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Artschitecture. Architecture and the arts

Abstract

The following text is the editorial in issue 54 of FAM dedicated to the relationship between arts and architecture. It explains the reasons for the conception of the number.

Keywords

Architecture and the arts — Composition — Art — Compositional procedures

With this issue number 54 of FAM, it seemed important to point out that although architecture is an autonomous discipline, it has always entertained and continues to have fruitful relationships with art. In this sense, art is understood as “profound” compositional procedures, and with the arts as disciplines which are in themselves autonomous and specific: music, sculpture, photography, cinema, theater.

Some of the *Artschitecture* essays follow the first path and investigate the structures which are common to these different disciplines and form the technical tools man uses to express his poetic nature as “homo faber” and as an architect. Others seek to illustrate the exchanges that the arts cultivate “superficially” and act as a mutual stimulus and invitation. These extremes evidently include numerous “intermediate stages” and particular variants. Some of these intermediate stages are recounted well by the work of Steven Holl, who kindly allowed us to translate and publish the essay entitled *Architectonics of Music* in Italian. Steven Holl uses music to situate his works and adapt them to the cultural context in which they are created, such as the neumatic notes of medieval music for London's Maggie's Center or ancient Chinese sounds for the Hangzhou Museum of Music. In the case of Maggie's Center, the geometry of the notational system is superficially used as an allegorical-ornamental decoration of the colored glass pavilion. In the famous Strait House or in *Tesseract of Time*, it is the internal structure of Bartók's music and dance that are transposed and “translated” into form and space.

Then there is language and writing in the background. Leon Battista

Alberti exhorted his pupils to learn to paint as a child learns to write. Similar to a game, art and language help us to imagine and build a better world and become aware that each of us is responsible for the outcome.

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FAM does not betray its relationship with the Festival of Architecture from which it arose in presenting this issue dedicated to the relationship between Architecture and the other arts. Indeed, it is a return to origins not only for the mechanisms underlying architectural creation which are common to other figurative arts, but also because "Heteroarchitecture" was the name and theme of the first edition of the Festival of Architecture in 2004. In that case, the rich schedule comprehensively investigated lands and relationships barely explored before, such as the field of fashion or cooking, presenting works and projects by the main Maestros of Italian architecture.

That edition of the Festival immediately raised the fundamental question of how architecture cannot be heteroarchitecture, that is to say, a system open to interpretation and exchange with the world, because it must build the house, the place, the city. In the first edition it began to do so starting from the relationship with other arts, other expressions, including music (contemporary music - Martino Traversa also through the painting of Vasco Bendini), sculpture (Arnaldo Pomodoro), photography (Paolo Rosselli, Paola De Pietri), fashion (through the experimental experience of Nanni Strada), cinema (review on Stanley Kubrick and Giuseppe Bertolucci), literature (where Carlo Lucarelli, Giuseppe Barbolini, Gianni Biondillo, and Marco Varesi discussed the role of the city in the contemporary novel).

Among the many guests, the main guest could only have been he who had invented and pioneered the formula of the urban cultural festival, widespread in Rome in the 1970s: Renato Nicolini, whose cultural projects I discuss in my essay on architectural sculpture.

Still in the context of the relationship between design and the arts, the Sculptural Presences project workshop (CSAC, Parma 2016) provided further food for thought, reported by Maria Chiara Manfredi. In this case, the application theme called the architect into question in the design of hypothetical spaces to extend the Museum Archive of the Study Center and Archive of Communication of the University of Parma - which contains the archives of the most important Italian artists and architects of the 20th century - starting with specific works of art to be relocated to the Abbey Museum itinerary.

Other contributions include those of Lamberto Amistadi, who investigates some "common procedures" of (knowing) how to make music, painting, and architecture; the American critic Yehuda Emmanuel Safran on the importance of utopia and the role of the unconscious component in the conception of architecture and the city; Steven Holl, who in his essay with the ambiguous title *The architecture of music* explains how some of his recent projects derive directly from musical compositional logic; Stefania Rössl on the work of Le Corbusier photographically translated through the lenses of the two great photo-

graphers Guido Guidi and Takashi Homma; Gianfranco Guaragna on the relationship between cinema and novel in the film *Psycho* by Alfred Hitchcock; Ildebrando Clemente on Adolf Loos, in which the analogy between the character construction method and the plot of his controversial and sarcastic stories, and the narrative writing suitable for stage action, proposes an extension of the concept of theatricality understood as a background capable of clarifying and better communicating the purpose of architecture.

The issue closes with two articles in different forms: a story through photographic images of places and architectures of the Po Valley by Luca Mantovani, which invites us to interpret the landscape through a “musical view,” and the explanation, in the form of an interview conducted by Riccardo Rapparini, from the Chilean architect Sebastián Irarrázaval on the importance that the arts in general - expressed through the three concepts of translation, repetition, and wholeness - have had in the construction of his architectural language.

The most heterogeneous issue ever (also in form, as this four-handed op-ed is no exception) because it probes the alleged heteronomies of architectural composition in the belief that the design process - and consequently the architecture that arises from it - is also (or especially) nourished beyond the drafting table.

Artschitecture, the title of FAM 54, is a tribute to the sculptor Anthony Caro, Henry Moore’s most promising student who probed the relationship between sculpture and architecture (he considered sculpture poised between painting and architecture) through the work of his later period known as *Sculptures*, also collaborating with architects of the caliber of Norman Foster, Tadao Ando, and Frank Gehry.

*The first part of the article is written by Lamberto Amistadi, the second part by Enrico Prandi.

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