



# HPA

Histories of Postwar Architecture

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## Histories of the Future

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## EDITORIAL

# Histories of the Future

Matteo Cassani Simonetti, Elena Formia, Ines Tolic

It can be argued that, in the prewar period, the Master Architect's main feature was his (or her) ability to anticipate and to build the future. World War II brought great changes to the global geo-political and socio-economic framework. Architects – the old and new masters as well as an army of lesser-known professionals – found themselves facing a world that had altered both the concept and the structure of the future. The prewar futures envisioned at conventions, exhibitions and fairs, or simply imagined in projects and books, were tested by postwar circumstances, while magazines and journals adapted to a different set of professional needs. Several prewar visions did actually become futures, but many did not. Some were adapted, some have been forgotten and some have been put to one side. As a result of all these transformations, even the prewar Master Architect has been, to some extent, revised. This issue is dedicated to histories of the future that have survived the prewar period in which they were conceived and found their place, conceptually and/or physically, in the postwar era.

The question of how to design the core of the city, a key topic in postwar modernist architectural debates, has been analyzed by Carola Hein, Professor and Head, History of Architecture and Urban Planning Chair at Delft University of Technology. The proposal by Tange Kenzo for a new urban centre for atom-bombed Hiroshima has often been presented as an iconic reference in these debates. *The Urban Core in Japan (1930s-1950s): From Plans for the Colonies to the Mainland* re-contextualizes Tange's project for the city centre of Hiroshima in terms of Japanese planning history, highlighting its particular continuities and discontinuities.

In *Jumbo Architecture*, Thomas Leslie — the Pickard Chilton Professor in Architecture at Iowa State University — deals with transformations in airport design and landscapes brought about in the 1960s and 1970s through the emergence of the 747 and other “jumbo” aircraft. As the author shows, the new requirements for passenger loading and seating and the changes to traffic flow have brought about a series of transformations to terminal buildings and airport landscapes, which have been subsumed into less humane and more disconcerting environments and systems which often produce noxious sensory environments. The sublime scale of the new hardware and its surrounding operations has marked a sudden shift in sensibilities, economies and passenger experience, which remains symptomatic of air travel today.

With the aim of describing an original panorama based on the contaminations between diverse disciplines associated by means of a sensitive attention in the planning of the future, Stefano Setti — researcher in Art History at the University of Milano — has analyzed the Movimento Arte Nucleare and its affiliation within architectural practice, with a focus on the Nuclear Architect Enzo Venturelli in his essay *The Image as Reaction Nuclear Painting and Architecture, Italy 1951-1958*.

Cybernetics’ original mission — to predict the evasive manoeuvres of bomber pilots — soon evolved into producing predictions about social systems and game theory, and making inroads into architecture by the 1960s. In *The Cybernetic Hypothesis & Architecture*, Fredrik Torisson — a doctoral student at the Department of Architecture and the Built Environment at Lund University — retraces cybernetics in architecture, discusses Gordon Pask’s take on architecture and cybernetics, and aims to express how cybernetics remains both not-present and not-absent to architecture as a subject matter within the “post-critical” architecture that currently dominates (or suffocates) the discourse on architectural theory since the turn of the millennium.

In his essay entitled *Between Science Fiction and Social Sciences. The “Dark Side” of American Cities*, Alain Musset — professor in Geography and Head of the PhD program “Territoire, Sociétés, Développement” at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris — deals with the city of the future as a “dark side” of the contemporary megalopolis. Musset observed that, in constructing an imaginary geography of fear and reclusion, Latin-American cities often inspire science fiction writers because they seem at the same time both strange and foreign, old and modern, hospitable and dangerous. Therefore, the author concludes, it can be said that science fiction denounces the real or imaginary failings that threaten the very existence of our metropolis as a political object and reduce them to territories dominated by fear.