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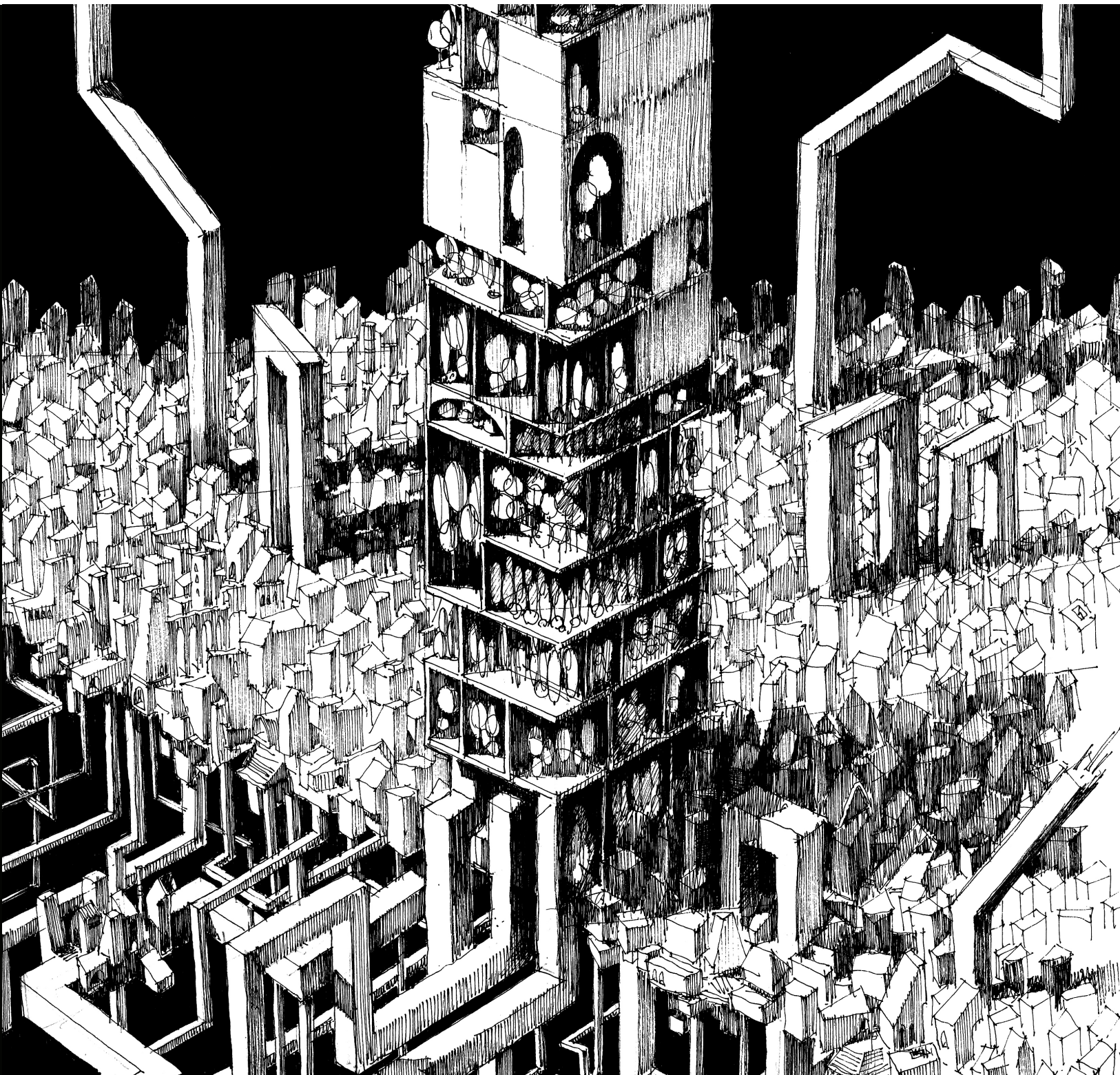

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Introduction from the Editors

SKENDER LUARASI
POLIS University
VALERIO PERNA
POLIS University

This year, 2020, marks Tirana's 100th anniversary as the capital of Albania. Comparing photos of a bucolic Tirana in 1920 with the urban explosion witnessed from Polis University's fourth floor today, inevitably raises questions about the form of the city: What is the form of the city? Can the city have a form? Such questions express uncertainty, but they also introduce the concept of normativity, insofar as they posit a distinction between the form of the city and its lack. The nineteenth and twentieth century theorists and architects, as diverse as Cerdà and Camillo Sitte, adopted the normativity of organism in order to think the form of the ever-expanding modern city as self-generated. However, the frenzied and unbridled growth of our cities, especially in the current context of global pandemics, renders the concept of self-generation suspect. Theories like urban archipelagos turn out to be ineffective insofar they are preoccupied only with the normative islands but not with the non-normativity outside and between the islands. What is at stake today is precisely an updated normativity of the whole that is guided by a sense of self-limitation; that "contests production itself" and the "overriding principle"[1] of infinite growth and self-generation.

The objective of Forum A+P 22nd issue is to draw current research and design practices, as well as theoretical speculations on the topic of uncertainty and non-normativity in multiple scales and contexts, in and from the city of Tirana. The significance of addressing such topic from Tirana – with the certainty that these phenomena can also be found in international situations such as the sprawl emergence in the Italian countryside or the severe informal development of eastern metropolis such as New Delhi or Beijing - is that this city is a harsh and unmediated example of what is already a global symptom: a strong contrast between an ideology of normativity on the one hand, and its actual impossibility on the other; between the aim for responsible design practices and ethical boundaries impossible to overcome; between education and merciless economic reason, between daily ideologies of inclusivity and an increasingly predominant exclusivity, between plain design narratives and irresponsible political decision-making; between expensive normativity affordable only by few, and not-so-cheap sub-normativity for the many; between frenzied building development and destruction of urban artefacts; between 'glittery' shapes in the center and chaotic sprawl in the periphery; between style and non-style. What happens in-between is dimmed as 'uncertain'. We believe an updated normativity of the whole is predicated precisely in including the uncertain and non-normative in our inquiries about architecture and the city.

This research agenda was first explored in Tirana Design Week 2019. Given the ambition and scope of such agenda we asked the help of many national and international friends that could join us with their peculiar reflections and insights. The list of the keynoters/speakers of Tirana Design 2019 included researchers and professionals coming both from eastern and western world: Mario Botta (CH); Marcio Sequeira de Oliveira (BR); Ben Schouten (NL); Alireza Taghaboni (IR); Antonino Saggio (IT); Marcos Novak (US); Franco Purini (IT); Rudolf Lückmann and Gernot Weckherlin (DE); Kiersten Muenchinger (US); Maja Lalic and Jelena Matic (SR); Fernando Menis (ES); Dimitris Gourdoukis and Anastasios Tellios (GR). We wanted them to focus on the specific reality of our city, using Tirana as a vector to raise ideas that could be then applied on a global scale, by addressing two questions: *"What do you intend for normativity and its contrary, the normativity?; And what from these concepts you can recognize or not in the current condition of Tirana",* and before their speech they were invited to a 'non-normative' city tour with us.

Their response was enthusiastic and captivating. We could not imagine such heterogeneity of topics and reflections that flourished during the event. From the non-normative condi-

tion of the Iranian city, we traveled through the urban playful appropriation (Dix 2007) of the Dutch public spaces, just in time to land in a precise intersection point between the impact of Information Technology in the last major paradigm shift in the history of architecture and its consequent materialization of third parties disciplines such as visual and performative arts, education, and dance. For almost three weeks, design, art, architecture, and urban planning intersected in multiple ways under the main topic of the event. The discussion went beyond the expectations we had when we started our curatorial work. We invited five among the keynoters to deliver a critical essay regarding their experience at TDW2019 and to deepen some of the concepts they dealt with during their time in in Albania. These essays form the *'invited paper section'* of this issue.

This was just the top of the iceberg of what the events were. In parallel with keynotes and lectures, a series of workshops run by international young creatives involved the students from POLIS for six days. The majority of our workshop leaders were selected from the annual Idea Challenge organized by Future Architecture Platform, a worldwide known pan-European platform architecture museums, festivals and producers and one of the main sponsors of Tirana Design Week and Tirana Architecture Week since its foundation. The workshop leaders were Celine Baumann (FR); Sonja Dragović (MNE); Julio Gotor Valcarel (ES); Vojtech Rada (CZE); Stefano Romano (IT); Gaetano de Francesco (IT); Gregor Andoni (AL); Merita Guri (AL); Marco Pietrosante and Marta Lagna (IT); Thomas Schmid-Dankward and Stephan Pinkau (DE); Maki Morikawa (JP); Arben Shytlla (AL). Each workshop presented an original outcome related to the topic of Tirana Design Week and the personal research of the leaders. These contributions are collected in the editorial and are accompanied by images and comments regarding the experience.

While compiling the contents of this issue we started questioning ourselves if there was space for 'more'. Without a doubt, a scientific journal should not record just the memories of past events, but also firther investigate the questions raised during those events. That is why, in January 2020, we launched an International 'Call for Paper' for this 22nd issue of Forum A+P on the topic of uncertainty and non-normativity. We received a wide variety of contributions that dealt with such from different scales and disciplinary perspectives. The final papers were selected on how they project new insights on the city as a complex organism: some offering direct solutions and strategies that deal with non-normative urban situations, others offering 'lateral thoughts' (De Bono, 1970) on the city as a complex and layered cultural artifact.

Artan Kacani's "Land tactics and the territorial impact on the informal urban growth in Albania," for instance, focuses directly on how to provide normative solutions to non-normative urban settelements in the post-communist context of Albania. The research is supported by a systematic data analysis that leads to the author to provide different quantitative and qualitative strategies. Alessandro Melis's "Community Resilience thorugh exaptation," on the other hand, explores the cultural and epistemic intersection of architecture and biology. He introduces the non-deterministic concept of exaptation in order to speculate about addressing different scenarios of uncertainty in the future. Amanda Terpo's "Facing Uncertainty With GIS, Using Non-Normative Tools To Plan Non-Normative Territories," focuses on uncertainty and non-normativity on the level of the procedures and instruments of planning. The paper proposes a major implementation of the GIS technologies to foster a more-informed and prediction-based metholodogy to support highly complex activities and decision-making practices […]. Eled Fagu's paper "Theoretical issues on the socialist city and reflections on Albanian urban landscape" focuses instead on the intersection of ideological normativitis and the city form, in particuluar the city of Tirana. The paper investigates how socialist ideology, national style and the accompanying process of de-urbanization gave shape the city of Tirana. Vincenzo Paolo Bagnato's "Design and public space: The university campus' open spaces between rituality and non-normativity" explores how a normative space par excellence like the university campus can create potential for non-noramtive spaces and encounters through the integration of smart communication technologies into its architecture.

This n°22 of FORUM A+P is the witness of the journey that precisely one year ago we undertook as curators. The last section of the journal poignantly called *Telquel* (as is) presents open ended yet informed opinions, arguments as well as drawings that speculate about the current state, problemsa and develoments of architecture of urbanism in general and in Tirana and Albania in particular. These pieces will probably serve as trajectories of future issues of Forum A+P and events at Polis. We are glad that you have the chance to have it in your hand and read and we hope that, after doing that, you will be triggered as well and get back to us with YOUR personal view regarding 'Design and non-normativity'. We always welcome your opinions, insights and feedback.

[1] *Bruno Latour, "What protective measures can you think of so we don't go back to the pre-crisis production model?", http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/852.html, accessed on September 20th, 2020. This article appeared in AOC on 29th March 2020: https://aoc.media/opinion/2020/03/29/imaginerles-gestes-barrieres-contre-le-retour-a-la-production-davant-crise/.*

UnLost Territories, between norm and normative

ANTONINO SAGGIO
Sapienza, University of Rome

I think it could be useful to recall some fundamental aspects on the basis of Tirana Design Week 2019, and from that, we will move independently from the lecture that I delivered in Tirana on the 19th of September 2019.

The title of speech had been (1919-2019) *"FROM BAUHAUS TO A NEW PARADIGM IN ARCHITECTURE".* My idea was to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the Bauhaus particularly to underline the paradigm shift from an architectural symbol of the mechanical and industrial world to a new one based on information, which is what portraits these times we are living in. Despite these celebrations usually have a historical-philological character, my lecture was based on the idea that history is always written from a today perspective and by the will to stimulate critical thinking. As many readers of this journal know, the presence of Bauhaus was essential in my book *Arkitektura dhe Moderniteti. Nga Bauhaus-i te Revolucioni informatik*, which was published by POLIS_Press at the end of 2015 and was translated by a team headed by professor Sotir Dhamo. Specifically, my contribution paused on the notion of 'paradigm shift' and was also the chance to publicly present our "charts". The latter is an instrument we use with the students to conceptualize the differences between two completely notions of intending and making architecture. Anyway, I believe that it is pointless to resume now – in such a short space – the contents of a lecture that touched several topics and would new a larger space to be explained. Moreover, for those who might be interested, the audio and pictures are available at the following link: https://bit.ly/37OaOsi.

From my perspective, I think it would more useful to briefly outline my last chair project, the urban project called 'UnLost Territories : Ricostruire la periferia a Roma. Architettura e società nei territori abbandonati" (Sapienza, Università di Roma 2016-2019), because it shows several contact points with the topics reflected during the Tirana Design Week 2019 - 'Foreseeing Uncertainty. Design and non-normativity'. Particularly, the theme 'The norm and the normative' is stimulating because the whole UNLost Territories project doesn't articulate itself from usual top-down planning practice, but opens up in a sort of oscillating balance between some normed aspects and others originated by peculiar "bottom-up" generated situations.

UnLost Territories, peripheries to bring back to life

Let us proceed to discover briefly what the project is about. We can start with the word UnLost. According to the Collins dictionary, the term means: **1.** not lost; retained and **2.** found or regained after having been lost. What we can now discuss is the title of the urban projects that indeed means "Not lost/not missed territories". The latter we are talking about are areas in the extreme eastern periphery of Rome, within the 7th and 8th municipality, towards the Grande Raccordo Anulare.

ects that indeed means "Not lost/not missed territories.
The latter we are talking about are areas in the extreme eastern periphery of Rome, within the 7th and 8th municipality, towards the Grande Raccordo Anulare.
To a superficial knowledge, these territories might look definitely far from the chance to be recovered, especially if we based our practice on the traditional urban design categories. Nevertheless, they are anything but 'lost' if we learn to operate with new principles – as taught by several realities in South America, such as Medellin.
The project UnLost Territories would have never been born with the Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropoliz (Maam). The Maam is a former factory occupied by people with different ethnicities that, thanks to the work of sociologists and anthropologists such as Giorgio de Finis who transformed an entire wing of the old delicatessen Fiorucci factory in a museum, has become an extremely interesting reality. Indeed, the "Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropoliz".

With the nITro group, I was invited to realize an installation in one of the spaces of the museum. Our work, tree.it, consisted of a dynamic platform able to send vectors in the space and, at the same time, configured itself as a proper multitasking object. Surely, it was a plastic presence in the space but in the end, it was intended to be even more: a platform, a sitting for events, support for lights and multimedia effects and, mostly, a ramp for the 'wheeled' jaunts of the younger inhabitants of the occupied factory. All the experience of tree.it, and the developed knowledge regarding the experience of the Maam, spurred to reflect on the role that art could have had in derelict and peripheral urban sectors. The museum seemed to be a concrete possibility of redemption in which the moment of fantasy, metaphor, and narration, together with the presence of several site-specific pieces of art also by well-known artists that could start a reflection towards new interventions in the suburban areas trigger by art as a catalyst.

For these reasons, one of the main ideas of UnLost territories is the will to propagate art enzymes in the many abandoned and derelict areas of the neighborhood surrounding the Maam.

UnLost Strategy

But how do we concretely move? First of all, we mapped all the internal and external areas of the Maam that could host new design interventions. This map was created through several visits and photoshoots of two graduands, Michele Spano and Manuela Seu. 22 'red' spots had been identified within Metropoliz (indeed the whole area occupied by the museum, and the structure and external spaces in the big fenced area of the former Fiorucci factory). Those were places where it was possible to intervene with micro spatial actions that could 'transform crisis into value' as Bruno Zevi would say. In this logic, for example, we imagined that – sooner or later – we would have the strength to realize Reciprocal 3.0. The latter is a light parametric structure that would have been built with hundreds of 1-meter length PVC bars and that would involve the inhabitants in a sort of big construction game. The outcome would take form in an organic shaped pavilion in which IT technologies would only be embedded to make the structure site-specific, but also statically optimizing the forces within the bars and superimposing other interactive systems able to interact with surroundings and transforming the installation in a big musical, performative, and ludic instrument.
We already did it successfully two times: in 2016 in Gioiosa Marea - Sicily - (goo.gl/Us1awF), and at CUBO Festival in Ronciglione, the northern part of the Lazio region.

In the UnLost Territories

The second chapter of the project happened in 2017 and started with an extension of the mapping process concerning the areas outside of Metropoliz. Thanks to the work of Silvia Primavera, together with the collaboration of several students, 44 new areas were added (today their number reaches 70 units). The mapping has been conducted through the identification of abandoned and underutilized areas belonging to the categories of the relicts or urban voids. As we precedently did in previous projects from my chair to this Google Map – which can be examined at the following link: goo.gl/znt2L6, we connected an online blog (unlostterritories.blogspot.it/) where each post, beside of a photographic/planimetric selection, contains projects that have been conducted in every area there during the years. Within these maps, lots of architecture students have been operating: they defined a specific functional program for every site, developed a negotiation with a client they identified in the community, and implemented a credible and realistic project, as much as innovative.
The areas 'ideally' mapped irradiates starting from Metropoliz that represent their symbolic, if not physical, center.

As we did in our precedent urban project – Urban Green Line - the sites are located in or in the premise of an infrastructural ring of approximately 4 kilometers diameter per 400 hectares. The ring, called "UnLost Line", hosts a tram line and it is organized through the principles of new generation infrastructures in the built city, that we already focused on Urban Green Line. The UnLost Line infrastructural ring is composed of a series of tracts that define the external perimeter, and others that rung along the diameter of the ring. It is about an '8' shaped path, its realization is programmed in two phases (firstly the northern one, then secondly the southern one), and it is designed to host a proper multitasking infrastructure (a tram, an ecological canal, pedestrian and cycle path). The ring crosses existing stations and nodes, creates a new pair of them and has been thought like an infrastructural flywheel to concretely motivate (either socially and economically) the projects in the single ar-

eas and the revitalization of the urban sector. Many projects along the UnLost line have been developed starting from Information Technol ogy and Architecture class (ITCAAD - at the 5th year of the MA in Architecture at Sapienza - University of Rome).

UnLost Principles

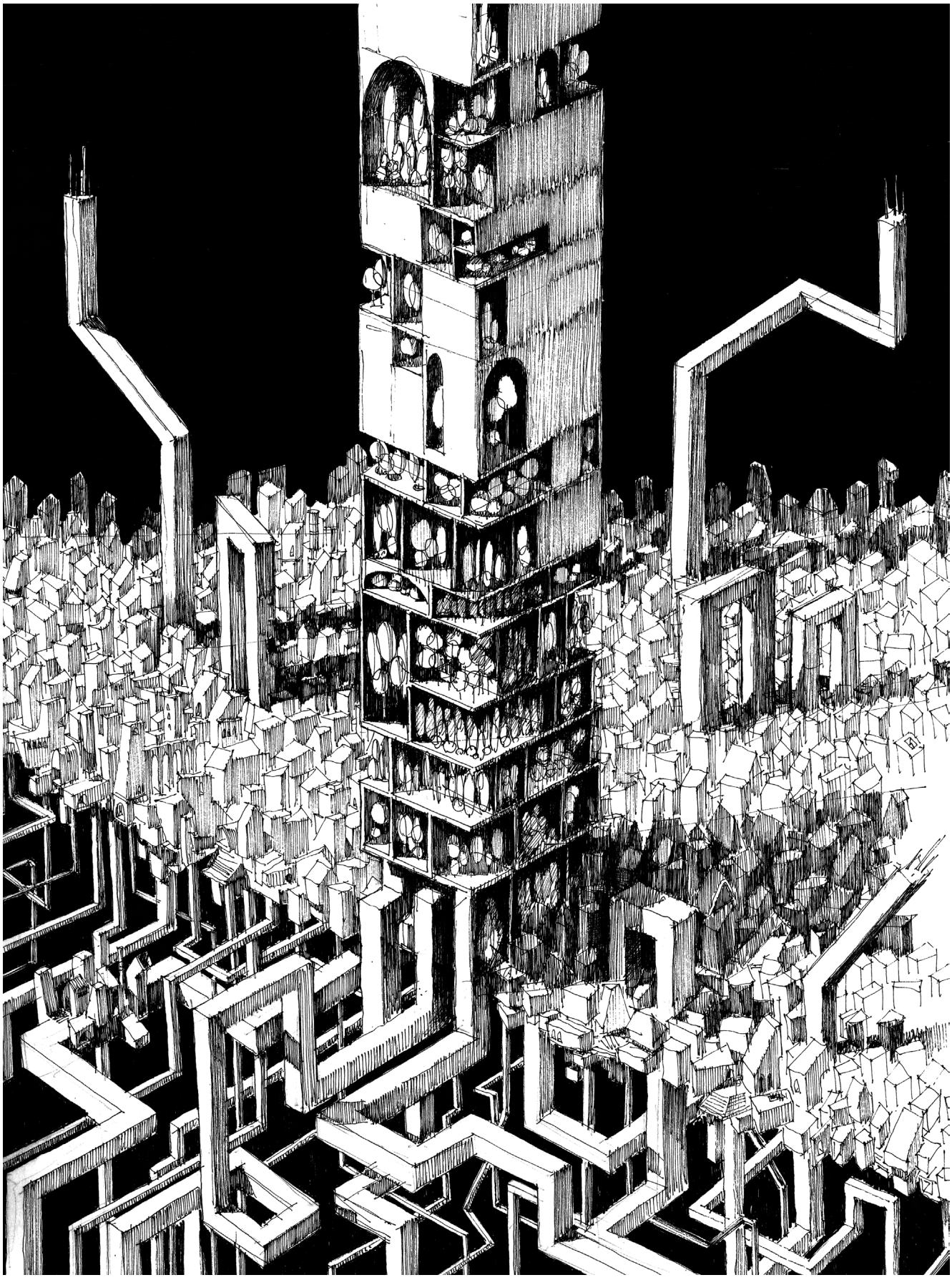
There are ten principles that lead our projects. We draw them up even better than the previous works. Five of them relate to the architectural design scale (mixité, driving force, rebuild ing nature, infrastracturing, magic crisis), while the others are dedicated to the new generation infrastructural system. Our method aims for creating strong and sharable principles to free individual energies. We could talk at length about this basic concept, and most point out how in this dialectic lies the key aspect of the 'The norm and the normative' topic proposed by the International Scientific Conference. Strong and sharable principles to free individual energies is an assumption that is valid either at the scale of vital urban planning, and either in the context of a complex university chair proposal as in the case of UnLost Territories.

The basic concept behind the project, as we said, gives to the Maam a propagator effect to revitalize the urban sector around it. The propulsive factors we identified are the following

- the reuse of an abandoned structure and, progressively, of its external areas;
- the occupation from inhabitants of different ethnicities and arriving from various situations of marginality;
- a situation of dynamic and self-regulated social equilibrium;
- the presence of art as a 'defender' of the occupation;
- the presence of art as 're-centralization' of the periphery;
- the presence of the 'sight of the art' on the marginalization phenomena that open towards a new aesthetic which is, at the same, also a new substance.

Our idea is to engage the Maam as if the designers would have a sort of mirror neurons. It was fundamental to deeply analyze to further emulate and personalize at the same time. For example, all the UnLost projects have always worked on the concept of Mixitè. In the case of Metropoliz this idea has been declined in a very specific way because that is a museum indeed, but also a social support center, an open lab concerning small didactic and educational modules, and of course strategies of dwelling. Other projects in the area of UnLost Territories propose a mixture of these and those uses. Still, others focus on particular aspects concerning some ethnic communities (regarding the culinary field, music handicraft, languages, literature, art itself). In some cases, the social or educative component prevails, or the temporary sheltering dedicated to migrants, or the topic of sustainability, even economical, with the development of wine auto production.

The project can be investigated and the dedicated volume, edited by Gaetano De Francesco and Antonino Saggio, *UnLost Territories Ricostruire la periferia a Roma Architettura e società nei territori abbandonati*, Publisher: Lulu.com Raleigh, December 2019, can be purchased at the following link: http://www.arc1.uniroma1.it/saggio/unlost/.



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