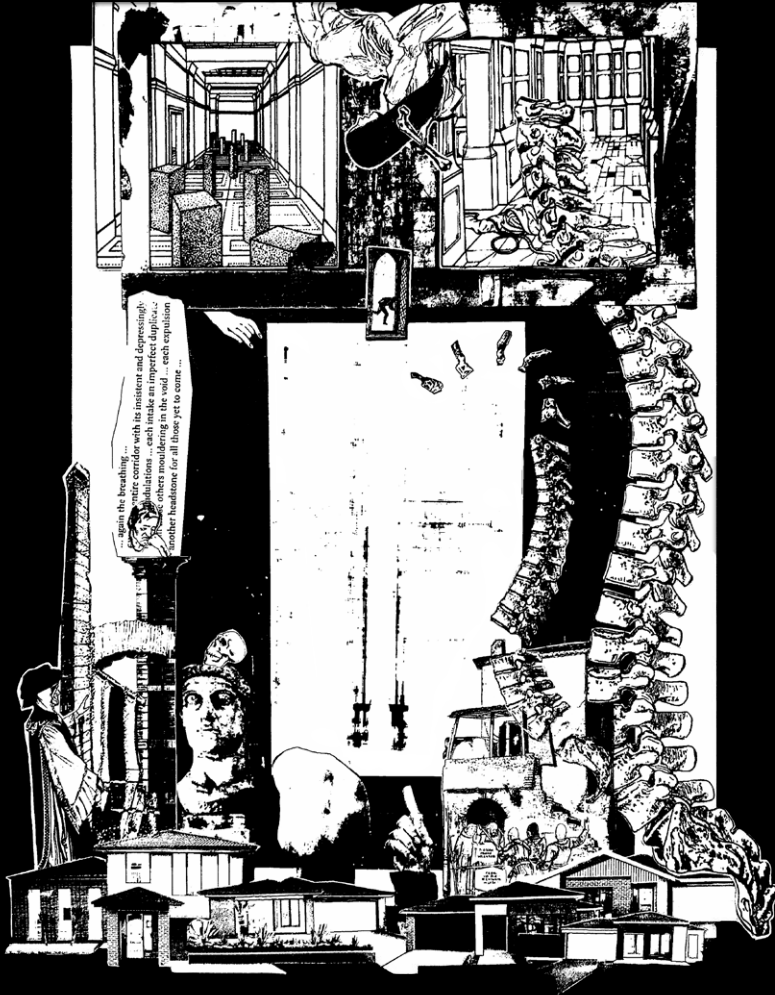


URBAN CORPORIS

TO THE BONES



Guest Editor
ANNA RICIPUTO

Edited by
MICKEAL MILOCCO BORLINI
ANDREA CALIFANO

URBAN CORPORIS SERIES

ISSN: 2785-6917

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1. URBAN CORPORIS X - UNEXPECTED, M. Milocco Borlini, A. Califano, 2022.
2. URBAN CORPORIS - TO THE BONES, M. Milocco Borlini, A. Califano, A. Riciputo, 2023.

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URBAN CORPORIS - TO THE BONES

First Edition, December 2023

M. Milocco Borlini, A. Califano, A. Riciputo

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Publisher

Anteferma Edizioni

via Asolo 12, Conegliano, 31015, TV, Italy

ISBN: 979-12-5953-056-1 (paper version)

ISBN: 979-12-5953-088-2 (digital version)

www.anteferma.it

The essays in this book have been double-blind peer-reviewed by selected experts

Disclaimer: responsibility for the text and images contained in individual chapters lies with their respective author(s). For queries, please contact the editors on urbancorporis@gmail.com or info@iuvas.org.

Cover image: Laura Szyman, *The entry and corridor*. Courtesy of the Author.

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**A BOOK ON
ARCHITECTURE, ART,
PHILOSOPHY AND
URBAN STUDIES
TO NOURISH THE
URBAN BODY**

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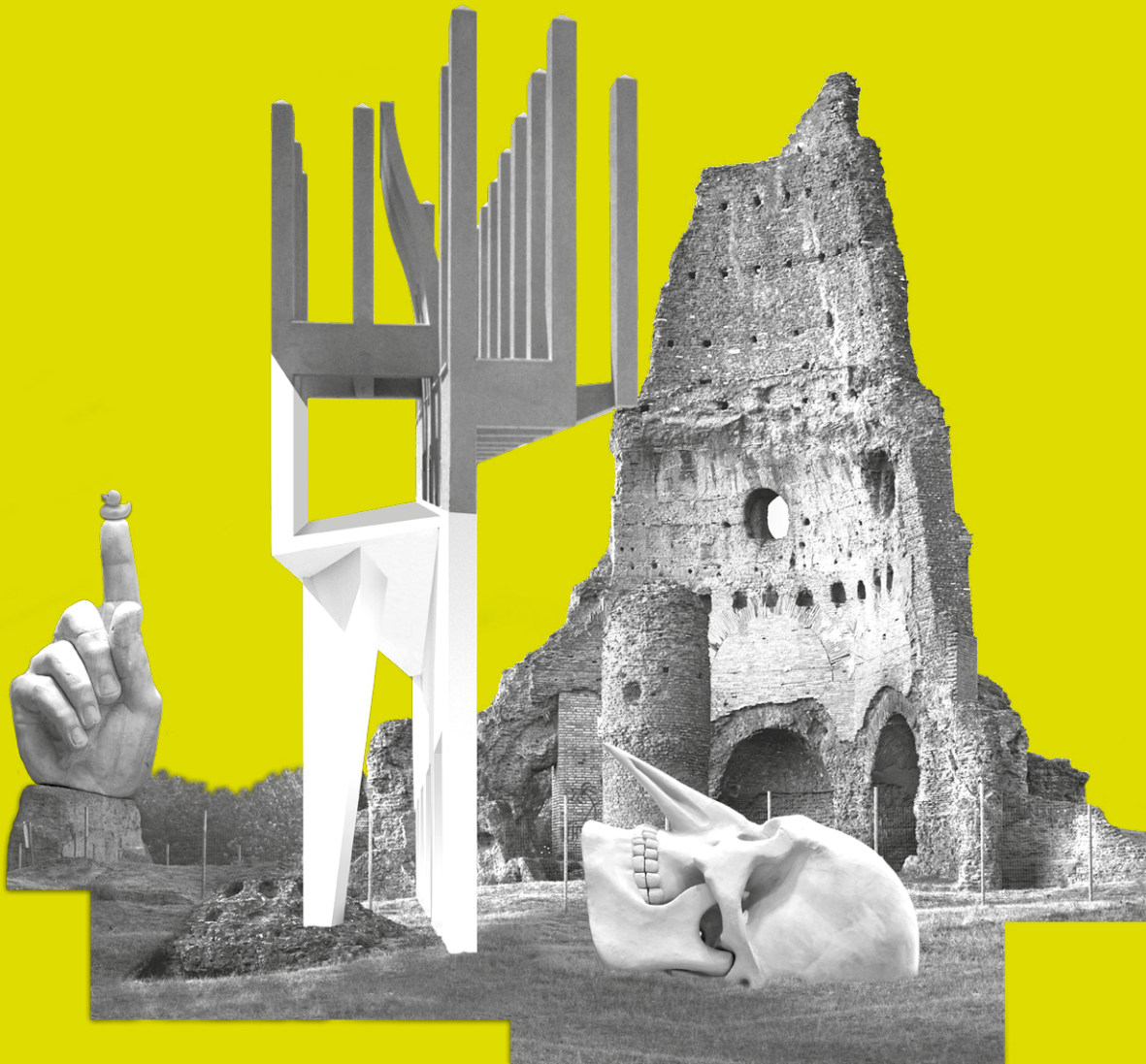
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Anna Riciputo, *The Senob*, digital collage 2023.

TO THE BONES

by Anna Riciputo, *Guest Curator*

In the constant search for physical and spiritual immortality, the Italian artist Gino De Dominicis entrusted a gigantic skeleton with the task of uniting the sensitive world to the imponderable universe through a cosmic magnet held on the tip of a finger: Humanity, in its essentiality, is reduced to the bones because, if the flesh is destroyed and the soul transmigrates, the bones remain and testify to our passage on earth. In the same way, Le Corbusier's *Maison domino*, naked only in its structural bones, stripped Architecture of its superstructures, showing the *zero degree* that can be covered with infinite possibilities. Thus, the anatomical structure that supports human beings, through analogy, becomes a tool for knowing and understanding the territory on which natural and artificial bones write words that allow us to read it: "the skull", which contains its founding characters; the "backbone", that supports its courses and settlements; the long "limbs", that extend outward and upward; the "short bones", that tell about fragments; and so on, until describing an anatomical landscape in which, by form or function, the natural and anthropic elements behave as parts of a single organic system, composed of hard and soft parts, rigid and flexible, fixed and variable. Bones like large outcropping stones or long rivers that have determined the adaptation of man's buildings to nature, or like homogeneous environmental systems that can be broken down into simple geometric entities such as points, lines and surfaces; bones as the fortifications, the great walls and the aqueducts on which parasitic architectures have been grafted, which surround the urban agglomerations whose original geometries

are still legible in the filigree of the contemporary city or which, sinking and emerging from the ground, project towards the countryside; bones as historical or industrial archaeologies, isolated remains or deep stratified networks that have formed positions and backbones on which the urban fabric has developed or will develop; bones as the remains of colonialism, the artefacts that have written on the earth the destinies of men and nations that have determined the dynamics of the contemporary city or that have remained temporal anti-murals in the landscape becoming Landmarks; bones as emerging fragments recovered and used within contemporary architecture, generating new hybrid aesthetics in which reconstruction, anastylosis and integration go beyond the discipline of restoration to found the transtemporal architectural project; bones as infrastructures – which branch out like veins within the terrestrial body in the distinction between arteries and capillaries – also represent the great "spine" on which the economy and development of countries are based, determining political and cultural geographies which, precisely on those infrastructures, they move; bones such as beams and pillars, walls and stairs, structuring elements of the architecture that determine and support its progress, but also rigid casings within which man occupies only the space of his own body; bones as minimal formal principles, morphemes, essential lines and paths that direct reality and the project, which bring the form back to its most intimate existential paradigm; finally, bones as theoretical principles that structure thoughts, key information supporting the framework

of architectural discourse, axioms, rules, ordering systems of the act of composing and breaking down reflections on reality.

As in the biological world, there may be endoskeletons and exoskeletons capable of guiding or dominating the shape of the landscape, city and architecture.

The endoskeleton *guides* the shape: placed inside it, and the shape is free to modify itself, to expand or contract, to grow in a more than proportional manner following concentric offsets or shrinking until it coincides with the skeleton itself. If a part of the skeleton breaks or deforms, the shape varies along unexpected lines, generating distortions that attribute plastic values to the original shape.

On the contrary, *the exoskeleton dominates* the form: it forces it into a closed and unchangeable boundary unless the skeleton breaks or deforms, generating possibilities. As insects teach us, to grow, the form must abandon or destroy the old exoskeleton to “enter” a new one that contains it: the building envelope, blocked in its shape given *a priori*, can only extend by budding, obtained by addition or multiplication of immutable primary cells.

The action of recognising the bones of a territory is triggered through the sense of *time* or, as usual, the act of travelling through space allows us to identify sequences and experience its realities within a cognitive process in which recognisability accompanies the identity of places, enhances their potential by reconnecting the individual to the global, through a contemporary rereading of the meanings of *locus*, form and memory.

Long bones like rivers, mountains, fractures, slopes, and coasts write linear words on the earth, which, through directional movement,

reach the exit towards the time of the future. Fragmentary bones, isolated elements that dot the surface, instead determine a horizontal crossing movement, a situation still in the present time in which the individual must face a continuous succession of obstacles: it is the archetype of the labyrinth – already a metaphor of complexity in the Euthydemus of Plato. Terrestrial writing speaks both the language of nature and the language of humans: it represents the desire to modify the territory by solid acting. Settlements, textures, paths, alignments, directions, rhythm, and distributions define a *rule*, the set of morphology and mutual relationships between the elements that make up an anthropised place. The movement through the rule is a counterpoint, in which independent yet in agreement exceptions are combined with the *cantus firmus* – considered in its harmonious meaning. The counterpoint time is variable, containing slow and accelerated movements, horizontal and vertical movements, and past and future times.

At the extremes of form and time are *ruin* and the *unfinished*. The ruin presents itself in a metempirical condition in which objects move in the space-time suspension in which it exist, but as a fragment of a whole that *was* in the past but *is not* in the present. Equally the unfinished: it exists in the present as non-being, not in the past; it will be in the future or the rubble – which contains neither the testimonial value of survival nor the monumental value of permanence.

Artists and architects look at the bones of the landscape and architecture, reading memory and potential: these are the keywords

with which this volume of *Urban Corporis. To the Bones* should be read and studied, interpreting the skeleton concept as a complex system of load-bearing elements that structure architecture and landscape in their material and immaterial reality. The purpose of the volume is to use the notions of form and time to discover how the aesthetics and structure of reality depend on them through the attribution of unprecedented value judgments to natural and anthropic elements considered “essential” for knowledge and planning of space. Openness to reflections that study the bones of the virtual, the post-human and the metaphysical also allows us to explore an array of theoretical paradigms that prefigure futuristic or atopic, but never impossible, realities.

The volume is divided into three sections called – through anatomical analogy – *Skull*, *Torso* and *Limbs*. The first section, the *Skull*, refers to everything that is intellectual and theoretical and has to do with speculative thought, memory, the virtual and the sentimental. The second, the *Torso*, contains the spine, protects the soft organs and supports the limbs; therefore, it represents all those landscape, urban and architectural conditions in which the skeleton functions as a system composed of interrelated parts. The third section, the *Limbs*, collects those contributions in which the bones of the territory project outwards, tell of movement, expansion, roads to travel and rivers to navigate, of extensive networks and long lines that unite humans and the lands into a single large living organism.

Anna Riciputo is an architect, PhD and Research Fellow RTDA in Architectural and Urban Design.

At the Department of Architecture and Design of the Sapienza University of Rome, she is a specialist and teaching manager for the Master in Design of Buildings for Worship; she teaches within the degree courses in Design, and Landscape Architecture. She is a visiting researcher at the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo and a visiting professor at the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo de la Universidad de Buenos Aires and the Universidad Nacional de Moreno; in 2023, she has been resident researcher at the Giovanni Michelucci Foundation in Florence.

Through her research activity, she studies the interdisciplinary relationships between architecture, the arts, and the social sciences to define new housing and urban models. With her doctoral thesis, she studied the architecture of the 1960s with a particular reference to Rome and its affiliation with the Scuola di Piazza del Popolo. In 2015, she obtained a scholarship from the Sapienza Foundation for a thesis abroad published with the title *Lina Bo Bardi and the Heterogenesis of Form*. She won the “Il Paese delle donne” award in 2021. In 2016, she won the Honorable Mention at the Young Critics Award with the *Souvenir* project.

Since 2008, she has worked as part of design teams for competitions as an architect and consultant; she worked as an architect for Fendi, designing the brand’s stores worldwide.

In 2013 she began her research on the “city as performance”, exhibiting several times as the solo exposition organised by Ordine degli Architetti of Ancona in 2021; the solo show at La Casa dell’Architettura at Palazzo Collicola Arti Visive in Spoleto in 2018; the collective exhibition The City of Inclusion at the MACRO - Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome in 2019 and the participations in the Rome Biennale in 2017, 2019 and 2021. She is a member of the collective Gruppo MOA within Sinestetica Gallery in Rome, organising exhibitions, lectures and cultural activities.

Essayist and editorial curator, she participates in academic research, workshops, and national and international conferences, writing the results in texts and articles published in collections and magazines, including *Op. Cit.* by Renato De Fusco.

A BOOK ON ARCHITECTURE, ART, PHILOSOPHY AND URBAN STUDIES TO NOURISH THE URBAN BODY.

The second volume of *Urban Corporis*, titled "To the Bones", compiles reflections from architects, artists, and scholars who have extensively delved into the fundamental themes of contemporary architecture. By navigating a constant interplay between past and future, memory and innovation, and the realms of the natural, artificial, and virtual, these contributions put forth strategies for architectural, artistic, urban, and landscape projects that resonate with the fundamental principles shaping our built and perceived environment. They advocate for design approaches that synchronise with the foundational elements, referred to as "the bones", that structure the landscape while promoting forward-thinking considerations.