

disegno 9.2021



unione italiana disegno  
9.2021

# disegno

ISSN 2533-2899

english version





# diségnó

9.2021

VISIONARY DRAWING

# diségno



Biannual Journal of the UID Unione Italiana per il Disegno Scientific Society  
n. 8/2021

<http://disegno.unioneitalianadisegno.it>

## Editorial Director

*Francesca Fatta*, President of the Unione Italiana per il Disegno

## Editor in Chief

*Alberto Sdegno*

## Journal manager

*Enrico Cicalò*

## Editorial board - scientific committee

### Technical Scientific Committee of the Unione Italiana per il Disegno (UID)

*Giuseppe Amoruso*, Politecnico di Milano - Italia  
*Paolo Belardi*, Università degli Studi di Perugia - Italia  
*Stefano Bertocci*, Università degli Studi di Firenze - Italia  
*Mario Centofanti*, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila - Italia  
*Enrico Cicalò*, Università degli Studi di Sassari - Italia  
*Antonio Conte*, Università degli Studi della Basilicata - Italia  
*Mario Docci*, Sapienza Università di Roma - Italia  
*Edoardo Dotto*, Università degli Studi di Catania - Italia  
*Maria Linda Falcidieno*, Università degli Studi di Genova - Italia  
*Francesca Fatta*, Università degli Studi *Mediterranea* di Reggio Calabria - Italia  
*Fabrizio Gay*, Università luav di Venezia - Italia  
*Andrea Giordano*, Università degli Studi di Padova - Italia  
*Elena Ippoliti*, Sapienza Università di Roma - Italia  
*Francesco Maggio*, Università degli Studi di Palermo - Italia  
*Anna Osello*, Politecnico di Torino - Italia  
*Caterina Palestini*, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" Chieti-Pescara - Italia  
*Lia M. Papa*, Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II" - Italia  
*Rossella Salerno*, Politecnico di Milano - Italia  
*Alberto Sdegno*, Università degli Studi di Udine - Italia  
*Chiara Vernizzi*, Università degli Studi di Parma - Italia  
*Ornella Zerlenga*, Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" - Italia

### Members of foreign structures

*Caroline Astrid Bruzelius*, Duke University - USA  
*Glucia Augusto Fonseca*, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro - Brasile  
*Pilar Chías Navarro*, Universidad de Alcalá - Spagna  
*Frank Ching*, University of Washington - USA  
*Livio De Luca*, UMR CNRS/MCC MAP, Marseille - Francia  
*Roberto Ferraris*, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba - Argentina  
*Àngela García Codoñer*, Universitat Politècnica de València - Spagna  
*Pedro Antonio Janeiro*, Universidade de Lisboa - Portogallo  
*Michael John Kirk Walsh*, Nanyang Technological University - Singapore  
*Jacques Laubscher*, Tshwane University of Technology - Sudafrica  
*Cornelie Leopold*, Technische Universität Kaiserslautern - Germania  
*Carlos Montes Serrano*, Universidad de Valladolid - Spagna  
*César Otero*, Universidad de Cantabria - Spagna  
*Guillermo Peris Fajarnes*, Universitat Politècnica de València - Spagna  
*José Antonio Franco Taboada*, Universidade da Coruña - Spagna

## Editorial board - coordination

*Paolo Belardi*, *Enrico Cicalò*, *Francesca Fatta*, *Andrea Giordano*, *Elena Ippoliti*,  
*Francesco Maggio*, *Alberto Sdegno*, *Ornella Zerlenga*

## Editorial board - staff

*Laura Carlevaris*, *Massimiliano Giammaichella*, *Enrico Cicalò*, *Luigi Cocchiarella*,  
*Massimiliano Lo Turco*, *Giampiero Mele*, *Valeria Menchetelli*, *Barbara Messina*,  
*Cosimo Monteleone*, *Paola Puma*, *Paola Raffa*, *Veronica Riavis*, *Cettina Santagati*,  
*Alberto Sdegno* (delegate of Editoria board – coordination)

## Graphic design

*Paolo Belardi*, *Enrica Bistagnino*, *Enrico Cicalò*, *Alessandra Cirafici*

## Editorial office

piazza Borghese 9, 00186 Roma  
[redazione.disegno@unioneitalianadisegno.it](mailto:redazione.disegno@unioneitalianadisegno.it)

## Cover

*Hugh Ferriss*, *The Lure of the City, 1929. Detail.*

The articles published have been subjected to double blind peer review, which entails selection by at least two international experts on specific topics. For Issue No. 9/2021, the evaluation of contributions has been entrusted to the following referees:

*Fabrizio Agnello*, *Adriana Arena*, *Marinella Arena*, *Pasquale Argenziano*, *Fabrizio Avella*, *Vincenzo Bagnolo*, *Marcello Balzani*, *Laura Baratin*, *Salvatore Barba*, *Carlo Battini*, *Marco Giogio Bevilaqua*, *Alessandro Bianchi*, *Fabio Bianconi*, *Enrica Bistagnino*, *Antonio Bixio*, *Stefano Brusaporci*, *Massimiliano Campi*, *Emanuela Chivavoni*, *Giuseppina Cinque*, *Alessandra Cirafici*, *Daniele Colistra*, *Carmela Crescenzi*, *Giuseppe D'Acunto*, *Antonella di Luggo*, *Gianmarco Girgenti*, *Maria Pompeiana Iarossi*, *Manuela Incerti*, *Serenio Innocenti*, *Laura Inzerillo*, *Alfonso Ippolito*, *Alessandro Luigini*, *Federica Maietti*, *Maria Martone*, *Marco Muscogiuri*, *Lia Maria Papa*, *Giulia Pellegri*, *Nicola Pisacane*, *Andrea Rolando*, *Luca Rossato*, *Daniele Rossi*, *Maria Elisabetta Ruggiero*, *Michele Russo*, *Marcello Scalzo*, *Roberta Spallone*, *Maurizio Unali*, *Daniele Villa*

Consultant for English translations *Elena Migliorati*.

The authors of the articles declare that the images included in the text are royalty-free or have obtained permission for publication.

The publisher has tried its best to contact copyright holders of the image published on p. 16 and remains at the disposal of any possible owners.

The journal *Diségno* is included in the list of scientific journals of the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Research (Anvur) for the non-bibliometric area 08 - Civil Engineering and Architecture and is indexed on Scopus.

Published in December 2021

ISSN 2533-2899



9.2021

# diségno

5 *Francesca Fatta*

## Editorial

7 *Paolo Belardi*

## Cover

It's no Country for Visionaries (Anymore). Two Design Experiments Beyond U-topia

16 *Archigram Group*

## Image

A Walking City

17 *Valeria Menchetelli*

A Walking City by Archigram Group: on the Utopian Dimension of Drawing

## VISIONARY DRAWING

25 *Barbara Ansaldi*

Contemporary Visionaries.  
Environment Concept Art's Imaginative Realism and Evocative Power

37 *Laura Mucciolo*

The Nearby Galaxy. Project for Four Forests and Settlements in the Markermeer;  
OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen

47 *Marco Carpiceci  
Fabio Colonnese*

Luigi Pellegrin: Visions of Infinity

59 *Nicolò Sardo*

Solid Utopias. Views and Models in Urban Experimentation in the 1960s

71 *Telmo Castro  
Andrea Pirinu  
Giancarlo Sanna*

*Flying Cities*. Heterarchy, Macroscopy and Stratifications in the Marginal Drawings of 1960-1990

## Visionary Masters

85 *Michele Valentino*

Drawn Visions. Athanasius Kircher's Research between Interpretation and Resolution of Reality

97 *Domenico Mediatì*

The Masters of Vision. From Visionary Science to Visual Suggestions

109 *Manuela Piscitelli*

Real Visions of Imaginary Worlds in the Illustrations of Gustave Doré

121 *Sofia Menconero*

Beyond the Limit in Piranesi's Art

133 *Giorgio Verdiani  
Pelin Arslan*

Visions of Far Places and Overlaying Illusions:  
the Gothic Fresco by Pisanello in Verona as a Graphic Crossing in Space and Time

147 *Francisco Martínez Mindeguía*

Joseph Michael Gandy and the Drawing of the Unfinished Consols Transfer Office

## Visionary Experiences

- 161 Edoardo Dotto Seeing Without Watching. Musical Visions by Norman McLaren
- 171 Salvatore Santuccio The Visionary Drawing of Explorers
- 181 Marco Carpiceci  
Antonio Schiavo Alberto Carpiceci: Drawing Fantasy Architecture
- 193 Alekos Diacodimitri  
Federico Rebecchini *Dōmu* by Katsuhiko Otomo.  
From Reality to the Imaginary, Architecture as an Integral Part of the Narrative
- 205 Sara Conte  
Valentina Marchetti Drawing Creator of Worlds. Criticism and Representation of the City in Comics

## RUBRICS

### Readings/Rereadings

- 221 Alberto Sdegno *Delirious New York* by Rem Koolhaas

### Reviews

- 233 Fabrizio Agnello Domenico Iovane (2020). *La rappresentazione del patrimonio archeologico attraverso procedure integrate di rilievo. Il sito dell'anfiteatro campano di Capua Antica. Applicazioni e metodi di analisi.* Caserta: Autopubblicato
- 235 Massimiliano Ciammaichella Alessandro Luigini (2020). *Adnexūs. Una indagine interdisciplinare tra immagine disegno e arte.* Melfi (Potenza): Libria editrice
- 238 Cosimo Monteleone Andrea Giordano, Michele Russo, Roberta Spallone (Eds.). (2021). *Representation Challenges. Augmented Reality and Artificial Intelligence in Cultural Heritage and Innovative Design Domain.* Milano: FrancoAngeli
- 240 Alberto Sdegno Daniele Rossi (2020). *Realtà virtuale: disegno e design.* Canterano (Roma): Aracne editrice

### Events

- 245 Laura Farroni *Drawing in the Archives of Architecture*
- 248 Elena Ippoliti *I Libro: I Disegno*
- 251 Federica Maietti *After the Damages.* The Training Project Becomes an International Risk Management Academy
- 254 Paola Raffa *IMG2021 Image Learning 3<sup>rd</sup> International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Images and Imagination*
- 256 Veronica Riavis *Digital & Documentation 2021 Palermo* New Frontiers of Digital

- 259 **The UID Library**

- 263 **UID Awards 2021**

# The Nearby Galaxy. Project for Four Forests and Settlements in the Markermeer, OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen

Laura Mucciolo

## Abstract

*In 2007, OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen presented the project OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago, a dwelling prototype involving four forests with their respective settlement systems on the artificial Marker lake in Holland. The four forests were represented as islands (or barges) occupied by a dense mesh of trees in parallel rows and at a distance of 10 meters from each other. Within the forest a system of partitions, parallel to the disposition of the plants, replicates the structure and articulation, translating the materials and thus determining the spaces for the human settlement in the form of a variation of a courtyard-house; vast voids interrupt the anthropic and plant mesh, deriving into two compositional possibilities, both based on subtraction: settlement along the fringes and central settlement, accommodating in this way collective functions, all indicated with the comprehensive term 'care', theoretical variation of the space for 'curing' (care/cure).*

*The representation through a mutually reciprocal rationale of the spaces (black-exterior, white-interior) generates a shift in the reported signifiers, declaring by way of a series of images that are preliminary to the project, of collages which become true and proper tools within the process, to already be on a journey: the 'controlled hallucinations' are the results of the inquiry concerning both 'sensation' and 'perception'. OFFICE has imagined another galaxy, one nearby, the one next to us.*

*Keywords: project, settlement, forest, OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, visions.*

## Introduction

"Should architecture deal with architecture?"  
[Geers et al. 2017, p. 7]

If visionaries "interpret rather than limit, and transfigure rather than interpret", they possess instruments which are in some way off-axis with respect to the common feeling of their time, to such an extent that they live in this sort of detachment, even when standing on the same spot as others, reporting what they have seen and heard, through scenarios that are hard to believe: they are considered as 'travelers' returning from territories about which precious little is known, and what is known has been learned through their eyes. Beginning with the gamble of dwelling on water, *OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago* introduces in the debate

some themes that have been translated into architecture through 'deconstructed' representations: the lake painted in © Lucas black and the proposal of long strips in Superstudio white. The suggestions concern the construction of a dwelling balance that looks to the future, rather than to the minimum necessary for satisfying the requirements of the project: anticipatory visions of contemporary trends, cloaked with the exploratory thrust that characterizes the project as a research activity.

The identification of the soil to preserve, the human settlement articulated according to rationales which are no longer urban, although still using the dictionary of the city (*polis*, courtyard house); the human presence as settlement necessity and the application of collective instruments as centrip-



Fig. 1. Bramante, Church of Santa Maria in San Satiro, (Milan), 1482. Central nave and False Choir.

etal condition of the settlement. These are the theoretical cornerstones of the project. Introducing theories is a practice in support of the operative component of architectures which, left to their own devices would only say themselves, or rather; would let the discussion regarding the project that defines additional fields of research die out; in this way the project is forced to take on other burdens, to carry out other erasures, to signify more than just its presence against gravity. Becoming theories, for some projects, means investing and being invested in them, giving life to tangible documents of existence. Codifying experiences of the project and observing the validity of the multiple possible tools for attaining it, thus constructing a 'way', actions that challenge applied theories, in other words, at certain moments verifying their premises, three of which can be identified here: 'before the project' (without perception), 'during the realization of the project' (opportunities), and 'towards the end of the project' (what end?).

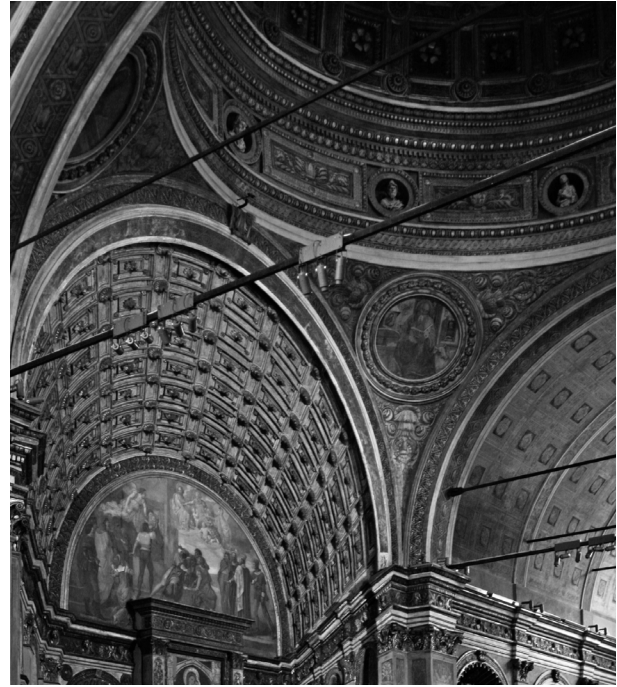


Fig. 2. Bramante, Church of Santa Maria in San Satiro, (Milan), 1482. Detail of the False Choir.

### Questions of method: a library of projects

'Before the project' (without perception). The fundamental division of dwelling into two practices, to accumulate and to let go, drives you into a corner. Experiences escape this choice, they accumulate anyway, without the voluntary possibility of giving them up; experience is made (of spaces, of constructions, of hypotheses) and this emerges overwhelmingly when thinking about space, when defining margins and stage sets in which something, sooner or later, will happen. Before the project is a plural space of added times: they always begin twice, first in a far-away time, even in the womb, and then when their perception is acquired. Positions in space, accumulations, destructions, absences, moments which individually have no meaning, yet acquire it through the collective reading, in the act of being together ordering again the pieces on the table.



During the execution of the project. The opportunity (often fortunate, always rare) is the recognition of a transposition into a fair copy, of a concrete possibility for reasoning by spaces built through the use of tools. The use of these instruments verifies infinite paths for following projects which have not yet seen the light, all ghosts that are instrumental to the ultimate project.

'Toward the end of the project' (what end?). 'Toward' is a time, and especially a spatial direction, such as that which *une Architecture* had in 1923, an indication, not too precise, of a geographical point that marked the epilogue of the stories and, consequently, of the projects. Often there is no end, the end of a project rarely coincides with the end of its probable work-site, with its execution; often projects, especially those that were never realized, follow each other and return onto the worktable, changing positions, roles, appearances, confirming their usefulness as episodes in processes of applied research. 'Before the project'. The launching of studio OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen took place when there was still no physical ship, yet the premises that united by necessity the two authors were taking shape in a reconstructed Los Angeles, an imaginary city distorted by redundant presences, "a fascination for a strange technicolor place" [Geers, Van Severen 2019, p. 182]. Los Angeles, visited in 2002 on the occasion of the project entitled *OFFICE 5 – Showroom* [1], for the co-authors of the studio gathers together the entire decade that goes from the late Nineties to the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the possible America (past and future), Mies' forgotten collages [2], the Madrid school with Ábalos e Herreros [3], the Rome-Prato-Milan inventions by Bramante, Ruscha's gasoline stations and Hockney's swimming pools.

'During the execution of the project', opportunities. The 2007 competition required theoretical and design-related reflections regarding the possibility of the 'cure' envisaged into the future (understood, in the words of the competition as 'health-care', 'cure' and 'care'), in fact including the need or not of the hospital space as a space for curing; the discussion involved the recognition of the state of illness as a temporary and cyclical episode in the life of an individual, which entailed the progressive loss of significance of the hospital as it had been understood up to that moment.

A search for design principles that can respond to the needs of the contemporary, challenging the use of static and obsolete spaces, based on the need to merge areas of care for large numbers of individuals working for collective masses, defining density differences with respect to the scale of the settlement (whether urban or non-urban).

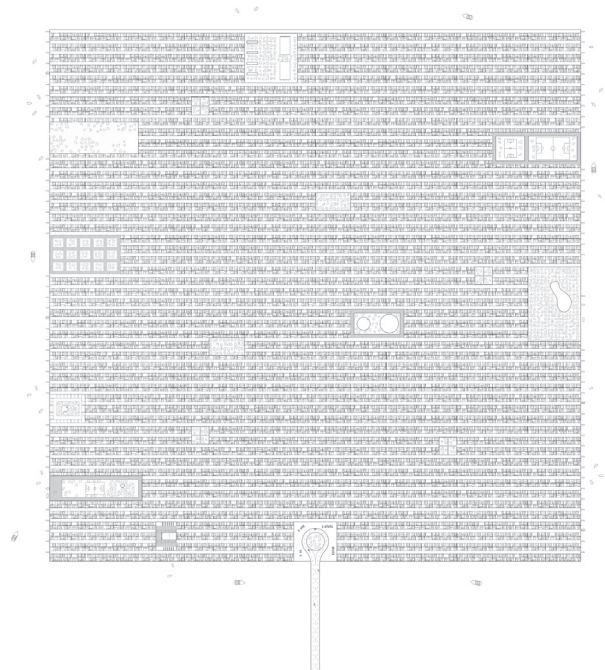


Fig. 3. OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago, 2007. Masterplan.

Fig. 4. OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago, 2007. Detail of a barge plan.



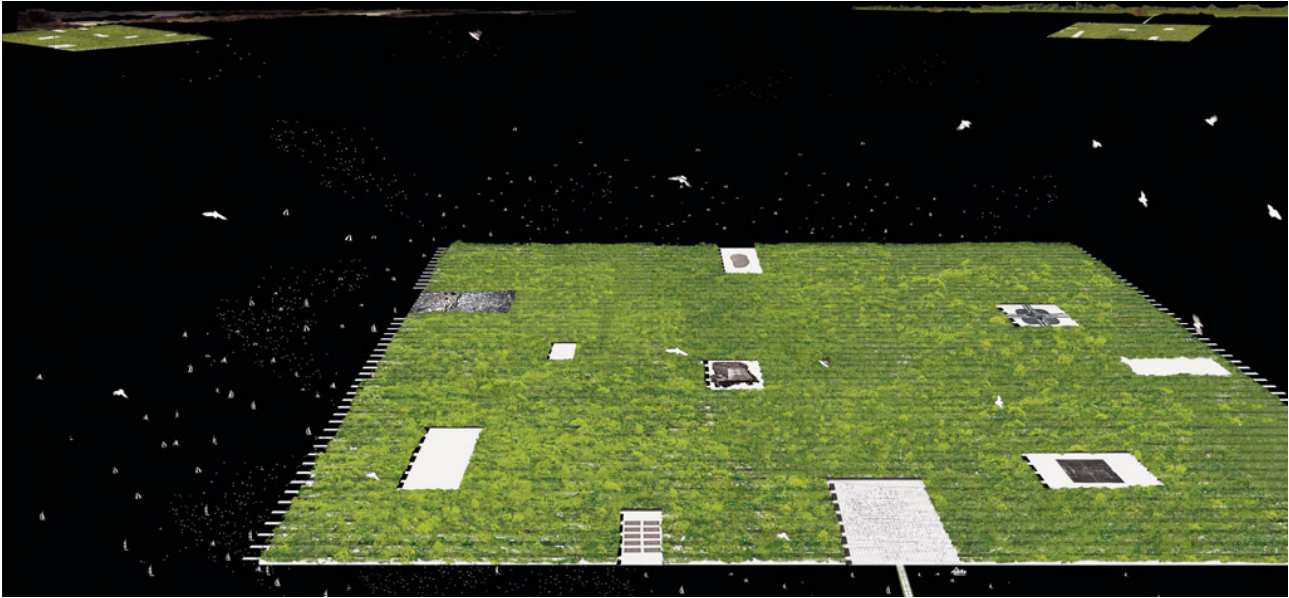


Fig. 5. OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago, 2007. Overview.

In terms of the competition, the premise is the interpretation of the space for care [4]; OFFICE reorders the reasoning, replacing the subject of the project, the space of dwelling, in which 'cure' is solved with additions, within the space of the house, of new areas that take on (for that nucleus) functions which once were collective and now have been abandoned. The overturning of the functions entails a transformation of the architectures: a collective spatial environment that is incapable of fulfilling its role for an increasingly larger public (hospital), is substituted with the exponential multiplication of gradually reduced spaces that serve minimal nuclei and determine new extensions to the space of the house (courtyard house), proposing an additional task which dwelling must attempt to address.

The proposal entitled *OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago* has interpreted the project through three hypothetical conditions that refer to an equal number of theoretical dynamics: 'inventions', 'settlements', 'images'.

'Inventions'. The identification of new territorial contexts located elsewhere with respect to already built territories, to be created from scratch using as new ground the artifi-

cial Marker lake, surrounded by land which resulted from a land-forming operation (reclamation). These new platforms are measured in kilometers, interrupting the relationship with the meter, and in a certain sense with a measure that man can be capable of perceiving: the nature of the reference, although not declared, is that of the floating barges, in the extension within the project of the spurious grammar of mooring, in the invention of a territorial ramification that, by necessity, extends so as to favor the settlement, in those places which would be impossible to inhabit without architecture. Between the pontoons arranged in the form of an archipelago and the artificial lake there exists a relationship equal to that which exists between content and container: each island of the archipelago uses the water as a frame, highlighting the extraneous nature of Cyclops' rafts while legitimizing their presence; conversely, the rafts add new conditions of depth to the flat horizon of the lake. Between container and content, the relationship which already exists in the construction of Bramante's 'fake' choir on the back wall of the church of Santa Maria in San Satiro, Milan is reaffirmed (fig. 1, 2). The depth set in play by the barrel vault with the coffered ceiling

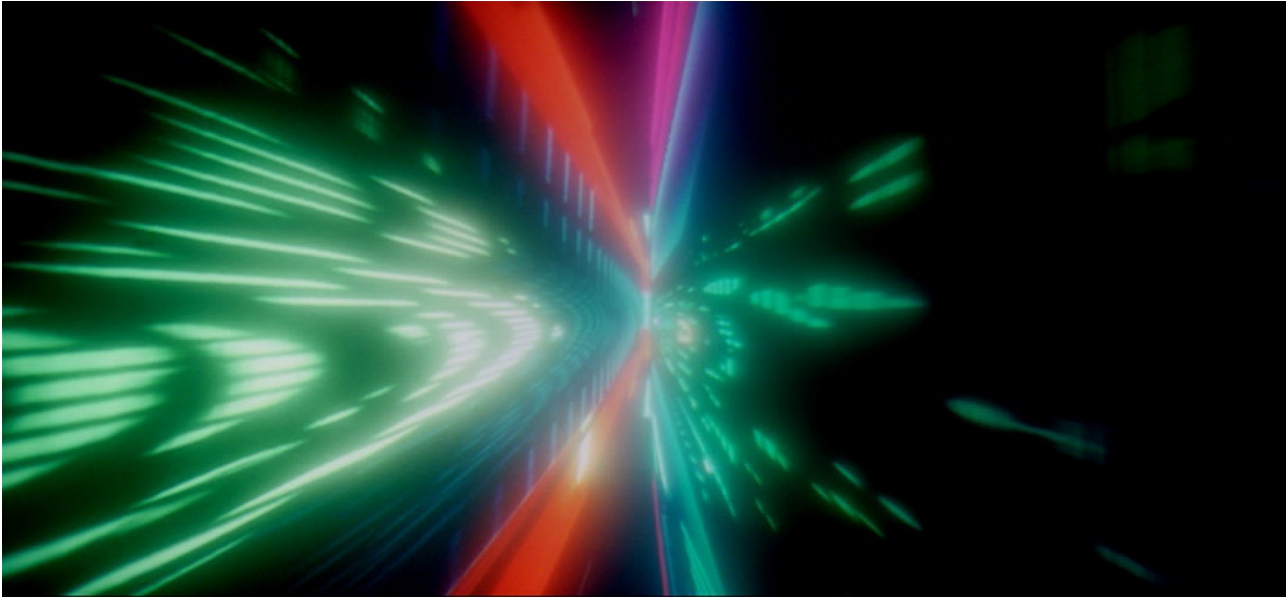


Fig. 6. Energetic luminous sequence from *Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite*, from the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (S. Kubrick 1968, USA/UK).

determines space contexts which would be impossible if not by way of an invention; the approaches to the wall break the illusory relationship, giving meaning to the word 'fake' and they open a waltz of diagonal steps in the direction of the sculptural work so as to verify the relationship between the wall and its axis.

The white holes in the grey lake (fig. 3) identify four potentially deep areas whose spatial features cannot be revealed at the planetary scale; also here, the approach (which takes place through a 'zoom-in', by way of further readable project scales) reveals the inconsistent depth and the very clear, repetitive and 'almost' flat composition.

The reference, in this case, is not to be understood as a listless celebration or as a re-evoking of themes, but rather as the use of Renaissance-related references, which become an adaptation of the spatial theme into new configurations, articulating at the level of the plan a naval battle between giants. 'Settlements'. Proceeding by scalar enlargements, the structures of the barges, 1.5 kilometers long, connected to the mainland by way of a single road, is revealed: a serial composition based on the alternating repetition of double rows of

courtyard house per settlement and anonymous strips (with set heights and fronts), used for slow traffic, for moving within the island: at both ends of the barges docks are located for access by water. Vast voids (square rectangles) within the structured and saturated space are taken for housing 'collective' spaces (such as covered swimming pools, parks, public and commercial spaces, sanatorium, cemetery etc.).

A precise *dispositio* of trees is placed in the middle of the strip, articulating the geometrical relation of the barge and defining a translation into plants of the partition which, as a continuous front, is interrupted by 'green' pauses.

The presence of anthropic plants is a plinth for the barge, in the *Overview* image: the composition of the project, or of its parts, is not understandable, only the structured turf which governs the space, in which the 'green' color clashes with the black lake on the background, despite the fact that the sign of the anthropic presence has been established (fig. 5).

The project, which originates as a proposal for the interpretation of the space for 'care', clearly becomes an alternative to urban space; new grounds to be colonized, the response of the project through a controlled density dwelling type (every

barge is intended for a maximum of 10,000 inhabitants) with shared collective spaces (both the large voids in the barge and the strips which, as anonymous and reiterated interiors, determine an architectural scene to inhabit). The adjective 'visionary', which we are analyzing here, and which in this specific case lingers on the project's drawings and communication, cannot but refer as well to the insight of a space that –already fourteen years ago– challenged the reiteration of spaces that were no longer usable for rather concrete reasons –soil, materials and their restoration, maintenance, re-use– (such as, precisely, hospitals, etc.), and especially the need to move and settle as a collective; an overcoming of the urban is proposed through the ex-novo construction of territories, as a necessary alternative for settlements. "the future is not as much about the territory within the boundaries of the islands [...], as it is about really engaging with the systems in which the islands float. [...] You can employ relatively small-scale platforms to transform vast territories, as opposed to actually design[ing] vastness" [Callejas 2013, pp. 50, 51].

The core of the project, the sense of the archipelago, does not concern so much the project of ungoverned areas (terrain, vagues, vastness) or their boundaries, as much as the introduction or identification of architectures in middle spaces which, as mediators, allow inhabiting (in this case extra-urban, sub-urban) also places where dwelling would appear to be impracticable.

Going beyond the imposition of the orderly, safe 'zones' of the Modern, indeed generating noise –attractive noise– through the intermingling of parts and ages, a new state of art is envisaged, which no longer mentions the city, but rather a settled and 'isolated' collective, a community that is organized into islands which, albeit loosely, are in relation to each other:

The project, already in its name, anticipates the exercise of the 'usage' to which OFFICE continuously refers, retaking part of the title of the project *The City in the City: Berlin as a Green Urban Archipelago* (1977) [Ungers et al. 1977]. This truthful quote would make almost any additional narrative inappropriate, what does deserve to be further analyzed in depth is the evident scientific method which, apparently is anything but scientific. This anticipatory capacity, which in the past also belonged to augurs and haruspices, includes the possibility of making predictions, anticipating trends, constructing projects capable of grasping directions that have already been undertaken; OFFICE's dowsing activities, through the reassessing of projects which have 'guessed' a direction, insists precisely on assuming that path as the basis for bringing about a revision that is capable of constructing new historical stages. "This lesson is made mostly of simple drawings. The reason behind this is that science, before being experiments, measures, mathematics and rigorous deductions, is mostly visions. Science is mainly a visionary activity. Scientific thought feeds on the capacity to 'see' things in a way that is different from how we saw them before" [Rovelli 2014, p. 31] [5].

Fig. 7. OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen. OFFICE 37 – A Green Archipelago, 2007. Street.





As said above, the thin thread of dust that links drawings, projects and visions regard the scientific models which prepare the research activity to see –in other words, to accept the vision– as an anticipatory fact, that is not the result of divination, but rather of training, that is increasingly reproducible, and for this same reason, scientific. The mere possibility that a theme (such as the archipelago, in this case) has traversed eras, minds, environments, roles, cities, projects, architectures, confirms the effective utility of the tool, capable not only of anticipating trends, but also of changing shapes, of allowing adaptations, precisely like the cells in the body.

The merit of studio OFFICE lies in this ability to practice variation, in a formal inclusion that is not lost in empty formalism, and in the admissibility of models as applied research, independently of the eras in which they appeared.

'Images'. The communication of the project refers back to technical devices which had been used also by Bramante: the plan of the barge, although not equipped with conditions of axial symmetry, is presented through the crafty design of the 'half' plan [Geers et al. 2017, p. 84]; this method, already used by Bramante for the project of St. Peter [Borsi 1989] is used in order to save space without repeating itself, implicitly declaring a scale issue (sought for) in the project; the authors operate in conditions that cannot be overlapped, but they are rather parallel, in which out of scale and solid-void relationships coincide –although in the absence of a central 'pivot' space in the case of the project OFFICE 37– so as to adopt similar resolute devices as forms of communication of the architectures.

In the same way, the order is disrupted in the transition from two-dimensional black/white drawings to the representation of the project through 'collages'. The 'collage' is a constructed scene that resolves, anticipates and prefigures in a plausible, albeit somewhat 'bizarre' or 'imprecise' manner some 'pieces' of the project, and which due to this role places itself at the opposite pole of the diagram. If diagrams, more so than the project, look to a range of possibilities, to the project as 'option', within which space remains valid and fulfills the required functions, the 'collage' is a "perspective representation of a true and proper architectural project, previously anticipated in its parts with drawings that are aimed at defining its features in plan and elevation" [Bruschi 1977, p. 39]. This pre-figurative direction, that of "resolving architecture through 'painting', through a prevailing visual image that is dynamically active in space; of transposing, that is, the concrete given into fantasy, transforming it into an apparition, a spectacle" [Bruschi 1977, p. 44] referring back to the same

intentions of the *Prevedari* engraving, giving the impression of space in its realization, in its 'solution'. Bramante, devising images of spaces 'out of necessity', adopting tools which he already possessed in order to translate them, as Borsi points out, he "comes to architecture by way of painting" [Borsi, 1989, p. 49], thus also OFFICE adopts these methods, determining a 'way'.

The pictorial influence (Hockney, Ruscha), the transposition of the pictorial imaginary as a device that makes up for the structural lacks (as in the case of Ábalos e Herreros), the rediscovery of Bramante [Bramante 2015] as a 'borrowed' architect, constructor of ghosts on the imaginary Rome-Prato-Milan motorway, re-situate the experience of the studio, identifying as in Bramante [6] not a 'language' (in other words a codification of ordered, structured, reiterated conditions), nor a 'manner' (in other words an ensemble of self-celebratory, and on occasion ego-referential, conditions), but rather operations that are adopted, 'used', appropriated and re-used 'out of necessity', updating which re-interpret a 'way' of proceeding within the discipline of the project.

The use referred to is not a gentile but rather a tribal practice, which re-proposes actions, spaces, projects, objects ready for use, without any sugarcoated distinction between the parts or special protection cases for historicized contexts; everything is rediscovered as ready to be used and re-used, catalogued with an ordering will (as communicated by the numbers assigned to the projects) and at the same time, upset by the chaos of these same codes, which follow an unresolved numbering system [Borasi 2017, p. 10]; everything is equal to that which stands next to it in the shelving unit of the studio: Bramante side by side with project OFFICE 5 – *Showroom*, Kircher under *Exodus*, or the *Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*.

On the shelves of the office based in Bruxelles, cultural and architectural references can be found, sedimented, which help to place the authors' interest in other authors and architectures in greater detail, better circumscribing works and areas in a denser context: America and Mies [Geers 2011] [7], Stirling [Geers 2014], Rossi [8], Bramante (as in this case), constitute research experiences that, if apparently disconnected, identify intervals of time and spaces of works adopted as models and cultivated until they become essentials accumulations.

The accumulation principle that accompanies usage does not produce systematic collections with an accurate method, whose purpose is to astonish, there are no glass protections for the reference, the aim is not to build museums of

the past, but rather *libraries of projects*, tracing back in time 'good' examples to tap from and whose purpose is resolved through usage, which often has more to do with a continuous disorder than with rigid ordering hierarchies.

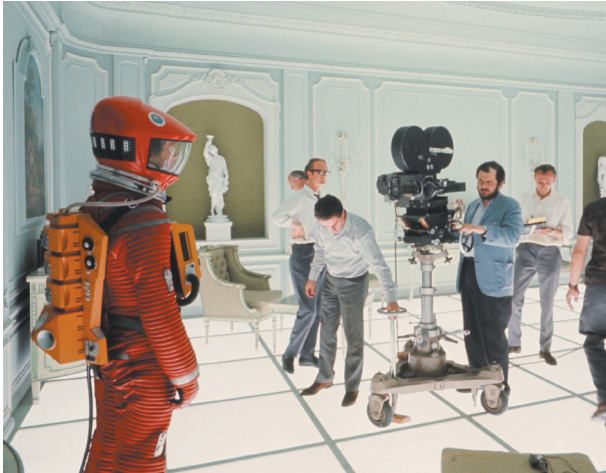


Fig. 8. David Bowman in a spacesuit exploring the room, scene from *Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite*, from the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (S. Kubrick, 1968, USA/UK).

Fig. 9. Elderly David Bowman eats dinner in his room, scene from *Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite*, from the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (S. Kubrick, 1968, USA/UK).

### In the nearby galaxy: two postcards

The above-mentioned conditions of representation see the meanings slip through the 'collages', true illusory apparatuses, major points in which the narrative of the project clashes with more daring territories, which ask the vision to become anticipation.

The previously clarified intentions bring back from the past and from the present, also in this case, practical solutions, coherent narratives that can be adapted to narrate a complex, structured, rigid project, without abstractions, yet equipped with the sin of fantasy.

The two proposed images are complementary readings which frame a bird's eye view of the barge and a very low perspective along the very long strips that are the attire of both the collective and private spheres.

The project, as interpreter of a settlement condition that looks to the future, proposes, above all through images, the transmission of an illusory charge.

An essential component of the postcards produced (only two) is the relationship, at two levels and between black and white, through the use of imaginaries represented by way of chromatic hierarchies which refer back to alternative and opposite contexts, capable of identifying specifically re-configured realities.

The first image, entitled *Overview* (fig. 5) is a bird's eye view of the eastern barge, and whose point of view is very compressed, to the extent that it also includes in the frame the faraway presence, like ghosts, of the other barges. This image is constructed through two opposite actions, the barge dominated by a brilliant 'green' (tree vegetation), while the water of the lake, represented with the use of the color black, interrupting the link to reality (the water is not truly black, and the boundary between water and sky is erased). The result of these two choices, in favor of reality and against it, make it possible to transpose the meanings: what is represented is no longer a lake, but rather 'another' space, known to memory thanks to cinematography, and more similar to a galaxy than to a wetland. The (presumable) interest lies in the necessity that the authors had, expressed through the use of the color black © Lucas, to highlight the perspective towards the future. By obscuring the background, an energetic luminous sequence from *Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite* [9] (fig. 6) fluctuates on a dark canvas without borders. The rarefaction of the boundary between the lake and the sky accentuates even more the extraneous object on the foreground (the barge) which,

thanks to a pictorial technique (the full color as a back-drop) becomes a small-large spaceship, where the ships and boats that orbit around it become, without the need of a leap of imagination, satellites and space junk.

As with galaxies, the distinguishing element is the spaceship, or rather the positioning with respect to it that the space establishes: interior or exterior, exclusively.

The exterior is no longer the space to be inhabited but only an area of transit, of mission or mistaken territory, recalling the long interludes of the *Millennium Falcon* in flight or, in the film *Gravity*, the incident on the outside of the spaceship. The exterior is a dangerous space, which cannot be traversed alone (thus renewing a nomadic condition of settlement), the undecipherable nature of the risk that is inherent to this space recalls a color that is equally symbolic, that black which “in concealing, reveals” [Marini, Corbellini 2016, p. 371].

The choice of the color, although apparently casual, finds confirmation of truth also in the second postcard entitled *Street* (fig. 7). The apparent dangerousness of the exterior is contrasted by the interior (of the ship/berge), framed by the strip.

The inhabitants, both plants and animals, which to this point had been imagined only as green, are now imbued with a celestial white aura [Marini, Corbellini 2016, p. 92] that nullifies the existing chromatic nuances. The anonymous spatiality of the *Street* is characterised by a ‘famous’ [10] flooring and by unknown openings on its fronts. It is in the pervasive white and in the traces on the ground that the scenic architecture of this space could be identified, mounted precisely for allowing the humans that settle in it to recognize it, not considering themselves to be in a foreign land, guests on a spaceship: through repeated spatiality chosen ‘from archives’ (*Supersuperficie*) a deceit is concealed (precisely as in the case of *Bowman’s room*) (figs. 8, 9).

In this case, the aim that is communicated through the use of color, leads us to reconsider the ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’ possibilities of space, in which the exterior –true and proper– understood as something that lies outside the project, stops existing, is cancelled, removed, painted black, as if wishing to underline its absence, its charring, its disappearance. In contrast, the interior space ‘staged’ through graphic codes from the past, highlights a great complexity in terms of scenic imagery; it is the only territory in which it is possible to live, and is therefore set up, programmed, and strictly designed to be inhabited.

## Conclusions

The need for a spatial alter ego introduces into the narrative the bi-univocal components of black and white, as a graphic communication choice, which transpose the perception of known spatial contexts (galaxies) that are unusual or have been altered. The transposition of the chromatic variation, at the level of the project, identifies two spheres, the ‘exterior’ and the ‘interior’, in which the project develops.

The reflection on the vision as a condition of the near future, capable of representing a re-configured reality, does not begin with the project, but rather in other sets of elements, and only arrives to the project at the end, through the re-evaluation of these two territories; the words by Lacaton and Vassal, from their poem/testament, *Il fera beau demain*, are enlightening in this sense: “Construire par l’intérieur [...]. L’usage: déplacements, sensations, perception intérieure, appropriation” [Lacaton, Vassal 1995, u.n.] and assume a structure of complex meanings, if taken in relation to the project.

‘From the interior’ is not only a space but also a way in which to proceed for defining and narrating architectures: the importance of the ‘interior’ events in a sense downgrades the exterior as architecture linked to the project, cancelling the relationship with the facade and with the surroundings (which explains the use of the color black for *OFFICE 37*); ‘from the interior’, instead, determines the possibility of a ‘nomadic’ and anonymous project (such as the barges) in which the exterior fulfills aerodynamic functions, rather than those linked to strictly ‘anchored’ architectures; ‘from the interior’ takes place the form of dwelling that is temporary occupation, thus becoming a synonym for appropriation and not of property.

‘From the interior’, in conclusion, is both what was being communicated by Superstudio’s *Monumento Continuo*, and what Kubrick and others represented, and which finally reached the architectural project through the use of the visionary image, representing the future always from a threshold, from the interior of a womb that has changed color, shape, aim. If, apparently, “the studio’s (*OFFICE*) buildings are machines for making images” [Woodman 2012, p. 7], these images –cheap and ‘frivolous’ for being the only driving force of a studio that is quite prolific in the production of projects– reveal to be, above all, research tools that transverse the field of the project crosswise (art, cinema, painting), so as to inquire into its boundaries and propose future attributions.



Notes

[1] "Soon afterwards, they [Geers, Van Severen] found themselves flying to Los Angeles to work on a project with a decadent, very Hollywood programme (the kind they would never again encounter in their European commissions): the transformations of a Venice Beach bungalow into a furniture shop and occasional residences [we are referring to the project OFFICE 5" [Borasi 2017, p. 10].

[2] For more information we invite the reader to look at [Beitin, Eiermann 2017].

[3] Geers and Van Severen, both graduates at the University of Ghent, met when they were at ETSAM in Madrid, in this period they became acquainted with the work of Abalos e Herreros. In 2014, Giovanna Borasi invited three architecture studios, including OFFICE, to interpret the Abalos e Herreros archive fund (API 64) donated in 2012 to the CCA (Canadian Centre for Architecture) by the authors themselves, the outcome being the exhibition *Out of the box* curated by OFFICE, Juan José Castellón and SO-IL. The relationship between the two studios is an intermittent one, which, starting from the sharing of a method 'out of necessity', in the common adoption has generated rules and tools, updating the method from time to time to the need. The opportunities for comparison between the studios have taken place in different cities, in changing roles and different institutions, using the usual means of communication: the image of the project. Drawings and collages conveyed a scientific way of proceeding.

[4] This competition anticipated the theme *Hospital of the future* presen-

Author

Laura Mucciolo, Department of Architecture and Project, Sapienza University of Rome, laura.mucciolo@uniroma1.com

Reference List

*A Conversation with Kersten Geers and David Van Severen* (2019). In *A+U*, n. 591, pp. 182-189.

Beitin, A., Eiermann, W. (2017). *Mies van der Rohe: Montage/Collage*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König.

Bruschi, A. (1977). *Bramante*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.

Borasi, G. (2017). Hunting for the Present in the Past. In Geers K. et al. (Eds.). *Office Kersten Geers David Van Severen*. Vol. 1, 2-56, pp. 9-14. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König.

Borsi, F. (1989). *Bramante*. Milano: Electa.

Callejas, L. (2013). *Islands & Atolls*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Geers, K. (2011). Perfectly Fine Mies. In *San Rocco*, n. 03/Mistakes, pp. 14-18.

Geers, K. (2014). Stirling's Minimalism. In *San Rocco*, n. 09/Monks and Monkeys, pp. 79-83.

Geers, K., Van Severen, D. et al. (Eds.). (2016). *OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen*. Vol. 2: 56-130, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König.

Geers, K., Van Severen, D. et al. (Eds.). (2017). *OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen*. Vol. 1: 2-56, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König.

Geers, K., Van Severen, D. et al. (Eds.). (2017). *OFFICE Kersten Geers*

ted by O.M.A. (curated by Reinier de Graaf) for the 17th International Architecture Biennale of Venice titled *How we will live together?* directed by Hashim Sarkis, held from 22 May to 21 November 2021, at the Arsenale, Venice.

[5] The quotation is, moreover, reprinted under the entry 'visionary' along with the definition of the Treccani Dictionary [Marini, Corbellini 2016, p. 621].

[6] The words 'linguaggio', 'maniera' and 'modo' refer to chapter III of Borsi's text entitled *Il 'modo' di Bramante*.

[7] Reference is made not only to the graphic translation but also to a deeper connection [Geers 2011].

[8] Published in 2021, the book *The Urban Fact. A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi* [Geers, Pančevac 2021], as a grantee projects by the Graham Foundation, in which the authors attempt to reconnect an 'unusual' authorial trajectory using twenty-three projects by the Milanese architect.

[9] We are referring to the final chapter of the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, dir. S. Kubrick, 1968, USA/UK (figg. 6, 8, 9).

[10] We are referring to the image by Superstudio, *Gli Atti Fondamentali, Vita (Supersuperficie), Viaggio da A a B*, 1971; but also, to the flooring in David Bowman's room in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

*David Van Severen* Vol. 3: 126-201, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König.

Geers, K., J. Pančevac (2021). *The Urban Fact. A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König.

Happy Birthday, Bramante! (2005). In *San Rocco*, n. 11. Numero monografico.

Lacaton, A., Vassal, J.-P. (1995). *Il ferà beau demain*. Roma: Carte segrete.

Le Corbusier (1923). *Vers une Architecture*. Paris: Éditions Crès et Cie.

*OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen 2003-2016. Acciones Primordiales, Primary Actions*. (2016). In *El Croquis*, n. 185. Numero monografico.

Marini, S., Corbellini, G. (a cura di). (2016). *Recycled Theory. Dizionario illustrato / Illustrated Dictionary*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

Mastriqli, G. (a cura di). (2016). *Superstudio Opere 1966-1978*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

Rovelli, C. (2014). *Sette brevi lezioni di fisica*. Milano: Adelphi.

Ungers O.M. et al. (2013; 1977). *The City in the City: Berlin as a Green Archipelago*. Zürich: Lars Müller.

Woodman, E. (2012). Picturing the present. In *2G*, n. 63, pp. 4-12.