



Drawing
Architecture Theory
on the City

Emre Altürk

**Drawing
Architecture Theory
on the City**

Proefschrift

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1. DRAWING, SPECULATION, CITY

—Introduction

Without faith in the genetic message inscribed on paper, there is no architecture. It has often been said that architecture is more than mere building. In this sense it is considerably less.

—Robin Evans¹

This is a book about architectural drawings. I especially address how drawings operate in architecture theory, and stress a particular role they play in facilitating critique and speculation. The use of drawings in the architectural design as a facilitating medium is well established. It is within the design process and through drawings and models that architects develop spatial ideas. This process consists of continuous ideation, testing, criticism and self-criticism. In comparison, the critique-oriented utilization of architectural drawings within the architecture theory is a rather under-explored area. In this sense, the capacity of architectural drawing not only as the representation of potential buildings but also as non-verbal argumentation is well open to exploration.

Drawings of architecture theory

That drawing is the primary and the main medium of architecture as we know it today is hardly a controversial statement. It, however, seems to hold as long as architecture is understood as a profession, as the designing of buildings. The demarcation line that is often too hastily and rigidly set between practice and theory not only differentiates between two kinds of activities; it also insinuates a differentiation between media: drawing is understood as the rightful medium of architectural design and practice, whereas theory is historically dominated by words. It is true that the contemporary architecture theory comprises an unprecedented quantity and variety of visual elements, just like the entire domain of architecture, or, just like virtually any other domain in culture for that matter. But drawings don't quite occupy the same privileged position in theory as they do in practice. In the latter, drawings constitute the very medium in which the architectural intellectual activity is carried out and communicated. In comparison, there usually is a sense of passivity and lifelessness to the visual

¹ Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and its Three Geometries* (London: The MIT Press, 1995), p. xxvi.



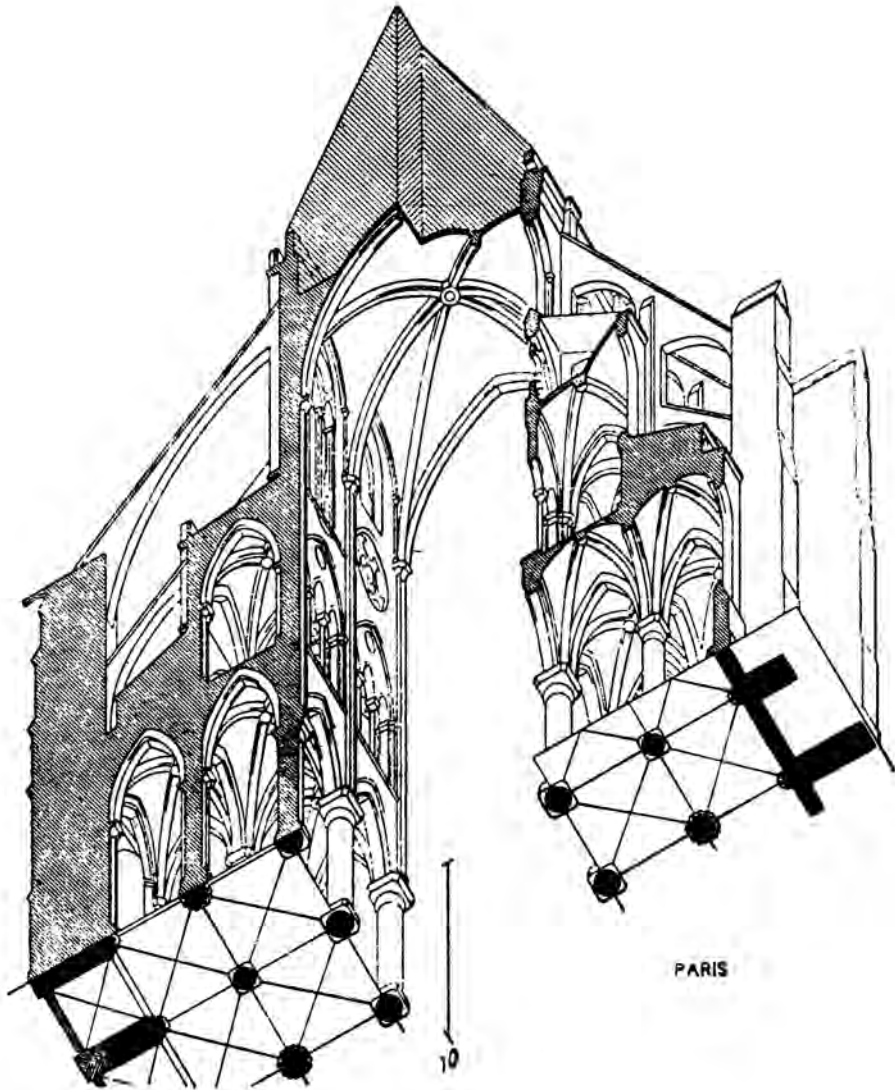
Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The Invention of Drawing. Painting. 1830.

elements deployed in theory. The 'active' medium in theory usually is the written text where the argument unfolds, while drawings and photographs merely 'illustrate' the text. It is true that this comparison is not exactly fair. One's encounter with theory is usually by means of a product that is finalized, published, ossified. Whereas design is a process, the products of which are also subject to ossification, even literally. This, nevertheless, hardly changes the fact that theory is, more often than not, written.

At first instance, there is nothing peculiar about the conventional territorialization of practice by drawing and of theory by writing. Both seem to be pragmatically sensible pairings. On the other hand, it is at least curious that drawing that helps constituting architecture as a legitimate intellectual activity by facilitating design is pigeonholed, that its role is secondary in contemplating architectural matters beyond singular design tasks, beyond a building. Drawings have provided the architects with the interface to operate on the built environment for centuries, both for observing/registering and for producing/projecting. They are capable of providing an immediate, if not analogue, relationship to the actual objects in space with a directness that is impossible to obtain through language. The observer of a drawing that describes a spatial configuration can understand it much easier and faster than the reader of a verbal description of the same configuration, who has to operate through a purely symbolic notational system while forming and sustaining a mental image. It is true that most architectural drawings have come to deploy specialized notations and require inculcation of various codes and conventions to be 'read'. But drawing's analogue origin still allows it to sustain a close relationship with the actual forms, arguably only to be superseded by a model. On the other hand, being a fully-fledged symbolic system, language, provides with a medium to easily express predications, assertions, logical and conditional relations; a capacity much required in theory.

Architecture theory, very generally, explains past practices and explores potential architectural production.² It is argumentative and mediatory. It constructs narratives around its object by constantly relating it to its contexts, to other practices and discourses. For much of this, theory requires the capabilities of language in facilitating articulate and detailed arguments. As far as the use of the drawings in theory goes, it helps—for clarity—to split the above definition into past and potential production. The former part, then, is concerned with analyses, evaluations and judgments on the past practices whereas the latter is concerned with projecting, *eg*, paradigms, positions, or design methods. For convenience one could call the former critical and the latter

² By architectural production I mean production in building, models, drawing, and writing. I try and provide a more comprehensive definition of architecture theory in chapter 3, 'architecture theory'.



Auguste Choisy. *Les Eglises Gothiques*. Drawing. 1899.

projective.³ It is true that both involve the other, even tacitly.⁴ Still, here I dwell more on the critical part of architecture theory, which is not concerned with the production of buildings or suggestion of schemes in a direct way as the projective theory, but rather is interested in the analysis and exploration of the existing architectural production for developing architectural positions and thought paradigms, in relation to which production of buildings may take place in other, more pragmatic, instances.

In the projective part of theory, drawings do what they accomplish best in practice: they communicate spatial information to guide the future production. They describe, eg, a paradigmatic spatial organization, a prototypical architectural element, a form generating diagram, a method of composition, an instruction. And within the critical part of theory, drawings often operate as substitutes for buildings: they allow actual buildings and other drawings enter into the media of theory, mostly books and journals, by providing visual reference to them. In other words, they usually merely delineate the buildings and other references invoked in the text, the medium where the argument is developed.⁵ What I am interested in here are the critical practices that accomplish more with drawings than deploying them only to connect the dots from the text to the buildings.

The drawings that play such a role are usually of analytic nature. By that, I mean, eg, drawings that break down a formal organization to its constituting parts to study their relation; drawings that abstract a building to its generating diagram or type; drawings that look for the organizing geometries of a structure; or drawings that map the specific features of a built environment or the specific behaviors of its users. It is true that registering, representing a three dimensional formal organization through drawing always requires an active mediation that is selective and explorative. Even photography, which is usually taken as the mute and acute representation of things, does manipulate its object. The 'analytical drawings', nevertheless, go over a crucial threshold and rather than providing with referential and informative delineations, they manifestly parse and reconfigure their object in order to understand it. They facilitate contemplation. However, there seems to be more than one threshold on that scale. While the analytical drawings do transform their object, since they simply aim to comprehend it, they are bound up with it; they are bound up with its elements, system, and context. And there are those drawings, which, rather than merely try

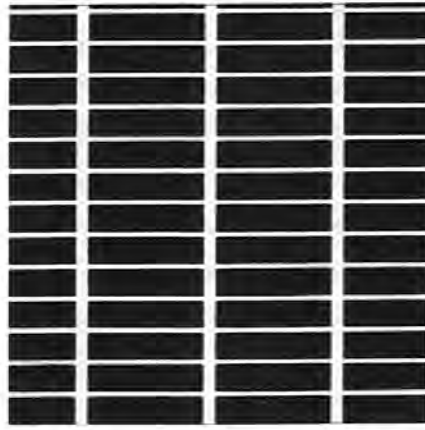
3 I am well aware that the terms 'critical' and 'projective' have come to denote specific positions in the recent architecture theory. However, here I use the terms quite literally. For the said 'specific positions', among others, see George Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents", *Harvard Design Magazine*, 21 (Fall 2004/Winter 2005), pp. 1-6.

4 I don't mean this differentiation for compartmentalization, but merely as an analytical device that let's me be more precise.

5 This book also deploys the images mainly in the conventional and common ways. Most of the images illustrate and reinforce the written text, where I mainly develop my argument. Still images are treated as equally important statements of the discourse and the layout of the book reflects this position.



Dutch density
8,000 persons/km²



Manhattan density
25,000 persons/km²



Existing Dutch population
15 million



Existing Dutch population
at Manhattan density along
Dutch/Belgian border
population: 15 million
area: 345 km x 1.75 km

OMA. Pointcity/Southcity (details). Drawing. 1993.

and understand their object, develop an argument on or through it. By that, I mean, eg, drawings that disturb or change the syntax and signification of their object to in order to mobilize questioning; drawings that compare, juxtapose, superimpose their objects; relate them to other discourses; shift their context; isolate and exaggerate their elements; render their selected/hypothesized qualities through other graphical means to offer alternative perspectives. I will call such drawings given to theorizing, 'speculative drawings'.

In short, I suggest a threefold structure to understand how drawings function in (the critical part of) architecture theory: descriptive/referential, analytical, and speculative drawings. Most of the drawings that I dwell on in this book are of the last kind in which the role of drawing is comparable to its role in design. And this is exactly what I am interested in. Such drawings bring about a structural transformation within the discipline precisely by deploying drawings for ideation and argumentation: a common practice in design but definitely a road much less taken in theory. Ironically, deploying theoretical drawings in ways similar to design means distancing drawings from buildings. Drawings' functioning is understandably bound up with the building in the practice but it is mostly so within theory as well: they visualize buildings, built or intended. Speculative drawings too utilize the eminence and immediacy of graphical means in describing form. They may too visualize buildings, spatial models, or urban scenarios. But not for building. They rather do so to make a point, to demonstrate an argument, to offer a perspective, or to articulate a position. So, such practices still benefit from images for imagining, much the way drawings are deployed in design, to attain results "beyond the reach of unaided imagination".⁶ Albeit, said images are meant to transform architecture theory rather than actual space. Distancing the drawing from the building liberates it, enables it to engage in discursive relations within the discipline or symbolic relations with the rest of the world, which is a privileged position that is historically granted almost exclusively to the building.

The Florentine Projects

In what follows I study some speculative drawings and a specific capacity they have in architecture theory. More precisely, I study three 'drawn' theoretical projects that offer positions on their contemporaneous theories, criticize specific architectural tendencies, and speculate on architecture's urban conditions or on the functioning of the discipline within the culture at large. Although I offer a hypothesis about a transformation they achieve by deploying the drawings in the ways they do, I don't necessarily assign them an inaugurating position, a status of an origin. However far or disparate, they most definitely have precedents. Their particular importance is due to the fact that

⁶ Robin Evans, 'Translation from Drawing to Building', *AA Files*, 12 (Summer 1986), p. 14. Also published in, *Translation from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), pp. 153-194.



G. B. Piranesi. *Grande Pianta, Campo Marzio*. Engraving. 1762.

they are of the 'immediate history' of the contemporary architectural discourse, which they anticipate. One could also examine *Campo Marzio* to demonstrate a utilization of drawings in producing a critical discourse.⁷ And I do actually briefly do that and stress the similarities between the Piranesian engravings and the speculative drawings that I focus on, in order to better articulate the latter. It is obviously absurd to talk about an overlap of the two practices. The list of the similarities, nevertheless, happens to be a long one.

Much like the projects I study here, Piranesi produced drawings that were meant for, among other things, visualizing and disseminating a critique.⁸ Technologically speaking, the engravings allowed wider dissemination, if not were devised for it. And as far as the content is concerned, Piranesi too offered a critique on the architectural types, hypothesized an imminent urban condition, and speculated on architecture's functioning within that condition. There are also similarities in the methods through which both the Piranesian engravings and my case studies try and trigger a reassessment of their object: they both disturb the syntax of their object and radically alter its signification in order to question, problematize, or simply render its very premises. But instead of Piranesi, I study three projects from the Florentine groups Superstudio and Archizoom that date from 1968-1971. The Florentine drawings are not engraved but primarily montaged. They are mostly "Photoshop images" that predate Photoshop. They mention mobile gadgets for communication/browsing and wireless infrastructures that consist of computers and satellites. They refer to Le Corbusier and Hilberseimer, but their producers, who are mostly alive, also lectured Rem Koolhaas. They offer opinions on globalization, mass-production, and industrialization, but also on the post-industrial society. What the perceived contemporariness of the Florentine projects indicates is more than a superficial connection to today. The projects not only anticipate the contemporary architectural discourse (eg, on the city) but they are also formative for it.⁹

The sixties

Although I don't paint a picture of "the sixties", the last remarks can also be said to be telling about the recently increased interest in the period, which gave way to many

⁷ *Campo Marzio* is a set of engravings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi first published in G. B. Piranesi, *Campus Martius antiquae Urbis* (Rome, 1762); later reprinted as *Il Campo Marzio dell'antica Roma* (Florence: Colombo Ristampe, 1972). It has to be noted that my understanding of Piranesi is mainly Tafurian, see especially Manfredo Tafuri, "The Wicked Architect": G. B. Piranesi, Heterotopia, and the Voyage', in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trs, Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987), pp. 21-54. First published in Italian, *La sfera e il labirinto: Avanguardie e architettura da Piranesi agli anni '70*, Turin, 1980.

⁸ There is obviously also the element of pleasure involved in fantasizing and delineating a Rome of classical grandeur.

⁹ I mainly dwell on this in the fourth chapter.

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Architecture and the Sixties: Still radical after all these years

Lynne Cooke in conversation with Rem Koolhaas



Rem Koolhaas and Lynne Cooke in conversation at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel, Seattle, 2004
© Photograph: Adam L. Weintraub, 2004

The 'Art and the 60s: This Was Tomorrow' exhibition broke new ground for Tate Britain by mixing fine art, architecture and photography. In a rare interview, seminal architect Rem Koolhaas talks to curator Lynne Cooke about the influence of Cedric Price, 1960s buildings and their legacy.

Context: → 'Art & The 60s: This was Tomorrow' at Tate Britain 30 June - 26 September 2004

LYNNE COOKE *What is particularly interesting about the exhibition 'Art & the 60s: This Was Tomorrow' is that, for the first time, it brings architecture and photography together with the fine arts at Tate Britain. Normally, as you probably know, architecture and photography fall under the aegis of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was founded to concentrate on the applied arts considered from a pedagogical perspective. Unlike MoMA in New York or the Pompidou in Paris, Tate's mandate does not include these disciplines.*

Screenshot from the Tate Modern's webpage with the interview of Rem Koolhaas and Lynne Cooke in the context of the exhibition 'Art & The 60s: This was Tomorrow' held in 2004.

publications and exhibitions. Arguably being the initial years when the contemporary architectural discourse began to take shape, the period does at times become a laboratory for observing the contemporary issues in architecture and urbanism in their infancy.¹⁰ It is familiar and very much related to today yet far enough so as to provide a critical distance. Along with this, obviously the generational or oedipal matters are involved. Whether or not a particular study is meant for 'killing the father' or for sympathizing with an already dead one, 1960s are important for being the formative years for the established architectural figures who have steered the discourse in the 1990s and—to some extent in—the 2000s.¹¹

The period is significant for me in an obvious way as being the one in which the speculative drawings that I study and assign a paradigmatic value were produced. But I am interested in the historical contextualization of the projects only in specific ways. What is relevant here are two other contemporaneous transformations. One of these transformations is due to the changes in publishing technologies and institutions. The other concerns a shift in the ways city is constituted as an architectural object (*ie*, from a pragmatic object to an object of study). The first one made the drawing's ventures in theory feasible, if not possible. The second one gave all the more reasons for drawings to speculate on the built environment.

The mid-twentieth century developments in the reproduction images and the technologies of dissemination may not be of the magnitude of the woodcut, the Gutenberg press, or the popularization of the Internet and the mobile browsing devices. The images, nevertheless, definitely became much more mobile and easy-to-reproduce thanks to the dissemination of the TV, the photocopiers, and the offset and lithographic printing techniques. The popularization of the latter printing techniques

¹⁰ It is admittedly interesting to mark the exact date, as Charles Jenks did with *Modern Architecture*, when a dominant understanding of architecture 'ended' or 'began'. It is, at the same time, not particularly useful. However one could obviously argue that in the years following the rapid after-war re-urbanization in Europe and sub-urbanization in North America, the previously dominant Western understanding of architecture that was inspired by the early twentieth century modernism lost much of its ground. Kenneth Frampton goes as far as to argue that by the mid-sixties architecture was "bereft of a realistic theoretical basis on which to work". In that sense, 1960s can easily be seen as the time when the contemporary architecture theory has started to take shape, mostly in 'opposition' to Modern Architecture. Similarly, Michael Hays argues that "[i]t does not seem particularly controversial to mark the beginning of contemporary architecture theory in "the sixties" (with all the changes in political theory and practice, the history of philosophy, the world economy, and general cultural production that the date connotes)... ". Likewise, Kate Nesbitt discusses contemporary architecture theory through texts dating from 1965 onwards. See *Charles Jenks, The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984,) p. 9; Kenneth Frampton, 'Place-form and Cultural Identity', in John Thackara, ed, *Design After Modernism: Beyond the Object* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), pp. 51-52; Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), p x; Kate Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

¹¹ I am thinking of figures such as Aldo Rossi, Robert Venturi, Rem Koolhaas, Bernard Tschumi, Peter Eisenman, and the like.



A selection of architectural magazines from 1960s and 1970s..

enabled, among other things, relatively cheaper and faster—and possibly more informal—publishing alternatives. Diminishing the dependence on the established publishing institutions or any significant capital enabled self-publishing and supported the type of visual media that is alternative, amateur, independent, or underground. This formed the technological background for a richly graphic architectural debate, innovation, criticism, and speculation carried out in pamphlets, 'little magazines', "underground architectural protest magazines", and some "professional magazines that were influenced by the graphics and intellectual concerns of their self-published contemporaries" thus experienced a period of informality or littleness.¹²

Moreover, ideation and argumentation in graphic media provided the students and the young commission-less architects, the key-profile responsible for the informal magazines and associated exhibitions, with a much-demanded outlet, a channel of expression, and even a means of livelihood. The drawings didn't suffer from the expense and the slowness of building.¹³ The former was unaffordable and the latter was unbearable at the face of the demand for instantaneity; be it demanded by the 'pop-age' or by adolescence. Still more, the informal and underground character of such media resonated politically with the *zeitgeist*. This is not to say that all self-published speculative practices shared a common world-view. But, it is safe to say that most were alternative; most of them were positioned against the established and the institutionalized. Alternative could mean that a particular speculative practice was an angry 'punk' one undermining the architectural conventions, a fantastic one bored with the reality or the bureaucratic modernism, a provocative one 'fed up' with the prevailing architecture education wanting to 'get to' the teaching faculty. Or an alternative speculative practice could mean the denunciation of planning and building in order not to be consumed by 'the system' and instead launching speculative projects as critiques of the bourgeois culture and its architecture. At any rate, through the 1960s and the 1970s the printed and highly visual media, both formal and informal, acted as an energetic site for architectural speculation.

The second relevant transformation that interacts with the one at hand concerns

12 The expression 'underground architectural protest magazines' is used by Reyner Banham to refer to student-run alternative magazines such as *Polygon*, *Clip-Kit* and *Archigram*, in his essay 'Zoom Wave Hits Architecture' in *New Society*, March 1966 (later published in *Design by Choice* (London: Academy Editions, 1981), pp. 64-65). For the 'little magazines' and the argument on the little period of the professional magazines see the exhibition 'Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X – 197X' curated by Beatriz Colomina and a group of PhD students at Princeton University School of Architecture at <http://www.clipstampfold.com>; also see <http://www.cca.qc.ca/pages/Niveau3.asp?page=csf2&lang=eng> for Clip/Stamp/Fold 2 at the Canadian Center for Architecture.

13 For instance Banham writes, "The greatest value of these Opping-Popping mags is their insistence that even 'designing up to the minute' is barely good enough. Buildings still take a tidy time to make, cities even longer (Rome only looks as if it was built in a day). If you design right up to the minute, it will be many millions of minutes later before the human race can move in, and the buildings will be out of date by just that period of time." Banham, 'Zoom Wave Hits Architecture', *op. cit.*, p. 64.



Poster for the first *Superarchitettura* exhibition. 1966.

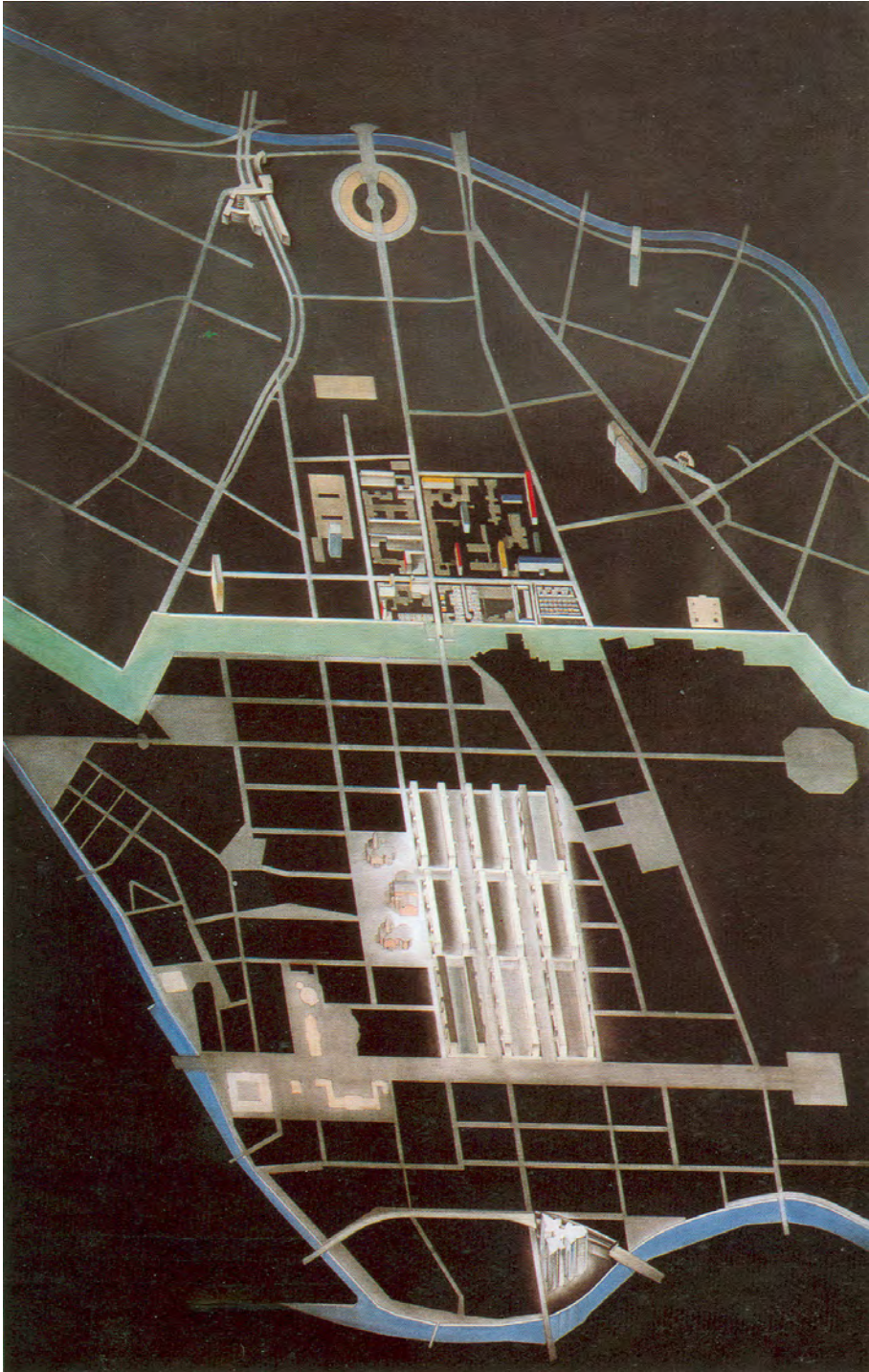
the ways the city is constituted as an architectural object. I actually engage with this transformation in a chapter-long fashion. However, some initial remarks could be noted at the outset. In this study I assume that through a mid-twentieth century transformation in the mainstream Western architectural discourse, the city became a primarily intellectual object for architecture. That is to say, for architecture, the contemporary city resides more in the critical architectural discourse than it does in the practical or the projective ones; it is more an object of study than a pragmatic object; it is more about thinking than about doing. Architecture still has a crucial part in the production and the reception of the built environment. And architects still participate in the large-scale projects or in the occasional radical transformation of cities especially in far Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. But architecture has been increasingly running out of cities 'where it can start over again' and it now has to engage with the existing ones instead.¹⁴ If by the 1950s the city still was something that could be constructed and reorganized, today it is mostly theorized, mapped, and coped with. It is the context rather than the project, only to be transformed moderately. We've come to the understanding that the contemporary city in its entirety and complexity is something that cannot be replaced by a single architectural gesture, or by a series of architectural gestures; not only because it is economically unfeasible and politically totalitarian but also because this is simply not the attitude towards the existing city anymore. The city is something that we come to terms with; even in order to modify it.

The re-positioning of the city as a primarily theoretical architectural object from the 1960s onwards has entangled the diminishing of the alternative urban models to replace the existing city and fueled the efforts of understanding and operating within it. This, in general, has made architectural discourse much more receptive of the existing city, and, in particular, encouraged architectural drawings to operate on the city in more observant and critical fashions; to engage with it on a more theoretical level. In this sense, city's shift from the projective side of architecture theory to its critical side has catalyzed the production of drawings of city, in general, and of critical and projective drawings in particular.

Kinships of speculative drawings

The remainder of this book is thus about a particular capacity of drawings in architecture in facilitating critique and speculation as theoretical activities. My intention in studying such architectural drawings is not to mystify drawing, disembody it from

14 Rem Koolhaas, as someone intellectually and professionally invested in the large-scale transformation of the Gulf Region and particularly of Dubai, argues that Singapore in the 80s, China in the 90s, and recently the Emirates seemed to have provided conditions approximating a *tabula rasa*. He asserts, however, that "we live in an era of completions, not new beginnings. The world is running out of places where it can start over". See Rem Koolhaas, 'Last Chance?', in, Ole Bouman, Mitra Khoubrou, and Rem Koolhaas, eds, *Al Manakh: Dubai guide. Golf survey. Global agenda* (Amsterdam: Stichting Archis, 2007) p. 7; or <http://www.archis.org/volume/2007/00/00/Last+Chance%3F/3181>.



OMA. Social housing at Kochstrasse and Friedrichstrasse, Berlin (showing also the projects of Eric Mendelsohn, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe). Collage. 1980.

its operationality in design or undermine its other roles in theory. Rather, it is to stress an under-utilized capacity of drawings that has particular potentials, especially in the contemporary architecture theory on city. In fact, it is because of drawing's more established roles in design and theory that speculative drawings gain a particular importance as a medium of criticism and speculation. Much the way the visual media have a specific potential in facilitating cultural and political critique because of its own prominence in the production, dissemination, and perpetuation of culture, drawings too offer a similar potential in architecture because much of architectural knowledge consists of and disseminated through drawings.

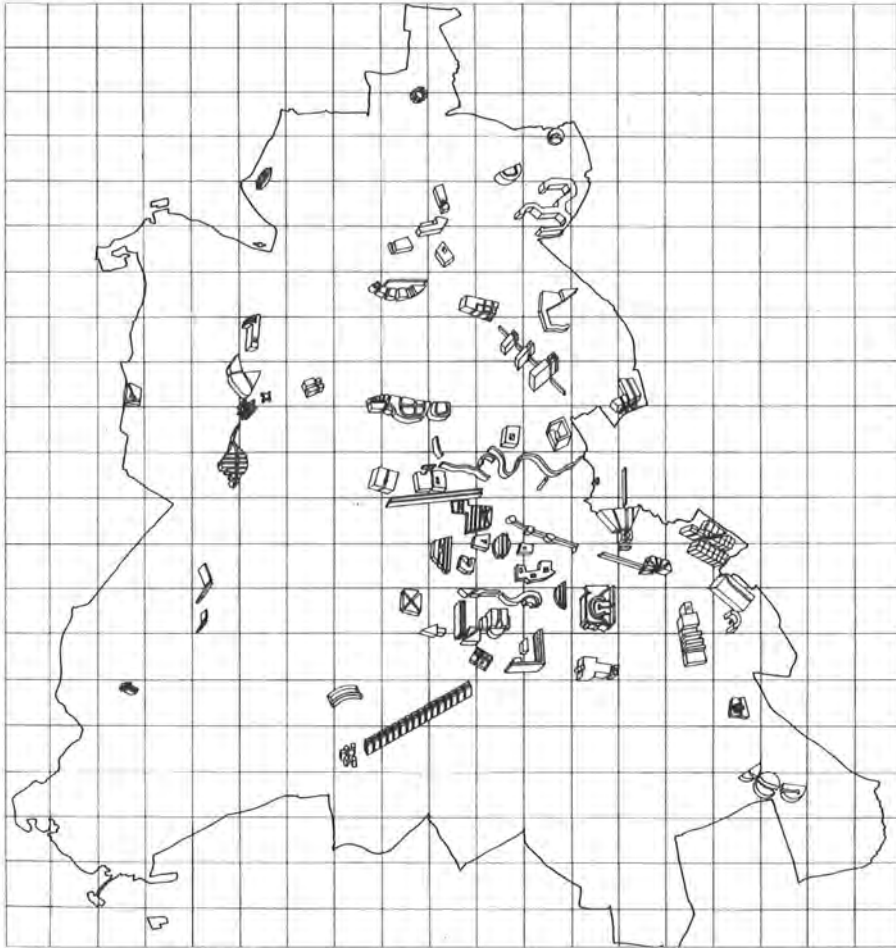
It is true that the visual media definitely has their limitations. It is impossible to develop arguments or articulate notions through images at a level of detail and specificity that could compete with language. I could not, for instance, communicate in images the argument that I have developed so far. In this sense it is obvious, studying the drawings that facilitate critical and speculative discourses, I assign them neither an overall superiority nor exclusivity. Architectural discourse is produced in writing, drawing, models, and buildings. Any particular architectural activity is both produced in a combination of these media and requires a discursive background that comprises them.

Drawings, nevertheless, seem to have a particular lead in facilitating speculative practices, basically due to two sorts of kinship that they provide. Firstly, speculative drawings in the form of 'theoretical projects' generate a kinship with design, which in turn can be understood as another form of speculation. As noted time and again since Alberti, architectural drawings, unlike most forms of representation, anticipate their object.¹⁵ Design, the conception of the architectural object, involves speculating on the future performance of the devised object as a fundamental and embedded activity.¹⁶ Architectural design, in this sense, is inherently a process of thinking and speculating through drawing. And "the short stories on the post-contemporary" are deeply embedded in this process.¹⁷ Comparable to their cousins in design, many speculative drawings in theory are anticipatory. They too often engage in advance with an object that doesn't exist, albeit not with the agenda of enabling its production. When speculative drawings of architecture theory anticipate a future/imminent scenario or visualize a hypothetical

15 Robin Evans and later Stan Allen are arguably the ones to formulate this in the most succinct and clear way in the recent architecture theory. See especially Robin Evans, 'Translation from Drawing to Building' *op. cit.*; Stan Allen, *Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation*, 2nd ed, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

16 George Dodds goes as far as to understand architecture, design and speculation as being virtually synonymous when he asserts that Alberti by "distinguishing the activity of the architect from the activity of the artisan, grounding architecture not in the mechanical art of construction, but in the liberal art of speculation". George Dodds, 'On the Place of Architectural Speculation', *Journal of Architectural Education*, v. 46 n. 2 (November 1992), p. 76.

17 Lara Schrijver, 'Scenarios and speculations: dreaming the world that might still become', unpublished essay, 2009.



Oswald Mathias Ungers, Hans Kollhoff, Rem Koolhaas, Arthur Ovaska, Peter Riemann. *Städte in der Stadt*. Drawing. 1977.

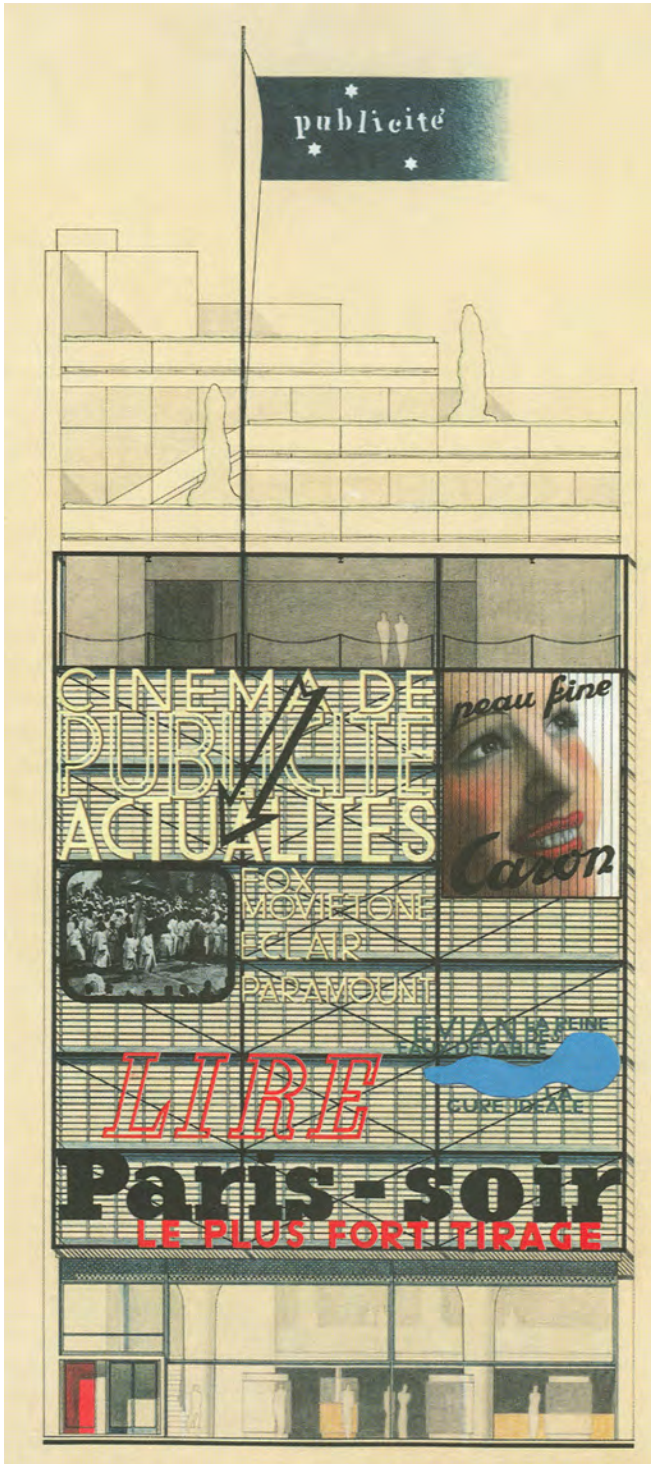
one, it is to render it palpable, often with the agenda of mobilizing its assessment and questioning. At any rate be them anticipatory or not, speculative drawings can said to be a medium to 'design' and communicate architectural situations that have theoretical signification.

The second kinship that the drawing provides as a medium of theoretical speculation is a more general one. Drawing has a potential to form immediate connections not only with the buildings and the other drawings, but also with any architectural and cultural phenomenon that manifests itself visually. The importance of this potential kinship can be better appreciated when one recalls that the primary role of architecture theory is to explain its object and construct narratives around it by means of mediation, by means of forming relations to other practices and discourses. It is obviously possible to articulate such discursive relations through writing and even be perhaps more precise. And this is the more established and common practice. Speculative drawings, nevertheless, being akin to other visual elements of the architectural discourse potentially have an immediacy in bringing them together, re-assembling architectural elements so as to form a montage that has theoretical signification.

Before moving on to the structure of the book, perhaps a final remark is due concerning the multiplicity of the speculative drawings that partly stems from the issue of assembling and montage. It is true that some of the drawings in this book don't necessarily look like what the term 'architectural drawing' commonly invokes. This partly has to do with the pragmatic restriction of the notion, through what Alberto Pérez-Gómez would call functionalization of drawing.¹⁸ Because of its efficiency in describing building forms and its common use in practice, it is usually the 'orthographic set'—consisting of plan, section, and elevation—that the term 'architectural drawing' has come to mean. The speculative practices I study mainly deploy orthographic drawings and composite perspective images, another well-established medium in architecture. However they also deploy storyboards, films, kinetic models, and catoptric boxes.

The main reason for the common restriction of the architectural drawings to the orthographic ones is that architectural drawings, or more generally architectural representation—comprising various types of drawings and models—are only taken to be the mediating objects that participate in the production of buildings. While there is 'apparently' nothing wrong with such definition, it is rather exclusive. And one doesn't need to go as far as the catoptric boxes to see what this understanding excludes. Perspective drawings, for instance, are not necessarily instrumental in the making of the building. Mapping as an activity and maps as drawings/projections, are important for the discipline. But architects don't use maps to convey information for construction. It is then possible to say that the visual machinery deployed to produce buildings do

18 See Alberto Pérez-Gómez, 'Architecture as Drawing', *Journal of Architectural Education*, v. 36 n. 2 (Winter 1982), pp. 2-7.



Oscar Nitzsche. Elevation for *Maison de Publicité*. Collage. 1936.

not necessarily overlap with the one that may be utilized for analyzing and explaining architectural space, or forming architectural ideas. And it definitely doesn't overlap with the visual machinery that may be deployed to speculate on architectural phenomena. This is even more valid for the speculative drawings that engage with the built environment and the urban culture, both of which has gradually been incorporating more images in an increasing number of media. Hence the multiplicity of speculative drawings.

The structure

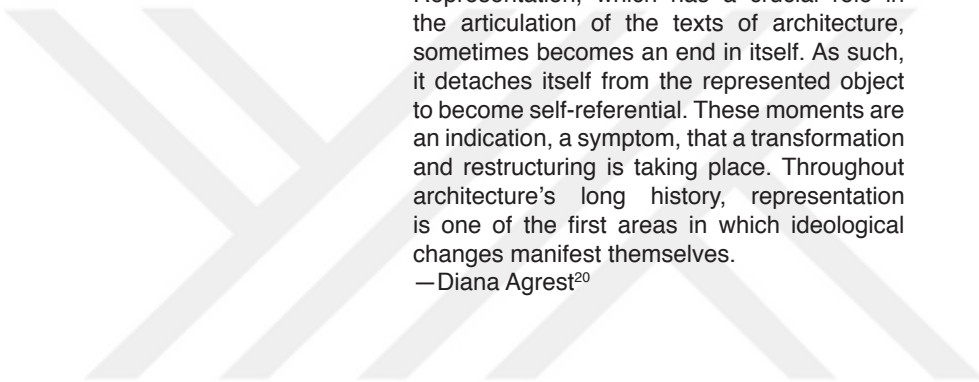
Studying the speculative architectural drawings, first in and of themselves and then in their relation to architecture theory on city, forms the structure this book. Through the three Florentine projects I first study what speculative drawings are. Then I contextualize them first in architectural representation in general and second in the architecture-city relationship. Going through one of my case studies would perhaps render this clearer. In the second chapter I engage mainly with three projects, *The Continuous Monument* and *Supersurface* by Superstudio and *No-Stop City* by Archizoom. *No-Stop City*, very briefly, is actually not a project for an 'alternative city', but it is the 'existing city presented with a critical awareness'. It is a certain interpretation of the city; a speculation on architecture's functioning within an imminent urban condition presented in drawings and contextualized in writing.

In the second chapter I study *No-Stop City*, and some other, speculative drawings. I explain the projects, examine their use of media. In the third chapter I study what presenting the existing city with a critical awareness, or more generally, developing a theoretical argument through drawings means for architectural drawings. In the fourth chapter, I look at what directing architecture's visual machinery towards the existing built environment solely for critique means for architecture theory on city. I argue that rejecting to project an alternative city in favor of critically engaging with the existing one is indicative of a transformation in architecture theory on city, after which architecture is less occupied with the alternative urban models and more comprised efforts to conceive the city. I demonstrate how analyzing the city and speculating on architecture's urban conditions through drawings is indicative of the constitution of city in architecture as a primarily theoretical object. With the exception of this very sub-chapter where I explain the structure of the book, the chapters can actually be read separately and in any order.¹⁹ But I chose to start from the drawings in the second chapter, and then to contextualize and widen my argument.

¹⁹ The title of the second chapter, 'Complicated Mental Acrobatics', is a phrase that Superstudio use in the storyboard of *Supersurface*. The title of the third chapter, 'Discourse through Images', is the common title that Superstudio and Archizoom used for their first joint publication in a major architecture magazine. The title of the fourth chapter, 'The City of Architecture', is obviously a play on Also Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*.

2. COMPLICATED MENTAL ACROBATICS

—Three Theoretical Projects in Florence of the 1960s



Representation, which has a crucial role in the articulation of the texts of architecture, sometimes becomes an end in itself. As such, it detaches itself from the represented object to become self-referential. These moments are an indication, a symptom, that a transformation and restructuring is taking place. Throughout architecture's long history, representation is one of the first areas in which ideological changes manifest themselves.

—Diana Agrest²⁰

In this chapter, I study particular theoretical practices that deploy speculative drawings. More specifically, I focus on three works by the Italian groups Superstudio and Archizoom: *Il Monumento Continuo* and *Vita/Supersurface* by the former and the *No-Stop City* by the latter.²¹ The projects, as well as the groups, have a lot in common. But despite their obvious similarities the projects have important differences, a comparative study of which substantially helps one to better understand each. These projects have been discussed under diverse rubrics. Some of these rubrics, such as *Architettura Radicale* and neo-avant-garde architecture, overlooked their particular functioning.²² Others, such as visionary architecture and megastructures, missed their point completely. So, rather than trying to understand the projects through deduction, I will start by studying the drawings.

20 Diana I. Agrest, Representation as Articulation between Theory and Practice, in Stan Allen, *Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation*, 1st ed, (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 165.

21 Superstudio and Archizoom were two groups of Florentine architects. Superstudio was founded on 04.11.1966 by Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia. The group also comprised Gian Piero Frassinelli, Roberto Magris, Alessandro Magris and Alessandro Poli (1970-72). Most active years of Superstudio arguably were 1968-1972. Archizoom was also founded in 1966, by Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello and Massimo Morozzi. The group later also comprised Dario Bartolini and Lucia Morozzi.

22 The name *Architettura Radicale* was coined by Germano Celant in 1972, arguably in retrospect. See 'Radical Architecture', in, Emilio Ambasz, ed, *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape: Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Florence: Centro Di, 1972) pp. 380-387.



- Per chi come noi sia convinto che l'architettura è uno dei pochi mezzi per rendere visibile in terra l'ordine cosmico, per porre ordine tra le cose e soprattutto per affermare la capacità umana di agire secondo ragione; e "moderata utopia" ipotizzare un futuro prossimo in cui tutta la architettura sia prodotta da un unico atto, da un solo "disegno" capace di chiarire, una volta per tutte, i motivi che hanno spinto l'uomo a innalzare dolmen, menhir, piramidi, e a tracciare città quadrate, circolari, stellari e infine a segnare (ultima ratio) una linea bianca nel deserto.



La grande muraglia cinese, il vallo d'Adriano, le autostrade, come i paralleli e i meridiani, sono i segni tangibili della nostra comprensione della terra. Crediamo in un futuro di "architettura ritrovata", in un futuro in cui l'architettura riprenda i suoi pieni poteri abbandonando ogni sua ambigua designazione e ponendosi come unica alternativa alla natura.

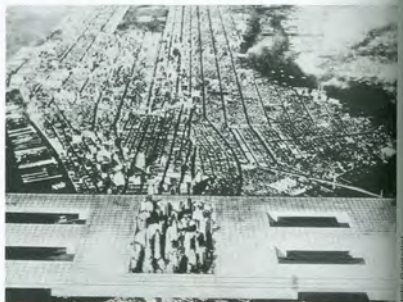


Nel binomio natura naturans e natura naturata scegliamo il secondo termine. Eliminando miraggi e fate morgane di architetture spontanee, architetture della sensibilità, architetture senza architetti, architetture biologiche e fantastiche, ci dirigiamo verso il "monumento continuo": una architettura tutta egualmente emergente in un unico ambiente continuo: la terra resa omogenea dalla tecnica, dalla cultura e da tutti gli inevitabili imperialismi -.

SUPERSTUDIO: DISCORSI PER IMMAGINI



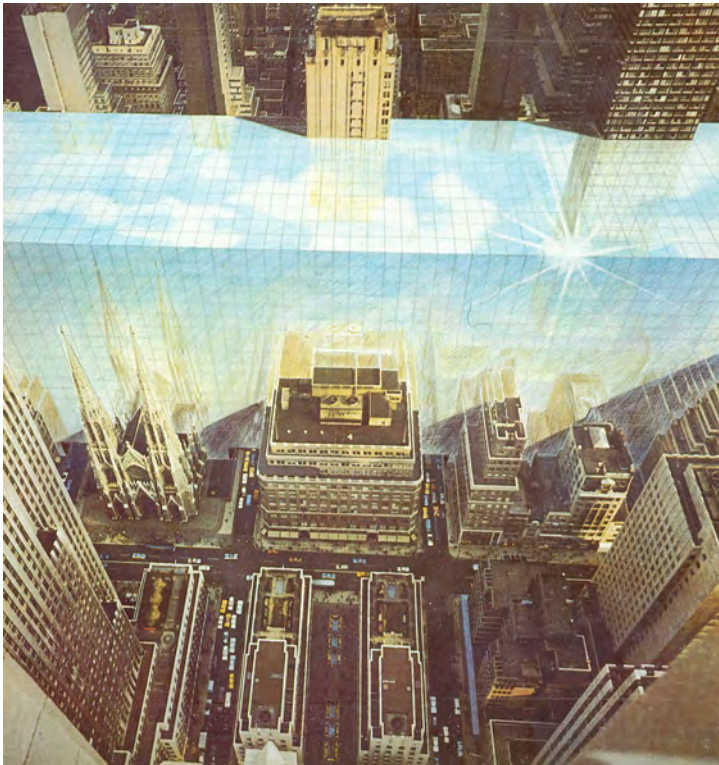
- Superstudio -: Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Piero Frassinelli, Roberto Magris



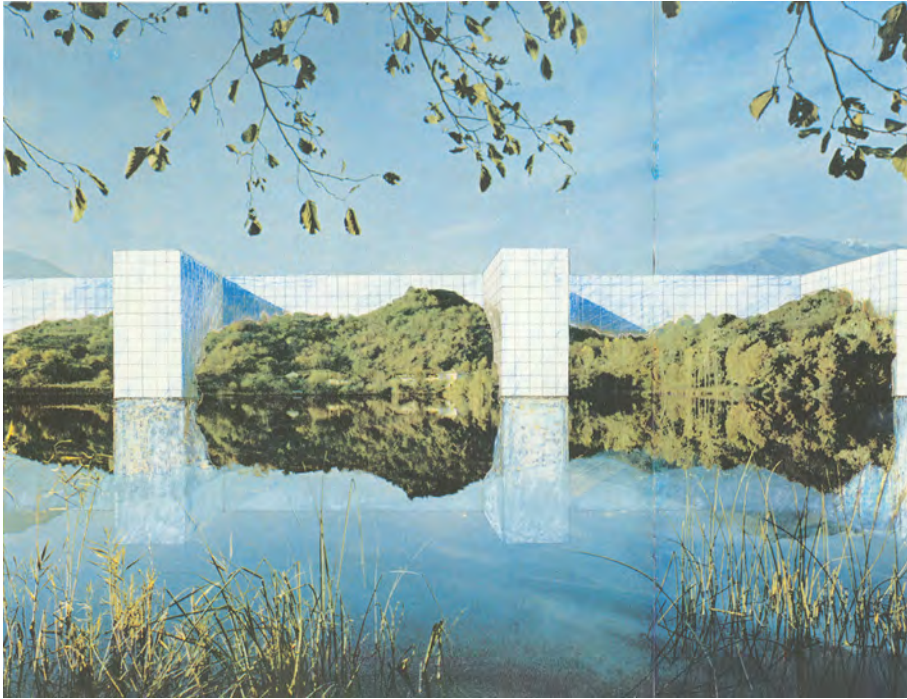
Superstudio. *Superstudio: Discorsi per Immagini* (publication in *Domus*). Mixed media. 1969.



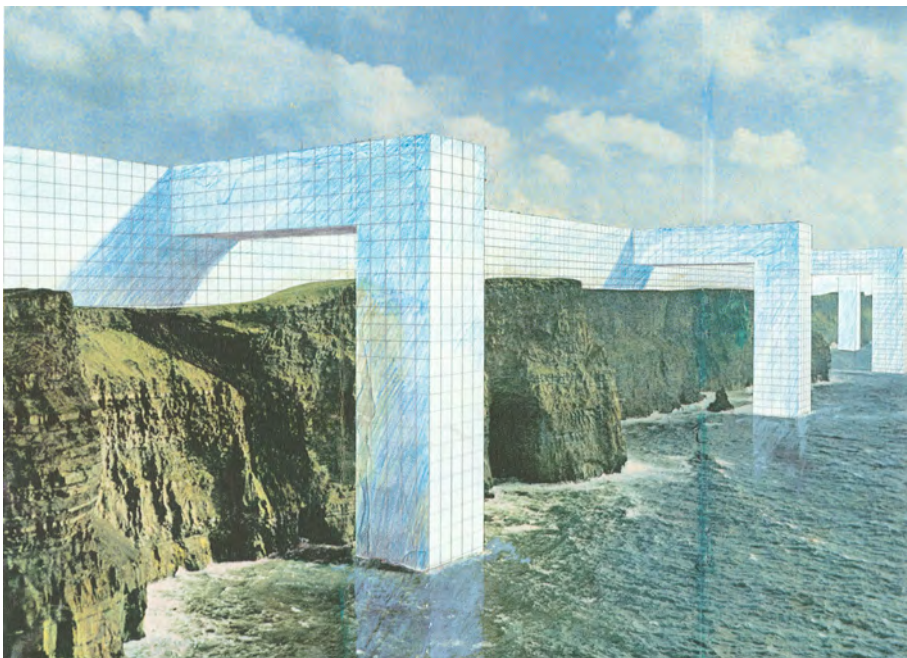
Superstudio. *Il Monumento Continuo*. Photomontage. 1969.



Superstudio. *Il Monumento Continuo*. Photomontage. 1969.



Superstudio. *Il Monumento Continuo*, on the river. Photomontage. 1969.



Superstudio. *Il Monumento Continuo*, on the rocky coast. Photomontage. 1969.

Il Monumento

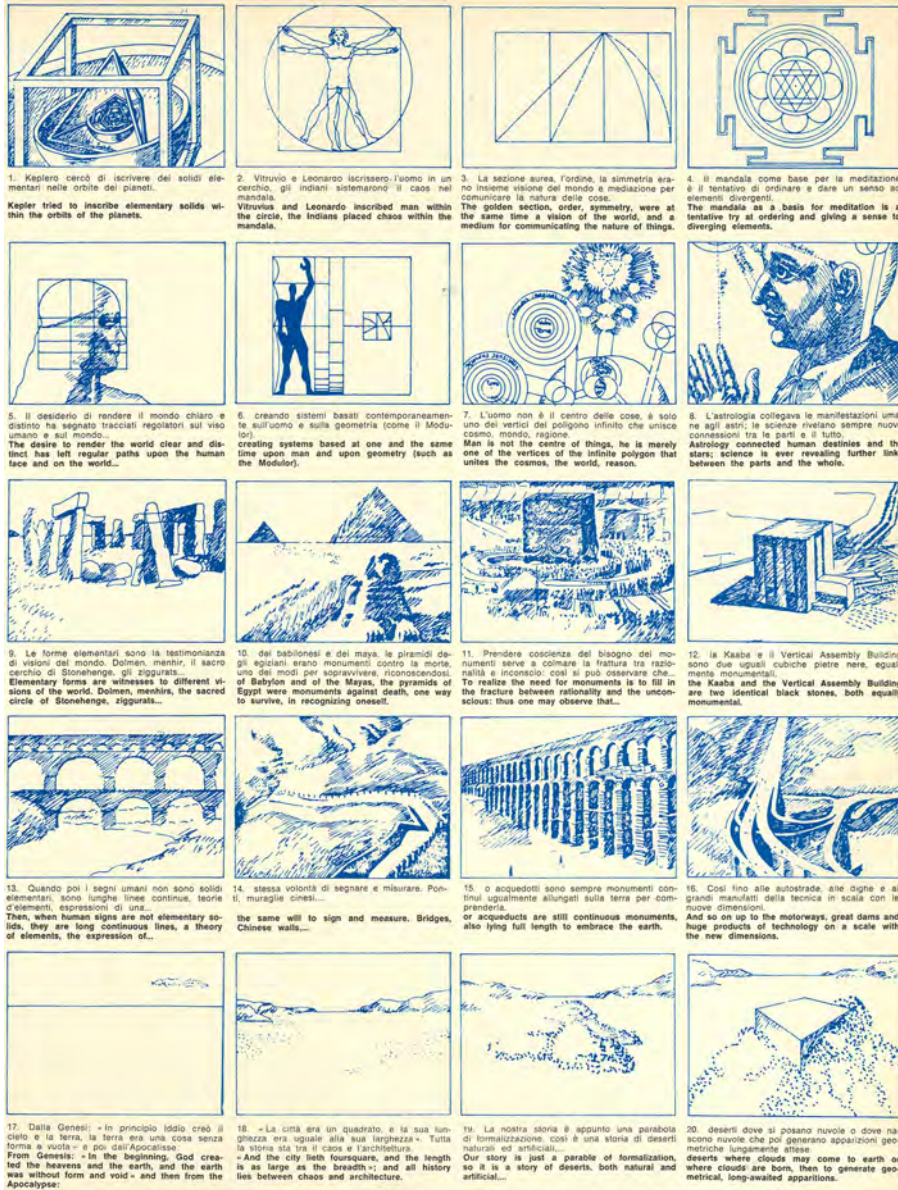
The first of the two Superstudio projects I study is '*Il Monumento Continuo*' [The Continuous Monument, hereafter *Il Monumento*]. The project made its first notable public appearance in the fall of 1969 at the Trigon exhibition in Graz and was published in the catalogue of the exhibition, Trigon 69.²³ In December 1969, *Il Monumento* was published in a major architecture magazine for the first time and thus was presented to a wider audience. The two page presentation in *Domus* was titled '*Superstudio: Discorsi per Immagini / Superstudio: Speaking through Images*'.²⁴ The title could have perhaps been translated more literally as 'discourse/discoursing through images'. And as it suggests, the two page presentation incorporates mainly images accompanied by a very short text. The first set of small images on the first page is apparently intended to instill the symbolic power of architecture and it comprises photographs of, among others, the Stonehenge, the Kaaba, a ziggurat and an aqueduct. The second set of small images provides the first glimpses of the 'moderate utopia' that the short text refers to: the photomontages of *Il Monumento* shows a continuous structure in drawing superimposed on the photographic images of the actual places. The structure is a linear three dimensional grid that extends to the horizon cutting through the residential neighborhoods of Coketown, running through the deserts or along the highways, and incorporating the tip of the Manhattan Island. A larger print of this last image in color covers the second page. In this montage, *Il Monumento* is in its most formally articulated version. The gigantic structure has voids over East and Hudson Rivers, and another void houses some of the skyscrapers in Manhattan. The image is warped so as to give the impression of the curve of the globe and *Il Monumento* extends beyond the reach of the eye. Besides the metropolis *par excellence*, *Il Monumento's* otherwise uncompromising character seems to bend only for very few occasions, such as the Kaaba and the Coliseum. In principle, this terrestrial architectural gesture runs along the globe—through the cities, the countryside and the nature—unaltered.

Superstudio elaborated the project for another couple of years developing the graphic quality of the montages. In November 1971 a storyboard of *Il Monumento* (first produced in 1969) was published in *Casabella* with the title '*Deserti naturali e artificiali / Natural and Artificial Deserts*'.²⁵ The storyboard offers a backbone to the images and

23 The theme of Trigon 69 was 'Architecture and Freedom,' and it was held in Graz between October 4th and November 15th of 1969. It was organized by Eugen Gross, Richard Kriesche, Jörg Mayr, Herbert Missoni, and Helmut Strobi. The exhibition was of winning entries for a competition of ideas and the entrants were asked to "deal with how and to what extent freedom in the architecture of the future can be allowed to the individual and to society, and the limitations imposed by architecture on this freedom." The projects were to "correspond to the possibilities and probabilities of development in our civilization up to the year two thousand." The overall aim was defined as to make use of "small scale Utopian view of the future to provide ideas for responsible action in the immediate present." See Superstudio, 'Lettera Da Graz', *Domus*, 481 (December 1969), pp. 49-54.

24 Superstudio, 'Superstudio: Discorsi Per Immagini', *Domus*, 481 (December 1969), pp. 44-45.

25 All the references in the text to the *Il Monumento* storyboard in this section are to: Superstudio, 'Deserti naturali e artificiali', *Casabella*, 358 (November 1971), pp. 18-22.



Superstudio. *Deserti naturali e artificiali [Il Monumento Continuo]* (detail). Storyboard. 1969.

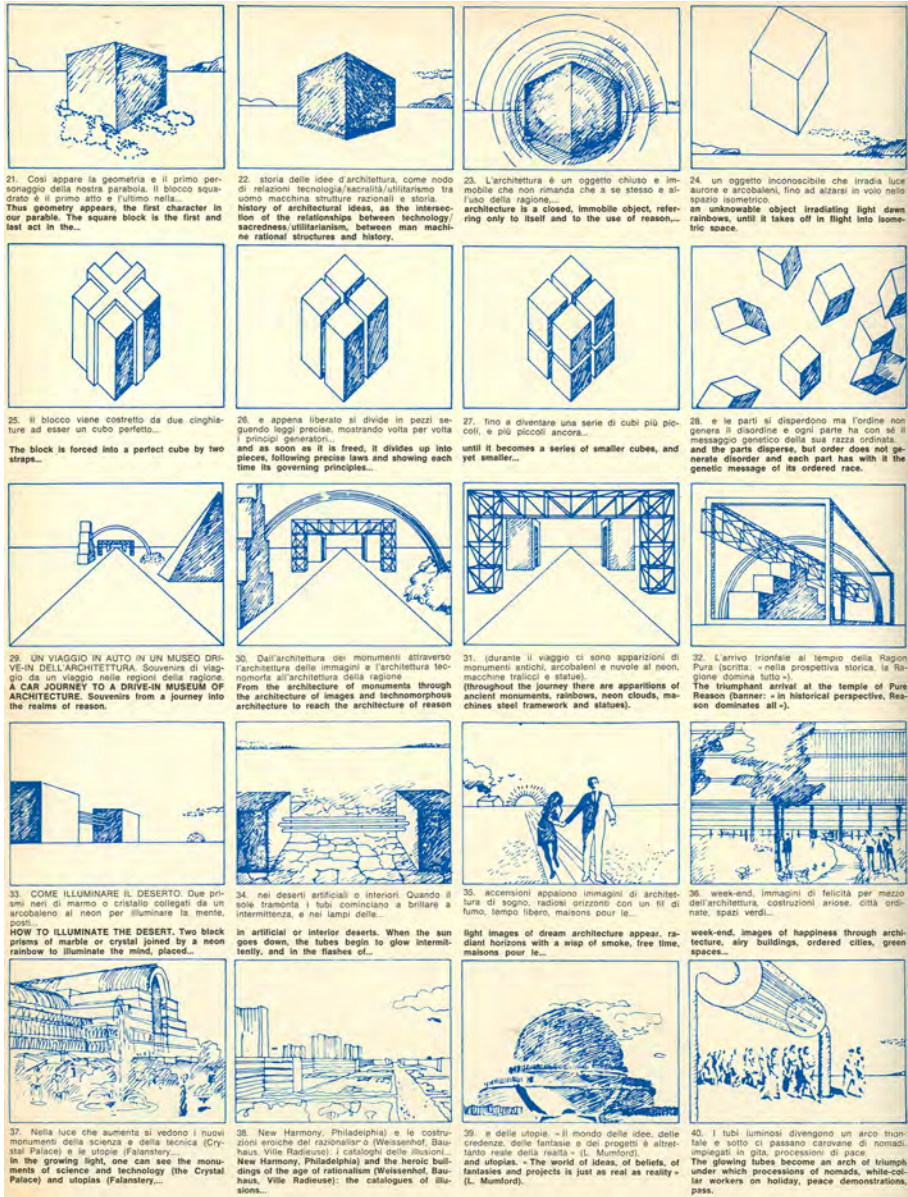
it structures the project by providing a narrative: a “parable,” as the group called it, which is a genre reserved for fictitious stories that illustrate moral attitudes or religious principles. The graphic quality of the published version well matches the storyboard standards, which is a medium to visualize the plans/intentions about the shots in order to design and communicate an impression of the end-product, the film. The story of the unrealized film starts with instancing some efforts to rationalize the nature, from Kepler to Vinci. What is common in these examples is the application of systems based on basic geometry onto nature—including the human body. The story goes on to instill basic geometry as a trans-historical and trans-cultural commonality shared by all people by pointing to the manifestations of elementary forms in different ages and geographies, such as the Stonehenge, ziggurats, pyramids, the Kaaba and the Vertical Assembly Building. Going through such figures, buildings and systems, somewhat haphazardly, geometry is positioned as a privileged innate knowledge and as a sign of human existence. This is, besides other things, affirmation of a Vitruvian position. In *De architectura*, Vitruvius mentions the anecdote of the Socratic philosopher Aristippus in which, shipwrecked and cast ashore on the coast of Rhodes, he finds geometrical figures on the sand that he concludes as evidence of human existence, “traces of man”.²⁶ In the following shots of the storyboard, ‘continuous lines’ are posited as the other trace of man next to the basic geometry. The text accompanying the sketches of the aqueducts, the bridges, the Chinese Wall and the highways reads: “when human signs are not elementary solids, they are long continuous lines, a theory of elements, the expression of the same will to sign and measure”.²⁷

This strand of argument serves not only to justify but even to naturalize what is to follow. For after this prelude, *Il Monumento* is presented as the logical, if not the inevitable, ultimate act of architecture: “a single architectural construction with which to occupy the optimal living zones, leaving the others free”; a building “shaping the earth (measuring it, like longitude and latitude)”.²⁸ The formation of *Il Monumento*, or

26 “... he observed geometrical figures drawn thereon, and cried out to his companions: “Let us be of good cheer, for I see the traces of man”.” Vitruvius, *De architectura*, 6.1.1. When referring to Vitruvius I provide the book, the chapter, and the paragraph numbers respectively, as it is usually done, for the reader to be able to find the reference in various versions and prints of the manuscript. For the English translation throughout the book I use: Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Morris Hicky Morgan, trs, (New York: Dover, 1960).

27 Of course, continuous lines are again geometrical. Moreover, measuring also refers to basic geometry, etymologically and otherwise: geometry (from Greek geo + metron) initially means to measure the earth. To measure (to compare a quantity to a known, basic, or standard unit) is one of the most basic ways of acting upon a given environment, thus inextricably connected to reason as well as geometry.

28 The change in the story from the pre-rationalization of *Il Monumento* to its formation resonates in the pace of the film. In the first four rows of the storyboard the shots are static; in fact, one single frame extends to form the whole shot. Moreover, these shots are linked to each other solely by means of the narrative for they are visually independent. Almost no movement is implied within the shots or from one shot to the next. But starting from the fifth row, where *Il Monumento* starts to form, the action in the story resonates in the movement within and between the shots. Moreover, the shots here are also visually connected to each other forming the sequences.

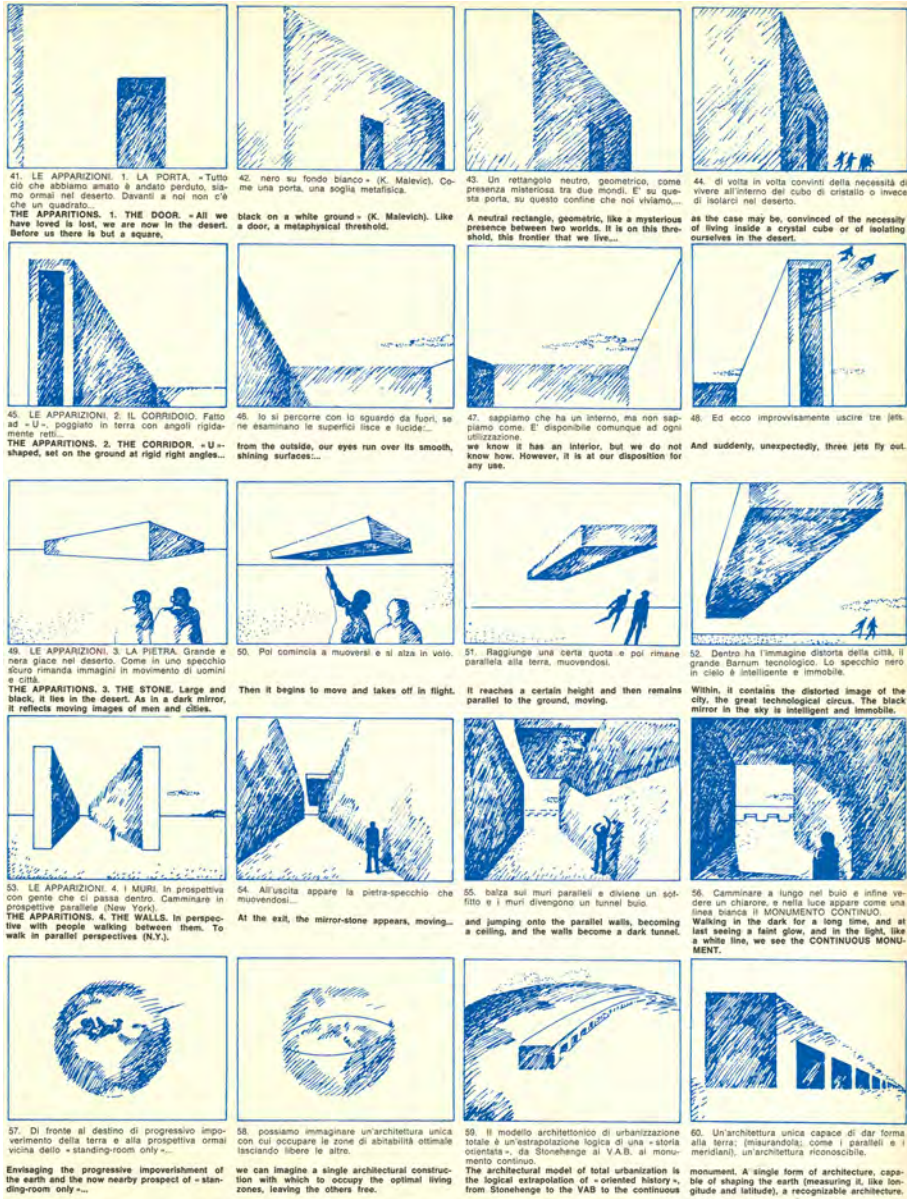


Superstudio. *Deserti naturali e artificiali [Il Monumento Continuo]* (detail). Storyboard. 1969.

a premonition of it, is accompanied by the biblical references (Genesis, obviously, but also Apocalypse). Through such a change of paradigm the ultimate architectural act, besides being a logical result of the human rationale, now acquires a divine blessing, or a sense of faith. Quote from the Apocalypse, “and the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth,” is followed by the prophecy of Superstudio: “all history lies between chaos and architecture”. The “first act of architecture” is repeated as the “last act in the history of architectural ideas” and the square block appears from the ground, much the way a rectilinear black block of stone does in the opening sequences of Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 film, ‘2001: A Space Odyssey’. In the film, this perfectly orthogonal and polished stone block has an uncanny signification because it seems to be out-of-context: it is surrounded by primitive humans who are only then starting to utilize simple tools. These tools are no more than sticks and bones used to kill the members of the rival group and to oppress them to claim territory. As in Aristippus’s presumption, the stone block implies tools and techniques of man, yet a much later one. Similarly, in Superstudio storyboard it is asserted that “a square block of stone placed on the earth is a primary act ... [i]t implies man, machines, rational structures and history”. This kind of uncanny signification is something Superstudio photomontages utilize extensively, and so it will resurface throughout this study. As far as Superstudio’s square block in the storyboard goes, unlike Kubrick’s, this one soon divides up into ever smaller cubes to disperse over the planet carrying the “genetic message of its ordered race”.

After this point, the story becomes rather ambiguous for a while. The part named ‘A Car Journey to a Drive-In Museum of Architecture’, again, establishes the ‘architecture of reason’ as the ultimate architectural act. So its avatar, the cube, is pictured as to surpass and contain all the previous types of architecture.²⁹ The succeeding part, ‘How to Illuminate the Desert’, tackles with the modernist utopian imagery. The metaphorical flickers of some neon tubes flashes the elusive ‘images of happiness through architecture’, eg, airy buildings, ordered cities in greenery, the Falanstery, Weissenhof, Ville Radieuse. The shot showing Boullée’s Newton cenotaph is accompanied by a quote from Lewis Mumford: “the world of ideas, of beliefs, of fantasies, and projects

²⁹ The metaphor of the museum seems to work for distancing the group and the observer from the souvenirs. For, as a necessarily modern institution, the museum usually provides us with the fragments of a past or alternative reality upon or against which we can define ours by distancing and differentiating ourselves. Seen in this perspective, along with Superstudio the observer is distanced from the fragments and a type of relationship between the architectural form and its cultural or technical context. In the case of the ancient monuments supposedly there exist more organic relations between a given culture and ‘its’ formal manifestations and a wider consensus on these relations. In the case of “technomorphous” architecture, as the phrase suggests, the very technique or technology generates the architectural form. In both cases there is a formal codification of an external reality, and one’s distancing oneself from these forms may be seen as distancing from the idea of such codification. One may go on to argue that the shots even suggest superseding of their very medium for ‘architecture of images’ is also a souvenir in the museum. In any case what the last shot suggests hardly alters. The shot illustrates “the temple of Pure Reason,” which basically is all the previous souvenirs concentrated and contained by a cube frame, the avatar of pure geometry and reason.



Superstudio. *Deserti naturali e artificiali [Il Monumento Continuo]* (detail). Storyboard. 1969.

is just as real as reality". This juxtaposition is obviously far from being coincidental. Boullée not only, like Brunelleschi and Alberti, noted the divergence of the architectural design from the construction process but he also explicitly prioritized the former by considering the material production of the building as secondary to the 'product of the mind, the picture'.³⁰ It is this very intellectualization of the profession that enables Superstudio, two centuries later, to disembodify the picture from the building in order to deploy it to affect the other pictures.

Following some more premonitions,³¹ the succeeding shots in the storyboard show the definitive birth of *Il Monumento*. The drawings show a single continuous line going around the globe: 'the architectural model of total urbanization' is a single building 'occupying the optimal living zones leaving the others free'. The ultimate 'single design' operates on maximum contrast between the man-made and the nature: it holds up the entire built-up volume of the humanity, signs the Earth with the ultimate rational act and leaves the rest intact. It is only through such a grand gesture that architecture becomes a way of understanding the world.

In the remaining sixteen shots we see *Il Monumento* in action in the world as we know it; going through the nature, the ancient monuments, the medieval cities, the modern metropolis, virtually unchanged. This last part of the unrealized film is visually much more accessible to us because of the produced photomontages which were to be used to shoot it. The shots were to be realized through the camera movements on the photomontages.³² It is also these montages that I will mostly dwell on. Moving from the storyboard to the montages we are, in fact, already in a much more established form of architectural representation. What is particularly important in *Il Monumento*,

30 "What is architecture? Shall I join Vitruvius in defining it as the art of building? Indeed, no, for there is a flagrant error in this definition. Vitruvius mistakes the effect for the cause. In order to execute, it is first necessary to conceive. Our earliest ancestors built their huts only when they had a picture of them in their minds. It is this product of the mind, this process of creation, that constitutes architecture and which can consequently be defined as the art of designing and bringing to perfection any building whatsoever. Thus, the: art of construction is merely an auxiliary art which, in our opinion, could appropriately be called the scientific side of architecture." See Etienne-Louis Boullée, 'Architecture, Essay on Art', in, Helen Rosenau, ed, *Treatise in Architecture* (London: Tiranti, 1953), p. 83.

31 The succeeding premonitions could just as easily be the further flickers of the neon tubes. They are called the 'four apparitions' comprising the door, the corridor, the stone, and the walls. At first instance, they seem to be the initial stages of *Il Monumento*. However in the end *Il Monumento* becomes visible at the end of the tunnel formed by the stone and the walls (third and fourth apparitions) which suggests they are some premonitions but not the monument itself. The only given reference is to Malevich in the first apparition: "All we have loved is lost, we are now in the desert. Before us there is but a square, black on a white ground." This is the door, the threshold between "living inside a crystal cube" and 'isolation in the desert.' If the Malevich reference is more profound than just the commonality of the word 'desert' or 'black on white,' the door, then, stands for self-referentiality; through it one enters the cube, the zero-degree of architecture.

32 The Smithsons and Peter Sigmund used the same technique to produce a film of their 1958 competition entry, 'Berlin Hauptstadt'. For this purpose the drawings of the project were drafted in very big dimensions and the film was shot through the camera movements, panning and zooming in/out, on the drawings.



Superstudio. *Deserti naturali e artificiali [Il Monumento Continuo]* (detail). Storyboard. 1969.

however, is the unconventional role that the established types of drawings play. For *Il Monumento* is a critique of monumentality and modernist urban schemes that is carried out precisely by carrying said schemes to absurd extremes. As such it is the functioning of the drawings in the architectural discourse that is important. However, one needs to address the matters on the medium to go any further.

Photomontage

Representing a project through the photomontages shifts it into an analogue medium instead of architecture's more established notational medium; most notably the orthographic set. As much as the orthographic drawings are directly related to the realization of a building far more than the analogue ones, the latter gives the project a more convincing sense of reality. Despite its analogue origins the orthographic set is an abstract and highly coded way of visualization.³³ It does not necessarily look like the building. Rather, it is a medium in which the figures are arranged in relation to each other forming a system. And the building is produced by recreating the system established in drawings with the actual building components for which the figures stood for. On the other hand, the analogue media render representation more realistic by mimicking the ordinary perception. Such sense of reality, of course, peaks in photomontage simply due to intrinsic qualities of photography.

Photography is hardly a neutral medium. Not only the choice of the subject matter, but also the mechanisms such as framing and exposure manipulate the reality that is to be 'captured'. However due to its indexicality photography has a claim to document the reality more than a drawing of any sort. As Susan Sontag argues,

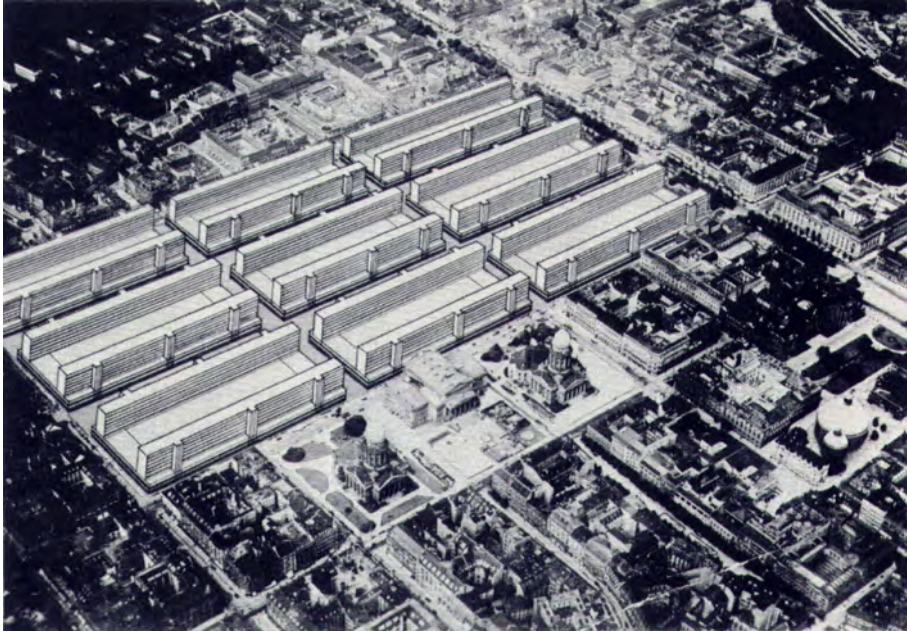
[Photographic] images are indeed able to usurp the reality because first of all photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like footprint or a death mask. While a painting, even one that meets photographic standards of resemblance, is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by the objects)—a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be.³⁴

Here Sontag dwells on the indexical character of photography, the actual physical relation between the photograph and the represented object in order to establish the directness and the strength of the relation between the two.³⁵ Although today we are

³³ On the workings of the architectural drawing see especially Evans, *The projective cast*, *op. cit.* and Stan Allen, 'Drawings' in *Practice*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-70.

³⁴ Susan Sontag, 'The Image-World', in, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 154.

³⁵ Charles Sanders Peirce, in his most widely known classification of signs, differentiates between three types of relationships between the signifier and the signified. Indexes signify through their physical relation to their object, icons through resemblance and symbols through convention.



Ludwig Hilberseimer. *Vorschlag zur Citybebauung* superimposed on Berlin. Photomontage. 1924.



Superstudio. *Il Monumento Continuo*. Photomontage. 1969.

more skeptical of the photographic images, due to the contemporary image editing software, the claim of photography to document the actual world is reasonably intact.³⁶ This claim is exactly why it was preferred in the inter-war modernist montages and later by Superstudio. In both cases the contrast between the actual city and the hypothetical project was exploited, albeit with different agendas. This contrast is mainly generated by the fundamental difference between the architectural and the photographic representation. Architectural representation diverges from not only photography but also most other representational media in its relation to its object.³⁷ Although there are architectural drawings made of existing buildings (eg, survey drawings), usually, architectural representation produces its object rather than re-presenting it. In this sense architectural representation is projective as opposed to the retrospective photographic representation.³⁸ As such, the photomontage provided the early-twentieth century modernists with the perfect tool to present the modernist buildings against the backdrop of the pre-modern existing city: forward looking architecture superimposed on the old city. And in Superstudio montages, the photographic images of the actual cities and the nature enhance the sense of familiarity with these places and only strengthen the contrast with the absurd architectural gesture that lands on them, which becomes all the more alien due to its more mediated and coded medium.

The kinship between the early modernist montages and *Il Monumento* montages goes beyond the mere choice of medium. It is also compositional and thematic. *Il Monumento* montages reproduce modernist compositions without significant alteration. In principle, like their modernist precedents, these montages illustrate the building in pen-drawing superimposed on the photographs of actual locations. They operate in the way a model photograph works but with the actual surroundings. In other words, one usually observes the entirety of the building from a high stationary point superimposed on the photographic image of the landscape. The less used other type was meant to give an impression of how the building would be perceived if realized. This type obviously has a low stationary position. Most of the time it is intended to create a more real-life-like image with people and surroundings in detail. This composition type was also used by

36 I further dwell on this issue in the third chapter, especially in 'image and word', through a comparison of the image and the written text as alternative modes of representation.

37 As Robin Evans puts it, architectural drawing's relation to its object diverges from the usual by means of the direction of the 'projection lines' that connect the two: "With the profusion of reproduction techniques, things become flatter. At any rate the vast majority of projections work that way, since two-dimensional information is so much easier to handle than three-dimensional things. In practice, projection has become thoroughly directional because of the availability of certain instruments and machines for making pictures; but there is nothing in projection itself to suggest directionality. It can work either way round. Architecture provides an instance of the opposite tendency, taking information from flat representations to create embodied objects." See Robin Evans, 'Architectural Projection', in, Eve Blau and Edward Kaufman, eds, *Architecture and its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation, Works from the Collection of the Canadian Centre for Architecture* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1989), p. 19.

38 Here I use projection/projective in its common architectural sense, as directed towards the future, towards a devised but yet-to-be-produced object.



Superstudio. *Vita*, From A to B. Photomontage. 1971.



Superstudio. *Vita*, The Encampment. Photomontage. 1971.

Superstudio, but rather in the Supersurface, the next Superstudio project I study. As far as the thematic connection is concerned, since *Il Monumento* partly has the modernist urban schemes as its object of criticism, it operates exactly within their framework, posing as a megalomaniac building.

In short, *Il Monumento* photomontages (the main medium of the project) *i.* establishes it in an analogue medium that explains architectural projects rather than providing systematical information to be used in the production, *ii.* makes it palpable, or almost real, thus mobilizes reaction, *iii.* locates it unavoidably in the modernist visual tradition of photomontage in terms of composition and content.

The Supersurface

The most obvious commonality between the *Il Monumento* and the *Vita* [life] montages is the grid.³⁹ The grid that characterizes the singular global architectural gesture in *Il Monumento* resurfaces in *Vita* albeit in a fundamentally different way. In *Il Monumento* the three dimensional grid structure was superimposed on the actual places that are strongly symbolic, *eg.* of the medieval, the industrial, the modern, the spiritual, the natural. Whereas in *Vita*, the grid does not form a three dimensional structure but a two dimensional surface that covers the whole terrain. The grid, rather than landing on a symbolic preexisting condition becomes the very symbolic condition. Everything happens on the grid surface. It is as if *Il Monumento* is melted down to cover the terrain, mutating from architecture to landscape. Now there is no architecture but the grid and one can only see the parts of nature underneath through some gaps in the surface. What does not change for the grid is its self-referentiality. *Il Monumento* montages are necessarily external.⁴⁰ The grid surface of the monument is stubbornly silent, smooth, shiny and reflective—in short impenetrable. The surface in *Vita* is even more so now that it does not have an interior. In the montages, 'life' takes place on the Teflon-like

39 *Vita* is the first part of the *Cinque Storie: Vita, Educazione, Cerimonia, Amore, Morte* [Five Stories—Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death], also known as *Atti Fondamentali* [The Fundamental Acts]. Superstudio developed *Cinque Storie* mainly between 1972 and 1973. Stories were published in *Casabella* between July 1972 and August 1973, in 6 parts: *Vita* in *Casabella*, 367 (July 1972), pp. 15-26; *Educazione* in *Casabella*, 368-369 (August-September 1972), pp. 100-104 and in *Casabella*, 372 (December 1972), pp. 27-31; *Cerimonia* in *Casabella*, 374 (February 1973), pp. 35-41; *Amore* in *Casabella*, 377 (May 1973), pp. 30-35; *Morte* in *Casabella*, 380-381 (August-September 1973), pp. 43-52.

Most of the content of the first story, *Vita*, was also published in 'Italy: The New Domestic Landscape,' the book edited by Emilio Ambasz to accompany the exhibition shown in MOMA in May-September 1972 curated again by Ambasz. In the book the storyboard was not published yet the film itself was screened in the exhibition (this time Superstudio was able to produce the film with MOMA's grant). Moreover the text embedded in the storyboard accompanied the montages in the book.

40 With only one exception: the viewpoint is inside the monument in the photomontage that demonstrates Taj Mahal incorporated by the monument. In *Il Monumento* storyboard the text for one shot reads: "our eyes run over its smooth, shining surfaces: we know it has an interior, but we do not know how." Although it is the shot of second apparition, the corridor (probable premonition of the monument), the statement obviously holds for the monument too.



Superstudio. *Vita*, The Spring Cleaning. Photomontage. 1971.



Superstudio. *Vita*, Fruits and Vine. Photomontage. 1971.

grid surface to which nothing is likely to stick.

Another continuity between the two body of works is the way the grid is represented. In *// Monumento* the contrast between the city/nature and the monument is strengthened by the way they are represented: the former in photograph (indexical) the latter in drawing (symbolic/abstract). The tension is between the actual—that we already know but to which we feel even closer through the immediacy of the indexical representation—and the hypothetical—that is self-referential but becomes even more alien due to the mediated-ness of its representation. This continues in *Vita*, but since what was superimposed in the former becomes the background in the latter, it has a completely different effect. In *// Monumento* what is represented through the immediacy of the photographic representation are the familiar places; in *Vita* it is the human body and the social practices in their most natural and tribal state. Thus, the contrast that is shocking, or rather touching, is the alienation of the people from the abstract terrain that they live on; it is the naked flesh against the grid with all that it has to represent; the very 'fundamental acts' of life versus the abstract systems that they are embedded in.

This change of focus resonates in a change of scale. As previously said, *// Monumento* montages are within the compositional framework of its modernist predecessors—just as *// Monumento* itself is akin to the modernist city-scale gestures. Accordingly they are composed as to provide a general view of the project and the terrain from a high stationary point. In *Vita*, however, that distance diminishes. A much lower stationary point is used. Although, one again observes the grid surface extending to the horizon, the focus here is unmistakably on the 'life' taking place on the surface with a much closer look and much detailed rendering.

As unorthodox as they are, *// Monumento* photomontages are recognizably architectural representations. After all, they visualize a building. Architectural drawings, especially the perspective renderings and the sections do sometimes deploy human figures to give a sense of scale as well as a hint of the envisaged life taking place in the building. But those figures are obviously vastly secondary to the project and often even remain abstract. But going through the *Vita* photomontages one cannot help but question how all these people made their way into the architectural representation in the absence of recognizable architectural objects. Many with an architectural and urbanism background would arguably intuit what the grid is. But then again, one has to remember that these images date before Manuel Castells's network societies, before the understanding of the city as an accumulation of the global networks became common sense, and only few years after Yona Friedman or Constant Nieuwenhuys. The storyboard again provides a framework for the montages that is worth articulating.

The storyboard/film is titled 'Life, or the Public Image of Truly Modern Architecture.'



Superstudio. Vita (detail). Storyboard. 1969.

Supersurface: an Alternative Model of Life on Earth'.⁴¹ The dual structure of the long title resonates in the storyboard itself. The first part, of the storyboard mainly ventures what may be called a re-definition of architecture as a "cross-science". The new role of architecture here is to assess the tendencies in various disciplines and extrapolate data in order to 'visualize a guiding image'.⁴² Accordingly the first part of the film presents the existing 'tendencies' and compile 'a report on reality'. Similar to the *Il Monumento* storyboard, all this material is eventually directed towards the proposition of the Supersurface. Most important of these facts/tendencies is the conception of the utilization of the earth "through service and communication grids". These grids are continuous but not homogeneous; cities are at the intersection points and the locations of these points are due to "historical, social and geographic reasons". The text is accompanied, among others, by Yona Friedman's 'Continent City' that illustrates Europe as a network of major cities. Superstudio also attests New York as a "didactic example of the functional utilization of territory through a Cartesian grid". It is here that *Vita* diverges from *Il Monumento* again: more than a critique of the existing architectural tendencies, it seems to offer an understanding of our territorial conditions that is partly imminent and partly suggested. Its examples pave the way for the second part of the story: the Supersurface, this time, with the subtitle, 'a model of a mental attitude.'

Supersurface is an 'imagined' network of energy and information extending to every properly inhabitable area, recalling the strategy of *Il Monumento*. In Supersurface, however, there is no built architecture. It is rather a conditioning of these optimal zones through a landscape gesture. Supersurface does not aspire to any form of architectural definition. At most, it creates typologies that are analogue to the conventional categories of the street, the town, and the city.⁴³ The Cartesian surface, beyond its physical existence, is a "visual-verbal metaphor for an ordered and rational distribution of resources". In order to fulfill its egalitarian promise this network of energy and information also reaches beyond the places that are urbanized through the surface by means of an invisible grid that is only noticeable at the "universal plugs" located at uniform distances. These plugs are normally located at the intersection points on the Supersurface. Everyone can connect to the plugs through "sophisticated and miniaturized devices" not only to benefit from the global system of information but also

41 The text of the storyboard is only in English as opposed to the bilingual storyboard of *Il Monumento*. This is probably because the film was commissioned by and produced for MOMA exhibition. Yet, the text accompanying the storyboard in Casabella comprised the Italian of the text embedded in the storyboard. The only other produced/published storyboard for the stories was that of *Educazione*, which, despite being published again in Casabella, was in English.

42 The images in these shots are rather underdeveloped and the text is discontinuous (at some points ambiguous) and full of diverse, if not haphazard, references.

43 If 10% of the total area is covered by the Supersurface, it extends like a continuous ribbon; if 50% is covered it forms a chessboard, with squares measuring 1km x 1km, alternating with squares of open land; if 100% is covered the grid is transformed into a continuous surface, only to be confined by the mountains, the rivers and the oceans

Re: **DESIGN QUARTERLY 78/79** - a special double issue on "architecture"

To: ANT FARM, ARCHIGRAM, ARCHIZOOM, FRANCOIS DALLEGRET, PETER EISENMAN, HAUS-RUCKER-COMPANY, CRAIG HODGETTS, LES LEVINE, ONYX, ED RUSCHA, SUPERSTUDIO



From: JOHN S. MARGOLIES, 299 West 12th Street, New York, New York 10014

I am an architectural writer (among other things) and have been asked to prepare a double issue (about 68 pages) of DESIGN QUARTERLY published by Walker Art Center. I am devoting the majority of this issue to direct expression of "conceptual architecture." The overall theme of the issue will be related to the following concepts: the communications environment; the psychological environment; the entertainment environment.

I have come to realize that too often my editorial function has been to tamper with or subvert other peoples' ideas. I am therefore asking several people and groups to prepare a number of pages to directly communicate their ideas. These pages belong entirely to those assigned them, including the layout.

Your contribution should deal with recent material, can be somewhat abstract and definitely must be unpublished in America. Perhaps you would like to prepare special material for this issue. Contributions may be any combination of the following: photos, drawings, text, type. I am not interested in a traditional magazine format of ordered text and pictures. I am, rather, looking for a more general and less specific type of communication. Please enclose a glossy photograph of yourself (or selves) along with biographical material.

Thank you for your cooperation in this experimental venture and I anxiously look forward to seeing what you come up with.

Those contributing to this issue are: **PETER EISENMAN** who has been asked to prepare an opening essay on "conceptual architecture" (pages 1-5); **ANT FARM** (pages 6-10); **ARCHIGRAM** (pages 11-16); **ARCHIZOOM** (pages 17-21); **FRANCOIS DALLEGRET** (pages 22-28); **HAUS-RUCKER-COMPANY** (pages 29-33); **CRAIG HODGETTS** (pages 34-36); **LES LEVINE** (pages 37-41); **ONYX** (pages 42-46); **ED RUSCHA** (pages 47-53); and **SUPERSTUDIO** (pages 54-58).

Additional material to be included in this issue: a special section devoted to documenting the Minneapolis conference, **HENNEPIN: THE FUTURE OF AN AVENUE** -- including photographs of Hennepin Avenue and newspaper articles about the conference (pages 59-63) and a spread specially prepared by **TONY SMITH** (pages 64-66).

PLEASE NOTE: THIS LETTER HAS BEEN REEDITED FOR PUBLICATION.

The cover of Design Quarterly on 'Conceptual Architecture'.1970.

to satisfy their primal needs.⁴⁴ Living now at a time of sophisticated and miniaturized devices and radicalized globalization that seems to hook us all up to the physical and abstract networks, it is clearer to us what Supersurface is. Superstudio offers an understanding of urban/territorial conditions by, again, radicalizing them. But the project has another agenda, that of providing a 'visual metaphor' to group's political positions in 'the transfer of all designing activity to the conceptual sphere, the rejection of production and consumption, and the rejection of work'.

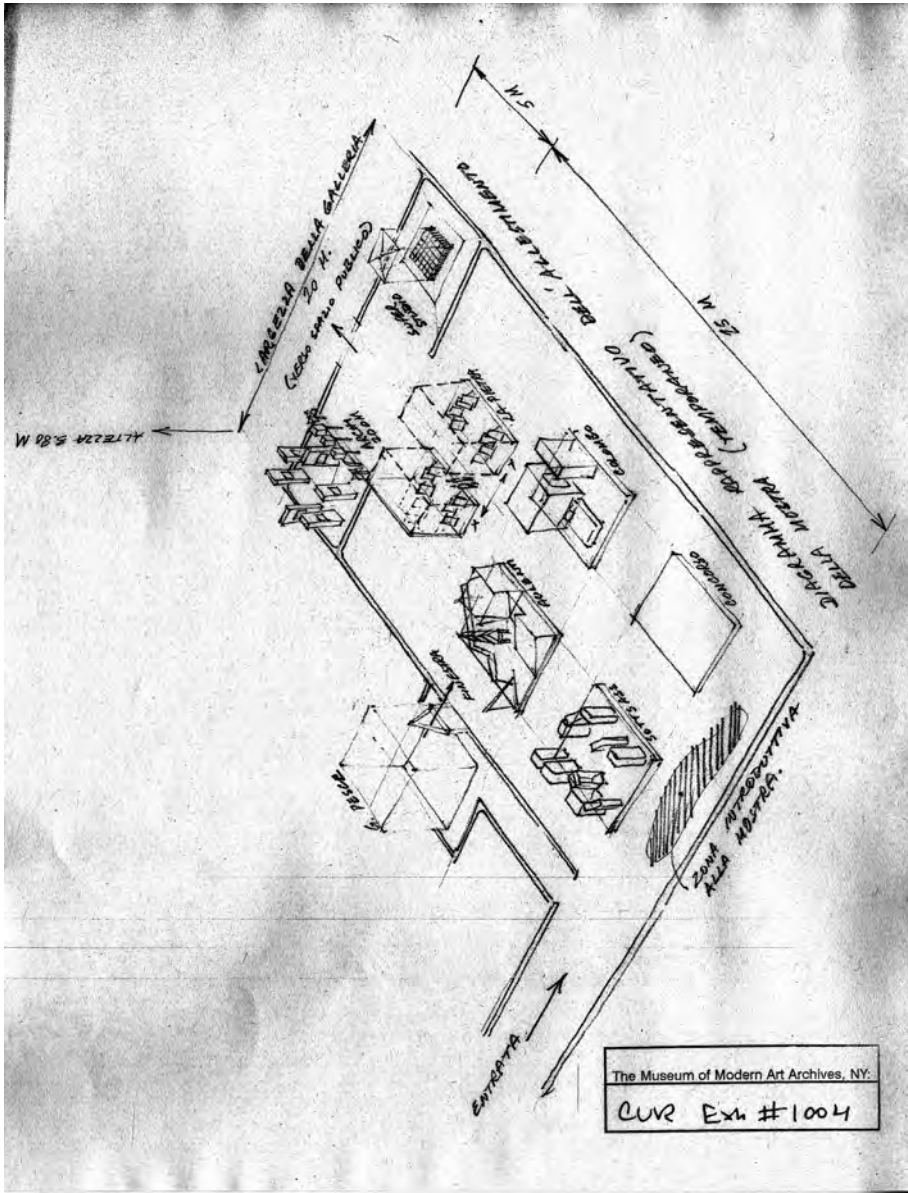
Non-Violent Intelligence

The notion of a 'conceptual architecture' or calling for the transposition of the architectural and design activities into the conceptual sphere were not necessarily very unusual for the period. And it had other facets than the economic recession that made practicing architecture significantly harder. Superstudio's use of the term 'conceptual' diverged from many other practices that deployed the term specifically within the linguistic analogy. With semiotics offering a widely shared paradigm in the cultural theory and art, the semantics, the syntax, the conceptual and perceptual dimensions of architecture were widely discussed throughout the 1970s. Superstudio use the term 'conceptual' in Supersurface, however, more to mean a practice that is not material and doesn't have to negotiate with the existing power structures.⁴⁵ Refraining from the material practice obviously stemmed from a political engagement in this case, just as the call for the destruction of objects and the city:

The destruction of objects, the elimination of the city, and the disappearance of work are closely connected events. By the destruction of objects, we mean the destruction of their attributes of 'status' and the connotations imposed by those in power, so that we live *with* objects (reduced to the condition of neutral and disposable elements) and not *for* objects. By the elimination of the city, we mean the elimination of the accumulation of formal structures of power, the elimination of the city as hierarchy and social model, in search of a new free egalitarian state in which everyone can reach different levels in

44 In fact, another global system of information, this time operating through satellites, was devised later in the second story, *Educazione*. By providing data for decision making supposedly without influencing the decision this system was meant to free the individual from the repressive vehicles of instruction, such as family, school, work, army, church, and state. It is, of course, no coincidence that some of the mentioned institutions correspond to the Marxist state apparatus. In late 1960's Althusser further articulated conventional Marxist state apparatus: He differentiated between 'repressive state apparatus' and 'ideological state apparatus.' Repressive state apparatus (RSA) are in fact Marx's state apparatus, namely: government, administration, army, police, courts, prisons, in short, apparatuses of the state by which it exercises overt force. On the other hand Althusser also introduces the ideological state apparatus (ISA), by which state exercises covert force: religion, education, family, politics, trade-union, communications, culture. RSA function by violence whereas ISA function by ideology. RSA are strictly public whereas ISA may be private. Superstudio's above list includes some from both. See Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', *Lenin and Philosophy*, Ben Brewster, trs, (London: New Left Book, 1971) p. 152.

45 Superstudio actually was not insistent on refraining from material practice and did produce objects (mostly small-scale at the time).



Study for the layout of the MOMA exhibition Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. 1972.

development of his possibilities, beginning from equal starting points. By the end of work we mean the end of specialized and repetitive work, seen as an alienating activity, foreign to the nature of man; the logical consequence will be a new, revolutionary society in which everyone should find the full development of his possibilities ... the construction of a revolutionary society is passing through the phase of radical, concrete criticism of present society, of its way of producing, consuming, living.⁴⁶

As such, the elimination of objects and the disappearance of work required the liberation from the system that “has us chasing cars and clothes; working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don’t need”.⁴⁷ Similarly, elimination of the city required surpassing of institutionalization of power through space. Since any material practice within the architecture’s conventional field of operation was destined to be incorporated by ‘the system’, the only two other alternatives left were the “violent revolution” and the “non-violent intelligence”.⁴⁸ Today one doesn’t have to think past Che Guevara t-shirts to be skeptical about the first alternative, and the second one was already somewhat problematic since the work of the group was publicized by the established major institutions including MOMA, which puzzles one about what was considered to be the system. Then again this does fit into Superstudio’s pattern of getting into the system of the object of criticism, thus resonates with designing the ultimate megastructure as a critique of megastructures.

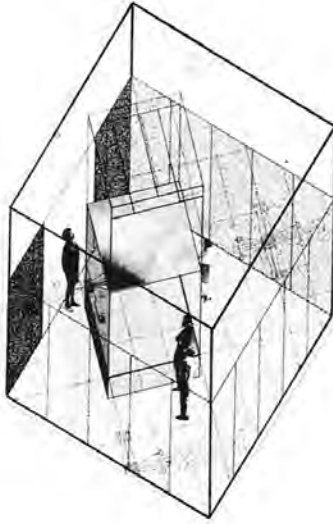
The ‘guerilla warfare’, as the group called it, or the non-violent acts of intelligence obviously did engage with matters beyond architecture. Here I am interested in the part where architectural speculation on the cultural and territorial conditions are carried on an intellectual plane that is facilitated by drawings. Studying Superstudio projects, which visualize architectural and urban situations that signify theoretically, I don’t necessarily endorse disembodiment of architecture from material practice. Architecture primarily is a material practice. But the ways Superstudio deploy architecture’s visual machinery in the designing and communication of theoretical projects have a significance beyond the group’s initial political reasons to do so. ‘Supersurface: a model for mental attitude’ indeed deployed an attitude which, to my knowledge, was never this explicitly taken and systematically deployed before:

This is not a three-dimensional model of a reality which can be given concrete form by a mere transposition of scale, but the visualization of a critical attitude towards (or a hope for) the activity of designing understood as philosophical speculation, as a means to knowledge, as critical existence.

46 Superstudio, ‘Description of the Microevent/Microenvironment’, in *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, *op. cit.*, p. 245. Original italics.

47 Plot line from the 1999 David Fincher film, *Fight Club*.

48 Adolfo Natalini, ‘Inventory, Catalogue, Systems of Flux... a Statement’, lecture at the AA School of Architecture, London (3 March 1971). Published in Peter Lang and William Menking, eds, *Superstudio: Life without Objects* (Milan: Skira, 2003), pp. 164-167.



*SUPERSTUDIO "SUPERSURFACE" - THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART - NEW YORK 1972
(UN ENVIRONMENT ALLA PIRSTA ITALY THE NEW BOTTEPIC LANDSCAPE)*

Superstudio. Supersurface 'micro-environment' (for the MOMA exhibition). Collage. 1972.

It is significant that Superstudio locate their model on a theoretical surface. In the two projects that I have studied, the group deploy two embedded aspects of design in theoretical practice, *ie*, drawing and speculation. Next to the written text which is the established medium of theory, Superstudio deploy theoretically signifying drawings, and doing so, incorporate in theory the intellectual/speculative processes embedded in the design, embedded in the production of architectural form. Thus, their critique of architectural tendencies and urban conditions is through form. They operate in a way that the written theory could not accommodate. The dual accomplishment of drawing here is that on the one hand it enables engaging with the city on a theoretical/intellectual level, as a context rather than a project. And on the other hand, it is still able to position the city as an architectural object that can be considered through form, through architecture's core means and object. As such, the architectural form and the drawing function in the articulation of architectural thought paradigms next to being embedded in the material practice. And the two types of practice, the intellectual and the material, were meant to sustain a constant interaction:

For several years, we have been trying to carry out our work and theories in an integral fashion: a theoretical formula for our work existed, and also a series of examples verifying this theory, *ie*, the theory was confirmed by practice and vice versa. We slowly became aware that this is difficult to put into practice; architectural operations take place on parallel, staggered planes: theory in order to be put into practice, requires such a series of economic conditions, clients, laws and regulations that a number of years passes between its formulation and its realization. In particular, the two staggered parallel planes already mentioned do not even possess such absolute parallelism that one may move from one to the other; between the two planes, there is a gaseous deforming area ... For this reason, we have realized that often, instead of obtaining a theory-practice-theory check. The process becomes ambiguous and contradictory. So recently, we have been aiming towards a different sort of behavior, in which the two spheres become separated even while remaining clearly connected. Thus we are interested in producing, elaborating and transmitting ideas using the most convenient channel, and we are interested in producing objects ... which derive from the theoretical skeleton without however trying to verify it point by point.⁴⁹

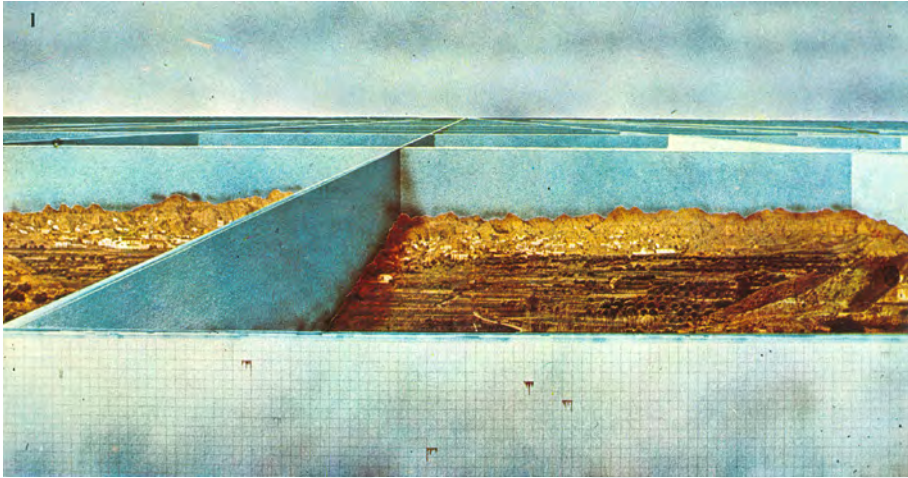
That 'most appropriate channel' was, more often than not, representational media.

Demonstratio per absurdum

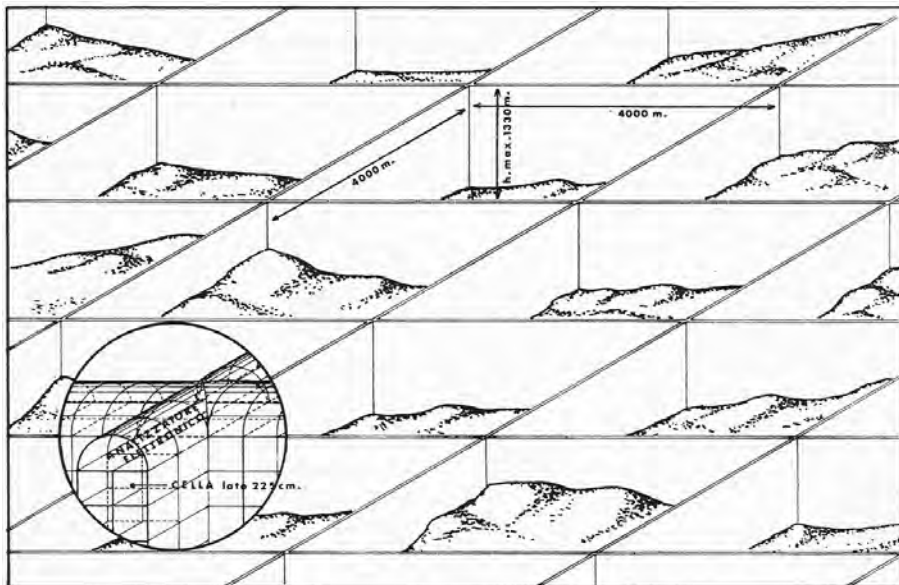
Il Monumento was an architectural critique on the modernist large-scale urban schemes, the fetish of all managing technologic architecture, and monumentality. In retrospect, Adolfo Natalini defined it as a "negative utopia with critical intent" that utilizes rhetorical expedients, such as metaphor and *demonstratio per absurdum*,⁵⁰

49 *Ibid.*, p. 166.

50 Adolfo Natalini, 'How Great Architecture still was in 1966...', in, Valentijn Byvanck, ed, *Superstudio-The Middelburg Lectures*, David Radzinowicz-Howell, trs, (Middelburg: De Vleeshal,



Superstudio. 2000 Ton City. Photomontage. 1971.



Superstudio. 2000 Ton City. Drawing. 1971

in order to criticize two, then prevailing, tendencies: “technology can solve every problem” and “monuments will return because of their powerful meaning”.⁵¹ Although as another group member, Frassinelli, put it *Il Monumento* was “utterly beautiful, utterly neutral and everyone could see their own ideas reflected in it”,⁵² the main gesture of the project was hardly vague in its meaning: one single building running around the world was to be taken seriously but not literally even in the decade of megastructures. The irony and the demonstration through absurdity stemmed from the diminishing of the critical distance in the project. Superstudio criticizes by getting into the system of what is to be criticized, mimicking its patterns, developing its premise and carrying it to its extremes to blow it out of proportion; much like a cancerous cell or a virus. A self-righteous and all-managing architecture is criticized precisely through a prophetic and far-reaching proposal.

It is true that the whole *Il Monumento* story is not as clear-cut and straightforward as its main gesture. In this sense, Kenneth Frampton’s remark complements Frassinelli’s: Superstudio was among the most poetic of all movements unfolding then.⁵³ The group, however, produced other projects that tackled with the similar issues, again deploying irony but in a much more straightforward manner. One of them was ‘Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas, Premonitions of the Mystical Rebirth of Urbanism’.⁵⁴ The project hypothesized and visualized twelve cities. I will not go through all of them; shortly studying the first one, the ‘2000 Ton City,’ would suffice to make my point. The city is a single, uninterrupted building: a grid formed by what very much look like heightened continuous monuments. The building consists of five cells each way, all of them housing an individual. The floor of each cell can evoke sensations of all the living things, and the ceiling is a brain-impulse-receiver. Impulses of the individuals are collected by the ceiling and transmitted to an electronic analyzer which programs the life of the entire city moment by moment. One of the cell walls is capable of emitting 3D images, sounds and smells. The wall on the opposite side, when needed, forms a seat capable of not only molding and covering the body perfectly, but also satisfying physiological needs. If one of the inhabitants indulges in “absurd thoughts of rebellion against the perfect and eternal life granted to him”, the analyzer first ignores the “crime”, yet if repeated, rejects the “unworthy” individual. In case of rejection the ceiling comes down with a force of 2000 tons, crushes the individual, reaching the floor. When the ceiling returns to its place, each of the individuals from the surrounding cells donates an ovum or a

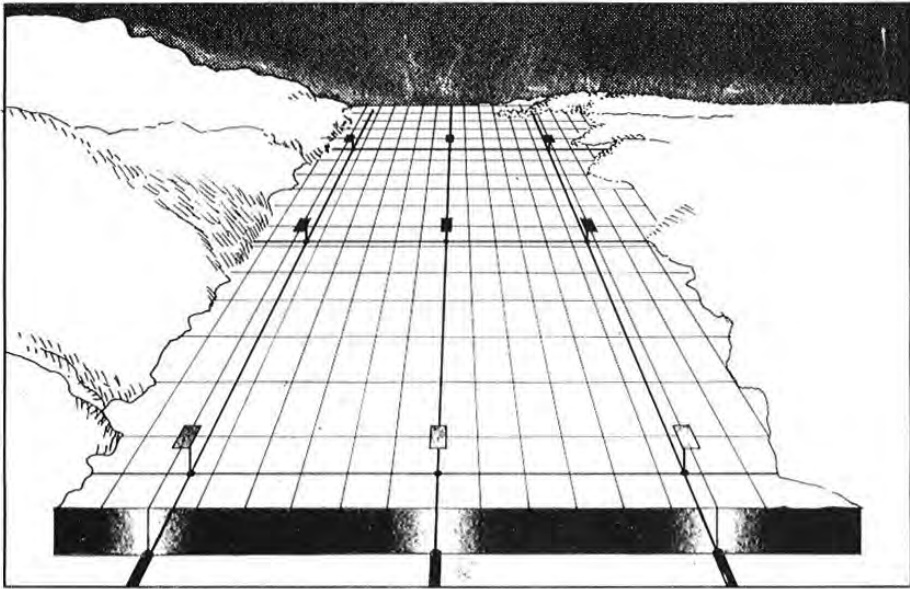
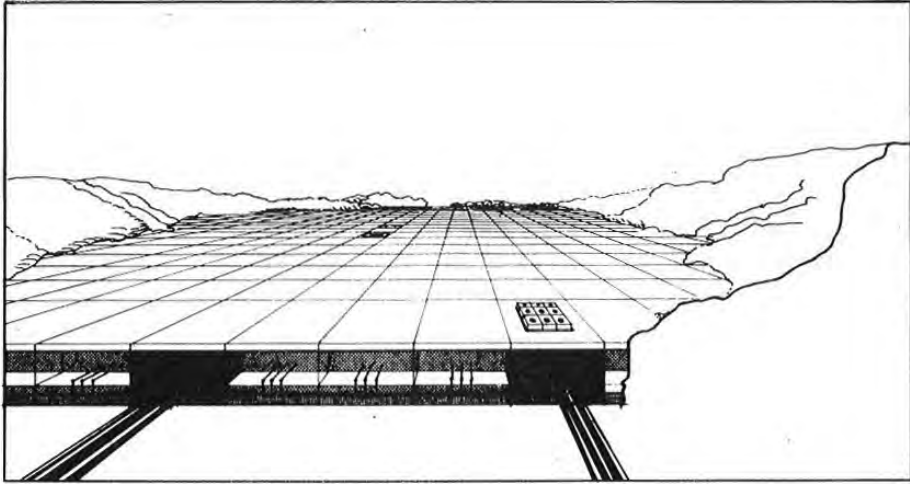
Zeeuws Museum, 2005), p. 31. First published in *Spazio-Arte*, 10-11 (1977).

51 Adolfo Natalini, ‘Discussion’, *ibid.*, p. 79.

52 Piero Frassinelli, ‘Journey to the End of Architecture’, in, *Superstudio: Life without Objects*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

53 Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 3rd ed, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992), p. 288.

54 Published in *Architectural Design*, (December 1971), pp.737-742, 785. Later the project was published in Italian with a bonus thirteenth city and additional photomontages: ‘Le Dodici Città Ideali/The Twelve Ideal Cities’, *Casabella*, 361 (January 1972), pp. 45-55.



Superstudio. Supersurface. Drawing. 1971

group of spermatozoa, which are transferred to the now empty cell. Here one of the ova is fertilized and the seat transforms into a uterus “protecting the new son of the city for nine months, until his happy down”.

If *Il Monumento* carries the aspects of modernist urban schemes, monumentality, and self-referentiality to their extremes 2000 Ton City does the same with the technology fetish and an all-managing architecture. All twelve cities, and a bonus thirteenth city, carry one or more architectural gestures to an absurd conclusion, in a way that does not leave any room to skepticism. Yet perhaps the most interesting point of the project is its format: ‘Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas’ was presented as a test very much like the ones in popular magazines. In the later pages readers are presented with the evaluation of their tests. Based on the number of cities that they approved of, one would be: an empty shell with dark and humid cavities into which the system penetrates; a cog of the system lubricated by the logic of bourgeois culture; a slave of the system; or a warm afraid of not being like everyone else. The ones who did not approve any of the cities were not off the hook as well for they did not realize “that the descriptions represent the cities now”. To them Superstudio asked: “Is it possible that you didn’t realize that it is enough to carry forward the logic of the system until it becomes rigorous logic to concretize many more hallucinating fantasies ...?”

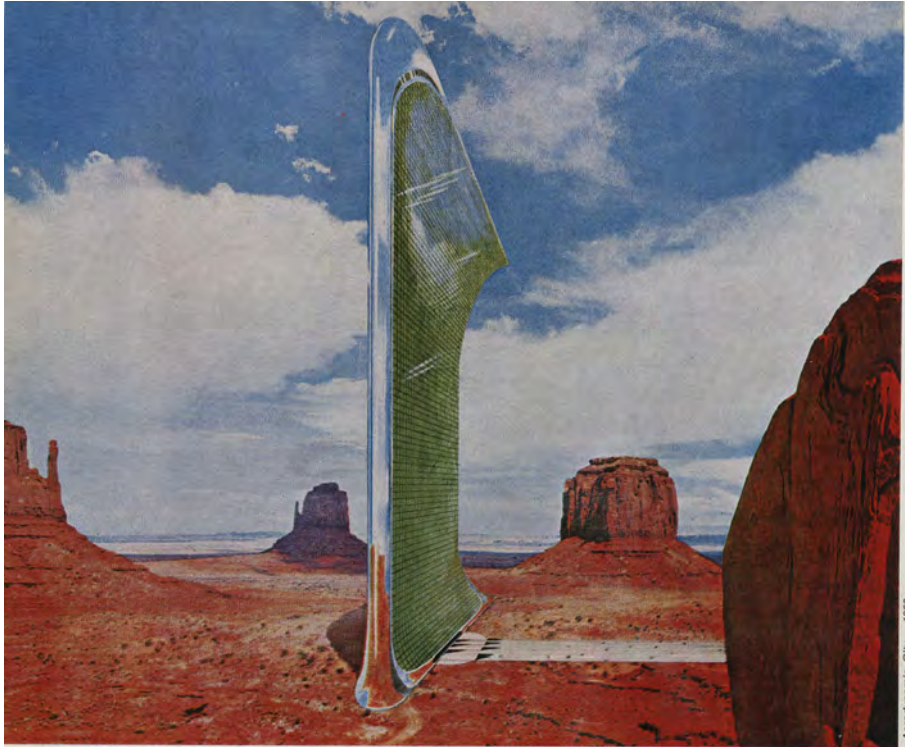
Vita and the rest of the *Cinque Storie* also operate in a more straightforward manner than *Il Monumento*. Although rhetorical techniques of shock and *demonstratio per absurdum* are again utilized, the stories, *Vita* in particular, are less ironic. Supersurface offers a way of understanding the built environment as much as it is a critique of it. Moreover, since the story partially coincides with the actual concerns of the group, its functioning differs from that of *Il Monumento*. In serving as a paradigm to understand the actual city and in the strategy of the project, *Vita* actually becomes comparable to the last project that I study.

The No-Stop City

Archizoom worked on the No-Stop City between 1969 and 1972.⁵⁵ The project was published for the first time in Casabella in 1970 with the title ‘*Città, Catena di Montaggio del Sociale: ideologia e teoria della metropoli*’ [City, the Assembly Line of the Social: ideology and theory of the metropolis].⁵⁶ Yet, it is possible to trace the ideas presented

55 Andrea Branzi, ‘Notes on No-Stop City: Archizoom Associates 1969-72’, in, Martin van Schaik and Macel Otakar, eds, *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956-76* (Munich: Prestel, 2005), p. 177; Andrea Branzi, ‘Postface’, *No-Stop City, Archizoom Associati* (Orléans: Editions HXX, 2006), p. 140; in this article actually Branzi states that the project got under way in 1968, but the very sentence continues as “... and was published for the first time the following year in Casabella (n. 350-351).” Since mentioned issue of Casabella actually dates from 1970, the year 1968 is most probably a mistake, printing or otherwise.

56 Archizoom, ‘*Città, Catena di Montaggio del Sociale: ideologia e teoria della metropoli*’, *Casabella*, 350-351 (July-August 1970), pp. 43-52.



« Aerodynamic City », 1969

ARCHIZOOM: DISCORSI PER IMMAGINI

« Archizoom »: Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Massimo Morozzi, Dario Bartolini, Lucia Morozzi



« edificio residenziale per centro storico »

Archizoom Associati. *Archizoom: Discorsi per Immagini* (publication in *Domus*). Mixed media. 1969.

there back to 'Archizoom: *Discorsi per Immagini* / Archizoom: Speaking through Images' published in *Domus* in 1969, together with Superstudio's *Il Monumento*.⁵⁷

Archizoom presentation, *Immagini*, included a text four times that of Superstudio. However, here Archizoom still tries to make justice to the shared title and the presentation still is convincingly image-based.⁵⁸ The included images, seven photomontages, don't seem to add up to an easily discernible unifying project, yet they all delineate a separate grand intervention and they share a common drawing technique and a montage effect that are familiar by now in this study. Montages delineate vast edifices, in drawing, superimposed on photographs of actual places that are mostly familiar or strongly symbolic/exemplary of a landscape. Here again, the montages mobilize an anxiety, if not shock, due to the uncanny (lack of) relationship between the superimposed edifice and its context. They deploy a thematic tension and accentuate it with a representational one. In the case of 'Aerodynamic City,' arguably the most visually sophisticated and appealing photomontage to come from Archizoom, one sees a hi-tech looking building in the middle of the desert. Obviously any kind of edifice, or any trace of human habitation for that matter, would be unexpected in that particular landscape. Yet, nothing probably could have been more alien to its context than this slender, slick skyscraper; a building that one could easily pass as a Martian colony in a science-fiction film. This thematic tension was accompanied by a representational one between the drawing and the photograph; the one that I articulated in *Il Monumento* montages.

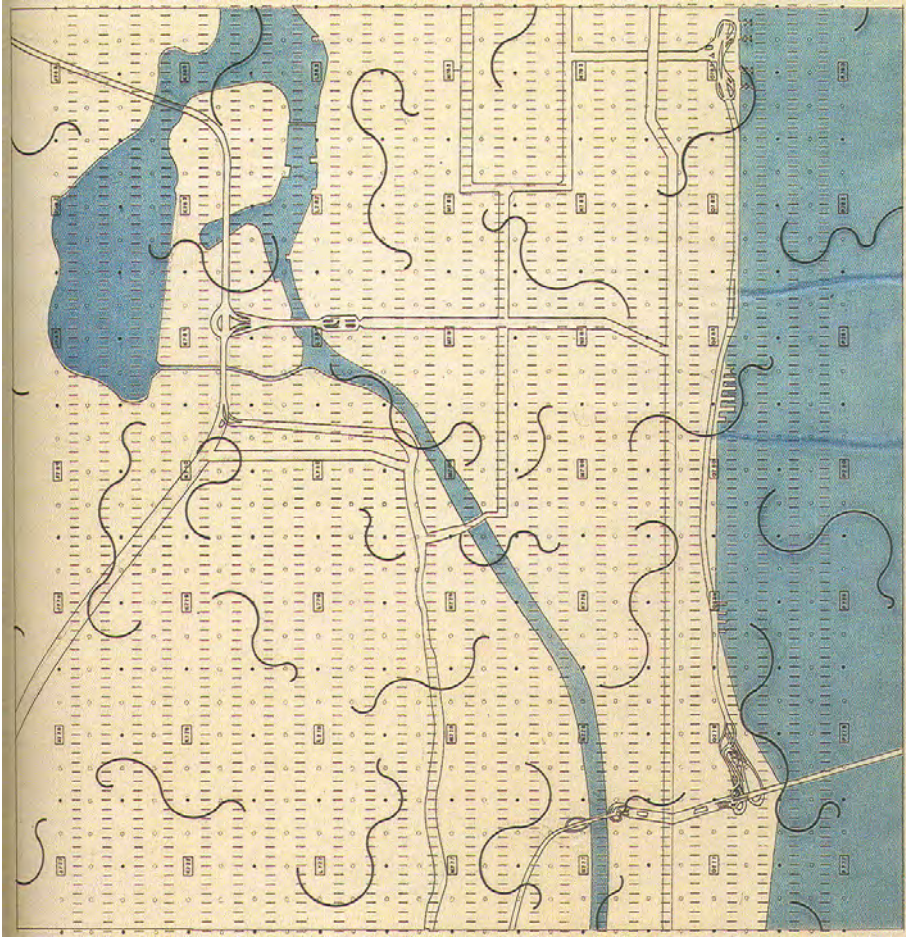
The other big montage delineates a vast residential structure at the historical centre of Florence. The building is a slender cubic frame that rises over the immediate surroundings of the *Duomo*. It is around the same height as Brunelleschi's dome that overlooks the town. The vast structure is reminiscent of many architectural references from Ledoux and Boullée to Yona Friedman's 'Paris Spatial'. Still yet, it also is similar to one Superstudio scene I mentioned earlier, which it probably precedes: "the temple of Pure Reason". Superstudio's temple, a cube frame containing all previous architectures as souvenirs, was a visualization of the argument that "in historical perspective, Reason dominates all".⁵⁹ The debt of Archizoom's cube to Enlightenment and the 'architecture of reason' is clear and it too dominates history, Florence. Another important photomontage is *Quartieri paralleli per Berlino* [Parallel quarters for Berlin]. This image shows parallel linear structures running through Berlin. It looks like a complex of *Monumenti* applied to Berlin.⁶⁰ This photomontage particularly comes very close to Superstudio's work on the previous pages. Actually, in intention and

57 Archizoom, 'Archizoom: Discorsi Per Immagini', *Domus*, 481 (December 1969), pp. 46-48.

58 Images occupy at least three times more surface area than the text

59 Superstudio, 'Deserti naturali e artificiali', *Casabella*, 358 (November 1971), p. 19. Original capital letters.

60 Archizoom's structures are slightly more context-conscious than *Il Monumento* because they have voids over other dominant lines such as the highways and the rivers.



Archizoom Associati. Diagramma Abitativo Omogeneo (No-Stop City). Drawing. 1970.

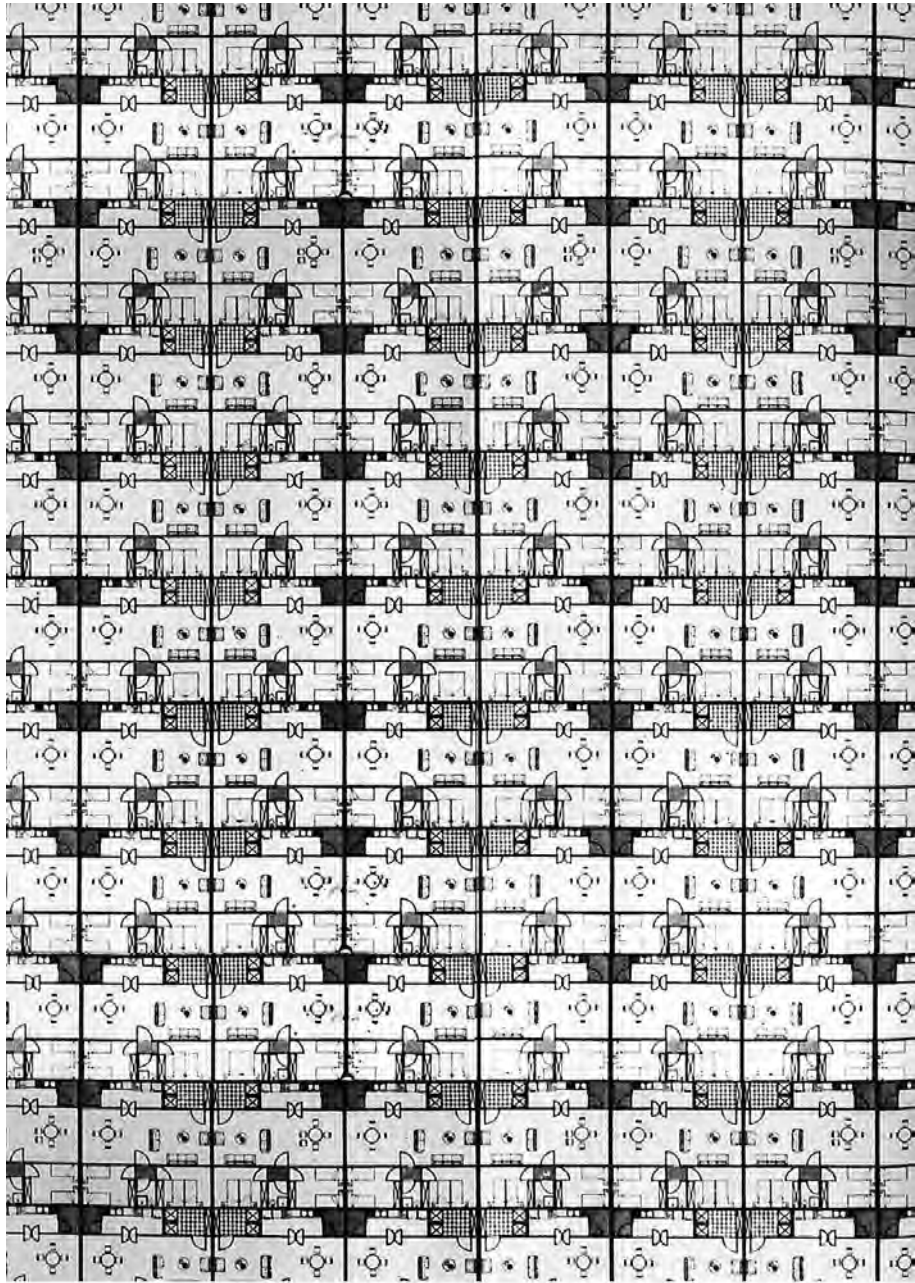
in effect all the montages in both presentations are in the same vein and the four page presentation in total is the statement of a shared position.⁶¹ But the texts in two presentations operate in completely different ways and it is actually the text, more than the images, in the Archizoom presentation that connects *Immagini* to No-Stop City. Superstudio's short text is ironic just as the images; it operates in the same way that images do: both the text and the images are the project itself. Whereas, the Archizoom text is about the project, which is the set of loosely related photomontages. The text works either as a preface or a postscript. It is a contextualization of the images. It does not provide a point by point explanation of the montages, but it posits a context of conditions and ideas which apparently compels Archizoom to produce the drawings. The text operates as the anchor of the photomontages; an anchor of the ironic to the literal that fixes the meaning, limits the possible readings, directs the observer, controls the communication.⁶² In other words, the images provoke whereas text explains, brings back to earth. Unlike Superstudio, Archizoom prefers not to do away with this anchor. This, on the other hand, obviously limits the signification of the montages to the text, which was further developed in No-Stop City.

The text plays the lead role in the first publication of No-Stop City and this is noticeable at first glance: two thirds of *Città* is text. Moreover, Archizoom deploys a totally different visual strategy. It is not just that the images are much less unusual, playful and colorful. The group also shifts the medium of drawing from the analogue in *Immagini* to the notational in *Città*: except for the two photomontages, the medium of choice for No-Stop City is the orthographic, mainly the plan.

These plans, or the diagrams that produce the plans, truly speak of repetition, and of homogeneity as the result of the repetition. They are conveniently named as diagrams or schemes of *abitativi omogenei* [homogeneous habitation], and all the drawings basically delineate the repetition of some elementary units and relationships *ad infinitum*. They do so again by means of a grid. One's first impression is that these are the diagrams of a surface similar to Supersurface. Bodies of water and some other natural elements suggest that what we observe is a single surface covering the Earth. However, the eighth drawing is a schematic section, showing that No-Stop City has at least nine levels. In the section, the structure levels out a change of the ground line (perhaps a hill, a canyon, or the ocean basin). Apparently, if the structure were as no-

61 This may seem obvious given the facts that the groups were operating within virtually the same paradigms and conditions with members of similar backgrounds who have been collaborating during and after the formation of different groups. Their most notable collaboration was the two 'Superarchitettura' exhibitions in between which the two groups were formed. The exhibition was showed in Pistoia and Modena in 1966 and 1967 respectively. However, related to each other as they are, the works of the two groups articulate similar issues in different ways. And nowhere after their earlier collaborations in 1966-67, their products come this close to each other as they do in *Discorsi Per Immagini*.

62 Here I am dwelling on Roland Barthes notion of 'anchorage', see 'Rhetoric of the Image', *Image, Music, Text*, Stephen Heath, trs, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 32-51.



Archizoom Associati. No-Stop City. Drawing. 1971.

stop as its name suggested, then it would homogenize and level out the entire surface of the earth.

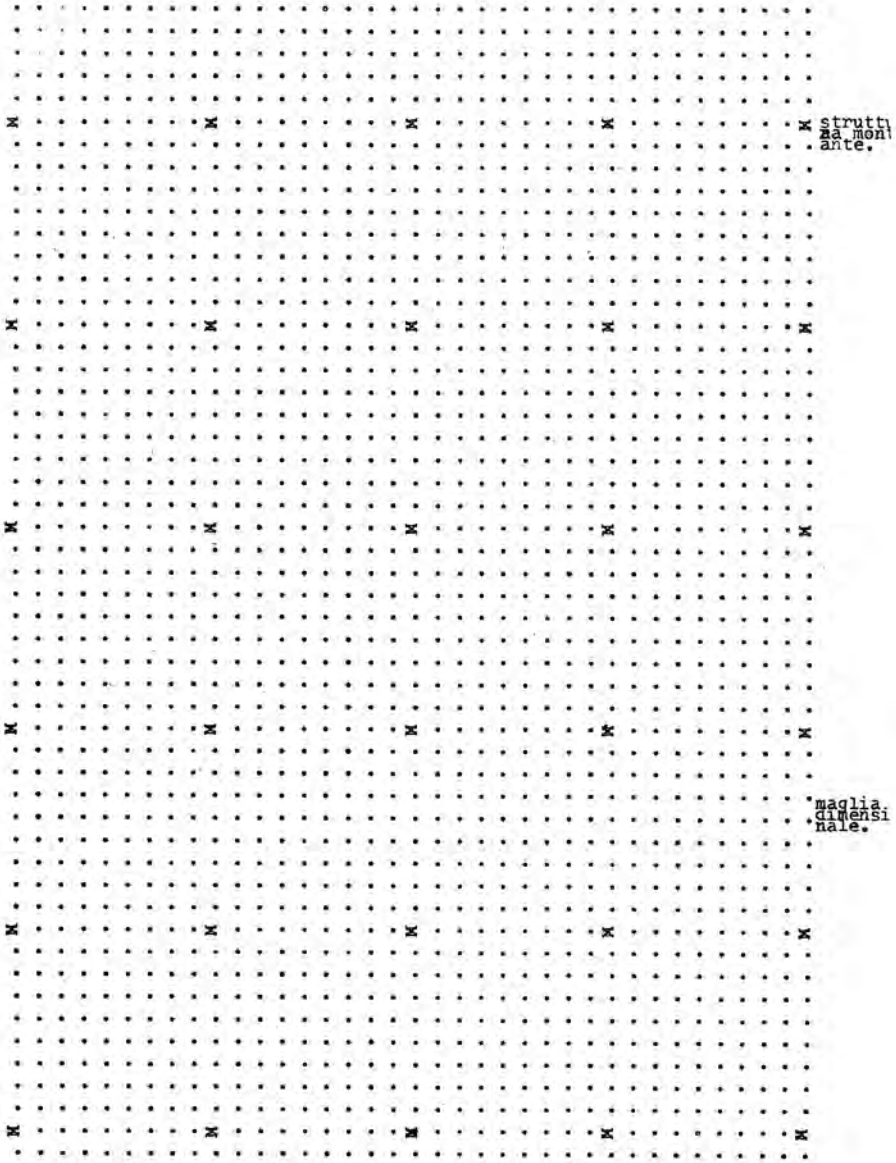
The virtually undifferentiated homogeneity achieved through the grid structure gains a further meaning in the plans. Supersurface photomontages show a surface extending to the horizon, beyond the reach of the eye. Yet, just like anything else the grid has to vanish at certain points due to the intrinsic qualities of the perspective. Obviously, the orthographic set provide a medium where offsetting actually can be repeated and delineated infinitely. Yet, the most important consequence of changing the medium back to a notational one is obviously reversing all the processes that I described when I studied Superstudio photomontages. Superstudio projects are located in an analogue medium that is conventionally reserved for the illustrative, real-life-like drawings. The group consciously avoid the notational medium that is mostly utilized to communicate systematical information for the construction. In order to mobilize reaction, Superstudio aims to render the projects palpable and they achieve it through the intrinsic qualities of the perspective and the photography. In short, Supersurface is provocative because it simulates the real. No-Stop City, on the other hand, is again disturbing, albeit in a different way: it operates within the linguistic competence of professional architecture and simulates the realizable.

Superstudio montages are architectural drawings produced by architects with an architectural agenda. Yet, since they are in perspective and photography, they are not only mentally penetrable to a wider audience but they can make use of the visual techniques more akin to visual and performing arts. For instance, Supersurface montages are undeniably dramatic. Such theatrical effect is partly due to the fact that we are observing the photographs of actual people put in uncanny sceneries. So it is partly thematic. Yet it is also because we are, too, located in the perspectival space of the drawings. The drawings assign us to their allocated stationary point: they presume the observer and condition their view. So it is partly spatial. In the world of plans and sections, however, these visual techniques do not apply, the theatrical space collapses, and the centrality of the observer diminishes.

No-Stop City aims to ensure effectiveness with another, more indirect, strategy. The ever-present grid of Supersurface stands for the city and the economic system that produces it. The dramatic effect stems from the tension between the very fundamental acts of life and the abstract systems that they are embedded in. In that sense, for its critique the project focuses on the life, *Vita*, taking place on the surface, in the modern city. Archizoom presumes the same city and focuses only on it. It articulates the surface further and leaves the hard-task of imagining a life on it to the observer. Rather than showing us how uncanny such life would be, Archizoom leaves us with the thought of how hard it is to imagine a life in this "city" and how disturbing it is to see that in fact it is somehow reminiscent of the actual social housing schemes, the American

ARCHIZOOM ASSOCIATI
DIAGRAMMA ABITATIVO
OMOGENEO

IPOTESI DI LINGUAGGIO
ARCHITETTONICO NON FIGURATIVO



Archizoom Associati. *Diagramma Abitativo Omogeneo* (No-Stop City). Drawing. 1970.

city, the suburb, the endless English row-houses, the Parisian *banlieue*, the sea of apartment blocks, say, in Beijing, Ankara, Athens, or Barcelona. The further mind-numbing monotony of the structure and the alienating abstractness of the surface are established the more effective the project becomes.

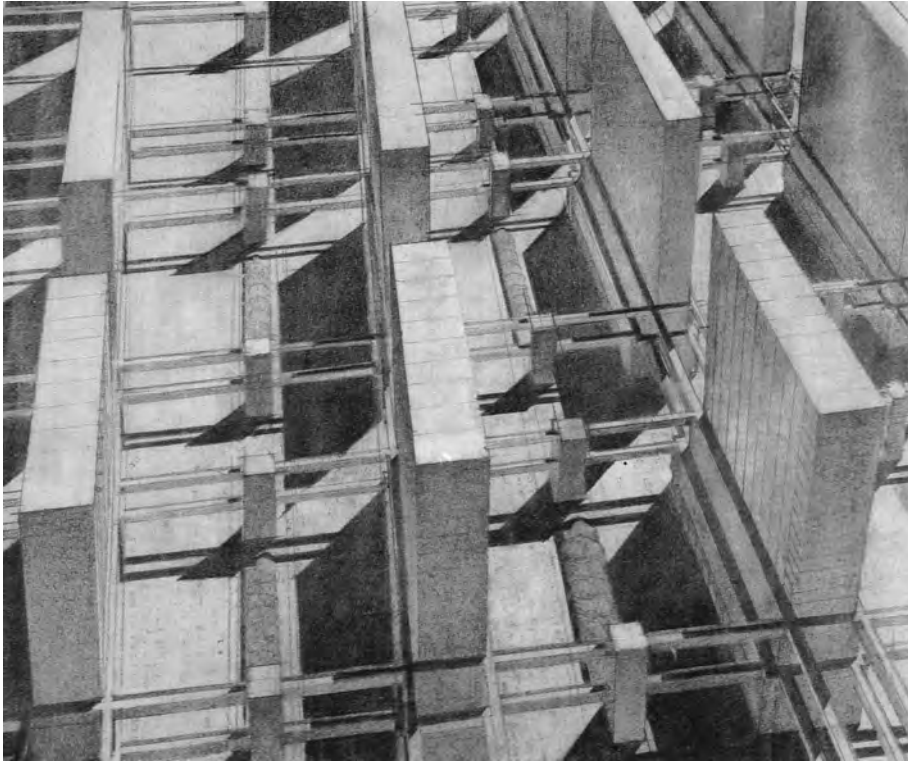
The shift from the perspectival space of the montages to the plans may symbolically do away with the observing subject, but it constructs another one. No-Stop City is outrageous precisely because it is in plans and sections. By the same token, the technical pretension of its orthographic drawings constructs a builder-subject. Moreover, like Superstudio projects, it is intended for architects, but even more so because it utilizes almost exclusively the medium that is specific to its target group. No-Stop City drawings single architects out from the general public and hold architecture responsible. The technical features of the drawings—the orthographic medium, the fine lines, the precision—point to the architects and imply production. Then, the relentless and dull offsetting not only further convey the idea of production but they also equate architects to bureaucrats, following the set and rigid procedures of a system, effectively and professionally. As opposed to multivalent Superstudio photomontages that become ambiguous in meaning, Archizoom plans become telling in their muteness. Like the subject matter, the medium that it is articulated through is also stripped of qualities, dull, ordinary, and joyless; just as the ambience rendered by the Thomas Mann quote that opens the text of *Città*:

*A mezzogiorno, in un giorno di una stagione qualsiasi. Non piove, eppure il cielo è uniformemente grigiastro, comune, senza festosità; nella strada è una luce opaca che esclude ogni mistero, ogni stranezza dell'anima.*⁶³

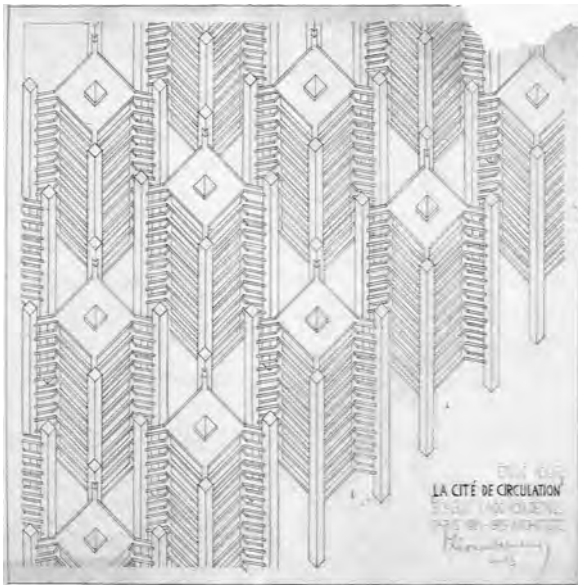
Although the Mann quote brings the text close to the drawings, again the text does not operate along the same lines with the visual media. It explains the project, its context, tools and their specific utilization. The text is about a condition and the drawings take the main aspect of that condition and radicalize it so that it becomes unbearably strong, undeniably obvious. The expressions in the text are certain; the language is that of manifestos. It starts with the bold declaration of what the group considers as the bottom line of the city: “As a physical and social phenomenon the metropolis derives

63 In English, roughly: “At midday, one day of the week, no matter what season. It is not raining, and yet the sky is uniformly grey, ordinary, joyless; in the street, there is an opaque light which excludes all mystery, all strangeness of the soul.” Some parts are omitted in Archizoom text and the full quote in German original is: “... um Mittag, Wochentags, zu einer gleichgültigen Jahreszeit. Das Wetter ist mäßig gut, indifferent. Es regnet nicht, aber der Himmel ist auch nicht blau; er ist gleichmäßig weißgrau, gewöhnlich, unfestlich, und die Straße liegt in einer stumpfen und nüchternen Beleuchtung, die jeden Mysticismus, jede Absonderlichkeit der Stimmung ausschließt.” See Thomas Mann, *Königliche Hoheit*, mit Kommentar von Heinrich Detering in Zusammenarbeit mit Stephan Stachorski, (Frankfurt a. M: S. Fischer Verlag, 2004), pp. 529-530. *Königliche Hoheit* was first published in 1909.

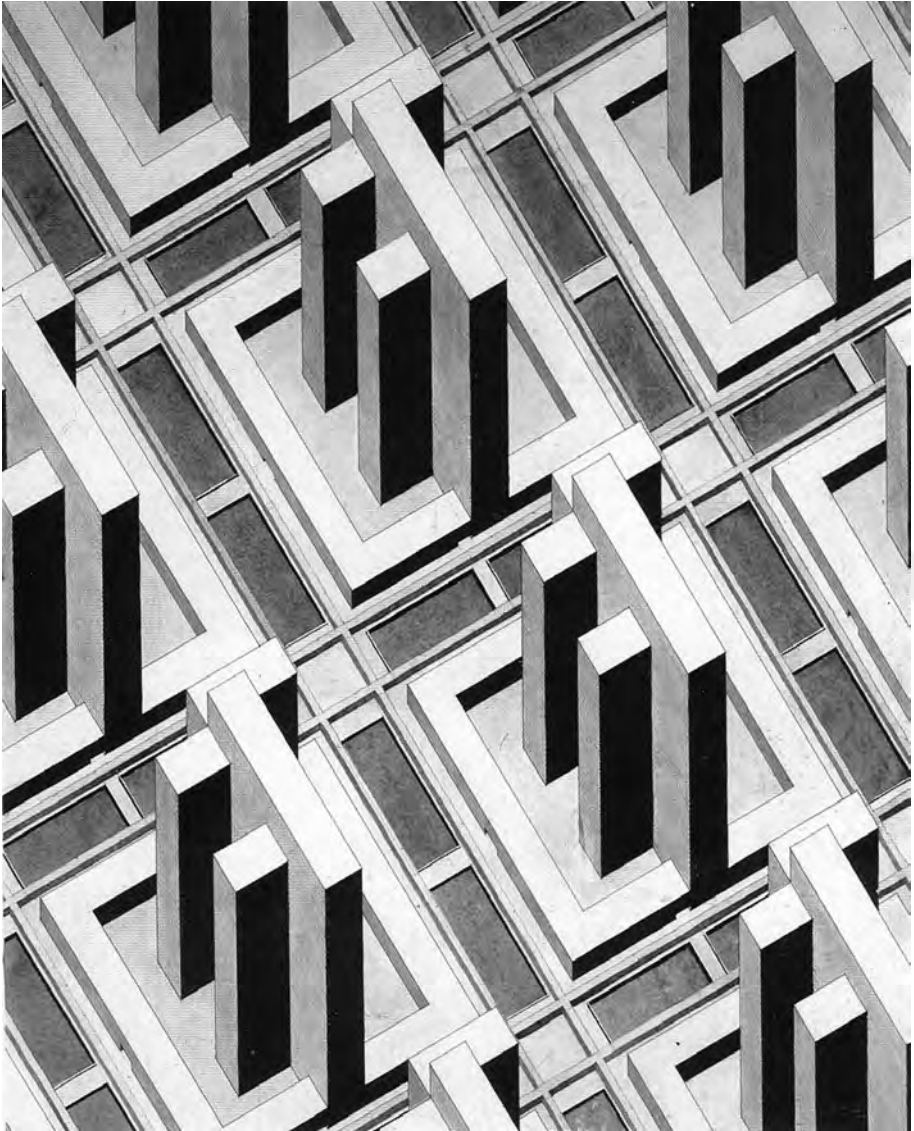
One could easily consider Robert Musil’s masterpiece *The Man without Qualities* (1930-1942, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*) as being another literary reference.



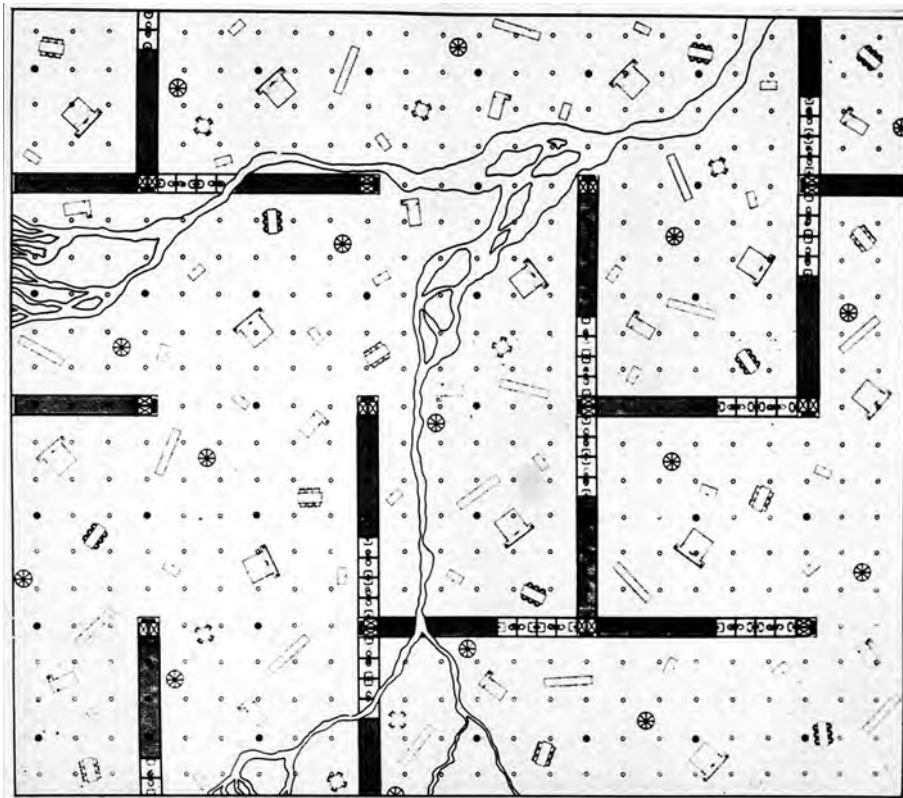
Richard Neutra. Rush City, reformed, perspective. Drawing. 1923-27.



Theo van Doesburg, Cornelis van Eesteren. La cite de circulation, Paris, axonometric. Drawing. 1924-27.



Cornelis van Eesteren, Georges Pineau. Quartier commercial d'une grande ville contemporaine: Paris, axonometric view. Drawing, 1926.



Archizoom Associati. *Diagramma Abitativo Omogeneo (No-Stop City)*. Drawing, 1970.

from the Capital and develops in line with its logic".⁶⁴ Yet, even before elaborating on this proposition, Archizoom first exposes the goal, the mechanisms and the tools of the project. First thing the group clarifies is that No-Stop City is not a project in the conventional architectural sense of the term: it is 'a Theory not an alternative proposal'.⁶⁵ And the reason of this position immediately follows: "Just as there is no Economy Politics of the Class but only Class Criticism of Economy Politics, there is no Urban Theory of the Class but only Class Criticism of Urban Theory".⁶⁶ This situates the group unmistakably in a Marxist discourse, and shows their allegiance to Friedrich Engels. In a much later article, Andrea Branzi explains the group was familiar to Engels's article, The Housing Question.⁶⁷ He reads Engels as negating "worker's

64 The quotation is from the brief English summary preceding the Italian text. Archizoom, 'Città...', *op. cit.*, p. 43. The main Italian text starts similarly: "*La città moderna "nasce nel Capitale" e si sviluppa all'interno della sua Logica: il Capitale impone ad essa una propria Ideologia Generale, che ne condiziona lo sviluppo ed il configurarsi*" [The modern city "is born in Capital" and it develops within its logic: the Capital imposes its own General Ideology, and this conditions its development and configuration].

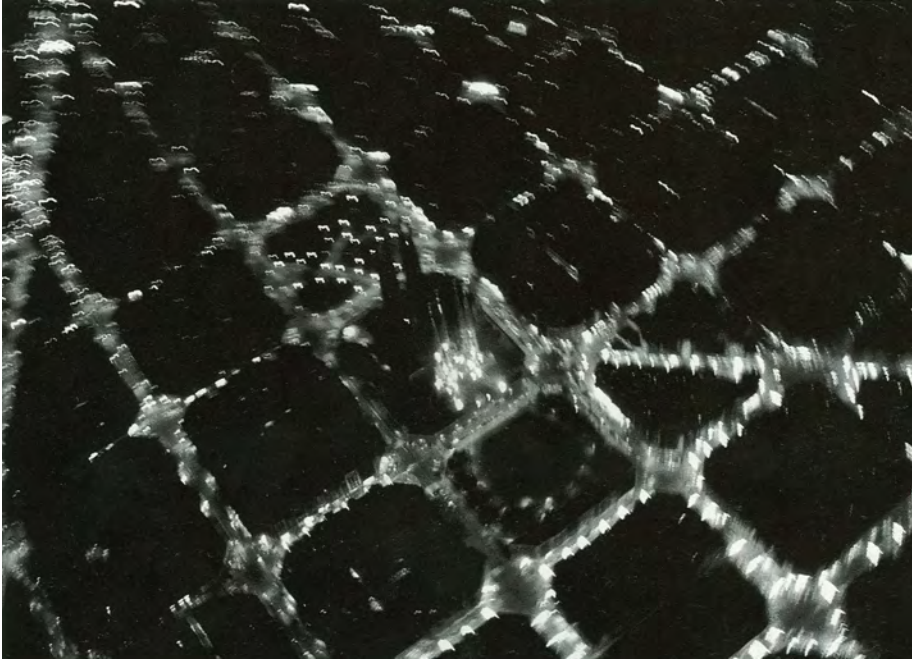
Città, Catena di Montaggio del Sociale still needs a proper translation in English. The first translation of the full text, to my knowledge, appeared in 2006 in *No-Stop City, Archizoom Associati, op. cit.*, pp. 156-174. Yet, I abstain from quoting this translation. So instead I will use my own translation and provide the Italian original in the footnotes whenever I refer to *Città*, unless I am referring to the brief English summary.

Original capital letters. In various texts especially Archizoom put emphasis on some nouns by starting them with capital letters. Marie Theres Stauffer argues that Germanic use of capital letters could be understood as "declaration of allegiance to certain German thinkers". These thinkers obviously include Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but also the members of *Frankfurter Schule*. Given the political disposition of the groups and the content of these texts, her proposition is understandable. However, it has to be noted that the use of the capital letters is not thoroughly Germanic because it is only the prominent words that are capitalized. Moreover, the said allegiance is more than obvious with or without the capitalization. See Marie Theres Stauffer, 'Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias', *AA Files*, 47 (Summer 2002), p. 31.

65 *Di una Teoria dunque, si tratta, e non di una proposta "alternativa"*. Archizoom, 'Città...', *op. cit.*, p. 44.

66 *Come "non" esiste una Economia Politica di Classe, ma solo una Critica di Classe all'Economia Politica, così non esiste una Teoria Urbanistica di Classe, ma solo una Critica di Classe alla Teoria Urbanistica. Ibid.*

67 Branzi, 'Notes on No-Stop City...', *op. cit.*, p. 178. *Zur Wohnungsfrage* [The Housing Question] was first published between 26.06.1872 and 22.02.1873 as a series of articles in *Der Volksstaat* [The People's State], paper of the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands* [German Social-Democratic Workers' Party]. The series comprised of three parts: How Proudhon Solves the Housing Question, How the Bourgeoisie Solves the Housing Question, Supplement on Proudhon and the Housing Question. The articles forge a criticism on reformism and its main thesis can be found in one of paragraphs in the second one: "The housing question can only be solved when society has been sufficiently transformed for a start to be made towards abolishing the antithesis between town and country, which has been brought to an extreme point by present-day capitalist society. Far from being able to abolish this antithesis, capitalist society on the contrary is compelled to intensify it day by day. On the other hand the first modern utopian socialists, Owen and Fourier, already correctly recognized this. In their model plans the antithesis between town and country no longer exists. ... [I]t is not the solution of the housing question which simultaneously solves the social question, but only by the solution of the social question, that is, by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, is the solution of the housing question made possible. To want to solve the housing question while at the same time desiring to maintain the modern big cities is an absurdity. The modern big cities, however, will be abolished only by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, and when this is once on the way then there will be quite other thing to do than supplying each worker with a little house for his own possession." The



Jordi Todo. Barcelona. Photograph. 1990.

metropolis” and deploying “a worker’s critique” on the existing city. So he concludes:

This meant that the problem was not to plan a better city but to seize possession of the existing one. The role of planning did not consist in innovation, but in its ability to demystify the logic on which the bourgeois city was based. The true political question was not how to improve the functioning of the city, but instead how to disrupt it (with barricades).⁶⁸

The kinship to Natalini’s account on Superstudio’s work is obvious.⁶⁹ For Superstudio, resisting the system is only possible through either ‘violent revolution’ or ‘non-violent intelligence’. If the ‘barricades’ in Branzi’s account were more related to the former, demystifying the logic of the bourgeois city was carried out through the latter, the non-violent intelligence. To do so Archizoom took on the complex relationships between city, culture and architecture. For the demystification of the city was about the culture within which the very mystification took place as much as it was about the form of the city. Branzi, in particular, forged a critique of the ‘bourgeois culture and architecture’ also through a series of articles.⁷⁰

Following the brief formulation of the essential determinant of the city and the aim of the No-Stop City, Archizoom exposes the method and the tools of the project:

In order to complete such an operation we use a conventional written language, and a graphical one that is closer to the discipline. The former provides us with widely tested analytical tools; the latter allows a creative elaboration of the results of the same process. But the creativity in this case is represented only by the use of the architectonic language at a direct explanatory level that is otherwise impossible. In fact, from the moment that the problem of the language is that of the “Optimal Communication” (that is, the most explicit and general communication possible), “it necessarily becomes UTOPIA”. The Utopia that we use, however, is only instrumental: it represents itself, yet, not as prefiguration of a Different Model of the System (for Laborer’s Metropolis does not exist), but as a critical Hypothesis on the same System.⁷¹

article was later published in pamphlet format and this is the version that Branzi refers to. Various other publications appeared after this one.

68 *Ibid.*

69 Natalini, ‘Inventory...’, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

70 See Andrea Branzi, ‘Il ruolo del l’avanguardia / The Role of the Avant-Garde’, *Casabella*, 363 (March 1972), pp. 27-33; Andrea Branzi, ‘L’Africa è vicina / A Bit Like Africa’, *Casabella*, 364 (April 1972), pp. 31-38; Andrea Branzi, ‘Abitare è facile / Inhabiting is Easy’, *Casabella* 365, May 1972, 35-40; Andrea Branzi “Radical Architecture, il rifiuto del ruolo disciplinare / Radical Architecture, Refusing the Disciplinary Role”, *Casabella*, 386 (February 1974), pp. 46-47.

71 *Per compiere tale operazione noi utilizziamo un linguaggio classico scritto, ed uno grafico, più strettamente disciplinare. Il primo ci fornisce strumenti di analisi ampiamente collaudati; il secondo ci permette una elaborazione creativa dei risultati del processo stesso. Ma la creatività in questo caso è rappresentata solo dall’uso del linguaggio architettonico ad un livello esplicativo diretto, altrimenti impossibile. Infatti dal momento che il problema del linguaggio è quello della “Comunicazione Ottimale” (cioè della comunicazione più esplicita e generale possibile), “esso diviene necessariamente UTOPIA.” L’Utopia però che noi utilizziamo è solo strumentale: essa rappresenta se stessa, ma non come prefigurazione di un Modello Diverso del Sistema (che non*



Andreas Gursky. Photograph.

Members of Superstudio and Archizoom at times complained about being taken literally, as if these projects were meant to be built. This may be due to the fact that the images can be much stronger or more known than the text; or that they have also designed objects and buildings to be produced; or that after-war Europe witnessed megastructures which were meant to be built or actually were built. In any case, the text leaves no room for such skepticism. No-Stop City is a theoretical practice. Since Archizoom sees 'capital' as the sole determinant of the city, in order to understand the city beyond its 'cultural mystifications,' they have focused on its capitalist production. *Città* is a statement on the basic premises of 'the system', a critique of the city as the space of the system, and a reassessment of architecture as an agent of system's spatialization. Unlike Superstudio, the written part of their theoretical practice is not ironical. And they don't utilize drawing as exclusively as Superstudio. However, they do manifestly acknowledge the specificity to the drawing as well as its eminence in rendering architectural ideas and in facilitating the speculative processes of the production of architectural form.

Archizoom's 'refusal' to propose an alternative city obviously stems from an ideological engagement. The actual and the metaphorical relationships between the capitalist production and its spatialization that the group elaborates in No-Stop City can perhaps be best understood through an analysis of the political underpinnings of the project. And one could start doing that from Mario Tronti's writing.⁷² But again here I rather focus on the specific functioning of the No-Stop City drawings within architecture the

The Factory and the Utopia

Engaging the city, Archizoom claims to deploy one of the most conventional architectural means on the subject, the utopia.⁷³ However, although their project has affinities with utopia, it radically transforms the conventional sense of the term as it is established in architecture.⁷⁴ The basic characteristics of utopia can be defined as: *i.* a radical criticism of the existing society and the existing space, *ii.* the proposition of

esiste Metropoli Operaia), ma Ipotesi critica sul Sistema stesso. Archizoom, 'Città...', *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁷² Pier Vittorio Aureli does that brilliantly, see *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008); see also Mario Tronti, *Operai e Capitale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966).

⁷³ 'Utopia' initially started its life as a proper name coined by Thomas More referring to the hypothetic settlement articulated in his 1516 book, which later came to known shortly as 'Utopia' (originally *Libellus verè aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reipublicae statu deque nova Insula Utopia*). The word is derived from Greek *topos* [place] and prefixes *ou-* [non] and/or *eu-* [good]. Utopia later came to designate the literary genre inaugurated by More's book and sharing its structural characteristics. In time, semantic clarity of the term has been considerably compromised.

⁷⁴ For an outstanding articulation of the notion of the utopia see Françoise Choay, *The Rule and the Model: on the Theory of Architecture and Urbanism*, Denise Bratton, ed., (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997). First published in French *La Règle et le Modèle*, (Paris: Le Seuil, 1980, revised ed. 1996).



Subodh Gupta. *Sister*. Mixed Installation (detail photograph by Emre Altürk). 2005.

a model society and a model space.⁷⁵ In architecture, many enterprises have been developed within this paradigm. Mainly starting in Renaissance and proliferating during the industrial revolution, architecture did not suffer from a shortage of visions of the 'ideal city', the spatial model that lies at the heart of the utopia. Moreover, it is even not that contentious to propose that all architectural projects are in a way akin to utopia, understood in simplest terms as a hypothetical better place yet to be produced. Both the actual paradigm of the utopia and the architectural common sense are both consciously deformed by Archizoom. By means of the written text, No-Stop City offers an account and forges a criticism of the existing capitalist society and the existing city. As far as the second half of the utopia paradigm is concerned, the project offers a model by means of the drawings. This "Urban Model, however, does not represent the alternative to present reality, but present reality at a new level of Critical Awareness".⁷⁶ So this model is neither totally non-existing nor necessarily any better. On the contrary, it simply exposes the very system and its underlying logic that produces the city.

In essence, the drawings elaborate a spatial model. Yet, rather than being an ideal model for a better society, it is the ideal model or the underlying blueprint of the existing city. Thus the second part of the utopian paradigm is folded back on the first part and deployed as a filter that strips the existing city from the qualities that mystify it, a filter that enables a better and truer sight of it. In doing so, No-Stop City overlaps the two parts of the utopia paradigm. Rather than an antithesis of the existing city, the model is both the blueprint and the purified version of it. It is supposedly the uncompromised essential logic behind the city. In this sense the model, the No-Stop City, overlaps with the factory and the supermarket. For it is these places, Archizoom asserts, the logic of the system spatializes itself, its functional, rigorous, rational logic, directly and transparently.⁷⁷

The model of Archizoom operates in a different way also in its relation to time. The utopian model can be laid down at once and for all. Simply because it is "the ideal", by definition, it does not need to change. In that sense, it has no real temporality. The ideal can only be maintained to recur constantly. Moreover, the utopian model only implicitly acknowledges the time preceding itself. Since, the utopia suggests the replacement of the existing with the model; it implies a temporal dimension in which the existing shall change into the model. Obviously, this is the time frame that the model precisely is meant to influence and mobilize for its own production. Yet, this time frame is only

75 Here I adopt and slightly change Choay's formulation. *Ibid.* She distinguishes three features: a criticism of an existing society, a model society, and a model space. Yet, as it is adopted by the architectural discourse utopia always include also the criticism of the space of the existing society. Moreover, utopia necessarily assigns a great importance to the instrumentality of space in the forming and functioning of the model society. Thus it presupposes a close relation between the space and the society. So, my addition, criticism of the existing space, does not disrupt Choay's formulation.

76 Archizoom, 'Città...', *op. cit.*, p. 43.

77 *Ibid.* One could argue that this is more true for the factory rather than the supermarket.

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Philip Glass. Einstein, Spaceship, Rehearsal Nos (partial).1976.

of interest for it culminates in the model. No-Stop City has the reverse diagram. Here the model does not lie somewhere in the future, it already exists. The time frame succeeding the model is targeted and aimed to be mobilized for the appropriation of the model. Existing space, a mystified version of the model, is to be exposed by the model and co-opted. It is not even to be replaced: "Laborer's Metropolis does not exist".

Utopia is thus a useful notion to understand the No-Stop City, not because it is one, but because it transforms its paradigm. Moreover, throughout the text of *Città Archizoom* seem to undermine the mutually enabling and symbolic relationship between the city and the system, which is arguably the basic assumption that the utopia dwells on. The group argue that the system is no longer an external referent which is represented by 'its space'. The system and the city is the one and the same thing, and this isotropic structure is well capable of representing itself.⁷⁸ Ultimately "the World" becomes identified with "the Capital" which raises the "logic of Industrial Production" to the level of "universal Law".⁷⁹ Yet, the city does not correspond perfectly to the system as the model space of utopia does to model society's institutions. It requires mystification and veiling of its rigorous logic. If the city actually corresponded to the logic of industrial production perfectly it would overlap with the factory and there wouldn't be any need to expose this logic through the No-Stop City.

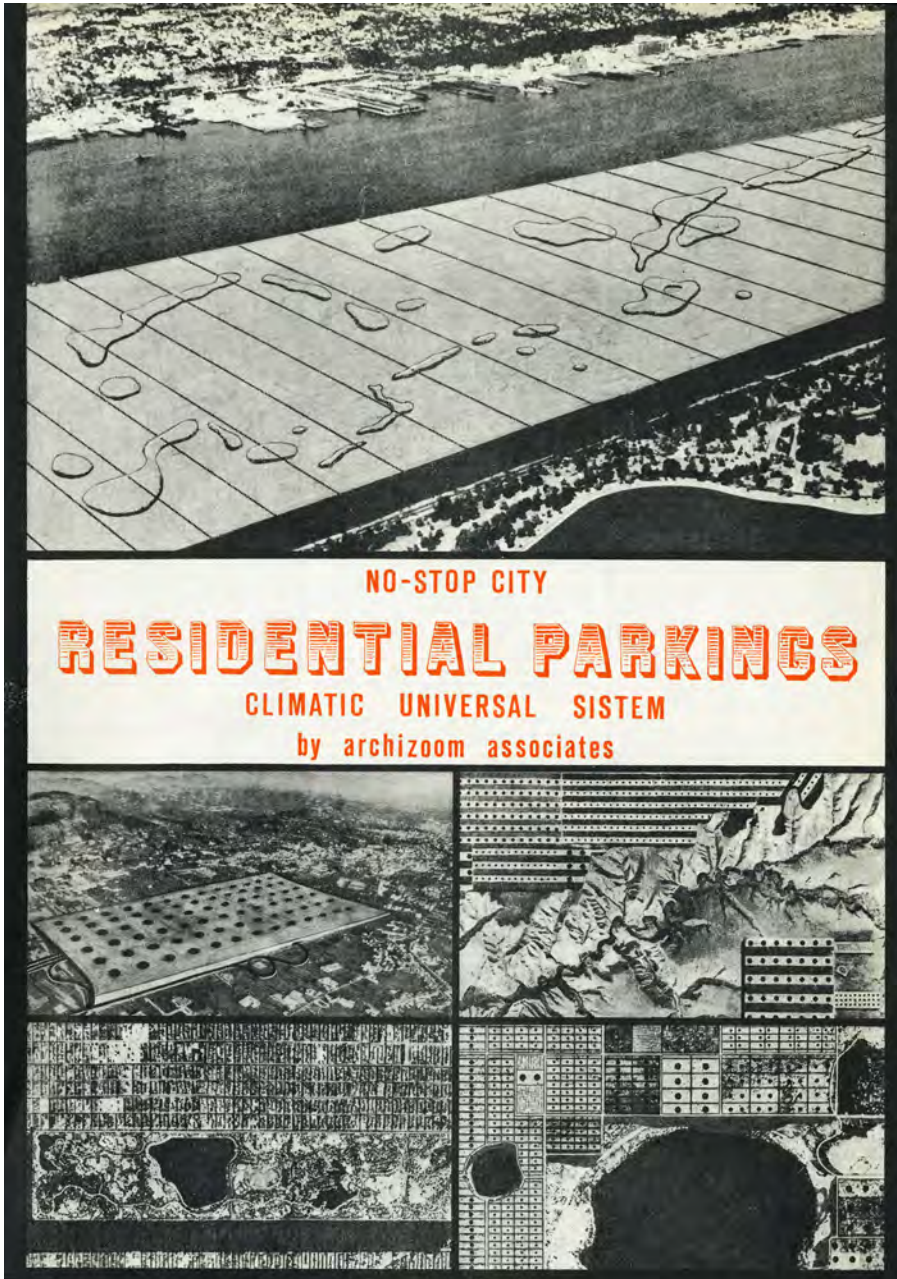
A system may actually have a perfectly matching spatial organization as in a Fordist production line in a factory. A city, however, is an accumulation rather than one single design. Moreover, Archizoom argue, the prevailing phase of capitalism may not have a perfectly matching spatial model because it ceased to be a 'place' to become a 'condition'. So, unlike the utopian spatial model, the system does not realize and represent itself through the city. Building on this, Archizoom criticizes the attempts to represent the city as a "giant machine" or a "structure of trade".⁸⁰ Moreover, any typological study that aims to crystallize the reality of the system would remain ambiguous. So, Archizoom concludes,

[A]s a "cognitive instrument," Architecture does not renounce regarding itself as the best instrument for representing the System as a whole; as a social instrument, it does not renounce its role of Prefiguration. Doing so, it makes two mistakes, alike and distinct: it still believes that a visual relation with

78 *La "capacità di rappresentare il Sistema" quindi, come una realtà esterna, in sviluppo sul territorio, cade: il sistema diviene una condizione isotropa di essere che "si rappresenta benissimo da sola". Ibid., p. 49.*

79 *L'Identificazione del Capitale con il Mondo attraverso la "necessità" naturale del Benessere, permette di fare assurgere la "logica" della Produzione Industriale al valore di Legge Universale. Ibid.*

80 *Tutti gli attuali sforzi di attribuire ancora alla città questa capacità di rappresentazione, come "macchina gigante" o come "struttura degli scambi", non servono altro che a attribuire significato ad una struttura che "significa soltanto se stessa". Ibid.* This is, of course, a criticism directed to, among others, Archigram.



Archizoom Associati. No-Stop City, Residential Parkings Climatic Universal System (publication in *Domus*). Mixed media. 1971.

the System is possible, and it still believes it is apt for the struggle for an alternative Model.⁸¹

Architecture can no longer render the system through the built environment. The “system” does not operate in that way anymore. Archizoom clarifies their argument in a later and much more concise text, where the group actually uses the name No-Stop City for the first time.

[O]ne is led to wonder if the modern city is nothing more than a problem which has not been solved, or if, in reality it is not a historical phenomenon which has been objectively superseded. That is, we must determine whether Capital still confronts the task of managing its own organization and image on an urban level, as it did a hundred years ago, or whether the changes which have taken and are taking place have not altered its sphere of action, thus transforming the concept of the city.⁸²

Archizoom problematize the relationship between capitalism—as the determining system which especially after the mid-twentieth century started to penetrate into and organize all spheres of activity—and the city—as the main arena of these activities. The group constantly imply that as the system becomes ever pervasive it somehow also becomes independent of the specific spatial configuration of the cities and operates on another more abstract level. Their argument actually comes close to the succinct diagnosis of Habermas on the contemporary city,

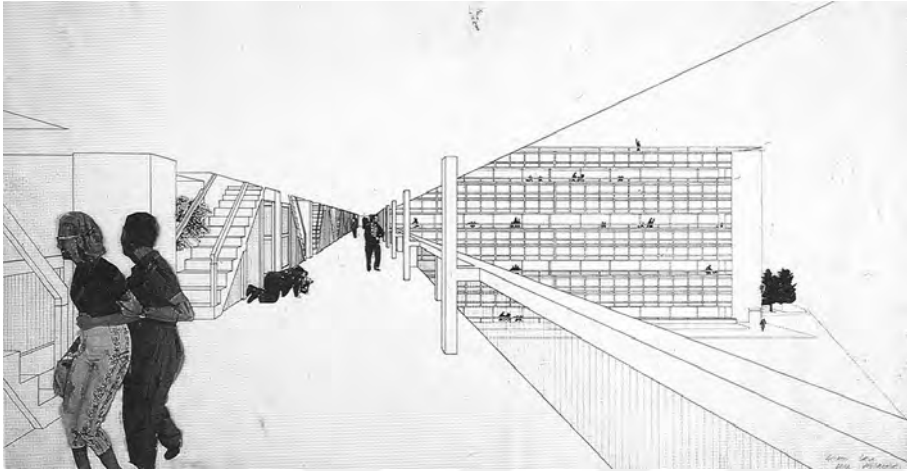
As a comprehensible habitat, the city could at one time be architecturally designed and mentally represented. ... However by the nineteenth century at the latest the city became the intersection point of a different kind of functional relationship. It was embedded in abstract systems which could no longer be captured aesthetically in an intelligible presence.⁸³

Archizoom, however, was able to render the city intelligible; not in its aesthetical presence, not as a place or through spatial qualities, but as the condition produced by the abstract systems, the congestion, the sheer quantity it is, as “a bathroom in every 100m², or a computer in every 40m²”.

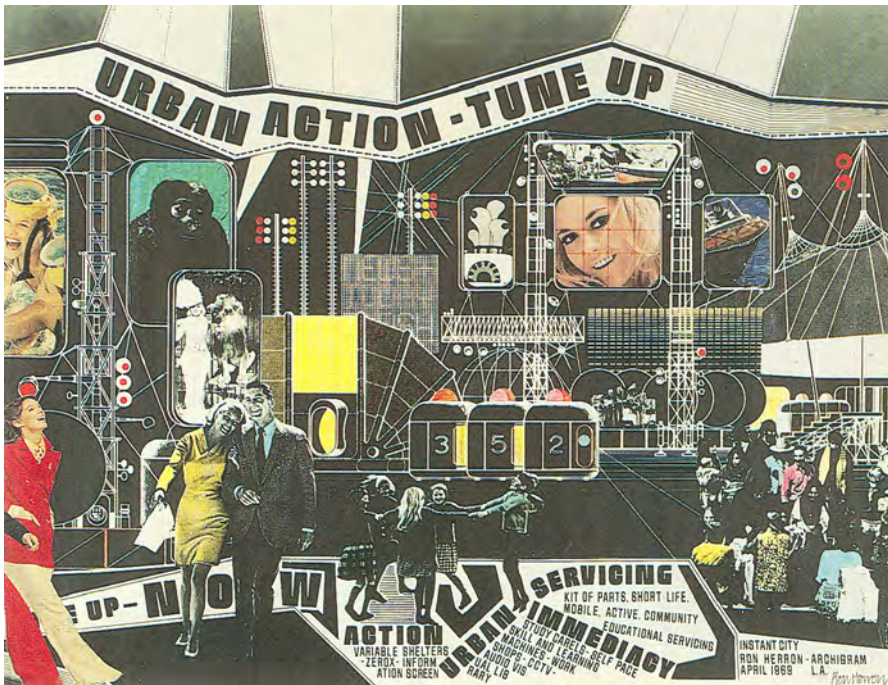
81 [C]ome “strumento conoscitivo” l’Architettura non rinuncia a considerarsi il miglior strumento di rappresentazione dell’intero Sistema, come strumento sociale essa non rinuncia al suo ruolo di Prefigurazione. Così operando essa compie due errori uguali e distinti; crede possibile ancora un rapporto visivo col Sistema, e crede ancora funzionale alla lotta il Modello Alternativo. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

82 Archizoom, ‘No-Stop City, Residential Parkings Climatic Universal System’, *Domus*, 496 (March 1971). For this text I will use David Radzinowicz’s translation in English in *Exit Utopia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-175

83 Jürgen Habermas, ‘Modern and Postmodern Architecture’, in, Neil Leach, ed, *Rethinking Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 233-234.



Alison & Peter Smithson. Golden Lane, Deck. Photomontage (with Marilyn Monroe, Jo Di Maggio). 1952.



Ron Herron, Archigram. Instant City. Collage. 1968.

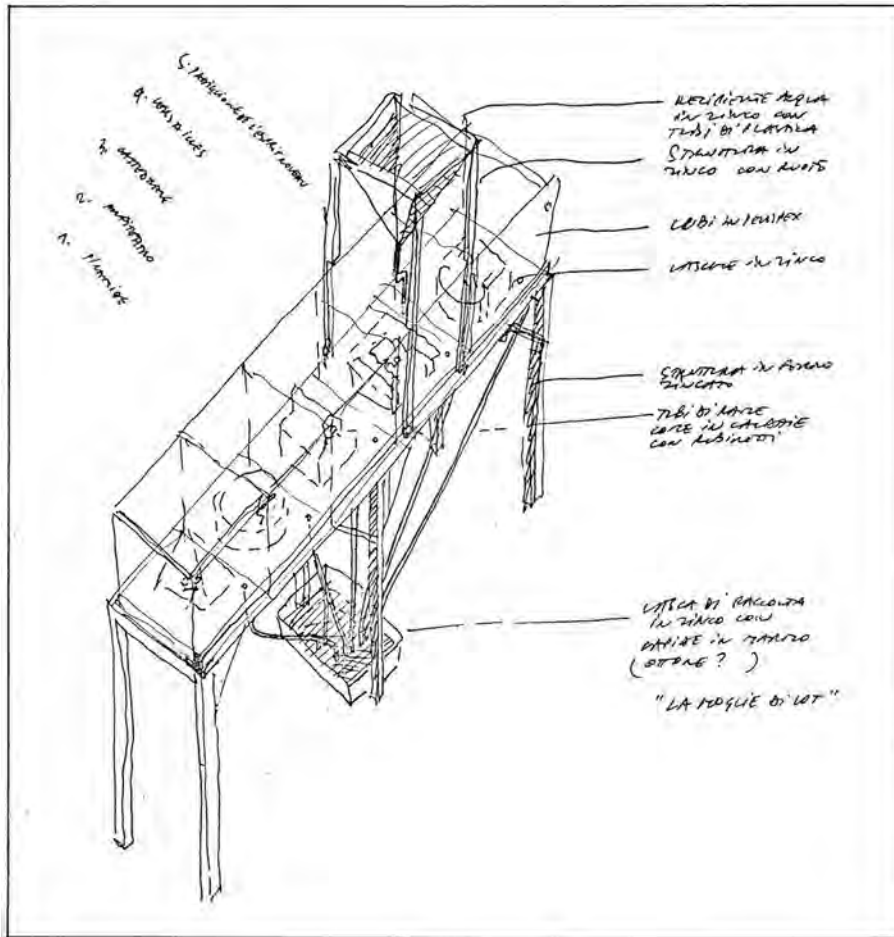
The theoretical performance of drawing

The architectural representations are usually abstract and highly coded media. They facilitate the design and the communication of complex spatial relationships. There exists a quite clear cut between the relatively exclusive and sterile world of representation and the materiality of the building which only later becomes a part of the actual world through its appropriation. Early architectural photomontages operated in a way to blur that demarcation line. They transferred the architectural idea visually into the real world shortcutting the processes and the social actors taking part in the production of the building; not actually and not as convincingly but definitely a lot less painstakingly. But once established, that is a connection which can work both ways. If photomontage makes architecture lose the abstractness of its medium of conception to look more earthly, then, when needed, through the same channel the world could invade representation. Superstudio utilized this not only to criticize the contemporary architectural tendencies but also to contemplate and visualize architecture's relation to its territory and to the urban culture; they let an imagery of life invade architecture's intellectual media precisely as a way of re-connecting the two.

The incorporation of an imagery of mundane life in the architectural visual media could be considered in its interaction with the similar practices in the period in art and architecture. The demarcation lines between the abstract and the figurative, high and low, fine art and popular have been tested and blurred since the early-twentieth century avant-gardes. The Smithsons argued in a 1956 article that advertisement, utilizing popular mass imagery and disseminating through mass media, started to take over one of the traditional functions of fine art: "the definition of what is fine and desirable".⁸⁴ And relating to the everyday and the ordinary through the popular imagery was not necessarily unorthodox in the Europe of 1960s. Archigram magazine was setting new and popular ways of conveying architectural ideas which were influential for, among others, the Florentine groups; The *Utopie* magazine was deploying cartoon aesthetics and imagery; Smithson's were deploying occasional pop references, and so on.⁸⁵ Superstudio images, too, deployed a multiplicity that architectural representation conventionally did not have. But theirs could not be further from the pop imagery. As the stories required, most of the time everything they introduced to the montages were necessarily elementary, simple, natural or tribal. Superstudio, indeed, did utilize some patterns of pop-art and advertising yet their relation, I believe, was more methodical than visual. For instance emphasizing or exaggerating a feature of the product to help to

84 Alison and Peter Smithson, 'But Today We Collect Ads', in, Steven Henry Madoff, ed, *Pop Art, a Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 3. First published in *Ark* (November 1956).

85 Such as the Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio image in the Golden Lane Housing photomontages. Obviously, Smithsons and Team 10 in general, too aimed to re-connect architecture and life in more substantial ways as exemplified by their concerns about identity and alienation, emphasis on a connection between place and life-patterns, and efforts for substituting CIAM's functional classification with categories of House, Street, District, and City. See, among others, Alison Smithson, ed, *Team 10 Primer* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968).



Superstudio. Study on *La Moglie di Lot*. Drawing. 1978.



Superstudio. *La Moglie di Lot*. Kinetic model. 1978.

convey the message is a commonly used advertising technique. This is Superstudio's most prominent technique as well. Only in their case the features were carried away to absurd conclusions.

The mid-twentieth century efforts to relate architecture to the everyday life through the popular mass imagery do have a parallels and interaction with pop-art. But perhaps another post-war art, namely performance art, is more pertinent in explaining the functioning of the Florentine projects.⁸⁶ These drawings register and communicate architectural intellectual practices within theory, comparable to the way photography and video registers and enables the communication of the artistic performance. Albeit, beyond registering the intellectual practice, the drawings facilitate it much the way they facilitate the conception of form in design. In order to fully understand this capacity of the drawing one has to situate it within the representational discourse in architecture, and I do this in the next chapter.

86 Superstudio also produced works which came close to an artistic performance more than an architectural one. *La Moglie di Lot* [The Wife Lot] is perhaps the best example of such a performance. The project comprised a galvanized metal table (251 x 56 x 100 cm) holding five salt models in a zinc basin and another metal structure (56 x 56 x 156 cm) which could slide on the table. The salt models were a pyramid, an amphitheatre, a cathedral, the Versailles Palace, and Pavilion Esprit Nouveau. The metal structure slid over the models respectively, dripping water from an up-side-down pyramid onto the salt models slowly dissolving them. When the first model, the pyramid, dissolved a pyramidal iron-wire structure was revealed; in case of the other models a refractory residential settlement, an empty egg shell, and the brioche of Marie Antoinette were disclosed. Finally when the Corbusien pavilion dissolved the inscription on a brass plate read: "*l'unica architettura sarà la nostra vita*" [the only architecture will be our lives]. The long-lived Superstudio aphorism affirmed the tag line of the project, "architecture exists in time as salt exists in water". *La Moglie di Lot* and *La Coscienza di Zeno* were prepared for 1978 Venice Biennale which incorporated a retrospective on *Architettura Radicale*. *La Moglie di Lot* was created by Frassinelli in collaboration with Natalini.

3. DISCOURSE THROUGH IMAGES

—A report on the functioning of drawings within architecture

In the previous chapter, I studied three projects that deploy what I have called ‘speculative drawings’. I argued that by means of facilitating critique and speculation within theory, these drawings diverge from the more established and conventional functioning of drawings in architecture. They operate on a theoretical surface that is historically occupied by the written text.

That these projects are unorthodox is visible at a glance. But being unorthodox, with which established practice do they break? Precisely in what way? I have argued that said projects re-vitalize an under-used capacity of drawing by facilitating ideation, testing, critique and speculation within theory. They do this not necessarily by introducing new tools and techniques, but rather by manipulating the functioning of the already existing and well-established representational machinery. In order to articulate this point, in this chapter I study the said machinery. In that sense, this chapter offers a contextualization of the speculative drawings within the representational discourse. But it is not an exhaustive contextualization of the Florentine projects in the sense that I study all the capacities of drawing in architecture and compare them point by point with the Florentine drawings. That these drawings diverge from drawing’s common roles is obvious. It would be more sensible to show in what ways they are like the commonplace architectural drawings.

As far as the functioning of drawings in architecture theory is concerned, I already differentiated between three types of drawings in the introductory chapter: descriptive/referential, analytical, and speculative. Then I posited the Florentine projects as a form of speculative practice carried out in the visual media. Alternatively, if one looks at the profession—that part of architecture which is conventionally perceived as the rightful place of drawings and models—one can differentiate mainly three capacities of drawing: design, presentation, and production. I can argue that the Florentine projects either bear similarities to each of these capacities or become meaningful in relation to them, although they obviously operate within theory and are not meant for material production. The *Monumento* drawings are comparable to the design drawings in the sense that they visualize a non-existing architectural object for its testing. It is only



Ettore Sottsass. The Planet as Festival: Design of a Roof to Discuss Under (showing city fragments including Archigram's 'Walking City'). Drawing. 1972-73.

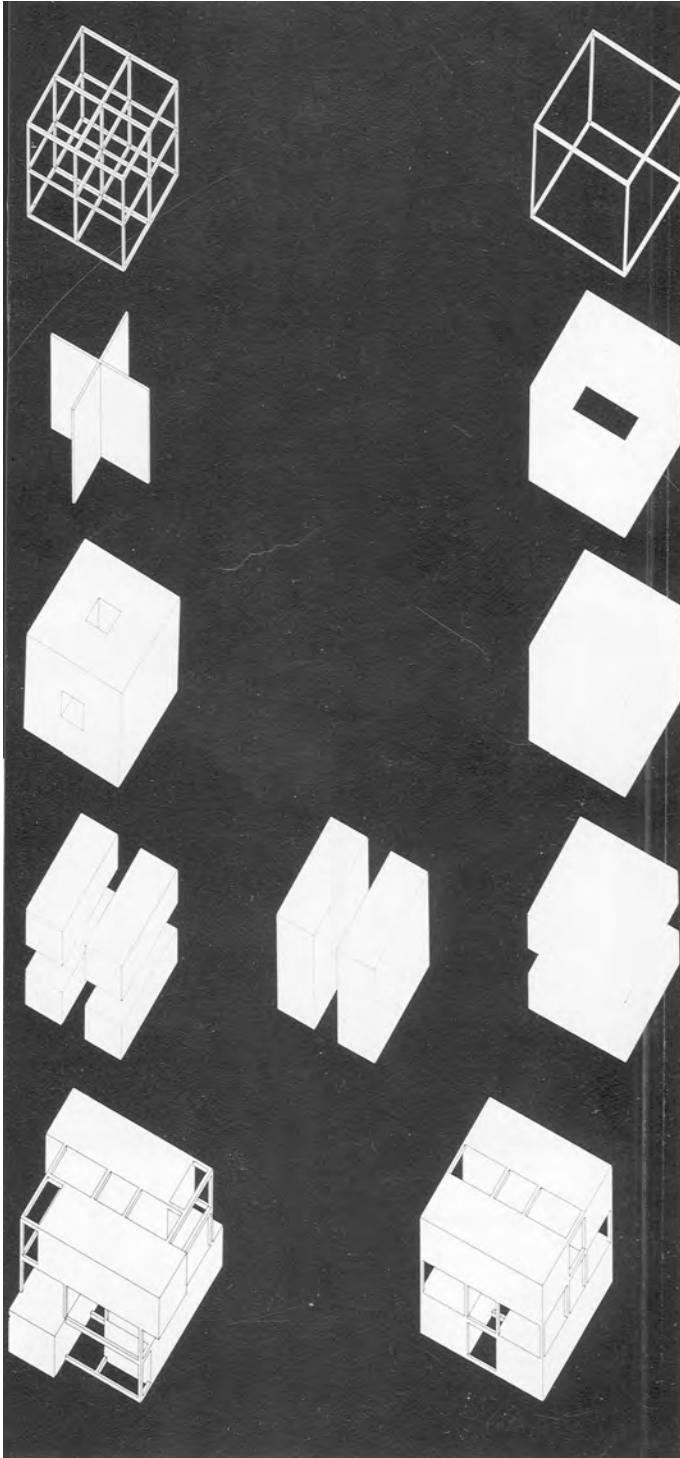
that in design, the architectural object is meant to develop, get refined and convincing; whereas *Il Monumento* is meant to fail and the drawings precisely aim to convince one that it would fail. The *Monumento* drawings are like the presentation drawings in the sense that they are produced to propagate a finalized architectural scheme in a visually appealing way. Most of the photomontages not only function but also look exactly like the commonplace presentation drawings except for the absurdity of the architectural object that they visualize. And finally, as I have been arguing, *Il Monumento* gains its meaning precisely by not being a project for building.

As discussed later in this chapter the connection between the drawing and the building is among the core and the most established codes of architecture. As early as the Roman antiquity, drawing conventions were socially sufficiently established to suggest a correspondence between the drawing and the building—sufficient enough for presentation drawings to be accepted as fair impressions of the proposed architectural scheme.⁸⁷ Drawing gradually became the primary medium for the production of the buildings; starting in the Gothic period with a very limited number of cases, spreading and getting more established towards the end of Renaissance, and being naturalized after the industrial revolution. In the books of architecture, drawing, as the substitute of building, became the complementary medium of the written text for theory since the late-fifteenth century. It is this historical relation between the drawing and the building that enables the Florentine projects. And it is this relation, in turn, which they intentionally and systematically disturb.

Their distancing of the drawing from the building enables it to engage in discursive relations within the discipline or symbolic relations with the rest of the world, which is a privileged position that is historically granted almost exclusively to the building. The severing of the connection between the drawing and the building is not a straightforward matter, for the autonomy of the drawing is a delicate issue: in order to accomplish the intended effect the drawing needs to remain architectural, mainly by means of a combination of its media, content, or context. Once accomplished, this capacity opens up a field of operation for the drawing to produce architecture theory; and not only the kind that is intended to delineate didactic and paradigmatic models, but also the type of theory that intends critique, or speculates on new ways of looking at architectural and urban phenomena, constructs architectural thought paradigms.

Rather than dwelling further on the position of the Florentine drawings in relation to the taxonomy I formulated, this chapter tries to understand how the speculative drawings fit into architectural representation understood as the media of the architectural intellect. Briefly studying the historical constitution of the drawing's functioning in architecture, by looking at the crucial inflection points, demonstrates mainly two things. Firstly, that the institutionalization of drawing as the main medium of architecture overlaps with

⁸⁷ See 'The institutionalization of drawing's capacities' in this chapter.



Peter D. Eisenman. Cardboard Architecture: House IV. Drawing. 1973.

the divergence of the material production of the building from the daily architectural practices. Secondly, that the history of the institutionalization of architectural drawings is mainly the history of the intellectualization of architecture. And looking at this history is crucial to understand how drawings facilitate architectural intellect in design and theory alike. It is especially in relation to this historical perspective it becomes curious that drawing that helps constituting architecture as a legitimate intellectual activity by facilitating design is pigeonholed, that its role is usually secondary in contemplating architectural matters beyond singular design tasks, beyond the building. Addressing this issue requires reassessing the relation of the specific medium and the specific content. For neither architectural representation nor architecture theory are monotonous or monolithic bodies consisting of necessarily similar practices, one cannot address their relation in general terms. Thus, on the one hand, I comparatively study how the images and the written text facilitate and communicate ideas in general and architecture theory in particular. And on the other hand, I try and differentiate between theoretical practices that lend themselves to these media to varying extents.

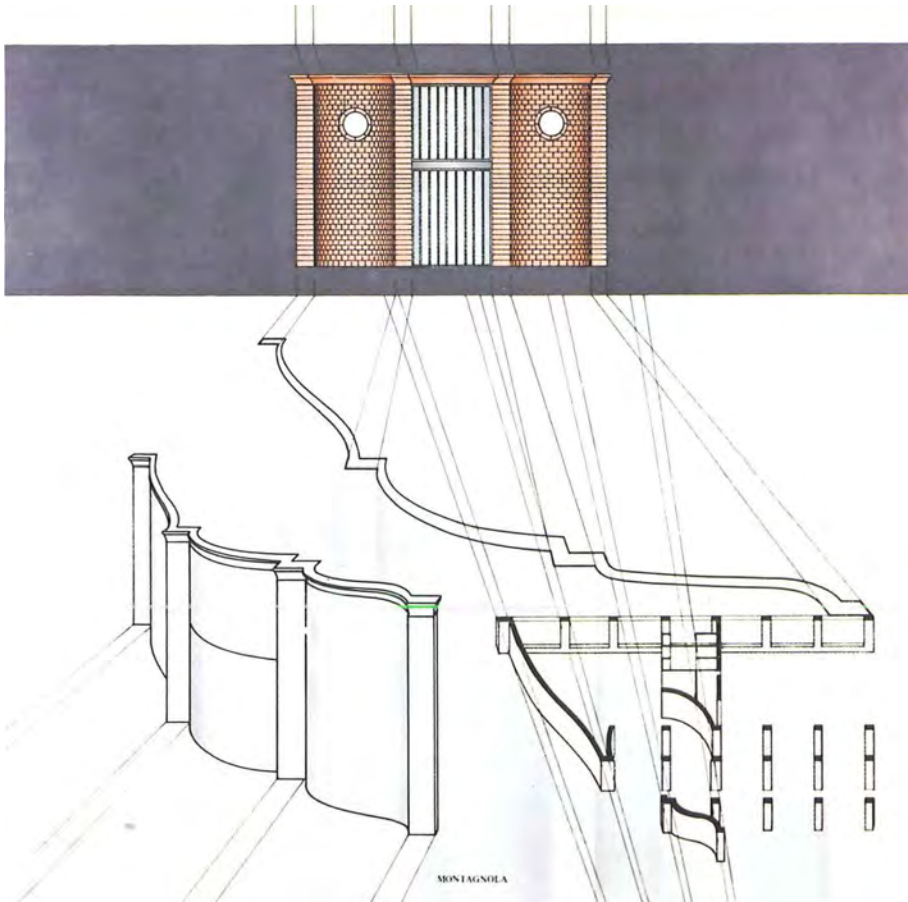
Architecture and representation

It is possible to distinguish between two main types of relationship between architecture and representation.⁸⁸ One involves the symbolic relationship between a building and a reference; be that reference internal to architecture (eg, historical precedents, design process), external (eg, political agenda, economic interest), or intermediate (eg, program).⁸⁹ The other is the relationship between a building and its representations in diverse media, such as the drawings and the models. Clearly, here I engage with the latter and I particularly focus on the drawings more than the models. However, the demarcation line between and within these categories may blur at times; especially when the drawings become ends in themselves. But, in order to see what gets blurred let me first demarcate the categories by focusing on the latter.

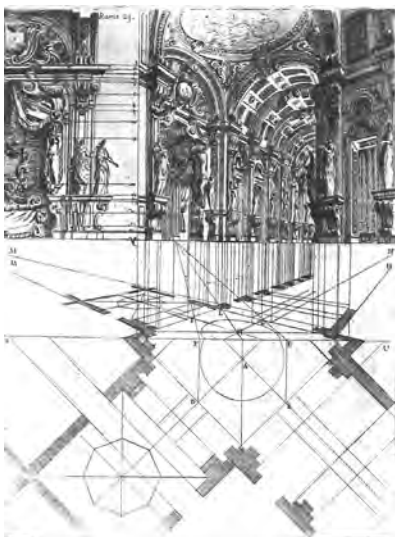
The relationship between a building and its representations is rather complicated and manifold. It is useful as a starting point to distinguish between two kinds of representations with respect to their relation to their object: the representations that precede the building and the representations that succeed it. The representations preceding and producing a building constitute the historical/institutionalized medium of

88 Most of this sub-section was previously published in Emre Altürk, 'Architectural Representation as a Medium of Critical Agencies', *Journal of Architecture*, v.3 n.2 (2008), pp. 133-152.

89 For example: Richard Meier buildings reference the formal vocabulary of historical architectural modernism; Peter Eisenman's series of house projects are often presented as representations of their own design processes; any building that aims at some level of political propaganda references that political agenda within a specific context (Albert Speer's German Pavilion for 1937 Paris World's Fair would be an abundantly clear example); the shopping mall is can be considered as a symbol of consumption and the economic system that induces it; many projects are claimed to be generated by their program to the extent that they are caused by and reflect it, as in the case of early twentieth century functionalism.



M. C. Betrix, Consolacio, B. Reichlin, F. Reinhardt. School in Montagnola. Drawing. 1977.



Ferdinando Bibiena. Una scena per angolo (from Architettura Civile). Drawing. 1711.

the architectural practices and they correspond to profession's legitimate field of action: the design process. The building may be the historical *raison d'être* of the profession but it involves the representations of the building far more than it involves the building itself. Of course, the material production of the building started to diverge from the architectural design activity long ago, arguably in late Renaissance. This divergence was both caused by and the cause of a reorganization of the social production of buildings. Yet, it was enabled by the very institutionalization of drawing as the medium through which architects operate on their object (indirectly, from a distance and with a time lag) and transfer their ideas to others for the materialization of the building.

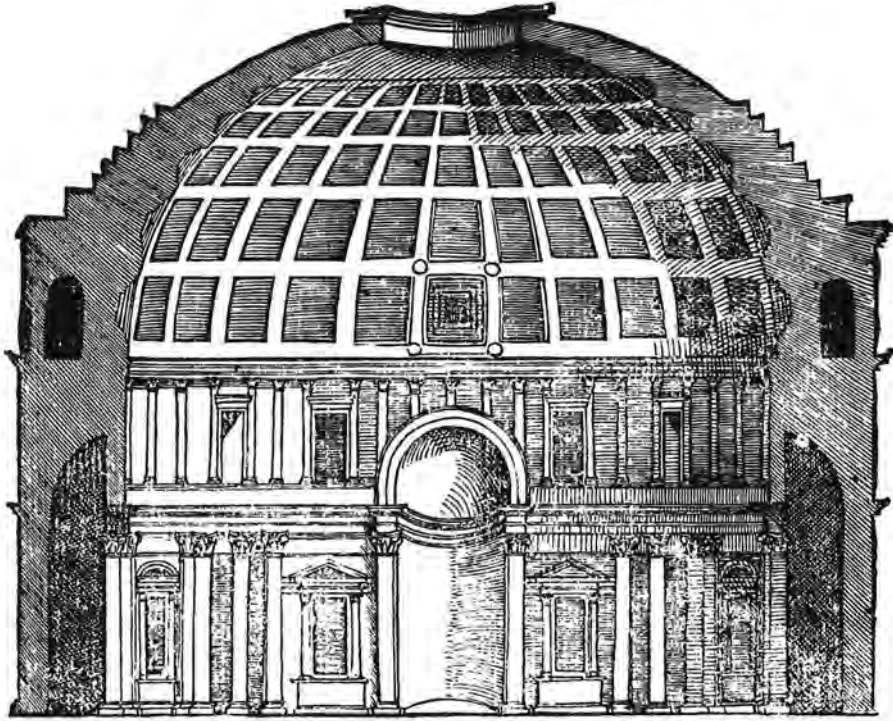
Today, this is institutionalized to the extent that architectural ideas are not only developed but also should preferably be confined within the design process.⁹⁰ More often than not, architects' activity culminates in drawings. Architecture offices take some part in the supervision of the construction and obviously architects still get credit for the building. However, it is the production and the submission of the (working/contract/production) drawings that architects are responsible for and it is through these drawings that services, contracts and payments are regulated. That is why Robin Evans is nothing but plausible when he argues "architects do not make buildings but they make drawings of buildings".⁹¹ Alberto Pérez-Gómez goes one step further arguing that "since the inception of Western architecture in classical Greece, the architect has not "made" buildings; rather he or she has made the mediating artifacts that make *significant* buildings possible".⁹²

The second kind, the representations after a building is built, are usually not the primary concern in architecture for they don't contribute to the production of buildings thus falling categorically out of the established sense of 'architectural representation'. Yet, they have an immense effect on both architectural representation and the reception of architecture. Buildings may be spatial, but for centuries they have been communicated mainly through images—through their flat representations. Today the relationship between a building and its images has become quite peculiar. The circulation of the images (mainly, photographs and drawings) through periodicals, books and over the internet has come to be the main way through which the information on buildings is disseminated—especially for those prominent buildings which shape the discourse. Most of the time, it is through the images of such a building that one gets acquainted

90 Timothy McDonald and Alice Chun write: "Design is understood as the rightful place for architects' ideas to be formed, developed, documented and sealed. Consequently, building has become the rightful place of builders—and lawsuits, depending on the degree to which architects' ideas remain in flux. As a result, the forming of ideas through building is not only discouraged in architectural practice, but also considered categorically irresponsible." See 'Translation and Materiality: The Space of Invention Between Designing and Building' *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 55, No. 3, February 2002, p. 183.

91 Robin Evans, 'Architectural Projection', *op. cit.*, p. 21.

92 Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 7. Original quotations and italics.



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Sebastiano Serlio. Pantheon, section. Etching. 1540.

with it rather than through actual physical experience. Moreover, even the actual experience is usually conditioned by the prior knowledge acquired through the images.⁹³ In any case, usually, the image is constantly and easily available as opposed to the actual building that stands elsewhere; remote and perhaps inaccessible.

This, of course, is just a part of the profusion of images in general. We are surrounded by TVs, computer screens, printed material, billboards, and bombarded with a two dimensional version of the world. As Evans argues, “flat versions of embodied events” are profuse to such an extent that they long ceased to be a matter of even mild curiosity: ‘we tend to think of them as a part of the ever expanding technology of information transfer’.⁹⁴ In consequence, we have come to take the image of something, as the thing itself without a second thought. In other words, we are today quite easygoing about the space between the image and the object and between the word and the concept that Foucault problematized through Magritte.⁹⁵ Moreover, in the age of digital reproduction,⁹⁶ and after Baudrillard,⁹⁷ the priority of the object *vis-à-vis* its representations is not to be taken for granted anyway: the aura and the authority of the object have been withering for at least a century now.

In short, both the ways the buildings are produced and the ways the information on buildings disseminate are heavily dependent on representation, more specifically on projections such as drawings and photographs. However, what is historically and specifically called architectural representation are the drawings and models preceding and producing the building. As such, architectural representation forms the interval between the abstract thought and the material building.

Functions and types of drawing

Architectural representation is hardly a uniform body. The above suggested categorization helps distinguishing between the various relations of architecture and representation. Yet what I just singled out above as architectural representation is still

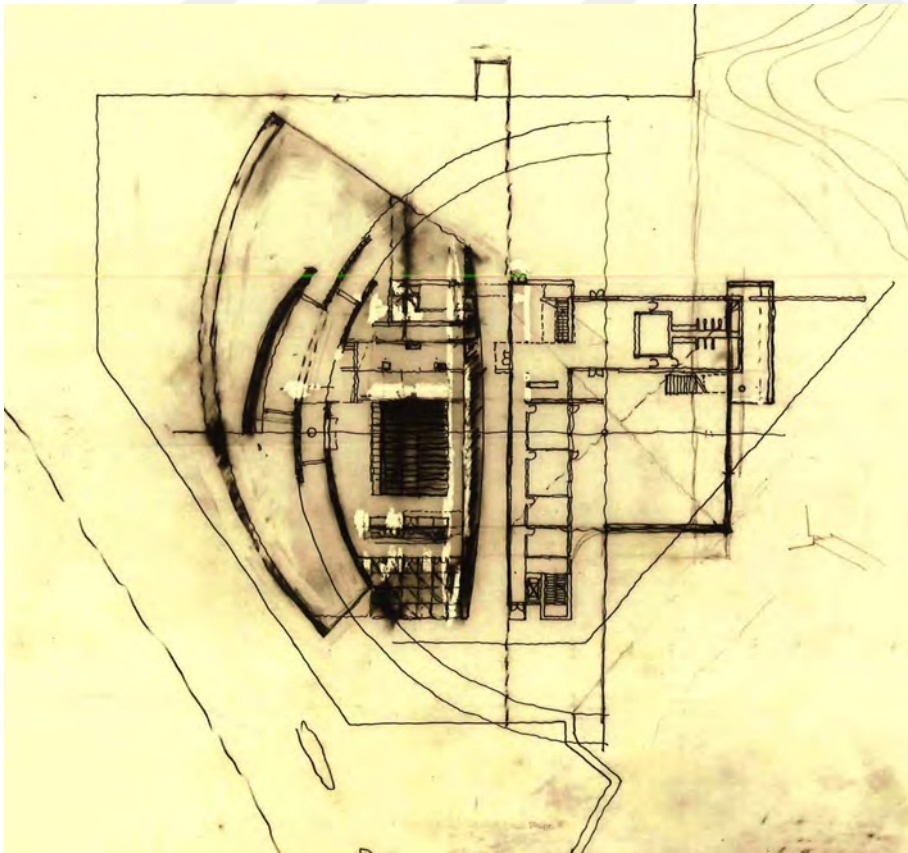
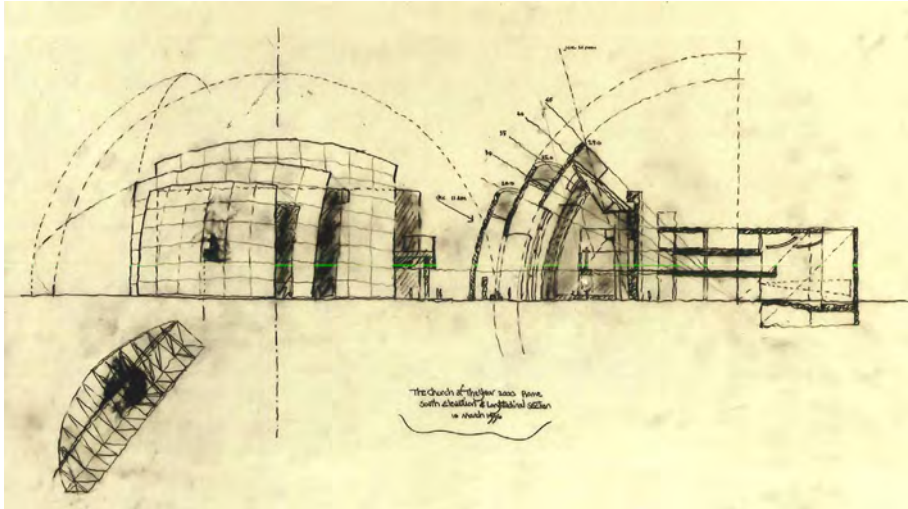
93 To give a commonplace example, one’s experience of Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is almost never without some expectation caused by the images and footages one has seen before their encounter with the building. This is also true for cities like New York, Paris, London, Venice, Hong Kong and so on.

94 Evans, ‘Architectural Projection’, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

95 See Michel Foucault, *This is not a Pipe*, James Harkness, trs. and ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). First published in French, *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*, 1973 (preliminary manuscript published in 1968, in *Les Cahiers du Chemin*).

96 Benjamin argued that in the age of its technological reproducibility the original artwork is destined to loose its authority. See Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in, Hannah Arendt, ed, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 217-252. First published in German, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, 1936.

97 See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Sheila Faria Glaser, trs, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994). First published in French, *Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981.



Richard Meier. Elevation section, and plan studies for the Jubilee Church. Drawing. 1996.

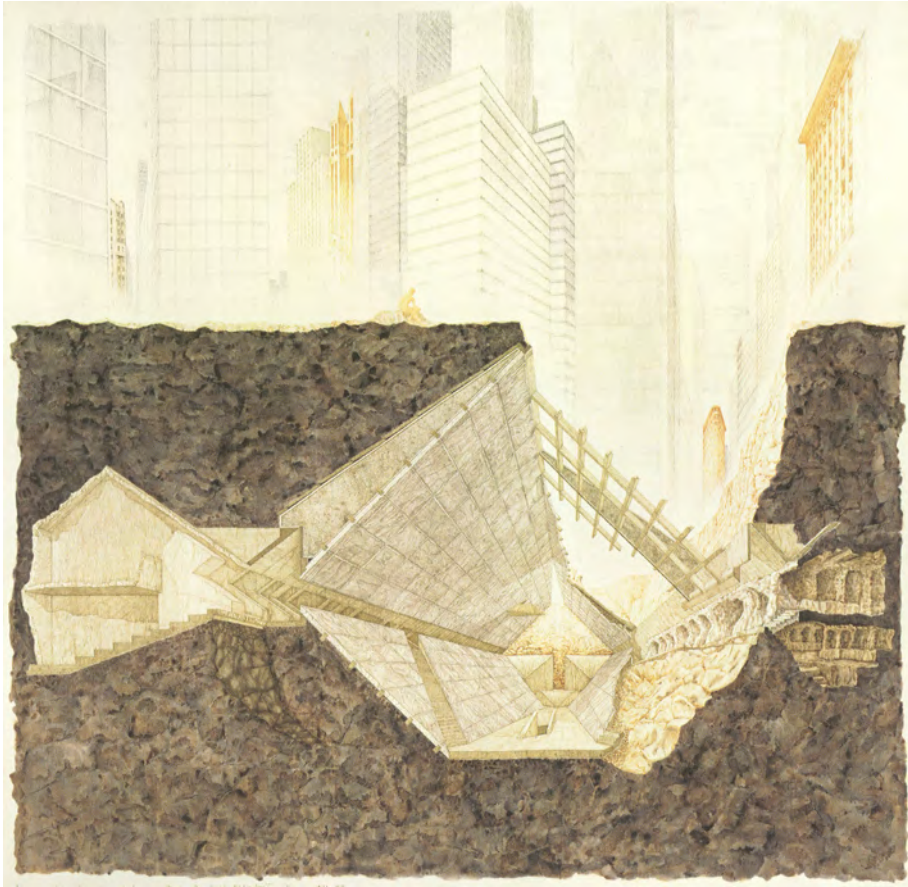
very diverse in terms of both functions and types. In other words, there are different tasks achieved through representation and they are not all achieved with necessarily the same tools and techniques. So there are two nets we can throw on the diverse body of architectural representation to better grasp it. I start with the former.

The indispensability of representation for architecture as we know it today stems from its particular position between the thought and the building; or more specifically, from the communication it facilitates in this position. This facilitation occurs on two levels: first, drawing facilitates a creative ideation and the materialization of ideas in the design process, and second, it enables material production of the building by operating between the involved parties. It is not only difficult but also uninteresting to try prioritizing one of these levels over the other. It is true that the capacity of drawing to transfer the information necessary for the materialization of the building is what enables the constitution of today's architect's social position: as the designer and not necessarily the builder. On the other hand, without drawing's capacity to facilitate the creative intellectual designation of buildings that we came to call 'design', the profession couldn't have achieved the status of art which evolved into our contemporary conception of architecture.⁹⁸

Being initially a profession, architectural activities are predominantly directed towards a pragmatic end: the building; or more precisely, towards the intermediating drawings and objects that enable the social production of the building. So, obviously, whatever shifts, gaps, holds, feedback-loops the process may involve, the above mentioned capacities of facilitating design and intermediating construction are sequential. Along this directed sequence, the tools(types of drawings) do not necessarily change. Yet, the character of the drawings does change. Drawings enable various degrees of communication and, in so doing they can be located on a scale based on the extent of communication that they are intended to achieve. In principle, the later in the design process the drawings are produced the more people they are intended to communicate with, thus the more they comply with a set of shared conventions and standards. In fact, many binary-oppositions may happily form the two extremes of this scale, such as ambiguous-definite, tentative-certain, personal-public, experimental-conclusive, and so on.

The drawings that are produced earlier in the design process are usually more abstract, vague, or even intimate. This haziness is obviously due to the sheer number of decisions that are yet to be made. However, it is also due to the number of people that the drawing is intended for, which is at this stage probably a few, if not one. For although drawing is usually a medium of communication and being so, it has to be legible to a minimum of one (other) person, a drawing is also a medium of facilitation,

98 On the various capacities of architectural drawing especially see Edward Robbins, *Why Architects Draw* (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1994).



Gaetano Pesce. Church of Solitude, transverse section. Drawing. 1974-77.

and being so, it may very well be used by an individual for their own use and for its basic merit: enabling a materialization of ideas. Architectural drawings are produced for and capable of making spatial ideas accessible and palpable. They enable architects to materialize abstract thoughts and images that they supposedly see with their “mind’s eye”. This process is not necessarily as sequential as the Renaissance (or Albertian) phrase suggests. One arguably never designs or “sees” the building in mind then draw it simply to communicate it. One rather sees, or at least refines, it through the act of drawing. This is drawing’s basic use for design: a creation/visualization of ideas enabling their examination, testing, and unfolding.⁹⁹ As Michael Graves argued, “that a certain set of marks on a field can play back into one’s mind and consequently bring forth further elaboration” is the very premise of the architectural drawing.¹⁰⁰ Materializing ideas through graphical means in order to develop them is obviously not specific to architecture. Charles Sanders Peirce writes,

Reasoning is dependent upon Graphical Signs... By ‘graphical’ I mean capable of being written or drawn, so as to be spatially arranged... I do not believe one can go very deeply into any important and considerably large subject of discussion without using space as a field in which to arrange mental processes and images of objects.¹⁰¹

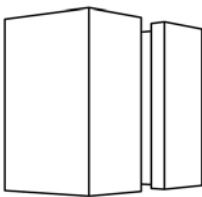
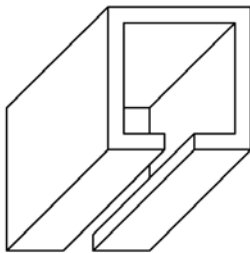
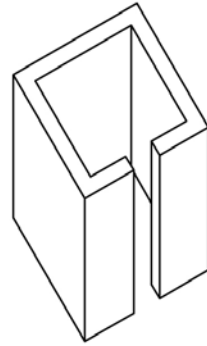
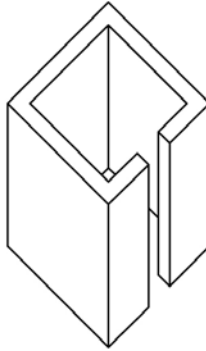
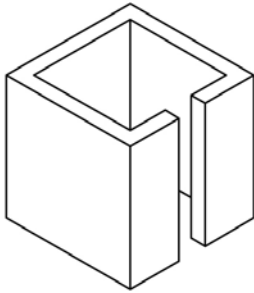
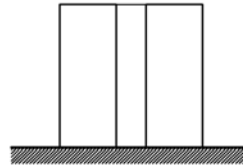
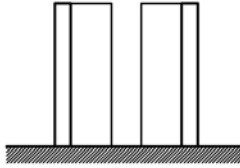
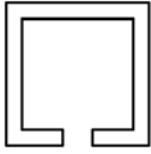
A task as complex and big as designing a building obviously requires a feedback loop comprising materialization of ideas through graphics/objects and then acting upon these materialized ideas. Drawings and models are not only the conventional media to do this, they are also simply pragmatically apt for devising buildings and spatially designating building parts due to the immediate and direct relationship that they are capable of producing with the objects in space.

The variety in the character and in the communicative scale of the drawings is deployed in regulating the communication with a range of involved parties. Between the architects participating in the design usually the whole range is acceptable from a vague sketch scribbled down on a napkin to the working drawings. However not every one needs to witness the whole process or see every drawing. The aspects of the scheme that are chosen to be presented and the manner of presentation vary considerably in drawings when it is presented to, for instance, a fellow designer for discussion, a senior designer for criticism, a junior designer for further assignment, a client for feedback, a specialist for consultation, a supplier for order, a contractor for production, or an editor for publication.

⁹⁹ Obviously what necessitates such mediatory machinery, at the bottom line, is the material means and the time required for the production of buildings.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Graves ‘The Necessity for Drawing: Tangible Speculation’, *Architectural Design*, v.47 n.6 (June 1977), pp 384.

¹⁰¹ See C. S. Peirce, ‘An Essay Toward Improving Our Reasoning in Security and in Uberty’, C. S. *Peirce Papers*, Harvard University Houghton Library, file 683, cited in Michael Leja, ‘Peirce, Visuality, and Art’, *Representations*, 72 (Fall 2000) pp. 101-102.



Main architectural drawing types: orthographic drawings (plan, section, elevation), paraline drawings (isometric, axonometric 45°, axonometric 30°-60°, plan oblique 45°, elevation oblique 45°), and perspective.

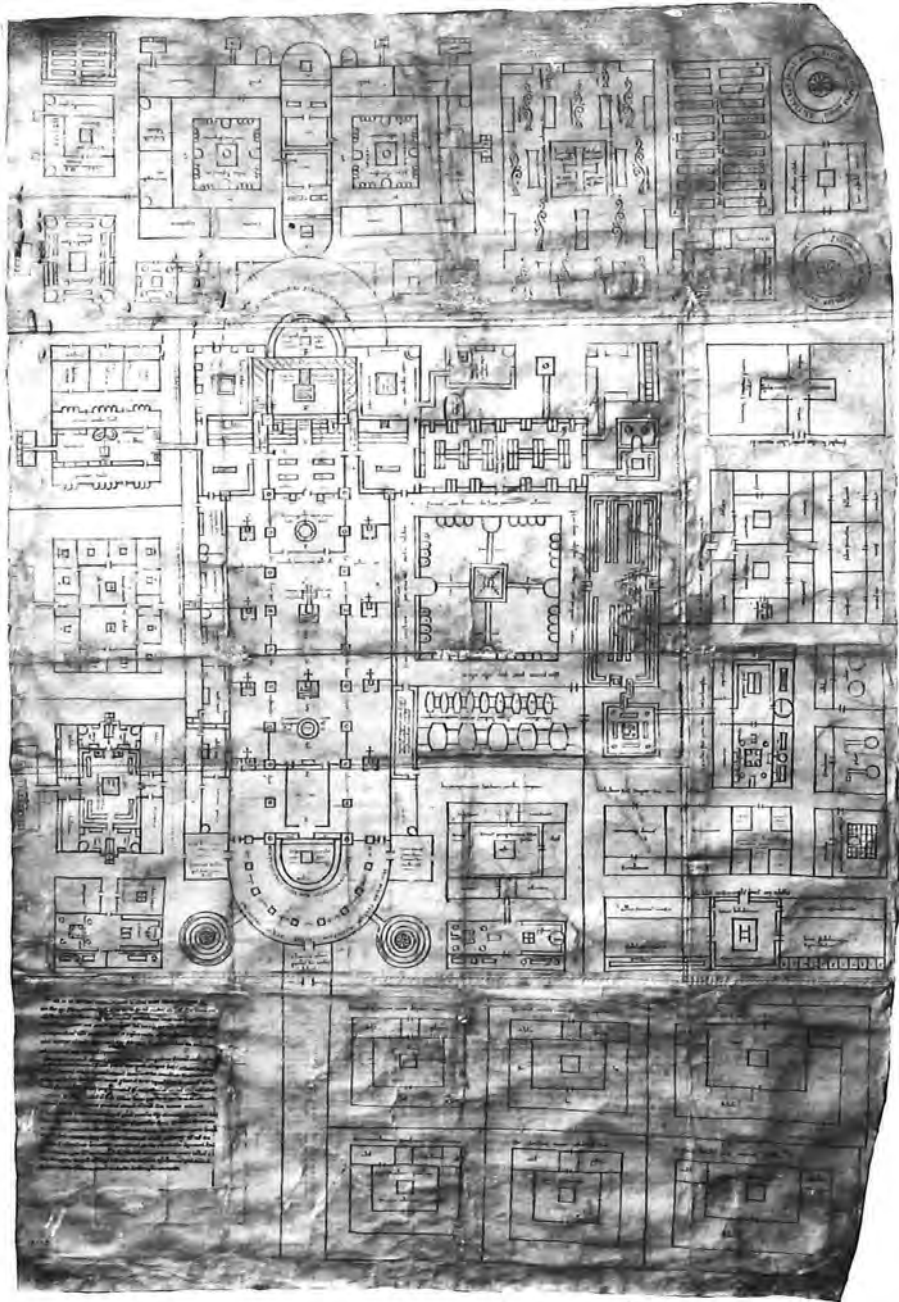
Some drawing types may achieve some of these functions better than the others or certain drawings may be conventionally, contractually or legally required to be submitted at certain stages in design. The type of the drawing, however, doesn't necessarily determine its capacity. A section, for instance, can very well be the first sketch that guides the design process, a presentation drawing that describes the design, or a technical drawing meant to enable production. The capacity of the drawing, on the other hand, usually determines most aspects of the drawing. Depending on the capacity that it is meant for, the same section, for example, can vary within a range from a sketch that raises questions and explores potentials for a certain part of the scheme, to a slick and glossy presentation rendering, still to a technical notation. However, through convenience and convention, as well as due to the intrinsic properties of the drawings, some types are affiliated with certain functions; as perspective is affiliated almost exclusively with presentation since it offers a real-life-like impression of the project and since it does not provide the specific information for construction in an easily extractable manner.¹⁰²

A certain capacity of representation comes around in relation to its means and it is the main determining factor in the functioning of this means. It should be noted, however, the relation between architecture and representation or between a capacity of representation and its means is not simply causal. Representational means enable a capacity and once the institutionalization of that capacity is under way it pushes its means towards systemization and sophistication. That is why in the relationship of the two there are no clear cuts, immediate and thorough reorganizations of one due to the inventions or changes in the other. The relation between the two is that of a mutual-validation and mutual-enabling which evolved and changed both throughout their common history.

The institutionalization of drawing's capacities

So far I have mentioned three capacities of representation in the profession: namely design, presentation, and production. Representation thus plays various and crucial

¹⁰² The flexibility of drawing types in fulfilling various functions enable architects to operate with a rather limited number of drawing types. All these types utilize projective geometry since they engage with three dimensional forms on two dimensional surfaces. As such, the relation between projection lines connecting the "object" and the drawing's picture plane is usually used to define the drawings. Most common of these drawings are obviously the orthographic projections. These are parallel projections (imaginary projection lines run parallel to each other) where the picture plane and the bisecting surface (cutting or running tangent to the form) are parallel to each other and perpendicular to the sight of the observer, eliminating foreshortening or distortion on the parallel surfaces. Common drawings of this type are plans, sections, and elevations. The so-called paraline drawings assemble two/three parallel projections, albeit tilted or shifted, nevertheless to scale. Perspective, on the other hand, is a conic projection where the projection lines converge to a point suggesting the location of the observer. Benefiting from foreshortening, as well as the established conventions, perspective offers a real-life-like image.



St. Gall monastery plan. 820.

parts throughout the process from the initial intention to the building. Representation is the medium of the architect's intellectual labor, the craft in rendering ideas visible, and the means for communicating spatial configurations. It is thus the testimony to the intellectual and the social character of the profession. At the risk of sounding dramatic, it is the testimony to the existence of architecture as we know it today. In the preface of his seminal compilation on the history of the profession Spiro Kostof argues:

Indeed even without documentation it can fairly be postulated that architects were aboard from the moment when there was the desire for a sophisticated built environment. For buildings of substantial scale or a certain degree of complexity must be conceived by someone before construction of them can begin. This is what architects are, conceivers of buildings. What they do is to design, that is, supply concrete images for a new structure so that it can be put up. The primary task of the architect, then as now, is to communicate what proposed buildings should be and look like.¹⁰³

This is a text-book definition of the essential architectural activity and it is bound up with representation. Obviously the job descriptions of the building practices have changed through time and varied in different geographies. So did the relation of architectural representations to their object. Yet, the production of images remained as a crucial part of the architectural activities and evolved in relation to them.¹⁰⁴ Major changes in the intellectual and the social character of the profession always went hand in hand with those in representation. The importance, the consideration and the intellectual labor that goes into the design of buildings in advance has dramatically increased in the last five centuries. Be that because of architecture's claim to the artistic and the scientific or because of the changing social and technological conditions that required thorough conception of—an increasing number of—buildings before their construction, this definitely had a structural relation with the drawings that facilitate design and form the demarcation line between design and the building. The necessity to test the spatial ideas before the construction and outside the building site pushed the design drawings to sophistication. A parallel sophistication of working drawings enabled the demanded emancipation of the architect from the site. Thus the intellectualization of the profession and the representational tools available to architects dramatically changed their social position and perception.

This last point is crucial in the constitution the architect's identity. As a social figure the architect is historically involved in the production of buildings. The construction site, however, now as in the past, does not immediately strike one as a place where sophisticated intellectual work is carried out by gentlemen. And this was precisely what

¹⁰³ Preface to Spiro Kostof, *The Architect, Chapters in the History of the Profession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. v.

¹⁰⁴ Be it general, this remark is not universal. Even the broadest of my generalizations on the historical relationship between architecture and representation would not exceed the limits of the previously Roman world, more precisely, Europe and the Mediterranean basin.



Jacopo Bertola. Construction of a rotunda (delineating the architect consulting the plans with the scholars and handing it to the mason for the production). Painting.

was at stake, what architects historically and desperately aspired to: being on equal footing with the intellectuals, say people of theology, law, or medicine instead of being affiliated with the people of manual labor. The books on the history of the profession begin with and stress throughout that historically it is the conceiving of a building that is the architect's trade as opposed to the physical materialization of it.¹⁰⁵ Kostof quotes Plato: 'architects contribute knowledge, not craftsmanship'.¹⁰⁶ This is even more valid for the treatises written by the architects. In fact, stressing the intellectual side of architecture is the main motivation of writing an architectural treatise in the first place. A treatise usually also is a demonstration of the claim that architecture is not a straightforward profession carried out without much thinking; that there is a discourse involved which deserves pages of elaboration.

The oldest architectural treatise to reach us begins with the same argument. Vitruvius argues that in "all arts there is the actual work and the theory of it," the former being the expertise of the one trained in the specific field, the latter being common to all scholars.¹⁰⁷ The building is the "substance" of architecture and the architect has to master his practice by "continuous and regular exercise" of the profession. But he also needs to be a scholar able to theorize, that is, "demonstrate and explain" architectural production on the basis of trans-disciplinary scholarship.¹⁰⁸ It is true that although *De architectura* is the single most important work that offers an insight to the architectural practices in the Roman antiquity, Vitruvius usually is not a figure whose word is taken for granted. The famous list of the fields in which, he argues, the architect has to be knowledgeable is often ridiculed. The list comprises drawing, geometry, arithmetic, optics, history, philosophy, physics, music, astronomy, and medicine. In fact, any modern day architecture student rushing from the design studio to the structure class, studying art history and building technology in the same week would probably see at least 'some' truth to Vitruvius's list. And, he openly states that he is not talking about an expertise in all these fields.¹⁰⁹ Yet even if this list was an exaggeration, the main reason for such pretension was to exalt the profession to an intellectual level that requires vast knowledge in many related fields. His treatise is the oldest endeavor that we know of to engage in an effort to shift architectural activities from the craft in site to a discipline.

In fact the role that Vitruvius assigns to drawing, in and of itself, already seems to be close to enable the emancipation of the architect from the 'messy construction site' if

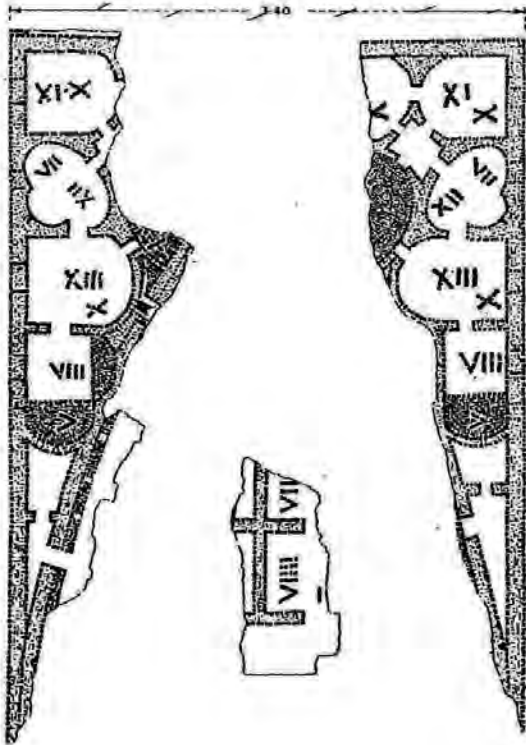
105 For general reading on the history of the profession see: Martin Shaw Briggs, *The Architect in History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927); Spiro Kostof, *op. cit.* Also see Frank Jenkins, *Architect and Patron* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

106 Plato, *Politicus*, 259E. Cited in Kostof, 'The Practice of Architecture in the Ancient World: Egypt and Greece', in, Kostof, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

107 Vitruvius, *De architectura*, *op. cit.*, 1.1.15.

108 *Ibid.*, 1.1.1-2.

109 *Ibid.*, 1.1.13. "[I]n the midst of all this great variety of subjects, an individual cannot attain to perfection in each, ..."



Roman mosaic showing a bath plan (with the dimensions of the rooms in Roman numerals).



Hagia Sophia mosaic showing baby Jesus being offered the church itself and the city of Constantinople by the emperors

such division of labor were socially favored then:

Arrangement [design] includes the putting of things in their proper places and the elegance of effect which is due to adjustments appropriate to the character of the work. Its forms of expression are these: groundplan, elevation, and perspective [or section].¹¹⁰

We do not know it for sure, yet it seems highly unlikely that the Romans used detailed working drawings.¹¹¹ Thus, the architect figure was still bounded up with the construction site. As far as the drawings go, dimensioned plans and elevations, perspective-like drawings, shaded and colored renderings were in common use.¹¹² Although it was again not necessarily the centre of their activities, pre-Roman architects drew too.¹¹³ But what we know for certain is that the two of the above noted capacities of architectural representation, namely design and presentation, were already carried out by drawings around the time Vitruvius was writing his treatise, that is, around 25 B.C. Evidently, drawing conventions were socially sufficiently established to suggest a correspondence between the drawing and the building; sufficient enough for the presentation drawings to be accepted as fair impressions of the proposed building, forming a basis on which the project could be judged—approved or rejected. On the other hand, the lack of the detailed and complete working drawings shows that the modern presumption of a “precise” and “objective” correspondence between the drawing and building was still far. The drawing, clearly a part of basic architectural activity, had not assumed ‘the’ pivotal position in architecture just then.

The next significant ‘data point’ to observe the evolution of the drawing’s functioning within architecture would be the Gothic architecture. To the extent that one can make generalizations about a period that spans nearly 700 years, it can be said that the pre-Gothic medieval ages did not quite witness the Vitruvian architect and their representational machinery getting significantly closer to that of today’s.¹¹⁴ There are some surviving drawings and it is known that models were used. Yet the social

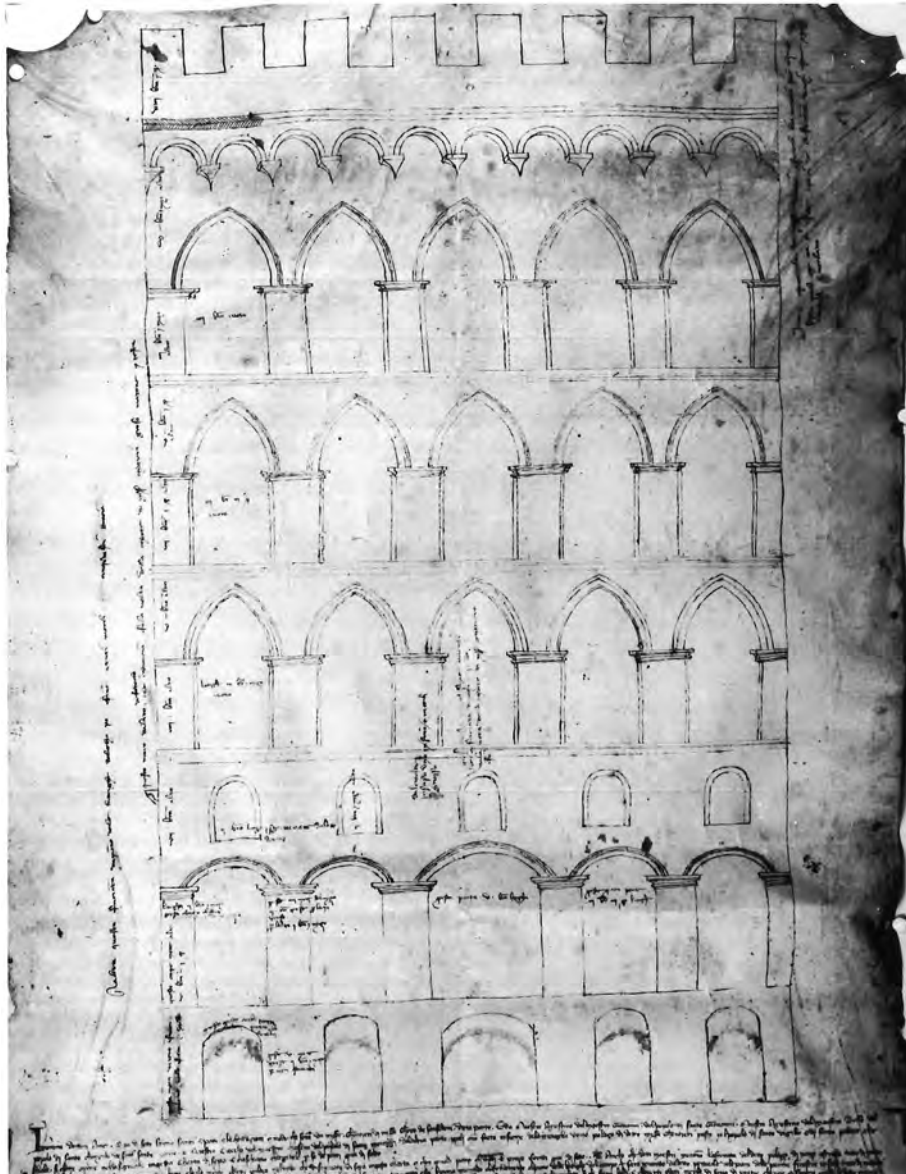
110 *Ibid.*, 1.2.2. This is a controversial paragraph. The wording that Vitruvius uses for the drawing types is: *ichnographia*, *ortographia*, *sciographia*. Alberto Pérez-Gómez argues “Vitruvius was not referring to linear perspective [by *sciographia*], but rather to a perception of the building’s totality in depth, a view which reconciled the internal and external orders, the plan and the elevation”. He also refers to Daniele Barbaro’s remark that *sciographia* is not to be confused with *scenographia* [stage design] which was the “true province of perspective”. Instead of *perspectiva artificialis*, Barbaro argued, the list of drawings includes the section or the profile. See Alberto Pérez-Gómez, ‘Architecture as Drawing’, *Journal of Architectural Education*, v. 36, n. 2 (Winter 1982), p. 3. See also Daniele Barbaro, *La Pratica della Perspettiva* (Sala Bolognese: Arnaldo Forni, 1980 [1569]).

111 See William L. MacDonald, ‘Roman Architects’, in, Kostof, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

112 *Ibid.*

113 Kostof, ‘The Practice of Architecture in the Ancient World: Egypt and Greece’, in, Kostof, *op. cit.*

114 For a good review of the subject see John Harvey, *The Medieval Architect* (London: Wayland, 1972); also see Martin Shaw Briggs, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-129; Kostof, ‘The Architect in the Middle Ages, East and West’, in, Kostof, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-95; Nikolaus Pevsner, ‘The Term ‘Architect’ in the Middle Ages’, *Speculum*, XVII (1942), pp. 549-562; Andrew Saint, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-50.



Giovanni di Agostino. Façade drawing in the Sansedoni Palace Contract. 1340.

position of the profession did not necessarily encourage the sophistication of its tools. The Vitruvian ideal of the *architectus*, who is both knowledgeable in 'liberal arts' and an expert in building technology, had considerably faded.¹¹⁵ The design and the supervision of the building were still the tasks of the architect, or rather the master, who was a member of the guilds and probably laboring manually in the construction site at least until the thirteenth century.

In the Gothic era, however, we start to see changes concerning the structure of the profession. There is certainly not a definite separation between design and construction just yet. However the signs are clearly there. Franklin Toker asserts that as early as the mid-thirteenth century leading masters were prized not only as artisans but as intellectual creators.¹¹⁶ These masters were able to execute several buildings far from their home base simultaneously "working primarily as designers and supervisors rather than as builders". This position was enabled by having capable *in situ* representatives as well as reliable architectural drawings,

The presumption is inevitable that it was through drawings that the architect began to manage his building operation by remote control, and it was this liberation from daily involvement at the construction site which fed his new and higher status. Certainly the making of drawings was regarded as the key attribute of the High Gothic master builder.¹¹⁷

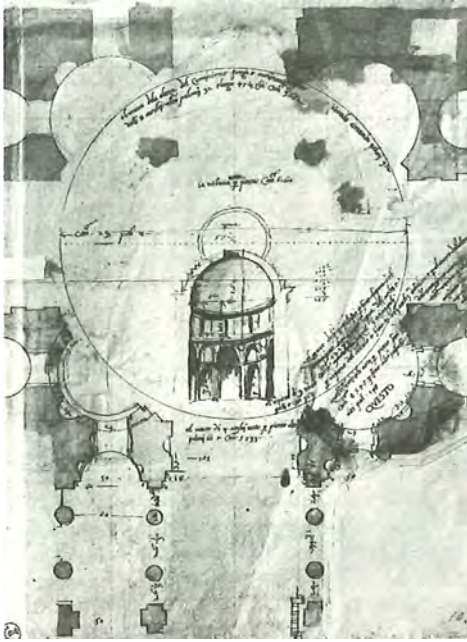
Kostof asserts a similar position by assigning significant importance to the Gothic drawings. He lists the roles of drawings as: "Some were meant for the patron, others were the product of the architect's own arrival at design solutions, still others were working drawings to be consulted by the masons on the job".¹¹⁸ Hence the presentation, design and production drawings. The last kind of drawing Kostof mentions functioned as proto-working-drawings in their specific context although they would definitely not be regarded as working drawings by modern standards. There are documents that clearly assign co-authority (if not primacy) to the drawing along with the text as the guides to construction, such as the famous *Sansedoni* contract. Toker observes that, this particular project could have been carried out to a significant extent solely with the help of the drawing. Yet there is still a considerable room for local idioms, as well as *in situ* instruction and decision making on the part of the master builder (as different from the master designer). Toker argues that although the elevation in *Sansedoni* contract does not match the modern day blueprint standards it would have well functioned as a working drawing enabling 'remote control' in the wider social and legal context; the missing parts would have been obvious for the master builder through custom and

115 Kostof, 'The Architect in the Middle Ages, East and West', *op. cit.*, p. 60.

116 Franklin Toker, 'Gothic Architecture by Remote Control: An Illustrated Building Contract of 1340', *The Art Bulletin*, v. 67 n.1 (1985), p. 69.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

118 Kostof, 'The Architect in the Middle Ages, East and West', *op. cit.*, p. 87.



Baldassare Peruzzi. Plan for the crossing of St. Peters. 1520-1535.

experience.¹¹⁹ And in larger projects, the well established norms and rules of Gothic architecture as well as the generations of experience, for which the masons could rely on their guild education, would make the filling of the 'gaps' between the drawing and the building even easier. Primitive Gothic working drawings, Toker maintains, "encouraged professional specialization but prevented a fixed split between architects and builders. That split would come only with the perfection of the working drawing after mid-sixteenth century, although social and economic factors would also play a part".¹²⁰

The Early Renaissance did not witness a considerable change in terms of the establishment of the last conventional capacity of the drawing.¹²¹ As it is widely known, the perspective was systematized in this period, mainly by Brunelleschi, Alberti and Piero della Francesca. And the perspectival construction eventually played a crucial role in the refining of the orthogonal projections, which in turn were to evolve as the exclusive drawing type of the modern blueprints. Yet, as far as the *quattrocento* is concerned, only one of these projections was in common use: the plan. The proto-orthogonal elevations and sections of the Gothic era lost much of their currency, at least in Italy, despite their endorsement by Alberti and later by Raphael.¹²² The main media of the communication of the architectural form seem to have been the ground plan (delineating the layout but not necessarily thoroughly dimensioned) and the model (visualizing the vertical dimension), both of which were supplanted by the verbal account of the architect.

James Ackerman, writing on the first half of the sixteenth century, concludes that drawings were not the "chief means of communication between architects and builders".¹²³ Creating a "melee" of indigested, incomplete, tentative ideas, only a few

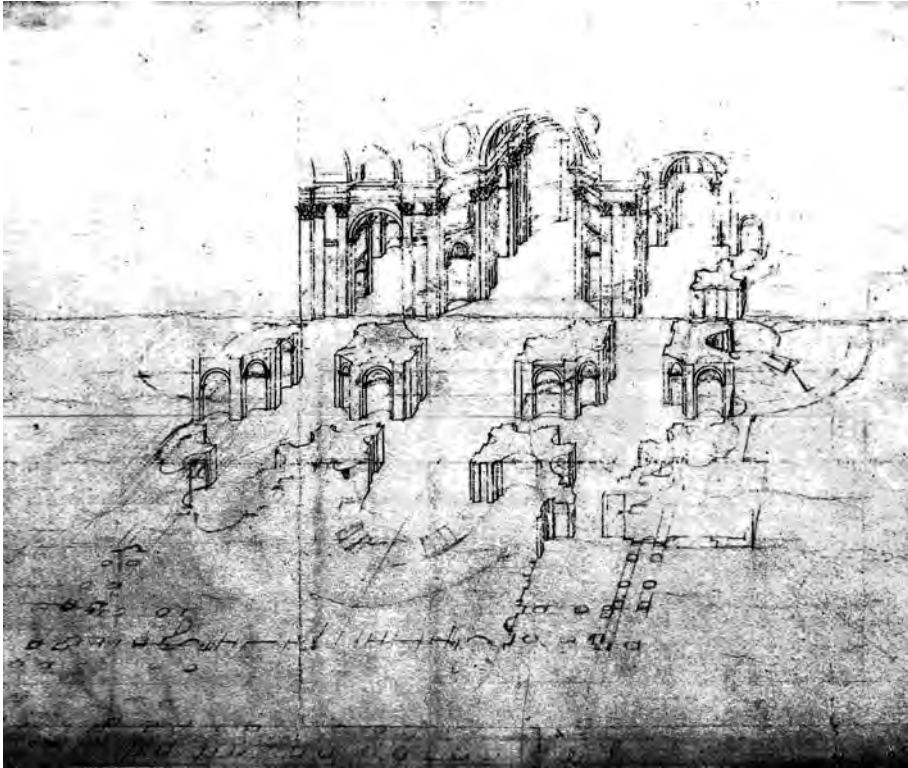
119 Toker, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85. Concerning the different levels of notations, Toker uses an analogy to music. He suggests a similarity between the Gothic working drawings and neumes and the modern working drawings and notes: "Of the various arts, music and architecture were peculiar in going through two stages of codification. Musical notation first began in late antiquity in the form of the neumes ... , but the note was not effectively until codified in the eleventh century by its ascribed creator Guido of Arezzo. The neume was intelligible only to those who knew the basic melody, while note was a fully symbolic language, allowing singers to interpret correctly even music they had never heard before." *Ibid.*, p. 88.

120 *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

121 For architectural drawings in the Renaissance and the practice in general see J. S. Ackerman, 'Architectural Practice in the Italian Renaissance', *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians*, 13 (1954), pp. 3-11, reprinted in Creighton Gilbert, ed, *Renaissance Art* (New York: 1970); Ludwig H. Heydenreich and Wolfgang Lotz, *Architecture in Italy 1500-1600* (Baltimore: 1973); Wolfgang Lotz, *Studies in Italian Renaissance Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1977); Leopold D. Ettlinger, 'The Emergence of the Italian Architect during the Fifteenth Century', in, Kostof, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-123; Catherine Wilkinson, "The New Professionalism in the Renaissance", in, Kostof, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-161; for a bibliography see J. S. Ackerman and J. A. Pinto, *A Bibliography of Renaissance and Baroque Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997); Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959 [1940]).

122 See Alberti, *op. cit.*, 2.1.3; see note 179.

123 Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 162.



Baldassare Peruzzi. St. Peters, combined plan and cut away perspective. Drawing. 1520-1535.

of these drawings, he observes, could have been intended to be seen by anyone else than the architect, let alone being used in construction:

The few that are finished may be classified in two categories: first the large, carefully drawn, and attractively rendered projects that were made for the client. These are called presentation drawings; they are rare and they cannot have been much use for construction because they almost never include measurements or a scale. Moreover, they typically show the building that was to have been built rather than the one that was built. ... The second type of finished drawing was intended for use in construction, but it is limited to details—a window, an entablature—and was intended only to guide masons and carvers.¹²⁴

Although in bits and pieces, the drawings increasingly were being used for production, emancipating the architect from the site at least temporarily. This is arguably not only because the drawing was not sufficiently established in architecture but also buildings were still not necessarily conceived as final wholes before their completion, at least until high Renaissance or Baroque. At any rate, although still affiliated with the construction site, by the end of Renaissance the architect figure irreversibly became one of an artist-intellectual. To start with, this new figure almost never emerged from the building craft guilds (except mainly for Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and Palladio). The Renaissance architect was mainly a painter or sculptor (thus educated and especially knowledgeable in perspective) who additionally studied Roman remains (first hand or through drawings). The artist became an architect when he was given a building commission.¹²⁵ He was not necessarily an expert in technical/constructional matters, thus needed to communicate verbally and through the drawings and the models not only with the patron but also with various experts and builders. Besides this practical purpose, drawings also were required for the social purposes by the architect, who, like his fellow artists in the other design arts, was demanding what Edward Robbins called 'the acquisition of gentlemanly status'.¹²⁶ In order to acquire this status, Robbins writes, Renaissance architects required an instrument that could fulfill three tasks at once: *i.* it should clearly communicate what architects wanted to realize without them having to remain on site, *ii.* it has to allow the testing of their ideas outside the site, *iii.* and it would clearly be defined as an intellectual equivalent to writing and mathematics; one that could be used without mess and without significant manual labor.

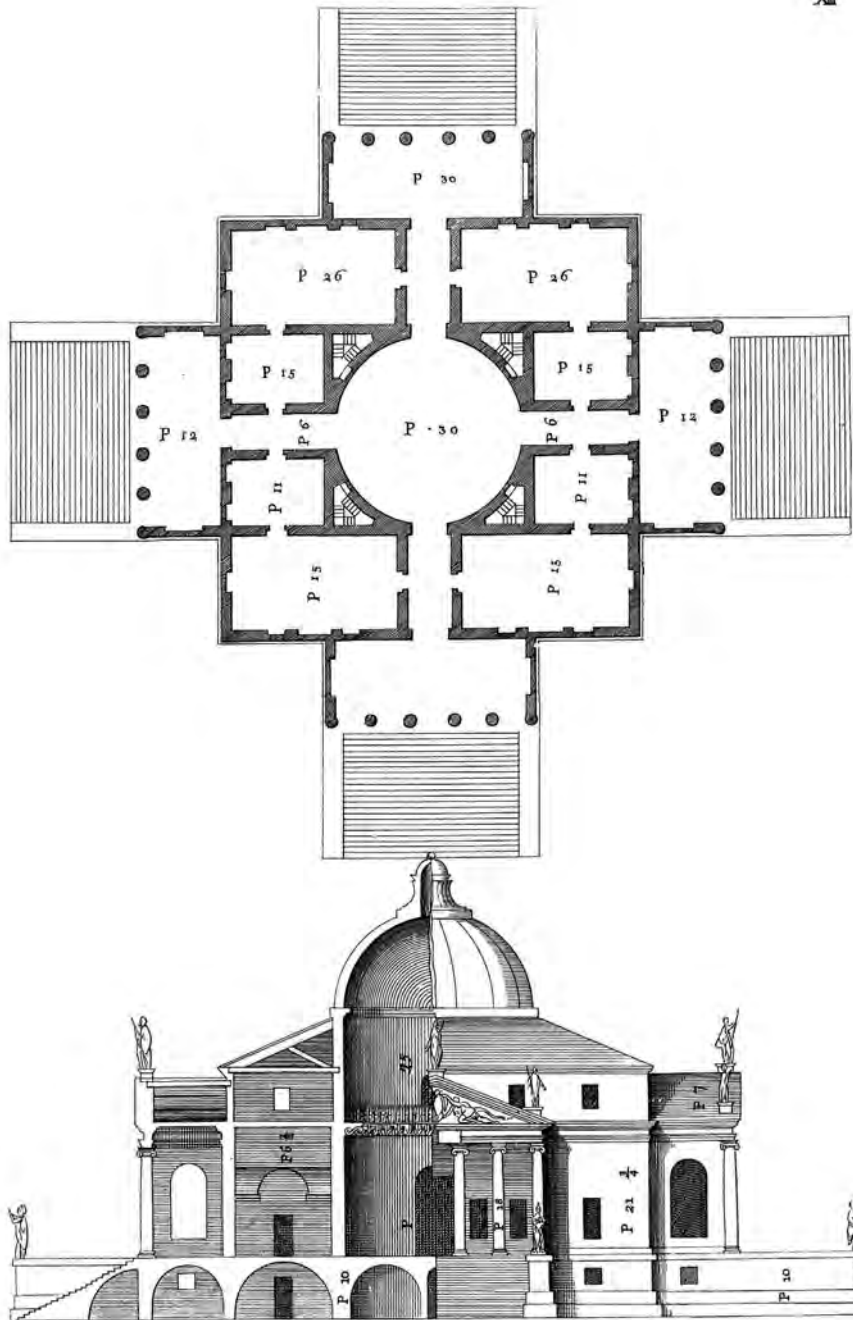
Certainly making use of this tool, Wolfgang Lotz asserts, we may consider Galeazzo Alessi as the first 'architect by remote control'.¹²⁷ It is true that the drawings that Alessi provided were rough sketches visualizing the major design decisions and he left

124 *Ibid.*, p. 161.

125 *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

126 Robbins, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

127 Wolfgang Lotz, 'Introduzione ai lavori del convegno', in Corrado Maltese, ed. *Galeazzo Alessi e l'architettura del Cinquecento* (Genoa: 1975), p. 10; cited in Toker, *op. cit.*, p. 87



Andrea Palladio. Villa, plan, section/elevation. Drawing. 1570.

“detailed designing and the supervision of construction to architects and decorators who were loosely associated with him”.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, in Alessi and in Palladio, we start to see an architect figure who wasn’t necessarily attached to a court or to great patrons, but received a larger number of smaller commissions.¹²⁹ Although they were not necessarily obliged to do so, Alessi and Palladio often supervised the construction. But when they didn’t, drawing was readily available as a medium of communication. And if the working drawings of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were not as thorough and complete as their modern counterparts, it wasn’t necessarily because the idea of remote control and drawing techniques were not established enough. It was because the idea of the necessity of exhaustive and precise correspondence between the drawing and the building was not there yet. Modern blueprint standards required and awaited the social and technological conditions brought about by the industrial revolution, and the systematization/generalization of the already existing architectural drawing techniques that is usually accredited to Gaspard Monge and Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand. The contemporary conception that a set of architectural drawings add up to “a complete, objective *idea* of a building”¹³⁰ awaited, on the one hand, Boullée’s prioritization of the conception over the construction, and on the other hand, the abstraction and the geometrization of production (if not space altogether) in the nineteenth century.

Professional-ity of drawings

One point in all this, however, is rather puzzling. It is through the drawings that architects have contemplated their objects for centuries. Drawing as an activity has enabled the intellectualization of the profession and it was pushed for sophistication by the intellectual (and social) requirements. On the other hand, drawing’s role has been secondary in seemingly the most intellectual part of the discipline, architecture theory. From Serlio on, drawings have been systematically deployed in the books of architecture theory to illustrate the paradigmatic precedents or the didactic compositions. Arguably from Palladio on, there have been published oeuvres that are inevitably heavily illustrated. However, it is not only that the more visual theoretical practices are outnumbered by the sheer pile of theoretical writings. It is also that the part of drawing has seldom went beyond being merely referential illustrations as opposed to actively producing a theoretical discourse.

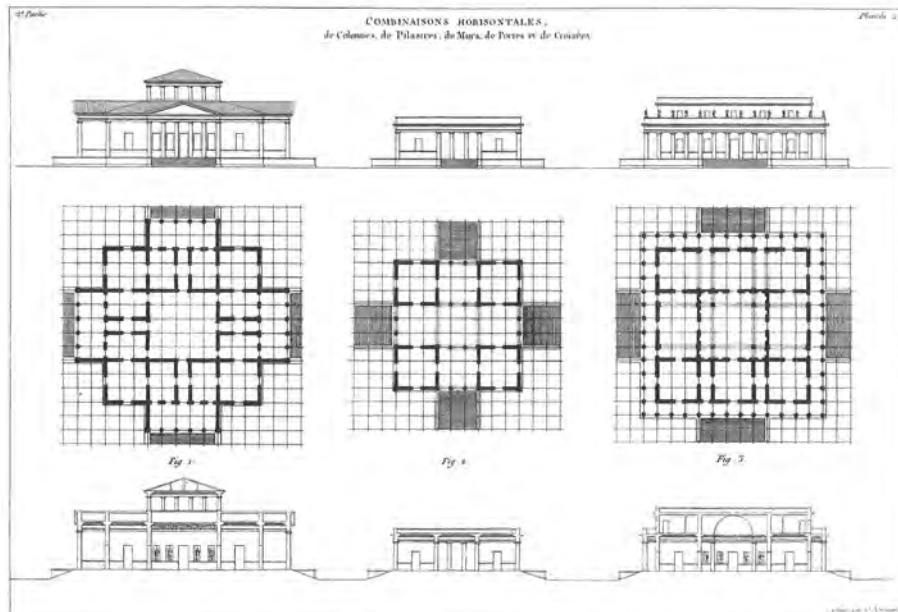
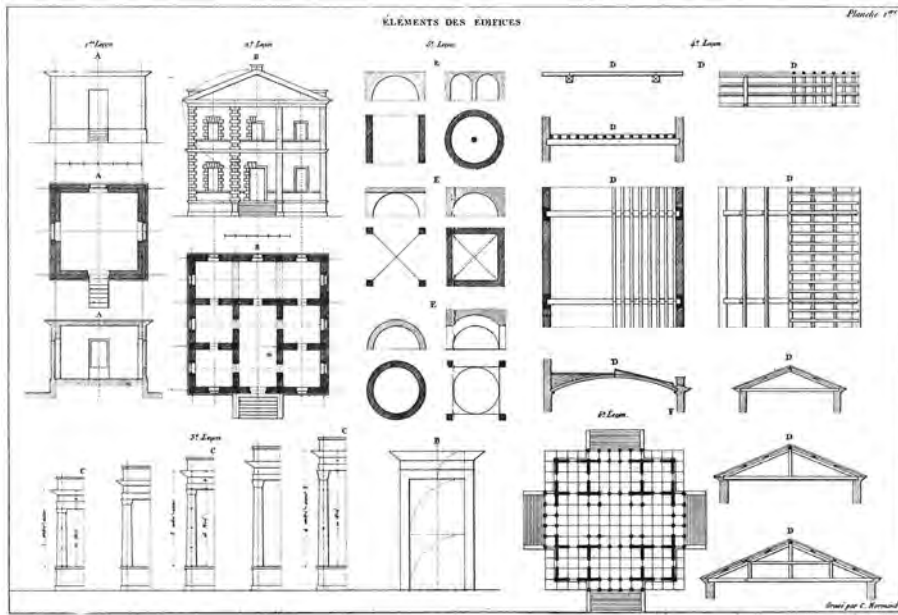
Regarded by most as the first properly theoretical manuscript, as the inaugurating text of architectural discourse, Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria* did not contain any drawings.¹³¹

128 Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

129 *Ibid.*

130 Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Italics are original.

131 Alberti did, on the other hand, presuppose a knowledgeable reader who is familiar with the numerous buildings that he invokes in the text. See Leon Battista Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, 1485 [c. 1452]; see Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, J. Rykwert, N. Leach, and R. Tavernor,



Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand. Building elements; horizontal combinations. Drawing. 1821.

The surviving Latin copies of Vitruvius's *De architectura* were not illustrated. The text occasionally refers to some images, so evidently originally there were some. And obviously the book would have been clearer with illustrations. On the other hand, it has been suggested that images possibly were not crucial to the main arguments, for the references in the text show that the images that we know must have existed were not of architectural objects.¹³² Mario Carpo accounts for Vitruvius's refusal to properly illustrate his treatise with the inherent difficulty of translating from visual to verbal (ekphrasis) which, he argues, was the core of the Vitruvian program: "*significare scriptis*, transposing architecture from the experience of the building site to the discipline of discourse and writing," thus "boosting the status of his craft".¹³³ He quotes Pierre Gros's diagnosis on the Vitruvian agenda,

There is no doubt that for Vitruvius the transition from drafting to writing was the principal means for raising architecture to the status of a liberal art: that is, a practice grounded in a branch of learning ... and governed by a set of rules that could be formulated with the same rigor as, for example, those of the art of rhetoric.¹³⁴

However there are two 'transpositions' here which are not necessarily the same thing. It is one thing transposing architecture from the building site to the architect's studio and another thing to transpose it from the visual to the verbal. The former is precisely what drawing enabled, albeit later; and we have seen that the drawings in Vitruvian time were not necessarily very primitive. The latter is the puzzling point that I just have mentioned: the written text has conventionally been the medium of choice for theory although drawing too helps establishing architecture as an intellectual practice.

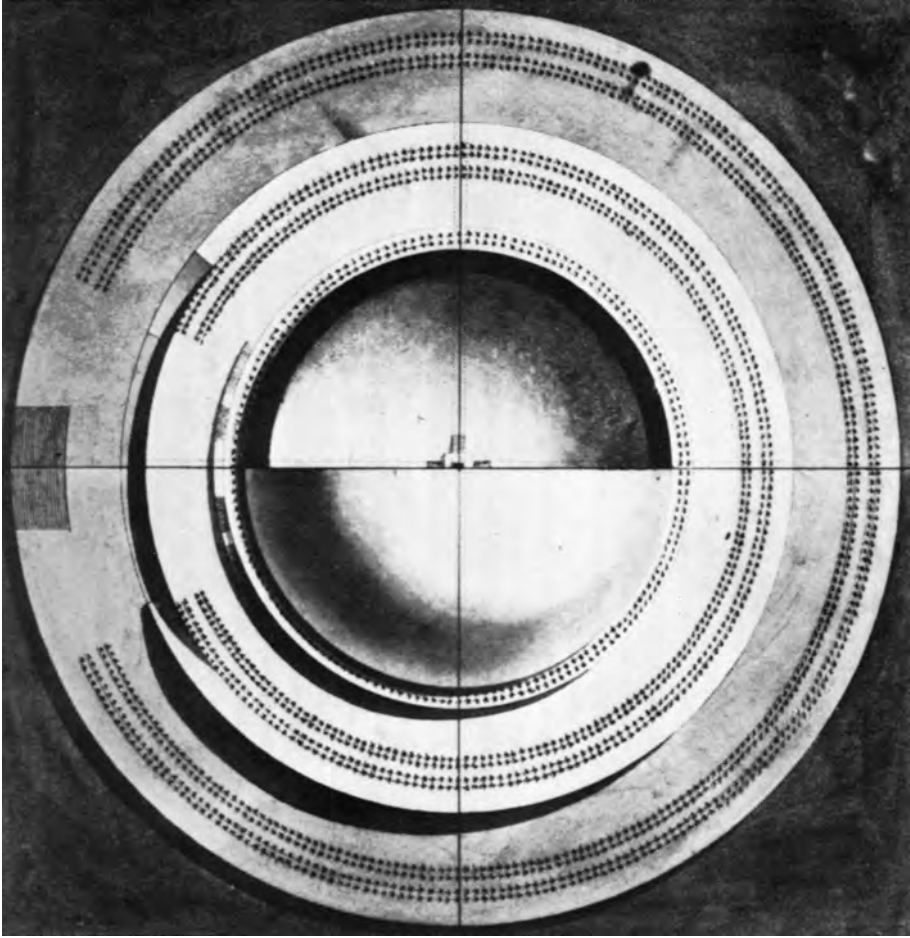
The above noted diagnosis on Vitruvius actually sheds some light on the first reason. What is at stake here is not just liberating the architect from the construction site. That much could have been achieved by means of drawings if the social, economic and technical conditions were sufficiently established. Yet, even so, the drawing would have remained a 'profession-al' tool, fulfilling a practical task. Moreover, within the Roman context the creativity it could enable would rather be limited to the variations in the very much established building types of the Roman construction and war machineries. Liberal arts, on the other hand, refer to the general knowledge and the development

trs, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988); Alberti, *L'architettura*, Paolo Portoghesi, ed, Giovanni Orlandi, trs, (Milano: Polifilo, 1966). When referring to *De re aedificatoria*, I provide the book, chapter, and paragraph numbers respectively, as it is usually done, for the reader to be able to find the reference in various versions and prints of the manuscript. Unless stated otherwise, I use Rykwert *et al* for the English translation throughout the book.

132 Mario Carpo, *Architecture in the Age of Printing. Orality, Writing, Typography, and Printed Images in the History of Architectural Theory*, Sarah Benson, trs, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), p. 17. First Published in Italian, *L'architettura dell'età della stampa. Oralità, Scrittura, Libro Stampato e riproduzione meccanica dell'immagine nella storia delle teorie architettoniche*, 1998.

133 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

134 Pierre Gros, cited in *ibid.*, p. 19.



Étienne-Louis Boullée. Cenotaph for Newton, top view/plan. Drawing. 1784.

of intellectual capacity beyond the practical, professional, and vocational skills.¹³⁵ And this approximates to what theory, or “scholarship”, was intended for: developing ideas on architecture that are not immediately functional in daily practical, vocational tasks. The use of drawings in this way doesn’t take place arguably until Piranesi. Gros and Carpo’s diagnosis that Vitruvius transposed architectural activity from drawing to writing in order to elevate the status of the profession presupposes an inferiority on the part of visual means in facilitating intellectual practices. The affiliation of the image with a lower form of ideation and communication actually has a long tradition.

Image and word

Although drawing’s modern-day capacities in architecture were definitely not established and its types were not yet refined, there were already deeply established conventions and rhetorical tools deployed in orating and in writing at the time of Vitruvius as he was almost contemporaries with Cicero. However there is something more fundamental than the level of sophistication of each of these alternative media of representation and it has been a topic of discussion from antiquity till today. The word has historically been regarded to be more refined and intellectual than the image. The written text is a fully-fledged, self-sufficient notational system standing for another symbolic system, language. Writing, like language, exists through convention; it is man-made, artificial. Its codification and deciphering requires intellectual processes that need to be mastered somewhat painstakingly. It is not legible to ones who are not familiar with its specific codification (in that specific language). Image, on the other hand, seems to be more immediately conceivable. It does not require as complex deciphering processes and it is more commonly legible. A pictogram symbolizing a man or a woman (on the door of a public toilet for instance) is immediately legible to most as opposed to words, ‘erkekler’ and ‘kadınlar’, which would be illegible to ones who are not familiar with that specific codification, Turkish.

It is often Plato (in *Cratylus*) who is referred to as the first to systematize the difference between image and text through the binary of ‘natural-artificial’.¹³⁶ This is immediately perceived as a form of ‘nature-culture’ or ‘nature-nurture’ binaries which are perhaps the more commonly used wordings today. Rather than an opposition, I take the binary as a distinction of terms; and that distinction is a matter of degree not kind. In other words, in sign systems there are levels of cultural codification and relatively simpler instances, like pictorial representations, are at times referred to as “natural” signs. Going back to the aforementioned public toilet example, it is true that the ‘pictogram’ is more generic and easily deciphered than the ‘word’. But the deciphering of the pictogram

¹³⁵ Later in medieval world, Liberal Arts referred to studies in higher education comprising the *trivium* and *quadrivium*. Being the lower division *trivium* consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic; *quadrivium* comprised arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy.

¹³⁶ W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Iconology: image, text, ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 74.



Icons developed for the U.S. Department of Transportation.

still requires a cultural background: the woman pictogram is usually differentiated from that of man by long hair or skirts which are obviously cultural. Other commonplace icons and ideograms are even more telling: smoking pipe-high heels, ♂ - ♀. Still more fundamentally, the symbolic relationship between the pictogram and the human form is one that requires a widely shared but specific cultural background to construct and it relies on conventions such as the 'contour line'. However, the distinction, if recognized as far from being definitive, is useful to hold for a while in order to contemplate about these levels of communication.

In and of itself, the distinction between the image and the written text does not necessarily grant superiority to either side. Yet, when it is engaged, more often than not it is to praise one side against the other (as it is often the case in painting-poetry comparison). Thomas Mitchell notes,

when conventionality of language is invoked to make a case for its superiority to imagery, the arbitrary sign becomes a token of our freedom from and superiority to nature; it signifies spiritual, mental things, in contrast to images which can only represent visible, material objects; it is capable of articulating complex ideas, stating propositions, telling lies, expressing logical relations, whereas images can only show us something in mute display. When claims are made that some kinds of images (allegories, history paintings) can tell stories or articulate complex ideas, the answer is usually that the image "in itself" does not express these things, except by parasitical dependence on verbal supplements—titles, commentaries, etc.¹³⁷

In this position pictures form a "natural" thus "lower" region of communication conveying only a "limited and relatively inferior sort of information, suitable for beings in a 'state of nature'—children, illiterates, savages, or animals". But as Mitchell continues to argue, the same qualities may be turned around to advocate the superiority of the image,

The naturalness of the image makes it a universal means of communication that provides a direct, unmediated, and accurate representation of things, rather than an indirect, unreliable report about things. The legal distinction between eyewitness evidence and hearsay, or between a photograph of a crime and a verbal account of a crime, rests on this assumption that the natural and visible sign is inherently more credible than the verbal report.

Obviously, both positions are very much open to attack. The muteness, universality, unmediated character, or naturalness of the pictorial representation may easily be refuted. One can demonstrate that the production and the perception of images are necessarily cultural, that we learn to decipher them, that images are no simple 'copies' of reality and even the photographs manipulate that very reality (eg, through framing and exposure), that even the most straightforward and loyal pictorial depictions more often than not start with basic conventions such as the contour line. And doing this

137 *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

would hardly be groundbreaking. But even after, or especially after, accepting that signification of images presuppose specific cultural backgrounds, it is helpful to consider images together with the text maintaining their rivalry. What is at stake in this rivalry is the competence in communication. However asking which of the two achieves better communication is rather vague and too general to be beneficial.

When exploring the potentials of images in communication Ernst Gombrich starts with a comparison of image and written text in various functions.¹³⁸ He borrows the language structure of Karl Bühler and distinguishes between three functions of language: expression, arousal and description. In simple terms, speech is 'expressive' when it informs its recipient of the speaker's state of mind, or it may be intended to 'arouse' a state of mind in the recipient, or it may 'describe' a state of affairs past, present, future, actual, conditional, and so on. Gombrich asserts, "looking at communication from the vantage point of language ... we shall see that the visual image is supreme in its capacity for arousal, that its use for expressive purposes is problematic, and that unaided it altogether lacks the possibility of matching the statement function of language".¹³⁹ Then he immediately starts to justify the last point. He maintains, for the doubter of this point the impossibility to illustrate the very proposition that they doubt should serve as the proof of the same point. And it is true that although simple statements seem to be communicable through images; this medium lacks the agility of language in various situations. A simple sentence such as 'I had to come to the office even though I feel sick today' is easy for anyone to form at least in one language. Whereas making such statement through images would be painstaking, if not impossible.

Obviously when the state of affairs get complicated or abstract, communicating them through images becomes next to impossible. Moreover, the relative ease of describing or simply referring to things using the language is obvious. The popular board-game Pictionary plays with this idea and one's task in the game is to describe an object, person, action, or notion to their teammates as quickly as possible using only simple drawings; in other words, communicating in graphical means, a task that proves to be rather challenging. It is true that images can render abstract notions. For instance, the very popular *Scream* of Edvard Munch evokes anxiety, and its popularity seems to indicate that it does so for many. But it hardly describes anxiety in the sense that it can be described thoroughly using the language, say, by the Webster dictionary: "an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as sweating, tension, and increased pulse), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it."

138 E. H. Gombrich, 'The Visual Image: Its Place in Communication', *The Image and the Eye* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982), pp. 137-161.

139 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

On the other hand, it would be at least imprecise to argue that images lack the descriptive function. Spatial arrangement of graphics may at times be more useful than any written description, for instance in manuals and instructions for putting up or arranging things. It is true that sometimes the graphics become notations, specialized codes that require specific backgrounds. This may very well be the case for, say, algorithm schemes used to devise computer software. But diagrams and images that require only as much cultural background as any given mediocre text or image may very well be able to describe situations or instruct how to arrange, organize or produce things: one doesn't have to think past the instructions that come with IKEA furniture.

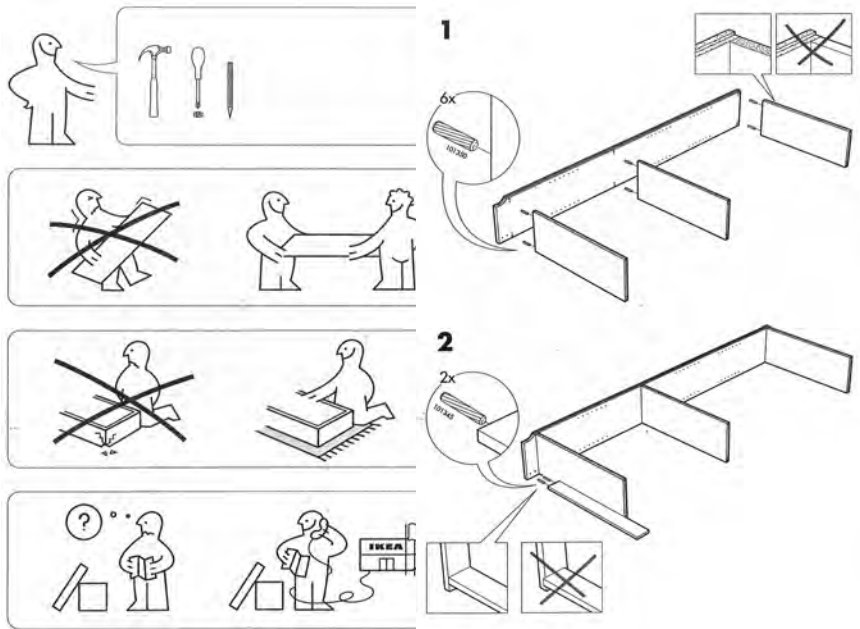
Most of the material that one can think of regarding the expressive and arousing capacities of images seem to confirm Gombrich. In the case of expression, text again seems to enable more precise and easy formulation of a state of mind. This is of course more the case for everyday purposes and as long as practicality in communication is the primary concern. For artistic expression, for instance, one's choice of the channel of expression depends also on preferences and available means. Arousal seems to be the strong suit of images, as Gombrich argues. At first instance a commonplace comparison between people telling/writing one about the classic Spielberg movie *Jaws* and seeing the movie, or a still, or even just the poster would make us immediately agree with Gombrich that image is much stronger in stirring emotions, such as fright and anxiety. My example is relatively old and deriving from popular culture, but it is also roughly contemporary with the Florentine projects. Moreover, the film is a canonical one to play on our rather primordial reactions and behaviors; and doing so, it gets closer to Gombrich's account on the subject. In the 1950's Gombrich would argue that the stylization of representation and conventions in image production prevent us to regard them as natural.¹⁴⁰ In the 1980's, however, although he maintains that the nature-culture opposition is misleading, he argues, there is a difference in the way we learn about an obviously arbitrary code such as a language and about images; the latter being more natural. He asserts that "we do not have to acquire knowledge about teeth and claws in the same way in which we learn a language. And representation of teeth claws in their turn will be more easily recognizable...".¹⁴¹

Rather than as an opposition, Gombrich considers the nature-culture binary as a continuum of skills that can be located on a scale based on the 'ease of acquisition'. What we must learn, then, is a "table of equivalences, some of which strike us as so obvious that they are hardly felt to be conventions, while others are chosen 'ad hoc' and must be memorized piecemeal for the occasion".¹⁴² Earlier in his career Gombrich asserted the existence of 'something like a language of pictorial representation' that

140 See E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: a study in the psychology of pictorial representation* (London: Phaidon, 1960).

141 E. H. Gombrich, 'Image and Code: Scope and Limits of Conventionalism in Pictorial Representation', *The Image and the Eye, op. cit.*, p. 285.

142 *Ibid.*, p. 283.



IKEA furniture (Kilby AA-103149-2) assembling guide.



Image used in the poster of Steven Spielberg's Jaws. 1975.

has to be mastered in order to conceive images, the obvious ones and the others. And nowhere did he deny the dependence of (visual) communication on conventions or “prior knowledge of possibilities”. However, at this specific instance he stresses the limits of conventionalism that he helped forming and feels obliged to “plead guilty” to having undermined the “commonsense distinction between images, which are naturally recognizable because they are imitations, and words, which are based on conventions”.¹⁴³ The main agenda of the seminal article is to argue against what might be called ‘extreme conventionalism’ that is personified in Nelson Goodman. In ‘Languages of Art,’ Goodman argues and Gombrich quotes:

Realistic representation ... depends not upon imitation or illusion or information but upon inculcation. Almost any picture may represent almost anything; that is, given picture and object there is usually a system of representation, a plan of correlation, under which the picture represents the object.¹⁴⁴

Acknowledging the plausibility of Goodman’s formulation, Gombrich, nevertheless, opposes to equating the workings of language and image. Playing down the role of the conventions in decoding the meaning of at least certain images, he asserts a differentiation within images. Comic strips, for instance, require “a good deal of cultural learning” and support the case conventionalists. However, erotic nudity seems to support the opposite position since, Gombrich argues, it is unlikely that “response to this genre much depends on ‘inculcation’ ”.¹⁴⁵ While Gombrich’s latter example is less than convincing,¹⁴⁶ there definitely seems to be different levels of ‘ease of acquisition’ of the codes within the visual media. From photograph to diagram, and to architectural drawing, there are various levels of codification and communicative competence.

Communication—in both images and the written text—is dependent on various factors such as code, context, and the particular mindset or background of the observer. That is why in many studies on especially visual (but also verbal) communication,

143 *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

144 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art, an approach to a theory of symbols* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 38.

145 Gombrich, “Image and Code,” *op. cit.*, p. 297. Original quotation marks.

146 Although he admits that conventions would be at work “in the choice of the models and the poses”, Gombrich seems to undermine the part of culture not only in pornography—the exhibition of sex—but also in sex itself. Even if we assume that one’s “response to this genre” is not an obviously cultural one as to reproach it or to get frustrated by it; assuming that the pleasure acquired through such imagery should be natural since sex is natural seems to be a misleading proposition. Admittedly an innate sexual drive must have exist in humans yet complex human sexual behaviors seem to be more culturally conditioned (through, *eg.* acquired codes, habits, norms) than being explicable through plain sexual instinct. Moreover, the relation between the acquired culture of eroticism and actual sex is possibly similar to another relation noted at the outset of this chapter: the one between pre-acquired knowledge about a significant building or a city through its images/footages and the actual experience of the same environment; in the sense that the former may very well affect, even condition, the latter. In other words, just as we can ask how natural seeing is we can also question just how natural sexual behavior, let alone pornography, is.



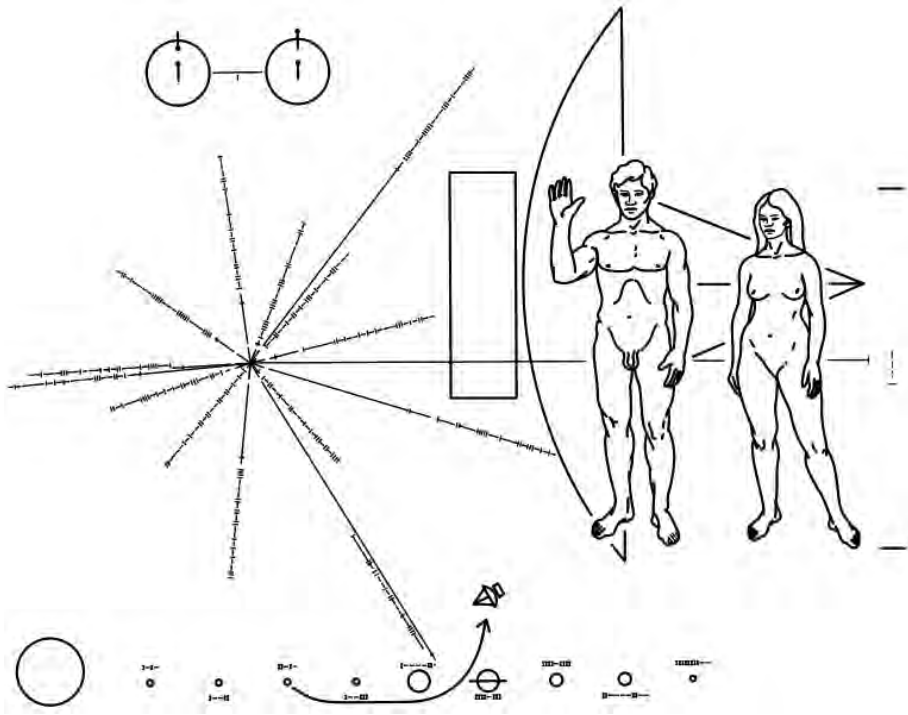
Cave Canem mosaic from Pompeii.

examples are selected from the ones designed for the widest possible audience, such as commercial ads. Since communication is difficult and delicate we use various levels of 'redundancy' to ensure that the message is delivered. In both of the aforementioned articles Gombrich uses a mosaic from Pompeii to make this point. The mosaic shows a dog and contains an inscription: *cave canem*, that is, beware of the dog. Here the pictorial depiction of 'teeth and claws' reinforce the message by deploying the image in the arousal function. But it also helps to ensure that the message is received by the ones who are not familiar with the specific code of the inscription, that is, Latin.¹⁴⁷ This is of course only if the observer of the mosaic shares a cultural background/prior knowledge close enough to be familiar with the possibilities that the dog image may signify. Then again, without the inscription the image may very well be interpreted as, Gombrich argues, the sign for a public house called 'The Black Dog,' or a veterinarian. Such prior knowledge, of course, is acquired through and contains an amalgam of words and images.

I can compile my findings at this point. Communication requires a cultural background that is shared, at least to some extent, by the sender and the receiver. Although it is absurd to talk about the 'naturalness' of pictorial representation, it is possible to argue that its codes are usually more widely shared or easier to acquire and decipher.¹⁴⁸ Through a point-by-point indexical reproduction, certain images, such as photographs and films, mimic the perception of actual space to the extent that they appear to have no codes. We may talk about a certain immediacy that images, in particular, pictorial, photographic and filmic representations, have in delineating existing places, persons

147 A commonplace case of the usage of redundancy is 'emoticons,' that is, symbols such as ':)' or ':(' . In face-to-face communication in addition to language our tone, facial expression and bodily gestures help communicating (or give away) our state of mind to the recipient. In communication in the form of concise texts, such as short or hastily written and often informal e-mails or text messages on mobile phones it is quite common to add emoticons to convey the mood of the sender in order to compensate for the inability to use gestures.

148 At least on earth: on 2 March 1972 and 5 April 1973 respectively, NASA (USA's National Aeronautics and Space Administration) launched two deep-space probes, Pioneer 10 and 11. These spacecrafts were the first man-made objects to leave the solar system. Next to their exploration missions, these aircrafts each carried "a graphic message in the form of a 6- by 9-inch gold anodized plaque bolted to the spacecraft's main frame." The message, designed by Dr. Carl Sagan and Dr. Frank Drake and executed by Linda Salzman Sagan, composed of graphics of a symbol of hyperfine transition of neutral hydrogen, thought to be the most profuse element in universe, a chart showing the relative position of the sun in the milky way, a chart showing the position of the earth in the solar system as well as the trajectory of the probe, and finally figures of a man and a woman drawn in proportion to the silhouette of the probe. Gombrich argues even if the intended beings were to have receivers similar to us, the anthropocentricity of the message would make it impossible for them to decipher it. He stresses the dependency of the graphic communication "on the prior knowledge of possibilities" and on one's acquired abilities such as the ability to separate the code from the message. He further points to the conventions at work that designers seem to take for granted such as the 'contour line' which enables one to perceive the figures as symbols of human body and as the arrow showing the trajectory which would be meaningless to a species that "never had the equivalent of bows and arrows." See <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/missions/archive/pioneer.html>; Gombrich, "The Visual Image," *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.



Graphic message on the plaque carried by Pioneer 10 and 11. Engraving on gold-anodized aluminum. 1972.

or objects. Such apparent kinship also enables images to effectively communicate existing or intended spatial configurations. Usually the more coded the visual representation, the more specific information it can communicate, as in the case of maps. Beyond some level of codification visual representations may become notational systems. The alphabet too provides a notational system that, through specific codes, corresponds to a fully-fledged symbolic system: language. Due to its high level of codification, language, once it is mastered, enables easy reference to things and their articulate and detailed description. In that sense, it is usually easier to state, define, predicate, express logical and conditional relations in words. However, considering the refinement of the medium and the message delivered in that medium as functions of the level of codification is misleading. Generic and more easily deciphered visual media don't necessarily operate within a lower region of the intellect. As alternative media, image and written text simply have advantages over each other in different tasks as I have articulated.

For obvious reasons one is inclined to put architectural representation under the rubric of 'image' as opposed to that of 'text,' or of visual as opposed to verbal. And this does hold for many instances. I have delineated the obvious eminence of drawing in architectural practices. Yet the architectural representation is manifold. The representational machinery of architecture comprises seemingly analog images, such as perspective projections and fine rendered elevations. But the same machinery also very commonly comprises notational systems, such as orthographic working drawings, which are akin to text in the sense that they are symbolic systems. Such blueprints of architectural forms operate through conventions and are legible through inculcation for they deploy specific codes (eg, the codes that structure the relation between the drawings) and symbols (eg, marks, figures, texts). Such machinery is well capable of both making articulate spatial descriptions and benefiting from the visual immediacy of the image.

Architecture theory

Architecture theory too is manifold. In that sense, drawing doesn't operate uniformly within theory. In order to precisely address how drawing operates within theory, one needs to look at theory, its capacities, its outputs and its various media. Obviously rather than an exhaustive survey or articulation of the concept, here I aim to formulate a usable definition in relation to the specific interest of this study: theory's relation to drawing.

In most basic terms, architecture theory is a form of discourse. Just this much seems to bring it closer to the written text because discourse is usually immediately affiliated with the language. Etymologically speaking, discourse evolves from the Latin verb *discurrere* [to run about]. As the verbal image metaphorically hints, it refers to an intellectual

process that pivots around a specific subject to develop and organize knowledge and reflections on it. A fairly accurate and straightforward dictionary definition is “formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject”. Being the closest modern language to Latin, the Italian sense of the word revolves around verbs like *parlare* [to speak], *conversare* [to make conversation] *orazione* [to orate], *disserere* [to dissert, to develop critical and lengthy arguments on a specific subject]. This last sense of the concept offers an instance that brings the usage of the word in common parlance (to the extent that it is used in common parlance) and in scholarly writing, especially in cultural theory. *Serere* in *dis+serere* [disserting] means to join, to arrange, to link together in Latin. Obviously, etymology doesn’t necessarily say much on the current use of any word, but in this case it offers a useful metaphor. It, on the one hand, may lead us to the straightforward usage of ‘discourse’ as the organization, bringing together related arguments or orderly expression of knowledge, experience, and ideas on a subject. On the other hand, it may operate as a figure of speech making easier to grasp its usage in cultural theory, as popularized to a significant extent by Michel Foucault. Here discourse, roughly speaking, refers to a system or network of statements through which individual statements acquire meaning.¹⁴⁹ This system of statements enables us to contemplate or ‘to talk’ about phenomena. Then it’s easy to imagine that a statement may acquire different meanings in different discourses and a phenomenon may be articulated in different ways through different discourses (eg, analyzing a phenomenon through structuralist discourse and phenomenological discourse would lead to very different analyses). Without going further into detail, let me adopt this verbal image to delineate both a definition of discourse and its operation. In this sense, discourse is a set of interrelated statements that offers a position, a way of accounting on phenomena. And it operates by linking, organizing these phenomena going back and forth between its statements and its objects. So its role is that of a directed interrelating in order to assign meaning to and to make sense of its object.¹⁵⁰

In the previous sub-chapter I asserted that in the function of statement, language has a considerable agility, precision and ease of expression that images don’t quite have. So obviously when one develops a detailed argument one deploys many verbal statements. On the other hand, it is not particularly controversial to argue that a statement, an *énoncé* [that which is expressed], can very well be visual as well as verbal. Considering the prominent role that the images have in contemporary culture—in determining the range of accepted and preferred behaviors as well as in their dissemination—already goes a long way in convincing one that in a discourse—as a network of *énoncés* through which we contemplate and give meaning—comprises many images as well as words. This point becomes even more obvious when engaging

149 Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), *passim*. First published in French, *L’Archéologie du Savoir*, 1969.

150 I am well aware that the definition of discourse here comes close to that of ideology.

with architectural discourses.

Moving on to how architecture theory operates as a discourse in the discipline it helps to bear in mind the said metaphors of network and set of interrelated statements. In the introduction of one of the major compilations on architecture theory in recent decades in the Anglophone world, Michael Hays argues:

First and foremost, architecture theory is a practice of mediation. In its strongest form mediation is the production of relationships between formal analyses of a work of architecture and its social ground or context (however nonsynchronous these sometimes be), but in such a way as to show the work of architecture as having some autonomous force within which it could also be seen as negating, distorting, repressing, compensating for, and even producing, as well as reproducing, that context.¹⁵¹

Later on in the same text, Hays continues to articulate his take on the relation of architectural form and its contexts:

[A] Primary lesson of architecture theory is that what used to be called the sociohistorical contexts of architectural production, as well as the object produced, are both themselves *texts* in the sense that we cannot approach them separately and directly, as distinct, unrelated things-in-themselves, but only through their prior differentiation and transmutation, which is shot through with ideological motivation. The world is a totality; it is an essential and essentially *practical* problem of theory to rearticulate that totality, to produce the concepts that relate the architectural fact with the social, historical, and ideological subtexts from which it was never really separate to begin with.¹⁵²

Hays probes into architecture theory as a discourse inevitably from within another particular discourse, namely a Marxist one especially as articulated by Lukács and Jameson. This particular position obviously entails assigning a great importance to the material conditions and the ideological structure within which an object is produced. Consequently, in Hays's model theory operates as a discourse that (re)constructs its object by (re)connecting it to preferred systems of *énoncés*, to various economic, social, historical, cultural (con)texts. However, even if we strip the definition from its political engagement and abstract it—just for the sake of working out a more general definition—it is still possible to observe the discursive machinery at work constructing an argument going back and forth between its statements and its object producing relations between various texts; calling forth again the verbal image of *serere*.

One can argue that an architectural discourse is theoretical when it engages its object from a specific position as constructed by the very system of statements that produces that discourse; when it engages its object critically, that is, when the object is tested

151 Hays, *Architecture Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. x.

152 *Ibid.*, xii. Original italics.

and evaluated through and against a specific set of statements. On the other hand, one might counter-argue that this definition is ineffective for there is no other way of engaging an object; for no subject is without a position and there is always a discourse. This argument is valuable as long as one is prepared to do away with the vague demarcation lines between history, theory and criticism. It is true that if one takes one thing from Foucault it would be that history is never unmediated: the discourse that the subject assumes always entails a position and imposes a particular fabrication of history.

In this sense, one can hardly approach history without a theoretical position. But should we then concur that any historical text is by definition theoretical? Or does theory have a distinct set of criteria? It is not completely safe to rely on the motivation of a discourse to judge whether it is historical or theoretical. If it were, one's intuition would be to regard those texts that aim for a description of past practices as historical and those texts that study past practices in order to project a preferred practice for the present/future as theoretical. But even in that case, is there really the possibility of a historical discourse, the theoretical position of which does not entail even a tacit take on its contemporary architecture? Moreover again following Foucault, we can maintain that it is never innocent to choose what we know. In that sense, even if a historical account seems to be plainly descriptive the very preference of the subject matter would be due to a theoretical position. Still, Nesbitt attempts a differentiation on this ground in the other recent seminal English compilation on architecture theory by arguing,

Within the discipline of architecture, theory is a discourse that describes the practice and production of architecture and identifies challenges to it. Theory overlaps with but differs from architectural history, which is descriptive of past work, and from criticism, a narrow activity of judgment and interpretation of specific existing works relative to the critic's or architect's stated standards. Theory differs from these activities in that it *poses alternative solutions* based on observations of the current state of the discipline, or offers new thought paradigms for approaching issues. Its speculative, anticipatory, and catalytic nature distinguishes theoretical activity from history and criticism. Theory operates on different levels of abstraction, evaluating the architectural profession, its intentions, and its cultural relevance at large. Theory deals with architecture's aspirations as much as its accomplishments.¹⁵³

Nesbitt delineates a fair picture of the functioning of architecture theory yet one may still question whether the demarcation lines between theory-history-criticism are that rigid. Nesbitt argues that theory may share its material with history and its analytical attitude with criticism but it differs from them in outlook and in scope for its concern is neither a plain description of a historical architectural practice nor a plain evaluation of a contemporary practice against a set of values. However, both historical accounts and critical reviews necessarily imply theoretical positions; favor certain ways of conduct;

153 Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*; *op. cit.* p. 16. Original italics.

have tacit ideologies. This being said, I agree with Nesbitt in that it is still useful to distinguish theoretical discourse from historical descriptions and project reviews.

At this point I can compile the findings and develop a short description. Architecture theory explains past/existing architectural production and explores potential production. Its scope is never solely historical or limited to singular practices and objects: it always relates its object to others. It is never just for the sake of its object. When it studies a historical practice or puts an object in evaluation it is either to articulate a thought paradigm or to deduce tools which in turn can be deployed to understand and produce architecture. In that sense theory requires a historical and critical perspective but it always has a claim to the present and the future of the discipline. It is explicit about its discourse; it has a manifested position, a preferred conduct of architectural practices. It is argumentative. It constructs narratives around an architectural object or practice by either exploring its relation to its various contexts (eg, architectural, cultural, historical, intellectual) or by exploring unforeseen meanings by producing relations with other discourses (eg, semiotic, philosophic, psychoanalytic). Theory accounts for, explores, tests singular architectural practices in relation to others, but on a larger scale it may also question the functioning of the discipline as a whole within the culture at large.

It is useful to keep reading Nesbitt for a little more because she maintains her analytical attitude in identifying the functioning of architecture theory. Nesbitt argues there are different types of theory depending on the attitude of the enterprise towards its subject matter. In this sense theory can be prescriptive, proscriptive, affirmative or critical.¹⁵⁴ She maintains that these attitudes all “differ from a ‘neutral,’ descriptive position”. In this taxonomy, prescriptive and proscriptive theories aim to establish, in simple terms, dos and don’ts. In other words, prescriptive theory aims to offer solutions, suggest positive standards, or promote design methods; whereas proscriptive theory aims to define what is to be avoided. In that sense, they both operate on that level of theory which has future practices as its object. The remaining categories are inherently related and overlapping with the former two. A theoretical piece can be critical or affirmative of certain architectural practice that it takes on. In this way it can advocate or discredit that practice, thus in a way be indirectly prescriptive or proscriptive.

So there seems to be two main parts of theory according to this paradigm. One is concerned with analytical evaluations and judgments and the other is concerned with projecting paradigms, approaches, or methods based on the former evaluations. I will adopt this paradigm while discarding the previous categories (of prescriptive, proscriptive, affirmative and critical) for they deploy a redundancy that one can do without. The reason Nesbitt uses the terms ‘critical’ and ‘affirmative’ is probably that ‘being critical of something’ has a negative connotation in daily language. In this sense criticism mainly mentions the negative attributes and features of what is engaged in a

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

disproving tone. Whereas the term does not necessarily have a negative connotation in art and architecture: criticism basically means to evaluate and critic is the subject of this practice. So I consider the paradigm of theory consisting of two parts: critical and projective.¹⁵⁵ Obviously the former concerns analytic and directed evaluation of existing architectural practices and the latter aspires to articulate future practices. This paradigm resembles that of utopia that I studied when studying Archizoom's No-Stop City in the previous chapter albeit on a more moderate scale. The structure of utopia consists of the (radical) criticism (of existing society and its space) and the projection (of a model society and its space). Theory, on the other hand, is not necessarily radical in its criticism or thoroughly descriptive and ambitious in its prescription. Moreover, the structure of theory does not necessarily always comprise both parts, critical and projective, simultaneously and fully developed. For instance, theory may comprise criticism of a practice and have an explicit and outspoken position yet without a fully developed (alternative or further) projection. Moving on from the functions and types of architecture theory to its outcomes would further elucidate this point.

In order to provide some accuracy I suggest two levels for theoretical output: a conceptual paradigm and a pragmatic apparatus. In the former, theory provides a set of concepts, a paradigm to understand architectural phenomena or to design through; in the latter, theory provides more concrete and practical apparatus for the design such as pattern, type, method, tool, or principle. Let's take Rem Koolhaas's 'Delirious New York' as an example.¹⁵⁶ Through a theorization of urbanism and architecture of Manhattan, Koolhaas articulates concepts such as congestion, programmatic diversity and instability, archipelago and so on. In that sense, he offers a paradigm to understand a specific architectural/urban condition. One can perhaps argue that he is adopting and suggesting pragmatic apparatus as well; such as 'vertical schism'. Koolhaas defines schism as the "systematic exploitation of the deliberate disconnection between stories".¹⁵⁷ The schism, then, negates the programmatic coherence between the floors. Thus, each floor becomes an autonomous pigeonhole, accommodating any program as long as required. Hence Koolhaas argues, "from now on each metropolitan lot accommodates—in theory at least—an unforeseeable and unstable combination of simultaneous activities, which makes architecture less an act of foresight than before".¹⁵⁸ Yet, although Koolhaas's office OMA later used this diagram quite directly in the project for *Parc de la Villette*,¹⁵⁹ what is really at stake in his practice is the

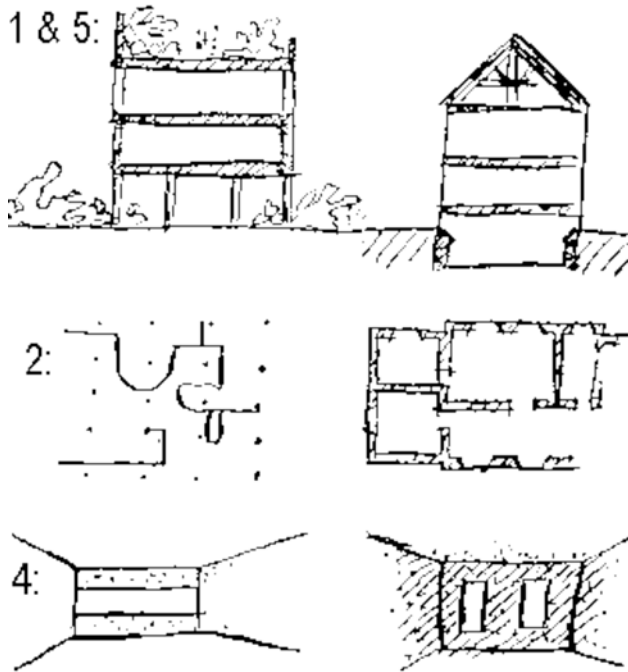
155 Here I use the terms 'critical' and 'projective' in a literal way.

156 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York, a Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994.) First published in 1978.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

158 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

159 OMA's project for *Parc de la Villette* was an entry for the competition held in 1982 to transform 55-hectare site, a former slaughterhouse area, in north-west Paris. The competition was intended to be single-stage, yet the jury announced nine first prize winners, who were asked to develop their proposals in a second phase. OMA's proposal was amongst the first prize winners. *Parc de la Villette* was finally built by Bernard Tschumi.



Three of Le Corbusier's Les 5 points d'une architecture nouvelle. Drawing. 1926.

articulation of a paradigm (rather than pragmatic apparatus) within which concepts like congestion, instability, and schism may acquire positive meanings and are deployed to conceive of and intervene in the city. Obviously the operation of the 'vertical schism' or the 'typical plan' acquires different values and connotations in other discourses and they were mostly called into the discussion for the controversies they entail, such as financial ambition or the inconvenience to 'architectural composition'.¹⁶⁰

As noted above, the other level of theoretical output—pragmatic apparatus—consists of more concrete and practical apparatus for design such as pattern, type, method, tool, principle. Obviously these pragmatic apparatus are devised within a theoretical position, a conceptual paradigm. On the other hand they don't necessarily require the same paradigm after their inception and they can be adopted by another paradigm or can be used as design short-cuts without a manifest paradigm. A practical apparatus can be one item from this (not conclusive) list or it can be a combination or amalgam of more. For instance Le Corbusier's *Les 5 points d'une architecture nouvelle* is obviously a set of principles. But one may easily consider it as the inception of a type or the definition of a tool, more specifically, a diagram to generate design.¹⁶¹

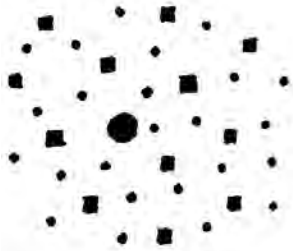
Perhaps the clearest examples of this latter type of theoretical output (pragmatic apparatus) are the architectural guidebooks that endorse specific ways of practice, aim to set norms, or provide a preferred vocabulary of forms and spaces. Christopher Alexander *et al's* patterns are quite exemplary of the latter and provide a Renaissance-like architectural treatise.¹⁶² Here traversing all scales from the urban regions to the bed alcoves the study provides an explanation of how things are, how they should be and instructions on how to design them. For instance on the distribution of towns in a region it is advised to "encourage a birth and death process for towns" and to "distribute them evenly in terms of different sizes" to create categorical homogeneity.¹⁶³ On corridors the book instructs:

160 For instance, Frank Lloyd Wright condemned the skyscraper as a "mechanical device" to multiply "by as many times as it is possible to sell over and over again the original ground area." Or, Emilio Cecchi has written that "the skyscraper is not a symphony of lines and masses, solid walls and openings, forces and obstacles; it is rather an arithmetical operation, an act of multiplication". See Frank Lloyd Wright, 'The Tyranny of the Skyscraper', *The Future of Architecture* (New York: Horizon Press, 1953), p. 153; Emilio Cecchi, *America Amara* (Florence: 1946), p. 13, cited in Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, H. J. Landry, trs, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 225. For Koolhaas's argument on the typical plan see Rem Koolhaas, "Typical Plan," *S, M, L, XL, op. cit.*, pp. 334-353

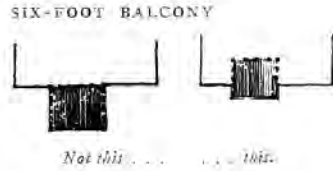
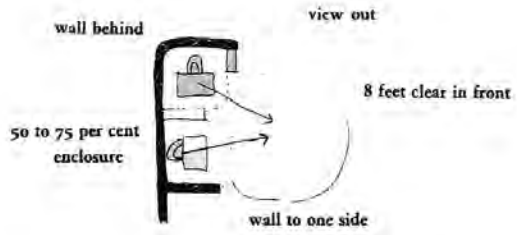
161 'Five Points' of Le Corbusier were: 1. the *pilotis* elevating the mass off the ground, 2. the free plan, achieved through the separation of the load bearing columns from the partitioning walls, 3. the free façade, 4. the long horizontal sliding windows, 5. the roof garden, restoring the area of the ground covered by the building. See Frampton, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

162 The work is presented in two volumes: Christopher Alexander *et al*, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Christopher Alexander *et al*, *The timeless way of building* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

163 Alexander *et al*, *A Pattern Language, op. cit.*, p. 19.



towns of 1,000,000 - 250 miles apart
 towns of 100,000 - 80 miles apart
 towns of 10,000 - 25 miles apart
 towns of 1,000 - 8 miles apart



Christopher Alexander et al. Drawings illustrating various patterns. 1977.

Keep passages short. Make them as much like rooms as possible, with carpets or wood on the floor, furniture, book-shelves, beautiful windows. Make them generous in shape, and always give them plenty of light; the best corridors and passages of all are those which have windows along an entire wall.¹⁶⁴

I have so far imposed two nets on architecture theory and tried to identify its types (*ie*, critical, projective) and levels of its outputs (*ie*, conceptual paradigm, pragmatic apparatus). One can also talk about 'tools' of theory, but this leads to some overlaps in terms. It is more useful to talk about the media of architecture theory and to follow the structure of its outputs (conceptual paradigm, pragmatic apparatus) to do that. It is usually to the level of conceptual paradigm that one refers when one talks about a 'theoretical' practice. Usually this level is not concerned with immediate applicability. Rather it undertakes to explain existing architectural practices and to explore possibilities. It is usually articulated and disseminated through books and journals. Admittedly since its task is to make articulate and detailed arguments, it usually requires the agility of language in statement function. Yet the discourse it elaborates, as well as the material it operates on, comprises all registers of architectural production: building, model, drawing, and text. Any theoretical discourse in architecture requires and operates on a selection from the architectural production; by linking these preferred instances of *énoncés* it constructs an argument. In other words, any theoretical discourse in architecture depends on buildings, models, drawings, and verbal statements. Yet it often deploys the latter two. Obviously the other level of theoretical output (pragmatic apparatus) also deploys both representational modes to achieve the best possible communication in a more pragmatic and design oriented manner. Yet depending on the pragmatic apparatus that is developed and endorsed by the particular theoretical practice, usually the scale in the choice of the representational medium tips in the direction of either text or image.

The rule, the model, and the form

Contrary to its immediate and common perception, architecture theory operates on all registers of architectural production. And depending on the intended output of the theoretical practice, its discourse is produced, dominantly, in written text and images. The argument Mario Carpo articulates by differentiating between 'rule' and 'model' is worth mentioning as another exemplary instance. Although Carpo does not refer to Françoise Choay's *La Règle et le Modèle* in relation to selection of the terminology and although he does not use these terms necessarily in the same scope as Choay, her work is crucial in understanding of the terms and of Carpo's point:

Two types of mechanisms for generating built space are assumed to have been at work since the emergence of the instaurational project. One,

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 635.



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. IIT campus model photograph. Photomontage. 1940.

developed by architectural treatises, consists of the application of principles and rules. The other, depending from the utopia, consists of the reproduction of models.¹⁶⁵

Choay coins the term 'instauration project' to refer to those texts that explicitly aim to develop an autonomous conceptual apparatus to conceive and build new and unknown forms of space. The rule and the model are the mechanisms to generate that space. She posits Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* and More's Utopia as the inaugurating texts of these genres respectively.¹⁶⁶ In simple terms, the former constitutes principles traversing and organizing the whole body knowledge in construction of space (from the rules that govern the choice of site selection for towns to the rules for successful finishing of walls); whereas the latter delineates a hypothetical, paradigmatic, prototypical spatial organization devised for reproduction. Carpo uses the same binary in a less refined manner and without an explicit reference to an exclusive inaugurating text. Here rule is metonymic to a set of principles to organize space and model is a paradigmatic organization to be imitated. Carpo writes,

Verbal discourse is better at recording abstract thought than at describing images. In principle, both words and images can express either rules and models. In practice, however, the structure of a tangible architectural model is much more easily represented by an image than evoked in words. ... By the same token it is easier to oralize than to visualize a rule. An image can illustrate a concrete example that has been generated by some abstract rule, but drawing can never enunciate the rule itself, except under very limited conditions.¹⁶⁷

In short, Carpo argues, rules lend themselves better to text and models better to images. He does not further detail this particular point. But the argument is an exemplary instance of the above general comparison of these representational media that I've carried out mainly in reference to Gombrich. If we take 'rule' as the description of principles of a spatial organization, the agility and the precision of text, its ability to easily express statements, logical operations, conditional situations, all, make it the representational medium of choice. Likewise, if we take 'model' as a spatial organization meant for (re)production, image proves to be advantageous since it can provide an immediate, if not analogue, relation to the said organization. The observer of an image that describes a spatial organization can understand it relatively easier and faster than the reader who needs to read the description, and in doing so, first operate through a purely symbolic notational system then to visualize and sustain a

165 Françoise Choay, *The Rule and The Model: on the Theory of Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 8. First published in French, *La Règle et le Modèle*, 1980.

166 Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, *op. cit.*; Thomas More, *Libellus verè aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reipublicae statu deque nova Insula Utopia*, 1516; see Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed, trs, Paul Turner (London: Penguin, 1965).

167 Carpo, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

mental image. Choay does not necessarily mention any kinship between rule-word and model-image. Moreover her main example of model is a written work, a piece of literature. Yet as I have noted earlier, the medium of expression, especially that of artistic expression, is not solely governed by adequacy and efficiency. More, as a writer, operated within literature, and Utopia is a literary work that is more than a mere description of a model space. Moreover, the description deploys rules as well models (eg, cities in the island of Utopia must not contain more than 6000 households). More's character Raphael's 'delineation' of the island of Utopia is nevertheless exemplary:

Well, the island is broadest in the middle, where it measures about two hundred miles across. It's never much narrower than that, except towards the very ends, which gradually taper away and curve right round, just as if they'd been drawn with a pair of compasses, until they almost form a circle five hundred miles in circumference. So you can picture the island as a sort of crescent, with tips divided by a strait approximately eleven miles wide.¹⁶⁸

The way the written text describes a spatial organization is comparable to the way one would describe the visual world to a person who has lost his sight. Obviously, a drawing, or more precisely a map, would have been more apt for the purpose of the above description of Raphael, if the book were solely about the description of space or aptness and efficiency were the sole concern.

Something similar to the building

Even when the built-in pretension of 'the model' is left aside, the eminency of drawing in describing spatial organizations is still important for theory. Drawing enables architecture to operate through its primary means and object, namely through form, within theory as well. And this is one of the two main positions that drawing historically occupies in theory, namely as the medium of theory, the other position being the object of theory.

Theoretical practices, such as this one, have engaged with drawing with various foci, eg, specific drawing tools and techniques, drawing's relation to building, or its functioning within architecture. This is historically drawing's first role within theory. Especially leaping in Renaissance, theory endorsed drawing's utilization in the building design/production and aimed to specify its role or account for its functioning. As quoted above, Vitruvius posited *ichnographia*, *ortographia*, and *sciographia* as the means to design, that is, to place things aptly.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, his use of drawings as a medium was probably very limited. Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* was intentionally and insistently verbal. It is true that his enterprise was one of articulating the principles governing the architectural practices. Whether these principles were 'extracted' from

168 More, *Utopia*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

169 See note 106.

the ancient and the contemporary buildings or 'handed down in writing by ancestors',¹⁷⁰ they were better treated and elaborated in text. At the beginning of the third book (on construction) when Alberti needs to explain how to draw the lines and angles in order to correctly lay down the foundation, that is, when he needs to operate within the realm of drawing and geometry, he admits that it is hard to do it without any graphic illustration, *verbis solis*, in words alone.¹⁷¹ He nevertheless prefers to do so anyway, and refers the reader to another source, if required, for graphic clarification. As a medium of communication, drawing was "foreign" to his specific theoretical undertaking. As a subject matter, on the other hand, he tackles with drawings and models and posits them as the best preparations for the building:

It is the mark of considerable experience to have so thoroughly thought out everything and determined it in the mind beforehand, that in the course of construction, or on completion of the work, one is not forced to admit, "I wish I had not done this: I would have preferred it done otherwise." ... For this reason I will always commend the time-honored custom, practiced by the best builders, of preparing not only drawings and sketches but also models of wood or any other material. These will enable us to weigh up repeatedly and examine, with the advice of experts, the work as a whole and the individual dimensions of all the parts, and, before continuing any farther, to estimate the likely trouble and expense.¹⁷²

Here drawings and models are endorsed as the media of architectural intellectual labor of designating the building in detail and in advance.¹⁷³ So accordingly, Alberti goes on to assert, they should mainly reflect this intellectual character. In other words, rather than being a showcase of craft in drafting, they should present the idea that is put into form in an 'architectural way', the modern sense of which was just then starting to take shape. An exclusively and specifically architectural way did not quite exist in the fifteenth century Europe for it is hard to talk about architecture as a fully-fledged and separate profession, in the absence of, among other things, any specific education or guild reserved for architecture alone. That by the *quattrocento* architecture had

170 See Alberti, *op. cit.*, 1.1.1.

171 *Ibid.*, 3.2.2.

172 *Ibid.*, 2.1.2-3.

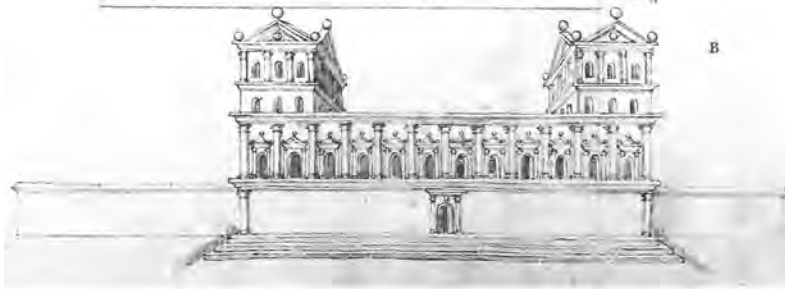
173 On this issue, a similar yet clearer passage of Alberti is quoted by Toker: "It is the role and function of the drawing to give buildings and parts of buildings a suitable layout; an exact proportion; a proper organization; and a harmonious plan, such that the entire form of the construction is borne fully within the drawing itself." See Toker, *op. cit.*, p. 86. However, I am not certain whether if this is exactly what Alberti meant. The argument does not by any means run against Alberti's views. Yet what is translated as 'drawing' here is the Latin *lineamenta* [lineaments], because Toker translates Orlandi's Italian translation where *lineamenta* is already translated as *diseño* which means both drawing and designing: "*Quanto al disegno, tutto il suo oggetto e il suo metodo consistono nel trovare un modo esatto e soddisfacente per adattare insieme e collegare linee ed angoli, per mezzo dei quali risultati interamente definito l'aspetto dell'edificio.*" See Orlandi, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Orlandi notes that Alberti uses the term *lineamenta* in a more specific way than Italian *diseño* signifies but he prefers this "literal translation" which then needs to be understood in its contexts in the text. *Lineamenta* seem to refer, especially in Rykwert *et al.*'s translation, more to architectural form and less to *diseño*.

namon doro secondo s'legge: anoi e' piaciuto difare' questo in questa forma: con questi hornamenti adu' piaciuta hora difarne' uno piu' hornato & piu' bello: faculo de quanto piu' bello fara' tanto a me' fara' piu' onore. Io so bene: che impu' modi sene' puo' fare' & compu' varij hornamenti: a questa non intendendo altro fare', uoglio bene' acquiescere' l'abitu' de' uesouo & decalonia & deprea.

L A forma de' uesouo & decalonia & anche' deprea fara' in questa forma: dedinetu' alla chiesa fo' uno quadro quanto e' il quadro della chiesa & in questo quadro io fo' un chiofio piu' grande con un portico intorno alto braccia sedici & largo d'una & le uolte s'aranno grosse' uno braccio & terzo & alte' tralcapitello & labasa braccia dodici luna. Delle' pareti di questo casamento fara' uesouando l'altare fara' decalonia & anche' deprea & questo uera' una porta grande' p'lopputo diretto alla chiesa donde' fara' l'entrata huiusmodi' sopra terra in uno cortile' grande' il quale' fara' comune' co' decalonia come' al'altare' fauo' planeta grande' donde' co' uera' uno orto l'altare' uesouo & ualato' decalonia & questa fara' la forma del fondamento di tutto questo casamento il quale' e' comparato' in tre' parti come' e' detto' di sopra: l'entrata' s'ara' due' braccia risponde' diretto alla chiesa s'ara' il portico della chiesa il suo fondamento' s'ara' in questo modo come' qui' questo poco' disegno' s'ipuo' comprendere' il quale' e' di misura' prima' il quadro de' la casamento' tanto s'essera' braccia & largo' e' l'altare' come' e' detto' di sopra' l'edifizio' e' in uolta' tanto di sotto' sequali' uolte' sono' due' uno luna quindici braccia & in questo modo' che' l'altura' di tutto' sono' grosse' uno braccio & mezzo & poi' ue' uno braccio & mezzo' di uano' & poi' ualato' tutto' di uano' braccio' in questo uano' io fo' una' Clauca' doue' quaquidam' s'inducano' tutte' & auata' l'uoga' comune' risponderanno' insieme' s'ara' laque' poteranno' uia' ogni' braccia. Questo muro' nel primo' fondamento' e' grosso' cinque' braccia & poi' io m'induco' in questa' misura' & grossezza' in fino' al piano' terreno' quando' s'ara' al piano' io e' diretto' a due' braccia' p'infino' alla prima' uolta' sopra' terra' & dalla uolta' in su' l'ordine' uano' braccio' s'aranno' poi' queste' prime' uolte' degli' portici' di questo' chiofio' uano' piano' degli' portici' della chiesa' & sicome' le uolte' di sotto' sono' repartite' in due' co' di sopra' al piano' terreno' s'aranno' auata' spartite' in due' & quello' muro' di mezzo' de' spartite' s'ara' le uolte' s'ara' doppio' & in mezzo' uano' braccio' d'ora' e' una' cloaca' ch'era' p' mezzo' co' una' ghora' d'acqua' & tutte' laque' si della chiesa' & si auata' de' casamento' in modo' sono' hordinate' doue' sono' scritte' queste' tre' ghore' & nettono' & mondano' & menon' uia' ogni' bruttura'.

16

Come' qui' tu uedi' disegnato' questo' quadro' & secondo' che' uedi' questo' s'ara' partito' Compato' co' e' proprio' l'edifizio' & sopra' terra' & in questa' forma' & di sotto' sono' canone' aue' molte' cose' & di sopra' daranno' all'altura' delle' uolte' di sopra' fara' quello' portico' in uolome' d'altura' otto' braccia & a quello' piano' fara' sale' & camere' che' risponderanno' parte' in sul chiofio' & parte' in su' l'orto' & co' queste' comparationi' s'aranno' dal' parte' decalonia' s'ara' che' in uolome' s'aranno' paltra' uia' secondo' & la conuenienza' delle' persone' di sotto' s'aranno' e' el disegno'.



B

Filarete. From *Trattato di architettura*, book IX, folio 66r.

achieved a considerable level in distinguishing itself from practical construction crafts such as masonry and carpentry is true (a distinction which matured and got established in *cinquecento*). However, a similar differentiation from other “design arts” of painting and sculpture was only imminent at best. Making these two differentiations was, in many cases, the reason why drawing was called to architectural theory as a subject matter. Drawing as a medium of architectural intellectual labor was by definition the evidence of this labor, thus crucial in differentiating architecture from manual and “straightforward” crafts. On the other hand, when most architects were also, or even mainly, painters and sculptors one needed to be more precise in deploying drawing as a means of defining professional specificity. Alberti differentiated painterly drawing from the architectural drawing by allocating the perspective to the former and the orthographic to the latter:

The difference between the drawings of the painter and those of the architect is this: the former takes pains to emphasize the relief of objects in paintings with shading and diminishing lines and angles; the architect rejects shading, but takes his projections from the ground plan and, without altering the lines and by maintaining the true angles, reveals the extent and shape of each elevation and side—he is one who desires his work to be judged not by deceptive appearances but according to certain calculated standards.¹⁷⁴

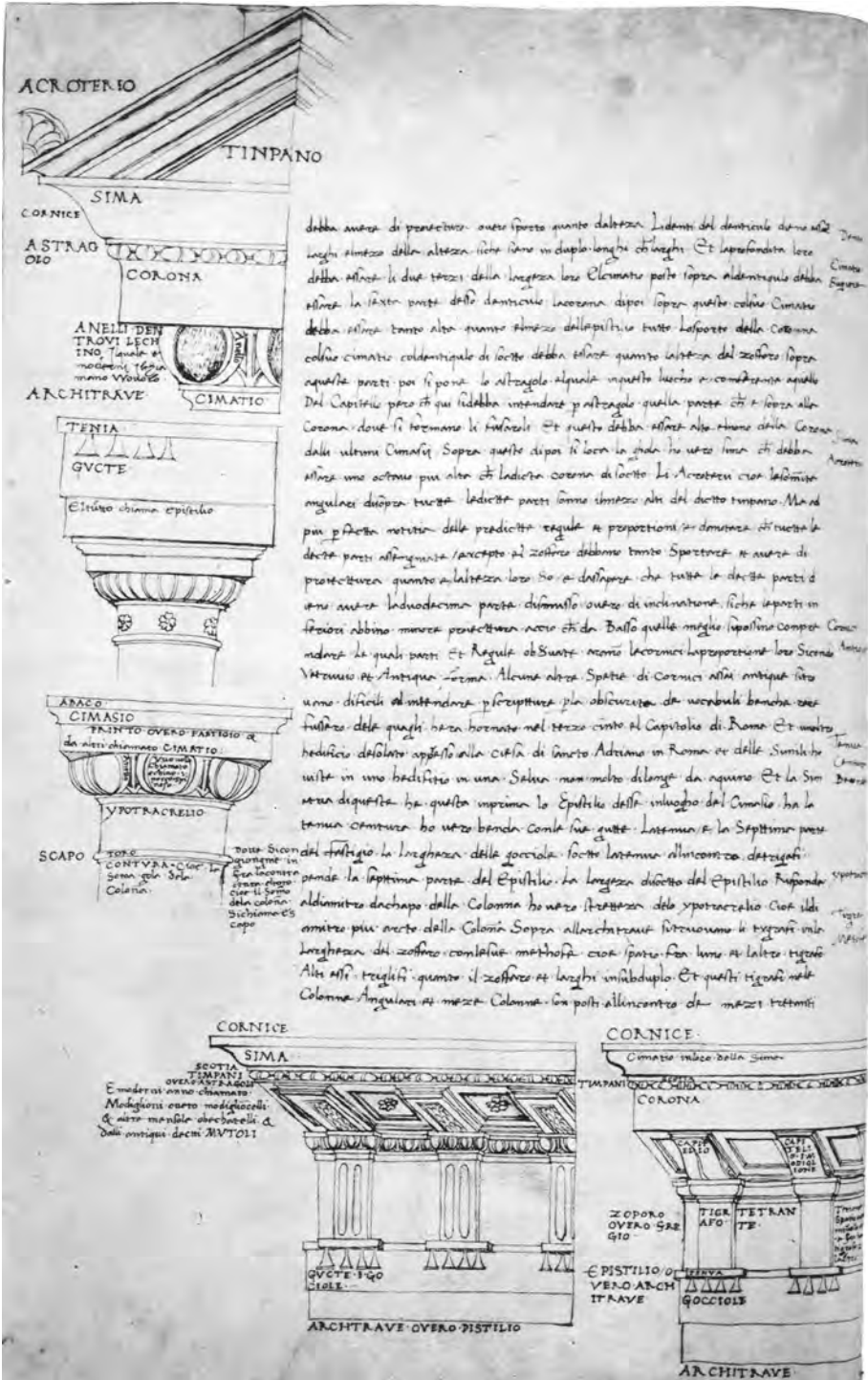
For Alberti, what is important in the architectural drawing are *proportio* and *divisio*, that is, proportion and the principal measurements.¹⁷⁵ The *perspectiva artificialis*, on the other hand, was suited to mimic the *perspectiva naturalis*, delineate the appearances, thus diminish lines and angles. So, the architect rather was to inhabit an orthogonal domain which did not distort measurements and proportions and as a ‘truthful’ medium was more suited to aid the ‘learned intellect and imagination’ to conceive and present the underlying principles governing the architectural form, or *lineaments*.¹⁷⁶

The other two major architectural treatises of *quattrocento*, namely Filarete’s *Trattato di architettura* (around 1460) and Francesco di Giorgio’s *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare* (in 1470s) were definitely not exclusively verbal as Alberti’s

174 *Ibid.*, 2.1.3

175 See also Lotz, ‘The Rendering of the Interior in Architectural Drawings of the Renaissance’, *Studies, op. cit.*, p. 4.

176 Parallel to the general agenda of his treatise Alberti here aims to formalize and specify a certain way of drawing as ‘architectural’. Obviously orthogonal projections were used for a long time before the Italian Renaissance, and Alberti, who in deed properly formalized *perspectiva artificialis* for the first time earlier in *Della Pittura*, did not claim an innovation on his part for the use of orthogonal drawings. His effort was rather expended to define the appropriate media of formal communication for the architecture that he had in mind. On the other hand, it is true that many architectural drawings of the *quattrocento* were perspectives. Referring to Alberti’s above quoted passage Lotz argues that his preferred set architectural drawings was a departure from Gothic in theory but not in practice. Thus referring to Lotz’s observation, Toker argues that Alberti’s appeal for the use of orthogonal projections “was conservative, not innovative; not call for a new type of drawing but for preservation of an old type that was being phased out”. See Wolfgang Lotz, *Studies, op. cit.*, p. 4, 33; see Toker, *op. cit.*, p. 87.



Francesco di Giorgio Martini. *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare*, f 36v, TAV 226. 1470s.

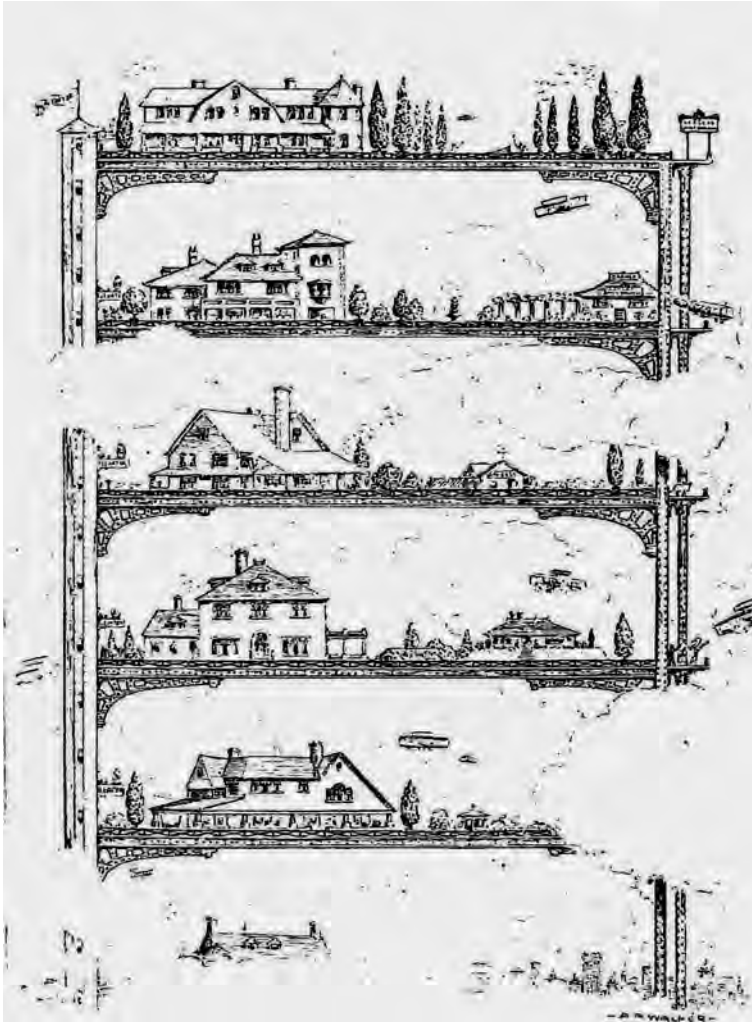
masterpiece.¹⁷⁷ The pages and the margins of especially Francesco di Giorgio's treatises were riddled with drawings. The Sienian explains his preference through an oculo-centric position:

Because every intellectual observation has its origin in sensation, ... and because among the senses that of sight is the most spiritual, pure, and perfect and shows us more things and differences between things, it seems that our intellect is unable to understand anything or remember it for long if it has not perceived it with the sense of sight, or at least seen *something like it* through perceiving which the intellect can rise to know the first object as well. ... Hence, when all the general and special rules have been given, it is necessary to *draw* some examples, through which the intellect may more easily judge and with greater certainty remember; because examples affect the intellect more than general words, especially the intellect of those who are not very expert or learned.¹⁷⁸

So, in order to understand an object, or anything spatial for that matter, Francesco di Giorgio asserted, one needs to see 'it' or 'something similar to it [*cosa simile a quella*],' that is, something that stands for it, through which the intellect can understand referred the object. Although he seems to affiliate drawings again with a lower region of communication (also for the non-experts and not-learned), his *trattati* definitely form a crucial inflection point for the nonverbal communication in architecture theory. In di Giorgio, much more than in Filarete, drawing is assigned to the position of building's substitute in the books of architecture theory. In the absence of photography, drawing as *cosa simile a edificio* operated as visual reference or graphic shorthand to (actual/paradigmatic/didactic) buildings. For di Giorgio drawing is a necessary means for

177 See Filarete, *Treatise on Architecture*, John R. Spencer, trs, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Francesco di Giorgio Martini, *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare*, ed, Corrado Maltese, (Milano: Polifilo, 1967).

178 My italics. In order to eliminate a possible misunderstanding, it has to be noted here Francesco di Giorgio uses the word 'draw' necessarily in the sense of drafting. The examples he refers to are in 'drawing' [*esempi in disegno*]. Here I use John Onians's translation as quoted in *Bearers of Meaning, the Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 173. The full text in Italian reads: *Perché ogni nostra cognizione e notizia dello intelletto ha origine dal senso, come testimonia Aristotele in nel primo della Posteriora e nel secondo e terzo dell'Anima, et in fra tutti li altri sensi esteriori el vedere è più spirituale, puro e perfetto, e più cose e differenze ci dimostra, come scrive nel primo della Metafisica non pare che lo intelletto nostro così possi perfettamente comprendere alcuna cosa né longo tempo tenere, se quella col senso del vedere non ha conosciuto, o almeno qualcuna altra cosa simile a quella, per la cui cognizione l'intelletto si eleva a conoscere la prima. E da questo procede che li filosofi o calculatori volendo trattare delle qualità intense, di quelle parlano come se fusse una linea et una quantità visibile, e, continuo, per questo ancora la memoria si fa perfetta, locando le cose considerate d'un modo che in quella sola non si confidi ma nella brevità, ordine e frequente meditazione. Onde, oltre a tutte le generali e speciali regule di sopra dichiarate del modo dello edificare le fortezze, è necessario a maggiore perfezione e chiara notizia ponete alcuni is esempi in disegno con modi più particolari, per li quali meglio lo intelletto giudichi e con più fermezza ritenghi el modo dello edificare, però che comune opinione è che li esempi più movino l'intelletto che le parole generali, massime quelli che non sono molto esperti et eruditi.* See Maltese, *op. cit.*, pp. 444-445.



A. Walker. Cartoon from the Life magazine (as reprinted in Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 1978). 1909.

both theory and practice [*cognizione e opera*].¹⁷⁹ Here drawing is not only the object of theoretical discourse: it becomes a medium of theory next to the written text. Di Giorgio seems to be the first one to explicitly articulate the rule-text and model-drawing affiliation. Rules are given in text and then *esempi* are ‘drawn’ both in order to understand better and to remember them later. For the sake of continuing with the same example and at the expense of making a historically impossible juxtaposition, we can recall the aforementioned Delirious New York example. Through a critical engagement the book offers a particular conception of a paradigmatic architectural/urban condition, that dominantly pivots around the notions of grid and vertical schism. The section of the Downtown Athletic Club not only renders the essence of the argument clearer in an immediate way, but once seen, it also operates as the summary or the graphic shorthand of the whole discourse developed throughout the book. As used in the book, the Life cartoon goes even beyond the role of the ‘graphic example’ foreseen by di Giorgio: due the nature of caricature it selects and accentuates the prominent feature of its object thus precisely by altering its object gives a clearer message about it. What the cartoon accomplishes about the section of Manhattan is comparable to what the City of Captive Globe achieves about its plan. The speculative drawing produces a discourse, a way of understanding the city. It theorizes that a series of disconnections that enables Manhattan’s by means of radicalizing its scheme and turning the city into an archipelago of cities within cities.¹⁸⁰

In di Giorgio, the use of the drawing is obviously bound up with being a graphic reference to a ‘model’ as an aspired paradigmatic building or as a prototypical/didactic spatial organization intended for imitation/aspiration. Using drawing in order to visually register paradigmatic buildings was practiced well before Renaissance.¹⁸¹ It was common for architects to keep a visual record of the buildings that they encounter during their travels. For Renaissance, ‘the’ locus of such paradigmatic buildings was Rome. But, such logbooks were either for personal use or intended to be shared only with a limited circle of associates and acquaintances. Publicizing such records does not seem to take place until the sixteenth century,¹⁸² more precisely until 1540 when the third book

179 “And, although in our own day it is held to be unworthy and inferior to many other mechanical arts, nonetheless anyone who reflects on how useful and necessary it is for every human activity, whether for the process of invention or for the exposition of ideas, whether for working purposes or for art—and whoever considers too how closely related it is to geometry, arithmetic, and optics—will easily judge, and with good reason, that drawing is a necessary means in every theoretical and practical aspect of the arts.” See Onians, *op. cit.*, p. 172. The Italian original reads: “*E benché ai di nostri sia reputata vile et inferiore a molte altre arti mecaniche, niente di meno chi considerasse quanto sia utile e necessaria in ogni opera umana, si nella invenzione, si in possere esplicare li concetti, si nell’operare, si all’arte militare—dall’altra parte geometria, aritmetica, prospettiva a questa essere affine—facilmente giudicaria essa essere uno mezo necessario in ogni cognizione et opera delle cose fattibili, con dritta ragione.*” See Maltese, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-294.

180 For Rem Koolhaas, with Madelon Vriesendorp and Zoe Zenghelis, ‘The City of the Captive Globe’, 1972, see Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-296.

181 The sketch book of Villard de Honnecourt (1225-1250) is the most known example of the type.

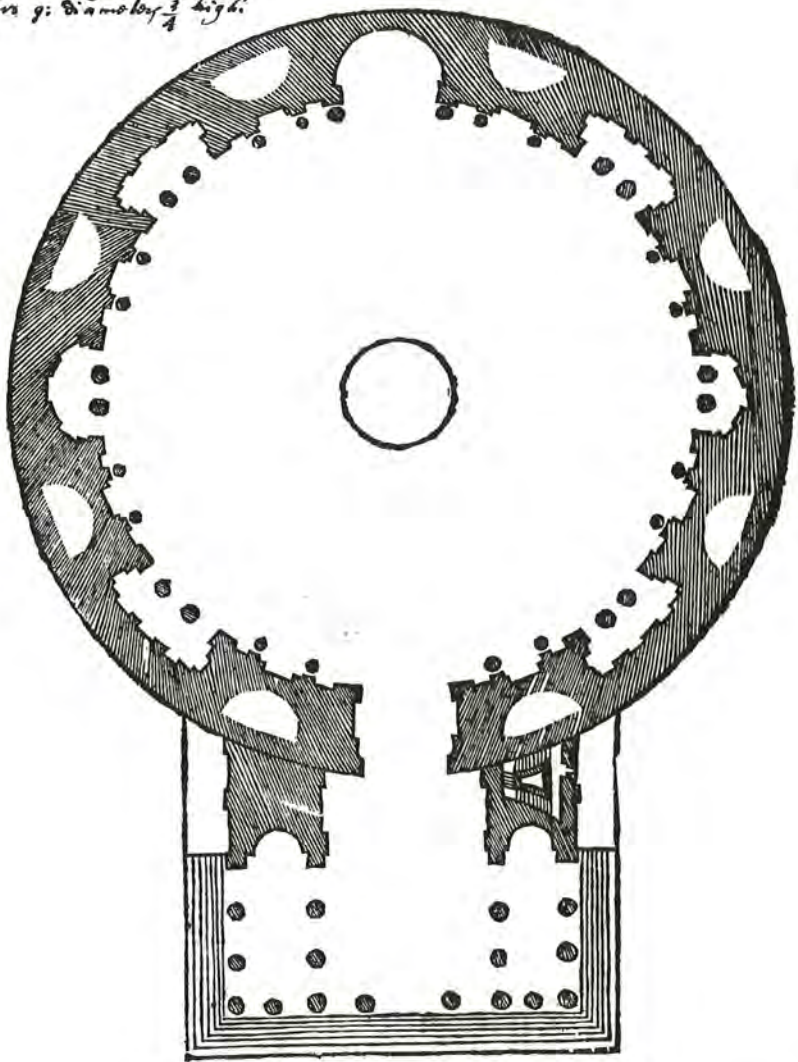
182 There is, however, one piece of document often referred to in relation to early visual

*2 the pillars of the Pantheon
 round in the one measurement
 in diameter 4: fo. 18: 7: 3:
 Capi. height 14: fo. 1: 1:
 Capi. height 14: fo. 1: 1:
 height 9: diameter 3: height.*

LIBRO TERZO.

59

Planta del Pantheon.



53 La Jette

Sebastiano Serlio. Pantheon, plan. Etching. 1540.

of Sebastiano Serlio's treatise was published.¹⁸³ Here Serlio demonstrated the major Roman buildings mainly in Rome and around Italy.¹⁸⁴ The book was richly illustrated with various drawings of the buildings in plan, section, elevation, perspective as well as some hybrids of these. In his dedication to King François that appears in the second edition in 1544, he expresses his intention in publishing a book on the antiques clearly: "I decided to put in one volume, if not all, then at least a majority of those [Roman] antiquities so that any person who enjoyed architecture could, wherever they find themselves [*potesse in ogni luogo*], take this book to hand and see all the marvelous ruins of those Roman buildings."¹⁸⁵ It has been suggested that this is the moment when architecture was "delocalized" by entering into a 'typographic virtual bibliospace indifferent to the location of the viewers', although not yet online, however relatively easily accessible.¹⁸⁶ At any rate, Serlio's treatise is crucial for having deployed printing and the wood-cut press in producing an architectural treatise which not only arguably aimed for the wider diffusion than any other preceding manuscript on architecture but also was the one that posited drawing as an equally important medium as the written text, if not the primary one.

Serlio's awareness of the 'didactic and dissemination possibilities' of the printed image

depiction of models. It is a letter sent to Leo X in 1519, and it is usually attributed to Raphael. In the letter a survey of Rome's monuments (most of which were either decaying or suffering from recycle of their materials in new buildings) is mentioned whereby the antiques were to be drawn in orthogonal projections, resulting in an inventory or catalogue. Not only Raphael's preferred set of drawings are reminiscent of the one that Alberti defined as architectural, but his phrases too are similar to that of Alberti's. The survey project was never actualized. The letter is reprinted with Raphael's other texts in Vincenzo Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti nelle testimonianze dei contemporanei e nella letteratura del suo secolo* (Vatican City: Pontificio Accademia Artistica, 1936); for an abridged English version see Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, *A Documentary History of Art*, (New York: Doubleday, 1957) pp. 289-296; on the similarity of Raphael's and Alberti's terminology see Howard Saalman, 'Early Renaissance Architectural Theory and Practice in Antonio Filarete's Trattato di Architettura', *The Art Bulletin*, v. 41 n. 1 (March 1959), pp. 105-106; also motioned in Toker, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

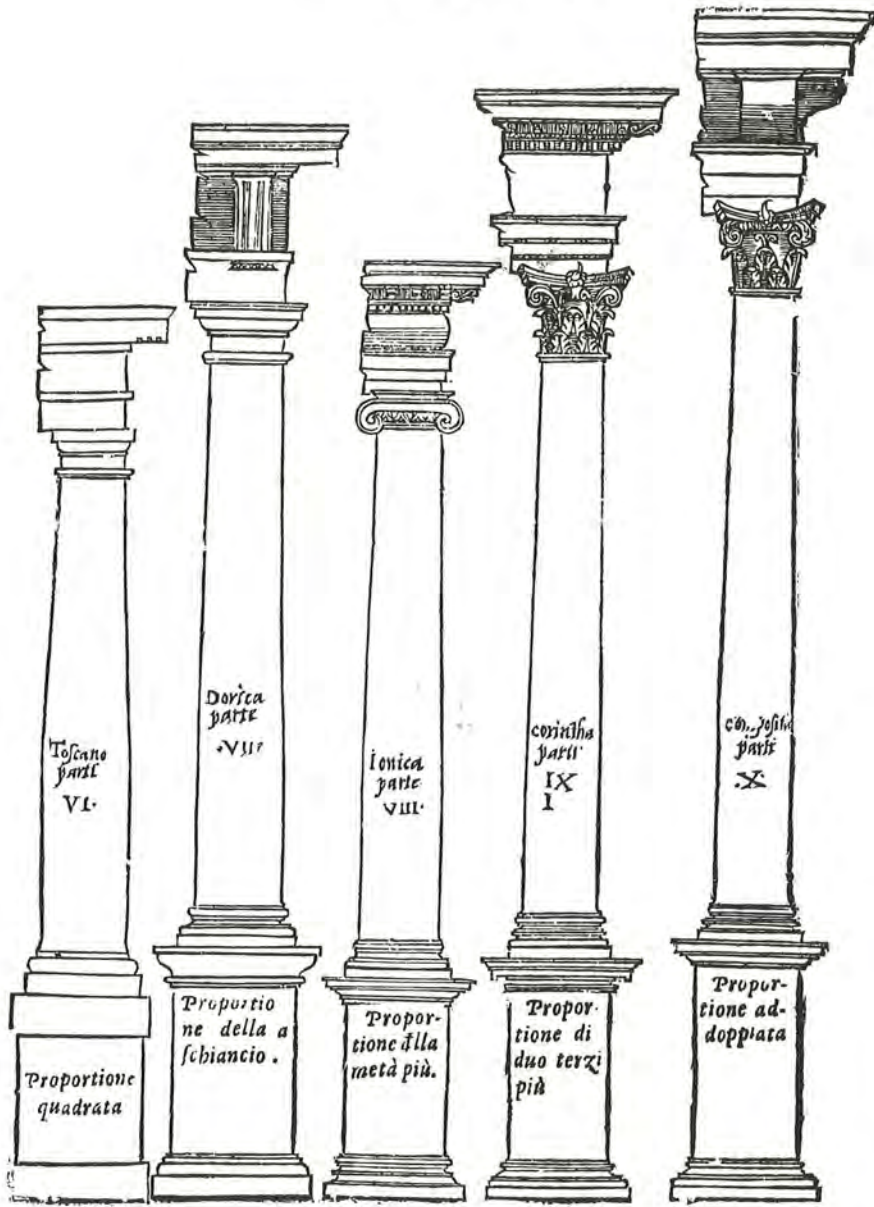
183 Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura, et prospetiva* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1964[1619]), facsimile, first published in Venice: 1619. The fourth book of Serlio's treatise was actually the first one to be published in 1537 because he preferred to start with what he deemed as 'more relevant and important'. At the beginning of this book Serlio introduces the whole project to be comprised of seven books: I, on geometry; II, on perspective; III, on antiques; IV, on the five styles (maniere) of building; V, on temples; VI, on habitations; VII, on situations. Book III was published in 1540, Book I and Book II were published together in 1545, and in 1547 Book V was the last one to be published within Serlio's life span (1475-1554). Book VII was published in 1575 and Book VI was not published until 1966. For a complete English translation see Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura, et prospetiva*, Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, trs, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

184 Serlio included in Book III some non-antique projects (by Bramante) as well.

185 See Serlio, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura, et prospetiva*, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

186 Carpo, *op.cit.*, p. 46. On the issue, Carpo references Myra Nan Rosenfeld, 'Sebastiano Serlio's Contribution to the Creation of the Modern Illustrated Architectural Manual', in *Sebastiano Serlio*, ed, Christof Thoenes, (Milan: Electa, 1989), pp. 102-110.

For a criticism of Carpo, especially on his ideas about the transition from 'non-visual mediaeval' to visual Renaissance, see the review of his book by Anne-Marie Sankovitch in *The Art Bulletin*, v. 85, n. 2 (June 2003), pp. 390-392.



Sebastiano Serlio. Five styles (maniere). Etching. 1537.

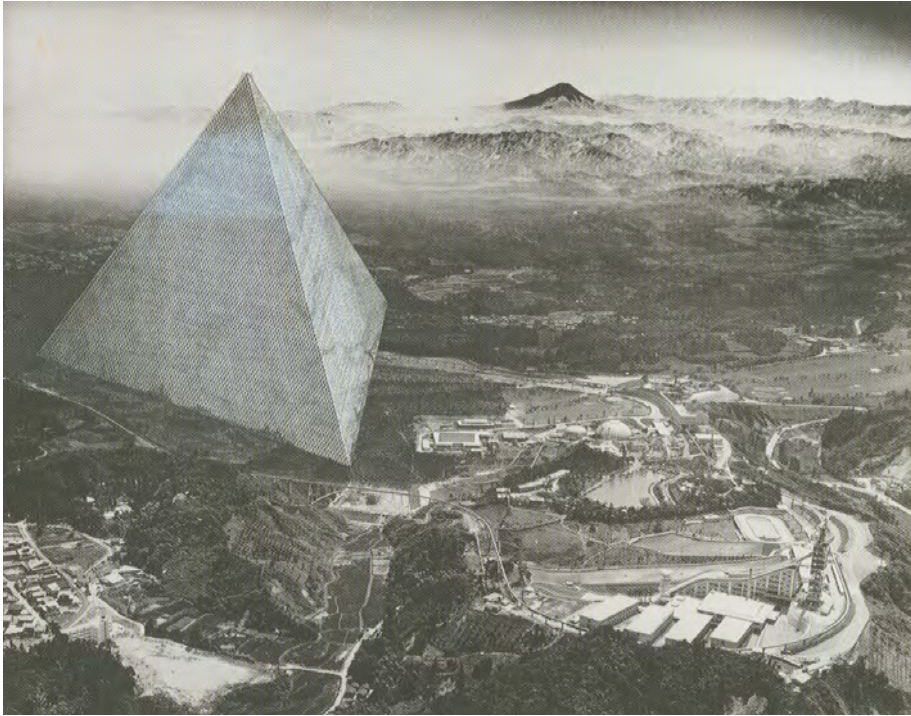
and text has already been discussed.¹⁸⁷ He indeed seems to have a crucial combination (comprising, eg, Italian instead of Latin, drawing as well as text, printing, wood-cut press) that is devised for not just wide but also popular access by the intellectuals as well as the “mediocre” architects.¹⁸⁸ In deed, due to the theoretical level of his enterprise and to the dominance of drawings, Serlio’s treatise is often reviewed as a printed pattern book. Technological part of his formula, nevertheless, stresses a point in relation to the conventional dominance of the written text in theory that I haven’t previously engaged. Unlike the design, presentation and working drawings which were produced for and usually consumed with the construction, thus discarded when they serve their practical purpose even in Renaissance, a drawing used to develop a discourse, say in a treatise, inevitably betrayed its purpose in a way because of the difficulty of its reproduction. In principle, in the pre-fifteenth century world, before Gutenberg and without the wood-cut print on paper, the more a book was illustrated the less it was likely to disseminate. Even symbols were a point of concern for it was easier to make mistakes in their reproduction: Alberti advised to use the written form of numbers instead of numerical symbols (eg, ‘five’ instead of ‘5’) to reduce this risk.¹⁸⁹ Living in and benefiting from an age when the mechanical reproducibility of images was, even though not perfected nevertheless possible, Serlio seems have provided the first fully-developed instance of the drawing in architecture theory as a substitute for the building.¹⁹⁰ Such use of drawings in theory was mostly bound up with the first two types of the threefold structure I asserted in the introductory chapter as the drawings of architecture theory. Theoretical drawings were predominantly descriptive/referential and sometimes analytical, arguably up until Piranesi, who shifted the model to the critical part of theory and deployed drawings in speculative practices.

187 See Rosenfeld and Sankovitch in the previous note.

188 See Serlio, *Tutte l’opere d’architettura, et prospetiva*, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 126. Serlio repeatedly argues that by learning the essentials from the masterpieces even the mediocre architects would be able to produce good buildings, and that this is one of the main goals of his treatise. In many other later instances, deriving guiding principles from the masterpieces is argued to be a way of ensuring a minimum level of design quality and of compensating for the fact that most of the buildings are produced by the “less-gifted” rather than the master. In 1977 Bruno Zevi argued, “[t]he Italian language, for instance, was formalized on the basis of the most important texts, from the Divine Comedy on. Once structured, the language was assimilated at all levels, even that of everyday speech. The same thing can happen in architecture. The invariable derived from the masterpieces can be applied correctly by even the humblest builders. But it is vain to seek for the invariables in “typical” or “paradigmatic” works, which are such precisely because they do not incorporate the invariables.” See *The Modern Language of Architecture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), p. 72; first published in 1977, in Italian.

189 Alberti, *op. cit.*

190 For a general reading on the visual communication through exactly repeatable visual statements see William M. Ivins, Jr., *Prints and Visual Communication*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978); although the introduction of print dramatically effected the dissemination of knowledge in general, architectural theory in particular, these effects may sometimes be overdramatized. For a calibration of the effects of printing in architecture theory see Joseph Rykwert, ‘On the Oral Transmission of Architectural Theory’, *AA Files*, 6, 1984, 14-27.



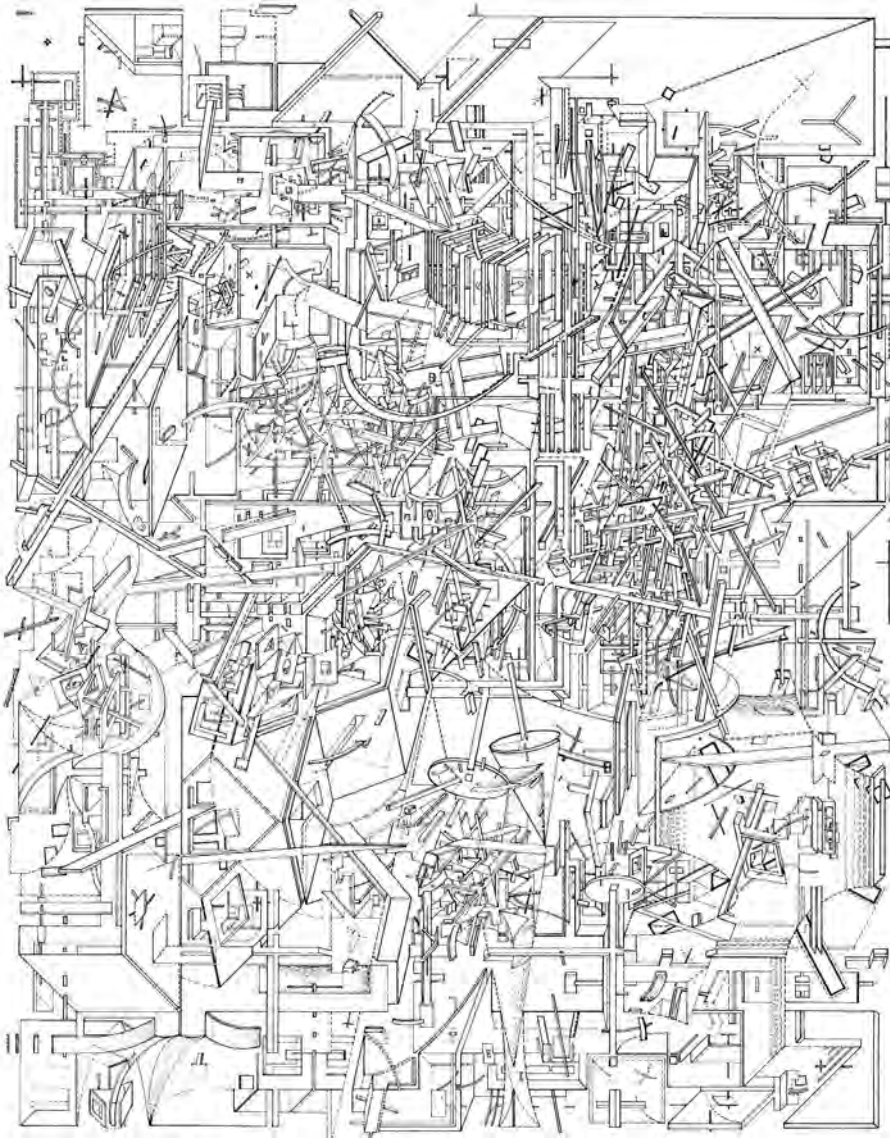
R. Buckminster Fuller and Shoji Sadao. Tetrahedron City, aerial perspective. Photomontage. 1968.

Formal speculation

I have studied in the second chapter how the Florentine projects shift ‘the model’ that dominantly operates in the projective part of theory to its critical part, eg, No-Stop City is not a model city after which to shape the existing one, it rather is a model of the existing city that offers a conception of it. Such shift from a production oriented domain to a conception oriented one gains further significance when considered with a parallel shift of the city in the architectural discourse. I dwell on this in the fourth chapter. This point can also be stressed to do something that I haven’t really done in this chapter: positioning the Florentine projects further by demonstrating how they diverge from many others that are not intended for ‘immediate translation’ into building. The most obvious body of work that the Florentine projects are often considered with in this sense has a very long history. And it is notoriously referred to by imprecise rubrics due to the variety of practices that are roughly grouped in it. As one these rubrics, “paper architecture” necessarily presupposes a ‘regular’, that is, built architecture. Then the former comprises the un-built projects, but mostly the ones that are not intended to or cannot be built. The term “visionary architecture” may be almost equally ambiguous, but it assigns more positive connotations to the referred body of work even only due to the everyday use of the adjective, meaning “marked by foresight and imagination”. The term obviously refers to various and diverse practices, thus covers more adjectives than the dictionary definition includes. It has been suggested that, terms such as theoretical (used to mean ‘not-practical’), speculative, imaginary, fantastic, futurist, ideal, utopian are often employed “as synonyms for or as aspects of the visionary”.¹⁹¹ These practices are mostly intended to offer new and unknown forms and spatial organizations. They may be driven by formal, theoretical, political, technological, or artistic ambitions. Some are nothing more than a disparate ‘vision’; still others may comprise a complete model social organization and drawings of “its” model space. They usually are not immediately attainable or simply meant to form a ideal to aspire to, rather than a blueprint that is expected to be completely fulfilled. The Florentine projects clearly diverge from such practices, which operate in the projective part of theory. Moreover, the Florentine drawings were precisely produced as critique of some projects that comfortably fall under the rubric of ‘visionary architecture’.

There is another body of work that is usually rushed under the rubric of paper architecture. I call this body ‘formal research through drawing’. The Florentines again diverge from this type of practice, but perhaps not as clearly. In this body, one could include those drawings that explore various architectural phenomena without the intention of direct or immediate materialization in building. What is explored and questioned are usually the potential architectural forms and the spatial qualities, but

191 George R. Collins, ‘Visionary Drawings of Architecture and Planning: 20th Century through the 1960s’, *Art Journal*, v. 38 n. 4 (1979), p. 245. First printed as the introduction to the catalog prepared for the exhibition held at The Drawing Center in New York (January 21 - May 5, 1978). Collins’s definition of the ‘visionary’ is a rather wide one.



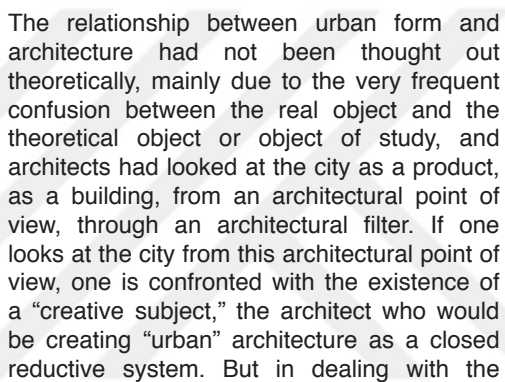
Daniel Libeskind. Maldoror's equation. Drawing. 1979.

these drawings may also engage with the drawing conventions, experiment with notations, or articulate concepts of interest, such as space, time, material, or light. One can consider the formal investigations of diverse figures such as Franco Purini, Aldo Rossi, John Hejduk, Daniel Libeskind, Bernard Tschumi, Zaha Hadid and Lauro Vicini, belonging to this line of practice. These formal researches are perhaps akin to design drawings in the sense that they too explore the possibilities of form, space, and material. Albeit they usually aim for publicity and they presuppose a less direct route, thus more steps, towards a possible realization. Such drawings might be analytical as well as speculative.

The Florentine drawings are too, in a sense, formal researches. But their outcome hardly caters to aspiration. They operate on a totally different part of architecture theory. However, in a comparable way to the other formal researches, they shift formal speculation to a conception oriented intellectual plane. As I have argued in this chapter, there are things that drawings are simply not able to facilitate or communicate in detail. But drawings do facilitate the conception of the architectural form. And they do facilitate critique and speculation when carried out through form. The Florentine projects do distance the drawing from the building, but they still operate by means of architectural form. It is only that they shift its processes from a material-production-oriented domain to a theoretical one, so that the research on form signifies theoretically.

4. THE CITY OF ARCHITECTURE

—The changing position of the city in the architectural discourse after the 1950s



The relationship between urban form and architecture had not been thought out theoretically, mainly due to the very frequent confusion between the real object and the theoretical object or object of study, and architects had looked at the city as a product, as a building, from an architectural point of view, through an architectural filter. If one looks at the city from this architectural point of view, one is confronted with the existence of a “creative subject,” the architect who would be creating “urban” architecture as a closed reductive system. But in dealing with the city—and particularly public places—we face a condition that resists design as a closed system. The city is not the product of a “creative subject,” and the place of the architect as such is eliminated. The architect, however, could be a reader, reading the city from different positions, different systems.”

—Diana Agrest¹⁹²

What if we simply declare that there is no crisis—redefine our relationship with the city not as its makers but as its mere subjects, as its supporters? More than ever, the city is all we have.

—Rem Koolhaas¹⁹³

The Florentine projects I studied in the second chapter were published between 1969 and 1971. They are from a period that may be seen as the opening years of the contemporary architecture theory. Accordingly, in this period it is possible to observe many aspects of architectural discourse undergoing transformations. Among other

192 Diana I. Agrest, *Architecture from Without, Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), pp. 3-4.

193 Rem Koolhaas, ‘What Ever Happened to Urbanism’, *S, M, L, XL*, op. cit. p. 971



Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret. Project A for the urbanization of Algeria. Model photograph. 1930.

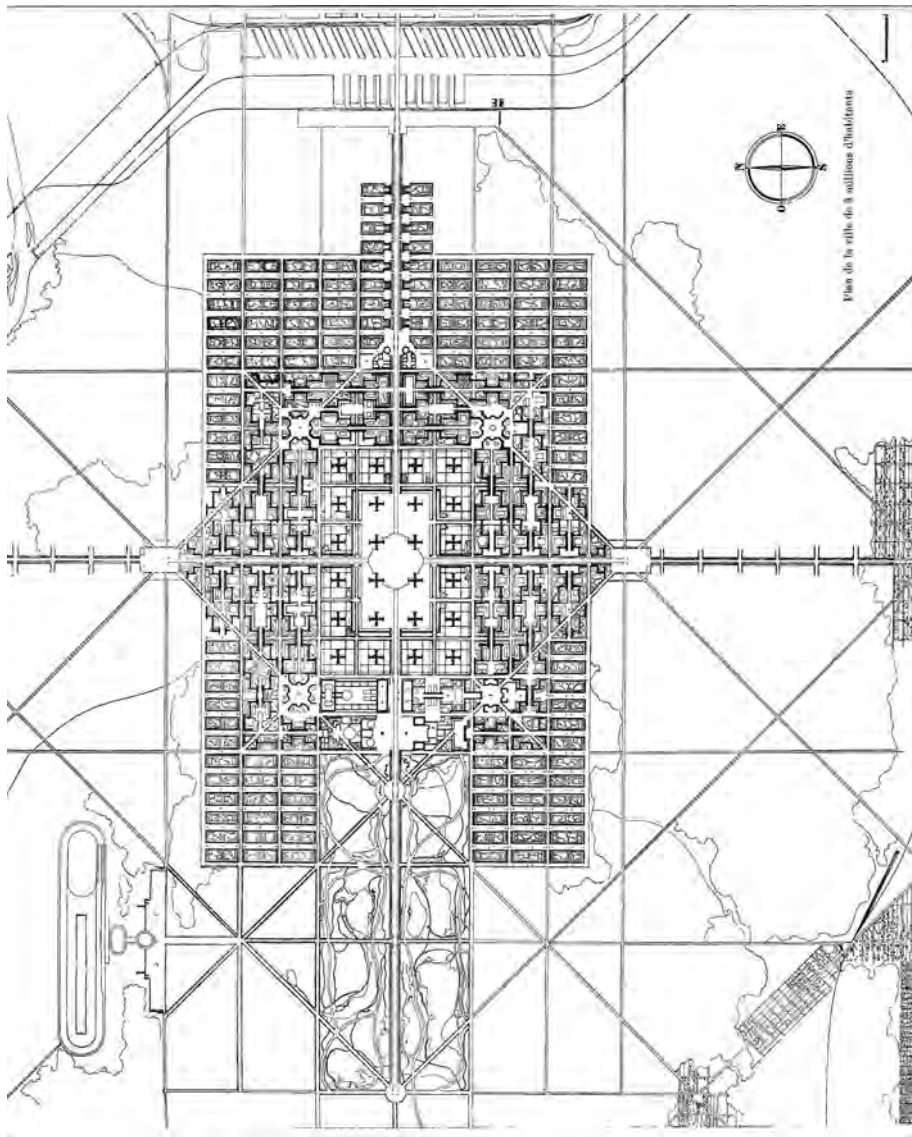
things, these projects can be seen as indicative of two of these transformations. As I have argued in the last two chapters, they are indicative of a transformation in architectural representation for they deploy drawing in speculative practices within theory. The theory these projects produce is unmistakably one that engages with the city. And they are also indicative of a post-1950s transformation of architecture theory on city. In this chapter, I continue studying the speculative drawings, yet with a focus on their relation to the transformation in architecture theory on city.

In the third chapter I have argued that in architecture theory, drawing has conventionally functioned as a substitute for the actual and potential buildings, as *cosa simile a edificio*. Due to its eminence in communicating spatial information, it is through visual means (drawing and later photography) that the buildings are usually incorporated into the main media of theory, eg, books and journals. On the critical part of theory, drawings usually function as the 'illustrations', as the visual supplement delineating the references invoked in the written text, which is the main medium the argument is developed. In the projective part of theory, drawing does what it accomplishes best in the profession: communicating spatial information, providing the blueprint of the projected model. The Florentine projects, on the other hand, while projecting models, operate within the critical part of theory. The models that they propose are not for shaping the actual city after; they rather offer critical reflections on the existing city. So the models they posit are for understanding architecture's actual urban conditions.

No-Stop City is not an alternative city; it is the existing city presented with a critical awareness; it is a certain interpretation of the city. I have so far looked at this statement from within the context of architectural representation. I studied how the conditions and the consequences of this in representation. But this very statement is also the indication of another change: that of the position of city in architecture theory, after which architecture theory is less occupied with alternative urban models intended to replace the existing city and more comprised efforts of understanding the actual city and operating within it. The re-positioning of the city as an intellectual object, in turn, encouraged architectural representation to be more receptive of the built environment; to operate on the built environment in observant and critical fashions; to engage with it on a more theoretical level.

Manifesto and Retroactive Manifesto

Perhaps the best way to address this change is to start with a strong example and then to calibrate the argument. In this sense, the change of the position of the city in architecture theory can be understood by juxtaposing Le Corbusier's '*Urbanisme*' and Koolhaas's '*Delirious New York*'. As it resonates in its English title—*The City of Tomorrow*—the agenda of *Urbanisme* was to 'establish the principles of town



Le Corbusier. Ville Contemporaine, plan. Drawing. 1922.

planning'.¹⁹⁴ Le Corbusier's is an endeavor that perfectly fits in the template of 'projective theory' as I have defined it in the previous chapter. It articulates a specific position and out of that position projects a spatial model. Le Corbusier goes at length to demonstrate—in an authoritative and pseudo-scientific tone, typical of the period—why and how the existing city is not modern enough and simply won't suffice anymore. And the Corbusian scheme as materialized in the proposed model, *Ville Contemporaine*, is everything that the existing city fails to be. The book is a self-proclaimed manifesto and it is written in the language of one. It dictates how the city of tomorrow simply "must be".¹⁹⁵

Le Corbusier begins to explain his model, *Ville Contemporaine*, by saying that it is an "ideal" case, a "laboratory" to investigate principles.¹⁹⁶ The model, detached from the "existing state of things", serves as a "theoretically water-tight formula to arrive at the fundamental principles of modern town planning". It is, in this sense, an ideal model from which "rules" are to be derived. Thus having the abstract and ideal blueprint established, any particular actual case, "whether it be Paris, London, Berlin, New York, or some small town", can then be taken on; its development can be controlled by the derived rules; its course can be channeled towards the model. In his preface to the 1947 edition of *The City of Tomorrow*, Corbusier asserts that, albeit with some modifications, the principles which were first enunciated in the 1924 edition were then, some twenty years later, being translated into action in several plans for the towns and districts that he is responsible for.¹⁹⁷

At the outset of *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas too mentions a 'laboratory'. In his case, the laboratory is more found than invented by him: it is Manhattan, of which the book is "a retroactive manifesto". He asserts that for a period of time, Manhattan, "a mythical island", served as the laboratory of the collective "invention and testing of a metropolitan lifestyle and its attendant architecture".¹⁹⁸ To be sure, as in Le Corbusier's, there is a certain sense of detachedness to Koolhaas's laboratory. This is connoted by the very term 'laboratory' and enhanced by the fact that the location is an island, resonating with that of More's. Furthermore, although it is certainly and by definition not a utopia, there is also a certain 'idealness' involved. Koolhaas mentions, what he engages with is more of a "theoretical Manhattan, a *Manhattan as conjecture*, of

194 Like *Vers Une Architecture*, *Urbanisme* too comprised of a selection of essays earlier published in *L'Esprit Nouveau*. See *Towards a New Architecture; The City of To-morrow, and its planning*, Frederick Etchells, trs, (London: The Architectural Press, 1947[1929]). First published in French, *Urbanisme*, in 1924.

195 The basic principles that Corbusier distills for *Ville Contemporaine* are: "1. We must decongest the centers of our cities. 2. We must augment their density. 3. We must increase the means of getting about. 4. We must increase parks and open spaces". *Ibid.*, p. 178.

196 *Ibid.*, p. 172.

197 *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

198 Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

which the present city is the compromised and imperfect realization".¹⁹⁹ So, much like 'a blueprint that does not predict the future cracks', the book "describes an ideal state that can only be approximated". But Koolhaas does this only to isolate the moments where Manhattanism, the unformulated theory of Manhattan, is "most visible and most convincing". In other words, he does not assert an ideal model, but distills from the existing city its blueprint, its model in order to acquire a better sight and a clearer conception of it. It is, I believe, more than obvious why I use a wording similar to that I have used for the No-Stop City.

This is, in a nutshell, the change of the position of the city—or more precisely, of the existing city—in the architecture theory: the very possibility of writing the manifesto of the existing city instead of a manifesto demanding its thorough transformation, if not demise; positioning the existing city as an object of study instead of an object of radical criticism; an object to be understood and enhanced rather than replaced. It is obviously easy to criticize an 85 year-old text, written in very different circumstances than ours. Being the controversial and complex figure he is, Le Corbusier in other instances learned from, if not fascinated by, the existing city, eg, the Mediterranean city. Moreover, the total reconstruction of cities did at times have a reasonably justified calling. Going through the pages of Dickens or Engels and reading the urban conditions of especially the working class, one can easily become sympathetic of the idea of radically transforming the late-nineteenth century industrial city. And when Le Corbusier argued in 1947 that he is putting the principles developed in *Urbanisme* in practice, he did so in the aftermath of the war, in the context of a war-torn Europe. In short, there is not much to be gained from undermining Le Corbusier.

My aim is simply to stress the change in the actual city's position for it has an intrinsic parallel and interaction with the contemporaneous changes in architectural representation. It is obvious that the transformation of a major object of architecture theory such as the city does have its repercussions in the media of architecture's intellectual processes. More specific to theoretical drawings under discussion here, it is possible to argue that once the existing city shifts from being a practical object for architecture to a conceptual object, an object of understanding, it is no surprise that drawing as architecture's conventional interface with the built environment facilitates process of reading, criticism, and speculation. This is however a delicate point. City's being a concept, a conception, an object of architectural thinking does not necessarily insinuate that it is not an object of production. There is not a more obvious object for architecture than the built environment. When I formulate the change in city's position I refer to the existing, actual city; I refer to the city in its entirety, as a complex entity. This is the city that today is hardly a practical object for architecture to re-model as it sees fit in the way it was assumed to be in *Urbanisme*. It is this city that cannot be replaced by a single architectural gesture, or even by a series of architectural gestures; not only

199 Ibid., p. 11. Original italics.



The cover of the Design Quarterly on 'Making the City Observable'. 1971.

because it is economically unfeasible and politically totalitarian but also because this is simply not the attitude towards the existing city anymore. The contemporary city is something that we come to terms or cope with; even in order to modify it.

Repositioning the city

Juxtaposing some texts helps me to further develop what I have started suggesting. Doing so, it has to be noted, I neither argue that these texts form a consistent theory on city, nor do I consider their authors as forming a group. I simply look at some canonical practices in the mainstream Western architecture theory that were crucial in forming what can perhaps be called our architectural commonsense on the character and the limits of intervening in the contemporary city. In a 1998 article, Mario Gandelsonas argued that,

The confrontation with the new [and illegible] city that emerges [as a result of suburbanization in the case of the north America and of the postwar reconstruction in that of Europe] in the late 1950s and early 1960s results in a theoretical production that accomplishes a critical shift in the position of the architectural subject, from production to reception, from writing to reading.²⁰⁰

Such change of attitude towards the city is actually recurrent in various texts in the period Gandelsonas addresses, and his immediate references are Venturi and Rossi. Obviously, Gandelsonas doesn't argue that architects do not participate in the production of the built environment anymore. His is an effort to stress the change of focus from the 'desire' for the overall production of the city to its reception, for the city is not immediately legible even for the professionals anymore. Hence the importance of 'reading' which will then provide the framework for 'rewriting'—rather than 'writing'. It is not very clear in his text but rewriting seems to suggest incorporation and reconfiguration—in any case utilization—of the already existing urban material; as opposed to writing which presupposes a clear slate, a blank canvas for architecture to realize what Gandelsonas calls its historical 'urban fantasy': a desire to impose an 'overall' order on the urban body as well as to domesticate the economic and political forces that traverse this body. Obviously, reading would also involve an 'imposition'; that of meaning onto the built environment. Continuing to dwell on his linguistic analogy, Gandelsonas sees this as a 'fixation of meaning' of the multiplicity of 'urban signifiers' by means of introducing a major signifier to structure the 'signifying field'. This in turn renders the signifying field more comprehensible. Such rendering does not aim at accurate representations, so in a way rewriting is imminent in the reading itself.

Although Gandelsonas refers to 'Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture', arguably the most paradigmatic example of the postwar elevation of architectural

200 Mario Gandelsonas, 'The City as the Object of Architecture', *Assemblage*, 37 (December 1998), p. 133.



LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

Revised Edition

Robert Venturi Denise Scott Brown Steven Izenour

The cover of Learning from Las Vegas.

attention to the existing city is formed by 'Learning from Las Vegas'. The opening lines of the book read,

Learning from the existing landscape is a way of being revolutionary for an architect. Not the obvious way, which is to tear down Paris and begin again, as Le Corbusier suggested in the 1920s, but another, more tolerant way; that is, to question how we look at things. ... Architects are out of the habit of looking nonjudgmentally at the environment, because orthodox Modern architecture is progressive, if not revolutionary, utopian, and puristic; it is dissatisfied with *existing* conditions. Modern architecture has been anything but permissive: Architects have preferred to change the existing environment rather than enhance what is there.²⁰¹

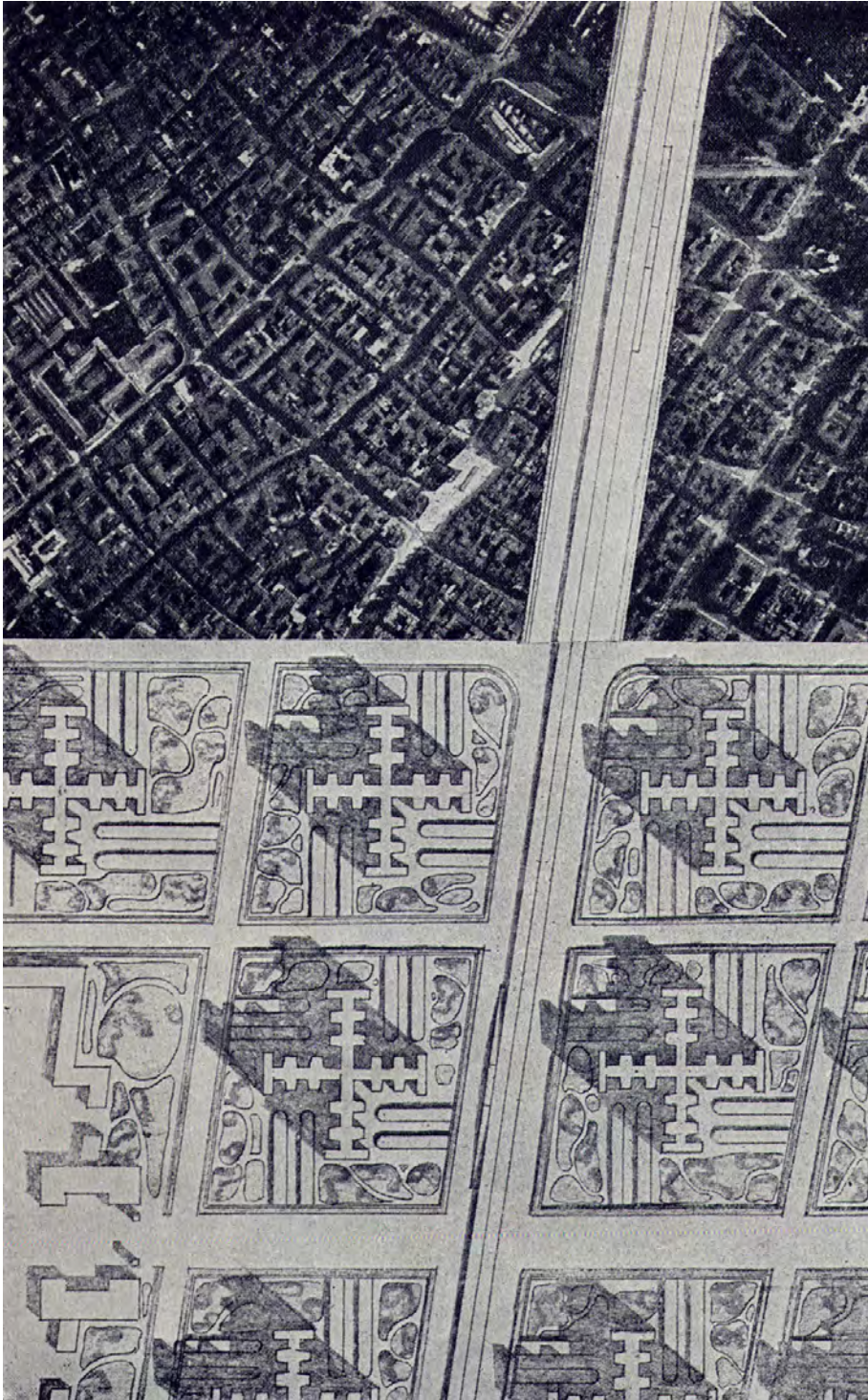
The differences in their tone and in their attitude towards the existing city when compared to those of the early-twentieth century modernists they criticize are immediately visible. These differences inevitably resonate in their language, in the words they choose to describe their position, such as, permissive, tolerant, non-judgmental. It is possible to take Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin de Paris* to which Venturi *et al* refer both as an actual project and as a provocative demonstration of the contrast between his scheme and the existing city. But in either case, Corbusier's attitude towards the existing cities in general and Paris in particular is unmistakable. When comparing the old street structure and the layout of *Voisin*, the best thing he mentions about the former is that its ugliness is something that we're used to in order to 'make the best of our misfortune'.²⁰² The streets, otherwise, are "walls of houses", "grotesquely jagged silhouette of gables, attics, and zinc chimneys" that make the sky a "remote hope" condemning people into a trench, which is "plunged in eternal twilight": "when all is said and done we have admit it disgusts us".²⁰³ He also contrasts the spacious and bright streets of *Voisin* to the 'appalling nightmares of the streets of downtown New York'. It is actually very possible to make a comparative list of the words that Le Corbusier and Venturi *et al* use in relation to the existing city, in which the words of the former would range from misfortunate to disgusting and those of the latter would pivot around 'almost alright'.

'Learning from Las Vegas' demonstrates formal and symbolic analyses of a particular existing urban condition; it is a rendering of the meaning of that condition. Venturi *et al* hypothesize an "orthodox modernism" that is puristic in its 'shunning' of symbolism which eventually effectively diminish the communicative power of architecture. As opposed to this one, they simultaneously try and construct an alternative position that is able to welcome the everyday symbolism, the popular imagery and the space of the commercial vernacular. On this level one can find numerous alliances between Venturi

201 Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1977[1972]), p. 3. Original italics.

202 Le Corbusier, 'Plan Voisin de Paris, The Street', in, Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret, *Oeuvre Complète 1910-1929*, (Zürich: Editions d'Architecture, 1974), p. 118. First published in French, in *L'Intransigent*, 1929.

203 *Ibid*, 118-119.



Le Corbusier. *Plan Voisin* superimposed on Paris. Photomontage. 1925.

et al and many others. Yet the fundamental aspect of their research, a raised attention to the existing city, would be a commonality that is shared by even more; even by the seemingly remote ones such as the Smithsons.

If not in their projects, then definitely in the writing of the Smithsons, one unmistakably witnesses their divergence from the earlier CIAM in terms of the attitude towards the existing city. The gentler tone of Smithsons, regarding the existing city, is perhaps best explained in Alison Smithson's phrase "subjugation of the one to as found".²⁰⁴ In any case, their discourse is free from a strong dislike of the actual city, which manifests itself in Le Corbusier as disgust on an almost personal, passionate level. While remaining critical of the post-war city, basically on the grounds of the alienation it causes, the Smithsons nevertheless both learned from it and acknowledged the limits of intervening in it. Criticizing the modern city's lack of 'comprehensibility' and 'identity' and with the agenda of revitalizing the presumably lost connection between 'place' and 'life pattern', Smithsons argued to replace the modernist paradigm of functionalist zoning with more phenomenological categories of House, Street, District, and City.²⁰⁵ Exemplified by their studies and mappings on the level of the street (eg, spatial distribution of play friends of children of individual houses) or in their fascination with the structure of Middle Eastern city, the aimed revitalization obviously entangled studies on existing life patterns and places.

Regarding the limits of architectural intervention in the city, the Smithsons were not necessarily very moderate by today's standards. However, when compared to earlier CIAM schemes, their ambitions were nonetheless restrained by a more realistic understanding of the pace of urban transformation. On this Peter Smithson argued,

If you think back to the pioneer days of modern architecture you will see that Hilberseimers and the Le Corbusiers and the Gropiuses were producing Ideal Towns in the Renaissance sense, in the sense that their aesthetic was in fact the classical aesthetic, one of fixed formal organization. Now the attitude of Team X is that this is an unreal attitude towards towns, and we think that planning is a problem of going on, rather than starting with a clean sheet. We accept as a fixed fact that in every generation we can only do so much work, and we have to select the points at which our action can have the most significant effect on the total city structure, rather than try to envisage its complete reorganization, which is just wishful thinking. Our current aesthetic and ideological aims are not 'castles in the air' but rather a sort of new realism and new objectivity, a sort of radicalism about social and building matters; and (to stress again) a matter of acting in a given situation.²⁰⁶

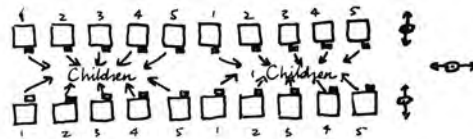
204 M. Christine Boyer, 'Talks on the City', public lecture, Delft School of Design (24 October 2008).

205 It is Kenneth Frampton who diagnoses Smithsons' set of categories as 'phenomenological', see Frampton, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

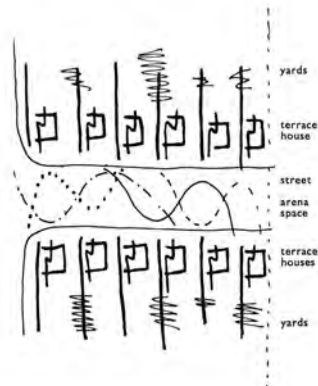
206 Peter Smithson, *Team X Primer*, ed, Alison Smithson, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968), p. 85.



Alison and Peter Smithson.
Damascus Gate, site plan. Drawing.
1979.



Cluster. Diagram of child association patterns in a street, AS.



Cluster. Diagram of street with scratchings indicating the zones of social contact, AS.

Nigel Henderson. Photographs; Alison and Peter Smithson. Diagrams of 'child association patterns'. Drawing. 1950.

In this paragraph one clearly sees why Smithsons form a transition between the early CIAM understanding of the city and the contemporary one(s). The generation of Smithsons witnessed how Enlightenment may turn against itself and lead to totalitarianism;²⁰⁷ how modernization and industrialization enable mass destruction as well as mass production; how capital may appropriate modernist architecture leaving aside its aspirations to modernity. Peter Smithson is nevertheless able to salvage the prominent aspect of Enlightenment, that is, progress. He is not so much opposed to the idea of total urban reorganization but he finds it to be unfeasible, a 'wishful thinking'. The existing city, nonetheless, should progress into a better one; but this is a gradual process in which every generation can accomplish a certain amount of progress. Thus, each generation has to engage with the existing city as their starting point. This requires a relationship with the existing city that is much more substantial than the embedded criticism in utopia.²⁰⁸ The relationship of the 'Renaissance ideal towns' and the 'castles in the air'²⁰⁹ to the existing city is a consecutive one: they are devised to replace it. On the other hand, the 'realism' that Peter Smithson endorses, 'acting in a given situation', obviously entails a deeper understanding of the existing city, an engagement with it that involves more than its demise.

The idea of gradual construction of the city in time through architecture connects Smithsons to another paradigmatic figure of the post-1950s architecture theory. In the case of Aldo Rossi, the phrase that I have been using—elevated attention to the existing city—would hardly suffice. The very first paragraph of the US edition of *Architettura Della Città* reads:

The city, which is the subject of this book, is to be understood here as architecture. By architecture I mean not only the visible image of the city and the sum of its different architectures, but architecture as construction, the construction of the city over time. I believe that this point of view, objectively speaking, constitutes the most comprehensive way of analyzing the city; it addresses the ultimate and definitive fact in the life of the collective, the creation of the environment in which it lives.²¹⁰

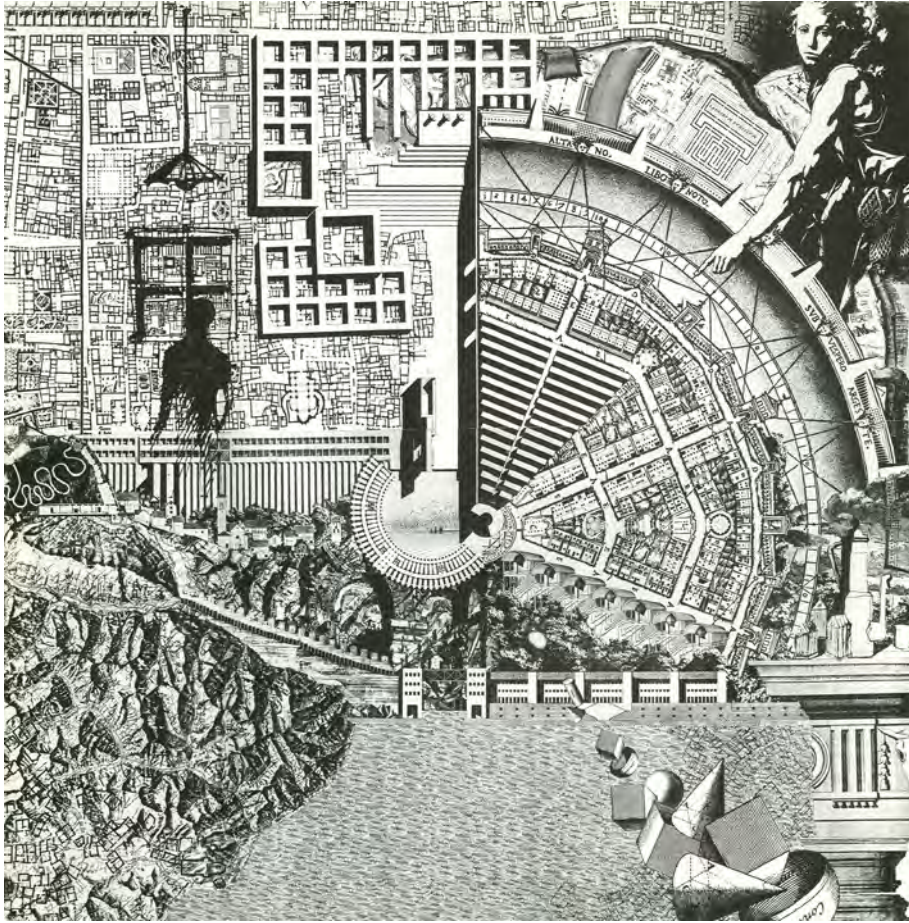
For Rossi, architecture and the city, production and the analysis is virtually one and the same thing. It is true that much of historical modernism in architecture also comprised

207 The classic book on this issue is Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, trs, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972); first published in German, with the title *Philosophische Fragmente*, in 1944.

208 As I have previously studied more in detail, the paradigm of utopia comprises radical criticism of the existing society and its space. This criticism is either articulated or implied by the radical difference of the proposed model society/space *vis-à-vis* the existing society/space.

209 Here Peter Smithson's reference is obviously to Lewis Mumford, who in his 1922 *Story of Utopias*, suggested: "Our most important task at the present moment is to build castles in the sky..."

210 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, ed, Peter Eisenman, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 21; first published in Italian, *Architettura della Città*, in 1966.



Aldo Rossi, Eraldo Consolascio, Bruno Reichlin, Fabio Reinhart. *La città analoga*. Collage. 1976.

'an ambition for the city'. One can convincingly mark the end Modern Architecture with the end of architecture's city-scale ambitions. Modernism invented a vocabulary of building types and forms. Yet, this inventive energy was generated by a mindset, the horizon of which was well beyond the building scale. Building was just a part of the modernist agenda whose ultimate ambition was a total reorganization of the city, presumably, to accompany modernization and to contribute to the shared ideals of modernity, such as a fairer distribution of the resources. But 'the city' that Modern Architecture related to was seldom the existing one and the relationship between Modern urban schemes and the existing city was seldom explained through continuity. On this, Rossi fundamentally diverges from Modern Architecture. Previously I've mentioned a possible list of keywords that Le Corbusier and Venturi used in relation to the existing city; Rossi's list for the city would consist of words like continuity, permanence, persistence, memory.

As opposed to the modernist discourse that is marked by an insistence on shifts, breaks, and changes, Rossi, while acknowledging the transformation of the city in time, focused on what remains. While the modernist city schemes were held together by the rationale of their program, for Rossi the unity of the city and its parts was achieved by history, by the city's memory of itself. While the modernists insisted on the imposition of new city models or the invention of building forms, Rossi was interested in the persistence of forms and in the models that already existed in the city. As much as *Architettura Della Città* is about the production of the city over time, it is about reading and understanding the existing city too. For Rossi the two cannot really be separate, the production of the city required its thorough analysis.

Repositioning architecture

One can add to this list. But at any rate, it seems possible to argue that the attitude towards the existing city has changed in the mainstream Western architectural discourse after the 1950s. If the former attitude inherited many aspects from Enlightenment and involved ambitions of ordering, restructuring, or replacing the existing city, the latter aimed at betterment, if it did at all, in a more gradual and piecemeal fashion that was coupled with coming to terms with the existing city and the powers that operate on it. For the wording of this last sentence instead of 'betterment' one could use 'enhancement' or 'improvement' and one could use 'coping' instead of 'coming to terms with'. In any case, the former set of verbs needs to stress the essence of working with the existing built environment. The mindset that the second part of the sentence has to reflect perhaps can be likened to that of someone who just realizes they are not on the driver's seat but on the back seat and try to comprehend the path to make moderate suggestions.

In his aforementioned essay, Gandelsonas mentions a moment of denial when

architecture fails to accept that the 'scene of production is almost fully occupied by a multiplicity of economic and political actors' leaving a minor place for architecture. This and the car analogy, pessimistic as they are, actually fit into the Tafurian account of the *storia* of Modern Architecture's encounter with the modern city and its economics. Tafuri acknowledges a post-war crisis in the architecture-city relationship, or in 'the architectural ideology on the city', that has been lurking there for half a century.

The crisis of modern architecture begins in the very moment in which its natural consignee—large industrial capital—goes beyond the fundamental ideology, putting aside the suprastructures. From that moment on architectural ideology no longer has any purpose.²¹¹

From then on, the architectural ideology on the city with its utopian tones, as it was formed at the beginning of the century, became an "operative mechanism", an "indirect stimulus" for the post-war reorganization of the city.²¹² But if the strengthening relation of architecture with modernization and reconstruction carried out by the central bureaucratic authorities and large industrial capital activated a crisis, Modern Architecture already comprised the seeds of this crisis from the beginning in its relation with the city and its capitalist reorganization.

Mostly with the agenda of contributing to accomplishing the ideals of modernity, early-twentieth century Modern Architecture strived to engage in the reorganization of production-distribution-consumption cycles, and of the city. This necessitated major shifts in the position of the architect and the scale and character of the architectural intervention. Engaging in the "construction of future" necessitated a reorganization of the city as a "social machine".²¹³ At this specific juncture, Tafuri argues, architecture discovered that in order to succeed this objective, besides utilizing the 'sector' of building production, it had to relate the sector to the reorganization of the city; in short, bind architecture's faith with that of the city.²¹⁴ Yet, he also observes what pioneers of Modern Architecture was not ready to accept then: 'once come within the sphere of reorganization of production in general, architecture would have to be the object and not the subject'. In other words, architecture and the sector of building production, rather than being the driving force in the reorganization of the capital and of the production in general, would be themselves organized and deployed in these processes.

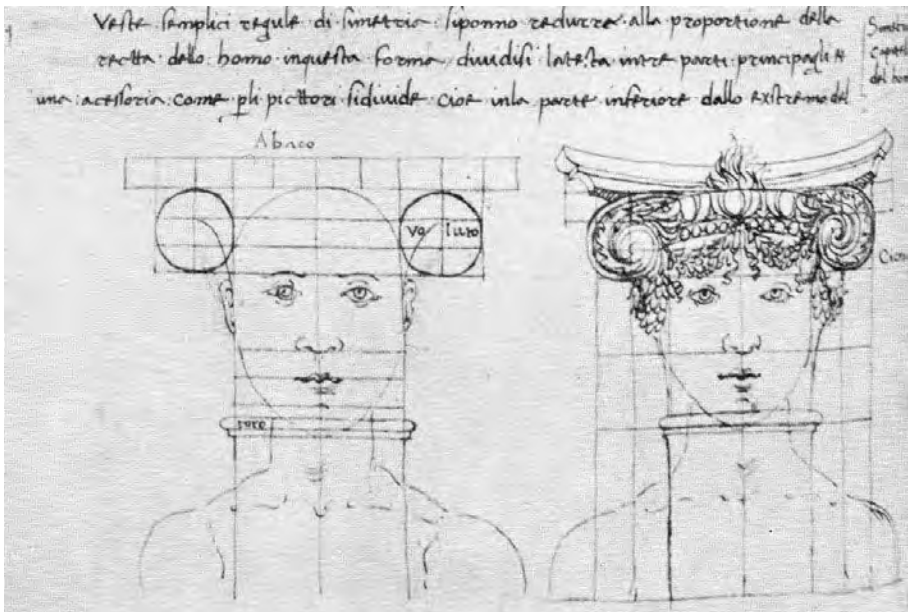
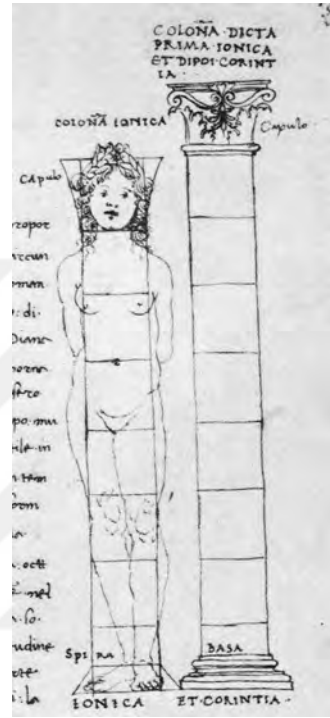
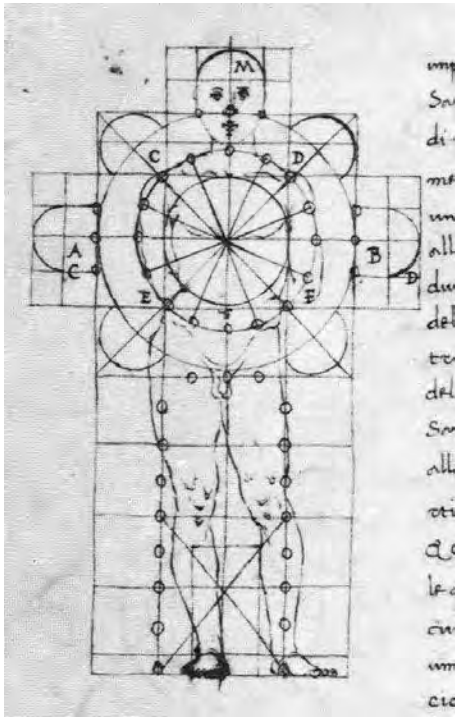
The aforementioned change of the position of the city within the architectural discourse from a pragmatic object of total production to one of conception can be seen as a belated acceptance of this last diagnosis of Tafuri. When tackling the existing, highly

211 Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia, Design and Capitalist Development*, Barbara Luigia La Penta, trs, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), p. 135.

212 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

213 *Ibid.*, p. 64, 104.

214 *Ibid.*, p. 100.



Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Various drawings from *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare*. 1470s.

complex city, architecture after modernism gradually did away with the ambition of its total reorganization through building. The city in its entirety could no longer be a pragmatic object. It had to either be expelled from the architectural discourse altogether or it had to be relocated as an object of study which allows intervention in a gradual and piecemeal fashion. This is not to say that architects do not participate in large-scale projects anymore. However, it is arguably commonsense today that we just don't have the optimism of interwar modernists about architecture's capabilities for intervening in the city. In any case, it is hardly controversial to argue that today, for architecture, the existing city (in its entirety, as a complex entity) resides more in the sphere of cognition than in the sphere of production; it resides more in the critical discourse than it does in the practical one; it is more an object of study than a pragmatic object; it is more about thinking than about doing.

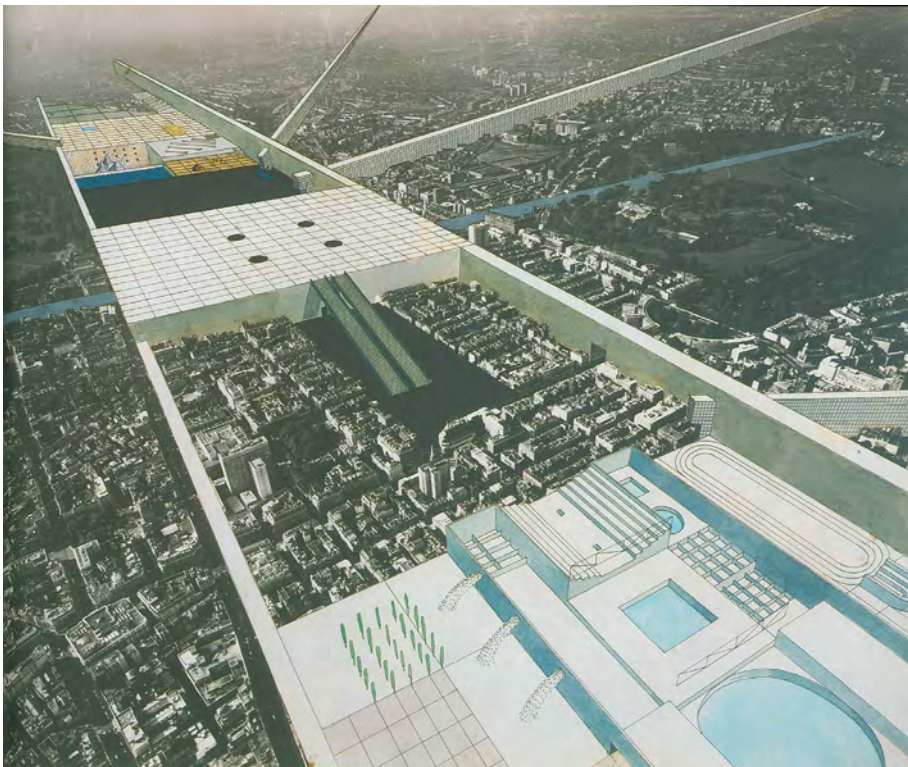
Consequences in drawing

The main consequence of such a shift for architecture theory is that it became more receptive of the existing city. Similarly, the main consequence for architectural representation is that representation—as architecture's historical interface with the built environment—started to operate on the existing city more in observant, analytical, critical fashions. This manifests itself on at least three levels. On two of these levels architectural representation operates seemingly in conventional ways, albeit on unprecedented scale. First of these two is the level, where representation functions as the repository of the extra-architectural imagery transposed into architecture. When an image is transposed and deployed in the metaphorical mechanisms in order to explain spatial phenomena or to generate form, it is obviously often through drawing that this image enters into the domain of architecture. For instance, when the human body is transposed into architecture in order to account for the proportions of five orders or to generate the basilica form, it is through drawing that it is first measured, rationalized, laid down to underlie the organization of form. But when one considers the contemporary ever-inclusiveness of architectural imagery that ranges from Las Vegas billboards (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour) to Japanese pornography (Koolhaas), and to Hollywood actors (Somol and Whiting), the quantum leap in the scale of the transposition of extra-architectural imagery is more than obvious. The extent and the variety of the imagery utilized to understand and convey architectural ideas today is simply unprecedented. Architecture's elevated attention to the actual city and the urban culture, which has gradually been incorporating more images in an increasing number of media, has multiplied the imagery used by architecture.

On the second of the levels where representation operates in a conventional manner but on a dramatically bigger scale, drawing continues to describe actual spatial organizations; it continues to be a substitute for the building in the books of theory. In the recent decades, the endeavors aiming at describing contemporary urban



Rem Koolhaas, Zoe Zenghelis. The City of Cpative Globe. Drawing. 1976.



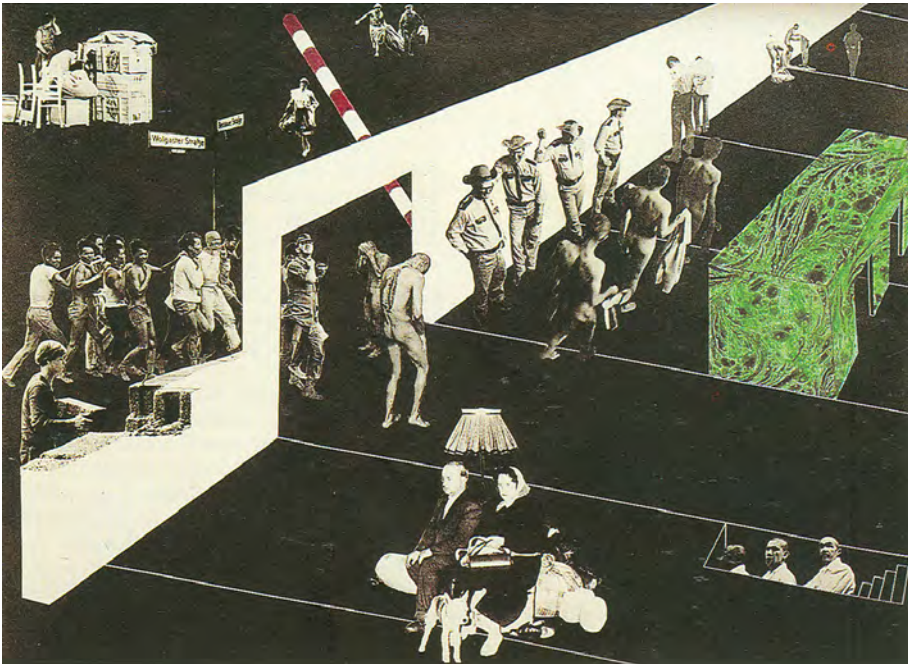
Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, with Madelon Vriesendorp, Zoe Zenghelis. Exodus, the reception area. Collage. 1972.

phenomena or suggesting an understanding of the present-day city have hardly been on short supply in architectural and urban discourses. Arguably, the energy once spent on envisioning new and complete urban models—mostly prior to 1970s—is now being spent on understanding the existing city. The dramatic inflation in the currency of the term ‘mapping’ in especially the last twenty years is but one indication of this. But, be they maps or not, drawings and other techniques of visualization have an eminence in describing spatial organizations as I have studied at length in the third chapter. Coupled with the ever-easier dissemination possibilities for images and the increased number of efforts to account for the existing city, it is obvious how the elevated attention to the existing city boosts representations of it in architecture theory. Morphological and typological studies on the existing city, of which Venturi, Rossi, and Koolhaas are but paradigmatic examples, require facilitation by architecture’s visual machinery. In this sense, although the content and level of theory vary, this level can be said to be the one established by Serlio’s third book, albeit radicalized.

The last level on which the shift in the position of the city in architectural discourse manifests itself again consists of images of the city albeit of the ones that exceed a crucial threshold and actively produce a theoretical argument rather than functioning as illustrations or clarification of an argument developed through the written text. The Florentine speculative drawings that I have studied are such drawings. I have earlier differentiated between the previous level where drawing functions *cosa simile a edificio*, illustrates the argument and this one, where it develops the argument. One such example was from ‘Delirious New York’. In the book, the section drawing of Downtown Athletic Club renders the arguments on vertical schism and programmatic diversity clear in an immediate way. Moreover once seen, it also operates as the summary or the graphic shorthand of the whole discourse developed throughout the book. On the other hand, as used in the book, the Life cartoon goes beyond the role of the ‘graphic explanation’ and accentuates the prominent feature of its object; develops an argument about it. What the cartoon does for the skyscraper section, the City of Captive Globe achieves the same for the plan of Manhattan. It produces an argument, a way of understanding the city. It theorizes the series of disconnections that enables the metropolis *par excellence*, and radicalizes Manhattan’s scheme turning the city into an ‘archipelago of cities within cities’. Similarly, in the case of Rossi, the series of drawings and photographs that he uses through out *The Architecture of the City* may clarify and support his argument, whereas *The Analogous City* collage rather aims at a theoretically signifying montage

Multiplicity of the architectural imagery

In order to test the aforementioned first two levels, it would be useful to have a brief look at some other practices contemporaneous with the Florentine projects that



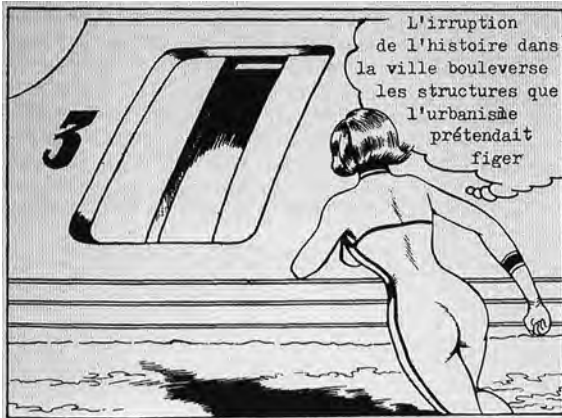
Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, with Madelon Vriesendorp, Zoe Zenghelis. Exodus. Photomontage, Collage. 1972.

engage with the city deploying an unorthodox imagery. Superstudio and Archizoom, or the remainder of the so-called *Architettura Radicale* (eg, Ettore Sottsass, Gruppo Strum and UFO) for that matter, may not be the most popularly referred figures on the issue. But as the classic examples, one can instance some of the Smithsons' projects, starting with their entry to CIAM 9; Venturi *et al's* study of Las Vegas urban strip; Archigram; *Utopie*; Yona Friedman; Hans Hollein photomontages; and the early OMA projects like Exodus and The City of the Captive Globe.²¹⁵ Among non-architects, the *Situationist International*, Independent Group, and Constant would be the first names to note.²¹⁶ I can't stress enough that these are just the figures and projects that are usually referred to in relation to the unorthodox imagery deployed in practices engaging with the city around 1960s. They are not necessarily critique/speculation deploying drawings in the way I have formulated. Although many connections, personal or inspirational, certainly existed between some, nor do I consider them as a group. They, rather have very different discourses. Yet, one can still argue that roughly in the same period these practices all aimed, to different extents, to get into the contiguity of the city in order to document, develop and communicate ideas about it deploying an extended and unorthodox representational machinery. Various visual strategies were used. Most were based upon the insertion of the ordinary, of mass imagery, of everyday symbolism, of technology—or other indicators of culture considered to be significant—as well as popular media into architectural representation as a way of effectively connecting architecture to the city and the prevailing culture.²¹⁷ Some

215 For various projects by Alison and Peter Smithson, especially the entry to CIAM 9 in Aix-en-Provence (1953) and the Golden Lane Housing (1952), see, A. Smithson, ed, *Team 10 Primer*, *op. cit.* and A. and P. Smithson, *The Charged Void: Architecture* (New York, The Monacelli Press, 2001). See also R. Venturi, D. S. Brown and S. Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, *op. cit.*; *Casabella*, 359–360 (1971); *Archigram*, 1–9 (1961–1974); P. Cook, ed, *Archigram* (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999); *Utopie*, 1–2/3 (1967–1969); M. Dessauce, *The Inflatable Moment: pneumatics and protest in '68* (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999); H. Hollein, 'Alles ist Architektur', *Bau*, 1/2 (1968), p. 2. For various writings and photomontages (especially Ueberbauung Wien [1960], Flugzeugtrger in der Landschaft [1964], Transformation 'Erzwaggon' [1963]) by Hans Hollein, see <http://www.hollein.com>. For R. Koolhaas, E. Zenghelis, with M. Vriesendorp and Z. Zenghelis, 'Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture', 1972, graduation project at the AA School of Architecture in London and competition entry to Casabella's 'The City as Meaningful Environment', see *Casabella*, 378 (1973), pp. 42–45 and R. Koolhaas and B. Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–21. For R. Koolhaas, with M. Vriesendorp and Z. Zenghelis, 'The City of the Captive Globe', 1972, Project for Manhattan, see R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, *op. cit.*, pp. 294–296.

216 For Situationist International, among many others especially see, Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), first appeared in French in 1967; Tom McDonough, ed, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004); Elisabeth Sussman, ed, *On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Moment in Time: The Situationist International 1957-1972*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989). For Independent Group see Claude Lichtenstein and Thomas Schreggenberger, eds, *As Found: The Discovery of the Ordinary* (Baden: Müller 2001); David Robbins, ed. *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990). For Constant see Constant Nieuwenhuys, *New Babylon* (Den Haag: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1974); Mark Wigley, ed, *Constant's New Babylon: the hyper-architecture of desire* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1998).

217 Obviously the 'mass culture' is necessarily an urban and modern phenomenon as the very



Utopie. *L'Argent de l'urbanisme* (appropriated image from *Jezabel*). Comic strip. 1969.



The cover of *Archigram* no. 4 (1964).

relied upon photomontages as a way of short-cutting the actors involved in building production, and used representation to manifest architectural and urban statements. Others questioned and manipulated the conventional “objective” representations of the city.

Going through the popularly referred examples or the architectural periodicals of the period might perhaps only provide a superficial outlook. But be that as it may, even on this level, one can make a tentative list of the changes in the imagery deployed in architecture theory after 1950s, as: 1. increase in the quantity of images, 2. increase in the multiplicity of images (especially through the incorporation of mundane/everyday/popular/mass imagery), 3. variation in the media (eg, increase in use of lithography, photomontage as well as inclusion of media like comic strip or storyboard), 4. increase in the quantity of ‘speculative’ images (critical or otherwise) not meant for implementation. The facts that these points are hardly controversial and that the practices that transformed representation in these ways more often than not did that while engaging with the city might not serve as a ‘proof’, but they certainly go a long way in convincing one about the interaction of the transformations in representation and architectural theory on city.

I have argued that the increasing quantity and multiplicity of architectural imagery is related to the elevation of architectural attention to the existing city and its culture. Yet, obviously along with this, were the contemporaneous factors, such as the profusion of images in culture at large in the last half a century. Although this profusion cannot completely ‘explain’ the parallel profusion of images in architecture, obviously the two is closely related. The increased currency of images in the recent decades has led to the coinage of terms like “visual culture” and has rendered propositions such as “ours is a visual age”²¹⁸ plausible. Popularization of television in 1950s, dissemination of photocopiers, offset and lithographic printing techniques in the 1960s, of personal computers in 1980s, of the internet in late 1990s, and of wireless mobile gadgets capable of capturing, transferring, and browsing images in the recent years, all have enabled ever easier dissemination possibilities for images. At any rate, images dispersed through TV, through printed material and over the internet, play an immense role in determining the range of accepted and preferred behaviors, and in propagating the preferred self-images.²¹⁹ Perhaps the easiest way to stress the impact of images

notion of ‘mass’ came into existence with the industrialized city in the nineteenth century. Due to rapid urbanization and modernization immediately after WW2, the notion was arguably never addressed more than it was in 1960s. Among the many possible, one can instance Lawrence Alloway’s remark for its telling wording: “mass culture is, by its nature, urban.” See ‘City Notes,’ *Architectural Design*, (January 1959), pp. 34-35.

218 Gombrich, ‘The Visual Image’, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

219 Like societies, individuals organize themselves around preferred self-images, and each person’s self-image, being socially derived, is heavily dependent on the culture at large and the governing ideology that organizes it. See M. Cormack, *Ideology* (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 12–13. I am well aware that it is risky to use the word ‘image’ in this



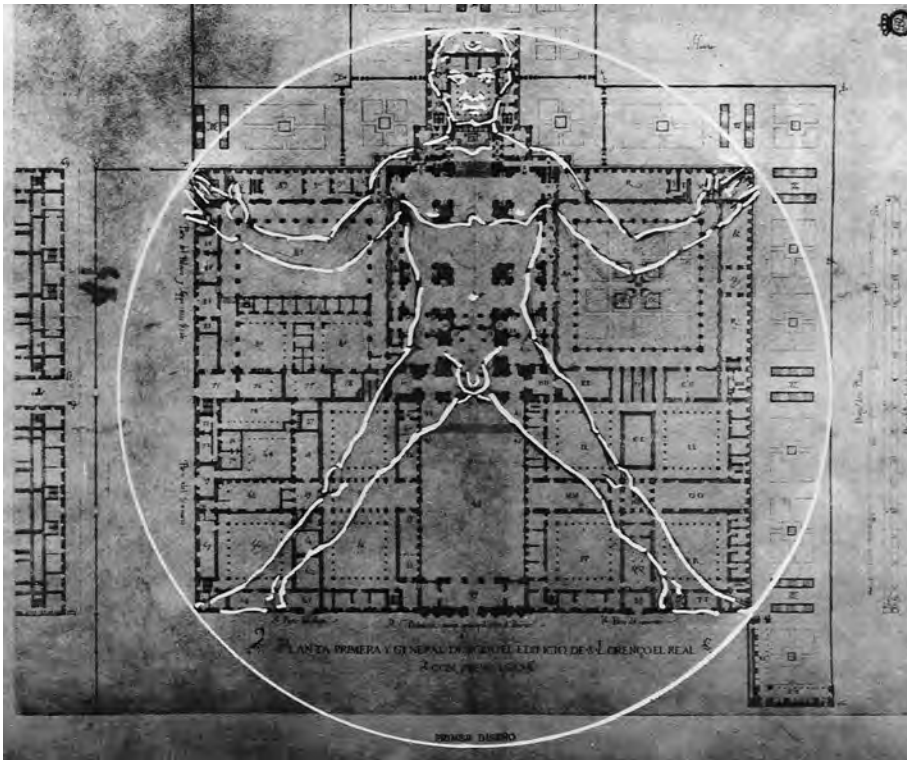
402

Trés Grande Bibliothèque (Very Big Library)
Paris, France
Competition, 1989

Strategy of the Void

403

Page spread from Rem Koolhaas, *S,M,L,XL*. 1995.



René Taylor. *Escorial*, with the superimposed male body. Drawing.

in culture today is to simply recall the suggested reversal of the conventional hierarchy between the image and the thing/event itself in the recent years which is recurrent in many studies on images and media but perhaps most paradigmatically known through Baudrillard.²²⁰ Let it suffice to say, expanded more than ever, today the collective imagery is a major ideological field and images play a crucial role in virtually all cultural processes.

Being a cultural enterprise itself and historically utilizing images, the increased quantity of architectural imagery is inextricably related to this profusion of images. If nothing else, the technological developments that enabled easier production and dissemination of images have also dramatically increased the dissemination of architectural knowledge, which is more often than not visual. In the specific context of this chapter, it could be said that the sheer quantity and currency of images in culture at large simply provided a larger visual vocabulary for architecture to transpose from and a higher motivation to do so. However, solely stressing the architecture-culture relationship would not provide a completely satisfying account. Culture at large has always been more—visually or otherwise—manifold than a singular cultural enterprise, such as architecture. So, although the impact of a more ocularized culture needs to be acknowledged, other factors have to be included. This is the point where the change of attitude towards the existing city comes into play by affecting the mechanisms through which extra-architectural imagery is transposed into architecture.

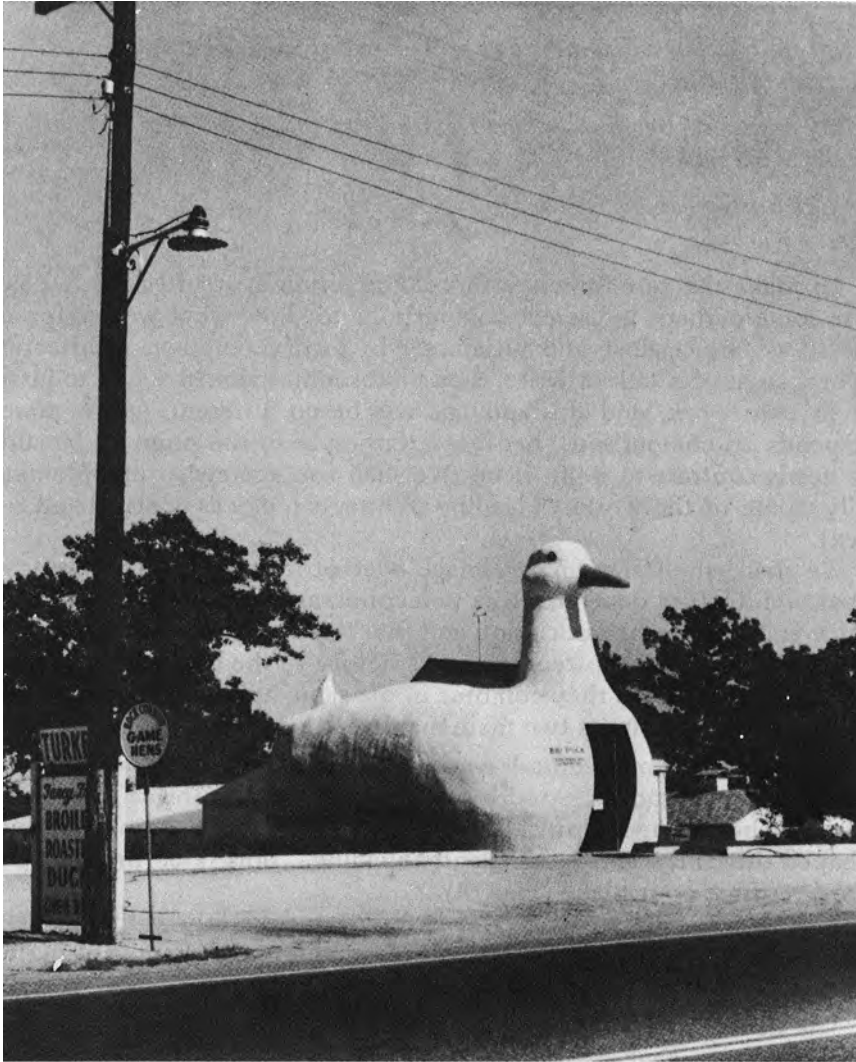
Conventionally, due to its specificity and operational nature, architecture's transposition processes are reductive translations: whatever the complexity and the multiplicity of the extra-architectural referent, it has to be reduced and crystallized into architectural form. This is precisely what maintains the limits of architecture.²²¹ The level of codification in the translation may vary. The metaphorical mechanisms that convert the human body to the cruciform basilica plan or the ocean liner windows to horizontal sliding windows of Villa Savoye are relatively easier to follow than the one that converts the 'voids' in Japanese pornographic images to those in *Grande Bibliothèque* project of OMA.

This reductive translation, however, seems to be valid as long as the extra-architectural referent is to be deployed in generating architectural form. Yet, obviously there are images that are part of a specific architectural discourse but do not transform into form, just like the Tanya ad on the cover of 'Learning from Las Vegas' which is arguably one

broader sense; for here it means not just a visual representation but also a bundle of behaviors. Yet, my precise point is the convergence of the two; the thinning of the bundle of behaviors to a surface, an image. Images in the narrower sense play a crucial role in the forming and propagating of preferred self-images.

220 See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, S. F. Glase, trs, (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1994). First published in French, *Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981.

221 Diana I. Agrest, 'Design versus Non- Design', in *Architecture from Without*, op. cit., pp. 30–65; first published in *Oppositions*, 6 (1976).



73. "Long Island Duckling" from *God's Own Junkyard*



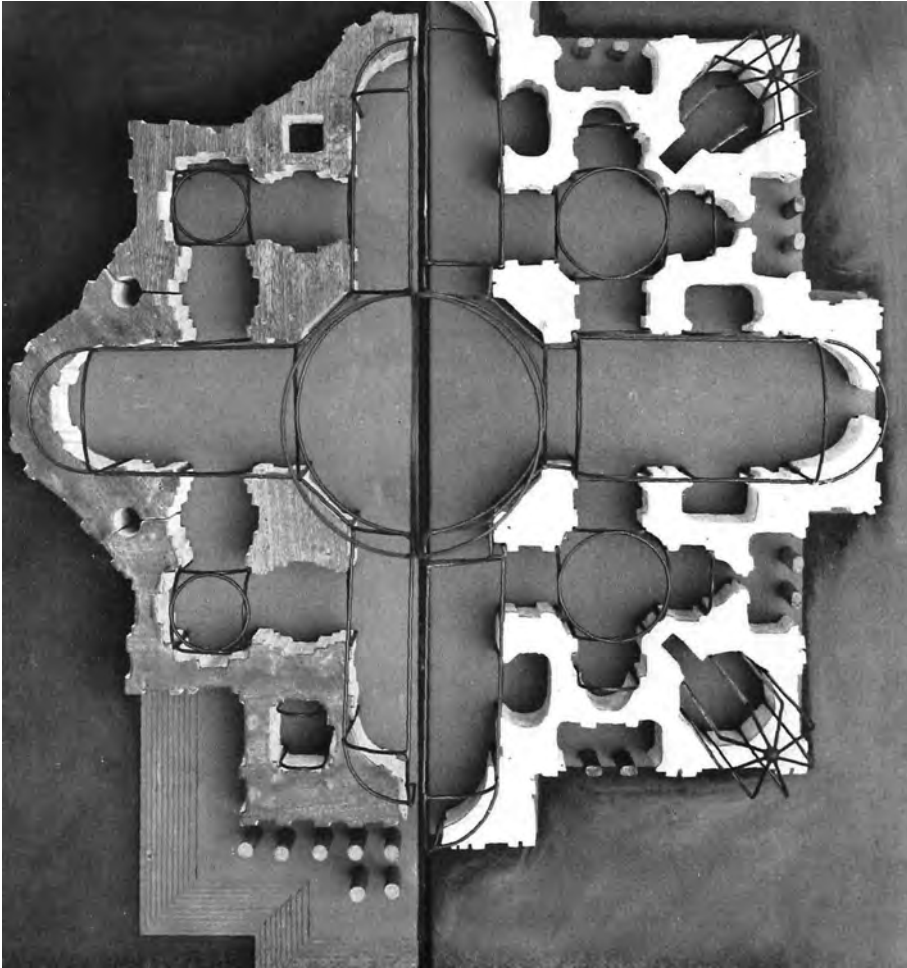
Robert Venturi *et al.* The duck, page from *Learning from Las Vegas*. Photograph, drawing. 1972.

of the most known images in architecture theory. Although, it is part of a theoretical discourse, the image is one of those that escape the metaphorical formal mechanisms and resist being totally incorporated into form. It is within, what can be called, an 'extra-building repository' that these images can exist somehow as excess architectural elements— which are not summoned in building. Obviously, the extra-building medium for the borrowed imagery in architecture is representation. And as I have been arguing, it is in the last half a century that extra-building repository of images has dramatically expanded.

Arguably, in its efforts to connect to the actual city instead of aiming at its replacement, some architectural practices after modernism engaged in a process comparable to Dadaist collage in incorporating extra-disciplinary elements rather directly: that is, without the conventional reductive translation that maintains the specificity of the work and the discipline. This rather direct transposition is, in turn, due to both the architectural position on the city and the intrinsic qualities of the visual media. In other words, the increase in the quantity and the multiplicity of imagery used in architecture can be understood on two interconnected levels. First is the architects' increasing interest in relating to the existing city and its culture. And the second is the tendency to form this relation as directly as possible, for which the visual media are better equipped and more immediate than written text. Let's take 'Learning from Las Vegas' example again. Since what is of interest is 'learning from' the qualities of the specific urban condition, the text offers an easy-to-follow account on the condition. 'Looking at how things are' in a permissive, non-judgmental way would ideally require discarding any preformed value-system first. Although that is impossible, Venturi *et al*/avoid, as much as possible, imposing complex theoretical articulations which may abstract the argument. Their intention is rather relating to the material as directly as possible. At first instance their endeavor is a documentary one that aims at registering and thereby incorporating a specific and unorthodox urban situation. This is why the visual manifestations of this urban situation are transposed directly via photography. On the other hand, qualities of the visual media—especially photography—only add up to this intended directness.

As I have studied at length in the previous chapter, visual/graphic information, for better or for worse, is commonly regarded as a more "direct, unmediated, and accurate representation of things", in comparison to "indirect verbal report" about things. Just as a photograph of a crime is less mediated thus more credible as evidence than a verbal account, the visual material on Las Vegas is more direct evidence on it than a verbal articulation. After all, even Barthes mistook photography as being too direct to have any codes.²²² So, Learning from Las Vegas is riddled with photographs and diagrams not only because the material is visually rich but also because an architectural position that is interested in providing direct relations to the existing built environment is more

222 Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Message', p. 17; 'Rhetoric of the Image', pp. 36, 42-45, in *Image, Music, Text*, *op. cit.*



Bruno Zevi *et al.* San Pietro, critical models. 1964.

inclined towards deploying visual media. It is not only that visual media are better equipped and more immediate in describing spatial organization. But also why not transpose the visual manifestations of an urban condition and its culture in order to demonstrate it when that culture manifests itself increasingly visually in a growing number of media.

I have argued that the shift of city in architectural discourse triggered architectural representation to operate on the existing city more in observant/critical fashions and this manifests itself on at least three levels. Now it is clearer why the existing city's being an object of study, description, understanding, and constructive criticism entails deploying representational machinery more substantially than before. And it is clearer why this may also entail the oozing of cultural references and extra-architectural imagery into the architectural discourse. In the previous chapters, I have already talked about the architectural images of the city that actively produce a theoretical argument. In this sense some aspects of the last level—on which the shift of the city in architecture theory manifests itself in representation—has been discussed. Still, as it is my main focus, in the remainder of this chapter I will again dwell on that and further study its relation to the shift of city in architecture theory.

Radicalized critical nucleus

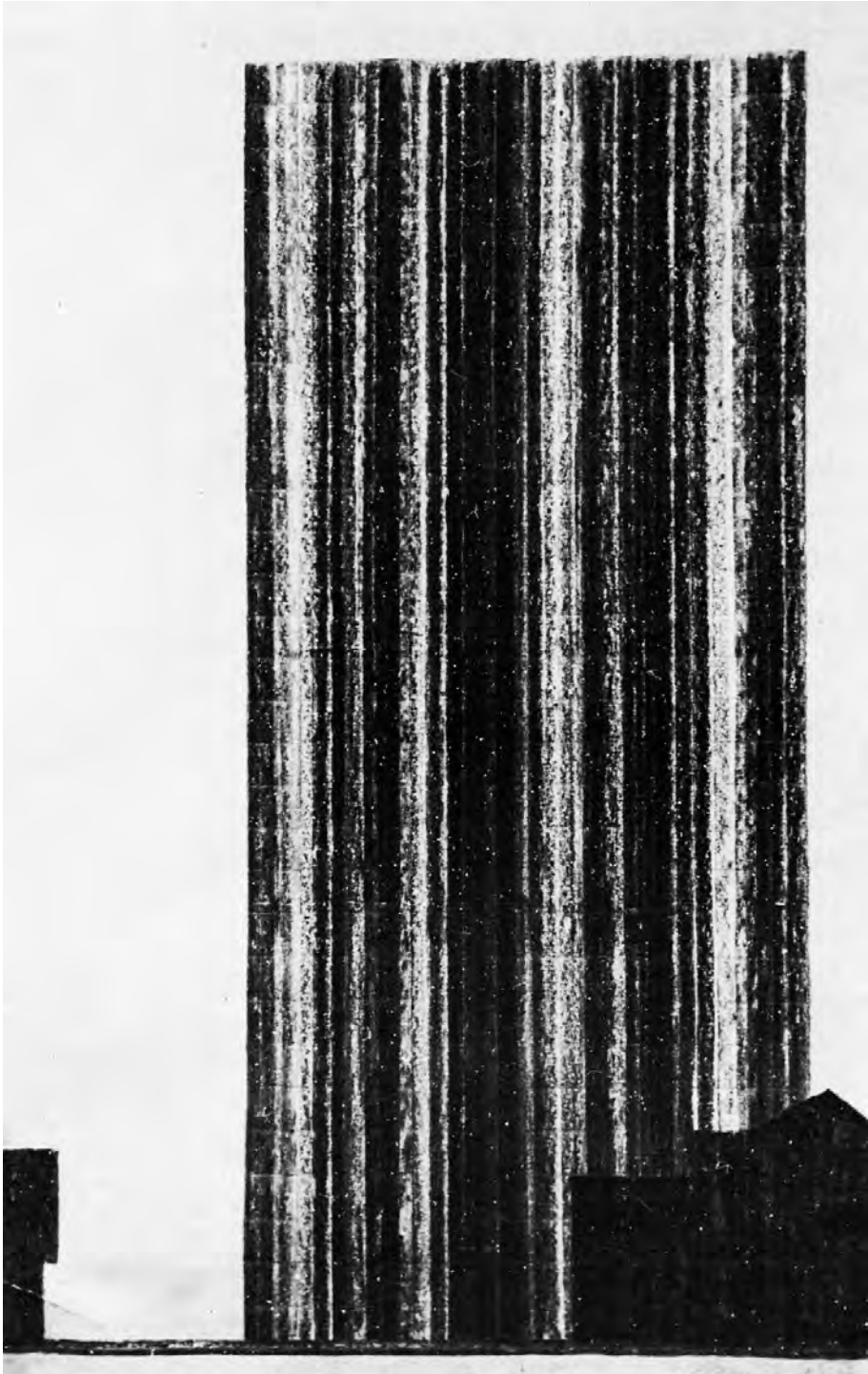
In 1964, Bruno Zevi asked 'Why art criticism must be expressed in words alone? And in architectural criticism, why should we not use the same instruments as the architect?'²²³ He posed these questions in the context of an exhibition of 'critical models' of certain Michelangelo buildings.²²⁴ The models were the products of a three-year research project carried out by a group of students at the school of architecture in Venice under Zevi's supervision. The models rendered specific qualities of the buildings. Or as Zevi put it, they were "three-dimensional translations of specific critical thoughts, by Tolnay, Ackerman and other scholars".²²⁵ The same year, Zevi referred to the exhibition in an AIA-ACSA seminar, and he argued that although they were far from being satisfied with the results, the experimental Michelangelo models were valuable for they had demonstrated that "architectural criticism or architectural history can be "written" in another way than with words."²²⁶

223 Bruno Zevi, 'Visualizzare la Critica dell'Architettura', *L'Architettura; Cronache e Storia*, v. 10 no. 104 (1964), p. 2.

224 See Bruno Zevi, 'Michelangiolo in Prosa', *L'Architettura; Cronache e Storia*, v. 9 no. 99 (1964), pp. 650-654; also see 'L'opera architettonica di Michelangiolo nel quarto centenario della morte—modelli, fotografie e commenti degli studenti dell'Istituto di Architettura di Venezia', *ibid.*, pp. 654-712.

225 Zevi, *Visualizzare la Critica*, *op.cit.* p. 2.

226 Bruno Zevi, 'History as a Method of Teaching Architecture', Marcus Whiffen, ed. *The History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1964), p. 15. Original quotation marks.



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Project for a glass skyscraper, elevation. Drawing. 1922.

It is important to note the underlying motivation of Zevi's efforts. In the said seminar, he complains about the detachment of design—and its teaching—from history. What he means by history is actually an amalgam of history, theory and criticism, for he asserts that one cannot make a distinction between them, for one “cannot have history without a theoretical approach and without critical involvement”.²²⁷ So what is at stake is a “complete coherence almost a fusion” between design, history, theory and criticism, so that ‘design can be taught in the history laboratory and history can be taught at the drafting table’. Put like this, it is more than obvious why Zevi tries to explore the ways history, theory, and criticism can be facilitated by design tools, eg, drawing and models, rather than by words alone.

Zevi may be complaining about the lack of enthusiasm on the part of students towards the history course when it is carried out in conventional methods. But what is at stake is not popularity. For Zevi, design is not separate from criticism to begin with:

[M]any works of art are of a critical nature. ... Modern art criticism has been able to show that many painters were not really artists but critics who used the medium of painting instead of the medium of words to express not their feelings but their ideas. And it is the same with architecture. In the best cases, our students will be good critics who will express their ideas in architecture, through building.²²⁸

Although it is easy to think of practices and figures that verify Zevi's take on painting—such as Rene Magritte, to name one obvious name—one may still have their reservations about his position. However, his agenda for architecture is clear: deploying images, models and buildings in critical discourses. “Now, we know that a critical essay can be produced by painting, as in the case of Carracci... Is there a reason why the same could not be done in architecture? Why not express architectural criticism in architectural forms instead of words?”²²⁹

It is true that some aspects of particular buildings and projects can argued to be critical of their context. In the recent architectural discourse, the argument Michael Hays developed through the drawings of Mies van der Rohe is arguably the most paradigmatic one on buildings' critical capacity.²³⁰ In the recent years, Hays's work has become the primary target for the ones critical of architecture's critical capacities.²³¹ Rem Koolhaas, who is, for better or for worse, taken as the iconic figure by the counter-

227 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

228 *Ibid.*

229 *Ibid.*

230 See K. Michael Hays, ‘Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form’, *Perspecta*, 21 (1984), pp. 15-29.

231 See Robert Somol & Sarah Whiting, ‘Notes around the Doppler Effect and other Moods of Modernism’, *Perspecta* 33, *The Yale Architectural Journal*, 2002, pp. 72-77.

criticality camp, once diagnosed that “the problem with the prevailing discourse of architectural criticism is [its] inability to recognize there is in the deepest motivations of architecture something that cannot be critical”.²³² I don’t necessarily refer to Koolhaas’s argument to provide an opposing pole to Hays. Hays’s position doesn’t exclude the fact that architecture indeed reproduces its context as well as producing it; a building, obviously, may reaffirm its context rather than negating it. Moreover, there is actually not ‘something’, but there are many things ‘in the deepest motivations of architecture’ that may potentially hinder its critical capacity. I am not going to dwell on the old—and somewhat misleading—remarks on the differences between the architect and the sculptor/painter. Yet, obviously, a building is initiated, financed, built, and regulated by social actors other than the architect. This may very well hinder building’s capacity of making a statement—critical or otherwise—which already has its limitations to start with. What I rather intend, having these positions in mind, is to direct the attention to the fact that there is also something in the primary processes of architecture which is critical and much less controversially so. This will then help me to study “the critical value of the image”. Tafuri in his seminal *Teorie e storia dell’architettura* argued that,

We can say, in fact, that every new architectural work is born in relation—no matter whether of continuity or antithesis—to a symbolic context created by preceding works, freely chosen by the architect as terms of reference for his themes; nor has the distance or proximity of these terms from the present any importance. This gives further confirmation to the fact that every architecture has its own *critical nucleus*. What interests us is the possible emphasis one can give to this nucleus, to the point of making it the absolute protagonist of the work.²³³

At first instance, Tafuri’s point may seem too fundamental or general to have any operational use at all. After all as Tafuri’s implied analogy suggests just as every person is ‘born’, destined to grow into the symbolic/social world of adulthood and to form a relationship to their context, every architectural project inevitably has a preceding symbolic context that it relates to. Yet what if the project not only is born into this symbolic context but makes its issues with the context its ‘absolute protagonist’? I would argue the Florentine projects that I have studied demonstrate such a case: they radicalize the inherent ‘critical nucleus’ of architectural work; they make the criticism of their symbolic context their absolute protagonist. It is doubtful that Tafuri, who insistently and intentionally ignored especially Superstudio, would have agreed to this reading. Yet, what is No-Stop City if not a project that is hung up on its—symbolic, urban, intellectual—context? What *Il Monumento* aims at if not an obsessive criticism of an existing architectural tendency carried out to the extent that—in the end—there

232 Koolhaas, quoted by Beth Kapusta, *The Canadian Architect Magazine*, 39 (August 1994), p. 10.

233 Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, Giorgio Verrecchia, trs, (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 109. First published in Italian, *Teorie e Storia Dell’Architettura*, 1976, Rome. My italics.

is no real architectural project but just criticism?

Tafuri writes the above-quoted paragraph in reference to Zevi and the “critical Michelangelo models”. For Tafuri, these models are *anamorphoses* of Michelangelo’s work, in Barthes’s sense of the word. Barthes argues, and Tafuri quotes, that the critic ‘doubles’ the meaning and creates a ‘second language’ that ‘floats’ above the primary language of the work itself. The doubled meaning is not a pure reflection of the work but an *anamorphose*. For Barthes, this process is a ‘supervised’ transformation that is conducted according to certain rules and always in the same direction. Tafuri argues Michelangelo models are *anamorphoses* but all they add up to are “amateurish translations of the architectural language into abstract and a-historical sculptural games” rather than presenting a fully developed and consistently supervised second language.²³⁴

Tafuri concludes that an alliance can exist between history of architecture and, what he calls, “visual design” only at a high level of abstraction. He then argues that “the possibility of a critical study conducted through images and through architecture is still there: but it will have to climb back into real architectural structures”.²³⁵ Here ‘real’ does not necessarily mean ‘built’. There is the possibility of criticism through images, for instance through drawings or photographs. However, Tafuri warns, in order to “*speak critically* through images” one has to carefully control and arrange them without being allured by the medium.²³⁶ Tafuri’s skepticism seems to be stemming from the appeal of the visual media. That is to say, the image seems to be doomed by its own ‘looks’. One the one hand, the appeal of the image can conceal its lack of substance, gloss over its shortcomings. One the other hand, the visual appeal also can steal the attention from a very important content. Considering in Tafurian terms, this may very well hinder the possibility of criticism through the images because criticism needs to climb back to the architectural structures. The image needs to remain in connection to the architectural structure, actual or hypothetical, that it represents or explores. Whereas it can, by means of its visual appeal, disembody itself from its content. Thus, for Tafuri, the risk that criticism through images runs is that the image can easily become “an end in itself, an autonomous image only very slightly related to the linguistic structures that it is trying to explore”.²³⁷

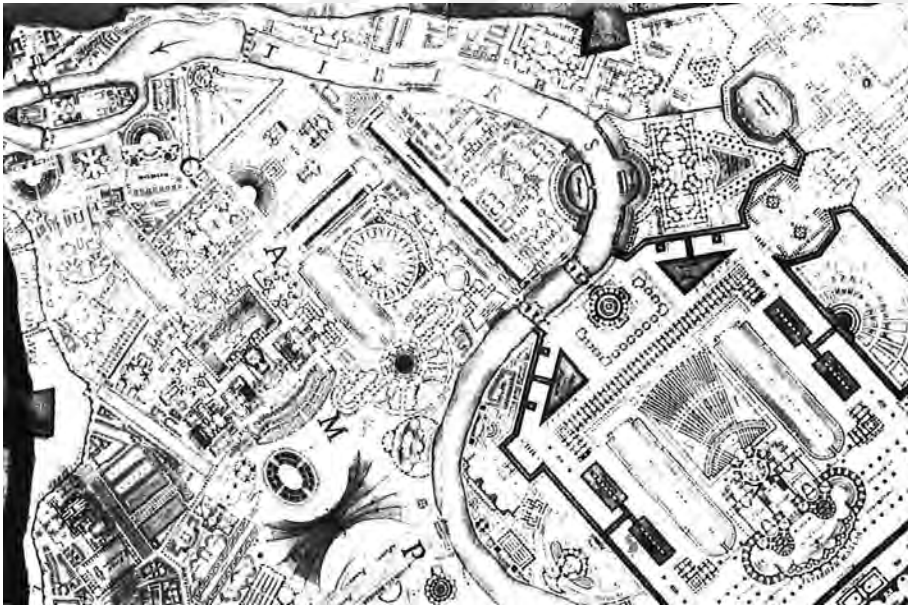
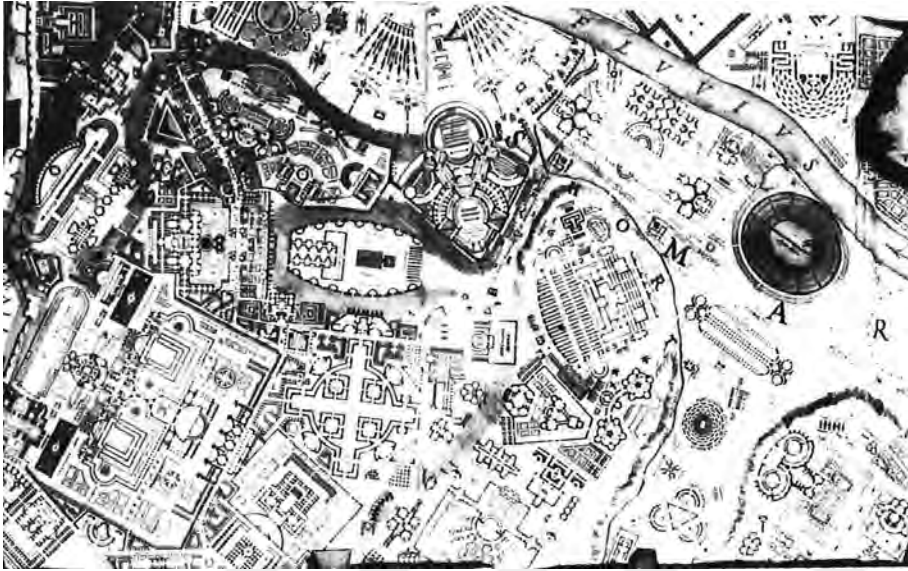
One the other hand, despite this ‘flaw’, images also have great potential as instruments of criticism in the Tafurian sense. They can very well isolate a theme and explore it. Or they can facilitate a montage of various themes of an architectural structure leading to reassessment of its syntax and semantic. Tafuri mentions five ‘instruments’

234 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

235 *Ibid.*

236 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

237 *Ibid.*, p. 157.



Giovanni Battista Piranesi. *Campo Marzio*, plans. Engraving. 1762.

by means of which architecture can experiment criticism: 1. The emphasis of a given theme, exasperated to the point of the most radical contestation of the fundamental laws governing it, or disjointed in a sort of disassembly of its single parts, 2. The insertion of a theme deeply rooted in a particular, totally different context, 3. The *assemblage* of elements from ideally and historically different and distant codes, 4. The compromising of architectural themes with figurative structures of a different nature or through their sudden insertion into a *series*, 5. The exasperated articulation of a theme originally taken as absolute.²³⁸ The strategy that seems to underlie all of the instruments is de-contextualizing architectural elements or pushing them to limits, but in any case disturbing the semantic or syntactic continuity in order to mobilize a process of the re-assessment of a certain architectural 'theme'. As further criteria Tafuri posits completeness of the architectural narrative, its conscious check along the way and the isolation of a theme or multiple themes in the narrative as protagonist(s) of the narrative.

Isolating a theme and then emphasizing/articulating it to the extent that problematize its very premises is something I dealt with when studying the Florentine projects. Tafuri, on the other hand, has especially "Piranesian Utopias" in mind, more specifically *Campo Marzio*, in relation to the first and the last instruments of experimenting criticism. Although Tafuri does not articulate the examples that he names in relation to the instruments, reading these two instruments in Tafuri's list together with his account on Piranesi's work elsewhere clarifies the matters.²³⁹ What is exasperated and taken to extreme in *Campo Marzio* is the diversity of architectural types and fragments in the city. And the previously 'absolute' theme that is exasperatingly articulated is the notion of city as a place, as a meaningful organic unity whose parts are joined together following certain rules, *eg.* syntactic and semantic. Piranesi questions the syntax of the city or, more precisely, the very possibility of a syntax, by radicalizing its fragmentation and typological variety. The individual and independent fragments undermine the notion of composition by not complying with any set of rules that would govern their connection and relation to each other. On this note, Tafuri compares the plans of *Campo Marzio* to the notion of 'heterotopia' as articulated by Michel Foucault,

One could very well apply to this obsessive technique of assemblage Foucault's definition of *heterotopia*: where the utopia affords consolation—he observes—by covering "cities with vast avenues," the heterotopia disturbs, secretly undermining language, "destroying 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to 'hold together.'"²⁴⁰

238 *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111. Original italics. I have shortened the list by taking out the examples Tafuri names without explanation or further articulation.

239 Tafuri, 'The Wicked Architect,' *op.cit.*

240 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Yet, obviously it is not only the syntax of the city that *Campo Marzio* exasperates. The ‘formless heap of fragments colliding one against the other’²⁴¹ results in what can be called a semantic white noise. Although the plans are extremely heterogeneous, full of diverse fragments that have little to do with each other, this very diversity, when radicalized, results in an apparent homogeneity. Tafuri asserts that it is so hard to extract individual typological structures in the over-crowded semantic field “we end up with a kind of *typological negation*, an “architectural banquet of nausea,” a semantic void created by an excess of visual noise”.²⁴²

Piranesi draws attention to the then imminent urban condition in *Campo Marzio*, and especially the condition of the architectural fragment within it. An exhaustive comparison with the No-Stop City would entail too much of a repetition of what is already said in the second chapter. But the commonalities are obvious. In this sense, what is most interesting in *Campo Marzio* for the purposes of this study is specifically its functioning within the architectural discourse. The drawings offer a reading of an architectural condition, a hypothesis on an imminent urban condition. It is an intellectual practice facilitated and communicated by means of drawings, or more precisely, etchings, which obviously implies more dissemination possibilities than the former. Some twenty years before publishing *Campo Marzio*, Piranesi wrote about the impossibility of making a certain kind of architecture through buildings: he argued that due to the political and economic circumstances of the period one could not build in a way that would continue the qualities of the classical Roman architecture. Thus, he continues,

[N]o other option is left to me, or any other modern Architect, than to explain his own ideas through drawings and in this way to take away from Sculpture and Painting the advantage that, as the great Juvarra said, they have in this respect over architecture; and to take it away as well from the abuse of those who possess wealth, and who make us believe that they themselves are able to control the operations of Architecture...²⁴³

Tafuri observes that this passage contains the “autonomous role of utopia:” the capacity to abstain from the abuse of the actual circumstances, to imagine, to create models, new values:

What might at first seem a lull or a refusal, on the contrary, reveals itself in all its worth as anticipation. The invention, fixed and circulated by means of the etching, renders concrete the role of utopia, which is to present an alternative that departs from actual historical conditions, one that pretends to be in a metahistorical dimension—but only in order to project into the future the bursting forth of present contradictions.²⁴⁴

241 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

242 *Ibid.*, p. 35. Original quotation marks and italics.

243 *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29. See also Werner Oechslin, ‘From Piranesi to Libeskind—Explaining by Drawing’, *Daidalos*, 1 (September 1981), pp. 15-19

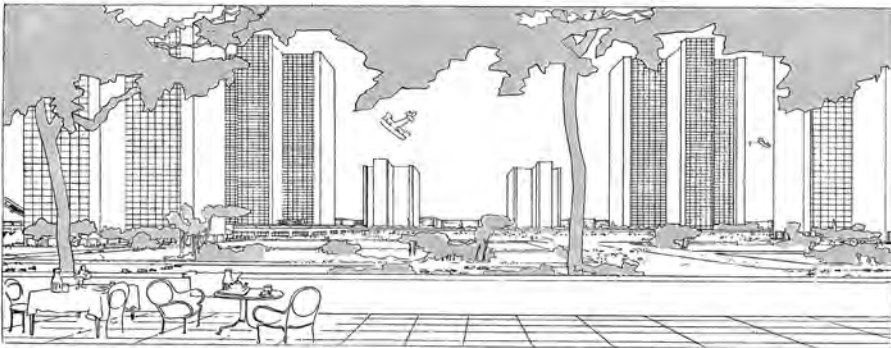
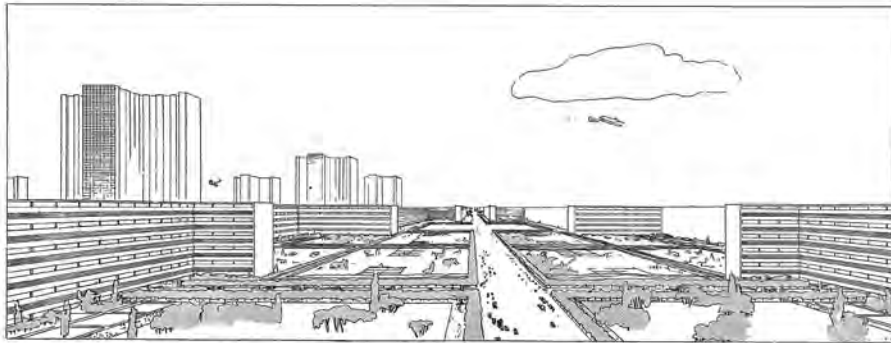
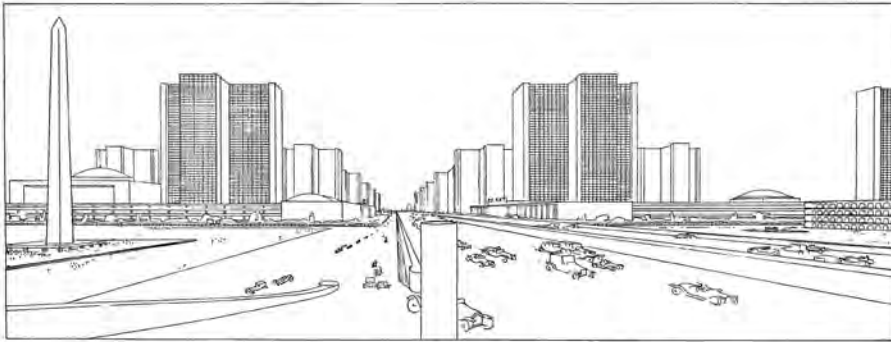
244 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Tafari argues, immediately following the above-quoted passage, that Piranesi has not yet reached there to the mindset that is at work in *Le Carceri* or *Campo Marzio*; the mindset that later fabricates what he calls 'anti-utopias'. And indeed, in the latter works the 'models' that Piranesi develops do not propose an 'alternative'. Much like the No-Stop City they offer a critique of the existing or the imminent city; they draw attention to the new city; present the city 'at a new level of critical awareness'; speculate on architecture's functioning within this new urban condition. Much like Archizoom, at a juncture when the actual city in its entirety escapes architectural practice, Piranesi shifts it into a critical sphere facilitated by drawing.

Theory from a minimum distance

I have earlier studied the eminent capabilities of visual means in communicating spatial information and their immediacy in forming connections with not only the physical built environment but also the urban culture that is dominantly visual. Visual architectural means also have immediacy in forming connections between the critical and the practical instances of a discourse. For architectural design and practice are dominantly facilitated by visual means such as drawings and models, theoretical practices that deploy similar media benefit from a kinship formed through the overlapping of the instruments. I don't mean to revive the entire agenda of Bruno Zevi, which is admittedly over-enthusiastic. Rather than a 'fusion' of design and its instruments with history-theory-criticism, I suggest a model of interacting discursive elements in the next chapter. There is hardly anything controversial in endorsing, as Zevi does, an architect figure that functions in all registers of architectural production. This endorsement, however, needs to acknowledge the inherent limits of these registers and their instruments. Zevi's idea of an architect figure that is a 'critic expressing their ideas in architecture through building' not only unrealistically overburdens the architect and the building but also rests upon misguided notions about the limits of architecture-language analogy and the inherently social character of the production of buildings.

This being said, it is true that the kinship and connection achieved by deploying similar media does have their potentials worth discussing. Most prominently, it helps keeping an immediate connection between the intellectual processes in design and theory. Architectural design process is by its very nature operational. It is a professional service for developing a feasible solution to a design problem. It starts with asking questions on the scheme to be developed (eg, on its symbolic operation, its built context, its program) and it usually not only deploys but also tests, even implicitly, architectural tools (eg, type, representational media) in the process. But due to its operational nature, design doesn't keep the questions open; it doesn't lead them to other questions or to more general discussions. It provides a, probably very much compromised, answer, and moves on. And due to the inherent slowness of architectural production, that answer



Le Corbusier. Ville Contemporaine, perspectives. Drawing. 1922.

would be 4-5 years old when realized. The immediate connection between design and theory provided by the use of similar media can easily become operational at this point both for shifting the research phase of design into a critical domain where it can unfold and for helping it enter into the architectural discourse much faster through the visual media.²⁴⁵ This obviously is but one way of producing theoretical discourse. As Diana Agrest asserts,

A theoretical discourse can be developed in different ways, from a historical or a purely critical perspective, a place that implies a certain distance from practice, a position of pure observation, a maximum distance. A theoretical discourse can also be developed from the position of an architect, the producer of architecture, from a minimum distance, which implies a work on both registers, between the two positions.²⁴⁶

Obviously the second way of theoretical production that Agrest asserts, the one that I have stressed in the last paragraph, doesn't have to be facilitated by the visual means alone. But when it is facilitated by drawings, they not only enable more immediate connections between the critical and the practical instances of the discourse but they also arguably make theory more inclusive, more open to contributions from design and practice.

Architectural desire for the city

My focus in this chapter has been the relation of the speculative drawings to a shift of city in the architectural discourse. I have argued that today the city is an intellectual object for architecture rather than a practical one. It can very well be discussed whether if the city ever really was a practical architectural object. For instance, in his aforementioned essay, Gandelsonas asserts that,

The fantasies imagined by European modernist urbanism (for example, Le Corbusier's architectural urban fantasy of a city of glass towers on a park, with

245 Remembering a Superstudio argument that I referred to previously would be helpful: "For several years, we have been trying to carry out our work and theories in an integral fashion: a theoretical formula for our work existed, and also a series of examples verifying this theory, i.e., the theory was confirmed by practice and vice versa. We slowly became aware that this is difficult to put into practice; architectural operations take place on parallel, staggered planes: theory in order to be put into practice, requires such a series of economic conditions, clients, laws and regulations that a number of years passes between its formulation and its realization. In particular, the two staggered parallel planes already mentioned do not even possess such absolute parallelism that one may move from one to the other; between the two planes, there is a gaseous deforming area ... For this reason, we have realized that often, instead of obtaining a theory-practice-theory check. The process becomes ambiguous and contradictory. So recently, we have been aiming towards a different sort of behavior, in which the two spheres become separated even while remaining clearly connected. Thus we are interested in producing, elaborating and transmitting ideas using the most convenient channel, and we are interested in producing objects ... which derive from the theoretical skeleton without however trying to verify it point by point." Natalini, 'Inventory...' *op. cit.* p. 166.

246 Agrest, *Architecture from Without*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.



Analytical map of Amsterdam and posters for Barcelona and Dessau presented at CIAM 4. Mixed media. 1933.

wide streets on a gridded pattern, where people walk on elevated walkways) depict the impossible relation of architecture to the object-cause of its desire, *the city*. The object of the fantasy neither exists in the reality of the city nor can it be literally realized. ...the modernist architect's desire was not for the existing city, because more in general, desire is not something given: urban fantasies construct architecture's desire itself by giving its coordinates, by locating its *subject* and specifying its *object*.²⁴⁷

As I have studied through Tafuri, as far as the processes of the reorganization of capital and the production of the city are concerned architecture is more the object rather than being the subject. That is to say, architecture is hardly the force organizing the building sector and the capital or the one producing the city. It is rather organized and deployed by production in general. But this discussion is not necessarily very relevant here in this study. My agenda necessitates understanding how city is constructed as an object in architectural discourse. That is why I formulate the shift as that of city in the architectural discourse. So, ultimately, it doesn't really matter whether if the city ever really was a practical architectural object. What matters is that it was definitely constructed as such in the architectural discourse. The first half of the twentieth century hardly suffered from a shortage of ambitious urban schemes aiming at a total reorganization of the existing cities. It may be true that even the most pretentiously rational of these ambitions was initially blinded by an 'architectural desire for the city'. But this would hardly change the hypothesized shift of the city in the architectural discourse that I demonstrated through a juxtaposition of *Urbanisme* and Delirious New York. Be it through an awakening from a fantasy, a sad realization, or through a plain, rational acceptance, the discipline simply doesn't inhabit the position that architectural mainstream thought it did up until 1960s in the re-organization of capital and in the production of the city.

What I am particularly interested is the re-constitution of the city as an intellectual or theoretical architectural object. I have argued that after this shift, architecture theory is less occupied with alternative urban models to replace the existing city and more comprised efforts of understanding the actual city and operating within it. This, in general, made architecture theory more receptive of the existing city, and, in particular, encouraged architectural representation to operate on the city in more observant, analytical, and critical fashions; to engage with it on a more theoretical level. In this sense, city's becoming a theoretical object catalyzed the production of drawings of city, in general, and of critical and speculative drawings in particular, such as the Florentine projects. It is obviously true that before this shift too drawing facilitated urban analysis and observations. CIAM produced analytical maps of the existing cities and posters about their problems as much as it produced 'principles for its future planning'. On the other hand, it is probably not very controversial to assert that the gaze of Modern Architecture and urbanism was seldom directed towards the city for anything else than

247 Gandelsonas, 'The City as the Object of Architecture', *op. cit.* p. 129. Original italics.

diagnosing problems. Moreover, I believe at this point it is obvious how the Florentine speculative drawings diverge from both descriptive/referential and analytical drawings. Through drawings, *Il Monumento* and *No-Stop City* actively produce an architectural theoretical discourse on city.



5. CITY, SPECULATION, DRAWING

—Conclusions

That architecture has to do with the production of the built environment is too obvious a proposition to make. However, the same proposition doesn't bear the same conviction when 'the built environment' is replaced with 'the city'. Aldo Rossi was confident enough to define architecture as 'the construction of the city over time'. Today the positions regarding the role of the city in architecture, however, seem to range between utter importance and complete irrelevance. Being primarily a profession, architecture relates to space mostly through its production. And the expression 'built environment' is in accordance with this for it denotes production and it simply seems to include the buildings. The built environment is comfortably vague when it comes to its limits. The city however suggests a large and definite spatial set, a totality. Architectural practice cannot relate to this set in its totality when its role in its production is not only ordered from outside but also incremental and piecemeal. Moreover, the city includes the urban culture along with the built environment and architecture is but one cultural enterprise among many. In this sense, if nothing else city often is the site of encounter and negotiation with the other practices and the social actors, with the regulating bodies and commissions, the zoning ordinances, the building codes and the like. And there are other things that come with the territory, be it an urban setting or not, that architecture takes into consideration on various levels, such as the society, politics, economics, climate, resources, and hazards.

For the sake of the precision of the argument I have dissected and categorized architecture throughout this book—into practice, theory, building, drawing, writing, critical, projective, analytical, speculative and so on. Whereas I have taken refuge in the relative comfort provided by the vagueness of the notion of city. A thorough study on the architecture-city relation would have to consider also the latter in its various aspects. My focus, on the other hand, has been its interaction with a particular capacity of architectural representation. Architecture in deed interacts with various aspects and actors of the city on varying surfaces to varying extents. It is obviously practice that engages with the busy, overcrowded scene of production 'hands on'. Practice, by its professional and operational nature, responds to singular design tasks; it invents on



Athens. Photograph.

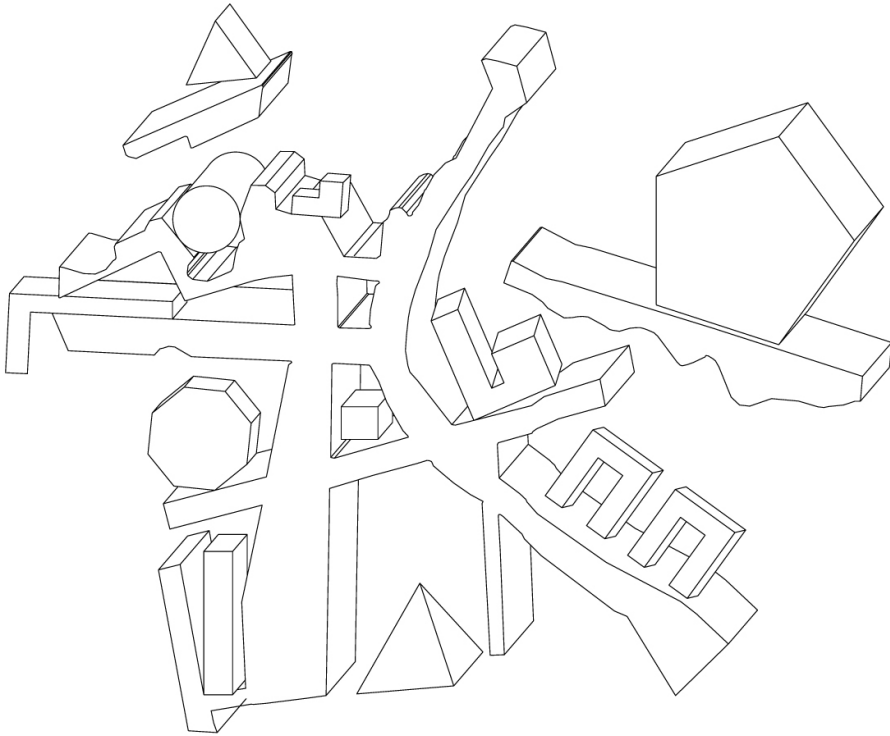
demand. It is not necessarily inclined to lead the questions of particular tasks to other questions or towards systematization.²⁴⁸ It is theory that is closer to systematic thought developed by means of mediating between practices, discourses, and even cultural domains. Theory, thus, can constitute the city as a context rather than a project. It can observe the city both as a built environment and a field of various cultural, institutional, economic forces that arguably amounts to a synchronic context for architecture, the diachronic being the history. Doing so, it explains architectural production and provides positions for future production. Stan Allen explains the traditional account on the functioning of practice and theory as,

The practice of architecture tends to be messy and inconsistent precisely because it has to negotiate a reality that is itself messy and inconsistent. Against this landscape of contingency, architectural theory has traditionally served a unifying function. Without a larger ideological framework, it is argued, the architect runs the risk of reacting passively to the multiple and often contradictory demands of context, clients, regulating agencies, media, or economics. Architecture, it is argued, needs a grand narrative in order not to be entirely consumed by these small narratives of opportunity and constraint. And so, in order to legitimate its mechanical procedures, practice appeals to a project: an overarching theoretical construct, defined from some place other than the studio or the building site, and expressed in a medium other than buildings and drawings. Detached from the operational sites of technique, theory stakes a claim on a world of concepts uncontaminated by real world contingencies. Theory needs distance for its reflections; but as a consequence of that detachment, the possibility of incremental change from within is held in check. Theory's promise is to make up for what practice lacks: to confer unity on the wildly disparate procedures of design and construction.²⁴⁹

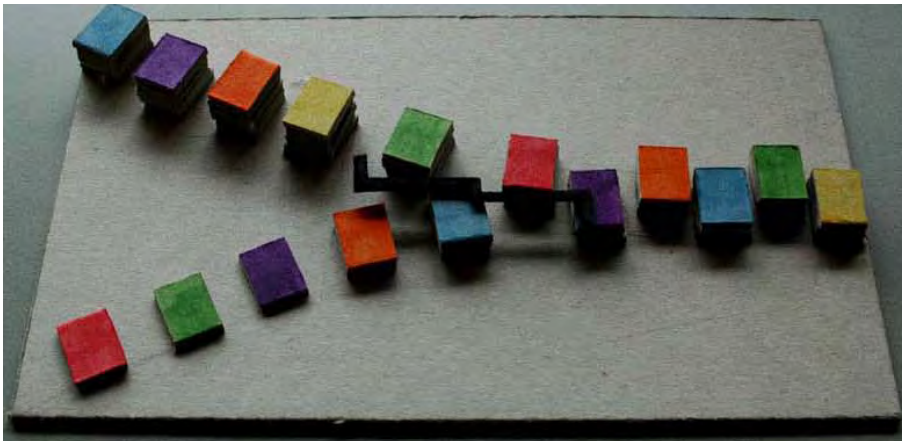
Although there seems to be nothing terribly wrong with the basic premises of the traditional positioning of practice and theory, its problems are arguably most visible when it comes to the city. It is especially here that theory struggles most to fulfill its promise to confer unity. It is the very disparity, multiplicity, and diversity of the city and the urban processes that seem to lie at the root of the disbelief—or at least, the lack of confidence—in the possibility of a productive architecture theory on city. Architecture theory on city only seems to make sense as long as it is not seen as a unifying, underlying and overarching set of values, of which the singular designs are but instances. It is true that theory often is more systematic or general due to

248 Diana Agrest's differentiation of theory and practice still offers a healthy and plausible account on the issue: "Architecture tends to make an absolute separation between theory and practice, between analysis and synthesis. This difference, however, could be better expressed in the difference between discourses: an analytical, exploratory, critical discourse and a normative discourse. Most theories are developed within the first category, while practice falls into the latter. Critical as opposed to normative discourse allows for questions to grow, to acquire a depth, to open fields, and not to be stopped short by the normative will trying to find immediate answers." Agrest, *Architecture from Without*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

249 Allen, *Practice*, 2009, *op. cit.*, pp. xi-xii.



Student group work. OMA's Ville Nouvelle Melun-Sénart Project, analytical drawing showing the system of voids supporting various architectural types (produced in Architectural Studies Seminar, taught by Lara Schrijver and Emre Altürk). Drawing. 2007.



Student group work. The zipper, 3D logo for Rotterdam dwelling on the programmatic imbalance between the north and the south sides of the river Maas, initial study for the project that suggests enhancing and diversifying the program of Rotterdam south, making two sides of the river programatically interdependent, thus bringing them together (produced in a workshop taught by Emre Altürk and Rojda Ekim Tan). Model. 2007.

its very mediation between buildings, drawings, texts, and contexts. And again it is true that it is theory's *raison d'être* to construct arguments, narrations that explain and make sense on the one hand and pose alternatives, generate positions on the future production on the other. But today it is highly unlikely that architecture theory on city could be a unifying *a priori* grand narrative, of which the practice later produces singular manifestations. It cannot consist of 'theoretically watertight formulas detached from the existing state of things', from which practice derives.²⁵⁰ Alternatively, Allen, suggests an understanding of theory and practice as competing practices: one being a primarily discursive, critical, interpretive practice; and the other, a material practice that produces new objects and organizations of matter.²⁵¹ Doing so, he seems to be able to formulate a non-hierarchical relation, where practice doesn't necessarily stem from theory but they are separate and interacting activities.

Similarly, I would argue, there exists a continuity and interaction between the intellectual processes that try and develop an understanding of the city and the intellectual processes of designing for the urban situations. Said continuity is not a matter of matching architecture theory and design: neither really matches with or completely translates into the other. It is rather that, a certain discourse consists of and produces various elements, *eg*, a text, a drawing, a building. While some of these elements are analytical or critical, others are more practical. A discourse may explain, make sense or raise questions in some instances, and it may provide solutions to practical problems in others. Although these elements never really overlap, they do interact: they generate, test, transform, and refine each other. A particular design engaging with an urban situation, for instance, benefits from an understanding of the city. But it, in turn, may test this understanding. It may revise and calibrate its paradigm. Or it could discard it when it falls short and, ideally, lead to another understanding of the urban condition. Theory, then, is to be understood as the explanatory and interpretative performances in a discourse that interact with the practical ones.

This is the kind of continuity that connects the critical/speculative instances in a discourse that engages with the city on a theoretical level and the practical instances that transform the urban space. The network and the protocols that the two interact through is more complex and less tidy than it is assumed in the traditional understanding of their relationship. In fact, its working may said to bear similarities to the emerging 'cloud-based' secure storage systems in computer technologies. In said systems one's data is not stored as a single block at one location, but its bits are rather dispersed in multiple locations over a network and these chunks of data only come together making a meaningful whole when logged in with a particular password. Similarly, any particular architectural practice, in practice or in theory, activates and compiles relevant bits and peaces from a cloud of architectural knowledge and conditions, brings together

250 See note 192.

251 Allen, *Practice*, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. xiii.



Density model of Shanghai, from the 'Cities, architecture and society' exhibition at the 10th Venice International Architecture Exhibition. 2006

Randstad Holland The Netherlands



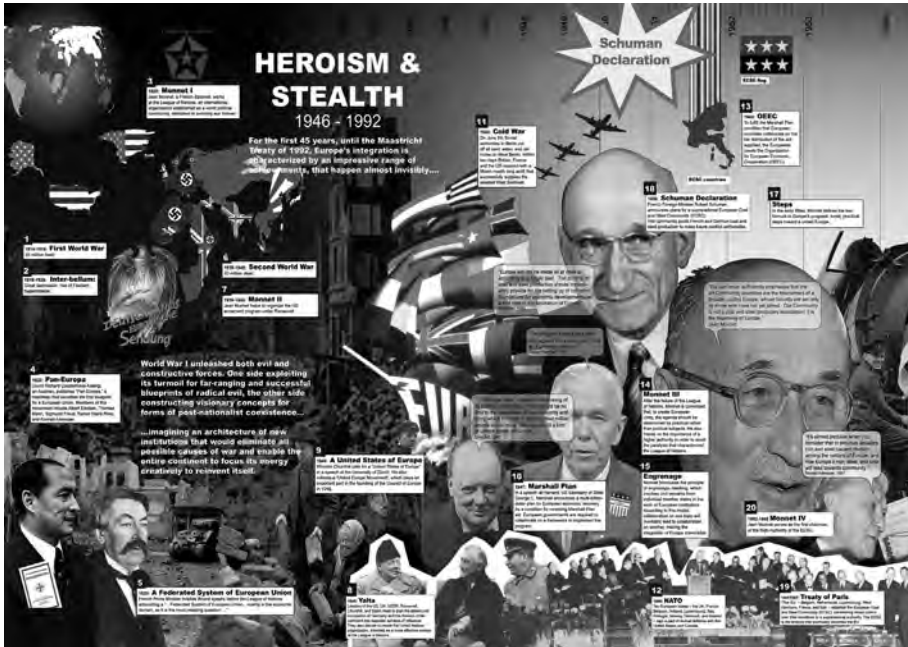
Arjen van Susteren. Metropolitan World Atlas, Randstad Holland. Map. 2005.

otherwise dispersed elements forming a recognizable total towards a particular operative end. Doing so, it produces coherencies at the face diversity.

This is where architecture theory finds itself today in relation to the urban condition: between a rock and a hard place; between the diverse urban processes, various social actors, the overcrowded scene of production, the messy reality that seem to resist unities and the need to form coherencies, even temporary and less pretentious ones, in order to make sense; for giving up attributing those coherencies and narratives would mean cutting the discursive cords with the city while having to operate dominantly within the urban conditions. This is why the city oscillates within the architectural discourse between complete irrelevance and utter importance. The energy spent on conceiving the city may seem irrelevant for it is beyond architecture's reach; for it is apparently beyond control. But obviously 'control' is not a prerequisite for interaction. And staying oblivious and indifferent to the city as a larger spatial condition can easily mean lobotomizing architecture. At the bottom line, architecture has to have a conception of and operate within its conditions (urban or otherwise) over which it has often very limited control. But if Michel Foucault was right about us turning into 'discursive functions' that could analyze and operate within the power relations, but have little effect in their institutionalization, then even the most impotent moments of architecture *vis-à-vis* the city should not be terribly disenchanting.

I have studied a particular functioning of architectural representation in forming said conceptions of the city, in engaging with it as a theoretical object. Due to the immediacy and directness of the visual media as well as drawings' eminence in describing form, I have argued, theory's becoming more receptive and observant of the existing city and its culture, which are also ever increasingly visual, assigned a particular additional value to the visual means. It is, however, important to note that my interest lies, and so does architecture's I believe, at the specifically architectural representations of the city rather than the ones that deploy generic visual means, such as charts and photographs. While the generic visual means also do offer an immediacy that is useful in communication, they don't necessarily lend themselves to architectural positions. Among many possible examples of pseudo-architectural generic representations that lack architectural position, one could instance the International Architecture Exhibition of the 2006 Venice Biennale:

The aim is both to inform and provoke a debate on the way we shape the future of urban society, just at the point that cities represent such a critical mass of the global agenda. It is an attempt to re-engage the physical structure of cities—their buildings, spaces and streets which is the domain of architects and urban designers—with the social, cultural and economic dimensions of urban existence. Despite, the informed perceptions of urban thinkers—from Jane Jacobs to Aldo Rossi, from Saskia Sassen to Rem Koolhaas—the architectural profession has perhaps been overly insulated from this



OMA/AMO. Image of Europe. Collage. 2004.



Pier Vittorio Aureli, et al. Brussels, a Manifesto, Without Rhetoric. Photomontage. 2007.

interdisciplinary debate.²⁵²

What the organizers are stressing here is precisely the rekindling of the production of the 'built environment' with the rest that the notion of the 'city' comprises. Not unlike many other efforts of offering a conception of the urban condition, however, the main attraction of the exhibition, 'Cities, architecture and society', seemed to end up making a fetish of its statistics. Other than this, some architectural and urban projects that 'affect the urban life' were 'also' displayed, but only to remain vastly secondary and weak. The main exhibition compiled and visualized data from 16 prominent cities around the world. The techniques of visualization ranged between the rather un-impressing charts that didn't go beyond the visual capabilities of Microsoft Office and some more interesting 3D density models. The hard-data was accompanied with photographs offering what can be called city close-ups. As such, the exhibition was exemplary of a trend of generic visual communication of the urban condition without any manifest position; architectural, political, or otherwise. In this sense, the claim to offer 'information' was arguably fulfilled. Yet the other part of its agenda, that of 'provocation', eluded the exhibition for the most part.

Besides 'aestheticization of data' the graphic competencies of the 'architectural eye' is also deployed in extra-architectural agendas. AMO's 2004 'Europe Exhibition' can be instanced as an example of the direct deployment of architects' graphic and compositional capabilities in the service of a political agenda.²⁵³ The aim of the project was to reassess the 'image' the European Union; the ways it is represented and perceived through words and symbols. The union was posited as a 'quite revolution' the operation of which was 'so radical, it could only take place by stealth'. On its fiftieth year and after accomplishing its first phase, then, AMO's exhibition was intended to accompany the 'coming out' of EU's 'inhibited iconography' through visualization of its history.

Historically having the 'crafting of images' as their pivotal activity, architects obviously do have an accumulated knowledge and a particular competence in rendering things

252 The 10th International Architecture Exhibition was directed by Richard Burdett. 'Cities, architecture and society' exhibition was designed by Aldo Cibic and Luigi Marchetti of Cibic&Partners to 'recreate the urban experiences of 16 world cities in four different continents within the 300-metre long *Corderie dell'Arsenale*', using 'photography, film and mixed-media presentations'. The cities comprised, Barcelona, Berlin, Bogotá, Cairo, Caracas, Istanbul, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Milan-Torino, Mumbai, New York, São Paulo, Shanghai, and Tokyo.

253 AMO is a subsidiary 'design and research studio' of Rotterdam based OMA [Office for Metropolitan Architecture]. It is posited as a 'think tank that operates in areas beyond the boundaries of architecture and urbanism - including sociology, technology, media and politics'. The 'Europe Exhibition' was commissioned by the Netherlands and the European Commission in order to mark the occasion of the Netherlands' 2004 Presidency of the European Union. It was initially showed in Brussels, and later in Munich and Vienna. See http://oma.eu/index.php?option=com_projects&view=project&id=270&Itemid=10.

visible, architectural or otherwise. As much as there is a value to the latter as well, here my subject has been specifically architectural practices. This may seem somewhat hypocritical having studied rather unorthodox imagery and media that perhaps don't strike one as architectural at first instance. But the Florentine projects that I have examined do stem from an architectural position, presuppose an architectural background, deploy and play on architectural tools, and ultimately has architecture theory as their object. In principle, the photomontages of *Il Monumento* function in the way drawings function in architectural design: they enable the testing of an architectural idea by rendering it visible. They visualize a form. It is only that as opposed to design where the spatial ideas are meant to develop, become convincing and hold, the premises of *Il Monumento* are meant to fail. It is this very failure that signifies theoretically; that stresses a position. The plans and sections of the No-Stop City too offer a spatial idea. They problematize architectural notions of form, composition, or quality within an immanent urban condition. And it is this exasperation that is their intended performance, precisely within the architectural discourse. Superstudio may have elaborated their projects partly through storyboards, which is an unorthodox medium for architecture. But the 'story' they visualize through this medium is that of the speculative processes of a building.

Thus, the reason I refer to certain practices as specifically architectural representations as opposed to the generic ones, partly has to do with the media and the conventions the former deploy. But their specificity mainly has to do with their engagement with the architectural form. It is speculation, intrinsic to the conception of form, that lends itself to architectural positions. And this is the particular potential of the speculative drawings deployed in theory. Similar to their cousins in design they provide a facilitating medium for ideation, testing, criticism, and self-criticism through form. They enable the design of theoretically signifying architectural situations.

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Architectuurtekeningen en de theorie van de stad

Deze studie gaat over architectuurtekeningen. Ik besteed vooral aandacht aan het functioneren van tekeningen in architectuurtheorie en leg de nadruk op de specifieke rol die zij spelen in het stimuleren van kritiek en speculatieve beschouwingen als theoretische activiteiten. Op dit punt ga ik verder in op het vermogen van architectuurtekeningen, niet alleen als representatie maar ook als non-verbale polemiek en als vorm van betoog. Ik onderzoek dit vermogen van tekeningen om na te gaan wat de mogelijkheden ervan zijn in de architectuurtheorie van de stad. Ik wil in deze dissertatie aantonen dat na het midden van de 20ste eeuw architecten moesten erkennen dat zij niet in staat waren de stad in zijn totaliteit te transformeren—het streven van de Moderne Architectuur. Het vraagstuk van de relatie tussen architectuur en de stad bleef liggen. Het herformuleren van deze relatie na de jaren '60 maakte de stad in zijn geheel als een object van architectuuronderzoek. Deze verschuiving van de stad binnen het discours van de architectuur van een pragmatisch/project-georiënteerd object naar een theoretisch object maakte dat de architectuurtheorie aanmerkelijk meer aandacht ging besteden aan de bestaande stad. Architectuurtekeningen—als raakvlak tussen architectuurgeschiedenis en gebouwde omgeving—begonnen op een meer observerende, analytische en kritische wijze in te spelen op de bestaande stad. Er zijn theoretische praktijken geweest die gebruik maken van het vermogen van tekeningen om zich op een theoretisch niveau met de stad bezig te houden en binnen de architectuur posities in te nemen en theoretische kaders te vormen. Een theoretische praktijk die gebruik maakt van tekeningen heeft als specifiek voordeel dat deze zich door middel van architectonische vormen bezig kan houden met het object. In deze dissertatie staat het potentieel van deze benadering centraal.

De dissertatie bestaat uit drie delen. Na een inleiding op mijn betoog onderzoek ik in het tweede hoofdstuk drie theoretische projecten die gebruik maken van tekeningen en vergelijkbare visuele media: *Il Monumento Continuo* (1969) en *Vita/Superface* (1971) van Superstudio en *No-Stop City* (1970) van Archizoom. *No-Stop City* is kort samengevat geen project voor een 'alternatieve stad', maar het is 'de bestaande stad die met een kritisch bewustzijn wordt voorgesteld'. Het is een bepaalde interpretatie van de stad; een speculatieve beschouwing over het functioneren van architectuur

binnen een imminente stedelijke conditie die wordt voorgesteld door middel van tekeningen en een beschrijving van de context. Ik denk dat dit project en de projecten van Superstudio indicatief zijn voor twee dingen. Ten eerste laten zij zien dat onvoldoende gebruik wordt gemaakt van de capaciteit van de visuele machinerie van de architectuur. Ten tweede zijn zij indicatief voor de bovengenoemde verschuiving van de stad binnen het discours van de architectuur en zij spelen op deze verschuiving in. In de overige hoofdstukken ga ik achtereenvolgens verder in op deze redeneringen. In het derde hoofdstuk ga ik na wat het ontwikkelen van een theoretisch betoog door middel van tekeningen inhoudt voor representatie in de architectuur. Ik plaats deze praktijk in de context van het discours over representatie. In het vierde hoofdstuk ga ik, alleen voor wat het de middelen van kritiek betreft, na wat het betekent voor de architectuurtheorie van de stad als de visuele machinerie van de architectuur zich richt op de bestaande gebouwde omgeving. Ik betoog dat het verwerpen van een ontwerp van een alternatieve stad ten gunste van het kritisch inspelen op de bestaande stad indicatief is voor een transformatie in de architectuurtheorie van de stad, waarna de architectuur zich minder bezig houdt met alternatieve stedelijke modellen en meer gecomprimeerde pogingen om de stad te concipiëren. Tenslotte onderzoek ik in het afsluitende hoofdstuk het specifieke potentieel van dergelijke praktijken en ga na welke gevolgen zij hebben voor de architectuurtheorie.

Résumé

Emre Altürk was born in 1979, in Konya, Turkey. He holds B. Arch. (2001, *cum laude*) and M. Arch. (2004, *magna cum laude*) degrees from METU in Ankara. He worked for METU and several architecture offices in Ankara and Istanbul. He has conducted his PhD research since February 2005 at TU Delft. He has taught both design and theory courses as well as given lectures. He has presented in several conferences and published in journals. In 2007, he won a prize from the European Association for Architectural Education in an academic paper competition.

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