

CREATIVITY and **REALITY**

THE ART OF BUILDING FUTURE CITIES

P R O C E E D I N G S



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Organizing Committee

Francesca Addario
Enrico Marani
Alessandro Oltremarini
Giorgio Quintiliani

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CREATIVITY and REALITY
The art of building *future* cities

edited by

Orazio Carpenzano | Alessandra Capanna
Anna Irene Del Monaco | Francesco Menegatti
Tomaso Monestiroli | Dina Nencini

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY ONE | 18 december

PLENARY SESSION

CREATIVITY AND REALITY

Opening Ceremony

Anna Maria Giovenale

Dean of Faculty of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome

Opening Speech

Orazio Carpenzano

Director of Department of Architecture and Design, Sapienza University of Rome

Lectures

GIORGIO DE RITA *Secretary General of CENSIS*

MARC AUGÉ *Ethnologist and anthropologist*

Interlude

speaker ***Anna Irene Del Monaco*** *IconA Curator*

Lectures

RUBEN OTERO *Drucker Arquitetos Associados | Brazil*

JOSHUA BOLCHOVER *Rufwork Architects | China*

Discussant

Alessandra Capanna *IconA Curator*

1st PARALLEL TABLES

PT 1.1 | PT 1.2 | PT 1.3

DAY TWO | 19 december

2nd PARALLEL TABLES PT 2.1 | PT 2.2 | PT 2.3 | PT 2.4

PLENARY SESSION THE ART OF BUILDING FUTURE CITIES

Renato Masiani

Senior Deputy Rector, Sapienza University of Rome

Lecture

LUCIANO VIOLANTE *Judge, Politician and Academic*

Round Table

speaker **Dina Nencini** *IconA Curator*

Giovanni Maria Flick *Jurist, Politician and Academic*

Orazio Carpenzano *Director of DIAP*

Margherita Petranzan *Director of Anfione e Zeto*

Franco Purini *Emeritus Professor Sapienza*

Lucio Valerio Barbera *Full Professor Sapienza*

Alessandra Capuano *Director of PhD School*

Antonino Saggio *Full Professor Sapienza*

PLENARY SESSION CREATIVITY AND REALITY

speaker **Francesco Menegatti** *IconA Curator*

Lectures

PIER VITTORIO AURELI *(Dogma: Aureli + Tattara)*

RAFFAELLA NERI *Full Professor Politecnico of Milan*

Final Round Table

speakers **Alessandra Capanna** and **Dina Nencini** + *All Chairs of Parallel Tables*

Closing Speech

Orazio Carpenzano *Director of DIAP, Sapienza University of Rome*

Abstract Selected:
158 Authors
121 Contributions
51 Institutions

Abstract Received:
252 Authors
196 Contributions
73 Institutions

drawing by
Luigi Savio
Margagliotta



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Creativity and reality. A way of resistance

Dina Nencini: dina.nencini@uniroma1.it

Associate professor at Sapienza University of Rome. Her research is mainly focused on the architectural construction, urban form and theories. She wrote essays about public space mainly related to Italian Architecture. She is Coordinator of DRACo, PhD Course in Architecture and Construction. Among her book: "La Piazza. Ragioni e significati nell'architettura italiana".

"I believe that as long as we continue to discuss useful art, as an expression of time and society, the profound meaning of art, which is independence and freedom of the spirit, will escape".

Edoardo Persico

"Every act of creation resists something. Bach's music is an act of resistance against the separation of the sacred and the profane".

Gilles Deleuze

There is a part of architectural knowledge deeply connected to human being and his life. Architecture is the concrete manifestation of the human community, which is explained in space by matter, heaviness and light. Architecture is part of the human story, in any age and at any time and urges man to go beyond the present, to realize what is not yet there, projecting his own finitude into the space and unlimited time of the imagination.

Architecture is, therefore, a mental projection that takes shape, through representation first and, subsequently, through construction, in the work. It is based on two assumptions: stability and imagination. Imagination is an engine, stability is a goal and both are in continuous and reciprocal relationship. With this statement I intend to define a general framework in which to consider the relationship between creativity and reality.

The way the architect deals with this relationship, declares his position. The reciprocity between creative action and

reality is not obvious and direct. It is useful to recall that, in the wake of some essays such as "The Analytic Line of Modern Art" by Filiberto Menna, or in the essay of Fulvio Irace, two trends can be identified: one called of the *Absence*, in which the architect evades external solicitations to retreat into his own creative world, and the other of the *Presence*, in which the architect welcomes reality in its plurality of expressions and interlocutions, dialoguing with it openly.

Nowadays we see the predominance of an exasperated "expression of presence" as many intellectual have written, and at the same time the creativity is something that is essentially associated with fashion and improvisation. The misunderstanding that creative action is the result of sudden enlightenment, reduced the moment of invention to instantaneousness, preventing its possibilities to elaborate a corresponding theoretical and practical structure. From literature to art, in all areas in which artistic creation is fundamental, the reflection on the invention, the ways and

techniques of unfolding the imagination, has found ample space by pointing out that even the imaginative action proceeds according to precise and repeatable rules.

Imagination is essentially interior and tends to draw erratically from a figurative world made of accumulation of stratified materials, recomposed by analogies and correspondences. It is therefore necessary to make a remaking of those materials that was stratified inside the references of the architect. This work passes through some obligatory steps that push the creative action from a particular dimension towards a more shared. There are, however, some important conditions which require time to reflect.

It is useful to make a parallel with literary writing, particularly with the trend that develops in the eighties in America, creative writing. Henry Miller's Decalogue "A Delicious Torture. Pages on the art of writing", but also the work of Raymond Carver and his successors, present the possibility of an open and instinctive dimension of writing, express a freedom from the anti-normative literary technique and out of pre-established canons. In fact, no one would think that the application of shared canons is a condition and prerequisite for the success of a work, however, none of us can believe that a writer may lack what we can define the knowledge of his own field of action. Carver in the "Steering by the stars" brings out his references, Isaac Babel, Nabokov, Ezra Pound and tells about the writing courses in which he learns the importance of accuracy. Nothing emerges of that hypothetical instinctive randomness that, superficially, is attributed to creativity, to the point that, quoting Guy de Maupassant, he says "There is no iron that can pierce the heart with more force than a point put in the right place". The exactness, the precision, the rejection of the make-up are just some of the basic beliefs of Carver's technique, which for writers continues to be the most "anti-academic" example of literature.

Nevertheless the misconception about creativity as the result of an impromptu and sudden enlightenment, which in our artistic culture has its roots in Romanticism, is still detrimentally dominant in schools. This misunderstanding also concerns talent and technical skills. In a short essay by Heinrich von Kleist entitled "Aufsatz über das Mario-

nettentheater", he wonders why knowledge and reflection determine in men the loss of spontaneity and grace. As if learning the technique corresponds to a detachment from artistic action that reduces its sense and beauty. At a more in-depth reading we understand how the full control of the technique, as a complex of actions and abilities aimed at the completion of a work, is necessary for the appearance of the sublime. However, at a time when knowledge is at large, compared to the possibilities of its transmission, this objective could seem very far away. It is true that technical knowledge is not sufficient to reach the end of the work, which is limited to being a necessary condition and not sufficient for its realization.

The technical knowledge allows to express and manifest thought. Control of techniques and tools is the prerequisite for this expression. Not only that, the technique, in the expressive possibilities it opens, is itself closely linked to the formal purpose. Tools and techniques are accompanied by the rules. The act of composition is defined by principles, instruments and techniques that the ultimate goal is the construction of architecture. The act of composition guides and translates the invention into form, is endowed with a precise theoretical structure, transmissible and regulated by principles, and the accuracy that connotes it, allows the architect to also include the transgression, the contradiction... it is within the full understanding of the compositional experience that the construction of architecture can be realized.

The majority of architects do not dwell on the description, usefulness and significance of the techniques of invention for themselves. Franco Purini in "L'Architettura didattica" ascribes this disinterest to the difficulty that surrounds the initial moment of design, comparing it to what Sigmund Freud calls the "oneiric shift". This mnemonic mirroring concerns the interior world of the architect, his experiences as well as his knowledge. The architect proceeds erratically proper to the inner world, and has to be able to overcome it through precise techniques in a permanent ideological construction. The techniques of invention are required for this translation.

There are some essays in which architects talk about architecture, their own way of conceiving architecture,

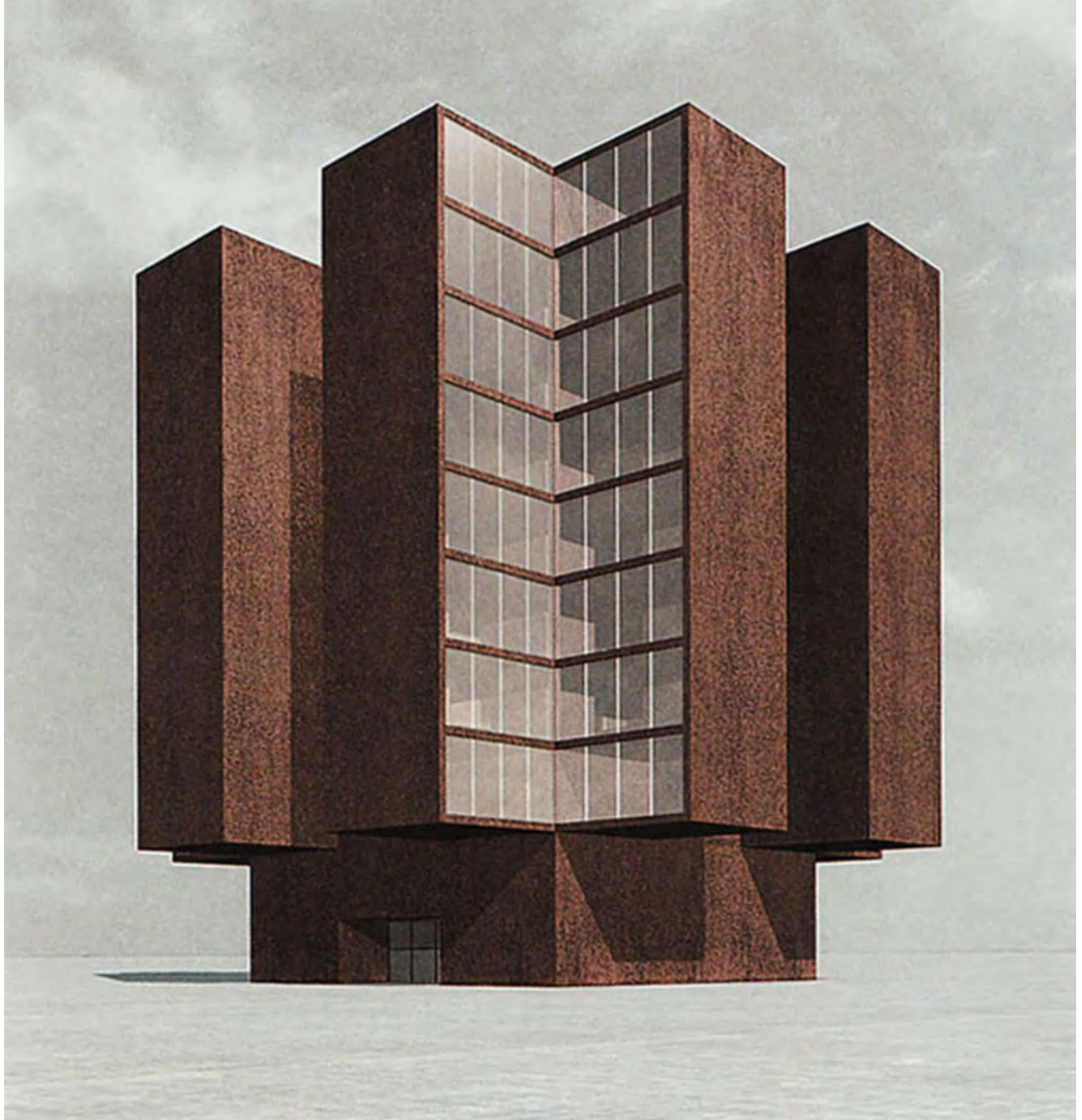


Fig. 1

*Simon Ungers,
Silente
architecture,
2003*

as Aldo Rossi wrote “all those who engage seriously in architecture and who design and think buildings at the same time, should tell us: how I did some of my architectures” or talk about it separating the space of the autobiography from the treatment of the modes of composition and design as in “Comporre l’architettura” by Franco Purini, or “Dentro l’architettura” by Vittorio Gregotti, in “La metopa e il triglifo” by Antonio Monestiroli, in “Una vita da architetto” by Giorgio Grassi, ...in Italy, and all over the world Frank Lloyd Wright or Louis Khan and many others, that define the horizon of architecture in the eyes of architects. They explain in these essays their poetics. However, the techniques of invention, although connected to it, do not correspond exclusively to the poetics, so if, proceeding backwards in the reflection of the architects on how their architectures have done, we come to deduce the techniques adopted to the design starting point, but we wouldn’t always be certain that we’d spotted the truth. I mean that the design starting point has two opposite dimensions: causality and intentionality. The first concerns the inner world in intuitive and open terms, the second the ordering and the hierarchy of choices.

Edgar Allan Poe aims to produce a text totally controlled by precise and identifiable rules, in which the imagination as a subjective fact is removed from the composition. In the afterword to “The Raven” entitled “The philosophy of composition”, Edgar Allan Poe exposes his *modus operandi* in the composition stating that what he intends to demonstrate is that nothing is the result of chance, that everything contributes to achieve the accuracy of a theorem. The singular choices of Poe’s compositional process depend on a strict system, for successive stages structured by four constituent moments of his poetic: the first relating to the definition of the width of the text, the measure; the second that establishes its type of writing, the genre; the third fundamental moment concerns the tone, the expressive gradient; and finally, the fourth moment can be considered the keystone, on which rests the poetic construction, named *refrain*.

The analog transfer of these four moments from literature to architecture is not so immediate, but is strongly significant for the understanding of the relationship between the

techniques of invention and the compositional process. I dwell in this writing on two of the four aspects, genre and tone. In architecture the genre concerns the choice of the architect of the field of typology, could be understood as that *ratio* that underlies and holds together all the components of the architectural work, that allows the singular elements to be arranged according to a system.

The genre is also a domain in which are defined the limits of the work that manifests itself according to the expressive gradient. We could say that the choice of the expressive register represents the creative place *par excellence*, the deep dimension of the composition.

The central question concerns the opposition between creativity and control, between improvisation and method, between imaginary construct and science, between subjective dimension and objective dimension in the process of construction of the architectural work.

The invention techniques reduces the risk that *imitation* may be schematic and negative: the re-design exercise of the architecture of masters starts with choosing those as references and models to imitate. This important work lead to a self choice of linguistic construction defined by selected steps of formal structure. That concerns a very complex process, with the introduction of different levels of interpretation of the architectural works taken as reference. I am referring to the studies of Colin Rowe and the introduction of analogies between works from different period that in comparison highlight invisible and permanent generating structures. In reading and re-designing an architectural work and in the subsequent possible translation, as Peter Eisenman did with the work of Giuseppe Terragni, the invention derives from the exasperation of some compositional principles anchored to permanent and recognizable themes.

In the global era, creativity is essentially absence of norm, of code, absence of form. It is not the “vaporization of the ego” as defined Baudelaire and present in the creative act that maintains a mystical aura, it is not the ethic freedom of Enlightenment Reason, and certainly not even the *furious* freedom of the Romantics.

Against this condition, the practicable roads are few, on the one hand abandoning oneself to the uninterrupted flow

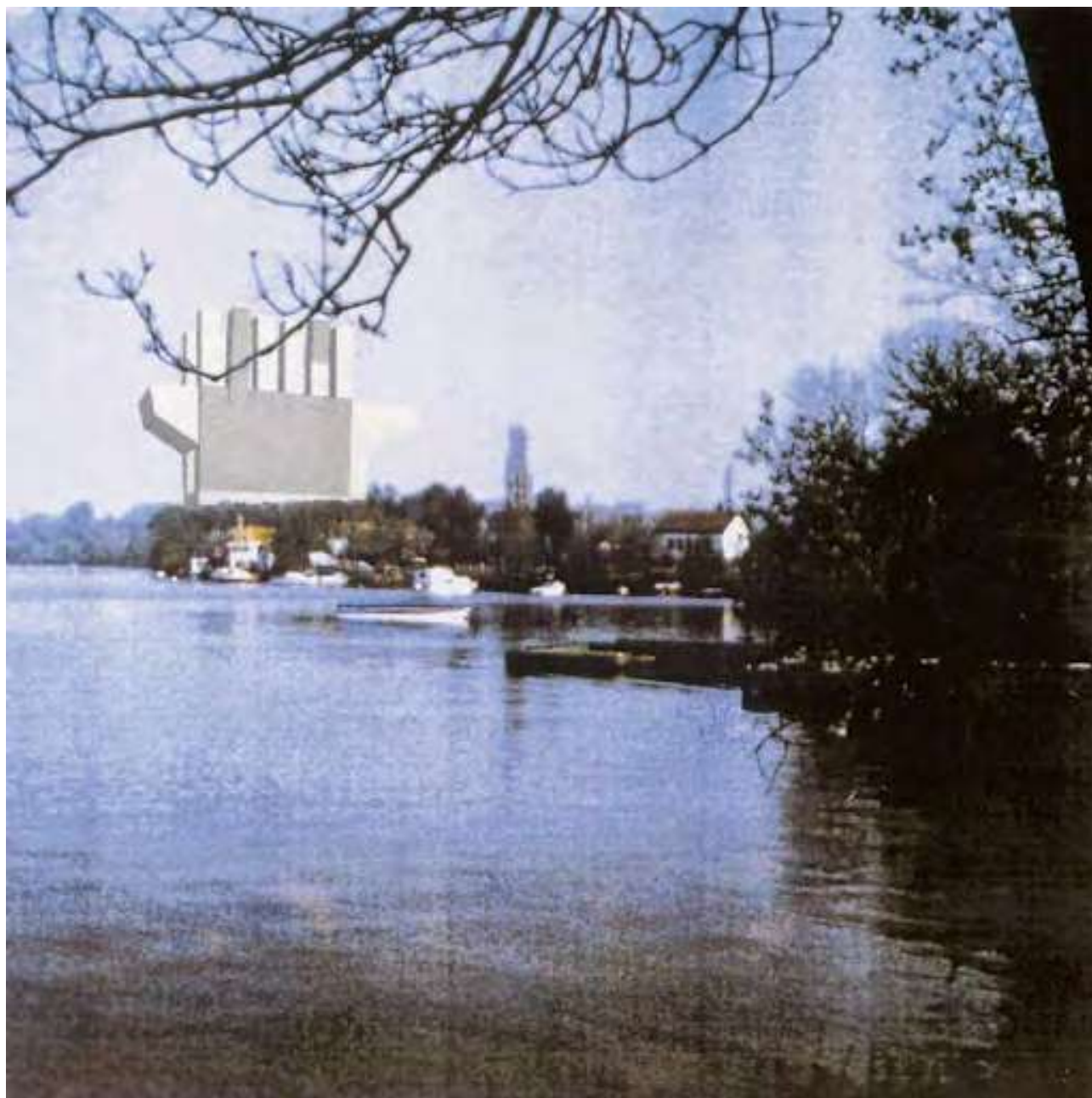


Fig. 2

*Hans Kohllhof,
The compact city
of Atlapole,
1988*

of the consumption of images, on the other the attempt to practice creativity still meaning it as an act of resistance, as Giorgio Agamben wrote, and considering it as the only possibility for creation.

Contemporary

“What does it mean to be contemporary? Of whom and what are we contemporary?” Agamben answers these questions by placing in tension, almost in short circuit, a series of familiar experiences: the archaic and the modern, the current and the untimely, the time and the fashion, the darkness and the light. Contemporary is not the one who tries to coincide and adapt to his time, it is not who sees the lights of his time, but who can perceive the darkness. And following the explanations that modern astrophysics gives of the darkness of the night sky, the author draws the image of a new *angel of history*, as in Benjamin prophecy: a light that travels very fast towards us without ever being able to reach us. What is contemporary and therefore what defines the innovation and novelty in art defines precisely the limits of the invention. This provocation to project our gaze forward and to detach ourselves from reality, has not only utopian intention, but rather it is what can trigger imagination.

Jean Paul Sartre in his essay “Imagination. Ideas for a theory of emotions” connects imagination to feeling, as Gilles Deleuze in “The logic of sensation” accompanies logic, the rational construction par excellence, to its antithetic, the feeling. Nowadays the passage from reason to the body is still in progress. It is a crucial passage and in a way, paradoxical. Many essays underlays this problem as central today, deals with the evidence of a crisis in contemporary society.

If empathy, that is the ability to be immediately in relationship with others, replaces the mediation and control proper to rationality, the implications on the conception of time and space are many. The relational space in the city, but also in domestic places, changes as the relationship between architecture and city, between

those who imagine it and those who inhabit it. It essentially changes the relationship with physical space, but most of all, with reality.

The global condition in which we are involved is highly mutable. The predominance of mutability over permanence puts in crisis the limits of architectural discipline. We have often spoken about overrun, about contamination. Today it is possible to verify and affirm the ineffectiveness if not the damage in the architecture of these positions. The will to support the change in order not to be overwhelmed, has produced an indisputable drift towards indifference to the project, if not to its total elision.

A wall is always a wall, beyond anything, but there is still the possibility of understanding architecture as a concrete answer to the permanent questions of architecture: how to translate weight, matter, light in the work?

To bring architecture and building back to its *elementary* dimension, to give centrality to the relationship between architecture and city, to avoid the expedients to which globalization alludes, from the predominance of the image determined by the exasperation of communication, to the demagogy of participation, means to seek a new condition for the project.

If the reality is itself construction, wanting to match reality, construction and architecture, we would fall into the danger of a trivial determinism. Agamben’s solicitation is not to stop superficially at the “*here and now*”, because we would miss a part of our creative commitment to reality; the introduction of the dynamism of imagination also involves the transformability of reality.

One hypothesis and one possibility, however, that must be tempered in the risk of the political emphasis that could be attributed to it, is that of the transformation as a result of a resistance. “Every act of creation resists something - Deleuze says - Bach’s music is an act of resistance against the separation of the sacred and the profane.” Only by accepting the *challenge of resistance* against reality will we be able to carry on our commitment as architects, through invention and creativity.

