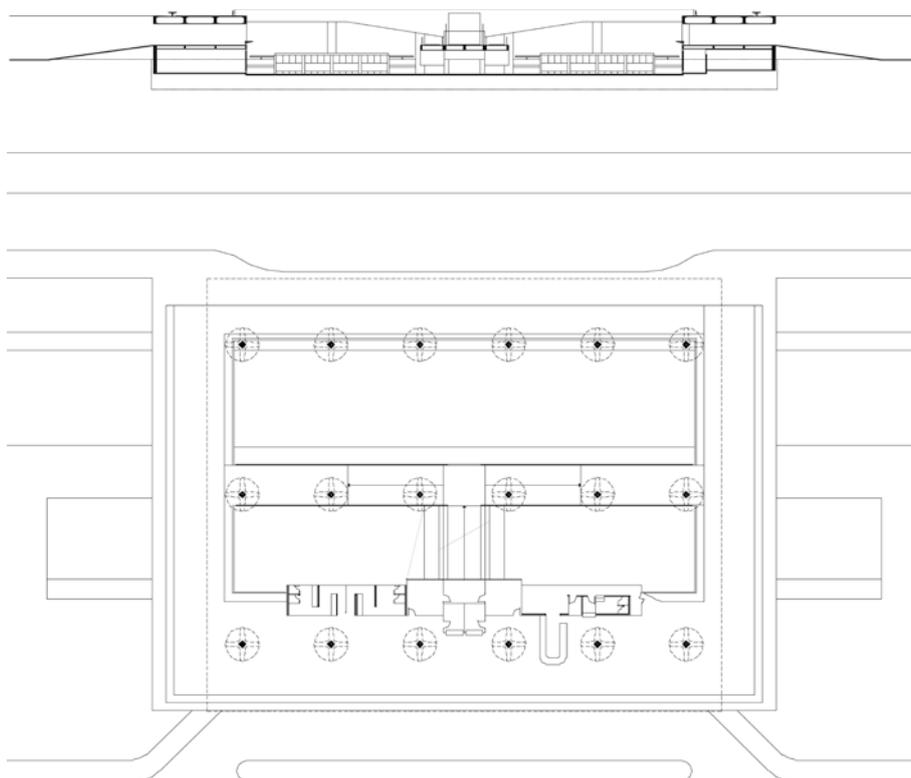
attitude towards the articulation of structural form» (Frampton, 2010, p. 5). After a sojourn in the United States in 1947, where he met with exiles from the Bauhaus, Vilanova Artigas initiated an intense activity of writing[10] through which he expressed his convictions on the role of architecture in a capitalist world. In parallel, his design research began to approach structures with longer spans, arriving at the roofs-diaphragms beneath which he developed an entire programme of functions, either public or private. The small scale with urban functions, in a metropolis like São Paulo, is at the base of public structures, such as the Morumbi Stadium (1952) designed with Cascaldi. The Taques Bittencourt House (1959), instead, a patio between two walls in reinforced concrete on four supports, is the archetype of this most important works from the 1960s. Bittencourt House, together with Baeta House (1956), Ruben de Mendonça House (1958) and Ivo Viterito House (1962), other than representing examples of structural minimalism, are also the bases for investigating materials, primarily exposed concrete, toward the definition of the fundamental characters of the School. Another important figure from the Paulist School is Lina Bo Bardi. A pupil of Gio Ponti, she moved to Brazil in 1946, together with Pietro Maria Bar-

Fig. 11
Lina Bo Bardi, MASP, São Paulo, 1968. External view (© Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 12
Lina Bo Bardi, SESC Pompéia, São Paulo, 1986. Internal view. (Photo by Ettore Vadini).
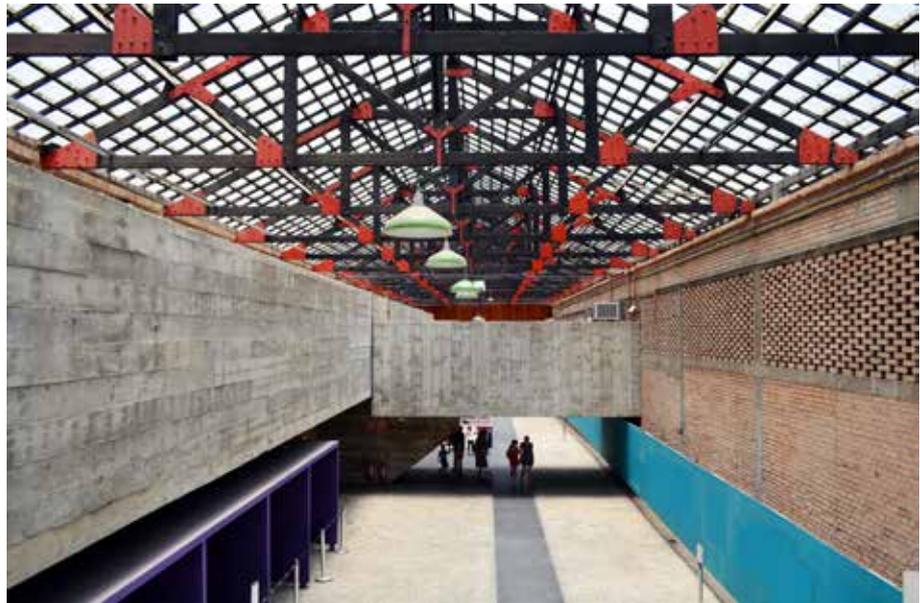
di, an influential art critic and gallery owner. For Lina Brazil would prove the ideal terrain for a return to primordial values, thanks to indigenous Brazilian culture. Her attention to the material and spiritual culture of Brazil can be considered subversive with respect to the cultural canons of the time: however, this, together with her rationalist background, would allow her to develop a particular sense of the arts, a rational-exotic integration that would henceforth traverse her writing, her artistic and architectural activity, culminating in that "culture as a free choice" found in the museographic design of the São Paulo Museum of Art.

The Casa de Vidro (1951) designed for herself, to a certain degree encloses her new world: organised around a court and set atop a hillside on pilotis, it opens up with its large living room above a luxuriant exotic natural setting, almost embracing it. Bo Bardi contributed to the consecration of the Paulist language with two works: the MASP (1968) and the SESC Pompéia (1986).

The series of schools commissioned by the State of São Paulo in the early '60s from a number of architects, including Vilanova Artigas, represented an occasion for developing that hoped for idea of 'democratic and transparent space' under one roof. The sequence, large volumes on minimal supports and spaces lit from above through openings in the structural grid, began with the school at ltanhaém (1959), followed by Guarulhos (1960) and culminating with Vilanova Artigas' most famous work, the FAU-USP (1961). «It is no accident that the most well-known work by João Batista Vilanova Artigas is a school of architecture. Indeed, for him, design, the education of the new generation of architects and political and professional militancy form a unicum» (Martins 2007, p. 33).

All of the characters that distinguish the Paulist School are tangible in this building. It is recognisable as a place of gathering and sharing of ideas. The whole is a paradigmatic synthesis of architecture, engineering and ideological conception; the functional programme of the FAU-USP rests atop the didactic project elaborated by Vilanova Artigas and Flavio Motta for the 1962 Reform. As Paulo Mendes da Rocha stated in a 2008 interview with Guilherme Wisnik, «I see the FAU-USP as the tree of Vieira and I feel myself to be one its fruits» (Wisnik 2008, p. 135).

The recurring elements in the architecture of Vilanova Artigas from this complex period are: ramps conceived as folded floor slabs and solutions to

Fig. 13
Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Edificio Jaraguà, 1984. (Photo by Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 14
Paulo Mendes da Rocha, House Mendes da Rocha, Butantã, São Paulo, 1964. External view (Photo by Ettore Vadini).

connections, between beam and column, emptied out at the apparent point of maximum tension. He perfected these elements in three sports facilities, all from 1961: the São Paulo Football Club, the Anhembí Tennis Club and the nautical club for the Santa Paula Yacht Club.

While on the one hand the military dictatorship would censor[11] the ideas and teachings of Vilanova Artigas, on the other hand it kept him very busy as an architect, in particular to define a tectonic typology flexible enough to be utilised indistinctly as a large public building, as with the Jaù Bus Station (1973), or a small home, for example Mendes André House (1966), Elza Berquò House (1967) and Martirani House (1969). After all, Vilanova Artigas while «claiming in reviews the need for plans, operative programmes, above all in the field of housing [his works] never renounced the idea that a work of architecture, qualified and autonomous, could have enough inherent value to revendicate situations that instead are to be confronted at another scale and in other terms» (Bracco 1967, p. 76).

Paulo Mendes da Rocha began collaborating with Vilanova Artigas in 1959. With his master he shared the necessity for a compromise between art and politics to favour the modernisation of Brazil. In fact, Mendes da Rocha carried the torch of the Paulist School into the present day, thanks to his numerous projects and activity as a teacher at the FAU-USP. In addition to public works[12], which began with the Clube Atlético Paulistano in São Paulo (1958), of particular interest here are his homes from the 1970s, examples of an irreducible radicality of the Paulist School, as well as paradigms for many generations of architects. They are the series Millàn (1970), Mazetti (1970), King (1972-74), Junqueira (1976-80), and later, in particular, his own home from 1966 which must be observed in order to find a common key of interpretation. At the Mendes da Rocha House, as in those that followed it, the original orography becomes a condition of design, in which an abstract and homogenous volume, apparently closed, drops down to a certain level based on the level of the terrain, leaving the level of entry in a condition of chiaroscuro. Once again, the roof-diaphragm "alla Artigas" which dominates everything, confirms the nature of the site and where precisely the articulation of the base permits a multiplicity of spaces-places for both domestic life, private on one side, and for encounters, open space on the other, as he had been taught by his master. The reasons why the Paulist School cannot be labelled "brutalist" can be

Fig. 15
Paulo Mendes da Rocha, MUBE, São Paulo, 1985. External view (© Ettore Vadini).

Fig. 16
Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Praça do Patriarca, São Paulo, 2002. External view. (© Ettore Vadini).

found above all in the text "Os Caminhos da Arquitetura Moderna" by Vilanova Artigas, together with "Le Corbusier e o Imperialismo" from 1951. Published by the Partido Comunista Brasileiro, both texts express the restlessness of the architect confronted with the risk that the Modern Movement was at the service of imperialism. Vilanova Artigas began by affirming that «no form of modern architecture appears absurd and shocking, giving the impression that it was produced by chance and fantasy». He continued: «each school, each trend, is built on a certain number of premises, and the forms of buildings created by architects affiliated [with that school, Author's Note] are not only the product of their fantasy, but also a logical consequence of these premises». Clearly the 1950s were years of ideological dispute, fought over the body of modern architecture.

From the same text it is also clear that the premises of the "School", in which Artigas believed, were those of anti-imperialism, activism, to ward off a future with «modern architecture, as we know it» because «it is a weapon of oppression, a weapon of the ruling class; a weapon of oppressors, against the oppressed». At the end, he asked:

what to do? Await a new society and continue to do what we do, or abandon the profession of the architect, for it is oriented in a hostile direction toward the people, and launch ourselves fully into the revolutionary fight? Neither of the two. It is clear that we must fight for the future of our people, for progress and for a new society, putting the maximum possible effort into this mission... we will create a critical spirit to dissipate the good from the useless in architecture. But it is also clear that, as long as we have not established the bond between architects and the masses of people, as long as the work of architects will not have the glory of being discussed in the factories, there will be no architecture. (Artigas 2004, pp. 35-50)

Vilanova Artigas never liked the label "brutalist", as Wisnik confirmed: «in short, in all of these brutalisms one perceives an expressive reduction of architecture to its tectonic reality, in an aesthetic operation that must be charged with ethical motivations» (Wisnik 2010, p. 12). To ironize on the qualification of the Paulist School as brutalist, made by Bruno Alfieri in *Zodiac* magazine in 1960, Vilanova Artigas at the 1965 São Paulo Biennale, paying homage to Carlos Millán stated: «the last homes that [Millán] built in São Paulo reveal a trend that critics, above all European, refer to as brutalist. A Brazilian brutalism, one could say. I do not believe this justifies everything. The ideological content of European brutalism is something else entirely» (Wisnik 2010, p. 12).
Nonetheless, *Zodiac*, which dedicated much of issue n. 6 to the "Rapporto Brasile", offered Flavio Motta, professor of Aesthetics and co-signer of the FAU-USP reform, the chance to speak, in "Introduction to Brazil" (Motta 1960, p. 61) about the existence of a local production, alternative to the architecture of Rio, and to highlight the figure of Vilanova Artigas. If until this moment Artigas had only received episodic attention from the world of print, he was now the protagonist in São Paulo of an "intense doctrinal activity". It is interesting to note how various observers, around the '60s, began to deal with the architecture of São Paulo with emphasis as a collective and independent manifestation. Luiz Saia, a Paulist engineer-architect, writing in 1959 in *Diario di São Paulo*, penned an article titled "Architettura Paulista" (Saia 2003, pp. 106-119) in which he praised the existence of a local professionalism born out of the modernist movements.
At the end of the'60s, the growing appreciation for the work of the Paulist School and its legitimate right to represent a national architecture, spurred the work of Paulo Mendes da Rocha, accompanied by Motta's report, developed for the competition to design the Brazilian Pavilion at the Expo in Osaka. Among various expressions, the project was selected precisely due the School's language, which offers glimpses of a continuity and a universal interest. One theme, as is evident, is the continuity, or lack thereof, with the Paulist School. In other words, the question of whether we are dealing with an architecture influenced by characters expressed in Rio, or something else. Many critics see a persistence of values, both formal and functional, and place the Paulist School along a continuous line with the development of Brazilian architecture in which it is possible to find regional identities. This continuity met with opposition from the critique made by the historian Yves Bruand, author of *Arquitetura contemporânea no Brasil* in 1973. At a time when there seemed to appear a certain friction and a rivalry between the two schools, Bruand's book carved out its own space with an analysis more accepted by critics of the production of the Paulist School. He defined it as ambitious, recognising of references, characterised by a rigorous functionalism, a technical level that aspired to the industrialization of construction and an aesthetic that promotes «strength,

impact, mass, weight and violent contrasts» (Bruand 1973). In classifying these works for the first time, giving a set of characters to the "Paulist School", Bruand already identified a legacy for this architecture in the work of Vilanova Artigas.

In 1986, Marlene Milan Acayaba's analysis of the architecture of housing from the'40s to the '70s in São Paulo shed light on some of the characters of the Paulist School. They are very similar to those listed by Frampton in the chapter titled "Regionalism". These are the "ten commandments": the relationship between housing, the landscape and geography, the single block as the ordering element of urban space, space organised around a patio or a central void, independent volumes, generic and industrialised materials such as reinforced concrete, social relations that occur under the sign of new ethic. The critic Hugo Segawa, instead, claimed that

characterising the production of the Paulist School as "Brutalista" forces a relationship of ascendency that minimises the remaining influences or restrictions established by this way of making architecture. It is impossible to compare the austerity of England, a nation suffering the consequences of war and suffocated by the momentary lack of materials, with a nation such as Brazil, which had few technological resources and whose architectural sobriety (not to say "aestheticised rusticity") derived from the limits imposed by the possibilities offered by industry to civil constructions. In this sense, reinforced concrete and its plastic and aesthetic potentialities (via Le Corbusier) were the most advanced technological front available to Brazilian architects at the time. (Segawa 2013, p. 175)

I am convinced that applying the label brutalist to Paulist architecture fails to stand up either as a precedent, if we consider the historiographic construction of Reyner Banham and the projects contained in *The New Brutalism*, nor as a parallel phenomenon, if we hold to the distinction of 'brutalism' made by many Anglo-Saxon critics – as an exclusively English trend from the '60s and '70s – and that witticism expressed by its principal theoretician, Banham himself, when he admitted that brutalism was already over in 1966 when his book was printed (Banham 1955, p. 1966).

Notes

[1] K. Frampton also explored this theme in the review Perspecta when, in 1983 he published the essay "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", a text comprised of 6 points based on an alternative historiography, which he himself had initiated in the '60s, against the threat of the universalization of architectural language.

[2] Charlotte Benton interviews Monica Pidgeon (9 July 1999), in "Pigeon, Monica (7 of 25) National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives", British Library, Sound Archive, https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0039XX-0700V0.

3 Presentation by Kenneth Frampton of the Monica Pidgeon Memorial, Architectural Association, 23 November 2009 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oJ0lsfBuzE).

[4] Theo Crosby was technical director of AD for 8 years and 7 months, Robin Middleton for 7 years and 8 months, Kenneth Frampton instead for only 2 years and 7 months.

[5] Between 1962 and '64 the magazine dealt on different occasions with South American architecture and urbanism, and in particular in Brazil. For example, half of the May 1964 issue was dedicated to Oscar Niemeyer's work at Brasilia.

[6] K. Frampton, in Architectural Design, January 1965.

[7] Gregori Warchavchik with the House in Rua Jtapolis, highly appreciated by Le Corbusier, would boast the title of "pioneer of modern architecture in Brazil". Other works worthy of note include the House in Rua Santa Cruz (1927) and Max Graf house (1929) praised by Gio Ponti in Domus 64 from 1933 for «demonstrating the great capacity for adaption of warm countries, and stupendously framing the tropical vegetation».

[8] Rino Levi designed the Levi House, Milton Guper House, Castor Delgado Perez House; Bernard Rudofsky designed the House in Rua Canadá, Frontini House; Daniele Calabi is the author of the Calabi House, Ascarelli House, Medici House, and the Orphanage in São Paulo with Giancarlo Palanti.

[9] The reference is to Bertha Gift House (1940), his Prima House (1942) and Rio Branco Paranhos House (1943).

[10] In particular in three texts entitled "Le Corbusier e o Imperialismo", "Caminhos do Arquitetura Moderna" and "Uma falsa crise".

[11] In 1964 Vilanova Artigas was removed from the FAU-USP, together with Paulo Mendes da Rocha and Jon Majtrejean, before being forced into retirement in 1969. Artigas would have to wait for the amnesty, in 1979, before he was reintegrated, initially as an assistant, and in 1984 as a researcher.

[12] His many works include the Brazilian Pavilion at Expo 1970 in Osaka, the Capela de São Pedro at Campos Jordão (1987), the Forma Warehouse (1987), the MUBE (1988), the State Art Museum (1993), the redesign of the Praça do Patriarca in São Paulo 2002.

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Ugo Rossi
The USA: the image of our future. Aren't they?

Abstract
This article ponders on the role of the United States as the reference point and the model of modern capitalist, consumerist and global culture, anticipating not only what is to come, but also what is already happening, on the rest of the planet. However, very much aware of the cultural problems worldwide – if that model was to be really globally available – in order to contrast such a global and indifferent escalation, it is to be recognised that the phenomenon of Critical Regionalism potentially has the power to contrast the indiscriminate consumption of natural resources and the annihilation of cultural diversity with the various nations of the world.

Das industriell entwickeltere Land zeigt dem minder entwickelten nur das Bild der eignen Zukunft[1]. (Marx 1867)

The epoch of consumption in which we live, characterized by the globalisation, by the tearing down of life's certainties and by the fickleness our existence, more and more hectic and forced to keeping up with the inclination of the group to avoid feeling out of place or outright excluded, is well described by Zygmunt Bauman, in the *Liquid modernity* (2000), and it recalls what a few years previous Jean-François Lyotard recognized as the postmodern condition (1979). In both cases the most relevant aspect of it all is the impossibility to pinpoint a center of reference.

Contrary to that though, more recently, Richard Florida (2003), stated that, nowadays, there are many centers of reference in correspondence with those places able to attract, stimulate and encourage new and thriving generations of creative people. Oddly as it may seem, that article points at the United States of America – the best of possible worlds – as the reference point and as the model for a global, capitalist and consumerist culture which, as it is, will most certainly anticipate what is happening and what is to come on the planet, reminding us what Karl Marx stated at the end of the nineteenth century: «The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future» (Marx 1867, Foreword).

The United States, as the Western cultural model of reference par excellence, found some sort of convalidation in the history of the Millennium just closed. As Stephen Gundle and Marco Guani wrote (1989), we need to consider that

no other country in the twenty-first century has been able to compete with such increasing influence and with the ascendancy that the US has had on the contemporary world. It can be argued that the apex of the American political and military power was reached in 1945, when the exclusive possession of the nuclear bomb, the military success and an extraordinary economic and financial power gave rise to an unprecedented global hegemony; for other aspect, on the other hand, the importance of the United States in the Western world in probably more relevant today than it was forty years ago. (Gundle-Guani 1989)

For a while now, the US has been a solid and powerful democratic nation that, during the course of the last century has seen a huge economic, scientific and cultural development, above all it is the nation that has influenced the outcome of both world conflicts.

That said, it is also important to point out that the unparalleled and widespread development of American culture was not due to the relevance of their intervention to win both WWI and WWII, nor it was due to the lack of homeland enemy attacks that called for keeping up and running all the activities pivotal to the economic growth. Finally, the reason was not even ascribable than a large number of eminent representative in most fields of human knowledge emigrated there to flee from Europe, by then haunted by dictatorships and the nazi persecutions.

The reasons why the United States became the powerful nation that it is, have simply more to do with the profusion of great energy and resources for their self validation as a role model – the so called *American way of life* – set in motion from the *Cold War* era (Orwell, 1945)[2], until today.

We are only partially aware of the great pervasiveness of the *American Way of Life,* the result of the huge accomplishment, achieved from 1947 till 1959 (Rossi 2019), ultimately aiming to promoting, informing and conquering, by way of the persuasive and seductive means of the so called *soft power*, all the nations devastated by WWII, and those ones that had not yet selected a model to pursue (the Communist or Capitalist one), in need of an economic, moral and material recovery.

What is meant by *soft power*, is well explained by Joseph S. Nye in one of his publications with the significant title: *Bound to Lead. The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990): it is the ability to achieve predetermined goals in terms of international relations through seductive means rather than coercive ones (Mattelart 2000).

The US cultural takeover of the world was most fully perceived between the 60s and the 70s of the last century, during the time of recovery and economic booming, when the effects of the *European Recovery Program* (ERP) policies and the *Organization for European Economic Cooperation* (OEEC) – the so-called *Marshall Plan* (1948-1952) – became most evident.

As a consequence of the ERP-OEEC policies and *Soft Power* strategies, more or less since the late 1950's, fridges, electric ovens, washing machines, dishwashers, radio devices, televisions, films, blenders, vacuum cleaners, grocery stores, drive-ins, comics, cartoons, Jeans, Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, fast food – items and objects commonly available in the United States since the 1930's – became widely available worldwide, allowing for the *American Way of Life* to take over the world promising prosperity and freedom.

The fascinating and seductive qualities of US goods radically changed not only the way Europeans lived, but also of all the people in the countries involved in the process of economic recovery and structural reconstruction.

Goods, products, and the several new methods of cooking food induced by the introduction of appliances such as *freezers and microwave ovens*, frozen food products, as well as all the other domestic appliances, all contributed to changing not only the way of living but also architecture and the idea of the city alltogether.

Nonetheless, the US cultural colonization, through the deployment of appealing goods and products, led some of the countries under that spell to feel threatened; they soon feared that sooner rather than later they would become part of a great single system of social and cultural homologation, at first internationally and ultimately globalized, all over the planet: «the spreading before our eyes of a mediocre civilization» (Ricoeur 1961, p. 276), based on mass consumption. Those very same worries found an actual expression, especially in the 1960's, in the considerations of Paul Ricoeur (1961), Jean Baudrillard (1968; 1970; 1986), Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari (Deleuze-Guattari, 1972), Armand Mattelart (Dorfman-Mattelart, 1972, Mattelart, 2001) and of many representatives of the *intelligentsia* of that time, exposing an actual aversion and a juxtaposition between the "culture" of the old continent and the "uncultured" new world; however,

Outside the United States, people would probably not drink Coca-cola instead of any other fizzy soda, nor would wear Levi's instead of another pair of heavy cotton trousers, nor they would eat hamburgers instead of another nibble (not in large quantities at least) if they did not associate such things to an appealing way of life. (Gundle-Guani 1986, p. 562).

In retrospect, it is true that already after WWI, the idea that Europe was the cultural guide and the center of the world was a thing of the past.

In 1919 Paul Valéry writes

Everything came to Europe, and everything came from it. Or almost everything.
Now, the present day brings with it this important question: can Europe hold its pre-eminence in all fields? Will Europe become what it is in reality - that is, a little promontory on the continent of Asia?
Or will it remain what it seems - that is, the elect portion of the terrestrial globe, the pearl of the sphere, the brain of a vast body?

The German philosopher Oswald Spengler had introduced the brief time of peace, just after the Great War, with the publication of *The decline of the West* (1918), in which he figured that the end of Europe as the center of the Western civilization, was caused not only by massification and the lack of identity – because the individual is replaced by the mass – but also, and moreover, because of the crisis of its economic, cultural and military supremacy. Europe, was evident, was losing its strength to prevail over the world, and the world itself, anyhow, did not wish anymore to be under its thumb (Mattelart 2000).

It will be the punitive policies of the Versailles treaties - the humiliation of Germany and the debasing of Austria, once the important political centre of a multiethnic and polyglot empire, to a small nation state – to elicit and foment resentment and vengeful feelings, and implementing nationalistic policies which were going to almost completely erase the hope for political unity and the supposed supremacy of European culture.

José Ortega y Gasset in his book *La rebelión de las masas* (1930) did not accept the decline of Europe envisaged by Spengler and was completely opposed to the ones who claimed that the future of civilization would be delivered into the hands of America, denying Europe the chance to inherit

the role of spiritual guide of the world.

However, history was soon going to agree with Paul Valéry, who believed that in case of a world blast the only nation suited to preserving western culture was going to be the US, «the most fabulous creation of European esprit» (quoted in Mattelart 2000, p. 225).

Historically, American culture has always been considered as dependent and descendant of the one brought over by the colonizing nations that dominated over the New World. A vision shaped by western historiography, that had elected Europe as the landmark upon which the history of the entire humanity was built. The same sort of fate was to follow American architectural culture.

The primeval urban planning of the first settlement on American land acquired a pivotal role in consolidating the colonial empires of the European nations fighting for the domination of the New World (Reps, 1965), which was also the perfect place upon which to experiment and to enact Europeans' socialist (Cabet 1840) utopias (Kruft 1989). Thus, if the point of origin of the architecture of American cities came from the application of the models that belonged to the European colonizers (Reps, 1965), modern American architecture came from the "colonization" of the European masters that in the 1930s fled Europe's dictatorships and racial persecutions to settle in the United States[3].

Besides the brief digression of the skyscrapers, the huge industrial buildings and infrastructures – so very much praised by Loos (1921), Le Corbusier (1923; 1937) and Mendelshon (1926) – for a long time it was believed that American architecture, as well as the culture, was dependent and heavily influenced by the European one. As observed by Peter Blake (1993; 1996)[4] and Tom Wolfe (1981), at the end of WWII the US university colleges and the schools of architecture adjusted to the principles postulated by Mies, Gropius and the Bauhaus.

Before the arrival of the European masters, the "modern" schools in America were probably only two – Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin and Eliel Saarinen's Cranbrook (who had moved to the US in 1923) – in the 40s they had almost all made the grade. Also, after the arrival of the European masters, the American teaching system that had been so strongly inspired by the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, did not seem to exist anymore, and the ones that had supported it were by then oriented elsewhere (Blake 1993, p. 44). Mies van der Rohe arrived in the US in 1937 thanks to the invitation of the young Philipp Johnson to build a country-house for Stanley Resor in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. In 1938 he settled down in the States for good, accepting, this time, the invitation made by John Holabird to take the position of director of di Armour Institute School of architecture in Chicago (which later on became the Illinois Institute of Technology).

Walter Gropius, after the distancing from the Bauhaus because of his political leanings to the left, found shelter in London, where he worked with Maxwell Fry from 1934 until 1937. Invited to the United States, he took over the department of architecture at the Graduate School of Design in Harvard until 1952, when he was invited by MoMA to organise the exhibition: *Bauhaus: 1919-1928*[5].

The Bauhaus heritage found great hospitality at the *Black Mountain Institute*, founded in 1933 in North Carolina, where Josef and Annie Albers, and Gropius himself, were given each a teaching posts (Harris, 1987).

Herbert Bayer, director of the Bauhaus graphic and printing department, emigrated to the United States in 1938, invited by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. –

MoMA's director – with the specific purpose of applying his museum displaying and installation theories to the MoMA's exhibitions *Bauhaus: 1919–28*, *Road to Victory,* and *Airways to Peace*[6].

In 1932 New York's MoMA had organized the exhibition *The Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*[7], curated by Henry-Russel Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, Alfred H. Barr and Lewis Mumford, aimed at documenting the birth and the growth of the Modern Style that from that moment on became known as "International Style" (Hitchcock-Johnson, 1932). An exhibition that more than any other initiative had promoted the Modern Movement (the European one in particular) in the US (Riley, 1992). From that moment on the International Style became known as "the new American style", as reminded us by Tom Wolfe (1981) and Peter Blake (1996). At that time, the most important publications fulfilled some sort of "didactic" purposes, in order to allow audiences and architects to approach the "new style": *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (Hitchcock, Johnson, 1932); *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* (Richards 1940); *What is Modern Architecture?* (Bauer Mock, McAndrew 1942); they also witness its promotion: *An outline of European architecture* (Pevsner 1943); *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries Modern Architecture* (Hitchcock 1958); or else they introduce the the modern masters: *Pioneers of the Modern Movement, from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (Pevsner 1936).

Fig. 1
Bruno Zevi, Verso un'architettura organica, cover.

Henry Hobson Richardson, Henry Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright were included in marginal chapters, amid Romanticism, Art Nouveau and the proto-modern. Lewis Mumford stated in his *The Brown Decades* (1931), «There is still no accurate, authentic, intelligent, and fairly exhaustive history of American architecture» (Mumford 1931, p. 254).

Bruno Zevi's first publication *Verso un'architettura Organica* (1945) and the following *Storia dell'architettura moderna* (1950), are the original evidence of an initial and exhaustive study that puts together architecture and American masters.

For the first time in the history of architecture, the characters and the newly born discourse around American architecture, assumed a determinant and paradigmatic role aimed to observe and interpret the growth of modern architecture. Zevi wrote (1945),

Numerous histories of modern architecture have been published in the last few years, mainly in the US and in England, and some of them are really excellent. Generally speaking though, those histories come to a conclusion after having dealt with the first generation of modern architects and the major masters who worked mainly in Germany and France […] I propose instead to search for a guideline delving through the architecture of the most recent years; rather than a sort of history, it should appear as a chronicle, even though it is already obvious that we can see an intellectual and artistic attitude towards architecture worthy of expression. The best contemporary architects are heading forward, towards a kind of architecture that here has been given a name: organic. (Zevi 1945, pp. 11-12)

The meaning given to the term organic in Zevi's book (1945: 63-64), was changed by William Lescaze's words:

Organic is the word which Frank Lloyd Wright uses to describe his own architecture […] This adjective was first applied to architecture by Wright's first employer, Louis Sullivan […]. As Claude Bragdon […] explained […] architecture throughout the world and down the ages has been bisected by an inevitable duality, having been
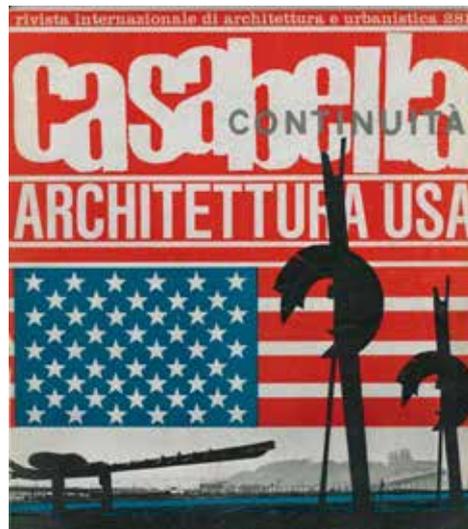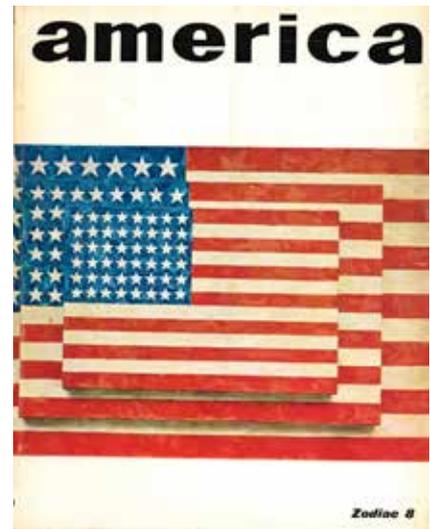
Fig. 2
Casabella 281, 1963, cover.

Fig. 3
Zodiac 8,1961, cover.

either organic (and as such following the law of natural organisms) or arranged (i.e. according to some Euclidean ideal devised by man). (Lescaze 1942, pp. 78-79)

With Zevi, Wright and the Organic Poetics of the architects of the Bay Region, Aalto and Scandinavian Empiricism became the reference point of Modern architecture; instead of Giedion and Gropius mechanization, instead of the CIAM and Le Corbusier. America, according to Zevi, became the cultural epicenter, the country able to put forward an alternative in opposition to the scientific assumptions and the regulations imposed by the *Existenzminimum* and the CIAM[8].

Besides Zevi's point of view, Blake, in his *The Master Builders* (Blake, 1960), had even the "courage" to juxtapose Frank Lloyd Wright to Mies and to Le Corbusier, stating that no modern edifice ever built would have the appearance that it did if it was not for the works of those three masters (Blake 1960, pp. 17-18).

However, at the time, American culture of architecture still struggled to call itself independent and to emancipate itself from the European one as witnessed in 1965, by the MoMA important exhibition: *Modern Architecture U.S.A*[9].

The exhibition organised by Arthur Drexler, MoMA's director of the design and architecture department who took the place of Philip Johnson in 1956, was dedicated to the contributions of "American" architects to the Modern Movement, but, except for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Greene & Greene and Irvin Gill, the most part of the architects selected to represent modern American architecture were foreigners emigrated to the US. Other "weak" aspects of the "authentic" conquests of American architecture: train stations, skyscrapers, bowling alleys, malls, drive-ins and motels; a topic that Reyner Banham addressed in an article written about the exhibition (Banham 1965).

Banham viewed as reductive Drexler's choice to showcase a repertoire of *International Style of Modernity* milestones, ignoring, on the other hand, the most representative US forms of architecture: the most "popular" and visible, literally *on the road*, to which, at least since 1932, Frank Lloyd Wright recognized the central role for the construction of the "new" cities:

The roadside service station may be – in embryo – the future city service- distribution. Each station may well grow into a well-designed convenient neighbourhood distribution centre naturally developing as meeting place, restaurant, restroom, or whatever
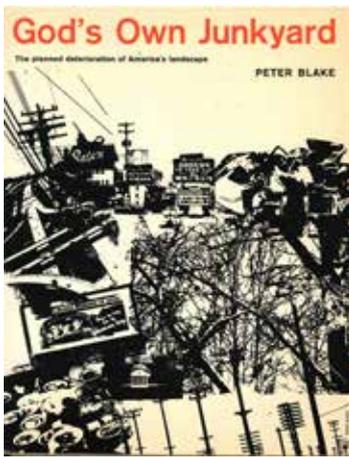
Fig. 4
Peter Blake, God's Own Junkey, 1963, cover.

Fig. 5
Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, Learning From Las Vegas, 1971, cover.

else will be needed as decentralization processes and integration succeeds. Already, hundreds of thousands occupy the best places in the towns or, more significantly, pretty well outside the towns. (Wright 1932, p. 289)

In Drexler's opinion, motels, supermarkets, bowling alleys, gas stations, Hamburger Stands were certainly the most popular and pervasive forms of architecture scattered throughout the US, but they were definitely not the most representative or worthy to be displayed at MoMA, a museum renowned for its proclivity for "high" and "learned" architecture.
At the Melbourne's conference, Peter Blake clearly stated that he believed (Blake 1971), like many others, that there was

no country more vulgar, more trashy, than the United States – The United States of Las Vegas fame, of Los Angeles fame, of honky-tonk and billboard-alley fame» (Blake 1971, n.p.).

Like Drexler, he too found deplorable the trivialities and visual pollution that spoiled the landscape and the streets of American cities – by 1963 he had also written a book on that topic, *God's own junkyard* (Blake 1963) – however, in Melbourne, he stated that

People like myself used to go around giving talks assailing this kind of thing and concluding that any country capable of producing such a massive outpouring of junk wasn't worth saving. (Blake, 1971, n.p.)

Soon though he had to change his opinion and admit fair and square that

the most significant development in the arts […] has been the emergency of Pop – or, rather, our recognition of what we once considered vulgar and trashy as a vast, untapped resource. (Blake 1971, n.p.)
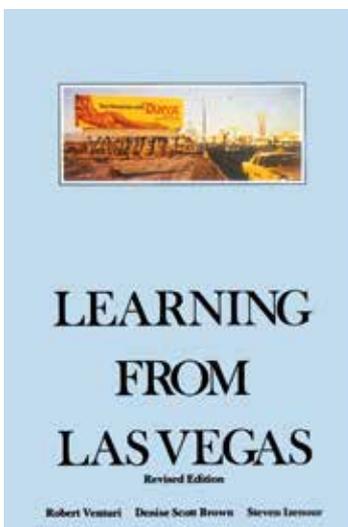
In any case, before perceiving a substantial change between the "histories" of architecture written from a "European" or an "American" point of view, we will have to wait for the publications of the American architecture historian Vincent Scully Jr. (1961; 1969).
His first history of architecture, *Modern Architecture* (Scully 1961), was a first attempt in that direction, it was with *American Architecture and Urbanism* (1969) though that Scully addressed American architecture since its prehistory, observing how influential it had been on *Conquistadores*, like for example the cases of the San Esteban churches, built around 1630, or San Francisco in Rachos de Taos, built in 1772 in New Messico.
In *American Architecture* Scully studied the most original traits of American architectonic culture, establishing its independence from the European one, and pointing out what was more distinctively "American" than "European". If all that was not enough, in the introduction to *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* by Robert Venturi (1966, p. 6), Scully called it the most relevant text of architecture in the twentieth century, second only to *Vers une Architecture* by Le Corbusier (1923).
Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, in particular, with *Learning From Las Vegas* (1972), questioned the difference between high culture and lower more, trivial one, claiming the fact that legitimately, one could love at same time Italian Mannerisms and Vernacular American architecture as they both are authentic expressions of a culture and a civilization, an antagonizing view in opposition to the elitist concepts put forward

Fig. 6
Tom Wolfe, Las Vegas (What?) Las Vegas (Can't heart you! Too Noisy), Esquire, February, 1964, pae 97.

a few years before by Blake and Drexler.

What was written by Tom Wolf in *Las Vegas. What? Las Vegas Can't heart you! Too Noisy* (1964) and Rayner Banham in *Towards a million-volt light and sound culture* (1967), explains how the cultural climate had changed. According to them, Versailles and Las Vegas were the most authentic models of the Modern city in Western history. That is why what Scott Brown, Izenour, Venturi and their students, kick-started was not just the study of the city of Las Vegas, but of all the cities in the world that, sooner or later, would have developed in function of automobiles, commercials, shopping centers, fast food and gas stations, so wonderfully designed, described, studied and witnessed by Wright (1932), Rusha (1963), Wolfe (1964), Banham (1971), Scott Brown, Izenour, Venturi (1972), Blake (1963) and many others.

Soon the claim for independence, the snip of the umbilical cord of American architecture away from the European one, was definitely formalized, finally America not only had its pioneers, its heroes, its masters, its poets, its schools, its history, but also its tradition (Wrenn-Mulloy 1976).

Just after forty odd years since those first manifestations of cultural independence and awareness, in 2014, unlike MoMA's 1965 exhibition, *Modern Architecture U.S.A.*, in the occasion of the *XIV mostra internazionale di Architettura della Biennale di Venezia*, the US pavilion "demonstrated" the pervasiveness of American culture in the world with three catalogues. The first one, *OfficeUS Atlas* – a volume of 1230 pages – (Gilabert, Kubo, Miljački, Schafer 2014) consisting of a vast and exhaustive selection of articles written at the time, as evidence of the *overseas* works of American architects; essays and articles on the organizational structure (*business management*) of American firms; a series of professional business cards for many American architects, and much else. The second catalogue, *OfficeUS Agenda* (Gilabert, Lawrence, Miljački, Schafer 2014), containing essays on the "marginal skills" of American architects; on international cooperation in foreign countries[10]and on the role of American architecture as US ambassador in the world.

The last catalogue of the exhibition, *OfficeUS Manual* (Gilabert, Miljački, Carrasico, Reidel, Schafer 2014), a showcase of all the American firms' "good practices" aimed to ultimate, undisputed success; a proper manual of *business management* for architects. Visitors, walking through the US pavilion at the *XIV Architecture International Exhibition of Biennale di Venezia*, were literally invested by the humongous quantity of projects that Americans had carried out all over the globe.

An unnecessary sort of revelation, as the awareness and perception of American supremacy in the field of architecture, and not just in that one, was already a global phenomenon that did not need any further demonstration.

Armand Mattelart clearly stated (2000) that the only country in the world that, because of its sphere of influence, deserved the name of "global society" was the United States. Because of its maturity, American society was the one that was enlightening the path of the other nations. In political terms it was not possible anymore to talk about the US' "cultural imperialism" at the expense of the rest of the world because its cultural industry together with its models of organization were actually recognized as universal. What the US offered was a global paradigm of modernity, a behavioral model of values destined to be imitated all over the planet, which led Mattelart to prospect a new global society extrapolated from the archetype born and bred in the New World.

In terms of architecture it suffice considering how common it is the practice of building skyscrapers; originally an American archetype, an exclusively American construction – the only examples of tall buildings, prior to the 1920's, were visible in New York and Chicago – today skyscrapers are the "new" constructions most commonly displayed on the planet. Its great success comes essentially from the simultaneous representativeness of modernity, a symbolic value and the "Reklame Arkitektur" (Hilberseimer 1927), because «The Medium is the Massage» (McLuhan 1967).

The skyscraper though, is not the only protagonist of such a phenomenon. Enormous has been the success of chained-brand hotels, clothing franchises, fast food chains, large groceries stores, shopping malls, multinationals' headquarters (other buildings "originally" American), that nowadays they are globally widespread and adopted in geographical contexts very different from one another, promoting the creation of urban landscapes that little by little end up denying their original peculiarities and contributing to the creation of what the French anthropologist Marc Augé called the *Non-Lieux* [non places] (1992). Buildings, or multi units constructions elevated to be representative of modern societies, as well as developing countries, for their unfamiliar flair and their intrinsic quality to be endlessly repeated, easily transmigrated anywhere in the world without exceptions, which for people it is very comforting, because we feel protected from the "risk" of being "surprised" by "unusual" or "unknown" environmental contexts, and, at the same time, alienating because a it appears as a universal place exactly the same anywhere we go.

During the early years of this third millennium, we have registered the increasing realization of edifices that deliberately resort to exceptional and daring solutions, as well as to sophisticated techniques to make those solutions the more possible, creating environmental contexts explicitly artificial and disengaged from locally affecting situations. At the basis of the most recent guidelines in terms of research, planning and the building techniques to make it all possible, is the belief that construction models do not necessarily need to be rooted in their own local contexts (the most appreciated aspect that has contributed to its great success and global promotion), ultimately severing the more direct ties with the local communities.

In the US, the number of building initiatives characterized by works of the highest technological standards have more and more multiplied since the 1950s. Besides the skyscrapers, that we have already mentioned, in the labs of MIT, researchers have developed study programs and prototypes of houses powered by solar energy (Barber 2014; Barber 2016) and prefabricated, modular ones made of plastic (Behrendt 1958; Plastic Houses 1956). Gradually – at the MIT Media Lab – thanks to the extraordinary development of digital technologies, AI and domotics, it was soon possible to think about self-sustainable homes and to the *Cities of Bits*: the *Smart Cities* (Mitchell 1995; Song, Selim, 2022).

It was soon noted (McLuhan 1962) that worldwide media literacy would have facilitated globalisation, but also that the newly acquired electronic interdependence reproduced a kind of image of the world that recalled a global village (McLuhan 1962, p. 31).

According to McLuhan, the technocratic discoveries have recreated the "field", whereby we live in a single restricted space resounding with tribal drums. That is why, today's preoccupations regarding the "primitive", are just as banal as those ones for "progress" in the nineteenth century and just as irrelevant if we think about our problems (McLuhan 1962, p. 31),

McLuhan states clearly that

Ours is a brand-new world of allatonceness. "Time" has ceased, "space" has vanished. We now live in a global village ... a simultaneous happening (McLuhan 1967, p. 63).

However, this kind of global model of modernity imposes, on one side, a consideration on the very concept of development, and on the other, on the issue of the cultural, regional and identity instances that Kenneth Frampton exposed in *Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity* (Frampton 1980, pp. 313-327).

For a long while now, it has been believed that the current process of development – the so-called linear one – has almost exhausted and dissipated the resources of the planet and that globalization has jeopardized, if not actually annihilated, the diversities and cultural complexities of the many nations and countries of the world.

If the first statement may be true though, the second one still needs to be verified. Oddly enough, globalization is a phenomenon that has given a great propulsion to most identity instances in the last few decades, and it is also very noticeable that the issues pertaining the depletion of the planet resources and the consequent worldwide crises, correspond to the increasing, counter actions taken as measures of compensation and resilience advocated by *Critical Regionalism*.

For those reasons, today, we ask ourselves if the US model of growth, and of all of those that look at them as an example, can be actually replicated; in other words, can the developing countries, or the less developed ones – like Marx believed – follow on the footsteps of the United States of America? A country of huge dimensions, with unlimited (it was thought) mineral underground deposits and enormous oil fields. A land of abundance, projected towards a great future with endless possibilities.

At this point, the answer is very predictable and the question is a rhetorical one. Of course the opportunity nowadays, can not be anymore, and for almost anybody, the ones that have given the US such unquestionable leadership. The historical digression of linear development and consumerism of which the US have represented the model (Galbraith, 1958), is no longer (and has been so for a long time) viable and sustainable, not only for ethical reasons but also for the necessity to preserve the balance, already distraught and almost [?][11] irreversibly compromised of our planet (Schumacher 1973).

However, today, the most popular buildings in the world are precisely skyscrapers, shopping malls and, by association, the redeeming, almost "salvific", *Smart Cities*, elevated to role models for a new equilibrium: city, society and the planet. Models brought about and developed in the United States and, in time, scattered and assimilated all over the world, so that, as stated by Mattelart (2000), global society is nothing but the extrapolation of an archetype born and bred in the New World.

  Those buildings though, as well as the *Smart Cities*, that have been adopted as global models, require huge amounts of power and highly functioning scientific, technical and IT systems. A paradoxical, ridiculous, if not tragic predicament, whereby countries much less developed use those models unconditionally, as pointed out by Richard Sennett and bringing about the obvious question in terms of planning of how it can be possible, that a country such as India, with a larger part of the population that has no access to drinkable water or to local medical surgeries, a country that

has no sewer system, tries to follow on such path doomed with failure, by planning one hundred brand new *Smart Cities* (Sennett 2018, p. 162).

Clearly, the inertia with which developing countries, or less developed ones than the US, want to reach the highest tops of developmental growth is a still open issue. Unfortunately, though, the linear model and global economic development – models adopted by all the industrialized countries, and supposedly not just them – have wasted and eroded the planet's resources, produced an incredible quantity of waste materials and almost erased regional and local cultural diversities.

In those simple terms, the culture of Critical Regionalism that also belongs to all the individuals that sensed that the possibility of a continuous and endless growth was purely delusional, will probably find today a renewed and necessary collocation.

In order to hinder the current growth model, perhaps will not be enough to apply the suggestions of Critical Regionalism or the research for a more circular model of consumption based on a smaller scale, regional standard of production – as put forward by Ernst Friedrich Schumacher (1973); but it is certainly very probable that the many countries of the world will need to formulate new models of – critical – rethinking following each one their own inclinations, opportunities and local, (possibly regional ?) culture. Frampton stated,

Critical Regionalism tends to flourish in those cultural interstices which in one way or another are able to escape the optimizing thrust of universal civilization. Its appearance suggests that the received notion of the dominant cultural centre surrounded by dependent, dominated satellites is ultimately an inadequate model by which to assess the present state of modern architecture (Frampton 1980, p. 317).

That would be very reassuring and we would be very happy to believe it.

Notes

[1] The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future

[2] Generally speaking the beginning of the Cold *War* is chronologically set in 1947 with the ratification of the National *Security Act* (18 September, 1947) and it symbolically ends with the fall of the Berlin wall (1989) and the dissolution of the URSR (1991). Here instead, we indicate 1945 as the beginning of the *Cold War*, in juxtaposition with George Orwell's text, that as a reaction to the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaky, writes the article "You and the Atomic Bomb" (1945): «The atomic bomb may complete the process by robbing the exploited classes and peoples of all power to revolt, and at the same time putting the possessors of the bomb on a basis of military equality. Unable to conquer one another, they are likely to continue ruling the world between them, and it is difficult to see how the balance can be upset except by slow and unpredictable demographic changes […] that is, the kind of world-view, the kind of beliefs, and the social structure that would probably prevail in a state which was at once unconquerable and in a permanent state of "cold war" with its neighbours».

[3] In the USA were to emigrate: Theodor W. Adorno (1939), Josef and Annie Albers (1933), Herbert Bayer (1938), Peter Blake (1940), Max Beckmann (1933), Marcel Breuer (1937), Serge Chermayeff (1940), Albert Einstein (1938), Enrico Fermi (1938), Walter Gropius (1937), George Grosz (1933), Victor Gruen (1938), Max Horkheimer (1933), Fritz Lang (1934), Claude Lévi-Strauss (1940), Peter Lorre (1935), Thomas Mann (1939), Erich Mendelsohn (1941), László Moholy-Nagy (1937), Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (1937), Piet Mondrian (1940), Mies van der Rohe (1933), Berta and Bernard Rudofsky (1941), Josep Lluís Sert (1939), Hans Richter (1940), Arnold Schoenberg (1933), Georg and Maria Ludwig von Trapp (1938), Oskar Wlach (1940), Bruno Zevi (1940) e many others (the date indicates the year of arrival in the USA).

[4] Peter Blake's observations pertaining to the influences of the European masters that emigrated to the US, belong to rather recent publications, although they go back to the early 1950s as documented in *No Place Like Utopia* (Blake, 1993), risalgono ai primi anni Cinquanta.

[5] *Bauhaus: 1919-1928* [MoMA Exhibition. #82, December 7, 1938-January 30, 1939].

[6] *Road to Victory* [MoMA Exhibition #182, May 21-October 4, 1942], *Airways to Peace* [MoMA Exhibition #236, July 2-October 31, 1943].

[7] *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. #15, February 9-March 23, 1932]

[8] Let us not forget that Zevi, because of the fascist government racial laws, left Italy in 1939, going first to London and then, in 1940, to the United States, later graduating at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, directed at the time by da Walter Gropius, and discovering Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1943 he went back to Europe aboard a naval ship that arrived in Glasgow. As a refugee he then goes back to London and the US Army puts him in charge of the planning of military camps and prefabs in preparation for the D-day in Normandie. In London he attends the RIBA library and puts together his first book, *Verso un'architettura organica*.

[9] *Modern Architecture, U.S.A.* [MoMA Exhibition #767a, May 18-September 6, 1965].

[10] The work of Albert Kahn, Ford's architect (Bucci, 1992), is very emblematic, especially pthe construction of the industrial compounds in Russia.

[11] The question mark indicates the uncertainty of such a statement. We still do not know if we have irreversibly disrupted the stability of the planet or if we are still in time to intervene on the process already triggered by deforestation, by air and water pollution… caused by the greenhouse effect, by tornadoes, by the rising of the level of the oceans, by the melting of glaciers and the ice cap… by pandemics.

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U. Rossi, The USA: the image of our future. Aren't they?

109

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Ugo Rossi, trained as an architect in Venice and Milan. After his master's degree at the Polytechnic in Milan, he continued his studies in Venice, where he received his PhD at Iuav University with a thesis on Bernard Rudofsky. His theoretical and practical interests focus on the investigation of the different meanings of modernity and the intersections between history and culture in the critical practice of modern and contemporary architecture. He writes essays and articles published in books and national and international journals. On his latest publication: T*radizione e Modernità, l'influsso dell'architettura ordinaria nel moderno* (LetteraVentidue, Macerata 2015), *Bernard Rudofsky Architect* (CLEAN, Napoli 2016).

Ray Bromley
Blending globalism, long-term futures, and historical sensitivities: The audacity of Constantinos Doxiadis

Abstract
Constantinos Doxiadis devoted most of his life to urban and regional planning. His work was globalized, futuristic and extraordinarily ambitious, yet he was fascinated by local contexts, history, and ancient civilizations. The Doxiadis Associates, the Athens-based international consulting firm that he founded in the mid-1950's, completed projects in over 40 countries. His Ekistics movement had associates throughout the world and he attracted thousands of students and conference participants to Greece. After a four-year illness, he died a year before the first United Nations Habitat Conference, held in Vancouver in Summer 1976, yet he capped his prolific publication record with four books for presentation at the conference.

From the early 1950s till the mid-1970s, Constantinos A. Doxiadis (1913-1975) was an immensely prolific analyst, designer, and promoter of urban development. Doxiadis Associates, the firm that he founded and directed, was among the world's most active urban and regional planning consultancy enterprises its foundation late in 1953 to the mid-1970's. Headquartered in Athens and operating in over 40 countries, it designed some of the world's largest national housing programs, and a wide range of new city, urban expansion, and urban renewal projects[1].

Doxiadis established and promoted a "science of human settlements", which he called "ekistics", applying it to the entire world and to the past, present and future of human civilization.

Ekistics was, and continues to be, an interdisciplinary field embracing the social and environmental sciences. It emphasizes spatial, temporal, and graphic perspectives, linking history to planning and futurology, and using a broad range of maps, diagrams and photographs. Architecture was an important component of ekistics, but Doxiadis went far beyond its conventional disciplinary frame to incorporate the agendas of interior design, landscape architecture, civil engineering, regional science, human geography, and global studies.

So as to develop and promote ekistics, and in close association with his firm, Doxiadis established and directed the Athens Centre for Ekistics (A.C.E.), the Athens Technical Organization (A.T.O.), and the World Society for Ekistics (W.S.E.). The A.C.E. and A.T.O. were major academic enterprises which organized research, conferences, and training programs, and which published pamphlets, monographs, textbooks, and two journals, *DA Review* summarizing the output of Doxiadis Associates, and *Ekistics*,

a scholarly journal intended to further the science of human settlements throughout the world.

Doxiadis wrote or edited over 20 books and literally hundreds of articles and planning reports, and he organized 12 international conferences known as the Delos Symposia for many of the most creative intellectuals of the 1960s and early 1970s. As a combination of academic journal, field of expertise, and movement to generate policies on worldwide urban and regional development issues, ekistics was branded as interdisciplinary, policy-oriented and futuristic, with a special tie to the pioneering experience of Greek history, language and civilization. The term "ekistics" was just one of hundreds of examples of how Doxiadis deliberately used Greek language and examples, inserted into the English language, as a form of "branding" and intellectual identity. He and his close colleagues generally worked in English, the dominant global language, and they were willing to travel to and work in impoverished areas of the world that had few international visitors. They turned their Greek nationality into a competitive advantage by extolling Greek heritage, promoting the attractions of Greece to international tourism, inserting Greek terms like *metropolis* and *megalopolis* into the international literature on urbanism, and using Greece's relatively low wages and living costs to underbid rival firms from North America and Western Europe.

This paper summarizes Doxiadis's career and rise to global prominence, and it speculates on why he is not very well known or widely discussed in contemporary architecture and planning circles. It evaluates the significance and lessons of Doxiadis's contributions to planning, and it argues that he is worthy of considerably more attention from the architecture and planning professions than he is currently receiving. For reasons of space, and because numerous other publications discuss them, relatively little information is given here on his theoretical frameworks and specific planning projects. Most importantly though, readers are referred to his *magnum opus* (1968) *Ekistics: An introduction to the science of human settlements*, to the excellent major synthesis of his life and publications compiled by Alexandros-Andreas Kyrtsis (2006), and to an article summarizing his ideas (Bromley 2003).

Life History

Constantinos Doxiadis was born in 1913 in a predominantly Greek area of what is now Bulgaria. His father was a pediatrician who moved his family to Athens and for a time served as Greece's Minister for the Resettlement of Refugees, Social Welfare and Health. Doxiadis got his first degree in Architectural Engineering from the Technical University of Athens in 1935, and then he travelled to Germany for two years to complete a Doctorate in Architecture and Planning at the Berlin Charlottensburg University, writing his dissertation on the urban design of Ancient Greek ceremonial centers. While in Germany he was influenced by the work of Gottfried Feder on new towns and settlement strategies, by the work of Walter Christaller on central place systems and regional spatial organization, and by the work of Ernst Neufert on the standardization and mass production of buildings. Returning to Greece he worked as Chief Town Planning Officer of Greater Athens, and then as Head of Regional and Town Planning in the Ministry of Public Works.

His professional development was rudely interrupted by the Second World War, and he served as a Corporal in the Greek Army, and then as Chief of a
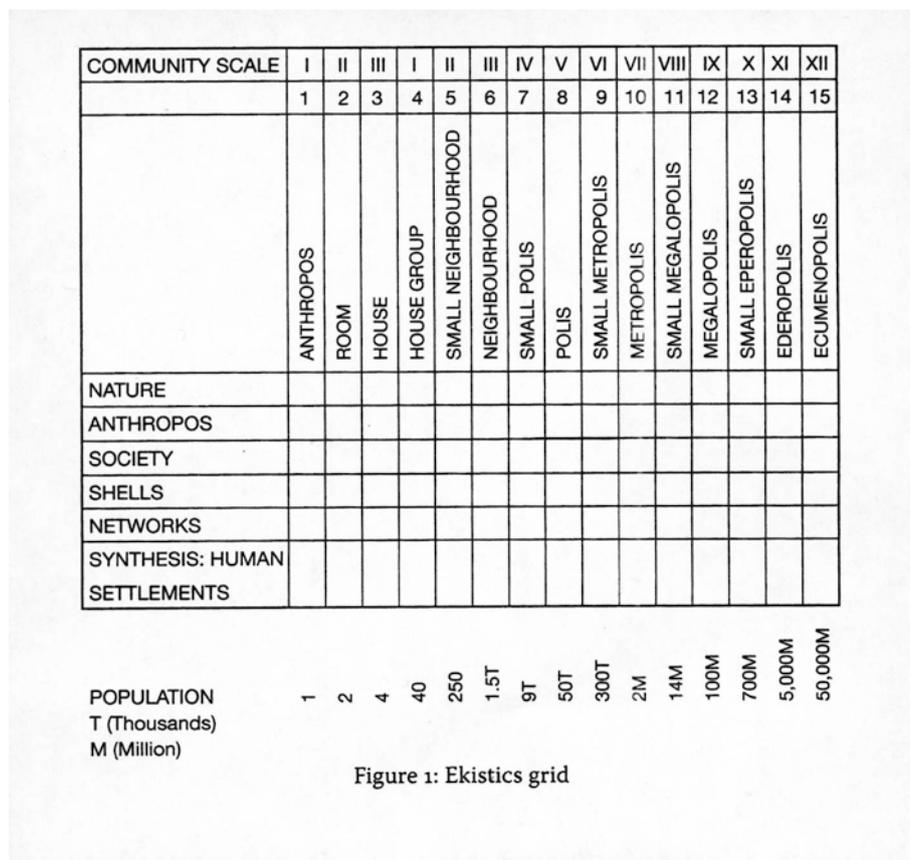
Figure 1: Ekistics grid

Fig. 1
Ekistics grid

National Resistance Group against the Greek Occupation. He successful-ly directed sabotage operations against German military supply lines, and after the end of the war he held various leading positions in the post-war reconstruction of Greece. In that reconstruction effort, he worked closely with the American administrators and technical specialists of the Marshall Plan, and he was renowned for his ability to speak English, guide and host international visitors, and promote interest in Greece's heritage and built environment. For over five years he was the central figure in coordinating reconstruction efforts and attracting international funding, but in 1950 he fell afoul of Greece's factional conflicts and was pushed out of the Greek Government.

Seeking a new start far from the tensions, rivalries, and conflicts of Athens, Doxiadis travelled with his family to settle in Australia. There he encountered problems with the recognition of his professional degrees, and though he embarked on several architectural and planning projects, his main source of income was as a horticulturalist growing tomatoes. After two yearsin Australia and frustrated by his failure to develop a professional career there, he and his family returned to Athens where he established a consultancy firm, Doxiadis Associates, late in 1953.

He quickly built an international network of contacts and friends who helped his firm obtain contracts. Some of the projects were in Greece, but most were in the Middle East, Pakistan and Africa, areas where North American and Western European consultants were reluctant to work, and where Doxiadis Associates could easily underbid the competition. He received substantial help from the Ford Foundation in establishing a Research Center and Training Academy in Athens, and from his old network of Marshall Plan friends in rapidly building his consultancy firm. With the firm prospering, he spent a great deal of time in the 1960s networking with leading scholars and public intellectuals around the world and lobbying

for increased global attention to the problems posed by rapid population growth and urbanization.

From the mid-1950's to the early 1970's, Doxiadis's career was characterized by extraordinary success, with a unique blend of professional and academic activity, and a rapidly-growing body of associates and followers. Global interest and concern for urban development issues was rising rapidly, and the professional, social and intellectual networks associated with ekistics played a significant role. Perhaps more than any other scholar-practitioner, Doxiadis helped to promote the term and concept of "human settlements," embracing all sizes and types of places, nucleated and dispersed, urban and rural. Building on his fascination with typologies, spatio-temporal relations, and developmental processes, he analyzed human settlements in terms of five 'elements' and a 15-level nested hierarchy of 'ekistic units'. The elements were *anthropos* (people as individuals), nature, society, shells (buildings), and networks (roads, utilities, transportation, communications and administrative boundaries). The ekistic units were: man (*anthropos*), room, dwelling, dwelling group, small neighborhood, neighborhood, small town, town, large city, metropolis, conurbation, megalopolis, urban region (small *eperopolis*), urban continent (*eperopolis*), and 'ecumenopolis' – the inevitable interconnected world urban system of the future. He saw the elements and lower eleven ekistic units as easily definable and fully functioning, while the top four ekistic units were still in process of formation.

The United Nations Conference on the Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 led to the commitment to hold another U.N. Conference, this time on "human settlements," in Vancouver in Summer 1976. With enthusiastic support from the Government of Canada, this first "Habitat" Conference was the largest of all the U.N. conference held up till then, with 132 national governments represented, 3,400 delegates, 1,600 media representatives, and at least 7,000 participants in the parallel "Habitat Forum", a conference of Non-Governmental Organizations. In many senses, the ekistics movement provided an ideal framework for Habitat because its theories and terminology embraces all levels of urbanization, past, present and future, and could be applied to the entire world, ranging from heavily urbanized and moderately prosperous world regions to predominantly rural and relatively impoverished ones.

Tragically for the ekistics movement, however, by the time Habitat was announced, Doxiadis had been diagnosed with a terminal illness, Motor Neuron Disease (ALS/MND, Lou Gehrig's Disease), and the intensely personal nature of his leadership rapidly transitioned from key feature to major liability of Doxiadis Associates, the A.C.E., the A.T.O. and the entire ekistics movement. He devoted much of the final years of his life to developing publications and scholarly networks for the forthcoming United Nations Habitat Conference to be held in Vancouver, including four books, *Anthropopolis* (1974), *Ecumenopolis* (Doxiadis and Papaioannou (1974), *Building Entopia* (1975), and *Action for Human Settlements* (1976), all published in the two years leading up to the conference. Sadly, however, Doxiadis died a year before the conference and well before the last of the four books came out, and none of these books attracted the attention that was given to such slim conference-focused classics as John Turner's (1976) *Housing by People* or Lauchlin Currie's (1976) *Taming the Megalopolis*.

Doxiadis's years of illness, his determination to present so much to the Habitat Conference, and his premature death left Doxiadis Associates, the A.T.O., the A.C.E. and his personal legacy in a chaotic situation with serious financial and organizational problems and with inadequate leadership. He had not named and groomed successors, there was no-one who could replace his extraordinary vision and charisma, and the range and variety of Doxiadis-related activities diminished very rapidly in the 1970's. The W.S.E. and the *Ekistics* journal continued with diminished participation and frequency, and the journal has recently been revived online as *Ekistics and the New Habitat*. The Doxiadis Associates consulting firm was sold soon after his death and has changed hands several times since then, existing in name but on a reduced scale and with little relation to his legacy. Meanwhile, the training and research activities associated with the A.T.O. and A.C.E. downsized during his illness and disappeared after his death.

Ekistics as Intellectual Legacy
From its beginnings in the 1950's, ekistics was branded as "the science of human settlements" an architecture and design-based parallel to Walter Isard's economics-based *Regional Science*. Both "interdisciplinary fields" focused primarily on human activity at the regional scale, drawing on micro-behavioral principles and macro-global forces to contextualize their regional visions. Both relied heavily on the leadership and writings of the founder of the field, and both grew to become impressive global interdisciplinary and quasi-disciplinary movements. Nevertheless, both ekistics and regional science have declined substantially since the death of their founder, Doxiadis in 1975 at the young age of 62, and Isard in 2010 at the advanced age of 91. Isard's legacy is more persistent, perhaps because he lived much longer and was based in the United States, a country with a much stronger economy and global intellectual impact than Greece. Nevertheless, both movements have failed to develop strong intellectual leadership and continuing momentum since the passing of their founder.
Compared with Isard, and with almost all the scholars and intellectuals of his era, Doxiadis had extraordinary breadth in terms of space and time, stretching his forecasts and recommendations far into the future, and placing heavy emphasis on graphic illustrations and visions. His classic text, *Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements*, had xxix + 527 pages of text and illustrations, including 479 maps, diagrams and photographs. He spread his illustrations across the entire spectrum of scales, from the individual person to the entire world, but he concentrated most at the intermediate levels, from the small town to *megalopolis*, the giant urbanized conurbations that characterize such areas as the north-east of the United States, the London-Ruhr-Paris triangle in western Europe, and coastal and near-coastal conurbations of north, central and southern China focused around Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Doxiadis's illustrations reflect the passion of many architects for graphics, but the focus is overwhelmingly urbanism and planning, portraying townscapes and land-use maps, rather than individual buildings.
As his reputation, firm and social networks grew in the 1960's, Doxiadis certainly relished his growing celebrity. Writers described him as "the greatest planner" (Rand 1963), a "master builder for free men" (Deane 1965) and the "remodeler of the world" (Lurie 1966). He wasn't tied or limited to any one academic discipline, and at the Delos Symposia he deliberately invited and hosted leading exponents of many different and con-

trasting disciplines, calling upon all of them to share their insights. Participants included such famous intellectuals and visionaries as Margaret Mead, Herman Kahn, Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller and Barbara Ward.

 Whenever he didn't have an answer to a question, Doxiadis would call on the pertinent disciplinary specialist: economists to solve economic problems, public administrators to solve administrative problems, and so on. He assumed that all perspectives and policies could be unified behind a single long-term vision of global trends and desired futures, a vision that was overwhelmingly his vision. Such consensus was feasible when hosting up to 30 leading intellectuals and their partners on a cruise around the Aegean Sea, visiting beautiful islands and engaging in prolonged face-to-face conversations, but it could not survive broader, longer-term international scrutiny. On just one statistic, for example, Doxiadis variously projected the world's human population to rise to 15 billion, 20 billion, and even 50 billion, numbers that are surreal in our current world of pandemic disease, environmental contamination, loss of biodiversity, and accelerating climate change. Similarly, in the 1960's and early 1970's, Doxiadis assumed that national identities and political and religious differences would decline across the globe, so that conflicts would gradually fade away, facilitating a gradual shift towards world peace and global government.

As a proponent of continuing world population growth and urbanization, Doxiadis had a unique perspective, favoring low-rise grid-planned linear cities concentrating urbanization in interlocking strips of urban development with major "utilidors" - corridors that could carry all the utilities and rapid transit necessary as population and economies grew and were transformed by new technologies. Beside the utilidors, large populations could be accommodated in medium-density walkable, low-rise neighborhoods, with the utilidors gradually being extended and new neighborhoods added along the urban axes as overall population rose. His term for a continuously expanding linear city was *Dynapolis*, and he envisioned various dynapolises eventually meeting and forming *ecumenopolis*, a giant global network of urban corridors, enclosing open areas of farmland, parkland or wilderness inbetween their axes.

While urbanization would be focused axially in the dynapolises, Doxiadis envisoned that agriculture would intensify and become more technical and mechanized in some of the most fertile areas so that it could support the growing world population while requiring less than 20 per cent of the total global land area and only 2 or 3 percent of the total labor force. Even bearing in mind the needs for mining, fishing, pastoralism, environmental tourism and the growing dynapolises, this would mean that about half of the global land area could stay with, or revert to, its natural vegetation and ecosystems. The world society and economy would function as a single global city, ecumenopolis, seamlessly interconnected by ultra-rapid transportation and systems of communication.

Doxiadis's overall urban vision focused on a broad and growing middle class, with no special provision or construction for elites, and with the gradual disappearance of poverty. What was crucial, of course, was good design of cost-effective housing, schools, retail facilities and other amenities that could be replicated thousands of times – the opposite of what "starchitects" might envision with their focus on spectacular and unique buildings, record-breaking heights, grandiose shapes and sizes, and wealthy clients.
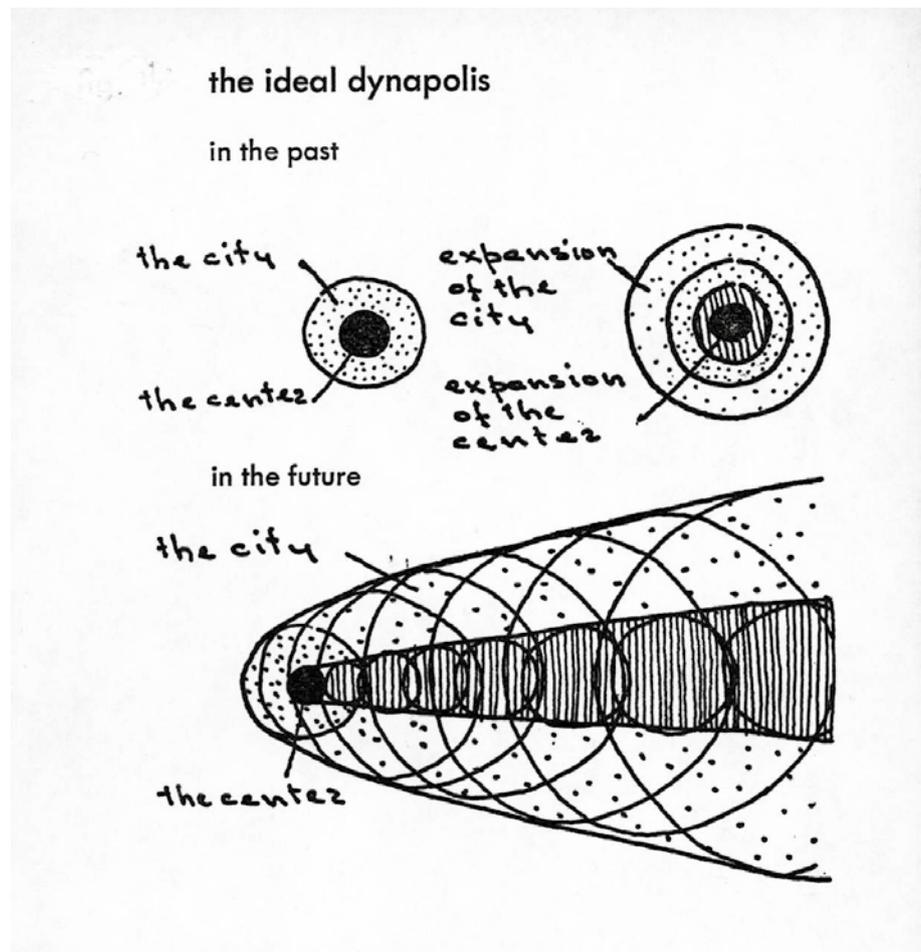
Fig. 2
The Ideal Dynapolis

Doxiadis Associates designed millions of houses for Islamabad, Karachi, the Sadr City sector of Baghdad, the mining towns of Zambia, the port city of Tema in Ghana, and numerous other areas in the Middle East and Africa. Hundreds of thousands of these houses were actually built, yet the significance of this housing is rarely acknowledged today because it is located in such non-touristic locations. Even when his housing projects are located in rich, "developed" countries, like Eastwick in Philadelphia, Park Town in Cincinnati, or Aspra Spitia in Greece, they were designed for working class families and attract little attention from architectural connoisseurs. Two exceptions that could appeal to those connoisseurs are the Apollonion in Porto Rafti near Athens, an idyllic ensemble of second homes for rich Athenians that was originally intended to be a community of artists and intellectuals, and the New Axum Cathedral of Our Lady Mary of Zion in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia, which tragically is now in the midst of a Civil War!

As a Greek citizen and a global practitioner, Doxiadis was outside the mainstream of Anglo-American academia and publishing. Awareness of his scholarship and planning practice were widespread across a broad range of countries and disciplines, but the sheer breadth and reach of his work over little more than two decades meant that few beyond the readers of *Ekistics*, the members of the W.S.E., and the international students who had studied at the A.C.E. and A.T.O. felt a close association with his work. After his death, lengthy tributes were published in *Ekistics*[2] and the *D.A. Review*[3], but most journals in the many disciplines that his work touched on published very short obituaries or no acknowledgement at all. He received little recognition as an urban planner, architect or civil engineer,
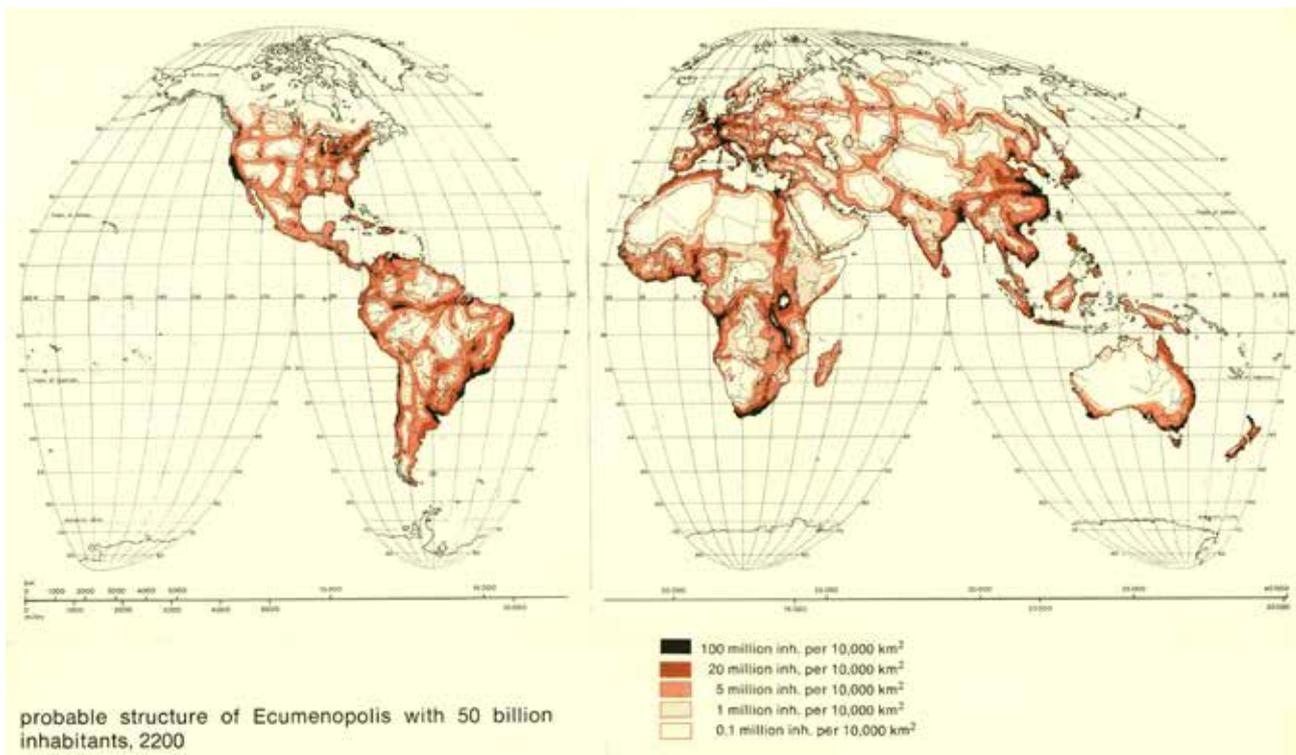
■	100 million inh. per 10,000 km²
■	20 million inh. per 10,000 km²
■	5 million inh. per 10,000 km²
□	1 million inh. per 10,000 km²
□	0.1 million inh. per 10,000 km²

probable structure of Ecumenopolis with 50 billion inhabitants, 2200

Fig. 3
Probable structure of Ecumenopolis

even though his firm employed many with those backgrounds. Among the social and environmental sciences, coverage was miniscule with the sole exception of geography, a bridging discipline with substantial readership of *Ekistics*.

The most notable characteristic of Doxiadis's scholarship was his extraordinary coverage of space and time, ranging from individuals (*anthropos*) to the entire world (*ecumenopolis*), and from ancient history to 200 years out into the future. This carried his scholarship way beyond the norms of all the associated disciplines and bestowed a very special character on ekistics, bridging across to archaeology, history and futurology. Long-term forecasting is inherently speculative, and no-one is likely to be alive to see whether their forecasts running more than 80 years into the future are actually correct, but there are still strong arguments that governments and intellectuals should make the effort to examine long-term trends and options, to accentuate positive trends, and to suppress negative ones. Doxiadis was one of the most ambitious and visionary thinkers of his generation, and his spatial and temporal perspectives extended way beyond those normally considered by architects, planners or engineers. Though architecture rewards the imagination of a few of its most distinguished practitioners, planning and engineering tend to focus on 5 to 50-year time horizons and on projects with low levels of risk and uncertainty. The conservatism of all three disciplines is quite notable, contrasting dramatically with Doxiadis's grandiose imagination. Indeed, in many parts of the world over the last 50-75 years, planning has pulled back from "national planning" efforts like those in the aftermath of the Great Depression, during World War II, and during the Third World "Development Decades" after World War II and has reduced itself to local land-use and transportation issues. So, the contrast with Doxiadis's perspectives has grown through time, signaling that it is better to make no forecast or long-term projection than to espouse an erroneous forecast or projection. In architecture, planning and civil engineering, it may well be that there are less visionary thinkers now than

there were 50-70 years ago when Doxiadis was at the peak of his career! Not surprisingly, the greatest problem of long-term forecasting is predicting the development of new technologies, and this is especially evident in discussing the development of *ecumenopolis*, Doxiadis's inevitable global city of the future, with almost all the world population tied into a seamlessly interconnected urban system. He imagined much greater advances in physical transportation technologies than have actually been achieved, and he failed to foresee the internet, but the internet has given humanity a taste of what *ecumenopolis* can be like. It is now possible to hold a globalized committee meeting with everyone appearing on each other's screens and hearing each other's voices, and to offer simultaneous translation into a variety of different languages. Such technologies have become cheap and widespread, though there is little sign that Doxiadis's prediction that national governments would gradually remove obstacles to global interactions is actually coming true. Almost half a century after Doxiadis's death, the global mosaic of national, ethnic, religious, cultural, ideological, gender and other forms of identity seems as complex and tangled as it has ever been. Cynicism, rather than idealism, about the roles and powers of international organizations is widespread, and there is no sign that any sort of world government is on the horizon.

Why should Doxiadis matter to today's architects and planners?
Doxiadis performed an important role by expanding spatial and temporal horizons, making audacious forecasts – some proving correct others false –, and projecting current trends a century or more into the future. He stimulated many others to envision, project and debate, and to consider longer-term trends and futures. With hindsight it is obvious that he failed to adequately understand the complexity and diversity of local societies and cultures, and the complexity and fragility of the natural environment. "The great negatives" such as pandemics, human-generated climate change, nuclear wars and international terrorism were largely absent from his futuristic scenarios. He shared the widespread modernist vision of the Post World War II Era that socio-cultural and ideological barriers would gradually disappear in the transition to a globalized society and political system. He foresaw a more peaceful and egalitarian world with population growth and urbanization accompanying the elimination of mass poverty. Much of this was "wishful thinking", but it was still valuable to stimulate others to think and to encourage debates on vital public policy issues.
When we narrow the discussion of Doxiadis's ideas to those relating to the expansion and redevelopment of urban areas, his perspectives are equally valuable to stimulate debate, yet just as ignored by mainstream thinkers. Doxiadis was a modernist who also believed in historic preservation. He advocated relatively high-density low-rise linear urban development with neighborhood units, superblocks, and wide corridors reserved for utilities and high-speed transport. His cities were intended to be walkable and well-served by mass transit, built "on a human scale," and yet infinitely expandable by adding new neighborhood units along the linear axis. He demonstrated this approach very effectively in the plan and early development of the city of Islamabad, and it can be applied to the development of new cities on greenfield sites. In the expansion of existing cities, however, it would require draconian controls imposed by government on landowners, forcing all new urban development to take place in one portion of the urban periphery.

Doxiadis's axial model of urban development is very favorable to historic preservation because it relieves pressure on most of the historic city by channeling growth to one sector of the urban periphery and to areas beyond that sector. It also favors mass transit, with most people living along the growth corridor and close to public transport offering access to all major destinations in the urban area. The model would work well in authoritarian political systems, or where land nationalization has been achieved, but not in typical western market economies or in countries where squatting and illegal subdivision are major means of urban expansion. By imposing strict governmental controls on urban development, it suppresses land specu-lation, severely constrains land markets, and facilitates long-term urban planning and the development of necessary infrastructure. Even though such measures may be politically impossible, just raising them promotes discussion and may stimulate innovation. Thus, Doxiadis's ideas are im-portant to broaden horizons and ensure that no single perspective domi-nates policy-making.

Doxiadis is both an inspiration and a warning – a tremendously ambitious, optimistic and energetic figure who sought to transform global futures, and a highly flawed character who exaggerated almost every virtue into a vice, did too much, tried too hard, and ended in relative oblivion rather than eulogy or vilification. His life and work evoke comparisons with those of Daedalus and his son Icarus, mortals in ancient Greek legend. Daedalus designed the labyrinth of Knossus to contain the man-eating monster, the Minotaur, which terrorized the ancient Minoan Kingdom of Minos, the first great international trading community of the Mediterranean. When threatened, Daedalus designed wings so that he and Icarus could escape, but Icarus tried too hard and enjoyed flight too much. He flew too close to the sun, his wings melted, and he crashed to his death.

Doxiadis tried to contain a monster – a global *dystopia* which was based on population growth, growing socio-economic inequalities, rapid uncon-trolled urbanization, voracious nationalism, environmental destruction, and the exploitative heritage of imperialism and colonialism.

He designed a strategy for deliberate urbanization, claiming that it would create a global *entopia* – excellent real cities which could facilitate eco-nomic, technological and social development while preserving the envi-ronment. He created a grand vision and an international network, but his vision was flawed and rapidly faded to obscurity after his death. Neverthe-less, he deserves great credit for stimulating creative thinking and debate, and current generations can learn both from his failed predictions and from his more successful visions.

Notes

[1] An incomplete but valuable list of Doxiadis Associates Projects is provided at doxi-adis.org/Downloads/major_projects_N.pdf.

[2] Ekistics, v. 41, no. 247, June 1976.

[3] Doxiadis Associates Review, v. 12, no. 97, July 1976.

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Bromley has worked as a consultant on World Bank, United Nations, UNICEF and USAID–funded projects, and to the Governments of Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, New York State, and New York City. He was a Fulbright Fellow at the National Engineering University in Peru in 1997, and has also served as a Visiting Professor at a wide range of institutions in different countries, including the Bandung Institute of Technology, the Beirut Arab University, and the London School of Economics.

Kenneth Frampton
40 years for an Architecture of Resistance, an interview

Abstract
In an interview with Ugo Rossi, renowned architectural historian Kenneth Frampton reflects, forty years later, on the concept of critical regionalism in the light of the social and cultural changes that have taken place as globalism gains ground.

Ugo Rossi: *Dear professor, when you wrote, "Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity" (1980), the process of globalization was in its early stages, what do you think has actually changed since then?*

Kenneth Frampton: Nothing much has changed, except the dominance of global corporate Capitalism is stronger than ever! As Frederick Jameson put it not so long ago it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of Capitalism! I would be the first to concede that Capitalism as Neocapitalism after the end of the Second World War was a very productive moment in European history most particularly in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and briefly in the UK and we might say that Denmark today still represents the triumph of this hybrid economy in terms of the well-being of the society in relation to the natural world! Regrettably, nothing could be further from this than the rise of Neoliberalism in the 1970s with Ronald Reagan, Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher! Much the same would eventually happen in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

UR: *Ricoeur's essay has had a certain relevance in relation to "Critical Regionalism", your article opens with a long quote from it. If you were to write about critical regionalism today, where would you find your inspiration?*

KF: One might just as well cite Antoine de Saint Exupéry which l do quietly at the beginning of Studies in Tectonic Culture (Frampton 1995) to the effect that "We don't ask to be eternal beings. We only ask that things do not lose all their meaning". Otherwise I suppose Harris Georg Gadamer's

Truth and Method of 1975, as I do in my work *A Genealogy of Modern Architecture* in 2015.

UR: *Critical Regionalism was written with an antagonist attitude towards globalization and postmodernism phenomena. In which way do you think your text might have been an attempt to define an alternative path for the modern?*

KF: My involvement with the Critical Regionalism argument was an effort to posit an ethical expression in the Post Modern movement.

UR: *If today you had to deal with an article on resistance/opposition to globalization, which alternative way would you follow?*

KF: On what may one predicate a resistant culture today? There is an aspect of my Critical Regionalism thesis which is often ignored namely the cantonal concept of some measure of direct government which is always surely latent in the Italian/European city-state. Hence my interest in Hannah Arendt's concept of "space of public appearance as a micro-political realm". This leads one to think about the importance of the school-cum-community centre as a resistant place. It is significant that a recent mayor of San Paulo who was from Lula's Workers Party managed to build some 30 schools during her tenure, all of them situated in favelas. This may be seen as Critical Regionalism at its most resistant.

UR: *Since the current processes of cultural globalization appear to be about fulfilling their achievements, what is the purpose of talking about regional architecture?*

KF: These last questions bring us back sooner or later to the same question which is ultimately a political question in which architecture has only a minor role to play! So, in that sense, Critical Regionalism was already irrelevant even at the beginning of the 80s when it was first formulated by Tzonis and Lefaivre (1981) and then by me!
In this regard, it was always a holding operation. This was always the case with architects that I have at various times identified as Critical Regionalist such as Alvaro Siza, Glenn Murcutt, Antonio Coderch, Carlo Scarpa, Tadao Ando, etc.

UR: *In terms of design and planning process, how is regional architecture different from international and global one?*

KF: Legend has it that Ando once gave a commission back to a developer with the words: "I think over a certain height architecture is no longer possible". In the 33 volumes study, *The Endless City* researched by the London School of Economics (2007) they point out that in 1980 there were only 120 buildings in the world over 8 stories in height whereas in 2005, 25 years later, there were 10,000! by which time 50% of the world's population was living in cities, many of them in megacities with populations ranging from 20 to 30 million!
There are corporate architectural practices all over the world designing mega high-rise structures in such cities but whether these works are of any kind of cultural significance remains doubtful apart from the pollution pro-

duced by such structures and the consumption of non-renewable resources that they embody. From this standpoint Critical Regionalism lies close to the ethics of Ernst Friedrich Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Matted* (1973).

UR: *Critical Regionalism was put forward as an alternative to Postmodernism, in reaction to globalisation. Don't you think that nowadays Critical Regionalism, as a response that same escalated globalisation, appears more as a necessity than simply a proposal?*

KF: What is of a necessity nowadays is a significant worldwide response to global warming but that tragically will not be prioritized by the Biden government when it takes over on January 20, although it would surely help to restart the US economy!

P.S.
Dear Ugo, I think that all your questions are variations of one fundamental question: What is the point of continuing with a 40-year-old "critically resistant" thesis when we are witness to the worldwide triumph of Neoliberal late Capitalist modernisation? Your critique of this current situation is virtually the same as that which was sympathetically formulated by Frederick Jameson in his 1994 book "The Seeds of Time" (p. 189-209).
During our interview, you rightly challenged me as to the pertinence of my continuing with this 40-year-old resistant stance originating in Alex Tzonis and Liane Lefevre's seminal essay of 1981 "The Grid and the Pathway" which was surely the inspiration behind my 1983 essay, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Ten Points for an Architecture of Resistance". As you rightly pointed out at the time what can be the pertinence of this thesis given the subsequent worldwide triumph of neoliberal globalized Capitalism; a movement which was already underway with the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency of the US in the early 70s & the anti-welfare state economic thesis of Von Hayek, later embraced by Margaret Thatcher. However, one could say that the 5th edition of my book Modern Architecture: a Critical History (2020) proves the validity of the Critical Regionalism argument in that modernity is being inflected differently across the world.
In his book "The Seeds of Time" of 1994 Frederic Jameson analyzes Critical Regionalism as an aesthetic with a political overlay in a particularly sensitive and yet rigorous manner! He writes: "The category of the joint as a primal articulation of the two forces that meet in it along with its correlative of the break or dis- joint … the point at which things break against each other rather than connect, that significant fulcrum at which one system abruptly ends to give way to another (and here he is referring to my essay, "Rapell a l'ordre" of 1991) would seem to be the fundamental aesthetic of Critical Regionalism".
Forty years separate the first and fifth editions of Modern Architecture: a Critical History (1980 and 2020), with the first edition coinciding with the 1980 scenographically postmodern Venice Biennale of that year! The 1st edition written between 1970 and 1980 was an operative history in large part of the interwar Modern Movement conceived as a progressive left-wing sequel to Banham's anti-Marxist, "Theory and Design in the First Machine Age" of 1960! Where the 1st edition opened with Walter Benjamin's image of the Angel of History of 1944, written just before his suicide,

the 5th edition opens with a citation from Gui Debord's "Comments on the Society of the Spectacle" (1988; 1990), ending with the words "power saved by the media from having to take any responsibility for its delirious decisions thinks that it no longer needs to think and indeed cannot think". At the end of the first edition, I wrote: "The veil that photo-lithography draws over architecture is not neutral. High-speed photography and reproductive processes are surely not only the political economy of the sign but also an unfair filter through which our tactile environment tends to lose its concrete responsiveness. When much of modern building is experienced in actuality its photogenic sculptural quality is denied by the poverty and brutality of its detailing … That modern society still possesses a capacity for such refined inflexion finds its confirmation in the finest work of Aalto. Against his inspiring achievement, the tendency of modern building to be devoid of content, to be reduced through the way it is built returns us to the Heideggerian challenge that building, dwelling, cultivating and being were once indivisible".

Here we already have the roots of Critical Regionalism "Avant la Lettre" plus my shift to the tectonic in the 90s (1995). However, my reference to Aalto in 1980 may also be seen in retrospect as advocating an alternative modernity! However, as Jameson points out in The Seeds of Time (p. 26 to 30) this alternative has also been rendered inaccessible via the highly destructive titanic forces unleashed by the forces of late capitalism! What can one say in the face of this? Perhaps one can only offer the myth of Critical Regionalism as a hypothetical ground upon which one can still create a microcosmos.

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Kenneth Frampton, architect, critic, historian and author, Kenneth Frampton is the Emeritus Ware Professor of Architecture at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University, where he taught from 1972 to 2020. Frampton has written extensively, and his numerous publications and essays gained him an international reputation as a leading scholar of modern architecture. His seminal writings include an essay, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance"; and several books, most notably "Modern Architecture: A Critical History", "Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture," and "A Genealogy of Modern Architecture: Comparative Analysis of Built Form." Along with architects Peter Eisenman and Mario Gandelsonas, Frampton was a founding editor of Oppositions, an architectural journal produced by the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies from 1973 to 1984.

Marvin Cukaj
Theory and project. The continuity of a comparison

Author: *Raffaella Neri*
Title: *Il filo di un pensiero*
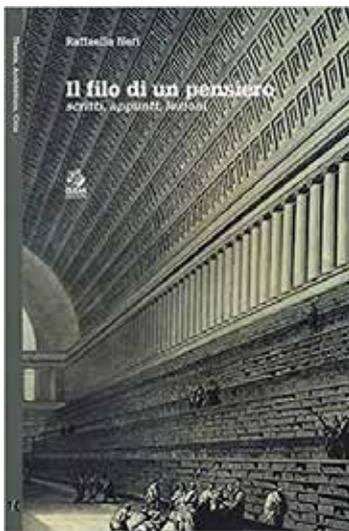Subtitle*: scritti, appunti, lezioni*
Language: *italian*
Publisher: *CLEAN edizioni*
Characteristics: *formato 16x24 cm, 202 pagine, brossura, black and white*
ISBN: *9788884976765*
Year: *2020*

Increasingly, architectural design is becoming a project of specialization, focused on exalting a specific aspect. Through captivating images, projects that exalt sculptural forms are told, through technical reports the technological efficiency of architectures that can be likened to real "machines" is told. Increasingly rare, vice versa, are the occasions in which an architectural project is accompanied by a report that makes explicit its reasons and compositional principles.

The project and the elaboration of the project represent the centrality around which the writings of Raffaella Neri's book orbit. In the different themes addressed, the nature of the research takes a different point of view from what happens frequently in the contemporary world, it is not focused on specificities but on the characters of generality, on the recurrences that allow to give an objective validity to the project. Generality of choices, generality of principles, leading to an ability to hold together, as a director does along the making of a film, the different aspects of which an architectural project is composed.

In order to divert attention from the specifics, trying to identify principles and put order among the problems that a project in its complexity must solve, an entire first part of the book focuses on the role that theory can invest. Theory, which the author understands as a necessary foundation for elaborating projects through which one can confront oneself, projects in which the concluding formal solution recognizably returns the reason for the building itself. Therefore, in dealing with the various aspects that make up the design process, it is necessary to pursue the overall purpose of the work, the principles on which it is based, and not to be sidetracked by individualisms.

The book is composed of thoughts and reflections, defined over almost thirty years of the author's training and academic career, put on paper on several occasions; university research and lectures, publications, project seminars and international conferences. The collection is thus rich in different themes and case studies, recurring, however, are the theses that the author tries to verify, comparing and abstracting, the lessons offered by historical cities and designers assumed as masters. Theses that belong to a twofold scaling of the project: at the scale of the building, we focus on the role of construction as a fundamental act of architecture; at the urban scale,

on the contrary, the focus is on the outside of the artifact and the relationships that architectures are able to establish with each other and with the context that surrounds them are investigated.

Construction is approached not in a technical way as the engineer might, but by investigating the encounter between the problem of construction and the problem of expression. Architectures by designers such as Peter Behrens, Mies van der Rohe, the architects of the Chicago School and the masters of Italian reinforced concrete are identified as exceptional case studies capable of enhancing the role of construction. The construction choices and principles that are able to be deduced through the analysis of such projects allow us to understand how the construction narrative can become the best opportunity to manifest the meaning of the building.

Instead, the relationships between architectures, and between architectures and context, represent the capacity to construct places and define the identity of those places. This capacity becomes the main objective to be pursued during urban design if, as the author argues, through urban design we aspire to an idea of the city understood as a composition of places, a sequence of different but related places belonging to the urban sphere, public space and the space of residence.

The title of the book, the thread of a thought, certainly refers to Raffaella Neri's already mentioned personal journey, however in the choices of themes and the ways of interpreting them there seems to be a general thread that refers to an attitude, to a posture with which to approach the project. A way of doing architecture that is based on knowledge as the architect's first act of awareness and responsibility, which seeks an objective validity of the project through the development of the deductive activity of recognizable rules and principles in a rational way. A way of doing architecture that, in conclusion, by framing the project as an opportunity for confrontation, as a continuous opportunity for growth, and by addressing itself primarily to students and project enthusiasts, belongs to a way of doing architecture school.

Giuseppe Verterame
Learning from Bovisa. Memories of a neighborhood

Author: *Giorgio Fiorese*
Title: *AURA di BOVISA.*
Subtitle: *Produzione Conoscenza Figurazione*
Language: *Italiano*
Publisher: *Maggioli Editore*
Characteristics: format 26x26 cm, 139 pagine, brochure, in colour
ISBN: *978-88-916-5579-0*
Year: *2022*

Giorgio Fiorese's book represents the latest outcome of a personal research on the Bovisa district, in which he has been involved since the early years of his academic and professional career. From the pages of the book, one feels a strong involvement that has lasted for decades and from which a certain *romanticism* shines through. It is no coincidence that, in the title «Aura of Bovisa», he uses a highly evocative word associated with the toponym that unequivocally identifies an area within the city. The word *aura* is a dynamic concept, evoking a sensation, an irrational substance associated with an opaque and unspecific memory. In the book, an attempt is made to restore the *aura* of the neighbourhood through numerous, heterogeneous events that feature the Bovisa stage. The author does not attempt to describe this atmosphere, but tries to crystallise it through maps, photographs, biographical accounts, extracts from novels, films and plays. The book spans 140 years of history, and the range of materials it contains makes it an immense archival repertoire that conveys the changes that have taken place in this piece of land, where the environment has changed numerous times in relation to urban, economic and social developments.

Fiorese adds three words to the title - Production Knowledge Figuration - useful to identify three thematic-chronological sections and, at the same time, keys to interpreting Bovisa's complex history. The structure of the book consists of 16 chapters full of information and numerous parallel insights. They advance in chronological order, but the thematic subdivision involves references and overlaps that make the relationship between the events, necessarily, multiple and complex. The thematic tripartition enunciated by the subtitle is not evident from the summary; instead, it manifests itself among the events mentioned in the pages of the book, in the photographs, in the paintings or in the poems, and sometimes mixes the elements of the whole to restore the *aura* of Bovisa.

The first chapter reports the biographical stories of people connected to Bovisa. Among them are characters from different social backgrounds, and their stories are an important contribution to portraying the changes that have taken place. The nine different biographies reported embrace the entire life of the district, from the first decades of the 19th century to the present day, or almost.

Even before the district existed, there was only land devoted to agriculture: the territorial system was made up of a punctiform set of farmsteads and oratories. One of these was the Cascina Bovisa, located in the Municipality of the Corpi Santi, from which the district's name was also derived.

From the mid-19th century a series of events occurred that began to characterise and structure the future Bovisa district.

In 1859 the Milan-Turin railway line was completed and in 1879 the connections to Erba and Saronno. These events would give Bovisa the image of a border territory, from an institutional, administrative and economic point of view.

In 1873 the municipality of the Corpi Santi was annexed to the city of Milan: the conversion from rural territory to urban satellite began.

This date represents a watershed and the actual birth of the district, which will be gradually completed over the following decades.

1882 is recognised by Fiorese - who uses a conspicuous bibliographical apparatus - as the year of birth of the Italian chemical industry, which found in Bovisa the ideal place for development and where excellences in the sector began to settle: Candiani, Calamari, Brill, Carlo Erba, Mapei, among others. The author reconstructs this period - which corresponds to *Production* - through a precise chronology of the Bovisa industry. The latter is supplemented with numerous photographs of the period and descriptions of the most important production activities, from which the life of the industrial district and the stories of the workers and factories are accurately portrayed.

Between the turn of the century and the 1930s, several civil settlements were built to integrate services and inhabitants into the prevailing production activity. These include a hospital, two primary schools, and three residential units of the Istituto Case Popolari.

The first gasometer was built in 1905, followed by one in 1930 and a third in 1953, then closed in 1994. Still today, the gasometers - only two, as the one in 1953 was demolished - characterise the urban landscape of the district, clearly visible from different points.

The book continues with chapters on the periods of the two world wars and the post-war period, when the district continued to structure itself from an urban point of view. These sections contain various testimonies, including paintings by Mario Sironi, workers' memoirs, an excerpt from Ermanno Olmi's «Il ragazzo della Bovisa», drawings and paintings by Ampelio Tettamanti, works and photos by Ernesto Treccani, writings by Giovanni Testori, and testimonies and scenes from Luchino Visconti's «Rocco e i suoi fratelli».
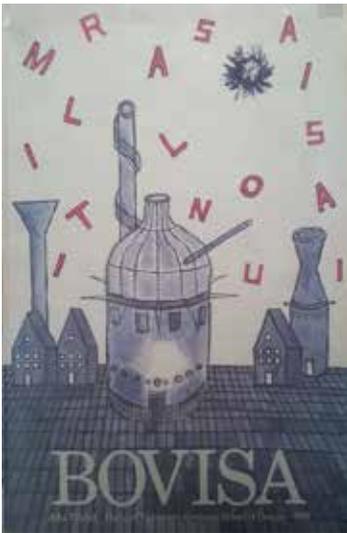
Fig. 3
Bovisa – Chapel of the dead angel, John Hejduk, project for the Triennale di Milano 1987.

1970 saw the beginning of a period - corresponding to the often-converging theme of *Knowledge* and *Figuration* - in which the author was involved, including the period of student mobilisations and academic reform. In those years the industrial decommissioning of the district was taking place, prolonged over the following decade, which gave rise to many urban transformation projects, and the group coordinated by Guido Canella, of which Fiorese was a member, developed some of these proposals, which sought to establish the new headquarters of the Politecnico in Bovisa.

The book contains a great deal of archive documentation, from the discussions with the public administration - which originally planned to locate the Politecnico in Gorgonzola - to the various design proposals that followed.

In 1987 Nicolin reproposed the theme at the Triennale, in the event «The Imagined Cities». In the book, this occasion provided the opportunity to devote several pages to the figure and works of John Hejduk, one of the designers invited by Nicolin for the Bovisa proposal.

The exploration of material on the neighbourhood continues with interviews, further stories, photographs and drawings. The final pages present the most recent projects and initiatives - including the knowledge hub - that confirm, in fact, the main idea of a cultural district.

The book only apparently shows the history of a neighbourhood-laboratory through the countless voices of its inhabitants in the course of its evolution. Actually, Giorgio Fiorese realises a product through a scientific process that is as intricate as it is exemplary, linking the findings of a potentially boundless archive with the eternal dynamics of the city's transformation. It is a very complex process, but one that has been made transmissible precisely thanks to this publication: it is not, therefore, just about the memories of the Bovisa district. This example shows us how history and design feed off each other, giving rise to combinations that give rise to multiple interpretations. That of Bovisa, is a tale that continues to the present day, by its very nature imperishable: it reveals the becoming of an *imaginary museum* through a process of selection and juxtaposition of material elements, events, stories that testify to the experience of the city's centuries-old substance. Many still unresolved suburbs like Bovisa can only benefit from the reconstruction of a memory-archive from which to generate a multiplicity of interpretations, especially from the point of view of the project.

Tommaso Brighenti
È del poeta il fin, la meraviglia …

Title: *Giorgio Raineri 1927-2012*
Language of the text: *Italian*
Publisher: *FrancoAngeli*
Series: *Italian Architects of the 20th century*
Features: *Size 23X 15.5cm, paperback, colour reproductions*
ISBN: *978-88-917-7122-3*
Year: *2020*

On browsing through the book *Giorgio Raineri 1927-2012* edited by Gentucca Canella and Paolo Mellano, right away we can see that it describes the work of an important Italian architect through an erudite and complex labour of research. Research on an architect, arguably not sufficiently well-known nor satisfactorily investigated by the history of architecture – monographic studies of Raineri's work being few and far between, not even by those scholars who dedicated their words to celebrating some important works by other working architects. An architect who, to borrow the words of the editor, should be "in all respects revered among those Italian architects of the late twentieth century who fully matched up to the architecture of the time". It comes as no surprise, then, that the work of this figure is part of the prestigious series *Italian Architects of the Twentieth Century*, which was launched in 2018, published by FrancoAngeli, and directed by Gentucca Canella, and which in recent years has published essays and conference proceedings on such important masters of Italian architecture as Ernesto N. Rogers, Guido Canella, Carlo De Carli, and Roberto Gabetti.

This volume offers a compendium of scholars from different generations and different fields, ranging from design to the history of architecture, from restoration to occupational studies, who help to piece together a detailed exploration and comprehensive testimony on the work and personality of Giorgio Raineri. A wide-ranging discussion between scholars of different generations in the pages of this volume which mingles essays by some of the leading lights of Italian architecture with the reflections of scholars from the Polytechnic University of Turin and studies by young researchers. Raineri saw a number of projects brought to fruition, on different scales, which tackled many aspects of a civil and private nature. He belonged to the generation born in the second half of the 1920s, and participated in the construction of Italian architecture of the last century through works of an undeniably poetic value, working mainly in the Piedmont area and, remaining somewhat aloof from the academic environment and teaching, unflaggingly "working on the preparation of projects" for more than sixty years within the walls of his Turin studio in Via Sacchi.

The format of the book is significant, it is divided into four separate sections: a first entitled *Giorgio Raineri, his Friends and the Studio in Via Sacchi* which collects the writings of acquaintances who shared the studio,

Fig. 1
Aimaro Isola, Roberto Gabetti, Giorgio Raineri at the *Moda Stile Costume* exhibition, Italia '61, Turin, 1961.

Fig. 2
Giorgio Raineri, with Antonietta Roasio, Farmers' Cooperative building at Montalenghe, Turin, 1957-58. (Photo Riccardo Moncalvo, Giorgio Raineri Archive)

his life and professional experiences in collaborating with him, partaking in projects and stories of a life lived. One moving memory, for example, is that of Aimaro Isola, called to collaborate by the young Gabetti and Raineri in the competition subsequently won for the Turin Stock Exchange building who, citing Montale, Mallarmé and other great bards, remembers Raineri too as a poet.

A second part follows, entitled *Giorgio Raineri: his Thought and Works* consisting of writings by notable architects and scholars who delve into the life and work of this Piedmontese architect, describing his works of architecture, the contexts, and his ability to carry through a project from conception to execution through careful control of the material. For instance, Vittorio Gregotti remembers when he wrote his first important essay on Raineri's work for Rogers' journal "Casabella", and then there is Gianni Contessi, who expands the discourse to take in Piedmontese architecture, but also many others.

The third part, *A New Generation Encounters the Work of Giorgio Raineri* has the merit of broadening the debate by giving voice to young scholars, asked by the main Italian schools of architecture to study and investigate Raineri's work, some of them for the first time.

Finally, the fourth part collects and republishes in full the essays which appeared in April 1999 in issue 42 of the journal "Porti di Magnin", at the time directed by Carlo Pellegrino and, when it came to architecture, by Lorenzo Mamino, an issue devoted entirely to Raineri's fifty years of architecture. This chapter anticipates and completes the final part of the book, made up of materials which bring together, in addition to a complete bibliography on Raineri, precious reproductions of the main journals which published his works in the late twentieth century, from Gio Ponti's "Domus", to "Casabella-Continuità" directed by Ernesto N. Rogers with important articles written by the very young Vittorio Gregotti and Aldo Rossi, and also Portoghesi's "Controspazio" and Zevi's "L'architettura. Cronache e storia"; significant documentation which makes this volume complete in its intent to tell, document, and gather together the work of this Piedmontese architect.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning the abundant illustrations which accompany the writings, certainly not a secondary consideration for a book
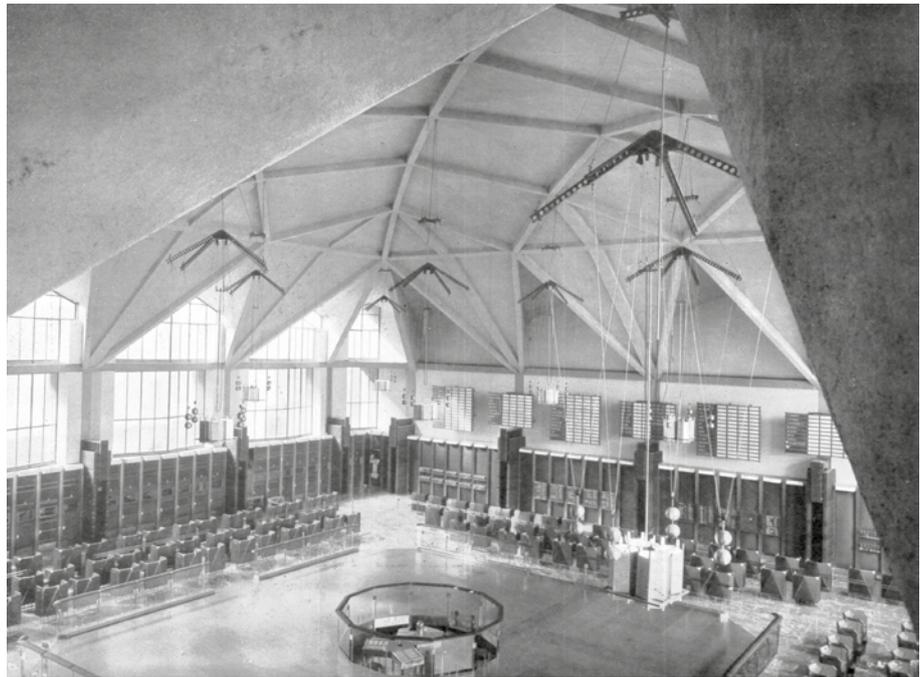
Fig. 3
Roberto Gabetti, Aimaro Isola, Giorgio Raineri, Giuseppe Raineri, Turin Stock Exchange building, Turin, 1952-56. (Photo Riccardo Moncalvo, Gabetti & Isola Archive).

on architecture, and which make this volume a valuable critical insight into Raineri's figure and work capable of "passing his lesson and original vision of architecture on to the younger generations".

To conclude, I would like to touch on the main merit of this research which, as the series it belongs to shows, draws attention to how necessary it is to reflect on the knowledge, preservation and protection of creative architecture of the late twentieth century, too often prone to unconscionable adaptation, conservation, repurposing or sometimes even demolition, which compromise and alter the integrity of the work as a whole, along with its expressive form, language and figure.

For several years, the editors of this volume have been championing this line of research by organizing conferences, seminars and public debates, but above all by writing publications on the subject: see for example the book published in the same series *Il diritto alla tutela. Architettura d'autore del secondo Novecento* by Gentucca Canella and Paolo Mellano.

Collecting, documenting, and rediscovering the works of a certain segment of Italian architecture therefore becomes a key point with regard to an awareness-raising which concerns not only the academic milieu, but also professional and legislative circles.

This book has the great merit of pointing out that in the works of these authors (and all those of Raineri demonstrate this), is concentrated the entire patrimony of Italian architecture, correspondingly recognized and studied abroad for its "utility and beauty", a patrimony rendered such by meticulous, expert work done within "small professional studios" and thanks to "enlightened" clients.