MAZZOCCHIOO

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FAKE STABILITY

The contemporary city is a collection of fake stabilities. All architecture (and consequently each built place) is the embodiment of a set of conceptions. Fake stability describes the condition of colliding ideologies in their built form. Its result is a territory freed of ideological load. This is the urban land of possibilities. It is both strength and weakness. In the urban realm, the fake cohabits with authenticity just as the permanence is measured by the ephemeral.

Mazzocchio's second issue focuses on the polemic brutal superposition of a new urban vision onto an existing urban tissue. As a result of the second half of the 20th century interventions, the structure of Bucharest has been profoundly affected. Almost 30 years after the Ceausescu regime has ended, #M2 brings into discussion the opportunities embedded into the urban situations where the so-called communist built heritage cohabits with the preceding city in a strange state of fake stability.

BUCHAREST

As a typical European city, the urban fabric of the center of Bucharest is the result of superposed historical built layers. The last large scale urban intervention was building the locally-named communist housing blocks during the 1970s and 1980s. Demolishing entire strips, totaling about 10000 houses and 30 churches among other cultural edifices of the previous city, allowed a continuous rhizome of new generic boulevards to enforce the image of the communist regime. The boulevard's other face was ignored, towards the historic city: urban wounds have appeared and the low rise continuity of the city has been obstructed by walls of 9-10 levels of apartments. The generic boulevard, intended as a mixture of modernization and ideological representation, became a Corridor fracturing the city. What remains today is a built heritage which acts as a fundamental structural part of the city, with problems and opportunities of its own. As a visible part of the urban landscape, the Corridors shape both the city's objective imagery and its mental map; as infrastructure they contain the main circulation arteries, concentrating here private and public transport, commerce and provoking functional mix. As an XL urban form, today the Corridors represent the counterpart of a mosaic of individual owners each inhabiting his own apartment. During the Ceausescu regime, the state led a wide politics of building housing blocks; people were offered the single choice to move in as tenants.

After the 1989 revolution, the state decided to allow people to buy for very low prices the apartments they were inhabiting . As an outcome, the present situation is that these collective housing blocks have a huge inertia when coming to decision making, such as rehabilitation. The fact remains that an enormous puzzle of private properties have an important say in the structuring of the collective environment. Dealing with the outdated state of these apartment blocks heritage is an imperative confrontation both from the urban point of view and from the residents perspective. The number of population living in such buildings is overwhelming.

The administrative structure of Bucharest into districts dividing the city into 6 slice circle districts does not encourage a profound, holistic approach of this visible urban problem. What appears as a fracture inside the urban tissue is receiving fragmented solutions both spatially and from the content point of view. The general perception is that the Corridors are outdated limits fragmenting the city into segregated parts. What needs to be done is seize the reservoir of opportunities embedded into the Corridors and act.

Polemic thesis

Accepting the existing situations as poetic reservoirs / rather than trying to solve – cure urban wounds. Reality is defined as problematic when it lacks the instrumental ideals. Utopia is problematic when it doesn't acknowledge the set of values that fuel reality. The ideals of the city have both a past and a future.

M2: Utopia as instrument

"Fake Stability" was a 2015 one-semester student project that aimed to generate proposals of rehabilitation of this specific type of urban fracture, as a key tool in the sustainable urban and architectural redefinition of the city's center: in terms of urban identity, public space, residential comfort and production. By responding to a series of thematic utopian superpositions, the student teams researched by design the richness of the opportunities embedded into this site-specific situations.

locuitori/km²

	< 1000
	< 5000
	< 10000
	< 15000
	< 20000
	< 25000
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	> 40000
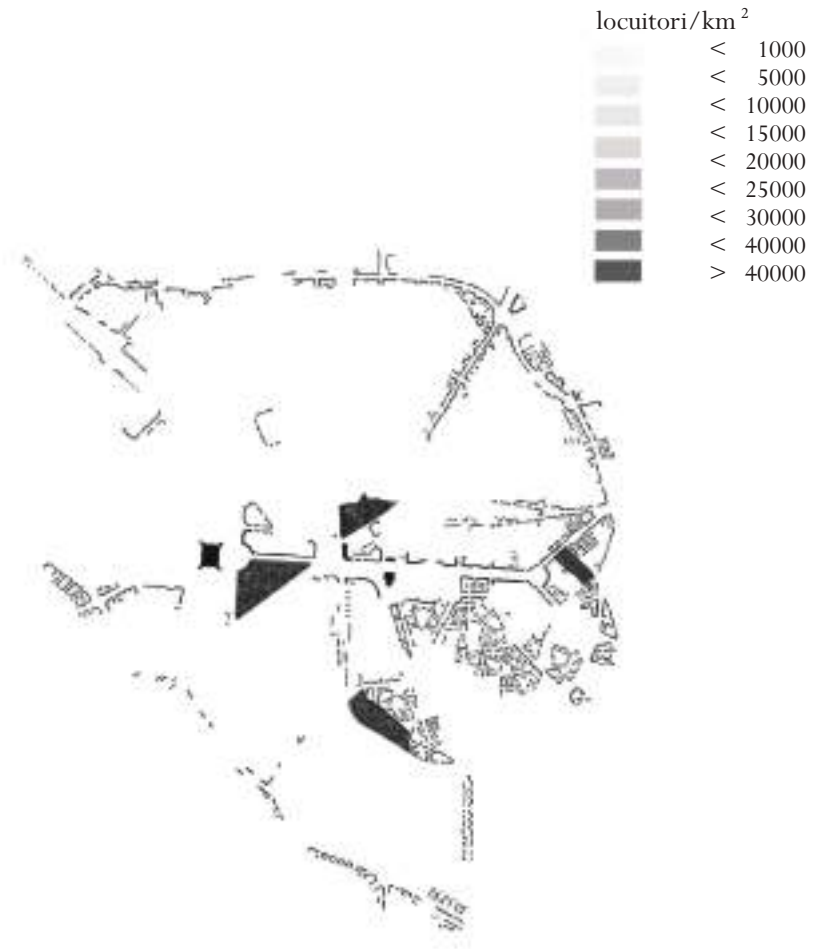
In the years following 1989, as a consequence of market liberalization, a growing real estate pressure and an underdeveloped and poorly applied legal system, the process of development that the outskirts of Bucharest underwent led to the appearance of Urban Sprawl. Furthermore, during the communist era, the capital assimilated a large number of inhabitants, most of whom were housed in the newly built residential neighborhoods, located outside of the city centre. When juxtaposed, the two main areas (Central Work and Exterior-Residential) generated, in its turn, two types of density — an apparent one (during the day) and an actual one (during the night).

Corneliu Coposu Boulevard

Tineretului

Unirii Boulevard

Alba Iulia

The main goal of the communist interventions that spanned from the late 70s and up until the end of the 80s was to restructure the urban fabric of the city and to impose an architectural organization that would better embody the new regime. Nevertheless with the housing blocks being the main method through which this could be successfully achieved, one of their main consequences was the densification of the centre. The process was, however unevenly implemented and resulted in great discrepancies in the distribution of the population within the centre. This led to the coexistence of very high and low density areas next to each other.

| 1852 Borroczyn | 1911 | 2015 |

Dimitrie Cantemir boulevard has been constructed in the 20th century, the already existing North-South axis of the city. Where the boulevard is placed today, there used to be agricultural lots or lots with individual dwellings. The outlining of the boulevard follow the ideas of free planning: vertical densification, free standing volumes, punctual or linear, the removal of the lot, encircled by vegetation, orientated after the sun. Fronts are discontinuous – the buildings can be placed perpendicular on the boulevard direction.

1852 Borroczyn   1911   2015
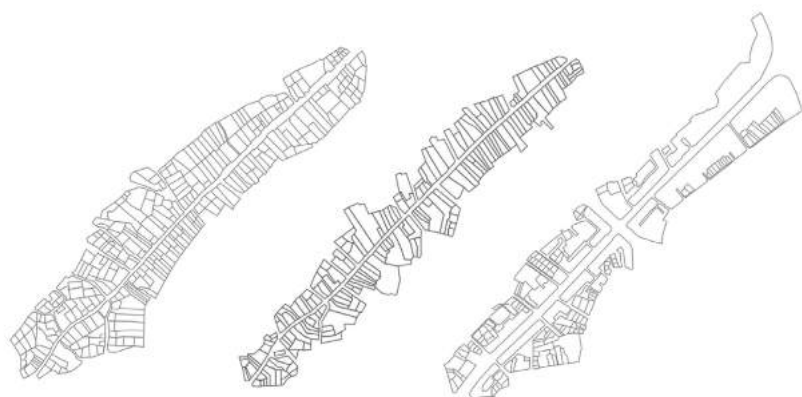
Calea Mosilor (initially called „Târgul din afara"), exists from centuries in Bucharest, following the same route as the present one. Its structure, as we see it nowadays, was created in the communist era, when massive building blocks have been constructed after the demolition of traditional family houses, with narrow, deep lots. The new buildings resulted from the adjoining of modular blocks, having a linear form and creating endless, dull fronts.

This new approach created breaches in the city structure.
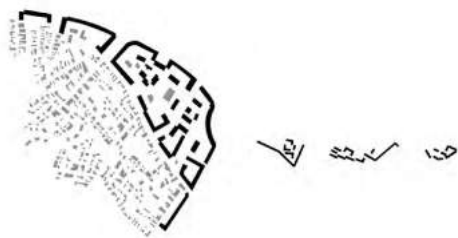
Linings
Enclaves
Ensembles
Expansions
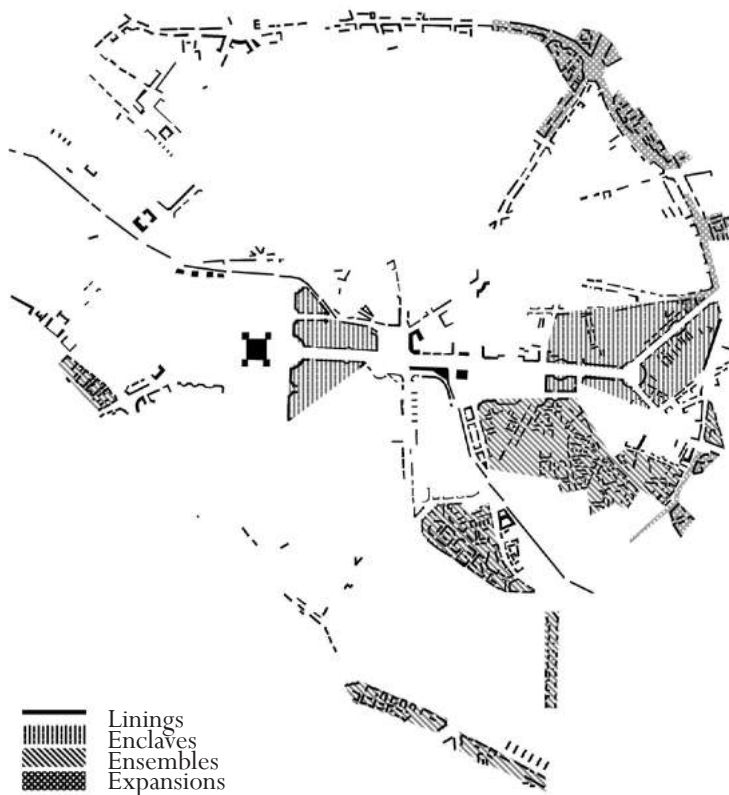
In order to understand how Bucharest's urban fabric was modified by lining the grand boulevards with apartment blocks, the city was examined on a larger scale. The findings were classified into three types: enclave, ensemble and expansion. The first, a relatively large area of traditional urban tissue outlined by a chain of high-rises creating a border-like wall around it. An ensemble is a unitary group of residential tower-blocks, starting from the lining of the boulevard; there is no clear distinction between the main street's atmosphere and the inside of the cluster, many times forming a unitary small neighborhood.
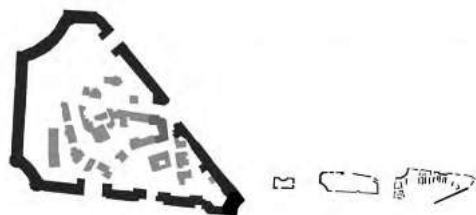
Enclave near Piata Constitutiei


Ensemble at Tineretului

Expansion at Piata Obor

The expansion of the block-lining has developed around important intersections in the eastern-working area of the outlying central ring- Piata Obor, Piata Iancului, Piata Muncii, Piata Alba Iulia, Tineretului. New apartment buildings have been added in depth, resulting in an urban crossover with the old ones.

Depending on their permeability, enclaves can be closed, almost completely, with just a few access points; partially, with a more fragmented „border"; or completely open to one side. Usually, the smaller ones are the most isolated. Although its content is predominantly homogenous, the traditional urban fabric inside the enclaves has been fragmented by small block ensembles, demolition or modern day interventions. (Enclave near Piata Constitutiei)

|	
Parking	
Street	
Conflict	
Urban equipment	

The boulevard, structural axis of the city, embodies a series of public spaces that meet the requirements of transit and social activities. The modern urbanization, that started at the end of the 19th century, served as source of inspiration for the inter-war avenues by applying the hausmannian model partially; therefore the new pattern made an attempt to revalue the vulnerable areas and to exhibit a smooth and graceful continuity in terms of traffic and city's structures. Then, the radical communist interventions came in addition to the hausmannian changes. Taking all the aspects into consideration, the complete representation of the avenue depicts a series of different identities as a result of its subordination to the area's character. The avenue's configuration is primarily emphasized by the lateral delimitation of the communist constructions which generates different types of building fronts: with continuous or discontinuous geometry, loop or unstructured aspect. All of them illustrate the effects either of an intended modification or of a spontaneous development in time.

Constructed mass
Parks
1,2 Typologies
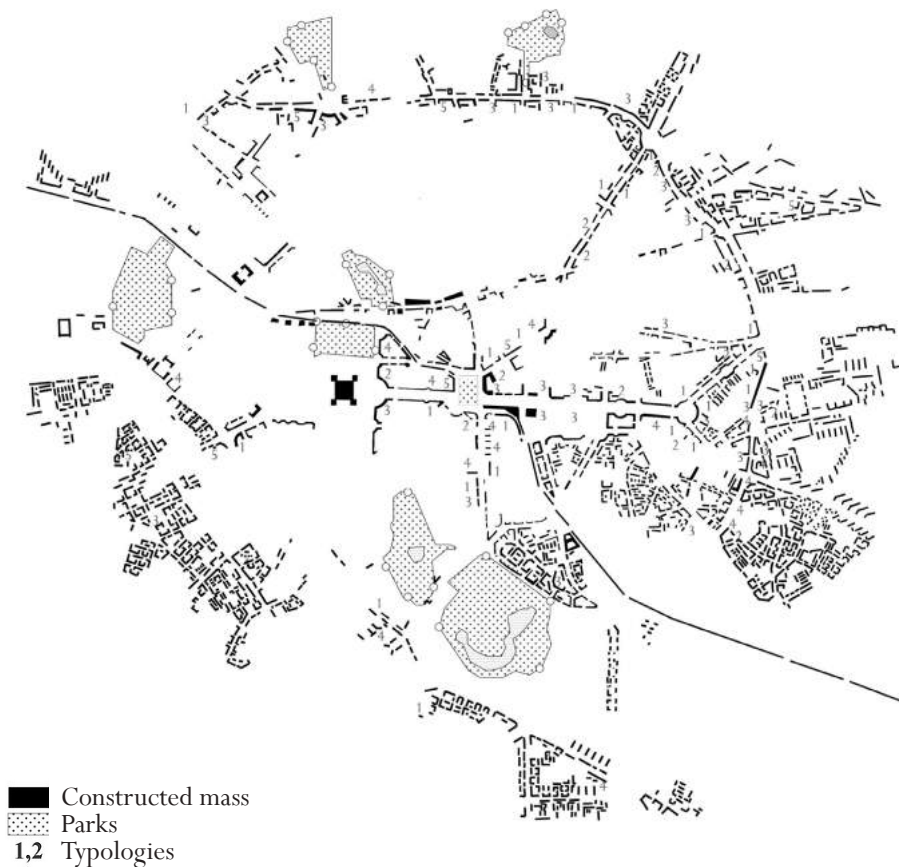
Regarding the visual impression of the boulevards, even though these „walls" generate a rhythmic alternation of urban spaces they are also monotonous due to the repetitions and linear character. As a result, on the subject of sections and the boulevard's layout, there can be depicted five different situations which have a major influence on the street's features and atmosphere: the monumental representation, balance, imbalance, conflict and building vs vegetation. All of them include the general components of the boulevards in Bucharest such as: building's height, traffic, vegetation or urban furnishings, which contribute to the creation of a specific atmosphere on each of these cases. The concrete curtains screen out irregular spaces, turned into terrain vague, which people use differently and depending on the context a large variety of particular situations takes place. Sometimes the threshold to the historic fabric is dramatic, but it can also be a mediated space. Most of the time this kind of space is a place with no character, even a conflictual one.
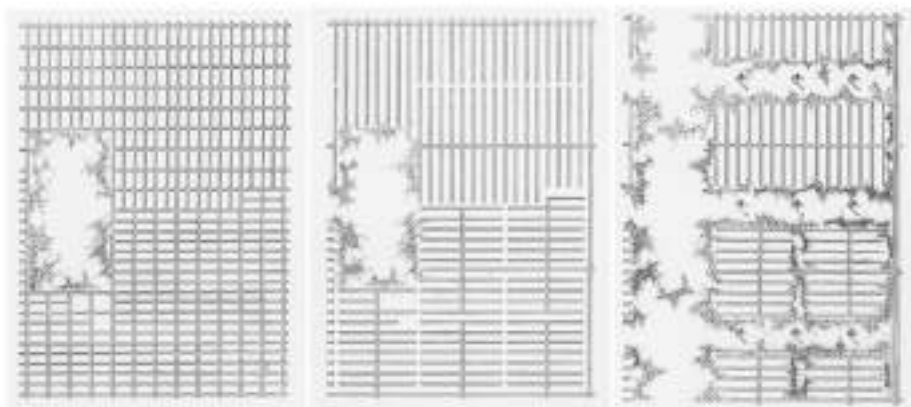
Is utopia outdated?

Relating to architecture and the city, truth is expressed by means of form and history. The test of time shows how today's Bucharest is deformed by elements that have no identifiable relationship to its roots and to an idea of continuity in space connections. The city is the product of the life of generations over time, and time allows us to measure its conformity and adequacy in a reliable way because the space is what actually connects past and future.

Bucharest suffered a break of space continuity, canceling therefore the urban stability built over time. The Corridors are a serious urban problem, possible consequence of an insufficient knowledge or lacking awareness of reality; perhaps it's also the symptom of a misunderstood idea of modernity and/or a misinterpretation of the Paris Boulevards, the stated example of modern Bucharest.

As for the solution of such important problems, a radical attitude is necessary, to proceed consequently in drawing all the imaginable conclusions of the case. And without mediation: the city is such an important fact that it needs not to take into account pathological conditions in its construction or reconstruction.

These conditions should be eradicated by acting without the fear of pushing to the extreme consequences, following the clear line of Ludwig Hilberseimer's Vertical City project which, disposing activities on different levels and separating the vehicular traffic from the pedestrian, demonstrated how to solve in a single act the complex functional city's mixture and the urban mobility problems.

The part of the Lafayette Park project built in Detroit by Hilberseimer and Mies van der Rohe, tested during almost three generations, is a real example able to indicate – also relating to methodical purposes – a significant working direction for the reconstruction of large areas of the future city.

Without running after utopias, over fifty years since its construction, Layette Park proposes a smart and elegant architectural solution to problems related to climate, residential typologies, density, traffic, community buildings and natural spaces which are the settlement's leading elements.

The buildings, geometrically defined in their strict precision, are placed into the nature according to harmonic relations and the perfection pursued in artifice corresponds to that found in nature.

The students' works of the Fake Stability project are very interesting because, digging into contradictions, they try to save a strongly compromised condition.

To this respect I believe that a radical attitude – apparently naive but not unrealistic – can also contribute to an understanding of the still hidden urban potentialities.

Traffic as utopia

While trying to find coordination between two extremes: the overall view of the city and the definition of one living cell, Hilberseimer proposes through the Vertical City, within the context of the 1920's socialist ideals, the logic of a conventional geometry. His main aim was taking into account the dynamics of the modern city –visible as the traffic problems. He uses only one type of hybrid building which arranges vertically all the activities: living, commerce, production and circulation.
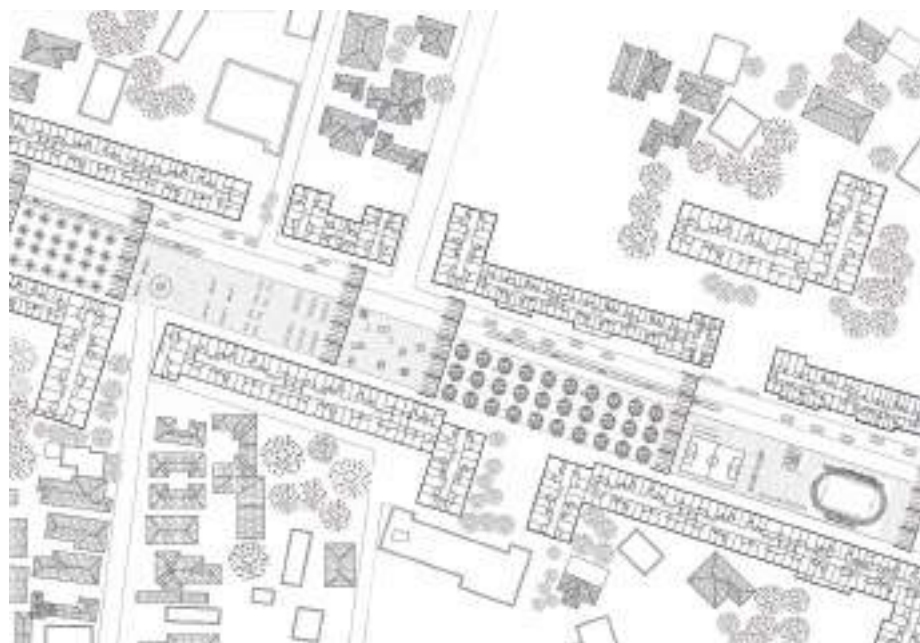
The system allows people to live, work and move everywhere as they please through this never-ending system. Looking at Bucharest's blocks, although we can see quite a resemblance with Vertical City, there is something essentially different about the two of them.

The aim of the project is solving the traffic problem inside the central 'ring' of Bucharest. Flexible and 'infinite' helix-shaped parking spots are placed in a multi-centric system around this inner circle, 'absorbing' the huge amount of cars coming from the peripheries. The traffic is solved by applying the park&ride principle and by placing an effective tramways system on the main arteries within the blocks, being surrounded by shared space.
The boulevard's logic is hijacked by giving it new sense (quality), functions, different atmospheres, trying to solve the in-between space with an identy problem which is now filled with parking spots, space with huge potential.
The project is placing a series of slim 'bookcases' – serving as parking lots, which lead to urban regeneration, by freeing the space behind the blocks.
The boulevard is sequenced by these 'urban rooms' whose ampleness lies in the honest adjustment depending on the context, creating gardens, movie theatres, art exhibitions, places of social interaction.

Lionel Feininger (1871 – 1956), Die Zinn in Halle, 1931 (Öl auf Leinwand, Stiftung Moritzburg (Dauerleihgabe der Stadt Halle)

Can architecture be apolitical?

The sole existence of a built presence represents a statement. A statement that can be used to manipulate, to make a point of force or influence, or, simply to send a message. Every architectural gesture sends a message, and therefore, is political. It can be very easily and bluntly explained: for example, a building that takes into account the context and responds to complex systems that surround it, can be politically named democratic. On the other hand, a building that turns this message into one of power (be it financial or ideological), is a dictatorship. Of course this is a caricature reduction, let's say, of a more nuanced reality, but only for the scope of sustaining the argument that architecture cannot be apolitical. In the past the means of transmitting something through architecture was in the hands of few…Now this power has spread. The important question is how the role of the architect has changed following this evolvement of things. I think that now, more than before, we are the guardians of democracy!
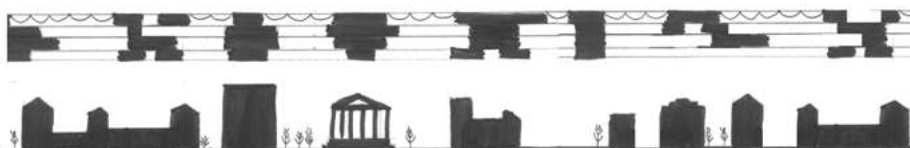
Yona Friedman considered that the city should be continued vertically. Above the existent tissue, the city will develop on a pillar structure, the actual buildings being created based on certain pre-established modules which people should dispose in harmony with their desires and needs. Because of the structure, the model can extend to a very large scale, no matter the location. This way, the project is feasible in the context of various cities. Also the importance of the vegetation is being reinstated as space is being liberated. The soil level is no longer viewed as a constructible space, all the remaining areas being committed to nature. In addition, Yona Friedman also raises the vegetation to the level of the proposed structure. This way, a more balanced overlap between organic and artificial is created. Making a connection between Yona Friedman's vision and the actual state of Bucharest, from the vegetation's point of view, we propose a platform over the belt of blocks, which is to become a new space of pedestrian circulations and leisure, its main characteristic being the vegetation which is allowed to spontaneously develop through secondary succession. Just as Yona Friedman's structure, the platform can be extended to a large scale, having the possibility to develop on all Bucharest's inside belt of blocks, infrastructure for the city, connecting the large green areas that exist in the urban structure.
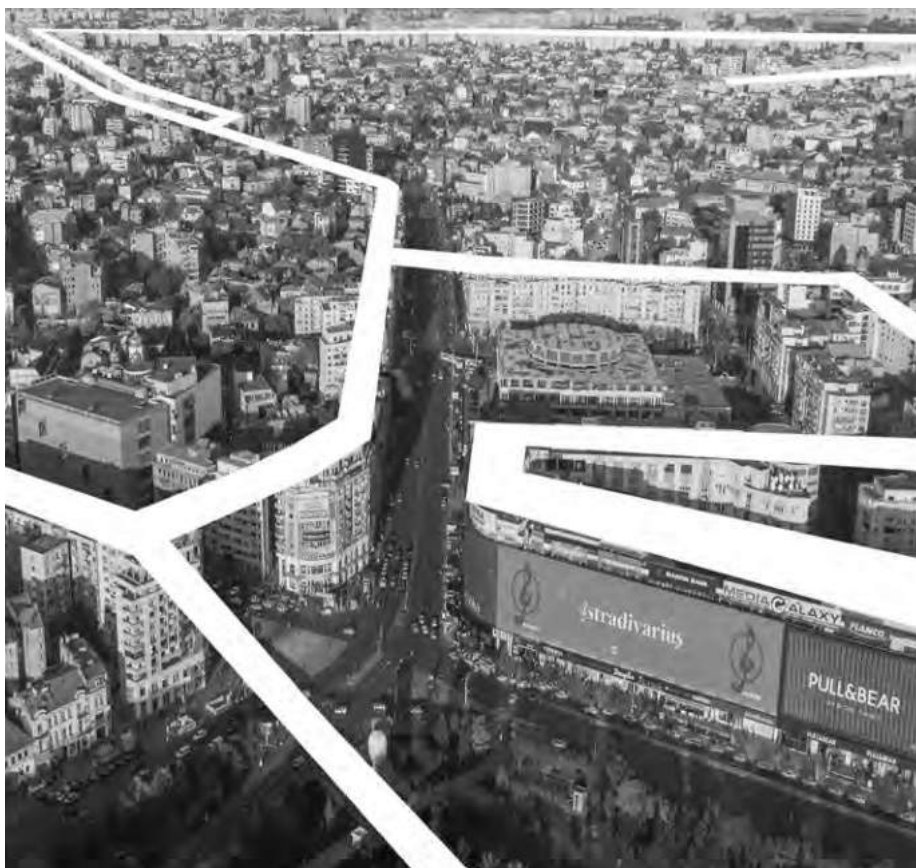
The intervention will materialize at the terrace level of the grand blocks, forming a new infrastructure with multiple access ways which proposes new relationships with the city and invites people to interact with the evolution of nature through the secondary succession. This phenomenon consists in this spontaneous emergence of plants; their seeds are carried by the wind, having the possibility to develop in the urban environment (the minimum necessity being a layer of dust). In the initial phase, colonies of pioneer plants that are adapted to this hostile environment will grow. These plants will enhance the soil by degrading and decomposing, and will later make room for more evolved plants. This cycle will repeat itself, the plants evolving to bigger species, like bushes and trees. Therefore, we predict a scenario in which the growth of plants is constrained by certain rules: the bushes and trees that are to be placed in the height variations of the blocks silhouette (as long as their structure allows it). The intervention consists in a structure meant to sustain the organic content. The access will be made through a system of ramps that connect the arranged green spaces of the city with the new infrastructure, also being present in the areas with urban congestion. In certain points, there are elevators placed on the blocks' facades which have a view towards the old urban tissue. This kind of access invites people in the space hidden by the grand plating of the boulevards, a space with a powerful presence in Bucharest, but not yet experienced by pedestrians. The platform itself offers the landscape vision over Bucharest and it allows interaction with the high frequented places of the city accessed by the ramps. Besides the pedestrian alternative put into place by the intervention at the level of the proposed platform, various cultural and sport facilities will activate, this platform being provided with playgrounds, exhibition spaces and also with amphitheatres destined for outside projections, resulted from the height difference of the blocks.
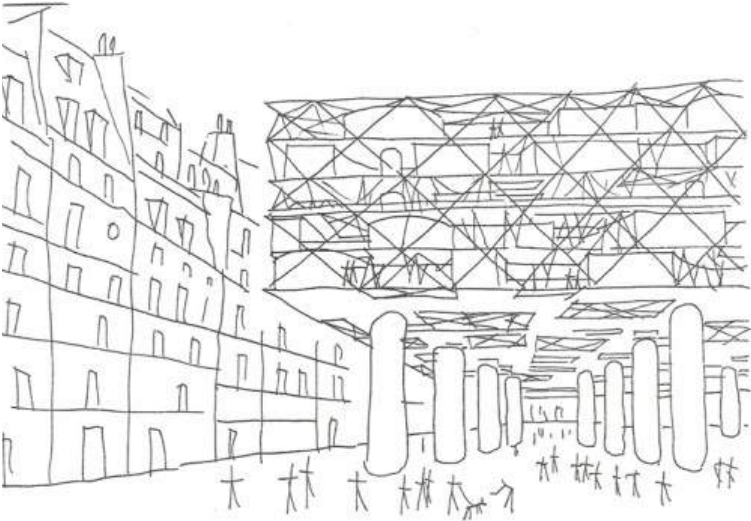
"I am not interested in utopias"

sB – What about the relations with other groups who were rethinking the city in the 60's, like Cedric Price, The Metabolists or The Situationists.
Was then an exchange of ideas among you, as a community of professional debate?

YF – Cedric Price i've meet in the '60. La Ville Spatiale was published in England and Cedric asked to meet me, I didn't know him before. The same thing with the Metabolists, Masato Otaka in Japan published La Ville Spatiale in '59 in Kindai Kenchiku.

sB – before the Metabolists?

YF – Yea. In a way the Metabolists group used the Ville Spatiale. You know, it happened that way, that the Ville Spatiale was a revolution, Archigram used it after.

sB – But you collaborate with them?

YF – I knew all these people because they came to see me. It's very simple. I knew Peter Cook when he was a student, he came to see me, and Otake and Kurokawa.

sB – And what do you think about Metabolists or Archigram now, after they developed their projects?

YF – In a way … I have for example Kurokawa … "Metabolism" it is more a slogan than a program. But this is typical for Japan. You know, we can not judge with our standard. For the Japanese certain words, certain symbols are very important, and translate that, you look at it, and it is very different. I was quite a number of times in Japan and I have an idea of how they think.

sB – What did impressed you in Japan?

YF – In a way I liked it, but it's again, with Japan… the Japanese don't like the medieval Japan. Tourists are impressed by the medieval Japan.

sB – And you?

YF – In Japan, the behavior of the people is interesting. It is very, very … Always in groups and very individualist in the same time. And that is interesting, not the hardware, but the software.

sB – And Archigram?
It was an European Utopia.

YF – It was graphism. Why not? That's not a negative judgment. Peter Cook, when we met the first time, told me: I would like to do a publication with graphism like in the science fiction magazines.

sB – And he did.

YF –Yea. Ok, this was his program, so why not.

sB – And what about Constant and The Situationists? This was no graphism.

YF – He discovered independently, we didn't know each other when he came out. But there is a difference: Constant is an artist, and he made the New Babylon as a big sculpture, and I was interested in the social thing. So the basis it's very different.

sB – So your Utopia is a social one?

YF –You know I had a book with the title Realizable Utopias. I am not interested in Utopias, I am interested in their capacity to be realized, it's a difference. I don't think that wishful thinking it's enough. This means in a way that you have to know what are the trends coming up. You can not invent a Utopia and convince people, but people can

- Nu cred ca oamenii trebuie sa invete ceva, ci arhitectul

Excerpt from the conversation entitled "Some simple truths" between Yona Friedman, Architect & Pioneer and studioBASAR: "From his home transformed in the model of his own dreams, Yona Friedman is telling about the possible utopia, where the architects learn from the people and where the constructions are more elastic and the living more flexible. The story links few key episodes in his life, like the participation in the CIAM X, the launch of the manifesto Mobile Architecture, or the meeting with Le Corbusier, but also some moments of accumulation and reflection, like his temporary residence in Bucharest in 1945."

Interview realized by: Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan (studioBASAR)/ with the support of: Romanian Cultural Institute in Paris, in the framework of the RDC program (Residences de Creation) / edited by: Roxana Szel / period: discussion - 4 January 2011; realization of the film - July 2012 | See: https://vimeo.com/198452174; www.studiobasar.ro
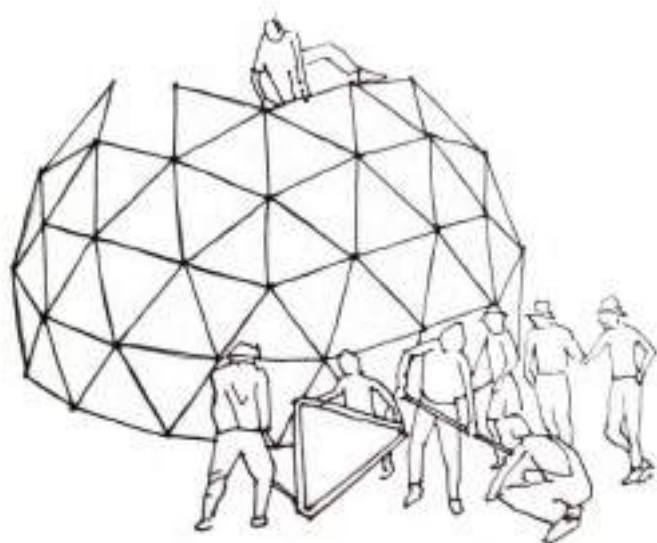
Drop City began as the brainchild of four art students who wanted to start a new type of community, a manifesto, outside the American societal values and problems that were defining during the 1960s. The anti-consumerist thinking expressed itself through the use of recycled materials, building a sustainable architecture inspired by Buckminster R. Fuller's work. The social dynamics of the group was based on the absence of any type of hierarchy, its „open-doors" policy and an emphasis on social equality, participation and cooperation. The founding members had been joined by people from around the world that came to live in the rural community of Colorado and work on the geodesic domes that was to become their shelter.

The existence of similar communities in modern-day Bucharest seems almost utopian. But one of the closest examples is living in the college student dorms. Sharing space with so many diverse but like-minded people encourages the exchange of ideas, opinions and stories. The age difference between students is not an issue; on the contrary, it offers the opportunity to learn from other's experiences. Often times, they help each other with school projects and deadlines, share text-books and trade different items, in the most basic type of commerce.

The block of flats is lacking in community spaces. By extracting some apartments, new spaces where people can come together are created.
The block's terrace is an unused, vague space. The extracted apartments are moved onto the terrace, suggesting the possibility of a new type of living.
There is an unresolved tension between the endless block of flats and the urban fabric behind. By reorganizing the new interior spaces the facade is transformed, responding to the traditional fabric.
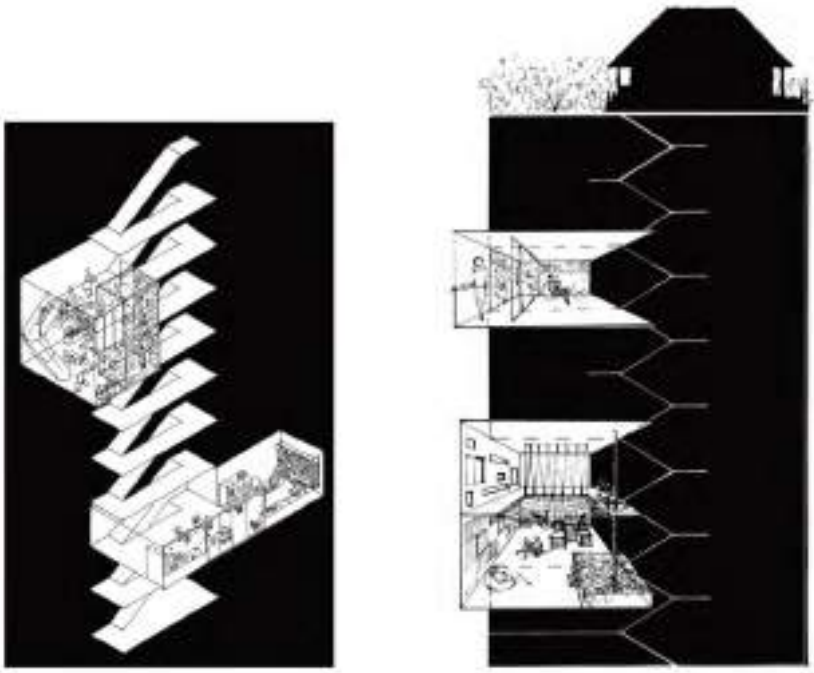
Space is the key element in bringing together a community because it is the starting point of interaction. Aside from the staircase which is used only as circulation, there is a lack of common spaces in the block of flats. Taking into account that the old meeting place from the rear of the block is now occupied by parking lots, some apartments are moved onto the terrace and void spaces are created along the vertical circulation.
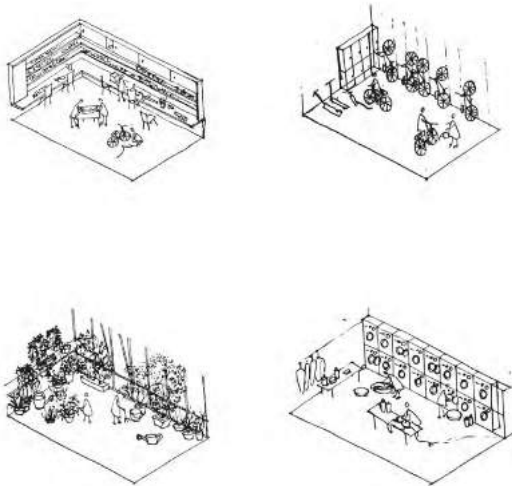
Considering people's needs, these spaces are organized with mixed activities from playing and having fun to doing daily chores, gardening, reading, or maybe other common hobbies. This will cause spontaneous encounters between the residents, making them to know one another and be a part of the block's community. The common places reveal themselves as animated centers of life and now form a connection with the traditional urban fabric from behind 'the wall'. The apartment block will embrace the mixed activities that the facing site has to offer as an example.

Can a city be designed?

Successful cities are based on two opposite paradigms that act simultaneously on it: grid and emergence [1].

The grid is the result of a rigid, top-down urban planning process designed to slice the city's territory into "architectable" slices (islands, plots), to allow the introduction of the buildings within the city. Somehow, the grid is the city's installation kit in its most encoded form. Emergence, on the other hand, is the result of the free structures - and of a free space - organic space structures which are coming from the history of the city or from the irregularities - disturbances - existing in the city planned grid. Studies show that emergence is what generates, in fact, maximum (spatial) integration into the city and is ultimately responsible for its success. Structures of emergence are more suited to city dwellers and are more likely bugs in the program, disturbances that help the program - the city – to become more adaptive. Can this adaptability be designed by architects? What are the obstacles to such a project?

Going down on the scale of things, we notice that we have a problem (the same) with the architectural objects. They are drawn into a 3D, geometric and rigid world, but they are built in a dynamic world where they become material parts of a sum (a cloud) of social assemblages with their own histories, movements, evolutions, aging. In this real world, people are not spectators sitting in front of the architectural objects but actors, agents, exploring and interacting with the space and the objects within it. People form, together with the architectural objects, or with parts of them, assemblages – unstable, dynamic networks - sometimes in opposition to the intentions of the architects (the stabilizers). Moreover, the technology of information has disturbed and will disturb so much the architectural object, and will connect so much the people in the future, that the architectural objects and the city built on them will be seen as modernist fictions that have become obstacles in the path of this connection: "When electronic technology connected the world, people began to register the failure of architecture, and the failure of objects"[2].

There is today a de-objectification, a de-location that the architects of the future must take advantage of. A more unstable structure is expected to occupy the material world of the cities of the future, capable of clinging to the information-time-space equation. We cannot give up architecture altogether, people still need order and still live in a world of matter, but a new form of matter - called anti-object, by Kengo Kuma, or advanced architecture by Manuel Gausa - is expected from the project.

Production as utopia
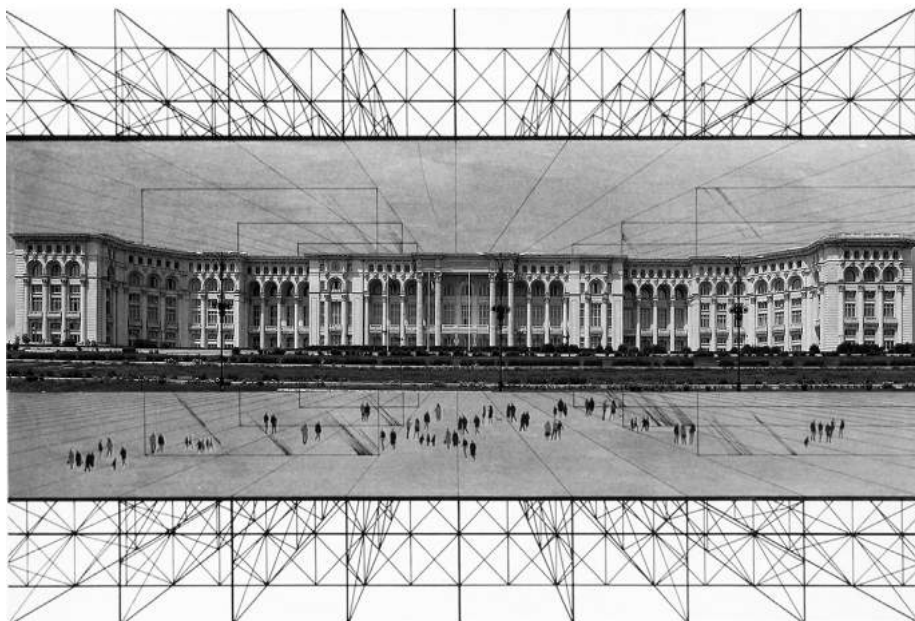
Published in 1970, the theoretical project No-Stop City (Archizoom) is an ironic critique of the ideology of architectural modernism taking onto its absurd limits. It illustrates an endless city intertwining architecture with objects and the triumphant consumer society, giving an interpretation of a catatonic environment, a boundless supermarket. No-Stop City is a city-without-qualities in which the individual can achieve his own housing conditions as a creative, freed and personal activity. As Andrea Branzi puts it, this project implements "the idea of the fading away of architecture within metropolis". No-Stop City is a critical Utopia, a model of global urbanization where design is the essential conceptual instrument used in the mutation of living patterns and territories. Considering architecture as an intermediate stage of urban organization that has to be overstepped, No-Stop City establishes a direct link between metropolis and furnishing objects: the city becomes a series of beds, tables, chairs and cupboards; the domestic and urban furniture fully coincide. "To qualitative utopias, we oppose the only possible utopia: that of Quantity" (Andrea Branzi). Referring to Andrea Branzi's last quote, The House of Parliament can be considered about in the same way: the quantity takes over quality. Designed as the bearer of national pride, the building expresses the unlimited potential of the new order, the Ceausescu communism. Standing as the vanishing point of the main thoroughfare of the city, it impresses with its sizes, looking like it has no beginning and no ending.

Philosopher Michael Hardt affirms that the actual economic society is preeminently postmodern, taking into consideration the current process of global informatization, which followed the modern period (replacing agriculture with industry).
Nowadays, spreading information and offering services are in the centre of the capitalist production. These aspects determined a significant change in the quality and type of work – a certain idea of immaterial labor having occurred. Concerning these circumstances, the spaces needed for this kind of labor took the shape of office "sky-scrapers" the corporatist model or by adapting many residential apartments to every business's need, which is a growing tendency. Actual statistics show that almost 90% of small businesses develop their activity in this kind of spaces. These block apartments are usually easily reached from the street and are usually on the block's first

The idea of immaterial labor comes to be theorized as a result of the changes in the mode of capitalist production as post-Fordism. More specifically defined, immaterial refers to two different aspects of labor:

Changes taking place in the workers labor processes, where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control.

A series of activities that are normally recognized as work, the kind of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards.

Concluding this socio-economic analysis of the existing context of Bucharest, the proposed utopian solution has the purpose to increase the quality of life while working in order to complete the functionality and efficiency of an office building. Having "The Walls" (communist apartment estates) of Bucharest as a layer to work on, the project suggests transposing the flat small business and bringing them together in a new space, the most appropriate place to create this new place being the top of "The Big Walls". Having the workplace in the proximity of the dwelling is an opportunity to reduce the traffic caused by the home-work-home daily transition. The access to this area is done by using elevators, elements that create a link between the new office level and the space behind the blocks. Placing them in this area, it encourages people to discover this under-privileged space. In order to emphasize the idea of individual freedom and trying to stimulate the social interactions, the space is configured as a grid that allows a uniform and freely distribution of the office units. Illumination becomes really important in this kind of space, so the roof takes a proper shape that enlarges the view on the surroundings. Ultimately, considering the constant need of social interaction and trying to combine labor with leisure, this office space is enhanced with alternative functions that give the chance to enjoy various activities.
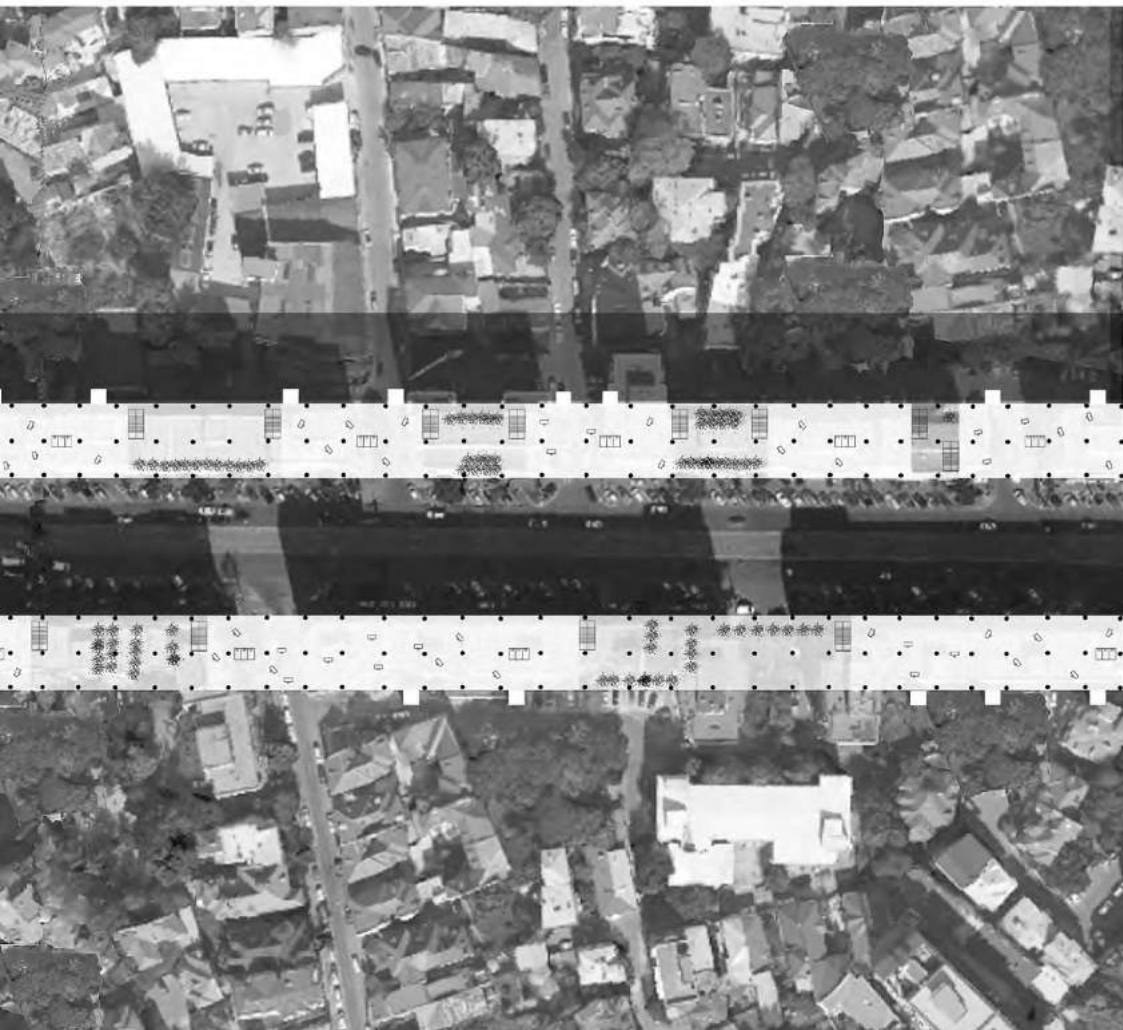
Can infrastructure be architecture?

Originally defining the foundations and other unexposed parts of constructions as necessary in order to erect the visible part of the buildings, the infrastructure is, of course, a part of architecture. In contemporary practice I think we should also include heating, gas, electricity, and other grid and off-grid installations that define the livable qualities of the designed spaces. Following this reasoning, for me, from the scale of the single family house to the scale of small and medium cities, infrastructure remains a part of architecture, an important one I would say, but it does not yet become architecture. In most cities the infrastructure is an invisible foundation (streets, data connections, sewage, water pipes, metro lines, etc.). One of the most beautiful cities in Europe, Genova , challenges the usual perception of architecture and infrastructure due to the dense development and the difficult natural landscape. In this city the boundary between architecture and infrastructure becomes fuzzy. The city is both architecture and infrastructure, whether walking on the streets (bridges in many cases) or entering the multistory basements of the medieval city blocks. Probably the most obvious example of architecture-infrastructure hybrid is Le Corbusier's urbanization of Algiers. Here, the architecture (mostly housing, as intended in the modern paradigm) – becomes infrastructure (or we could say in this case that architecture becomes urbanization and vice-versa?). The project is a manifest, it embodies in a purified form traits of the qualities that define architecture and its relation to infrastructure in big cities. Architecture is both housing and monument, while the transportation infrastructure in this example mutates and becomes the coronation of the architecture and not its foundation (relation that can be seen throughout Le Corbusier's architecture where the pilotis liberate the building from its "grounded" condition.)

Passing from the manifest of the city-territory to the iconic manifestation of it – New York, we find that the infrastructures are the true monuments; they can trigger awe sensations which only the best architecture examples can do. It is because of their pure form derived from a specific use, their esthetically undisputed materials and their dimensions that connect directly to the scale of the whole city that those infrastructures acquire true architectural characteristics. On a visible level, the transport infrastructure is as much a part of the iconicity of big cities as their most important buildings, while, on an invisible level, the city's physiology resolved through huge underground networks of inhabitable spaces has mutated into an important part of the metropolitan imaginary. An unused part of the sewage system of New York becomes home to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles . The four heroes that protect the big city find shelter in infrastructure as do many people on the fringes of society in real life. The infrastructures, true monuments of big cities and shelters for human life become, as such, architecture.
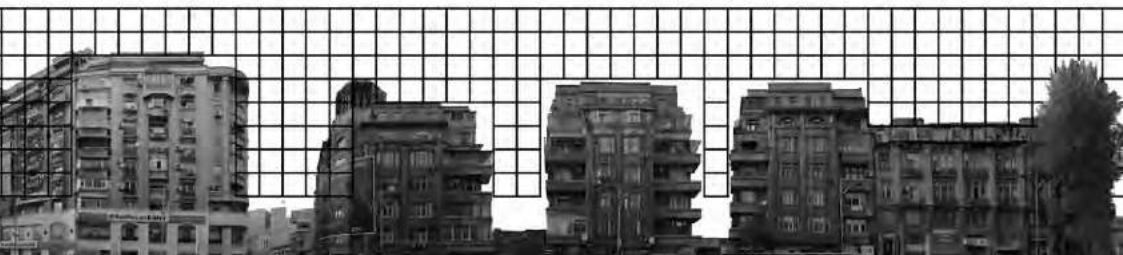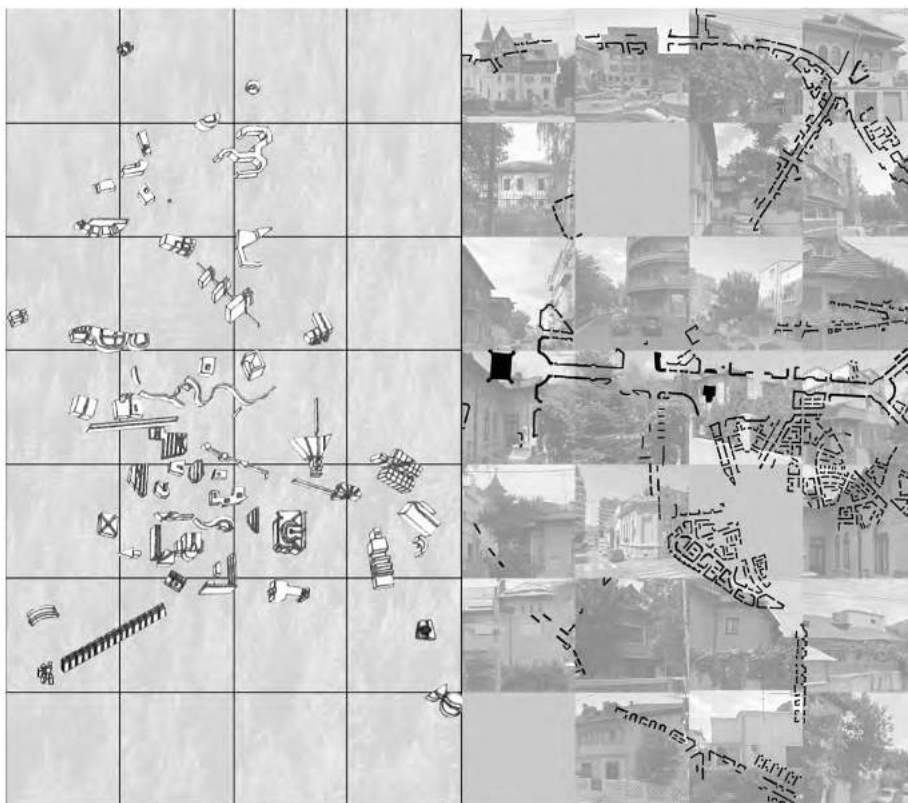
Depopulation and urban fragmentation represented two of the main characteristic for the 1970's Berlin – and, thus, Ungers and Koolhaas respond with the "City as an Archipelago". They propose the elimination of urban structures that are superfluous and function badly, and their replacement with green interspaces, which aim to function as a system of modified nature. What they do maintain, however, are the districts that possess clear and identifiable features. They become "islands" within the green space, hence the metaphor of the "archipelago". The urban villa is proposed as the main form of residential building, as it was seen as the ideal compromise between the housing block and the detached house. Therefore, the problem is no longer represented by the process of designing a new city – but rather by the (re)discovery and further improvement of the already existent elements.

In its current state, Bucharest is home to two main types of urban fabric. Firstly, it is relevant to mention the layer of the old town – distinguished by an organic growth, which oscillated between spontaneous and regulated interventions. It streetscape presents a plethora of rather permeable features, while it lacks in displaying areas that convey a clear sense of identity (with a few exceptions). Superimposed over the existing city are the "great walls", of the communist regime. Despite being a rather incoherent project, these urban structures exert an apparent authority trough their scale and quantity, thus leading to the birth of various contexts. The conflict between these two layers generates an urban fabric that is characterized by division and lacks an internal structure.

When it comes to the morphological evolution of Bucharest, it is perhaps instrumental to outline the several stages according to which this process of development occurred – all of which acted upon and shaped Bucharest's urban fabric. The pre-modern era, which lasted until 1831, is characterized by a spontaneous development in districts and parishes formed around the main churches. Between 1931 and up to the beginning of the communist regime, the capital went through a continual process of modernization. This period is marked by an assimilation of western influences – which, at times, occurred completely thoughtlessly – as well as by the strong desire to build a new national identity. Nevertheless, some of the most notable and ambitious projects of urban planning took place after the First World War. Such was the case with the brainchild of Cincinat Sfintescu, which was first published in 1921; one other similar instance was the publication in 1935 of the results of a study carried out by a team made up of four architects and one engineer. In spite of having different authors, both plans share a number of striking similarities. Firstly, they both acknowledge an uneven development and expansion on the

outskirts of Bucharest and propose a potential solution to keep this phenomenon under control – which, in the case of Sfintescu, involved a green belt. Furthermore, both projects put forward the potential existence of a functional segregation between the different areas of the city (such as Villa area, social housing area, business centre area, etc.). Lastly, the problem of car traffic – the car being a mere signifier for the beginning of a new era – is closely looked at. Thus, four ring roads were supposed to help streamline the traffic in the city centre. The aesthetics and image of the city is also a major factor that is being taken into consideration – and, therefore, both plans offer suggestions for the layout and organization of squares and avenues. Naturally, the plans had their differences and whilst the former could be described as rather bold and slightly disconnected from the city, the latter – which is seen as being the most historically significant one out of the two – was more accessible and addressed to the people. After the Second World War due to an expected change of political regime, the building politics focused more on quantity and the prevision of housing for the growing population (hence the massive building of entire neighborhoods from scratch). Following the earthquake that took place in 1977, the focus is one more placed on restructuring the city center. Many of the projects which were implemented find their origin in the interwar plans (such as Ceausescu's 'Civic Center'), but the way in which they were executed was characterized more by an injudicious thinking rather than an attention on the existing fabric.

At present time Bucharest finds itself in a fractured condition, one that in many occasions was caused and nurtured by the conflictual relationships between a traditional urban fabric and the attempts to modernize it.

On one hand, the 'great walls' appear to be the result of a historical approach trough their implementation onto already existing boulevards (with the exception of the Civic Centre) and by applying ideas and projects whose origins can be traced as back as the interwar period. On the other hand the new buildings completely ignore the existing urban fabric and its former connections by establishing an inner logic of "tunnel-avenues"

After 1989 the further growth of the capital was marked by an "anything goes" approach which led to an unregulated development in both its center and at its outskirts. This made matters worse, having a number of negative effects such as a chaotic growth and the loss of many valuable sites.

The proposed project tries to (re)establish an internal order in Bucharest by implementing the General Urban Plan from 1935, thus writing the epilogue to the modernization period.

The solution steers away from the dreaded model of the boulevard and instead makes use of a perpetual grid that defines urban enclaves, therefore providing a system for further growth.

Can a city (not) be authentic?

It is true that you can answer this question either one way or another, depending on how you define the terms involved or, even more, depending on what system it is used to relate them. Not being able to involve such formal demonstrations, I am counting that most of us live and have to have a direct understanding of the city.

In this respect, one of the main characters of Michel Gondry[i], a young director looking for work in the Japanese metropolis observes the imperfect spaces between the buildings. He senses that these derelict spaces could be the perfect ground of a ghostly parallel world[ii]. But I think that, more than fantasy, this sampling of the remnant spaces is a very honest way to look at the city and to grasp its fractures among different zones and borders powered by the authoritarian discourses of unity and identity.

No, the city cannot be the simple amount of agglomerated buildings in a given territory, neither the well-ordered space among them, but the background fabric that supports the different ingredients and contests them at the same time. Like a field of forces more and more intense, this urban energy is trying to erode or even engulf its own characteristics, until the point that every constituent element accepts its transformation. The will for this remodeling is permanently negotiated by each one of us, day by day, step by step. This is how the city has to be conflictual, an environment of permanent change rather than a fixed form eternally defined by its own authenticity.

If "Timelessness was inbreed at the country"[iii], it has to be that the city created History.

[i] Michel Gondry, director – Interior Design, short film in the triptych Tokyo! (2008)
[ii] "Something's wrong with these buildings. They refuse all physical contact with each other. […] Every night, flat ghosts slide in and out these gaps and wander about the city. Wander about the city… scaring the people to death. The authorities fill in the gaps with concrete, but the buildings keep moving apart, letting the flat creatures take over." (min.13)
[iii] "vesnicia s-a nascut la sat"; Lucian Blaga – Sufletul satului (poem)

Ville Nouvelle Melun Senart OMA
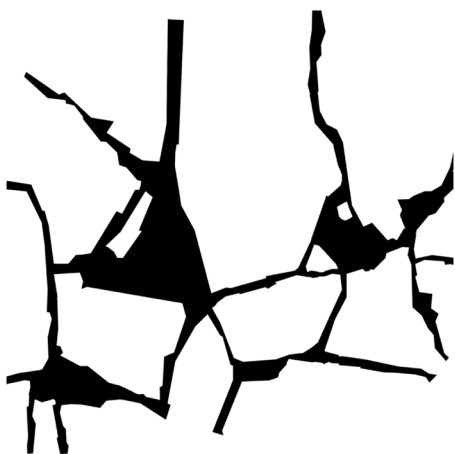

Barrens // 1852 Borroczyn

Rem Koolhaas' project for Melun-Senart frames the voids as promising places. The strips – linear voids, structure an archipelago of islands, having various geometries, densities and impacts. Therefore the void becomes a flexible *mise-en-scene*. The *maidan* as a void, is a space beyond culture, authority or hierarchy (be it the city council, the local community or any private investor). Laying somewhere between a natural and an anthropic landscape, neither permanent nor ephemeral, it becomes a retreat for those who want to escape the usual, controlled city landscape.

The *maidan* is an unbuilt, void space, part of Bucharest's history. Our project aims to identify spaces with similar characteristics and same potential, in the present structure of the city – the unbuilt spaces behind the communist collective housing units. Sustainability – the project places people at the centre of urban development. The spaces created are flexible, always changing, offering unique experiences for every passer-by. The space cannot be occupied, only visited, experienced, recounted. Nowadays, in the city, the functional segregation is more and more present. Taking into account that the *maidan* does not have a certain function, nor a specific architectural program. It is suitable for a variety of activities and social classes. Reconnection – decades ago, the *maidans* were connected by streets. Nowadays, they are separated by collective housing units which act as strong, opaque limits. The reconnection is made through linking elements, crossing the boulevards. These constructions are suitable for movement (pedestrian and by bike) as well as for unplanned, spontaneous activities.

The link between the buildings and the unbuilt space behind them (interior – exterior) is made by use of prefabricated terraces, added to the already existing apartments. Seen as extensions of the cramped, box-like interior spaces, these terraces enhance their attractiveness and therefore their durability and sustainability.

The various approaches of the facades come from the distinct characters of the two major spaces: the *maidan* and the boulevard. While the first becomes the image of a captivating place (one "inhabited" by humans and nature), the second one is characterized by noise, car traffic and pollution. The dwellings facing the boulevards can be screened by a double facade, housing enclosed terraces, which act as thermal and noise buffer, as well as extensions of the interior spaces.
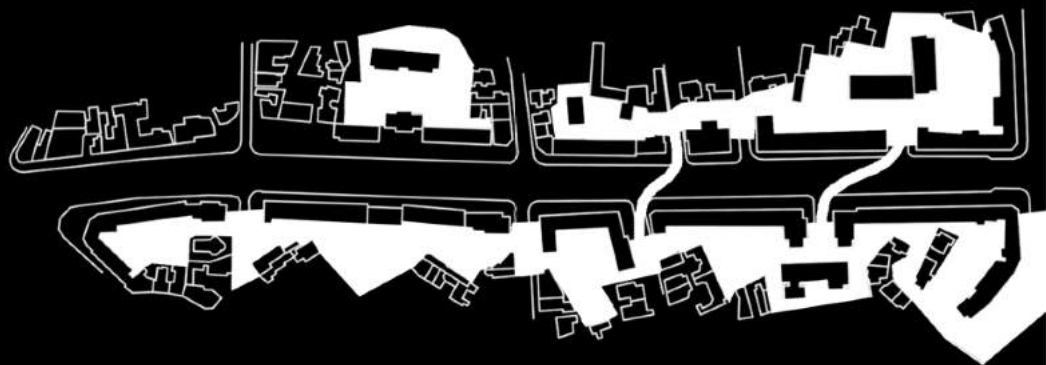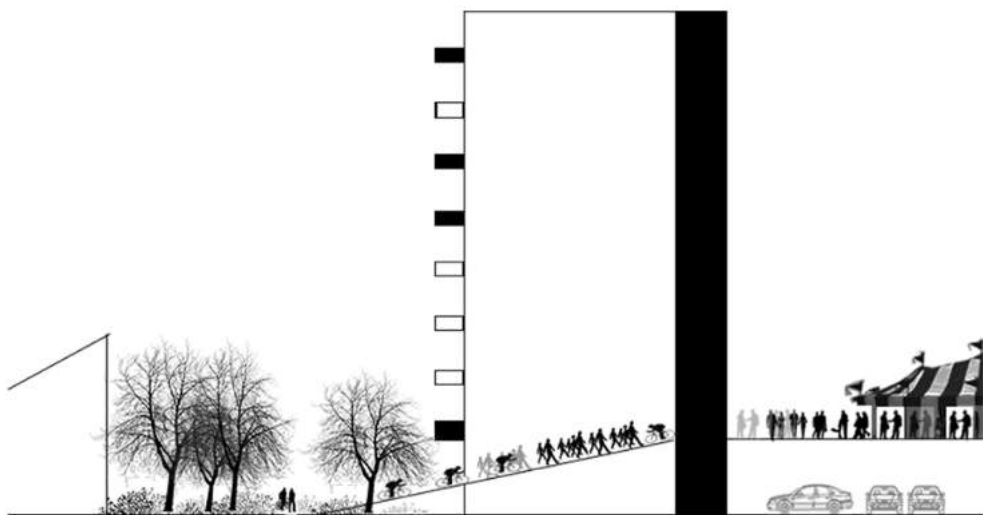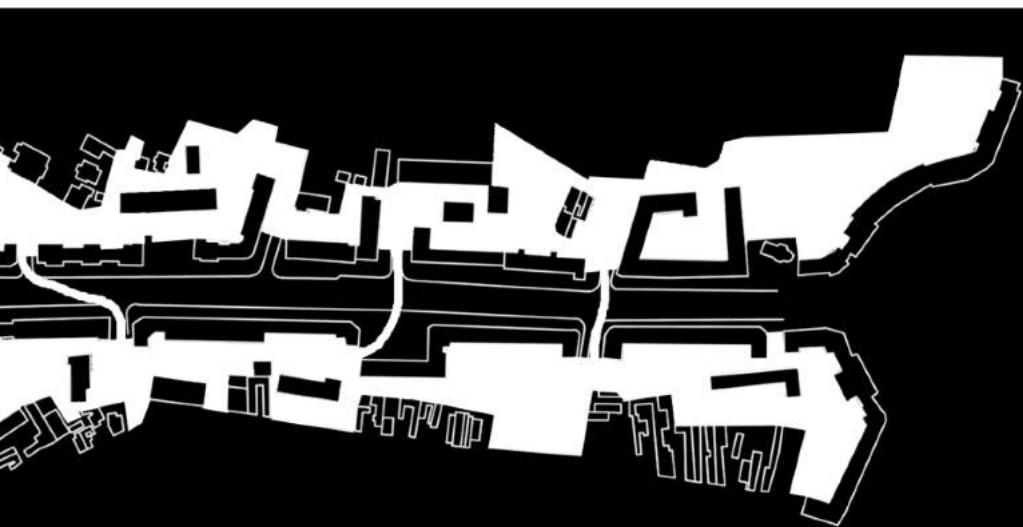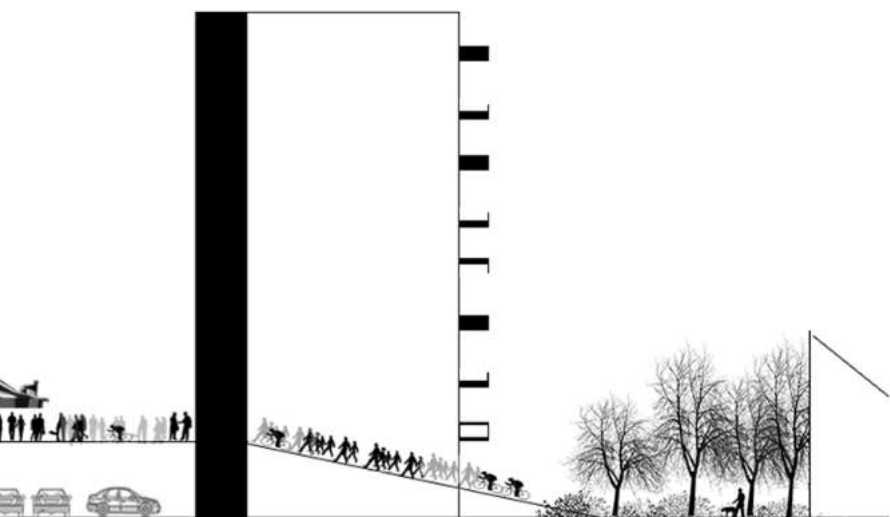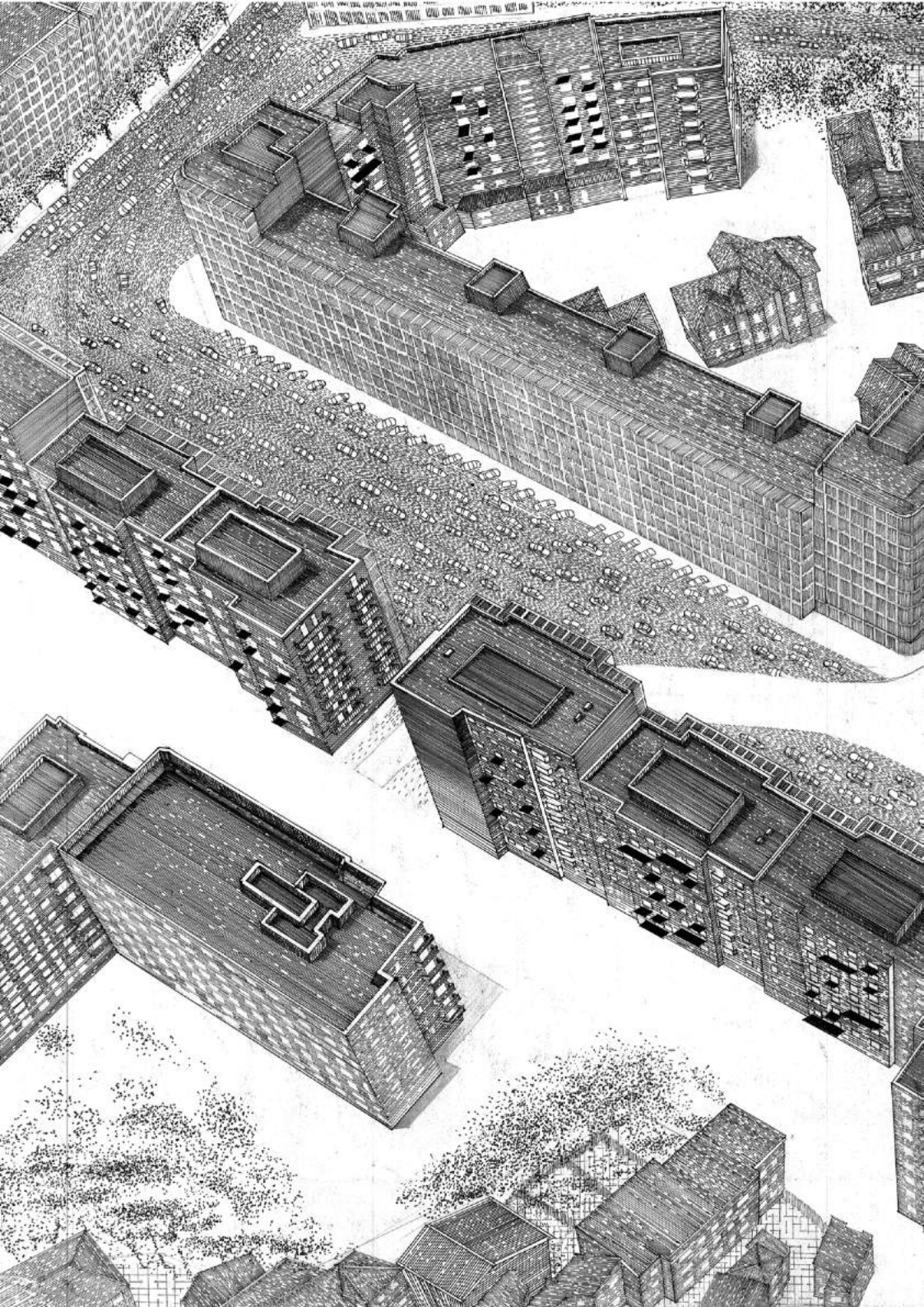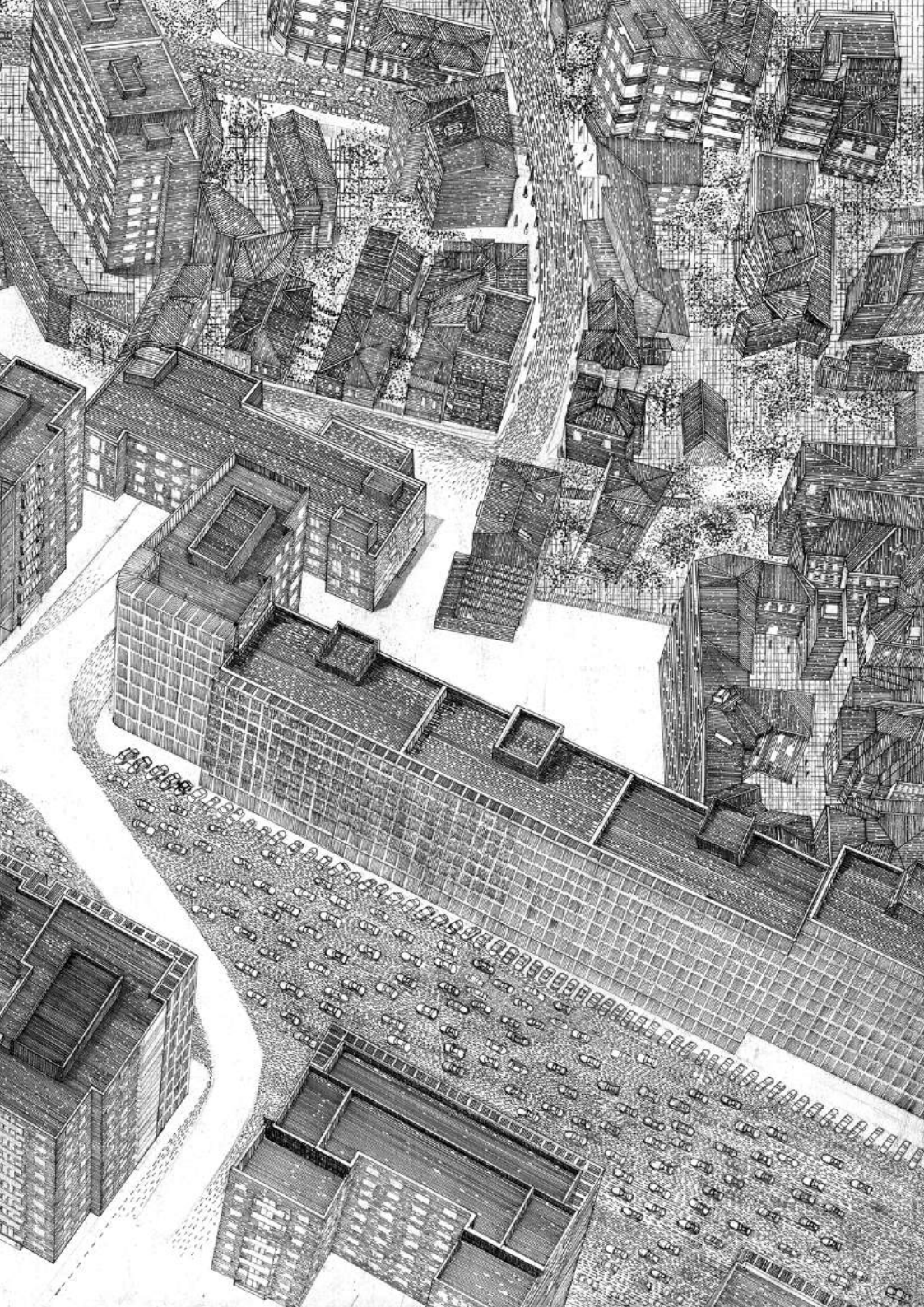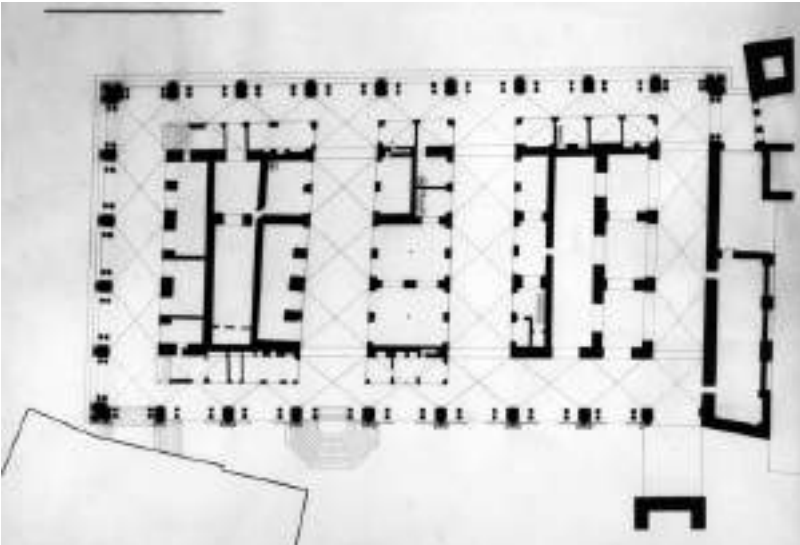
Can utopia be contextual?

Utopia is always contextual in the most vital and profound way: it is fed by the very context it provides an alternative for. This may not be the same understanding of «context» that the professional literature points to when it so often abuses the term. However, this understanding does not only allow one to unearth the roots of a specific project, but it is a standpoint that places context (and the reaction to it) at the very foundation of the architectural profession. It also almost always suggests that architecture be used as a tool for the construction of an ideally better alternative – not only to the existing architecture of a certain place and time, but rather – to other social, cultural or political conditions that architecture either empowers, validates or allows.

The more important question for me is how can a project be both utopian and contextual, or better yet, why should one strive to achieve this. The answer to the first question is far from simple, all the more so since it is highly likely that a general, theoretical answer be in itself a contradiction. As to the question of why, one should hope and even demand that the invention of something new remains a possibility – at the same time an open promise and a stake for the architecture that is to come. This invention can only stem from a critical appraisal of what is already there, while not destroying everything in its way; all other options are not only too easy, but seem to miss the very point of alluding to the new while also constantly keeping it out of reach. This is not only the art of preserving the contextual heredities of a project, but also that of «constructing a utopia» that preserves its utopian character.
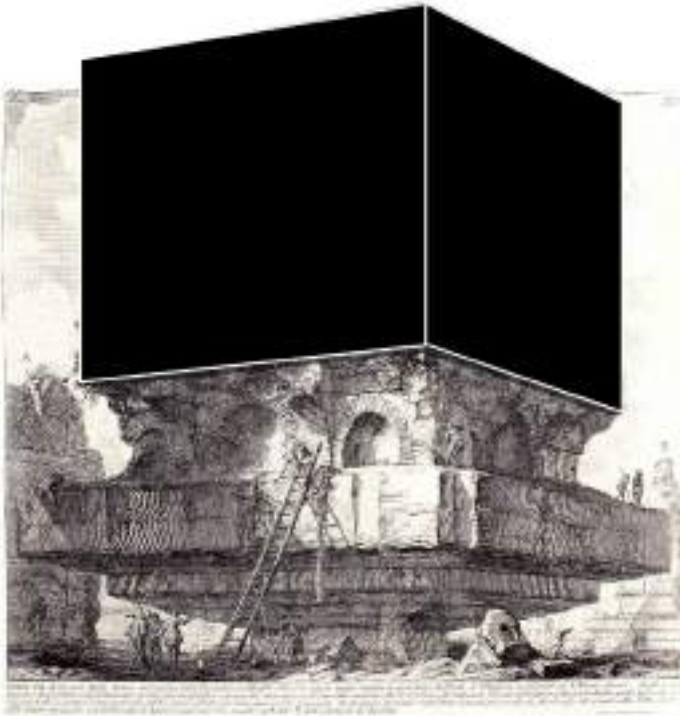
Is utopia Guilty pleasure?

C A R M E L O   B A G L I V O

In a recent article, published in the number of vice versa "The topicality of Utopia" (n°6 July 2017), I wrote about the Western Catholic culture, to which I belong, that kills and revives the Utopia at a time when Adam and Eve were forced out of Eden. The Utopian thought has created and destroyed the Eden and still, it creates the new world and the new man.

Man, imagining his own creation, destroys and reconstructs Utopia.

In the Garden of Eden there is no architecture because there is no need; now, in the new World, architecture becomes the tool to build and imagine it.

Architecture to take refuge, to accumulate, to build cities, to define symbols.

Architecture is the instrument of Utopia and aims to recapture that lost harmony and the construction of the world.

Man, with his architecture, never abandoned the aspiration to regain the Garden of Eden.

The city and its Utopias grow and, like the Tower of Babel, accumulate in an organic transformation of its texture.

The superposition of different textures goes from being spontaneous, coming from the bottom, to being ideologically planned, coming from the top; Here Utopia is at the service of ideology.

Utopia-Ideologized represents power and builds barriers between the before and after, the new and the old, between them and others.

The natural process of building on the Utopias of others is transformed into the zeroing of the Utopias of others through destruction and reconstruction, violent processes that are against the natural process of accumulation.

Accumulation is the law of the natural growth of things; Things are piling up and transforming; destruction and reconstruction make no sense and need a high need for energy.

Utopia is no longer creating the new from nothing, but is accumulating on what already exists.

The Utopia has paradoxically a place: At this point, the story resumes to follow its flow where the sense of guilt and the failure no longer exist.

Accumulating means using what we have. How to think the new, or how to grow it, change it or using what we have?

The accumulation as a form of man-made growth linked to the history of the places, things and people. It is a way of developing the common world in many civilizations. Rewrite on what we have where the rewriting process brings the new without destroying the old. The accumulation as the main strategy of making contemporary architecture. Designing means layering. Stratify means creating. Create means to grow.

What are the different forms of accumulation? Such physical forms and shapes without such provisional physicality and objects?

Accumulation could be an informal collection as unplanned use of a place, as temporary and creative occupation.

Using a place means to build a memory and leave traces on it. Using a place means to re-think it, to make it personal, to occupy it. This goes beyond the concept of public space which we are commonly used to consider. That kind of public space identifies itself with a certain kind of program and typology strictly codified in which the community identifies itself. Accumulating means formulating the relationship with history. Formulate the relationship with our teachers.

Lower architecture and upper architecture.

Lower architecture is anchored to the tracks (roots) while upper one is free to express itself. Yona Friedman, in the space city, designs a structure that covers parts of the city without touching the ground. In my opinion, upper architecture is born from the lower one.

Accumulation as a planned strategy. Architecture as an unfinished work.

Spaces are available for possible growths and transformations. The Fun Palace of Cedric Price is a place where everything can happen. So everything can be created.

Accumulation as a ruins stratification. Poetics of the fragment.

The architecture has often used the ruin or its metaphor to question the discipline itself as did Piranesi's Campus Martius. Using the ruin, Piranesi builds the foundations of modern architecture and its representation. Campus Martius is the juxtaposition of the ruins. The different building typologies are flanked to form the generic city without a planned urban space.

The architectural object itself is at the same time full and empty.

Campus Martius is like a contemporary city where the full of buildings must also contain public space. The public space, thus, loses its freedom and uniqueness to become a temporary occupation of a "private" place.

So why not use ruin as a priority element to rethink architecture?

The ruin no longer seen as an exclusive and closed place, where the only purpose is to keep it and then show it to the tourists. The ruins are no longer that part of closed city, belong to the urban space and are founding element to rethink the city. Perhaps today rethinking the ruins can bring back architecture to ground zero, cleaned up by all the accretions that have grown in recent years. The ruin or monument belongs to the design and the design process is the operational

Theory and practice, research and project overlap and Piranesi's engravings are the basis for new scenarios and readings of the past. Stratifications, juxtapositions and additions where the ruin is at the center of a place search process to identify new relationships and roles.

Fragments of different cities and different buildings coexist. Form new landscapes and scenery. The ruin is the raw material for new architectures that arise from the multiplication of the fragments and their juxtaposition.The ruin is the place of subtraction. Subtraction as a design tool used by contemporary art in order to eliminate the superfluous. Removing just as adding.

Superstudio in the project "Salvataggio dei centri storici" marks the end of the monument as an untouchable object.

As a work to be preserved, everything is in a design process. Society does not accept fetishes. The Coliseum is inhabited.

Returning on the Colosseum of Superstudio we approach the monuments as "alive" and modifiable objects. Monuments no more untouchable.

The places of the ruin are also the places of the empty space. Seemingly unformed and indefinite, throughout their history, Rome and Berlin had experienced times in which empty spaces were more than the occupied ones. Rome after the Empire and Berlin after the Second World War. Two epochs very far apart, but crossed by empty spaces: Roman countryside and the No-man-land in Berlin. Sudden openings and changes of perspective. But marked by a common fate: fill the gaps.

Accumulation produces hybrid buildings.

Hybrid buildings are the result of a simultaneous coexistence of functional and formal autonomous typologies. Different architectural objects are made up in new configurations while keeping their identities alive.

This attitude is radicalized in mega-structures projects and in the Metabolist architecture. Architecture positively thinks to include an entire city within a building and its unpredictable dynamics along with its victories and failures: Corviale in Rome is a notorious example: an unsolved building where the idea of the city never worked. The self-contained building has difficulty in surviving. It must contain functions capable of enlarging its target group, functions that have an extended value to the whole city. But a city building is not completed with primary functions related to market imperatives. It must contain features capable of expanding the target group, functions that have a value for the whole of city.

Accumulation and structures. No-iconic buildings expanded, modified and waiting to be colonized.

The building does not respond to the growth of the city but is expected to be transformed.

Bare structures. The architecture reduced to its structural essence, naked. We can define the accumulation as the only form of growth that can contain and transform everything; Accumulate also contains the utopias of others. Thus Utopia becomes collective and inclusive. Utopia is not an island but becomes an archipelago where everyone can live.
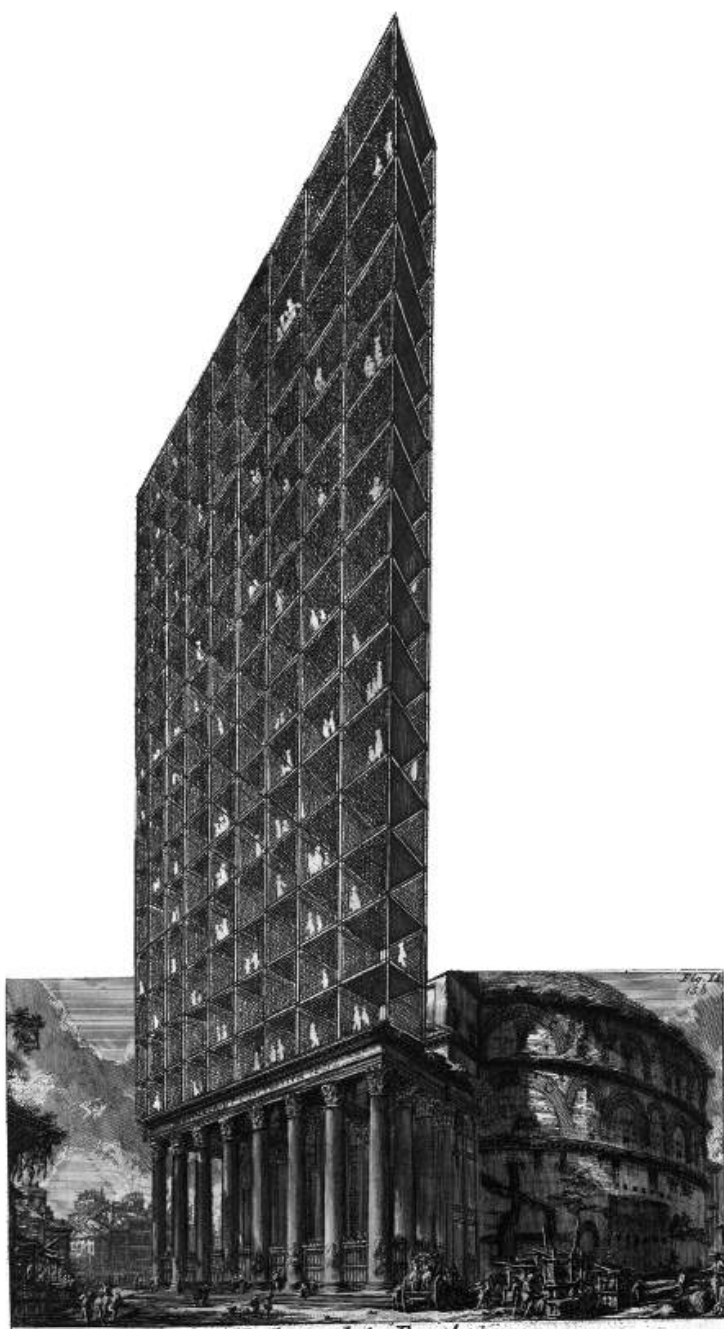
Veduta del Pantheòn

f a k e

as an attribute, it strips away the added value of the supposedly authentic. As a metaphor, it opens up the dual discourse between the original and the reiterating. The fake is the rich moment of the double: not a certainty, but an inquiring reasoning. The absolute is being challenged by the open-ended work. As information proliferates at all the levels of our existence, all thoughts dwell on readymade: thinking as dialogue. Producing the authentic gets suspended in the state of the genuine copy. In the end, the original as a strong concept fades away. In this difficult landscape, the stake is double: grasping the meaning of the archetypes while dislocating it to new purposes.

as a strategy, it goes beyond the good-bad categories. It is ambivalent, inherent, high-risk. It is not about dwelling from tabula rasa. It could be about infusing significance to an existent situation, about recycling the difficult history and its physical remains. Confronted to real needs and fantasized desires, people in the city are caught up in a continuous process of disguising one into the other. It is an instable process in the sense that it triggers the newness.

Should this strategy be finite? Should it end?

STEFAN SIMION

s t a b i l i t y

is a desirable condition when it comes to inhabiting a neighborhood. It is the mark of the dominant ideology: the modern middle class family that uses the city and in doing so the city complies to requirements such as security, continuity, functional mix, pedestrian routes, parks and plazas, maximum cultual and functional comfort for the individual understood as the generic
human with typical needs/ a clear division between private and public/ maximum efficiency in land-use. The urban fragment is acknowledged as such by recognizing its character, its physical and atmospheric particularities. Identity and Authenticity are the founding concepts. They have clear boundaries, so it is the discourse of the inclusive-exclusive. It is the safe esthetic of the familiar, the nostalgic, the melancholic. It is the moral proliferation of the existing.

is the dangerous look away from the condition of the contemporary city. it is not seeing that the city is truly alive as long as it is the essential laboratory of the society trying to improve itself. Failure is just a pathway to progress. Failure is thus healthy if seen as an intermediate stage. New needs mirror new possibilities: mutual determination. Social mutations add up as consequence to technical breakthroughs, to demographic explosion, to the new economical landscape, to the state dissolution, to the planetary sustainable imperative, to our most fabulous desires as a species to explore and experience everything. The city is the main stage. What is necessary is the ethical investigation of how failed urban spaces can become resource to the community.

List of illustrations:

CONTRIBUTORS:

A D A L B E R T O   D E L   B O

"Graduated in Architecture in Politecnico di Milano where he is now full professor of Architectural and Urban Composition in the School of Architecture Urban planning and Construction engineering, he has taught in the Faculties of Pescara and Venice. The research activity has been documented by studies and research in the field of urban analysis and architectural design, in particular on the historical experience of the Modern Movement, on the matter of the idea of city, on the theoretical/practical aspects of design with focus on settlement and sustainability issues. Among the main works are the Cemetery Park of Novate Milanese and the University Campus of Chieti, experience collected in 'Le architetture del Campus di Chieti', Skira, Milano, 2014. The University Sports Centre of the Campus was awarded the European Prize for Architecture for sports facilities 1996."

I R I N A   M E L I T A

Irina Melita studied architecture at the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest between 1998 and 2004, followed by a Master's Degree in "Integrate Urban Planning" in the same institution. She taught at the University, 1st year architecture studio, for four years. During the studies she had a one year Erasmus scholarship in Toulouse and several internships and collaborations in Geneva, Paris and Lausanne. She has acted as a teaching guest at Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne, Switzerland in 2014. Irina worked since 2004 in several partnerships, until she founded POSTER, together with Stefan Simion, in 2007.

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Dan Dinoiu studied architecture at UAUIM Bucharest and has been teaching there since 2003. He worked for DSBA for a few years and is the author of a PhD study about the Bucharest Modernism. He has participated in numerous architectural competitions and is the winner of 2000 Bucharest International Student Competition, organized by UAR

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EMIL BURBEA

Emil Burbea is a practicing architect, senior partner at Republic of Architects. In the last eight years he enjoyed being invited as teaching assistant at UAUIM. In both postures, he promotes the necessity of a permanent negotiation between the public and private interests in order to find the right configuration of the built environment. His PhD thesis was inspired by the "Heterotopia" of Michel Foucault—a practical tool to infiltrate or detour the mainstream power authority, hoping to find new and candid human interactions.

RADU PONTA

Radu Ponta is a practicing architect, senior partner at Republic of Architects. He is also teaching the theory of architecture at UAUIM as a lecturer. His PhD thesis develops a meditation on the relationship between written and built thoughts of Le Corbusier, a contextual utopian himself.

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Carmelo Baglivo studied Architecture at "La Sapienza" University, Rome. He worked for Max Dudler in Berlin and for Massimiliano Fuksas in Rome. In 1992 he won an international competition published by the Municipality of Rome for the Eastern Office District. In 1994 he took part in the 6th International Seminar "Naples Architecture and City". // baglivonegrini.it // instagram/carmelo_baglivo

STUDENT PROJECTS

Studio led by professor E. B. Popescu, Stefan Simion, Emil Burbea, Silviu Alexandru Preda / Critic guests: Irina Melita, Dan Dinoiu, Radu Ponta // student teams:

Community as utopia: Anca Gheonea, Laura Ichim, Alex Ivanof, Andreea Petre, Stefan Salavastru // Density as utopia: Cristian Badescu, Bianca Gavrila, Stefan Mihai, George Stanescu, Iulia Tudosie // Sustainability as utopia: Andreea Cosmici, Loredana Enache, Raluca Nistor, Alexandra Oprea, Alexandra Onea // Production as utopia: Diana Jitariu, Stefania Malaeru, Corina Oprea, Raluca Vasile // Green as utopia: Alexandra Crivat, Petre Frangulea, Iulian Mathe, Andreea Poparda, Roxana Chisalita // Traffic as utopia: Andrada Galan, Stefania Hirleata, Denis Mihalache, Diana Rimniceanu, Robert Stoicescu, Radu Tirca.