

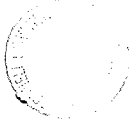
Peter Lang, William Menking

Superstudio

Life Without Objects

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The Continuous Monument,
New York

Scientific Editor
Luca Molinari

Art Director
Marcello Franccone

Design
Stefano Tosi

Editorial Coordination
Vincenza Russo

Editing
Emanuela Di Lallo

Layout
Sabina Bruccoli

Translation
Susan Wise, Venice
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It is a special pleasure to participate in the effort to bring the revolutionary work of SUPERSTUDIO back to the forefront of architecture.

SUPERSTUDIO occupies a unique place in the world of architectural design, offering visions of surreal tranquillity amidst convulsive social change and experimentation.

Like Paul Klee's angel, the drawings and montages of this experimental group point the way toward a serene world of accessible nature and technology, while simultaneously being driven from behind by the winds of progress that seek to disturb these moments of uneasy balance. These immensely powerful images are situated at a particularly fragile moment in architectural history, and seeing them today is no less powerful and poignant.

The exhibition, assembled with the support of the Design Museum in London and the Pratt Institute School of Architecture in New York, arrives at a time when many of the poetic prophecies within the work have come to pass, while many of the pressures and anxieties regarding the relevance and global significance of design still remain. The questions posed in the work are still asked by students and architects alike as they question the future of the city and the disciplines of design within ever more extreme forms of consumer culture. This exhibit, opening in New York at the Pratt Manhattan Gallery, Artists Space and the Storefront for Art and Architecture, promises to be exactly the type of penetrating network of ideas and events so graphically depicted in these remarkable drawings. That the exhibition itself, in 2003–4, is a dream-come-true for the authors, curators and the viewing public is the most convincing proof of the continuing relevance and importance of the work of SUPERSTUDIO.

Thomas Hanrahan
Dean of the School of Architecture, Pratt Institute

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Peter Lang
and William Menking

Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives



In front of the Bellosguardo
office

In those years it became very clear that to continue to design furniture, objects and similar household decorations was no solution to problems of living and not even to those of life, and even less could it serve to save one's own soul... It became clear that no beautification or cosmetic were sufficient to remedy the damage of time, the errors of man and the bestiality of architecture...

The problem therefore was that of increasing detachment from those activities of design adopting perhaps the theory of minimal force in a general "process of reduction".

SUPERSTUDIO, *Histograms*, 1968¹

For those who, like ourselves, are convinced that architecture is one of the few ways to realize cosmic order on earth, to put things to order and above all to affirm humanity's capacity for acting according to reason, it is a "moderate utopia" to imagine a near future in which all architecture will be created with a single act, from a single design capable of clarifying once and for all the motives which have induced man to build dolmens, menhirs, pyramids, and lastly to trace (ultima ratio) a white line in the desert.

SUPERSTUDIO, *The Continuous Monument: An Architectural Model for Total Urbanization*, 1969²

The growing number of opportunities to view the work of SUPERSTUDIO and others of their generation in a series of exhibitions dedicated to "Radical" architecture have effectively reintroduced the most graphic aspects of these 1960s protagonists to today's public. The collective shows lack, however, sufficient space to explore individual groups or specific actions in greater detail.³ Though the many exhibitions and illustrated catalogues have done a respectable

job of disseminating and consequently reviving the works of a predominantly European Radical architecture movement over the last five years or so, one still goes begging for more detailed information: with the noticeable lack of re-publications, much of the primary materials from this period are simply hard to come by.⁴ This is particularly unfortunate for SUPERSTUDIO who seem to have acquired the role as the Radical movement's *cover-child*.⁵ Scant little of their critical theories and texts ever seem to accompany the celebrated works put on display. There is of course much more to understanding SUPERSTUDIO's provenance and the group's relationship to the many cultural currents evolving through the European avant-garde in the 1960s.

Since none of these takes place in the distant past, most of the original protagonists are still very active on the scene, though their current identities are not always transparently linked to their *epic* endeavours of youth. While clearly a thirty-year hiatus suggests a certain amount of aging many of the principal actors remain highly energetic and active in the field while their works remain tucked away in attics and flat file cabinets. Admittedly, the current members of SUPERSTUDIO, Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Roberto Magris, Piero Frassinelli and Alessandro Magris were skeptical that another exposé would properly redress the continuing lapses that seemed to dodge their work.⁶ Nonetheless, the curators were trusted with their time and given open access to their remaining collection of projects and library.

This publication has therefore been planned and organized to serve as a portable reference focusing primarily on SUPERSTUDIO's critical writings in relation to their better-known body of designs and architecture. One of the most unexpected conclusions we as curators can draw from our involvement with SUPERSTUDIO is just how conscious the group was from the outset of the historical importance of its investigations: SUPERSTUDIO maintains an impressive archive that from the start meticulously documents the unfolding process of its critical research. While it's evident upon examining the material presented here that their most renowned images describe the momentous steps in the group's philosophical development, these images can only partly convey the complete historical passage. For this reason we have decided to initiate an operation of recovery, restituting in the process those projects and writings — critical texts and storyboards — that are far less familiar but entirely necessary in providing a more complete understanding of the group's oeuvre.

The timing for this revived interest in the 1960s' counter-culture is not that arbitrary either: we are again at a point where the convergence of technology and consumerism, in its current so-called free market state is spinning steadily out of control: the
12 small percentage of the global population still able to command

the world's apparently boundless resources is now having to fight to retain that dubious right. And just as Italy's economic miracle dating from the early 1960s skidded into a decline by the end of the same decade, we are again crashing to new lows at the beginning of the new millennium. No better moment, then, to turn back the pages of history to that previous era when a similarly ample crisis ripped through the world economies: welcome to Italy in the 1960s, a time of boom and bust; of war and resistance; of dreams and despair. We may not be reliving the era of pop culture, but we are ironically trawling into a new kind of pop-up culture.⁷ What remains to be seen, however, is whether the recent 1960s' revival emerging in the schools and in some of the more progressive offices goes beyond mere fashion trends.⁸

A definitive and momentous transformation took place in the design and architectural environment by the late 1960s: the increasingly debilitating crisis in Modernist architecture would find some of its most laconic last acts played out on the drawing boards precisely here in Florence. Each group challenged and eventually subverted the dominant functionalist methodology laid down by the early Modernists. SUPERSTUDIO recognized that "architecture" served to indoctrinate society into an irrelevant culture of consumption, and therefore sought to extract out of architecture all that encumbered on man's ability to live a free life. Their most evocative images, the series beginning in 1969 titled *The Continuous Monument*, spread its glacially translucent grid structures throughout entire regions of the planet enveloping buildings and entire cities, creating a monument to end all monuments. SUPERSTUDIO's renouncement of architecture, their conscious withdrawal from the perverse system based on the commercialisation of *popular demand*, was deliberately intended to strip architecture of everything except its most naked living truth.

This publication is structured into two basic parts.

Part I features the two curators' essays examining SUPERSTUDIO's history within the Florentine context ("Suicidal Desires", Peter Lang), and an essay on SUPERSTUDIO's penultimate moment on the larger international scene ("The Revolt of the Object", William Menking), and includes the retrospective testimonials and critical reflections from three of SUPERSTUDIO's members: Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia and Piero Frassinelli.

Part II is divided into the following four chapters:

1. 1966–68: *SUPERarchitecture*: to the Rescue!
2. 1969–71: *SUPERprojects*: Objects, Monuments, Cities
3. 1972–73: *SUPERexistence*: Life and Death
4. 1974–78: *SUPERsimple*: Elementary Architecture

In Part II each chapter engages in a specific historical moment and provides related documentation on SUPERSTUDIO's theoretical and 13

practical responses. The goal is to publish the group's most significant projects along with a related collection of images and their accompanying writings, storyboards and photos. While this publication is not intended to become a catalogue raisonné on the works of SUPERSTUDIO, it has been conceived as a work of consultation and reflection. Here every attempt has been made to pair significant texts and storyboards to their corresponding architectural projects. This introductory essay will navigate through some of the peak episodes that mark SUPERSTUDIO's architectural production, in an attempt to track the threads connecting people, places and time.

The first concern then, is to confront the term "Radical" architecture, which has become, through the numerous recent exhibitions the catchall phrase used to regroup the variety of tendencies that have aspired to shake off the hegemonic grip of Modernist architecture in the 1960s. Radical architecture is an ambiguous multivalent term that suggests different and clearly contrasting meanings. Andrea Branzi, one of the founding members of Archizoom, writing in 1973, gave this impression on the breadth of Radical movement: "Today the term 'Radical' architecture assembles at the international level all of the eccentric experimentation with regard to the straight line of the profession: counterdesign, conceptual architecture, primitive technologies, eclecticism, iconoclasm, neodadism, nomadism..."¹⁴ Gianni Pettena, another Radical player active at the time in Florence, insists on giving the movement a more sinuously fluid radiance, albeit with continental distinctions, weaving the ingenious experiments of the Californian Radicals to the more self-conscious language emerging in England, Austria and Italy, whose works result from far deeper frustrations characterizing the profession in Europe.¹⁵ In effect, Pettena's panoramic view of the movement correctly depicts the international exchanges, through publications, encounters and exhibitions, while devoting considerably less time to the many provincial accents buried in the chaos of translation, misreading, and local cultural wrangling.

14 Finally Emilio Ambasz's conception for *The New Domestic Landscape* makes the point that even within Florentine circle of visionary architects there were several contradictory positions regarding the role of architecture and design — let alone radical politics. The weakness in establishing an umbrella definition for the Radical architecture movement therefore remains, we believe, in the often-contradictory positions held by these distinctive activist groups. The Radical bind between the groups does not necessarily imply that there were common denominators linking one to another, as clearly those who saw themselves as neodadists were not necessarily willing to also act as nomadists. Branzi's intent was to underscore just how insidiously the work of such a diverse number of subversive credos were penetrating the 1960s' mainstream

culture. But the cost, already then, was a general undervaluing of the individual tendencies themselves, leading to a series of critical misinterpretations, if not offhand dismissals within the architectural community at large.¹⁶

The quickest link between the two groups SUPERSTUDIO and Archizoom can instead be made between the two *Superarchitecture* exhibitions that took place between 1966 and 1967. The original proximity of the two groups to one another lends credence to their coming out of a particularly Florentine phenomenon that could, we suggest, be referred to here as the "Superarchitecture" generation. In fact, SUPERSTUDIO's origins were linked to the hip to Achizoom's: the two groups' founding members, Adolfo Natalini and Andrea Branzi were classmates in the School of Architecture at the University of Florence. Their first public appearance together under their respective *nome de plumes* was for the exhibition titled *Superarchitecture* at Pistoia — on the outskirts of Florence — in December 1966, and then, curiously, as individuals in a second show with a much larger set of participants that took place in Modena some three months later. There remains some confusion on just how the two exhibitions were organized, precisely because most accounts suggest that SUPERSTUDIO and Archizoom were each formed *between* the two shows, over the winter of 1966–67. But what remains confounding is that both groups already appeared as SUPERSTUDIO and Archizoom in the first Pistoia venue. As is often the case behind the scenes, the story of just how the two groups were founded is tied as much to circumstances as it was to a prescient vision.¹⁷

Adolfo Natalini, an exhibited pop painter in the Florentine circle in the early 1960s, was asked by the Jolly gallery in Pistoia to mount a second show of his paintings in November 1966. Instead, in his new status as a recently graduated architect, he proposed an exhibition on architecture and invited Andrea Branzi and others to participate. In the meantime, Branzi and several of his close friends had planned an exhibition at the Galleria Comunale in Modena, whose opening date was to take place before November, but was postponed into 1967. Natalini's exhibition should have been chronologically after Branzi's, but eventually came up first on the calendar. For the Pistoia exhibition, Natalini proposed the title *Superarchitecture*: promoted to be "the architecture of superproduction; superconsumption; superinduction to superconsumption; the supermarket, superman and super gas". For this show they gave themselves names: Branzi and his companions Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello and Massimo Morozzi chose the designation "Archizoom", an onomatopoeic play on Archigram.¹⁸ Natalini created the term "SUPERSTUDIO", a logical derivation from his exhibition manifesto.

As things have a way of happening, the Jolly gallery exhibition in Pistoia was postponed from 4 November to 4 December. The

first date would have turned out to be catastrophic. On 4 November, an Italian national holiday, the Arno river overran its banks, flooding Florence and the rest of the valley. Natalini recounts how he found himself almost under water as he worked through the night on the graphics for the Modena exhibition poster.¹⁴ In need of a dry place to work, Natalini went to his friend Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, who knew of a place to rent on high ground. Shortly afterwards they founded together the first SUPERSTUDIO office at Via Bellosguardo 1.

SUPERSTUDIO really only appears in some kind of recognizable form some time after the second show in Modena, lagging a bit behind Archizoom.¹⁵ In fact, it would take roughly a year for Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia to collectively gather their forces to give a philosophical foundation to SUPERSTUDIO. Natalini's thesis project on an art centre for Florence, begun in 1964 under the direction of Leonardo Savioli, influenced him to study Louis Kahn. From Kahn, Natalini immersed himself in the history of monuments, a work that he himself has qualified as a work between "pop and the monumental".¹⁶ Toraldo di Francia's thesis presented in 1968, a "Machine for Vacations", represented a dialectical investigation into technology and the evolving social realm. In 1967 Roberto Magris entered the Bellosguardo office, adding his experience in working within the industrial design field. Piero Frassinelli joined SUPERSTUDIO in early April 1968. Frassinelli's university research combined anthropology with architecture, a background that provided him with exceptional skills in writing and storytelling.¹⁷

Over the course of 1967, SUPERSTUDIO laboured to establish three categories for future research: the "architecture of the monument"; the "architecture of the image"; and "tecnomorphic architecture". Natalini's 1966 thesis on the Palazzo dell'Arte served as the initial genesis for the group's work on the architecture of the monument, later developed with greater refinement in the competition for the Fortezza da Basso completed in 1967. The second category, on the architecture of the image, inspired the graphic-visual research behind the beguiling renderings that became the group's renowned signature. The architecture of the image provoked an extensive visual experimentation into techniques and appliques, appropriating from diverse sources, such as collage, pop art, cinema and dada.¹⁸ Toraldo di Francia's university thesis set the stage for a scientific-based research, using technology as an interface medium for architecture.¹⁹

From these preliminary three categories developed the first major critical project proposed by SUPERSTUDIO: the *Journey into the Realm of Reason*, an illustrated storyboard created to serve as "maps for orientation..." describing the unfolding relationship

16 between natural and artificial environments. This pictorial exege-

Superarchitecture exhibition, Pistoia, December 1966. Adolfo Natalini, Andrea Branzi and Massimo Morozzi (Cristiano Toraldo di Francia is taking the picture)



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sis into the theoretical underpinnings of a new architecture listed 26 progressive visions on man and his relation to the built environment. The storyboard narrative, already developed as a form of communication for a small world of objects, lamps and furniture created by SUPERSTUDIO between 1967 and 1968, would become a staple tool in the group's repertoire.

Simultaneously, SUPERSTUDIO began the first phase of its commercial activity, designing houses, banks and interior furniture. Despite its professional engagements, the office did not assume the role of traditional architects' practice, but neither did it remain a den of radicals. SUPERSTUDIO saw itself transformed into a "super" office, in that they attempted to create more than a semblance of a legitimate practice, while all the while seeking to exasperate the condition of the standard architecture through well-targeted "super" charged actions. The "super" code of conduct required that the young architects dress professionally so as to infiltrate the homes and offices of a prospective well-off clientele. They were "super-operators", and as such producers of designs and objects that would be over-loaded with symbolism and poetic content. As SUPERSTUDIO's designs confounded the sense of scale and objective significance, the unsuspecting user would find him or herself becoming part of the critical process of the design.

The making and shaping of these objects were consistently related to bricolage techniques, assemblies from existing manufactured productions, or adaptations from outside industries, such as the fibreglass boat shells redesigned and converted into the *Bazaar* 17

Superstudio in the Bellosguardo office, 1971



Superstudio in the Via delle Mantellate office, 1981



Superstudio in a painting by Elio Daniels



couch system. Nonetheless, the group's attempt to subvert the system only seemed to fuel it: Toraldo di Francia later admitted that these subversive objects they realized "initiated a new level of consumerism, and consequently another level of poverty".²⁰ Having recognized the futility of the strategy, SUPERSTUDIO retrenched, and responded by writing at the end of 1967 *Evasion Design and Invention Design*. The theory, really a manifesto on how to live vicariously through objects, rejected the notion that only the rich could improve their lifestyles through better designed architecture. Just like the *sit-in* had become a powerful tool for all its bare simplicity, SUPERSTUDIO called for people "...to live like one long protest..." , to engage in a life-long "...*be-in*". Every object has a practical function and a contemplative one: and it is the latter that evasion design is seeking to potentiate. Thus there is an end to the 19th-century myths of reason as the explanation of everything, the thousand variations on the theme of the four-legged chair, aerodynamic shapes and the sterilization of dreams. We need in fact to begin all over again: the data are those of myth, those of technology and consumer demand, those of repressed desires".²¹ In 1968 SUPERSTUDIO made yet another leap forward, abandoning the last vestiges of a market-driven architecture, erasing once and for all the supercharged messages of insurgency from the face, though not from the core, of their designs, producing a system of infinite multiplications, divisions and dimensions, the *Histograms*. At its simplest a physical bar graph, the addition of the histograms to the SUPERSTUDIO opus was to allow the group to design essentially by default, a sort of auto-pilot architecture, that left space and time for other more pressing activities.

"We prepared a catalogue of tri-dimensional non-continuous diagrams, a catalogue of histograms of architecture with reference to a grid transportable in diverse areas or scales for the edification of a nature both serene and immobile in which we might finally recognize (re-know) ourselves. From the catalogue of histograms followed effortlessly objects, furniture, environments and architecture... But all these things didn't matter much, nor have they ever mattered much. The surface of such histograms was homogeneous and isotropic; every problem of space and every problem of sensibility having been accurately removed. The histograms were also called 'the tombs of the architects'".²²

In the same year, the Bellosguardo office produced a poster announcing the following greetings: *SUPERSTUDIO wishes you a year of wisdom and peace*. The collage depicts a pyramid (in Rome) with the four members posing at its base, and an owl in the foreground gliding straight towards the viewer. The image, a morbid group critique, nonetheless came in the shape of a riddle. A sort of death wish so beautiful and entrancing that the message really didn't seem to matter.

By 1969 the stage was set to launch a completely self-effacing strategy of open-system architecture, for by now the elemental theoretical conditions developed by SUPERSTUDIO could be applied to any range of objects, buildings, city or region. Not a technologically determined mega-structure, but instead a sort of neutralizing living architectural volume that could be laid across finite or infinite space. The storyboard for *The Continuous Monument*, elaborated between 1969 and 1970 and published in *Casabella*, no. 358, 1971, under the title "Natural and Artificial Deserts", completes the historical project begun in 1967 with the *Journey into the Realm of Reason*, mixing a lesson on history with a theoretical discourse on the humankind's abuse of the planet. The striking architectural colossus that reconfigures itself across a myriad of different landscapes, constructed as a series of carefully layered collage and airbrush perspectives, projected the methodological simplicity of the histograms by merely exploding the scale of its operation.

The strikingly sublime images of *The Continuous Monument* introduced the conceptual work of SUPERSTUDIO to a broader public. But their widespread appearance on the international scene also caused a stir because their claims for an egalitarian society conscripted into a totalizing monumental architecture seemed curiously antithetical. Critics like Manfredo Tafuri were on the whole unimpressed with the premises of this particular brand of 1960s' architecture (see William Menking's essay "The Revolt of the Object"), preferring to reflect more on rehabilitating earlier Italian avant-garde precedents. But SUPERSTUDIO's commitment to pursuing a critical practice cannot be easily dismissed, precisely because their work could not have taken shape without a fundamental belief in the necessity for political engagement in the first place.

Natalini remarked in 1971, "...if design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of the bourgeois models of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning is merely the formalization of present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities... until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until

SUPERSTUDIO VI. AUGURA UN ANNO DI SAGGEZZA E DI PACE



Pyramid poster, 1968

then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture..."²³ *The Continuous Monument* must be read within these terms, as an architecture that does not portray "architecture" but as an architecture loaded with critical meaning, where the language of architecture is high-jacked to achieve other goals than building for the sake of building.

Although Manfredo Tafuri was largely skeptical of finding any critical value inherent to SUPERSTUDIO's work, other critics took their projects seriously enough to comment on. Both Charles Jencks and Kenneth Frampton were willing to look much closer at the issues, but each came to rather divergent conclusions. For Jencks, SUPERSTUDIO's insurrectional treatment of architecture, taken consciously from within the profession, reveals itself to be only more problematic when cloaked in a despotic beauty. He questioned their notion of professional subversion by commenting "...the groups Archizoom and SUPERSTUDIO consider themselves to be leftist revolutionaries while working entirely within the established framework of the consumer society (they call it 'revolution from within'). SUPERSTUDIO has designed 'The Continuous Monument', which 'is a single piece of architecture to be extended over the whole world...'"²⁴

Indeed, the first dilemma to understanding SUPERSTUDIO is how to reconcile their nearly schizophrenic position riding between architecture's theoretical and practical applications. But there is, in fact, quite a bit of logic at play. SUPERSTUDIO, from its first year in operation, periodically performed critical self-interrogations on their own work, in order to advance their theories up to the absolute limit. Jencks might have recognized the conflictual nature of SUPERSTUDIO's dialectical research: "In this case" he noted, "the idea is a mixture of 'Fascist' 'total urbanization' (as they call it) and absolute egalitarianism. Everyone has exactly the same room, or the same white square gridiron, which is used for all functions".²⁵ Jencks was indeed suspicious of the message: "...this monument is placed in striking contrast to nature and it is meant to convey a state of supreme calm and serenity; its 'static perfection moved the world through the love that it creates', or so the hope is. Like some tantalizing paradox, the enjoyment consists in being persuaded of something one knows to be questionable, if not entirely false".²⁶

For Frampton, on the other hand, SUPERSTUDIO meaningfully engaged in the dialectically entangled issue of design as both an aesthetic object and political instrument. Frampton was drawn to the controversially engaged position of the Florentine group, recognizing that their stand aggressively challenged the relationship between technology and social consumption.²⁷ Frampton understood that *The Continuous Monument* acted not as a realizable totem for the 20th century but as an evacuating symbol. He ob-

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Superarchitecture exhibition I,
Pistoia, December 1966

Superarchitecture exhibition II,
Modena, March 1967

served: "...SUPERSTUDIO, led by Adolfo Natalini, started in 1966 to produce a body of work which was more or less divided between representing the form of a 'Continuous Monument' as a mute urban sign and producing a series of vignettes illustrating a world from which consumer goods had been eliminated. Their work varied from the projection of vast impenetrable megaliths, faced in mirror-glass, to the depiction of a science-fiction landscape in which nature had been rendered benevolent".²⁸ The whole operation, Frampton may be suggesting, should not be interpreted as a monumental form occupying an existing landscape, but instead a phantom projection across a strangely altered spatial-temporal continuum.²⁹

Charles Jencks preferred to interpret *The Continuous Monument* as a Jacobin architecture, revolutionary but despotic. He failed ultimately in reconciling the ironic self-critique that functioned as a disordering control mechanism. But if Jencks was not convinced that the Monument's haunting message could be so false, Kenneth Frampton's interpretation of SUPERSTUDIO picked up on a counter cultural message, that he recognized to be veiled below the image itself. "Beyond the rule of the performance principle" noted Frampton, "which the philosopher Herbert Marcuse had already characterized as defining life in terms of instruments and consumer goods, SUPERSTUDIO projected a silent, anti-futurist and technologically optimistic utopia...".³⁰ According to Frampton, "it is significant that SUPERSTUDIO chose to represent such a non-repressive world in terms of an architecture that was virtually invisible, or, where visible, totally useless and by design auto-destructive".³¹

Frampton's read on SUPERSTUDIO comes much nearer to the group's original intent, but his commentary also confirms that *The Continuous Monument* was not so cloaked in irony and ambiguity as to lack legibility. SUPERSTUDIO consciously examined each layer in the process of design and architecture and built its alter-

native paradigm, one step at time. As Natalini emphasized: "By the destruction of objects, we mean the destruction of their attributes of 'status' and the connotations imposed by power, so that we live with objects (reduced to the condition of neutral and disposable elements) and not for objects. By the elimination of the city, we mean the elimination of the accumulation of formal structures of power — the elimination of the city as hierarchy and social model, looking for a new free egalitarian state, in which everyone can reach different grades in the development of his possibilities, beginning from equal starting points. By the end of work, we mean the end of specialized and repetitive work. Seen as an alienating activity, foreign to the nature of man".³²

Though *The Continuous Monument* remains one of the most renowned projects in the SUPERSTUDIO oeuvre, eliciting much critical comment, there were other intriguing projects that continued to examine the alienated relationship between human beings and their "natural" environment. In 1971 Piero Frassinelli penned the dozen fantasy worlds that became SUPERSTUDIO's *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas: Premonitions of the Mystical Rebirth of Urbanism*, appearing in the December 1971 issue of *AD*. In almost every "ideal" city the predominant theme was about blind faith in technological salvation and the looming effects of the Americanization of European culture. In the *Ninth City. The Ville-Machine Habitée*, to give one example, the city takes care of every convenience, where all one's needs are met. This is a mechanical city that is extremely efficient, recycling and regenerating itself for the good of the inhabitants, except in some cases where one might think of deviating... "The inhabitants live in the machine endlessly dragged along by conveyor belts, by chutes and pneumatic tubes from the time of birth to the time of death. The machine takes care of everything; along the innumerable routes which intersect, unite and divide according to the incomprehensible programming of the machine. The inhabitants find food and fear, sleep and joy, sex and hope, death and anger, sometimes also rebellion; but they know very well that if they get off the obligatory routes established by the machine, they will inevitably be crushed by its machinery."³³

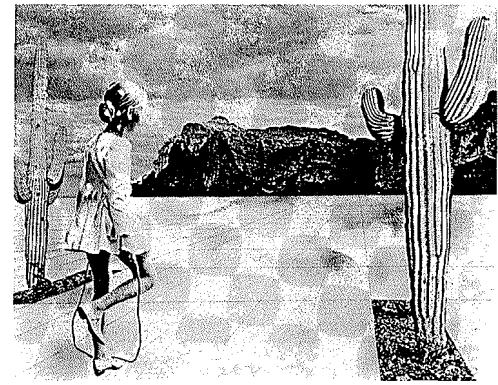
Once SUPERSTUDIO finished producing the *Twelve Tales*, they made the rounds to a number of publishers in Italy and abroad and were picked up by the *AD* magazine in London who published the English version first. In Italy, meanwhile, the weekly *Il Mondo* published a short unsigned review on page 29 titled "12 Città del futuro" (12 cities of the future).³⁴ The reviewer remarked, "The alternative proposals by 'Super-studio' appear in succession based on an imaginary, impossible and playful architecture". An interview with Adolfo Natalini followed. Natalini, in any event, had sent out several dozen copies of the *Twelve Tales* to Italian papers, including *Il Mondo*. *Il Mondo's* cultural editor during these years was Italo

Calvino. It appears unlikely that we can confirm Calvino ever read SUPERSTUDIO's *Twelve Tales* or had anything to do with the writing of the review, dated 5 December 1971. Calvino began work on his *Invisible Cities* around 1970 and published the book in 1972. Though the connection remains speculative — what kind of influence would the SUPERSTUDIO piece have had on Calvino if he had indeed read it in 1971 — the coincidence nonetheless remains intriguing. Calvino's short stories had a vast influence on the general public, not to mention a whole generation of architects. Another cautionary tale?

Also during this time SUPERSTUDIO began the production of its first film *Interplanetary Architecture*. The film combined the fantastical collage images from "space" created by Alessandro Poli with tightly choreographed camera movements and the images of American astronauts dancing in slow motion about the moon (taken from commercial super-8 reels available for purchase at the local news stands). These images were interwoven with a visceral soundtrack playing primitive African tribal music and Buddhist chants in the background. In one memorable scene while the rhythms are heard melodically in the background the astronauts, seen feeding on plastic sacks of liquid nutrition, seem instead to be playing on strange musical instruments. As the first foray into film-making, the effects are indeed at times simplistic, but nonetheless powerful precisely because the hyper-gadgetry of space-capsule life is suddenly reduced to a tribal rite." A poetic *renise en scène* in which the real protagonists are the histogram objects that penetrate the galaxy. SUPERSTUDIO's incursion into the world of film begins far from earth: everything, "from the moon to the planets is architecture", but in truth the sense of otherworldliness is not only in the space images but in the melancholic soundtrack, establishing a nostalgia precisely for primal knowledge on earth.

In 1972 SUPERSTUDIO participated in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark exhibition on Italian design *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*. Their *Passiflora* plastic lamp was selected by the show's curator Emilio Ambasz for the "Objects" section of the exhibit. In addition SUPERSTUDIO produced a series of nine images that intended to be a "...critical reappraisal of the possibility of life without objects" in the "Environments" section of the exhibition and catalogue.¹⁶ This project, which took the form of a small plastic model, repeated to infinity in a cubed light box. As they describe it is "...a reconsideration of the relations between the process of design and the environment through an alternative model of existence".¹⁷

The images reproduced in the catalogue are nine variations from their film project *Life, Supersurface* and remain one of their most potent theoretical images. These grided landscapes respond to Ambasz's detailed *Design Program* for the exhibit, calling for a



Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives

reconsideration of domestic space. SUPERSTUDIO collage their slick drawings of satellites, desert landscapes and people in the act of familial relations. One drawing, *The Happy Island*, features a woman at an ironing board and other domestic appliances which she has "no intention of doing without".¹⁸ She is depicted sadly marooned amid her appliances on a small grass island in the middle of a plane "without any messages in bottles". In the catalogue this image is the foil for another, *The Distant Mountain*, which portrays a youthful sybarite world of nomadic pleasures not enslaved to designed objects of mass consumption but free to experience their body and feed their souls.¹⁹

With *Histograms*, SUPERSTUDIO began its sweeping operation to remove all commercially driven clutter from the object, or the architecture: as in their *Five Suburban Villas* project, each superfluous decision was eliminated from the process until they reached the most elemental prototypical solution possible. And *The Continuous Monument* indecorously neutralized layers of gratuitous historical symbolisms associated with the making of monumental architecture. But the MOMA exhibition, whose survey dwelt on the nearly irresolvable theorem seeking to separate object from desire, stimulated SUPERSTUDIO to change route again, to attempt to step outside this burdensome dichotomy. SUPERSTUDIO, beginning with the MOMA show, sought to re-conceptualize the position of architecture altogether. They discarded the role of the creator, the designer, the architect. Instead, the group moved to espouse the complete reversal of the normative condition, to switch roles, to find architecture in one's *own* life.

The effort stretched beyond the original MOMA project, initiating one of the most unusual and paradigmatically innovative at-

tempts to take architecture onto a different philosophical plateau. Between 1972 and 1973, Casabella published SUPERSTUDIO's storyboards and texts for the *Five Fundamental Acts: Life, Education, Ceremony, Love and Death*. The project, of tremendous scope and vision, contemplates the existence of the architect, the *œuvre complet* on life. Conceived as an experimental film opus, only *Life*, *Supersurface* and *Ceremony* were completed in film version. *Supersurface*, a collage animation with its final sequence filmed outdoors in nature with a young couple, was screened for the MOMA exhibition *The New Domestic Landscape* in 1972.⁴⁰ *Ceremony* was shot live in Florence the following year.⁴¹ The illustrated texts for the *Fifth Fundamental Act. Death* was set to a slide show with an audio soundtrack. The *Five Fundamental Acts* were published in series in storyboard format. Like the one for *The Continuous Monument*, the storyboards for the *Five Fundamental Acts* were didactic in nature. SUPERSTUDIO's manifesto states:

"Architecture never touches the great themes, the fundamental themes of our lives. Architecture remains at the limit, and intervenes only at a certain point in the process, usually when behaviour has already been entirely codified, furnishing answers to rigidly stated problems. Even if its answers are aberrant or evasive, the logic of their production and consumption avoids any real upheaval.

Architecture presents no alternative proposals since it uses instruments accurately predisposed to avoid any deviation.

The working-class home resembles a stately villa in the same way as the design of a Radical architect that of an academic or reactionary architect: the difference lies only in the quantities in play, the decisions on the quality of living have already been made.

Accepting his role, the architect becomes accomplice to the machinations of the system. Then the avant-garde architect fills one of the most rigidly fixed roles (like the young lover in plays).

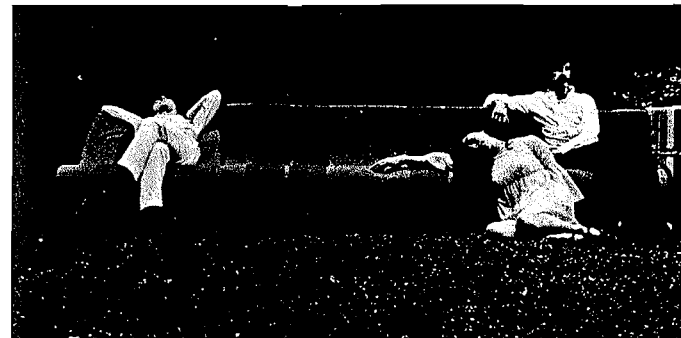
This tentative anthropological and philosophical foundation of architecture becomes the centre of our reductive process."⁴²

SUPERSTUDIO, one might argue, succeeded in cleansing architecture of all sources of contamination. The only quandary that would remain, of course, is what does in fact architecture look like when you have the chance to begin all over, when you can experience it through merely living, when you can move freely across the landscape inside a city of the mind?

Five Fundamental Acts sets in motion such a level of destabilization that there would in fact be almost no recourse to action possible afterwards, no sequel truly possible. After 1973, the work of SUPERSTUDIO entered by fiat into a second phase in which the group, as Peter Lang points out in "Suicidal Desires", reconstitutes themselves as best as they can, by shifting the focus of their research onto the primary building blocks themselves, through an intensive ac-

demically founded study on the making of peasant tools and shelters. The move coincided with the co-founding of Global Tools in 1973, a short-lived but significant meeting of minds between the far flung members of the Radical architecture movement. Their collective strategies, though never realized within this same ensemble, nonetheless moved parallel with the SUPERSTUDIO's second phase of production. But it should be clear that what SUPERSTUDIO brought to their phase of research was the intensive desire not to repeat the formula that would only serve to prolong the commercial market-oriented exploitation of the design profession. Of course this would be by now impossible to persevere, however, given the growing relationship that many of the individuals in SUPERSTUDIO were at this point cultivating in the construction and design worlds.

SUPERSTUDIO, in this phase that culminated in the presentation of *The Wife of Lot* and *Project Zeno* at the Venice Biennale in 1978, experimented with different kinds of co-operative efforts, working both independently as architects, and in combinations between members on various projects. Adolfo Natalini, from his position teaching in the University at Florence, introduced a course on *Extra-Urban Material Culture*, taught in conjunction with Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Poli and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia. The research on primitive peasant economies, their tools and shelters revealed a wealth of living information that succeeded in documenting not just the style of life in the far reaches of the Italian countryside, but also the rigours of poverty. It helped to develop simple methodologies that were assiduously economical and brilliantly creative in the use of recycled materials, energy conservation, distributed recourses, and multiple uses. The research and documentation gathered by the students for the *Extra-Urban Material Culture* project suggests some very interesting alternative paths to follow now.



If SUPERSTUDIO has succeeded in contributing to any particular lesson to inventing a future architecture, it would be not so much the individual "pieces" as it would be the process itself, the strict critical vision focused on their own roles in the much larger chain of production. This process of repeatedly and critically re-examining the normal drifts and currents moving across the domestic landscapes has led them to design, or perhaps more appropriately to un-design their surroundings like no other group before or after them. We are far enough along again to perform similarly critical interrogations and we hope as the editors of this project that SUPERSTUDIO's contribution may be to take another, *critical* look at the objects that surround our lives.

13 January 2003

¹ SUPERSTUDIO, "Histograms", reprinted in *l'Invenzione della superficie neutra. Elementi*, transl. Peter Lang (Milan: Edizioni Print, 1972, 19).

² SUPERSTUDIO, "The Continuous Monument", *Domus* (no. 481, December 1969).

³ The term "radical", first coined by Germano Celant to describe a whole range of artistic practices, is too general, the authors believe, to describe the specific milieu of SUPERSTUDIO; but we use it to describe the larger tendencies.

⁴ See G. Pettena, ed., "Radicals: Design and Architecture 1960/75", in *VI Mostra Internazionale della Biennale di Venezia*, exhibition catalogue (Florence: Ventilaturo, 1996); *Architecture radicale*, exhibition catalogue, Villeurbanne, Institut d'art contemporain - IAC, January-May 2001 (Barcelona: Diagrama, 2001); D. Soutif, ed., *Continuità: Arte Toscana 1968-1989*, exhibition catalogue (Florence: M&M, 2002); *The Changing of the Avant-Garde*, exhibition catalogue, New York, The Museum of Modern Art (New York: MOMA, 2002).

⁵ Sarah Deyong placed too much emphasis on the metabolists' influences regarding the Italian groups. S. Deyong, "Memories of the Urban Future", in T. Riley, ed., *The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection* (New York: MOMA, 2002, 31).

⁶ SUPERSTUDIO, disbanded in 1986, reconstituted itself in the 1990s to better administer its current archive. Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia were the initial founders in 1966, Roberto Magris joined in 1967, Piero Frassinelli in 1968 and Alessandro Magris and Alessandro Poli in 1970. Poli left the group in 1972. Frances Branton translated SUPERSTUDIO texts from Italian to English for the international journals and magazines.

⁷ Pop-ups are those nagging little Internet advertisements that are increasingly jumping onto the computer screens.

⁸ For a detailed discussion on the contemporary legacy of SUPERSTUDIO see D. Rouillard, "Superstudio: Monument Continuo 1969", *Le Monde* (no. 115, Paris, April 2001, 80).

⁹ A. Branzi, "Introduction", in P. Navone and B. Orlandini, *Architettura Radicale* (Milan: Documenti di Casabella, 1974, 14). Branzi stressed in a recent interview that Radical architecture was "not a recognizable language" and that it encompassed "... many small groups without a big theme". Peter Lang and William Menking, interview with Andrea Branzi (Arezzo, 2 December 2002).

¹⁰ G. Pettena, "Architettura Radicale", in *Architettura radicale* (cit. 31).

¹¹ Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steve Izenour, whose writings were highly respected among the Radical community, were quick to criticize the movement: "However, no architecture is not the answer to too much architecture. The reaction of the anti-architects of AD is perhaps as futile as the endless fondling of irrelevant subtleties at the other extreme in the other magazines, though it is possibly less harmful only because it seldom gets built,

plugged or inflated". R. Venturi, D. Scott Brown and S. Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1972, 149).

¹² The following account on SUPERSTUDIO's origins is drawn from Peter Lang's interview with Adolfo Natalini (Florence, 14 December 2002).

¹³ Dario Bartolini, from Archizoom. Peter Lang and William Menking, interview with Dario Bartolini (Florence, 9 September 2001).

¹⁴ Originally, the larger Modena exhibition, despite occurring after Pistoia, was conceived well before the Pistoia show. The pop-inspired manifesto for the *Superarchitecture* show was actually written after the programme for the Modena exhibit, conceived to display primarily thesis projects. Peter Lang, interview with Adolfo Natalini (Florence, 14 December 2002).

¹⁵ For the members of Archizoom (who require their own detailed study in a future forum), their daring engagement in the prevailing culture of architectural commodification pushed them to create a critical design language suffused in pop iconography that did not so much project a critical-ironical reality as it succeeded in becoming its physical embodiment. This is one of the arguments developed in Peter Lang's essay "Suicidal Desires" where he demonstrates how the two groups confront modernity through entirely different approaches: SUPERSTUDIO by internally gutting the Modernist canon and thereby helping to force a quick end to the Modernist era; Archizoom by modelling a parallel world that gave rise to a Post-modern language of architecture.

¹⁶ Peter Lang, interview with Adolfo Natalini (Florence, 14 December 2002).

Natalini's thesis project, *Palazzo dell'Arte di Firenze* (Palace of Art for Florence), completed in 1966, was exhibited at Modena.

In 1967 he submitted a competition entry for the Fortezza da Basso in Florence (with C. Chiappi, K. Gaschischmidt and A. Navati), now in the Pompidou collection.

¹⁷ Each of the members was an expert in a certain aspect of the SUPERSTUDIO creative and technical production. A more detailed biography of the members would require more space than available here.

¹⁸ Peter Lang, interview with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (Filottrano, 7 December 2002).

¹⁹ C. Toraldo di Francia and A. Natalini, "Dall'industria al tecnomorfismo", 1982.

²⁰ Peter Lang, interview with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (Filottrano, 7 December 2002).

²¹ SUPERSTUDIO, "Invention Design, Evasion Design", *Domus* (no. 475, Milan, 1967).

²² SUPERSTUDIO, *La Superficie Neutra* (Milan: Edizioni Print, 1972).

²³ A. Natalini, SUPERSTUDIO, AA School of Architecture lecture, London, 3 March 1971.

²⁴ C. Jencks, *Modern Movements in Architecture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1973, 56-57).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 248-49.

²⁶ According to Frampton, "... while one may challenge its effectiveness, the architectural avant-garde of the 1960s had not entirely abdicated its social responsibility. Many factions existed whose orientation was decidedly political and whose attitude towards advanced technology was by no means uncritical. Of these mention must be made of the Italian SUPERSTUDIO group, who were, in this respect, among the most poetic". K. Frampton,

Modern Architecture. A Critical History (New York: Thames and Hudson, 3rd ed., 1992, 288).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Frampton's remark on science fiction appears to have been intuitively correct. Sci-Fi provided some of the most explicit examples of how to depict other worlds.

²⁹ Frampton, *Modern Architecture. A Critical History* (cit. 288).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Natalini, SUPERSTUDIO, AA School of Architecture lecture (cit.).

³² SUPERSTUDIO, "Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas", *AD* (London, December 1971, 737-42).

³³ "12 Città del futuro", unsigned review in *Il Mondo* (5 December 1971, 297).

³⁴ The original master tape has suffered some damage to its soundtrack, and requires further restoration.

³⁵ *Interplanetary Architecture*, Italian voice over, with soundtrack, produced by the Centro di ricerca cinematografica dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1971.

³⁶ SUPERSTUDIO, "Description of the Microevent/Microenvironment", in *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, exhibition catalogue, (New York: MOMA and Florence: Centro Di, 1972, 242).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 248-49.

³⁹ The full Italian title is *Superficie - Vita su modo alternativo di vita sulla terra*, 15 minutes length, originally 35 mm, in colour, with soundtrack. First screening in May 1972 at the MOMA exhibition.

⁴⁰ The Italian title is *Carimonia*, 16 minutes length, originally 16 mm, in colour, with soundtrack. Production: SUPERCOSMIC HOME-MADE MOVIES INC., financed by ABET/PRINT. First screening on 20 September 1973 at the XV Triennale, Milan.

⁴¹ "SUPERSTUDIO", *Casabella* (no. 367, Milan, 1972).



The Wife of Lot, Venice, 1978

The continual references to catalogues and inventories and the definitely didactic nature of the publication constitute the affirmation of the wish to testify to one of the most logical acts that an intellectual can commit today: suicide. (Better still if it is suicide committed in public).

The new role of the intellectual will be born only after all the moralisms, aspirations and pretensions of his present role have vanished, perhaps violently. The architect's suicide and the disappearance of architecture are two equivalent phenomena: to work towards the one or the other is only a question of quantity. In both cases, it means eliminating the formal structures connected to artificial scale of values.

In this sense, our work has used the instruments of architecture in a contrary fashion, gradually, through absurdity, showing its uselessness, its falsity and its immorality.
Adolfo Natalini, SUPERSTUDIO, AA School of Architecture lecture, London, 3 March 1971

The inclination to violate architecture, to reject architecture as a given condition, to lay waste to its very foundations, suggests not a new form of architecture but the re-conceptualization of architecture as a fundamental condition of life. SUPERSTUDIO's nihilistic operation, springing from a reconstructed post-war Florentine society, reflects the flip side of the Italian *dolce vita*. Florence's artistic patrimony remained only a veil over the grim business of unfettered growth and alienated lifestyles, achieved at the expense of social equality and the urban environment. SUPERSTUDIO navigated the elevated themes of life and death precisely because architecture as a profession appeared too deeply compromised to ever be recuperated.

Post-war modernization was wreaking havoc on Italian society and decimating the surrounding urban landscapes. Mussolini's 31

Fascist regime contributed to the invention of Italian mass society, but did not construct a mass consumer culture. That would be the accomplishment of the post-war governments, whose laws were designed to promote private investments to the exclusion of all else. Private initiatives in housing were given a "free hand", with no controls placed on land uses, adequate service facilities like parks or parking lots, nor sufficient safety regulations to ensure proper building methods.¹ The results were catastrophic, with speculative buildings sprawling randomly through the urban peripheries and under reinforced buildings tragically collapsing in known high-risk earthquake zones.

Italians were becoming more mobile, more urban, more enamoured with their object world, but adapting to this new consumer-oriented lifestyle inevitably meant ruptures to traditional habits. Economic expansion came late relative to other European countries, but the symptoms of estrangement among the post-war Italian middle classes bore the common traits of similar Western industrialized countries. The growing prosperity within the Italian society exposed ever-deepening rifts within the communities at large, as well as intergenerational conflicts. During the 1960s the student population in the national university system doubled to half a million students, providing sufficient momentum behind the rise of a mass student culture.²

This gradual slide towards social breakdown was brought into explicit view through the work of some of the country's most creative cinematographic artists. As Siegfried Kracauer noted, "the more life is submerged, the more it needs the artwork, which unseals its withdrawnness and puts its pieces back in place..."³ Aesthetic manifestations depicting the general malaise of Italy's upwardly mobile classes and alienated youth increasingly surfaced in the arts and in cinema by the mid-1960s. After *La dolce vita* was released in 1960, Federico Fellini turned the camera on himself and his profession, creating in 1963 *Eight and a Half*, a spectacularly personal inquiry and psychological confession on the existential state of cinema and society. Michelangelo Antonioni in his 1964 film *Red Desert*, constructed a spiritually deprived vision of post-war Italy that was hermetically linked to a devastated landscape of smog-choked factories and polluted landscapes. As the characters move with empty gestures through *Red Desert's* world of manufactured sensations, only a siren-like song seems to penetrate the ambient stupor. The primal recall remains an insidious reminder of a simpler past, a symbolic metaphor that would find its echo in the reflections on the built environment among the young generation of architects who would form the nucleus of SUPERSTUDIO.⁴

Over the course of their activities, SUPERSTUDIO elaborated on the grand themes of alienation, rationalization, neuroses, therapy and the visceral forms of suicide. These themes informed the un-

derlying critique that constituted the group's thoughts and actions from the initial founding in 1966 to the late 1970s. But these epic themes also can be seen to reflect more formulative life trajectories. The story of SUPERSTUDIO, whose beginnings are announced in the historical staging of the 1966 *Superarchitecture* exhibit in Pistoia, finds its inception in Florence's rebellious youth culture. SUPERSTUDIO's genesis, in fact, cannot be linked to a specific student movement — the six members of the group did not come from the same ideological background or belong to the same student political organizations — nor did there exist a direct correlation with a specific class or a specific professor. The principal founders in 1966–67, Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, were from separate graduating classes; Roberto Magris was several years older than the others and already professionally working in the field; Piero Frassinelli came into architecture through a tract that had led through anthropological studies; Alessandro Magris and Alessandro Poli joined when the group had already established its characteristic identity.⁵ In many aspects SUPERSTUDIO was formed just as their name implied, as a "super-office", a design and architectural office that happened to have an extremely deep and foreboding sense of history and belligerent behaviour.

Yet to understand SUPERSTUDIO it remains essential to understand the university climate that existed in Florence during the 1960s, precisely because the generation of students who completed their education there were marked much differently than elsewhere in Italy. The reasons will become evident over the course of this next part of the essay, but in short the students attending the Florence School of Architecture were, out of sheer necessity, obliged to take control over their own education. This would be an operation to perform on many levels, considering that Florence's political government resisted any form of non-traditional modernization; the university administered itself as the pedantic gatekeeper of this very same cultural legacy, and the more innovative faculties found themselves isolated if not removed from participating in the city's architectural and urban development. The *Superarchitecture* phenomenon that led to the founding of SUPERSTUDIO cannot be explained without understanding the depth of frustration and sense of critical purpose that was unique to the young generation living and studying in Florence. The university experiences in Rome, Milan and Venice would take significantly different directions. These are therefore the issues to follow in order to get to the heart of SUPERSTUDIO's deeply internalized rebellion against architecture.

The entire national university was put to test in the 1960s, pressured by students and many of the faculties to renovate the archaic educational system, pushing for greater democratization and educational reforms. Student occupations and strikes gained cur-

rency in Italy beginning in the early 1960s. In 1966, litigations between left- and right-wing student political factions became deadly. In Rome the murder of the architecture student Paolo Rossi, at the hands of a group of neo-fascists brought thousands of Italians into the streets to manifest their shock. By 1968, the whole national university system was under siege with occupations and strikes, in communion with similar student-led revolts spreading from country to country. Going to school in the 1960s became a matter of revolutionary importance, an experience that deeply marked the younger generations.⁶

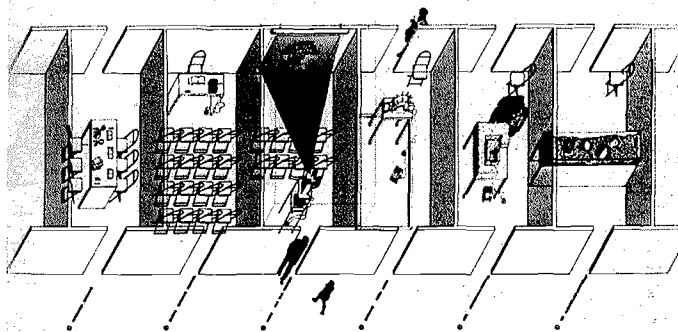
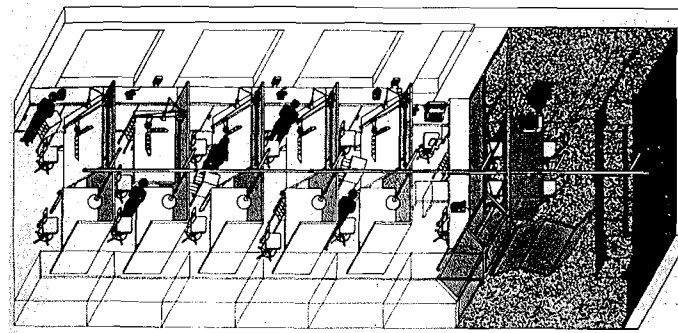
In the post-war period the schools of architecture in the nation's major universities were deeply polarized. The faculty of architecture at the University of Rome dominated the national academic scene, while a number of highly prominent architects in Milan linked to the international movement and CIAM brought the most polemical issues of the day to the pages of their magazines. The IUAV in Venice, through the directorship of Giuseppe Samonà, successfully broke out of its former institutional mould, becoming the foremost laboratory for critical architectural thinking in Italy. While the Venice school was more academically linked to Rome than to Milan — at times it seemed that the school was a kind of vanguard outpost at the end of the Roman commuter corridor — Samonà nonetheless played aptly to both fields, accommodating Bruno Zevi's camp in Rome while providing institutional support to the Milan-centric CIAM.

The Florence school of architecture lived essentially outside this privileged academic loop. Giovanni Michelucci, Florence's great transitional figure, masterfully succeeded in evolving his pre-war blend of rationalism and historicism into a uniquely Florentine style of crafts-based architecture. Though a prominent public figure, Michelucci became increasingly ostracized through his frequent clashes with the crusted Florentine patronage system. Adalberto Libera, Ludovico Quaroni and Leonardo Benevolo joined the Florence faculty in the mid-1950s, a decade into the post-war period. Their presence undeniably added to the school's minor status, but the School of Architecture was already losing ground to Rome, Milan and Venice. The Florentine faculty responded slowly to post-war revisions to architectural theory and practice while ignoring the need to carry out internal administrative and pedagogic reforms to the school.

In Rome the Fascist-led planning initiatives directed towards the growing peripheries, the new university, the EUR, and the regional planning towards the seacoast would find unusual continuity after the war in the figure of *Marcello Piacentini*, a towering presence from the past who held on to his job as director of the School of Architecture in Rome.⁷ Bruno Zevi returned in 1944 to the Italian capital from Harvard where he completed his architecture de-

Collage image of Superstudio
Bellosguardo office, 1971

Exhibition design in five acts
for the Neue Galerie, Graz, 1972



Social Dances

gree. Zevi's American connections and deep dedication to reforming Italian architectural culture had immediate impact on post-war debates. He quickly established under the aegis of APOA the first "organic school" in Italy inspired largely by Frank Lloyd Wright. Many younger Italian architects joined efforts with Zevi in reconstituting the Roman scene. One of the challenges was to re-evaluate and re-conceptualize a contemporary architectural style that could reconcile both Modernist and Neo-classical contamination from the Fascist period. Over the next decade, Mario Ridolfi, Adalberto Libera and Luigi Moretti among others, developed an urbanistic architectural language that, through the sponsorship of INA-Casa, the State-subsidized housing authority, succeeded in promoting the development of an urban-scale hybrid Modernism combining labour intensive craft-work with advanced concrete frame technologies.⁹

The urban fabric in and around Milan was heavily damaged during the drawn-out allied bombing campaigns. As the country's major economic centre, reconstruction proceeded quickly. The development of the city's regional master-plan, conceived with the participation of the Milanese members of CIAM, went largely unchallenged by the city's traditional planning strategists. The Movement for Architectural Studies (MSA) was founded in Milan in 1945 with the goal of opposing a traditional academic education. The Lombard city was already predisposed to developing a Functionalist and Neo-rationalist style of architecture to plug the many damaged sites. Milan's publication houses quickly became the principal platforms for national debates on the future of Modernist architecture. Ernesto Nathan Rogers took over *Domus* from Gio Ponti in 1946 and then moved over to launch an improved *Casabella-Continuità* in 1954 (the magazine remained under his direction until 1967). In 1947 the Milan Triennale opened its VIII edition featuring the most recent post-war developments in social housing and urban reconstruction.

Florence would also have its opportunities to grab the centre of the debate, but it seems that each occasion was squandered by internecine quarrels among bitterly competing interests. There are three key aspects that when collapsed together help explain the peculiar condition of Florence's conflictual artistic and architectural culture in the post-war period. The first was the failed reconstruction of Florence's city centre, heavily damaged during the German wartime withdrawal on 4 August 1944; the second concerned the equally disappointing manner in which the city expanded to meet the growing population and manufacturing needs in the same period; the third was the significance of the student activist movements in directly and indirectly contributing to reconstituting the School of Architecture into one of the most openly receptive — if also least recognized — grounds for architectural

and design experiment. The impunity of the city's historic legacy despite a hundred years of hidden renovations and kitsch constructions; the impossibility of engaging in dialogue with an openly hostile community on the future of Florence; the frustrations of a generation growing up on global youth culture in a provincial city would appear to make this climate hostile to new and emergent forms of culture. Yet precisely the opposite actually happened: Florence became the de-facto centre of the Radical architecture movement. Marginal cultures, it must be acknowledged, create their own ways to draw in the centre.

The reconstruction of Florence ended up in the hands of the city's most conservative forces. The German army covered its desperate retreat by destroying the numerous historic bridges crossing the Arno river. The Germans spared the Ponte Vecchio; the famous shopping bridge was left standing while the surrounding neighbourhoods were dynamited to block the Allied forces' advance. A competition was announced in 1946 based on a revised master-plan for the area prepared by architect Gustavo Giovannoni dating back to 1913. The results of this competition were largely ignored, and the intriguing urban proposals to reorganize traffic and commercial districts abandoned to more ad hoc rebuilding methods.¹⁰ In the end, the main controversy over the rehabilitation of the historic centre of Florence focused on the choice of the most appropriate architectural language to best address the city's monumental landscape. Drawn from a pastiche of concrete frame Rationalist and imitation Tuscan styles, the architecture used to patch together Florence's damaged fabric was hardly an improvement over the stylized neo-Renaissance buildings constructed during the late-19th-century renovation of Risorgimento Florence.¹¹

The reconstruction of the adjacent bridges only served to rigidify professional opinion, with the Santa Trinita bridge's *authentic reconstruction* backed all the way up to the top by the Vatican and Benedetto Croce, while Leonardo Savioli's more timid Michelucci-inspired proposals for some of the other Florentine bridges, with the architectural assistance of Giuseppe Gori and Leonardo Ricci, did not gain much public support.¹² In Manfredo Tafuri's opinion the ensuing proposals for the heavily damaged areas "...led to feeble and greatly compromised reconstruction of the historical fabric..." Tafuri essentially characterized the actual reconstruction as a failure, though "...it did manage to formulate problems worthy of deeper study".¹³ Tafuri's opinion may read like an understatement; the effect of a compromised reconstruction programme in the heart of Florence had much deeper repercussions: for one it distanced the best architects from the most important architectural recovery site in Italy, thereby permitting a powerful lobby of conservative architects, art historians and private investors to dictate the style and density of the city's reconstruction. Mean-

while, the planning and construction of the peripheral areas of the city, where much of the real growth in the post-war period was now concentrating also would lack vision. Once again, the financial and property investors were able to dominate the choice of sites and determine the quality of architecture, without having to invest in adequate services or development of green parks.

When Savioli and Ricci did succeed in *shaping from scratch* an ideal new community, Sorgane, the unfortunately politicized selection of the site, at the throat of the Arno valley directly across from a bleak industrial zone, only seemed to undercut the project's important architectural value.¹¹ The architects were rarely consulted for much of the city's later development. In what would become an increasingly familiar pattern, the most prominent Florentine architects found themselves pushed aside and stripped of an instrumental role in either the reconstruction of the centre, or the *planning and construction of the rapidly expanding periphery*. The net effect of these missed opportunities would be the total disengagement of Florence's leading architects from the city's future, according to Cristiano Toraldo di Francia pushing the most talented of the school's teachers into ever-deeper theoretical pursuits as the city "...auto-constructed itself through a process which has nothing to do with architecture".¹⁴ Florence lost in this early period of the 1960s many of its most prominent professors: Michelucci went into self-exile to the engineering department in Bologna by the late 1950s, and one by one Adalberto Libera in 1962, Ludovico Quaroni in 1963, followed by Leonardo Benevolo left for positions elsewhere.¹³

The strange set of circumstances that conspired to prevent any kind of relevant modern architectural discourse to emerge out of the potential "lessons" on the reconstruction of Florence, seems to have severely reduced the relevance of the Florentine architecture faculty. In both Rome and Milan each faculty was far more engaged in their respective cities' urban planning, building design and construction. Bruno Zevi observed: "In the immediate post-war period, Rome and Milan were behind the most significant events in the contemporary cultural discourse, constituting the central engines to the architectural discourse in Italy".¹⁶ To a great extent, the exalted condition of architecture in Rome and in Milan was tied to strong pre-war precedents. And despite the not too infrequent trading of professors from one university to another, Florence could simply not fit the pattern then emerging in both Rome and Milan. Each of the universities can be viewed as having preserved a reasonably legible ideological or architectural identity distinct from one another. The clichés hold through the 1960s, Rome remaining principally focused on urban-scale architectural issues, while Milan continued to be faithful to the principles of a functionalist CIAM-inspired Modernism. But the reasons Florence's

School of Architecture had little ascertainable identity of its own can also be traced to an intransigent administration, led in the 1960s by Raffaello Fagnoni, a politically conservative and old-school Rationalist, who stood in the way of educational and ideological reforms.

However, the reasons behind the *unpronounced* identity of the Florence School of Architecture go much deeper than the issue of an unresponsive administration and disaggregated faculty. For students, the system was confining and impenetrable, an elitist and economically discriminating institution that lacked adequate technological courses and still emphasized beaux-arts-era requirements for graduation.¹⁷ Worse, the students were not integrated into the school's decision making process, giving them no possible role to influence the school's future development. Cut entirely out of process, the students rallied together and fought back, creating extracurricular classes and discussion groups, forming political committees and organizing occupations and protests. Their complaints varied widely, directed to the school administration and the political government and targeting incompetent faculty. The students held "the dominant political class [responsible] for having left the Italian school system in such abandon and misery".¹⁸

The great conundrum of the Italian university system was that it rarely succeeded in reforming itself from within. Instead, the Italian university system became an ever-frequent target for attack from students and a growing number of sympathetic faculty members anxiously pressing for critical change. Vittorio Gregotti writing at the time in *Casabella-Continuità* on the student-led agitations of 1963-64 observed: "I believe that if we stop to reflect on the issue that has led us, or rather from where the students of the architecture faculty have led us in the last two years or so, we cannot but be amazed at the breadth of the material and the discussions delivered, for its progressive and in-depth articulation, for the political drive for renovation concretely sustained in precisely chosen battles, and above all for the irreversible disarticulation that all this has provoked within the aging and academically ridged school of architecture".¹⁹

These epic struggles against the outdated and archaic university effectively managed to create a sort of permanent antagonistic relationship between a cast of characters that included the administration, the faculty and the students, and that carried on in one form or another throughout most of the 1960s. The spring of 1964 effectively marked the beginning of a series of student-led actions against the architecture administrations. In Florence, the spring occupation of the rector's office included among its student ranks several of the future members of the *Superarchitecture* generation.²⁰ The occupations of the administration were the dramatic culmination of a series of student assemblies formed to rethink the

way architectural education should be taught. The students won *temporary victories*, like establishing a council that would include faculty and students.²¹ But there were smaller complaints as well, such as the beaux-arts-era requirement for the final thesis project that obliged students to create professionally constructed and thereby costly final wood models. One of the hard-won victories would be the ability to make a final model in cardboard.²²

For the first time the occupation of a school did not want to merely pressure the administration into making simple concessions. "It was instead" according to the student leaders Caponetto and Fracassini, "an experience of democratic life, an experiment in free cultural research, an occasion to assume responsibilities as students, technicians, and professionals of tomorrow. It anticipated what should become the University of Tomorrow."²³ 1964 became a kind of watershed year in the transformation of the Italian university system, and though institutional reforms would not be carried out for another couple of years, the students effectively shook the faculty out of its complacency, encouraging a number of professors to take up the students' cause.

Again Florence became an unusual example in the way its leading professors were able to respond to the students' demands and develop a new set of courses that became very popular among the students. Ricci and Savioli responded most creatively to student demands gradually introducing an entirely different sensibility to their courses at the school of Florence.²⁴ They were less concerned with an ideologically driven socially conditioned architecture that attempted to *reshape* public spaces and *improve* community functions, and far more interested in *investigating* new cultural phenomena and their impact on establishing new building typologies. Ricci had lived and taught in the US and he took back with him more contemporary visions on art and architecture. He transformed his design courses into hands-on experimental workshops, a multi-dimensional approach to the arts, that included broad freedom in composition strategies, materials, sculpture, like film and music. According to Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Ricci was the only figure that really succeeded in shaking up the school, importing to Florence from the States an Americanized Bauhaus based on the Gestalt design ethic.²⁵

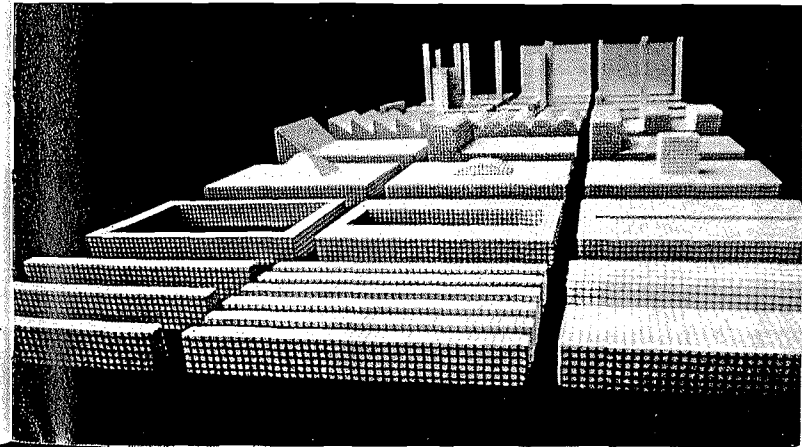
Ricci saw that the way the Florence school trained its students was incompatible with the demands of the outside world: "Our school" Ricci observed at a conference held in Rome in 1964, "was essentially based on this concept: prepare a generic architect that would be gradually shaped through natural selection, different specializations and different professional levels". Ricci felt that university could continue to absorb minor reforms without risking any real systematic change.²⁶ Savioli, like Ricci, was willing to throw his support behind the students, and began his own form

of resistance through the kind of courses he offered. He also drew a large following among the radicalized student population: Natalini, Toraldo di Francia, Poli and Frassinelli all had occasions to study or assist in classes with Savioli.

When Savioli took over the course *Plastica ornamentale*, he also inherited a classroom cluttered with beaux-arts plasters; everything went into the dumpster to make room for his students to work. He transformed his class into one of the most freethinking courses to be offered at the school. In 1966 Savioli introduced his course on *design composition investigating the rise of popular spaces* that was to culminate in the *Piper* project.²⁷ These were the spaces of the "spazio di coinvolgimento" (spaces of co-involvement), "...space not only as geometric measure but as psychological involvement".²⁸

There were of course several other professors teaching at the time that were to have significant influence on this generation, though legend has it that the students would force unsympathetic professors out of the classroom, like Baroni, because he insisted they apply columns to their projects. Part of the aperture in the curriculum was to allow students to explore broad areas of subjects *not traditionally linked to architecture*. Piero Frassinelli worked with the anthropologist Tullio Seppilli and the semiotics professor Klaus König who was an omnipresent figure at the time. Leonardo Benevolo's course on modern architecture and social history filled a sixty-year omission in the history curriculum. Benevolo was highly respected, but he was less responsive to the students' cause.

The pattern that emerged by the mid-1960s moved like a spinning wheel around the students, the faculty and the administration, a circus of continuous events. The atmosphere was incredi-



bly energetic, with extensive meetings, assemblies, all-night sit-ins, occupations, providing opportune time to cook up countless more events and experimental projects.²⁷ Piero Frassinelli opined: "...Radical architecture is born in the occupied university. One lives there and one sleeps there..." Over the long term, the point may in fact not have been whether the reforms to the university system ever were entirely successful; some reforms were achieved, others never came close.²⁸ The students and the faculty engaged in a decade-long ideological battle over the substance of a contemporary architectural education and this critical discourse undoubtedly succeeded in recasting the fundamental issues of the Florentine school. The prolonged struggle for educational reform is to be credited with furnishing the powerful rhetorical ammunition exploited so proficiently by the *Superarchitecture* generation.

And then of course there is the historically rich city of Florence, whose entire economy functioned outside of major industries like Milan or the huge bureaucracies like Rome. Florence was primarily an artisan-manufacturing centre with a very powerful shopkeeper middleclass. Students attending the School of Architecture in Florence in the 1960s had a much harder time finding work, or getting swept into working class struggles, or protesting national policies. Without the distractions of the big city setting, students moved in smaller circles: but one event in 1966 would act to pull the whole architectural community together and complete the *mise en scène*: the 4 November flood. The flood was not so much a catalyst in the formation of the *Superarchitecture* as it simply acted to revive one of the most inextricable taboos in Florence's history. The greatest impediment to renovating Florentine culture was in fact the immeasurably weighty presence of the city's much-glorified artistic legacy. Florence's History translated into a special local pride that effectively froze Florence in a state of existence that was neither reliably authentic nor contemporarily up to date. Most older Florentines seemed to refuse to exist in a heterogeneous present: and only with the persistent efforts of the younger generation of intellectuals, artists, architects and musicians did this embrace for novelty and change begin to have a positively erosive effect.

If in fact Florence was hopelessly blocked by traditional conventions, the city's artistic community had been taking important steps towards building a receptive place for an alternative contemporary art culture. Florentines were gradually becoming acquainted with the most important players on the European art circuit. Maria Gloria Bionchi's gallery Centrodiffusionegrafica on Piazza Saltarelli (later to become art/tapes 22, the pre-eminent video centre featuring the likes of Bill Viola) was one of the first galleries to bring internationally acclaimed artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, performance artists like Allan

Kaprow, the sound artists from Fluxus.²⁹ But in less than a flash, the flood of 1966 seemed to turn world-wide attention back on the past, now buried deep under metres of mud and debris. Scenes of volunteers from Florence and well beyond scooping up fragments of artifacts from the river's sediment and painstakingly handling them like birds caught in an oil slick were emotionally stirring, but ultimately a setback to the cause.

The planning for the first *Superarchitecture* exhibition in Pistoia began well before the 4 November flood. (See Peter Lang and William Menking, "Only Architecture Will Be Our Lives", on the beginning of *Superarchitecture*). The flood therefore was not the *deus ex machina* that launched the *Superarchitecture* movement, but it seems to have been the one cathartic episode that convincingly reinforced SUPERSTUDIO's anti-historical ideology. In a later ironic gesture, one of the illustrations accompanying the *Rescue of Historic Centres* project executed in 1970 by SUPERSTUDIO, portrayed Florence "restored" to its primordial state, with only the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore popping above a rendered view of the Arno valley as an enormous lake.

In sum, the long struggle that lasted through much of the 1960s sharpened the critical discourse of many of the principal activists engaged in the Florence counter-cultural scene. The university was in tumult; new courses were being introduced side by side with raucous assemblies and all-night occupations. The city was gradually recovering from the devastation of a flood that in some cases caused more real damage to artworks and buildings than during the war, when the most precious artifacts had been placed in safe houses and monuments buttressed behind sandbags. The petty bourgeois concerns and provincial ways of the Florentine middle class were incapable of seeing beyond the city's customary traditions. With all the talented artisans and small manufacturing centres the stores remained filled with clunky reproductions, fake furniture and leather luxury goods for the upper classes. Alessandro Mendini's land of "Good design" could be almost anywhere but Florence. To the young members of SUPERSTUDIO, the city was a sleeping giant, and only needed an event to set it off.

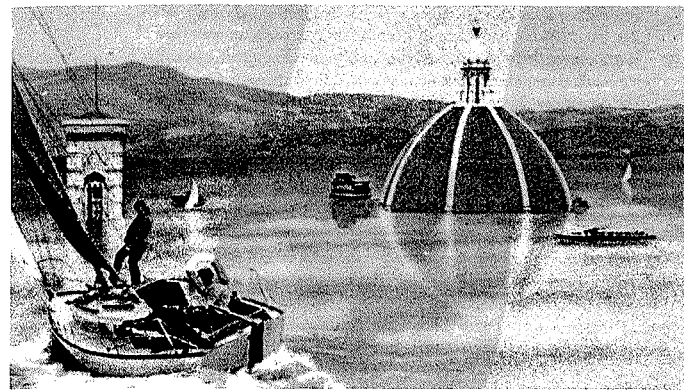
The *Superarchitecture* exhibition in Pistoia was the event that sparked the creative emergencies of Archizoom and SUPERSTUDIO, but this historic episode did not by consequence imply two already evolved and distinct sets of architectural strategies and projects. The Pistoia show was planned to showcase new lamps, objects, furniture and installation designs, but was to take place only after the larger and more elaborately assembled exhibition of student thesis projects concluded in Modena. The reversed order of exhibitions threw the two events out of sequence. There would be little time for Archizoom and SUPERSTUDIO to evolve between the two shows. Also pertinent to the formation of the two groups in this

earlier period were the kinds of initial prejudices they brought with them, such as earlier friendships, political ideologies and common architectural experiences. This in large part explains why Archizoom appears to have had a head start over SUPERSTUDIO in the first two years from their common launch on the scene, this despite Adolfo Natalini's singular role behind the *Superarchitecture* manifesto. In fact, Archizoom's head start seems to have provoked Natalini and Toraldo di Francia to redouble their efforts and sharpen their critical design and architectural position, through a year-long process of self-examination that paralleled their production of marketable designs and architecture. This first important self-analysis producing the *Journey into the Realm of Reason* proved quite successful in re-calibrating the group's theoretical production, so much so that SUPERSTUDIO would make periodic use of such self-revaluations to correct their course or re-formulate their design strategies.¹²

But another aspect concerning the early divergence between SUPERSTUDIO and Archizoom was how each of these two groups continued to grow progressively apart. Archizoom in fact remained far more dedicated to its research on popular culture and language, working on and in the medium itself to find the most symbolic forms for representing a pop-inspired landscape. Archizoom engaged in what now is the highly recognizable strategy of building on subjective accumulations, evident in the later projects like *No-Stop City*. Their way of undermining the Modernist status quo was through the construction of a self-referential language that did not so much suggest alternative realities as it suggested simultaneous multiplicities, layered textural references, or architecture evacuated of meaning. Architecture, incapable of completing a social revolution without breaking free from its capitalist moorings, would instead be steered towards a consumerist tower of Babel.

Conversely, SUPERSTUDIO embarked on a much more "classical" architectural trajectory. In essence, Archizoom and SUPERSTUDIO veer apart not only philosophically, but also through the applicative use of media conventions. SUPERSTUDIO effectively campaigned to destabilize modern architecture while remaining within the enlightenment language of perspectival space or, through their filmmaking, operating within the Cartesian construct of the *camera obscura*. SUPERSTUDIO therefore did not so much seek to challenge the conventions of representation, or what Martin Jay classifies as "Cartesian perspectivalism", the projection of the two-dimensional single ocular perspective, as they sought to operate to subvert the principles of architecture within this convention.¹³ Their intensive collage renderings of *The Continuous Monument* begin with a carefully reasoned historical thesis on the nature of cultural monuments and evolve into a per-

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Rescue of Historic Centres:
Florence, 1970

Suzieda Desires

versely hegemonic system of architectural domination. The creeping expansion of the monument across the global landscape is subtly revealed as its own neutralizer, thereby putting an end to its sublime terror. In effect, SUPERSTUDIO subverts a quotidian architectural experience not through a warping of the planimetric state but through satirical irony.

The same can be argued in regard to their films that retain basic narrative structures and follow largely rational progressions through space and time, but use the medium instead to call into question the meaning of architecture itself. From the beginning, SUPERSTUDIO built its projects using the narrative vehicle of the storyboard. Of the three extant films, the second, created for the MOMA exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* (see William Menking's accompanying essay in this collection, "The Revolt of the Object") presents *Life, Supersurface* (1972), a combination of montage animation and actors in an outdoor environment to stage an inhabitable but architectureless landscape. This film consists of the first in the series titled *Five Fundamental Acts*, a far-reaching and engrossing contemplation on the architecture of *unconfinement*. If *The Continuous Monument* stipulates *no interiors*, *Supersurface* suggests *no exteriors*. *Ceremony* (1973), shot one year later starring the members of SUPERSTUDIO and their first film without animations, further derides the significance of tradition and domestic ritual, illustrating how life spontaneously erupts around new-found ceremonies.¹⁴ One's own body becomes the mobile object of architecture: the self-contained envelope that is both inhabited and inhabits the living world. SUPERSTUDIO's uniqueness rises not from their experimental destruction of the repre-

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sentative medium itself, as it does from their subversive message. SUPERSTUDIO from beginning to end stripped architecture down to its most essential meaning.

SUPERSTUDIO requires additional levels of reading, precisely because there are degrees of deception constantly present in their elaborately assembled images and projects. Their highly seductive and visually pleasing visions tend to veil a biting critique collaged just below the surface. Each stage of their work is meant to peel back another layer of social paralysis, of futile dreams and debilitating social infrastructures. SUPERSTUDIO worked from positions of deep familiarity, destabilizing from within each and every aspect of the architectural discourse. Florence, as one of the most significant artistic destinations on the 19th-century Grand Tour, finds itself transported in the work of SUPERSTUDIO into a dimension of science fiction, history's other.⁴⁵ *Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas: Premonitions of the Mystical Rebirth of Urbanism*, apart from its anti-utopian visions and very personal form of inquisitiveness, refuses to celebrate the role of architecture and urban design in the construction of city life.⁴⁶ The exquisitely drafted sections, axonometrics and illustrations depicting the twelve cities reassure the viewer of a perfectly engineered set of structures that only happen to work like the out of control technology in Kafka's inscriptive *Penal Colony*.

The *Twelve Cautionary Tales*, conceived and developed by Piero Frassinelli, seem in the end to be much closer to a critique on the present than evocations for the future: the twelve scenes unfold like exaggerated projections on some of our most common obsessions, where consumer culture goes blind, bureaucracies go mindless, high-technology pacifies. This may also be interpreted as a critique of Americanization, a rising phenomenon in the contemporary Italian scene. The suggestive subtitle, "SUPERSTUDIO evoke twelve visions of ideal cities, the supreme achievement of twenty thousand years of civilization, blood sweat and tears. The Final Heaven of Man in possession of Truth, free from contradiction, equivocation and indecision; totally and forever replete with his own PERFECTION..."; implies just such a world specially made for you, with no need to do anything except to find the button. The project was not really about anti-utopias, but was SUPERSTUDIO's stark premonition on where contemporary trends were leading.

From 1966 to 1973 the SUPERSTUDIO office had schizophrenically advanced by pursuing on one hand pragmatic and successful furniture designs, train cars, residential and commercial buildings (the group could count on the industrial design experience of Roberto Magris), and on the other by progressively dissecting those very same projects to reduce the variations, to streamline the waste, to eliminate all clutter. The process developed into a series of checks and balances, whereby the theory en-

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gendered the production, to be subsequently re-theorized, controlled and modified. This is what Adolfo Natalini referred to as "theory → practice → theory check", that ran into all sorts of interesting problems, until they devised design skeletons on which to hang a series of design modifications.⁴⁷ SUPERSTUDIO managed at each turn to twist the paradigm and to imagine another critically altering move, until one by one SUPERSTUDIO dismantled everything that once stood solidly for the enterprise of architecture, until they reached a pure state of near nothingness.

But from here on, the work by SUPERSTUDIO reaches a significant turning point, or perhaps a point of no return. Where, in fact, does architecture go once it has been entirely erased from the architects' sketchpads and drawing boards? What kind of reductive design might result in a world where there is no need for designs? What type of room does one dream of when there are no more rooms to occupy?

This may well have been an inevitable outcome for a research project that began with the typological ordering of architectural monuments, images and ambient technology; and gradually spread far enough out to bring into its orbit a world of objects and buildings, of monuments and landscapes, until nothing remained untouched by its reductive powers. SUPERSTUDIO dutifully maintained their faith in the original premise set out in 1967 when they assembled the *Journey into the Realm of Reason*. SUPERSTUDIO continued unrelentingly to reduce, to strip, to expose the core properties of an architecture that eliminated the fastidious and distracting environment of unnecessary things and actions. What they achieved was tremendous, a spark of animation in an open field, a world populated by freethinkers wandering without material needs. But there would always remain a level of irony, a subtle gesture that somehow this was all a ploy to make us think, to make us want to change... but also allow us to retreat back to the comfort of our real homes, our heavy objects, our annoying lives.

But from 1973 on, coinciding with Adolfo Natalini's teaching appointment at the School of Architecture in Florence, the group moved in two different directions. It was a moment of deep reassessment. The individual members began working more independently on different types of projects, but also moved into the academic research and teaching. Natalini's class, taught with the assistance of Alessandro Poli, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia and Piero Frassinelli, investigated the everyday use of objects in contemporary culture. Under the title of *Extra-Urban Material Culture*, students were asked to return to their local family origins, and help anthropologically document the material culture slowly disappearing in the countryside. Natalini's famed lectures on the walking stick — he boasts a large collection of handmade and manufactured canes — served as an introduction to this reductive world.

Sarahal Bienes

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The course in effect initiated a second phase in the SUPERSTUDIO oeuvre; whereby there is a concerted attempt to find a way to reconstruct the bare elements of a new architecture.

The anthropological research on primitive Italian peasant culture, its tools and shelters, was one of the few projects of its kind going on during these years. Considering the massive scale of the farm exodus into the 1960s, the real risk, that has since proved founded, was the permanent loss of a highly sustainable low-grade human ecology. *Extra-Urban Material Culture* bears little resemblance to the fanfare and hoopla created around the 1973 Global Tools symposium, which remained transfixed by consumer culture. SUPERSTUDIO initiated *Histograms*, back in 1969, with the intention of reducing design and architecture to a single three-dimensional manipulation of surfaces. When SUPERSTUDIO began its study on the design of simple multi-functional utensils in 1973, it was not to design a better and more marketable product but to find proven low-grade technologies that were uniquely versatile.

The peasant farmer Zeno, in his native home in Tuscany, rebuilt a bent-wood chair from the turn of the century, piece by piece, over the course of about fifty years. Every reiteration preserved the chair's proportions and function, though each time the artifact was slightly modified. The goal of the research was to document and learn from these extraordinary human experiences; but this phase of SUPERSTUDIO's research lacked the checks, balances and earlier ironies that might have successfully lifted this project back on to a more international platform. A broad overview of the project including many examples drawn from the student research was later mounted at the 1978 Venice Biennale to exhibit the category of Architecture, under the title of *Project Zeno*. This strangely Heideggerian vision of the new world, a familiar revisiting of van Gogh's contemplation on a pair of peasant shoes, suggests a project that nonetheless reconnects with the *techné* of architecture.

SUPERSTUDIO also presented *The Wife of Lot*, consisting of a welded iron table and moving tower designed to hold a fluid pouch filled with water. A tube dripped water over five salt moulds representing the historical stages of architecture: the pyramid, the coliseum, the basilica, Versailles and the Villa Savoye. With time, as in fact was the case, each of the salt moulds disappeared, a demonstration on architecture's inevitable dissolution. This project more than anything else physically embodied the dilemma of architecture's ephemeral existence, with the additional tension that such a delicately framed iron and salt structure produces by sitting at the edge of Venice's Grand Canal. The artifact has since been lost, but its idea lives on as the anti-monument dedicated to the mother of all monuments.

48 The strange combination of professional practice and theoretical insurrectionism; of profitable industry contracts and sarcastic

assaults on consumerism; of global fame and peasant culture, are the conflictual relationships in a body of research committed to engaging mainstream society. The members of SUPERSTUDIO have sought to discover the way towards making a better society, made up of individuals responsible to their communities, critically cognizant of their natural resources and shared cultures.

The fundamental issues from the group's early beginnings were all directed towards a critique of a hegemonic modernization: Natalini was concerned with the struggle to democratize the university and undercut the dominating hierarchies of the administration;¹⁶ Toraldo di Francia criticized his home city for ignoring the advice of experts and auto-constructing itself as a self-propagating urban machine; Frassinelli's *Twelve Cities* was itself a sarcastic critique of a mechanized society where individuals were completely deprived of any control over their own future. To finally reach the ideal goal of a non-designed community, SUPERSTUDIO progressively whittled away at the architectural relationship between the individual and the social contract, concluding the journey not with a new form of people's architecture, but an architectural people ready to give their world a form. This may be what Adolfo Natalini had in mind in the first place, when he called for the architect's public suicide. If the architect cannot *become* architecture, is there anything left but to take one's leave of the stage?

¹⁶ P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy* (London: Penguin Books, 1990, 246).

¹⁷ D. Giachetti, *Anni Sessanta comincia la danza* (Pisa: BPS, 2002, 39).

¹⁸ S. Kracauer, "The Hotel Lobby", in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995, 173).

¹⁹ The connection between Antonioni and architecture was already evident to Alessandro Poli (member of SUPERSTUDIO between 1970 and 1972), but such research was not yet possible to do in the school. Peter Lang, interview with Alessandro Poli (Florence, December 2002).

²⁰ There were many major

and minor connections between them, but they were unlike Archizoom, who from the beginning existed as a tight and familiar group of friends or cohorts.

²¹ According to Marco Grispigni, students revolted because they were consciously aware that society would not be able to provide them with work at the level of their cultural formation. Students expressed at the same time their refusal to participate in the opulent society that only seemed to aggravate social and economic differences. M. Grispigni, "Generazione, politica e violenza. Il '68 a Roma", in A. Agosti, L. Passerini and N. Tranfaglia, eds. *La cultura e i luoghi del '68* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1991, 295).

²² Rome was bombarded in and around the train station and yards, mainly damaging the working class residential district of San Lorenzo.

²³ L. Molinari, "Between Continuity and Crisis: History and Project in Italian Architectural Culture in the Postwar Period", *2G* (no. 15, Barcelona, 2000, 7).

²⁴ Vincenzo Fontana's chapter on this and other reconstruction episodes provide a good summary of the polemical events. V. Fontana, *Profilo di architettura italiana del Novecento* (Venice: Marsilio, 1999, 194-95).

²⁵ So little of the historic centre, in fact, can be considered historically authentic, but for the ten million annual tourists to the city

this is a trivial observation at best.

¹¹ Fontana (cit. 195).

¹² M. Tafuri, *History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990, 7).

¹³ Amintore Fanfani was the national-level politician who sought favours with the working classes, thereby focusing his attentions on working class districts to begin with. But according to Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, the destiny of Florence was and remains locked in the hands of the shopkeepers, who are unwilling to allow experimentation into the city. Peter Lang, interview with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (Filottrano, 7 December 2002).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ M.T. Stauffer, "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopias, Designs by Archizoom and Superstudio", *AA Files* (no. 47, London, 2002). Also see M. Capobianco, "Gli Anni Quaranta", in M. Capobianco and E. Carreni, eds., *Architettura italiana: 1940-1959* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1998, 122).

¹⁶ E. Carreni, "Intervista a Bruno Zevi", 1991, in *Super vedere l'architettura italiana* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1998, 96).

¹⁷ An inquiry on the future of the Florence School of Architecture was published in the Florentine daily in December of 1966. The article outlined the tenuous conditions facing the school after the flood, becoming a sort of wish list for the then Preside Giuseppe Gori who proposed a new plan that would relocate the school into the periphery running along the foothills on the Florence-Prato-Pistoia axis, to deal with the rapid tripling of the school's population during the post-war period (500 students in 1958 to 1500 in 1966). According to the address by Gori, Florence drew stu-

dents from a vast region from Reggio Emilia, Genoa and the South, as well as a large number of foreign students. Of the possible factors that lay behind Florence's growing popularity, was the odd admission by the school's president, Gori, that the city had less residential problems than the other greater metropolises and because the professors were more accessible having less professional work to distract them. And there was always of course the city's artistic heritage (*La Nazione*, Florence, 7 December 1966).

¹⁸ "In his inaugural lecture for the new year, revealing that there was a lack of space for instruction, the president did not ask himself the reason for this defect, but instead thought to thank the 'authorities' for having kindly placed for our disposition separate and inadequate spaces... as if it was not a precise obligation to provide the means which the university and the school in general need, and that it is not the precise responsibility of the dominant political class to have left the Italian school system in such abandon and misery", "Discorso agli studenti del primo anno", *Casabella-Continuità* (no. 287, Milan, May 1964, 41-42).

¹⁹ V. Gregotti, "Facoltà del costruire", *Casabella-Continuità* (no. 287, Milan, May 1964, 19).

²⁰ In interviews with several members of Archizoom and SUPERSTUDIO, Marie Theres Stauffer placed Branzi, Correnti, Deganello, and Toraldo di Francia as part of the group that occupied the rector's office. See Stauffer (cit. 35, footnote 37).

²¹ On the agenda were students' demands to reconstitute the existing power structures within the university, to include the participation of the students in academic decisions, as well

as to open the thesis projects to a wider range of topics. Pizzolo and Di Cristina, in *Casabella-Continuità* (no. 287, Milan, May 1964, 39).

²² Toraldo di Francia saw the fight to do away with the expensive models as a sign that much more had to change: their demands were to open the university system to everyone, from all social classes, with costs accessible to everyone, such as in fact the cost of the professionally made models for the thesis project. These were the issues that provoked them to occupy the rector's office on Piazza San Marco in 1964, with about fifty other students including Massimo Morozzi and Andrea Branzi. The police came into the building and removed the entire group, booked and released them. Not by coincidence then, the first *Superarchitecture* show in Pistoia featured cardboard and mat-board installations. Peter Lang, interview with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (Filottrano, 7 December 2002).

²³ Caponetto and Fracassini, in *Casabella-Continuità* (no. 287, Milan, May 1964, 40).

²⁴ Stauffer (cit.) notes that Ricci and Savioli were assumed by the Florence university in 1963 and 1964. But they were present earlier as teaching assistants.

²⁵ Toraldo di Francia recalled that Ricci's course had the students work on full-scale models, a controversial approach given the school's penchant for precise ink drawings. Peter Lang, interview with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (Filottrano, 7 December 2002).

²⁶ Leonardo Ricci, "Problemi per una nuova maggioranza", lecture held at the Facoltà di Firenze in occasion of the faculty conference held in Rome between 14 and 15 March 1964. Reprinted in *Casabel-*

la-Continuità (no. 287, Milan, May 1964, 60).

²⁷ The youth culture continued to become increasingly evident within the public sphere. In Florence at the Feltrinelli bookstore on Via Cavour, English pop groups starting at night at the famed nightclub "Piper" would put themselves on display for wild groups of fans. See Giachetti (cit. 132).

²⁸ These last paragraphs are drawn from extensive interviews with Piero Frassinelli, Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia.

²⁹ Lighter forms of performance protest would arise, like a creative component of the Roman student movement that called themselves "Uccelli" (The Birds). They became famous for "occupying" the cupola at Sant'Ivo that was then part of the Sapienza university in Rome. During the assemblies they refused to speak but chirped instead perched on the benches like roosting birds. See Crispigni (cit. 304).

³⁰ "In 1968 the Italian Schools of Architecture be-

come rapidly and unarrestably shipwrecked", in G. Ciucci and F. Dal Co, eds., *Atlante dell'architettura italiana del Novecento* (Milan: Electa, 1991, 221).

³¹ Peter Lang, interview with Piero Frassinelli (Florence, 13 March 2002). See upcoming book by M.G. Bicochi, *art/tapes 22: the Story of Santa Teresa Behind the Art Scenes*.

³² "Journey into the Realm of Reason", published in *Domus* (no. 479, October 1969), features 26 images describing various states of architecture.

³³ M. Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity", in H. Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, 4).

³⁴ Of the *Five Fundamental Acts*, only two were realized as films; all five were published in *Casabella* as storyboards and illustrated texts.

³⁵ *Uranis*, a yellow bound weekly news-stand publication from Mondadori, was quite popular around the Florentine Radical crowd. Science Fiction works as a sort of alternative or escapist literature

that repositions familiar environments in order to test substitute orders, possibilities, futures. Over the course of the research the author has had several conversations with the members of SUPERSTUDIO on their predilection for Science Fiction.

³⁶ Piero Frassinelli, SUPERSTUDIO, "Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas: Preamonitions of the Mystical Rebirth of Urbanism", *AD* (no. 12, 1971). The original live slide presentation with voice over narrative and music is being recreated for the Design Museum exhibition in London. *Casabella-Continuità* (no. 287, Milan, May 1964).

³⁷ A. Natalini, *Inventory, catalogues, systems of flux* (London, International Institution of Design, Summer Session, August 1971).

³⁸ More could be said about these early connections, and more could be developed on each of the individual members of the group. Many of these goals were shared, and it would be important to go deeper into SUPERSTUDIO's group dynamic.



William Menking

The Revolt of the Object

Flash Gordon and Superman were the new idols of a generation that was angry but disposed to dissipate its furors within the exciting hyper technological chaos in a psychedelic orgy of the ephemeral.

Manfredo Tafuri

What I remember from first seeing the work of SUPERSTUDIO was how bloody slick it was, like beautiful images from a futuristic dream, very LUCID, exciting, and original!!! Their ideas seemed beyond the world, in the tour-de-force tradition of the Italian Futurists. Like Archigram, SUPERSTUDIO had a great name, very 60s', emblematic of the era... supergraphics, supermodels, superdomes. In addition to their innovative ideas, they had such GREAT visual style, kick ass design, and an amazing range of creative initiatives, from those really cool interiors to their awesome "New New York" and "Twelve Ideal Cities" urban design projects.

Doug Michaels, from *Ant Farm*

It is hard to imagine from the perspective of early-21st-century digital culture how startling and provocative were the visionary architecture drawings emerging from Italy in the late 1960s. The young architects and students with whom I studied in California in the period knew little of the internal Italian debates on art, architecture and design let alone the ideological conflicts that challenged its university system that Peter Lang describes in "Suicidal Desires".¹ American architects were well aware of the extraordinary domestic and industrial design coming out of Italy that magazines like *Domus* and *Casabella* promoted. Look at an Ezra Stoller or Jules Shulman photograph of a domestic interior — alongside Eames and Nelson furniture are Enzo Mari melamine bowls, Castiglioni brothers lamps and Joe Colombo stacking chairs. But the

visionary drawings coming from the studios of young Florentines from 1966 on were an altogether different level of creation, image making and thought than mere product design.

The drawings of SUPERSTUDIO, Archizoom, UFO, Gruppo Strum, Gianni Piretti, Ugo La Pietra and others were, as Doug Michaels puts it, "kick ass design" but more importantly they were "creative initiatives", unlike anything being produced in America at the time.⁴ They suggested a fantastic architectural scene in Florence that made California seem very provincial and unimaginative. In today's world where architectural shifts and drifts are internationalized quickly across cyberspace, it is hard to imagine a small museum city like Florence as a centre of international thought on architecture, urbanism and design. This small Tuscan city, as Peter Cook reminds us, is "a safe distance from Cape Canaveral, the galleries of New York and Düsseldorf, and even the smelly factories of the Po valley" and "there [is] hardly an insistent or threatening local milieu of mainstream architects worth bothering about".⁵ The arch scenes of Rome, Venice and Milan were vibrant in their own ways, but this small museum and university city was very much a hot spot in the late 1960s. It had an architecture culture that revolved around one of Italy's most lively and politically engaged architecture schools, the best art and architecture book store in Italy Centro Di and Maria Gloria Bionchi's out front gallery Centrodifusionegrafica (later to become the important video tape gallery art/tapes 22).⁶

Throughout the 1960s the seductively ironic and charged polemics of these Florentine architects were known in North America primarily through Italian magazines but SUPERSTUDIO did touch down in the United States at the Rhode Island School of Design for a moment in 1970. Its "strategist" Adolfo Natalini taught there for a semester with Archigrammer Mike Webb, and Austrians Raimund Abraham and Friedrich St Florian.⁷ This connection with the world outside Italy changed dramatically in 1972 when the Museum of Modern Art in New York under the direction of design curator Emilio Ambasz created an amazing exhibition and spectacularly beautiful catalogue titled *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*.⁸

The largest and most expensive exhibition in the history of MOMA, it featured alongside a survey of contemporary Italian industrial and domestic product design a SUPERSTUDIO *Microevent/Microenvironment* as well as projects by Archizoom, Ugo La Pietra, Gruppo Strum, group 9999 and others.⁹ It should be noted that during this period MOMA's architecture department truly had its finger on the pulse of the moment. The Architecture and Design Department under Arthur Drexler created other important exhibits: *Visionary Architecture* (1960), *Architecture Without Architects* (1965) and just before *New Domestic Landscape, Edu-*

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Mike Webb, Raimund Abraham, Adolfo Natalini and Friedrich St Florian, 1970



The Result of the Object

cation of an Architect (1971) on the pedagogy at the Cooper Union School under John Hejduk.¹⁰

In any event *The New Domestic Landscape* situated the work of the Florence architecture "Radicals" on a glamorous New York stage for its penultimate moment on the international scene.¹¹ It was the first to feature the young Florentines and none of the other visionary architectural draftsmen of the period: Cedric Price, Archigram or the Austrians: Coop Himmelblau, Haus-Rucker-Co, Hans Hollein or Walter Pichler had a major museum exhibition by this time. It was for 1960s' educated architects the first sign that their generation was having an impact beyond the studio. Further, as the catalogue points out, Italian post-war industrial design was understood by Americans for its "formal qualities alone, with little understanding of the ideological positions they represent".¹² The exhibition and catalogue attempt to rectify this understanding, but as I will show, in a typically Italian polemical style that can be mystifying to the Anglo-American mind. It is my intention in this paper to highlight its important — if somewhat confusing — discussion and the contributions it makes to architecture and design culture.

The New Domestic Landscape catalogue begins with a short discussion on domestication from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*:

"You become responsible, forever, for what you have domesticated."

"What does that mean — domesticated?"

"It is an act too often neglected. It means to establish bonds."

.....

"Please domesticate me", said the fox.

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"I want to, very much", the little prince replied.
"But I have not much time. I have friends to discover,
and a great many things to understand."
"One only understands the things that one domesticates",
said the fox. "Men have no more time to understand
anything. They buy things already made at shops.
But there is no shop anywhere where one can buy friendship,
and so we have no friends any more. If you want a friend,
domesticate me..."
"What must I do, to domesticate you?" asked the little prince.

.....
"...One must observe the proper rites..."
"What is a rite?" asked the little prince.
"Those are actions too often neglected", said the fox.
"They are what make one day different from other days,
one hour from other hours."¹¹

This call for design is quickly followed in the introduction with the disclaimer that "design cannot solve all problems that precede its creation and those that may arise from it".¹⁴ If this were not enough of a qualifier, Ambasz then proclaims the irrelevance of objects: "for many designers, the aesthetic quality of individual objects intended for private consumption [has] become irrelevant in the face of such pressing problems as poverty, urban decay, and the pollution of the environment now encountered in all industrialized countries".¹⁵ Furthermore, some of these designers "despairing of effecting social change through design, regard their task as essentially a political one and therefore abstain from physical design of either objects or environments and channel their energies into the staging of events and the issuing of polemical statements".¹⁶ These abstaining designers, in the spirit of polemical discourse, are given a chapter in the catalogue to state their position and critique those with whom they disagree about the production of objects. The catalogue essay by Manfredo Tafuri, for example, attacks the work of SUPERSTUDIO and Archizoom for being "liberation through irony [that] goes over the same ground covered by the utopias of the avant-garde of earlier years".¹⁷ When Piero Frassinelli of SUPERSTUDIO hears the name Tafuri he says "Oh, yes, the enemy!" But here they are both in the same exhibition on Design!¹⁸

Ambasz divides Italian design into three "prevalent attitudes... conformist, reformist and contestation".¹⁹ The conformist designer "conceive[s] of work as an autonomous activity responsible only to itself and does not question its sociocultural context", simply refining "already established forms and functions".²⁰ The second group or the reformists, are "motivated by a profound concern for the designer's role in a society that fosters consumption as one means of inducing individual happiness, thereby insuring

social stability".²¹ This group, he continues, is "torn by the dilemma of having been trained as creators of objects, yet unable to control the significance of the uses of these objects and they develop a rhetorical mode to cope with these contradictions".²² As advocate of social change these designers are convinced that there can be no renovation of design until "structural changes have occurred in society".²³ They do not "invent substantially new forms, instead they engage in a rhetorical operation of redesigning conventional objects with new ironic, and sometimes self-deprecatory socio-cultural and aesthetic references".²⁴ Some of these reformist designers employ the "ironic" strategies of pop art that by the early 1960s had seeped into Italian art. Ambasz finds the differences between the first two groups is not so clear cut, reflecting the "contradictions and paradoxes" of doubting the gains of a consumer society and at the same time "enacting the role of voyeurs of the technological dream".²⁵

Ambasz's third attitude to design is one of contestation and this is the approach he favours. He divides this design approach into two tendencies which both attempt to deal with the contradictions and paradoxes of the first two groups. In the first tendency Ambasz places designers who think that making objects of any kind is a chimera, and whose efforts are directed to political and philosophical action or complete withdrawal from the world of object making. In the second tendency he puts those designers who engage in object design or "active critical participation, but share with the preceding group the commitment that objects cannot be designed outside their physical and sociocultural context".²⁶ These designers recognize the "aesthetic of the uses made of their objects" and recognize that "the object is no longer conceived as an isolated entity, sufficient unto itself, but rather an integral part of the larger natural and sociocultural environment".²⁷ They create objects that "refuse to adopt a fixed shape or to serve as a reference to anything".²⁸ Ambasz seems to mean here designed environments like *Total Furnishing Unit* by Joe Colombo, *Transportable Housing Units* by Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper, and even the habitable *Kar-A-Sutra* by Mario Bellini.²⁹ These designs of flexible systems, most of which never went into production, were popular attempts in the 1960s by architects and product designers to extend their practice into the modular housing industry. The history of modular housing is well known, but Ambasz believes its value to be the open ended manner of use that allows the user the freedom to employ them as they "want them to be".³⁰ He labels products of this design tendency *environmental ensembles*; and for Ambasz this is the most compelling approach since it "corresponds to the preoccupations of a changing society", and is what "the exhibition is concerned with exploring" and what propels the final "Envi-

ronments" section of the exhibition.¹¹ In this last section twelve designers are commissioned to "propose environmental concepts and translate them into physical designs".¹² The exhibit also conducted an Environment competition for young designers under thirty-five that was won by Gianantonio and group 9999. It is the "Environments" section of the exhibition for which SUPERSTUDIO created a nine-panel project that arguably stands out as the iconic project from the exhibit.

The division of Italian design into three prevalent attitudes is followed in the catalogue by the two sections "Objects" and "Environments" that parallel and document the exhibition. The catalogue continues with two written chapters, "Historical Articles" and "Critical Articles", and concludes with a summary by Ambasz. It is in "Objects" and "Environments" where *The New Domestic Landscape* becomes somewhat confusing or, as I have already stated, typically Italian in its polemical style. While Ambasz claims that the designs shown in the chapters are selected to indicate the three prevalent attitudes he has introduced, the reality is somewhat different. One would assume that Ambasz would use his categories of prevalent design attitudes to structure the exhibition. However, he drops them and arranges "Objects" and "Environments" into completely different categories. In "Objects" designs are selected for: their formal and social means, sociocultural implications and finally "implications of more flexible patterns of use and arrangement".¹³ These definitions seem flexible and loose because many of the same designers appear in all three categories. In fact several of these designers are even asked to participate in the final "Environments" section of the exhibit which he claims is inspired by those designers who practice contestation. Ambasz claims that in order to do justice to the many motives and strands of design in Italy, participants were selected "on the basis of the formal and ideological positions they represent[ed] and each was invited to give a solo performance as the statement of their position".¹⁴ But it is inexplicable how objects designed by people who Ambasz claims are "unable to reconcile the conflicts between their social concerns and their professional practices" can be placed together with those who "do not question the sociocultural context in which they work".¹⁵

In the first "Objects" grouping selected for their formal and technical means are domestic designs by Joe Colombo, Vico Magistretti, Gaetano Pesce, Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper's early television boxes, Ettore Sottsass' classic Valentine portable Olivetti typewriter, the Castiglioni brothers' lamps, Massimo Vignelli's still popular plastic stacking dishes, and Gruppo Architetti Urbanisti Città Nuova's plastic *Nesso* table lamp. The objects displayed by this section are a veritable list of sensuous and still commercial popular objects from the 1960s.

The second part of "Objects" features designs "whose formal characteristics are derived from, or motivated by, the semantic manipulation of established sociocultural meanings".¹⁶ They seem aligned with his earlier description of reformist objects, yet many of the designers in the first conformist approach also show up in this section of the exhibit of "Objects": Gaetano Pesce, Vico Magistretti, Gae Aulenti, the team of Lomazzi, D'Urbino, De Pas, and the ubiquitous Ettore Sottsass.

The third of Ambasz "Objects" categories are those "selected for their implications of more flexible patterns of use and arrangement".¹⁷ The objects in this approach seem mostly to resemble stylish updates of Existenzminimum all-in-one kitchens or Dymaxion-like toilet/shower *Combos*, for example, Joe Colombo's *Tube Chair of Nesting and Combinable Elements*, Cini Boeri's *Serpentine Seat of Unlimited Length*, and eleven other collapsable, hinged, combinable, and folding designs.¹⁸ These designs are mostly unbuilt prototypes seemingly created for the exhibition. They show the possibilities of mobility and flexibility in architecture.

In fact, what Ambasz has done is to make claims about the different tendencies in Italian design and then select objects regardless of their designers. For example, the works of Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni appear in all three sections of "Objects": selected for its formal and technical means is their *Arco* adjustable floor lamp made of luxurious marble, stainless steel and aluminium. It is a domestic product that appears in many Italian design magazines as an icon of 1960s' bourgeois interiors. Their *Toio* adjustable-height floor lamp is equally luxurious but uses a different grammar of industrial materials such as an automobile lamp, exposed transformer and bright-red and chrome poles and is selected for group two, or objects with sociocultural implications. But it also fits the definition of reformist pop-art-inspired design. Their final object *Rampa* is a double-faced stair/desk/shelf unit based on the catalogue's definition of flexible patterns of use and arrangement, but it also fits Ambasz's definition of design contestation as an ensemble of interrelated processes. A skeptic might conclude that these objects are simply designed for different audiences. One for the luxury market, the other for fashion conscious designers and architects, and the third for a New York curator. It is difficult to see much difference in concept beyond their marketing.

Both SUPERSTUDIO and Archizoom are represented in the "Environments" section: they also were represented for their sociocultural implications. SUPERSTUDIO displayed their *Passiflora* (passion flower) plastic floor lamp while Archizoom presented four furniture models and three executed pieces of furniture in the section.

The question of why designers with anti-materialist, sociocultural pretensions choose to design luxury goods is a particularly

Italian conundrum and needs an explanation. Adolfo Natalini commenting on Italian architects involved in this sector has said, "its super production of ideas is due to the condition of complete unemployment among architects. In the Florence School of Architecture, there are 6,000 students, and architects in Italy are in charge of only 25% of the total built volume of building. The so-called 'furniture industry' has only two firms with more than 500 employees in more than 28,000 firms (average number of employees 4.8) and can therefore, thanks to its 'craftsmen' size, allow itself an ample margin of little experiments".³⁹ While SUPERSTUDIO did believe for a time that the luxury goods market, created by an extant artisanal Italian economy, offered them the opportunity to express design ideas that were closed off to them in the building sector, they eventually came to believe it was a dead-end street. It was, they decided, little more than an "inducement to consume".⁴⁰

In the second section of the exhibition "Environments" Ambasz presents a detailed, manifesto-like seven-page *Design Program* of "environmental concepts" that he hoped would become physical designs.⁴¹ The *Design Program* includes minutely detailed programmatic considerations and options that include cost goals (economically available to "low to middle income Italian families"), exhibition light sources, a list of "general considerations" and a final separate essay, "Manhattan: Capital of the Twentieth Century" that all attempt to put contemporary problems of the domestic landscape in context for the designers.⁴² It is liberally sprinkled with quotes from Siegfried Giedion's *The Architecture of Transition*, Henri Lefebvre's *The Explosion, Marxism and the French Upheaval*, Ambasz's Princeton professor Abraham A. Moles and Howard Searles' *Non-Human Environment*.⁴³ The Manhattan text, informed by Walter Benjamin insights, presents the island as an infrastructure that provides the framework in which "all crystallized fragments rescued from the city of memory, and all the fragments envisioned for the city of the imagination may dwell together in an ensemble, if not by reason of their casual or historical relationships (since no reconstruction is hereby intended), then by grace of their affinities".⁴⁴ This essay originally published in *Casabella* seems gratuitous and his call that it inspire designers to "make incursions into imaginary realms" is hardly necessary for groups like SUPERSTUDIO.⁴⁵ Based on this detailed *Design Program* each invited designer or group is asked to design "a domestic environment adaptable enough to permit the enactment of different private and communally imagined new events... sufficiently fixed to permit the re-enactment of... constant aspects of our individual and social memory".⁴⁶

In the *Design Program* Ambasz presents his view that the problems of urban society are so severe that designers must be chal-

lenged to act but that "any attempt at language renovation and invention can result only from a radical critique and postulation of urban practices and theory".⁴⁷ He concludes that "a domestic environment, equipped for introducing and transforming 'news from the world' may contribute to the process of making and breaking urban patterns and meanings".⁴⁸ In fact this definition already sounds like a SUPERSTUDIO project as if Ambasz's *Design Program* is merely providing cover for the group to do a major installation in the museum.

The SUPERSTUDIO catalogue presentation is a nine-image *Microevent/Microenvironment* that they label a "critical reappraisal of the possibilities of life without objects" and a two-dimensional reiteration of their film project *Life, Supersurface* which they viewed as an alternative life on earth.⁴⁹ It was they thought a model of a "mental attitude... not a three-dimensional model of a reality than can be given concrete form by a mere transposition of scale, but a visual rendition of a critical attitude toward (or a hope for) the activity of designing, understood as a philosophical speculation, or as a means to knowledge, as critical existence".⁵⁰

In the exhibition the installation was staged in a shipping container that Adolfo Natalini felt "shut up in wooden towers of a parody of Manhattan", their own *Eleventh Ideal City*.⁵¹ SUPERSTUDIO's anti-utopias are severely criticized in the most powerful text in *The New Domestic Landscape: "Design and Technological Utopia"* by Manfredo Tafuri.⁵² Throughout his career Tafuri remained critical of the Florentine visionaries. It is ironic that this critic who has words of praise for earlier 20th-century avant-gardes like the Italian Futurists and Russian Constructivists fails to grasp the radical potential of similar groups active during his own time. He praises the "processes of intense urban transformation prophesied by Sant'Elia or Balla although they had already been a reality for some time".⁵³ For Tafuri "the merit of the historical avant-garde is to have made us aware of those processes along with the ultimate consequences of those transformations for the practice of art".⁵⁴ However, it would be unrealistic and unproductive to expect contemporary (in the 1960s and today) designers to apply Tafuri's preferred standards of earlier avant-gardes, since they risk being imposed through specialized language and theoretical discourse.⁵⁵ But the Florentines images were a "monstrous marriage between populist anarchism and liberating events influenced by... the events of 1968, [that] attempted to haul a mythical proletariat onto the stage of psychedelic action..."⁵⁶ Thus, at the heart of the avant-garde, he concluded, one finds nostalgia for the happy time of childhood.

In fact, SUPERSTUDIO's "cross disciplinary... image guide" project is a call for a *Life Without Objects*, i.e. a critique of the practice of industrial design and concludes that "objects are status sym-

bols, the expression of models proposed by the ruling class".³⁷ The only objects one will need in the future they argue are "flags or talismans, signals for an existence that continues, or simple utensils for simple operations".³⁸ Tafuri does not appreciate the potential of contemporary surreal or pop imagery, preferring to see them as examples of a "withdrawal of the object into itself" reflected in the "cruel elegance of avant-garde Italian design...".³⁹ His text in the "Critical Articles" section of the catalogue is dense and insightful on 20th-century Italian design, but his belief was that SUPERSTUDIO's "anti-utopian regression was therefore fated to give birth to new utopias" and that a "private leap into the sublimated universe of 'artificial paradises' has not proven prescient".⁴⁰ They did call for a world "without cities, castles or roads" but this is an anti-utopian critique of Modernism in the spirit of historical counter-utopians.⁴¹ Ambasz claims that this is due in part to the "psyches of the designers themselves, their inhibitions, and their guilt complexes" and their guilt feeling regarding their own complicity in reinforcing the prevailing values of a consumer society.⁴² Nevertheless, the group tries to find a way out of their predicament of being designers in a world that they believe does not need consumer objects by launching their important but little known *Extra-Urban Material Culture* project, a systematic inquiry into the suitability of farm and building implements for what they suggest for contemporary culture.

It was a very special moment when a design exhibition on West 53rd Street could be a show of beautiful consumer objects and simultaneously a critique of the practice of design and the wider culture. This particular 1960s' Italian condition, where critique is incorporated into beautiful objects, is nowhere more clear than in the work of SUPERSTUDIO's *Microevent/Microenvironment*.

In the conclusion of the catalogue Ambasz poses two possible choices for the Italian designer: "...remain limited to the production of isolated objects... [or] build at least two million rooms a year, without spoiling the urban and rural landscape".⁴³ But *The New Domestic Landscape* also allows for — even encourages — designers who do not wish to create only objects or rooms but conceptual proposals; and SUPERSTUDIO showed the limitless possibilities of the design strategy. In the spirit of 1960s' polemical and protest culture SUPERSTUDIO, placed on MOMA's *New Domestic Landscape* stage, dreamed a visionary architectural future and present that was as relevant and convincing to its generation as it is to us at the start of the 21st century.

¹ M. Tafuri, *History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990, 383).

² Doug Michaels, in an e-mail conversation with the author, 2 January 2003.

³ Peter Lang, "Suicidal De-sires", in this catalogue.

⁴ Doug Michaels, in an e-mail conversation with the author, 2 January 2003.

⁵ P. Cook, "Natalini Superstudio", *Architecture Review* (vol. CCXXI, no. 1021, March 1982, 49).

⁶ Centro Di collaborated with MOMA and the New York Graphic Society Ltd. in designing, publishing and distributing the catalogue for *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems of Italian Design* (1972).

⁷ Cook (cit. 49).

⁸ E. Ambasz, ed., *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems of Italian Design* (New York: MOMA, 1972). All Ambasz' citations are from this text. Ambasz was on a year's leave of absence from Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies to develop this project.

⁹ *The New Domestic Landscape*, it should be noted, is not primarily about architecture or visionary plans but about the products of Italian industrial design. I visited the exhibition at MOMA in 1972.

¹⁰ However, not only are the designers featured in this exhibit educated as architects but it informs all of their thoughts and motivations. Renzo Piano devised a lightweight structure to cover the upper and lower terraces of the museum's garden, but remained unused because of a lack of money.

¹¹ MOMA's listing of exhibitions from the MOMA library. The next major architecture exhibition after *The New Domestic Landscape* was *The Architecture of the Beaux Arts* in 1976, a show that heralded Post-modernism at MOMA.

¹² See G. Celant's "Radical Architecture", in Ambasz, ed. (cit. 380). "All the new Italian architecture — Archizoom and Superstudio, etc. — has asserted that its aims are conceptual and behavioural. Proclaiming itself as radical, it no longer wishes to be commercialized or alienated, or to renounce its own ideas and expressive attitudes... It offers nothing but its ideological and behavioural attitudes... its significance lies in the systematic attention that it gives, not to what can be produced, but to an absolute and operative ethic. This consists in making people aware (not by means of commercial products, but their aim of disengaging themselves from, and breaking with, the present system) of the extent to which design and architecture have been led astray to having been made subservient to ideological and behavioural repression..."

¹³ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 285).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* catalogue overleaf.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* catalogue overleaf.

¹⁸ Tafuri (cit. 383).

¹⁹ In conversation with Peter Lang and William Menking on 29 April 2003.

²⁰ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 19).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* 20.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.* 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 139-210.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.* contents page.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 21.

³¹ *Ibid.* 19-20.

³² *Ibid.* 94.

³³ *Ibid.* 111.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 245.

³⁵ A. Natalini, "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape", *Architecture Design* (no. 8/72, London, 1972, 469).

³⁶ See G. Celant's "Radical Architecture", in Ambasz, ed. (cit. 380). "All the new Italian architecture — Archizoom and Superstudio, etc. — has asserted that its aims are conceptual and behavioural. Proclaiming itself as radical, it no longer wishes to be commercialized or alienated, or to renounce its own ideas and expressive attitudes... It offers nothing but its ideological and behavioural attitudes... its significance lies in the systematic attention that it gives, not to what can be produced, but to an absolute and operative ethic. This consists in making people aware (not by means of commercial products, but their aim of disengaging themselves from, and breaking with, the present system) of the extent to which design and architecture have been led astray to having been made subservient to ideological and behavioural repression..."

³⁷ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 285).

³⁸ *Ibid.* 10.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* catalogue overleaf.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* catalogue overleaf.

⁴² Tafuri (cit. 383).

⁴³ In conversation with Peter Lang and William Menking on 29 April 2003.

⁴⁴ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 19).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 139-210.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 21.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.* contents page.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 19-20.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 94.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 111.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 245.

⁵⁹ A. Natalini, "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape", *Architecture Design* (no. 8/72, London, 1972, 469).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 139-46).

⁶² *Ibid.* 147.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 139-46.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 147.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 148.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 143.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 242; originally in "SUPERSTUDIO", *Casabella* (no. 367, Milan, July 1972).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 242.

⁷¹ Natalini (cit. 469).

⁷² M. Tafuri, "Design and Technological Utopia", in Ambasz, ed. (cit. 388-404).

⁷³ M. Tafuri and F. Dal Co, *Modern Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1976, 124).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ D. Graham, "Art in Relation to Architecture / Architecture in Relation to Art", in B. Wallis, ed., *Rock My Religion, Writings and Art Projects, 1965-1990* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993, 224-41). For a discussion of architectural historians and pop art see Graham's essay.

⁷⁶ Tafuri, *History of Modern Architecture, 1944-1985* (cit. 99).

⁷⁷ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 242 and 245).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 246.

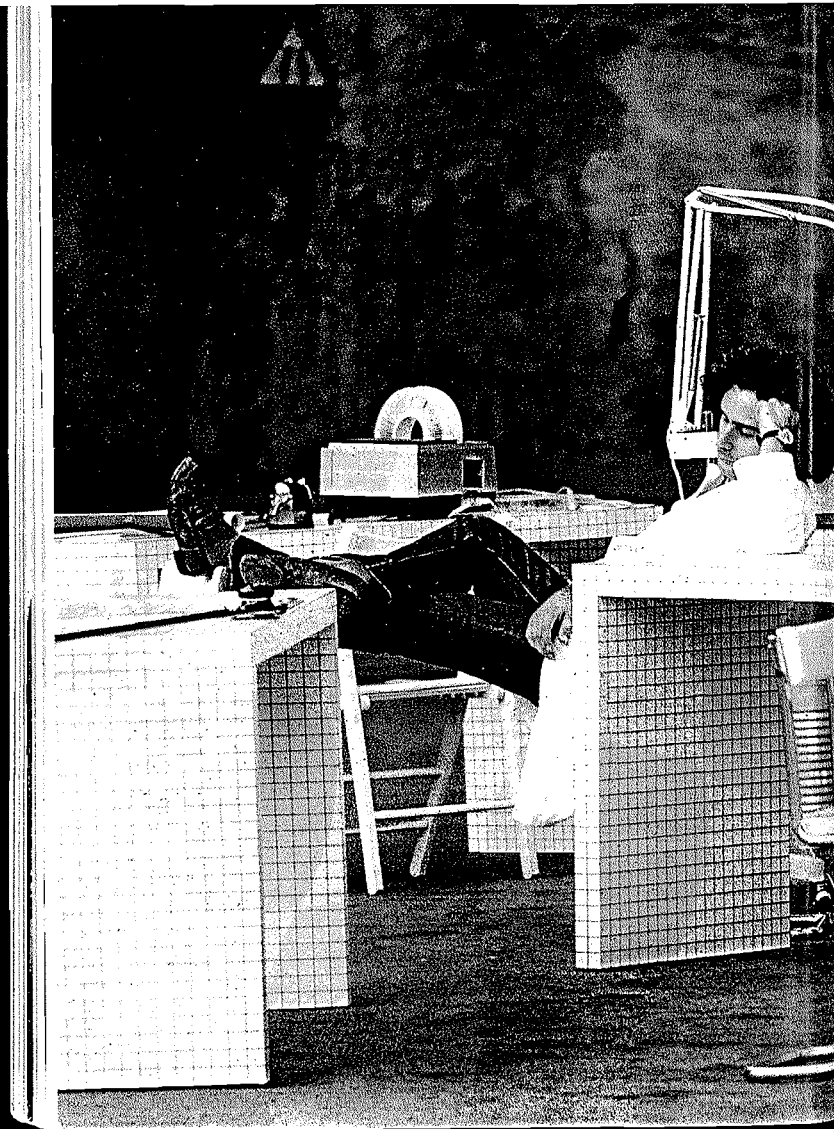
⁷⁹ Tafuri, "Design and Technological Utopia" (cit. 388).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 388.

⁸¹ Ambasz, ed. (cit. 242).

⁸² *Ibid.* 420.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 421.



Cristiano Toraldo
di Francia

Memories of Superstudio

I always believed that the school has one of the most important roles within society, that of forming a critical awareness capable of proposing alternatives to the cultural, social and economic system in which we live. Under formal education, creativity is often relegated to technical-expressive processes; it is rarely called upon in the evaluation of behavioural modes and institutions — in the stimulation of social changes. We should view the function of education in the light of its Latin etymology: e-ducere = to guide out of . . . This, I feel, is the true function of school — that of trying to liberate the critical capacity of the student. Metaphors and paradoxes are among the means used to provoke original thinking. Our only hope for escaping definition by the roles imposed upon us is the emergence of a creative-critical approach to society, an approach which renders clear the map of the distribution of power in the territory.
Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, 1982

It is in this light that I remember the sequence of events and researches that have characterized the story of the group of architects, SUPERSTUDIO, which I founded at the end of 1966 together with my friend Adolfo Natalini, whom I had called to reach me up in the safe hill of Bellosguardo, after the flood had destroyed his painter studio.

Ugo Foscolo, Elizabeth Barret Browning, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James were among the people that preceded us over time on the same hill, which I thought could be of good omen for our attempts in opening the closed disciplinary limits of architecture, transmitted to us through the academy of the International Style.

We drew and wrote through the whole day like on diary, a travel log, records of a trip that still continues, without any illusions of a defined destination. Thus we had no pretence of furnishing a

Misura furniture. 1970

formula of consolation or final identity, as did at that time the colleagues of the "Tendenza" with whose theories we apparently agreed, but who went on to uncover the strong plan of restoration behind the Neo-rationalist facade.

Rossi's theory of a Superhistorical logic of architecture had been saluted as a clear means of exit from the dark tunnel of the identity crisis of the International Style.

SUPERSTUDIO's architecture represented, on the contrary and beyond any defined architectural theory, a continued process of criticism over the structure of society, denying the institutional use of the discipline by the neo-capitalistic reformers. In fact, the latter still described architecture as an allegory of society; the town became the formal configuration of society before it could be considered a useful structure. This was the limitation that pushed architecture to an only linguistic renewal. This was also the limitation of some of the avant-garde groups (Archigram, Metabolism) the minute that they accepted the tautology that the architecture of a technological civilization should be technological, or organic, if coming from an organic model of society.

SUPERSTUDIO, refusing these reformist solutions, started from a structural analysis of the relations between society and culture. This led to a critical disassembling of architecture as institution and of the role of the intellectual as a producer of models. At the same time it revealed the contradictions and ambiguities that were at the basis of the Modern Movement.

"Traditionally, architecture has rarely sought to deal with the fundamental material of our human existence. The architect, remaining at the margin, 'intervenes' at one point in the process — usually after behavioural variables have already been codified. Once he is summoned, it is to provide solutions to rigidly stated problems.

Even when the solutions themselves are revolutionary, the rules governing their production and consumption prevent any real upheaval. The architect proposes no alternative behaviour because he uses instruments perfected by the system to avoid any substantial deviation on his part.

Thus, the working-class home and the stately villa are based on the same models. Designs of the Radical architect are scarcely distinguishable from those of the academic architect. The difference lies only in the quantities concerned; all decisions on the quality of life have already been made.

In accepting this role, the architect becomes the accomplice of the machinations of the very system whose approval he seeks. The avant-garde architect plays one of the most stereotyped parts; rather like the Byronic hero, he brings the Romantic conflict and dramatic irony necessary to the piece. Finally recognizing his situation, the architect may detect in his work and in himself certain



Memories of Superstudio

connotations of cosmetics, environmental pollution, and *consolatrix afflictorum*, bringing him to an abrupt halt on his well-paved way. At this time it becomes an act of coherence or a last try at salvation to discover the mechanisms that lie at the base of our social action, unravelling knots in order to liberate collective energies bound into schizoid behaviour modules." (SUPERSTUDIO, 1968)

The formal, constructive and vital acts which might be representing the role and destiny of man in his world are instead little more than a sequence of pre-constituted models deriving less from conscious individual choice, than from imposed formal structures.

In fact the passage to the 20th century had seen the completion of the critical discussion on the limits of the Classical language, which since the reformulation of Brunelleschi and Alberti, had crossed three centuries of revisions and mannerisms till the end of the 19th century.

At this time the advancing of the industrial revolution had started to demolish economical equilibriums and social hierarchies, which till then had found an appropriate representation in the formal systems of the architectural tectonics.

In the various artistic expressions like with architecture, there begins the work of disassembling of the linguistic apparatus, to define a degree zero, from which to start rebuilding a different formal universe.

To this attitude the industrial production system will furnish the model, which will be followed as a matrix of a new rational social and cultural order.

For the Modern Movement industry was going to perform a great civil, formal and cultural order on the human and metropolitan world: a logic and rational universe, of which architecture and design were pre-establishing (pre-figurating) from the immediate beginning the signs of a linguistic and methodological unity.

During the 1960s the key to an understanding of this reality turns from the first time upside down: complexity and contradictions together with the discontinuities existing in the physical and social world are absolutely not destined to disappear in the order of a dematerialized world, because they are the ripest fruit of the growth processes of the industry in the world.

Chaos is not a temporary reality, but a permanent one.

The avant-garde was destined to transform in creative possibilities what till the day before was considered bad and an element of disturbance.

SUPERSTUDIO positioned for the first time complexity as the central category of change and assumed as a positive and rich element the multitude of languages and behaviours.

"It assumed the logic of the industry as energy for diversification and not for homologation: the future would not be constituted by a world of standards, robots and of products of great series

but by contrasting logics of production, where the unique piece lives without problems with mass production, the codified languages with the anarchist ones, the definitive products with the temporary ones, the high technology with the primitive one." (Andrea Branzi, 1984)

Working around the hypothesis of architecture as a means for criticism, using systematically the *demonstratio quia absurdum*, the paradox, the negative utopia, SUPERSTUDIO in 1968 has produced an architectural model for total urbanization: *The Continuous Monument* as the last term in a series of architectures that have signed the planet since the linear cities of the Russian utopians of the 20th century.

"Eliminating mirages and will-o-the-wisps such as spontaneous architecture, sensitive architecture, architecture without architects, biological architecture and fantastic architecture, we move towards the 'continuous monument', a form of architecture all equally emerging from a single continuous environment the world rendered uniform by technology, culture and all the other inevitable forms of imperialism.

We belong to a long history of black stones, rocks fallen from the sky or erected in the earth meteorites, dolmens, obelisks. Cosmic axis, vital elements, elements reproducing the relationships of sky and earth, witnesses to marriages celebrated, the tablets of the law, final acts of dramas of various lengths. A square block of stone placed on the earth is a primary act, it is a testimonial that architecture is the centre of the relationships of technology, sacredness, utilitarianism. It implies man, machines, rational structures and history.

The square block is the first and ultimate act in the history of ideas in architecture. Architecture becomes a closed, immobile object that leads nowhere but to itself and to the use of reason." (SUPERSTUDIO, 1968)

Then trying to overcome the attempt both of the Roman and Venetian schools to restoring an autonomous and over-historical value based on the given forms and the types of the urban fabric for the reconstruction of the European city, we tried a connection with the Modernist utopia of the ideal city and brought it to the extreme limits. In fact even the project for the *Ville radieuse*, imagined by Le Corbusier, already was operating a separation of "layers" between nature, seen as a free distribution on the surface of the planet of its green part and the architecture of the city concentrated in high volumes suspended on piloties.

On the other hand Le Corbusier himself was standing to the end of a process of colonization of nature by architecture and of metaphorical transfer of the image of society that had culminated in the representation of the sovereign power of Louis XIV, along the never-ending perspectives of the avenues at Versailles or at Vaux-le-Vicomte.

At the same time he had the opportunity to reflect on the significance of the insertion of the large rectangle, apparently wild, denominated Central Park. There Frederick Olmsted putting on the scene the representation of nature, had pointed a "layer" pre-existing to the tracing of the Manhattan grid and had constituted a pretext for redemption from the density of constructions on the peninsula.

The Continuous Monument is positioned at the end of a story of oppositions between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, overturning the original concept of place as void and clearing in the thick darkness of the primigenia forest, to get to a final architecture, a totally artificial place, which stands out and crosses the natural surface of the planet, cleared and rendered homogeneous by the political and cultural processes of second capitalism.

In this way the crossing of *New New York* by *The Continuous Monument* symmetrically leaves a free rectangle, from where to escape tall skyscrapers, signs of a primitive layer of architectures as objects.

At this point having freed the field from the opposition nature-architecture, city-country, from the objectual aspect of architecture as a final monument of totalizing utopias, and of great stories, that in the name of a rational order, had organized a pure synthetic view of reality measured by perspective, SUPERSTUDIO introduces with the project *Supersurface* another extreme vision. A new reality which, having lost its marks of solid-mechanical, objectual architecture as three-dimensional support for life, would have been diffused on a neutral and virtual grid of energy and information fluxes, as support for a weak organization of territory.

Starting from the hypothesis of the planet rendered homogeneous, through a net of energy and information, SUPERSTUDIO elaborated the hypothesis of a reductive process for architecture and a different control of the environment without the necessary use of three-dimensional systems.

"The use of the hearth through a net of services and communications. The cities constitute the knots. The grid is a continuous but not homogeneous system. The voids leave space for the more or less intensive exploitation of territory... Cities like New York constitute a didactical example of functional use of a territory through a Cartesian grid. The Manhattan peninsula disappears under the unifying action of induced values... Hypothesis of control of the environment through the use of energies (artificial streams, thermal barriers, radiations, etc.). Toward the disappearing of the membranes dividing the interior from the exterior space..." (SUPERSTUDIO, 1970)

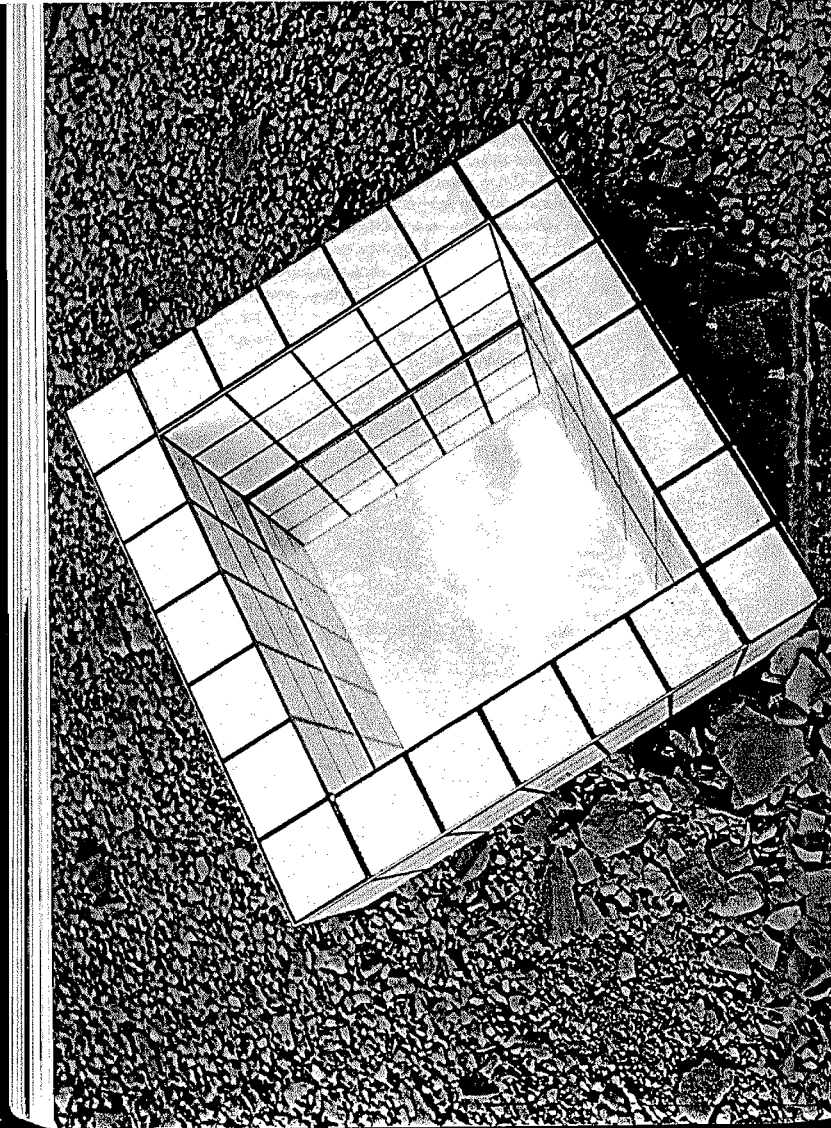
When the projects and pictures, writings and objects produced by SUPERSTUDIO first appeared, Radical architecture did not exist.

Now that this label exists historically, SUPERSTUDIO as Radical architecture itself no longer exists. In other words, it was not a question of just one more movement or school with well-defined homogeneous characteristics, but of a series of situations, intentions and behavioural patterns whose modes of existence concerned not only architecture and design, but also art, communications, behaviour, animation, criticism, philosophy and politics.

The techniques employed in liberating architecture involved its rejection as a discipline, its isolation, and the destruction of its specific character, as a codified language.

From time to time the modes of action have been irony, provocation, paradox, false syllogisms, terrorism, mysticism, humanism, reduction and pathos. In terms of cultural strategy these kinds of behaviour can be articulated in a deliberately discontinuous way, in line with what critic Filiberto Menna, alluding to the game of chess, has called "moving the knight".

January 2003



*For a house of calm serenity,
a house above fashions and styles,
a house to leave you time to live: we provide a strategy for living;
we provide spiritual exercises;
we suggest furniture of "luxe calme et volupté";
shining, still furniture, ornate and rigid, poor yet sumptuous,
immobile as stone, but with changing reflections,
like milestones, time signals, an important documentation
of your life.*

*We build serene archaeology for the present and future
and we invite you to build yourself a house outside time, a house
that is as you should be, to live in here and now.
And finally we invite you to free yourselves of fears,
to gain the dignity of the present
and above all the constant use of reason.*

To live in a house is not a spontaneous, natural operation, but requires a large dose of culture, power to reason and poetry. Every house is structured as a spatial projection of its inhabitants' desires, ambitions, necessities and histories. The house becomes an image, the figurative projection of its users. And in its turn, the house, as a complex of spaces, objects, images and intentions, imposes itself on its inhabitants, modifying their behaviour.

Thus, a body of actions and reactions is born, and according to the use that is made of the house and the degree of involvement that the house requires of its inhabitants, the more complex and determining they are. It should be clear by now that a house is not a piece of capital goods, but a consumer product, and at the same time it is also true that it is not only we who consume the house (so to speak) but the house which "consumes" us.

Thus a series of guerrilla warfare actions are born, violence is imposed and suffered... this is which creates the need for a "strategy for living", i.e. a series of practical rules, first-aid manuals, well-tried methods for smoothing over discord and bringing back peace and calm. Living strategy is substantially a method for reaching the self-consciousness of *homo habitans* through a series of spiritual exercises. And certainly every "manual of spiritual exercises for serene living" must suggest the abandonment of all desire to be always "in fashion" or the desire to be always stylish, or amusing, or to be liked at once: that is, it advises an immediate abandon of false problems, manias, hysteria.

Then, one can begin to desire an unencumbered life, a life where objects have but small weight, and are only memories, a choice of light thoughts, the reaffirmation of the truth we have reached, hopes for a better world, serene co-habitation of things, times, places, people...

It is clear that once we have eliminated false problems, connected with the objects we surround ourselves with, objects become a way of knowing ourselves through our choices...

Furnishing thus becomes a knowledge-technique, a body of messages about the state of things, and like all techniques of knowledge, its end is to secure for us a serene consciousness deriving from clarity.

It is, in other words, another way to save our souls.

The Egyptians and the Etruscans used to put household objects in their tombs: today also most houses are the tombs of objects. Objects become museum-ified very quickly, and are kept, it doesn't matter whether for a long or short time, with all the dusty eternity of useless ornaments. If the purpose of furnishing is to permit human relationships, everything we have about us must always and only be a witness to our mental or emotional relationships: a series of objects to keep like messages in bottles, about our public and private histories.

But the important thing is to keep ourselves free from fear regarding memories: the important thing is to keep control of the situation, with all its possibilities for change, for abolishing or conserving. Each operation, each variation, must however take place without drama, because usually nothing is bettered or worsened, just changed. In the field of variability, much is talked (too much perhaps) of mobile space, consumable space, transformable space. There is the search for metabolisms and cinetization, an architecture of "mobility, functionality, usability" is substituted for an architecture of "firmitas, utilitas, venustas".

At any rate, there is an effort to move what is still, without trying to stop that which is moving too much.

The problem is not that of searching for a house which imitates movement, which follows the man who moves, lives, con-

sumes, dies; the great problem is that of finding a house above passion, a house of calm serenity, a house for all seasons. We already move about enough ourselves to render the architecture variable, changing its relationships with the passing of time, with the changing of the seasons and life.

Modern furnishing is like a great race (from one exhibition to another, from shop to magazine) towards the most beautiful, the newest, the most functional.

But to come in first or last has no importance if the whole race is wrong, and the race of consumerism is definitely wrong.

Thus, the thing to do is not to take part in the race, but to get out of it as soon as possible, and to isolate oneself apart to collect together slowly the pieces of our existence and forge the instruments for our survival, the instruments for the satisfaction of true needs. Gestures become more measured and free: each rime, actions invent themselves with no need of support.

The problem is not to furnish rooms,
and not even to propose objects both amusing and perishable...
The problem is to furnish deserts,
to awake consciousness from long, dogmatic sleep,
and force backward the monster created by the sleep of reason.
Once, silver was used for protection against vampires
and werewolves;
now we use marble, chrome, mirrors and rare roots
against similar nightmare creatures,
but now it is easier to distinguish them because they are
nightmares in daylight,
born, under fancy lights, lampshades and appliques,
floating on blow-up cushions, boxed into modular,
transformable coffins; but at the same time it is also more
difficult, because now they frighten no-one (or almost):
a policy of progressive narcosis encourages them,
and the illusion of well-being feeds them.
The pass-word is still let yourself go,
let yourself be guided by Big-brother-who-knows-
more-than-you,
above all because Big Brother
is himself a civilized person,
who understands perfectly that one cannot argue about taste
and everyone has his own personality,
and so everyone has the right
to choose for himself when it comes
to slipcovers for the car,
the lamps for the TV set and the seat-cover
(or better still, the three-piece set) for the WC...

We don't intend to ignore passions or desires, or detach ourselves from things: but we are interested in a more profound possession of objects, an internal possession, which means consciousness and desire for things themselves.

This means eliminating jerky movements, afterthoughts, hurried choices. Above all, the problem of survival is connected to the informed and measured use of our reserves of intelligence: the waste to be avoided is that of intelligence.

Let us conserve it to be applied to the question of living.

We can imagine an ordinary house, sufficient for shelter, and to guarantee the primary functions of life; thus, with no problems... We can imagine it empty, and then we can begin to fill it, slowly, one piece at a time, with no initial plan.

These pieces have but one common characteristic: that of meaning something, being a figure or a personage, more or less archaeological signs, but above all pieces with no connection with the "great race". Every object has its magic significance: every object appears as a closed system, and connects with the others through homogeneity or through complementing them. This homogeneity derives only from an identical degree of formal perfection; the complementariness from the fact that, together, they constitute a significant system. All these pieces are held together through simple geometric patterns and do not substantially interfere with the structure of the house: if the latter has its own architectural reality, this must be respected through "non-interference"; if not, there is no sense in trying to dignify it with more or less cosmetic operations. The principle is that of least effort: a series of actions without violence, tending to maintain non-communicating systems closed, and at the same time to state a single idea of a serene and exact way of life.

A classic way of life which uses things in the correct way, keeping a clear space for itself for reflection and arranging things around it as images. This is a kind of living with no great adventures, which makes its choices without haste, constructing a form of serene archaeology of the present and the future.

There is furniture which already belongs to the archaeology of the present, that of Le Corbusier, Mies, Breuer, Mart Stam, Aalto, Eileen Grey, the ornaments of Wilhelm Wagenfeld or Marianne Brandt, are all objects from the 1920s and 1930s which have already brilliantly passed all tests, including the hardest of all, being put back into production.

And there is other furniture on the way to belonging to the archaeology of the future: always very shiny objects, ornate or very simple, but equally loaded with intentions and figurativity.

There are pieces of furniture in chrome and mirror, shiny metal or reinvented woods, leather and fur, glass and marble or plastics,

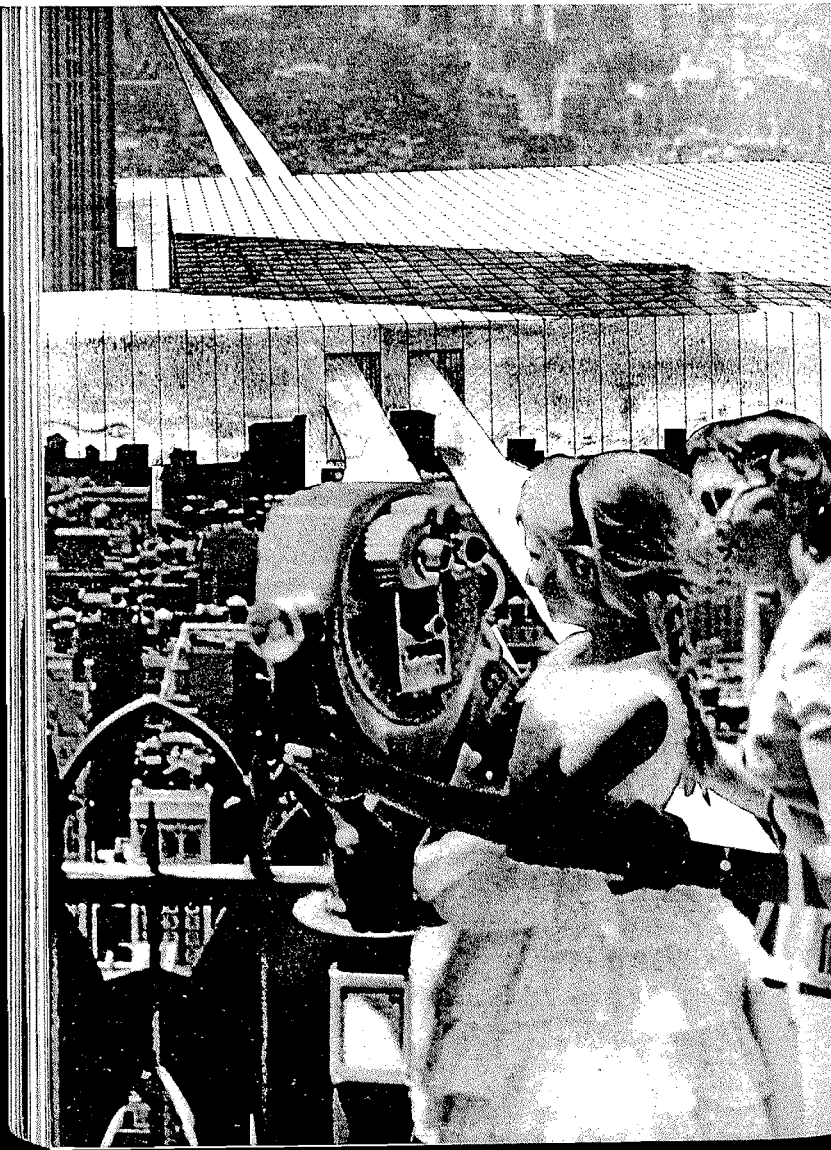
76 but always affirming the idea of their long life and self-sufficiency.

One has the impression of a series of hard, shining pieces of furniture, arranged as if in a grotto, according to the spirit of geometry. A series of ideas hidden like crystals, with the hope that they will grow in the dark until they become triumphant, polished objects, which will succeed at coming forth into the light of day.

In a period of redundancy and false problems (and furnishing is one of these), every act with a tendency to clarity, and every object made with the instruments of reason, appears as a black stone fallen from the sky in the desert.

The only thing to do is to search for the black stones and polish them for a long time, giving them a definite form of parallelogram or cube, and to plant them in sitting-rooms, bedrooms, on the beach, in the grass, and on the asphalt of some "Italian Square".

Published in Vogue, September-October 1969



The Continuous Monument,
detail

Just like in Kurosawa's film *Rashomon*, when we talk about the SUPERSTUDIO we each tell our own truth and all the truths are plausible, indeed, they may well all be true!

In recalling the film, I thought about the fact that there are six characters who have a "truth" to tell (not counting the witch, who just lends her voice to the dead samurai, and the bonze, who represents morality: the critic in our case). Six like us in the SUPERSTUDIO. Just try and have each one of us tell the history of the SUPERSTUDIO!... You would get a great *Rashomon*, with crimes, betrayals, thefts, misunderstandings, affections, joys, hopes. And all under the pouring rain... Florence is a rainy city!

The Journey

I like to travel, I even feel sure that travelling is the one important thing in life. So I have always envisaged my life as a journey; a journey comprising a great number of other journeys.

It was indeed a journey, when on 1 April 1968, after crossing the entire city, from my home in Piazza Oberdan to the hill of Belosguardo, out of sheer curiosity I approached the premises of the SUPERSTUDIO.

A rather odd date for a maiden voyage: in Italy 1 April is the day for pranks, when you are not supposed to believe anything you are told or that happens to you. The year, 1968, speaks for itself: I had just graduated in a student-occupied faculty of Architecture.

When I reached the SUPERSTUDIO, that very day Adolfo and Cristiano were working on the *Journey into the Realm of Reason*: it was undeniably a revealing take-off.

From there we went on to *The Continuous Monument*, a journey of architecture throughout the world. A long icy-cold snake, with a stereometry heightened by an elementary support, that was an instant success, precisely because it was utterly beautiful, ut-

terly neutral and everyone could see their own ideas reflected in it. This inevitably gives rise to the ambiguity that was part of our work, as in any human expression: the stimulating and frustrating possibility of being able to see each work, each action, each word interpreted differently, even antagonistically. Indeed just like *Rashomon!*

The journey is the journeyers. What we see is not what we see, but what we are.

Fernando Pessoa

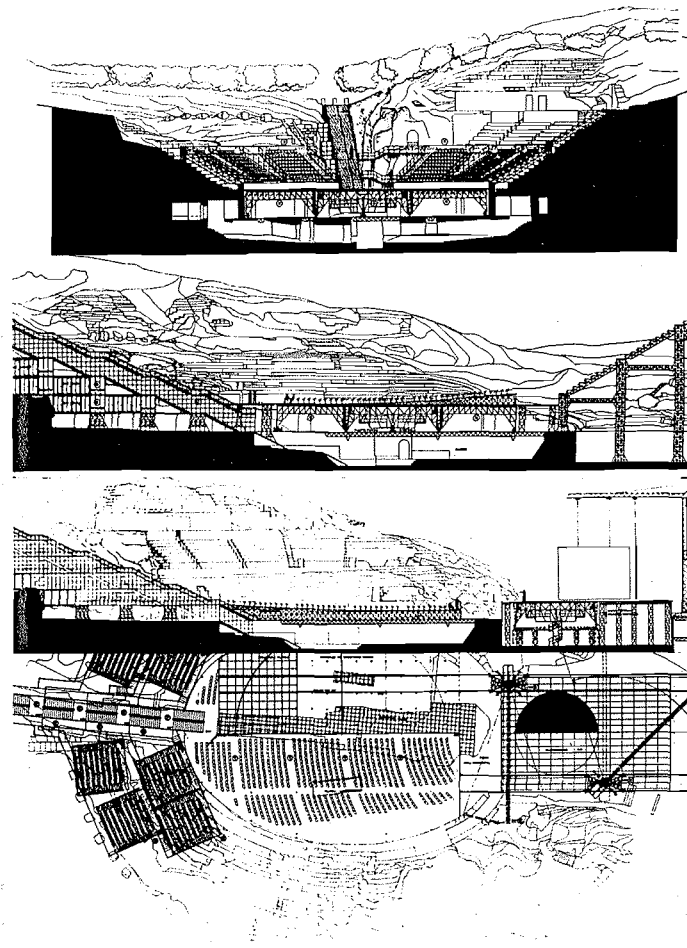
Having just started in the SUPERSTUDIO, I collaborated in *The Continuous Monument*, believing it was a parable invented to criticize, by carrying them to extremes, the mega-structural vocation, then prevailing, along with the demiurgic inclination of an architect confident it could solve every problem in the world.

Then, while Adolfo, on a trip to the United States, discovered primeval forms in a meteoric crater, in Arizona, I "improved", in my terms, *The Continuous Monument*, striving to explore the abysses of imbecility and horror that produce our beloved *Ideal Cities*. For me it was a significant journey that led me to think in depth about the brutal reasons that lie behind our industrial and urban civilizations and how great, fortunately, are the uncertainty and the incoherence with which, in practice, these reasons are applied. During this journey I sought to "improve" twelve models of cities, ridding them of the incongruities, the mistakes, the perplexities that human weakness interposes on the practical execution of the political, social, philosophical, ideological, moral, economic and, of course, also urbanistic and architectural theories whereby those who possess and control power, direct, advise, convince, mislead, implicate, oblige the "subjects" to carry out their programme. I achieved city nightmares, perfect mechanisms, like the one the Nazis designed to solve the "Jewish problem". *Ideal Cities* in that sense I mean.

After having cast a quick glance at a few historical cities, treating them with the same coherency as modern ones, and having attempted an architectural journey from the Earth to the Moon, we came to the conclusion that the only journey worth undertaking was the one inside Man, his mind, his culture, therefore our mind, our culture. Saying over and over to encourage one another: "The only architecture will be our lives", we went ahead through Lives, Educations, Ceremonies, Loves and Deaths. This was a journey as well, or better said, a significant exploration. I dealt with ceremonies and in part, loves and deaths. Architecture began to pale, to fade away in the actions of men, to be conditioned by them instead of conditioning them, to be a stage rather than a receptacle or a prison. The poetry of life (or of death) prevailed over the "poetic

80

Proposed theatre for Cagliari



Journey to the End of Architecture

81

theory" of architecture and art. I was more and more convinced of its instrumentality with respect to social and economic forces, of its ambiguous aesthetic-artistic ambition, of its impossibility to be authentic and to serve Man. In the course of this critical phase of re-evaluation, I was reminded of my prior studies in anthropology, first as representations of "ideal" societies all over again; then with concrete, intense and emotionally involved studies, rather than coldly scientific, I must say, on *Extra-Urban Material Cultures*. With my fellow-travellers, fascinated and intrigued, I strived to discern the birth of objects and of architecture starting from the primordial, from men "bare" of knowledge and experience. Leaving aside the "cultivators", sedentary owners of land, of cultivation, and of specific, already institutionalized cultures, we followed the ancient and modern nomadic "gatherers", the "inventors" of something out of nothing, out of flotsam, the great, the true, the only "improvisers" of design, of architecture, of town-planning; the few who, either because they have not yet collapsed under the cozy, warm, all so sweet weight of mass culture or because they are drop-outs from it, still had the brilliant prerogatives of children and madmen.

As you can clearly see, our journey, far from being a zigzagging course without a real destination, as was often reproached us, was according to me remarkably consistent and logical. A descent, perhaps apish but resolute, from one branch to the other, down to the roots of human doing, down to where Architecture is without Architects. To the only mental place where we might have been able to find (maybe!) the magic formula for the *Invention of the New Architecture*.

It was there, at our disposal, ready to reveal itself, to let itself be grasped, to be used. If only we had the *capacity* to search for it, had the *time* to search for it, had the *will* to search for it.

Once we reached this place, we realised however that this search was no longer the business of the SUPERSTUDIO but of each one of us. In other words that another journey began here, this time an individual one.

*Journeys never come to an end,
only the journeyers do.*
José Saramago

Architecture

My search for architecture now appears to me like that of the Graal, of the Philosopher's Stone, the Phoenix. And I believe I did not find it. I say "I believe" because I might even have found it without realizing it! I understand that this is not a very credible claim, but I shall try to explain. First of all let us see what I did

82 NOT want to find:

I did NOT want to find a *monumental* architecture.

I did NOT want to find a *fashionable* architecture.

I did NOT want to find a *beautiful* architecture.

Instead I always sought a "skinless" architecture, an architecture in which the outside arises from the inside, straight out of the inner life of the men who live in it. And therefore architectures the outside of which could be utilized, gone through, touched, made use of just like the inside, plain and hill architectures, an anthill architecture for men (of course just the opposite of a phalanstery!); an "invisible" architecture (in the sense of the "invisible man"). That is why I say I did not find it. Indeed I fail to see it, even if I have a feeling that, like in the film on the "invisible man", it has grown close to me, on the verge of revealing its outline in a puff of dust, of steam or in the rain: pouring rain (like in *Rashomon!*) that Gavroche sought cover from in the elephant of the Bastille. The first example of an architecture/non architecture that enthralled me and may have conditioned me ever since, since I was a kid, a pal of Gavroche's, when I did not yet know I would become an architect.

"Oh unexpected usefulness of the useless! Charity of great things! Bounty of giants! This outsize monument, that had contained one of the emperor's thoughts, had become an urchin's shell: the lad had been accepted and taken in by the colossus. The bourgeois dressed in their Sunday best walking by the elephant of the Bastille would say, examining it with their bulging eyes and an expression of contempt: 'What is it good for?'"

Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, Book VI, II

*An architecture can be consciously negative,
it can be intentionally designed to be unpleasant,
uncomfortable, to not work.*

Bernard Tschumi

Florence, December 2002

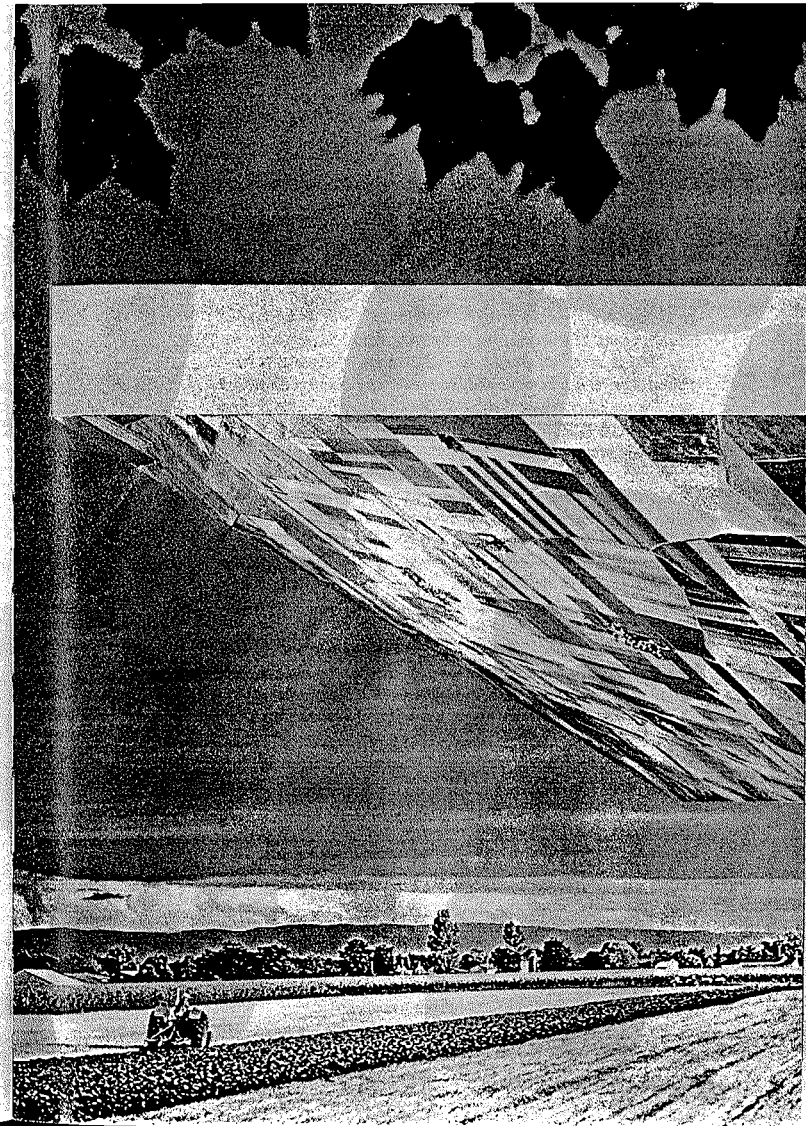
Reflected Architecture

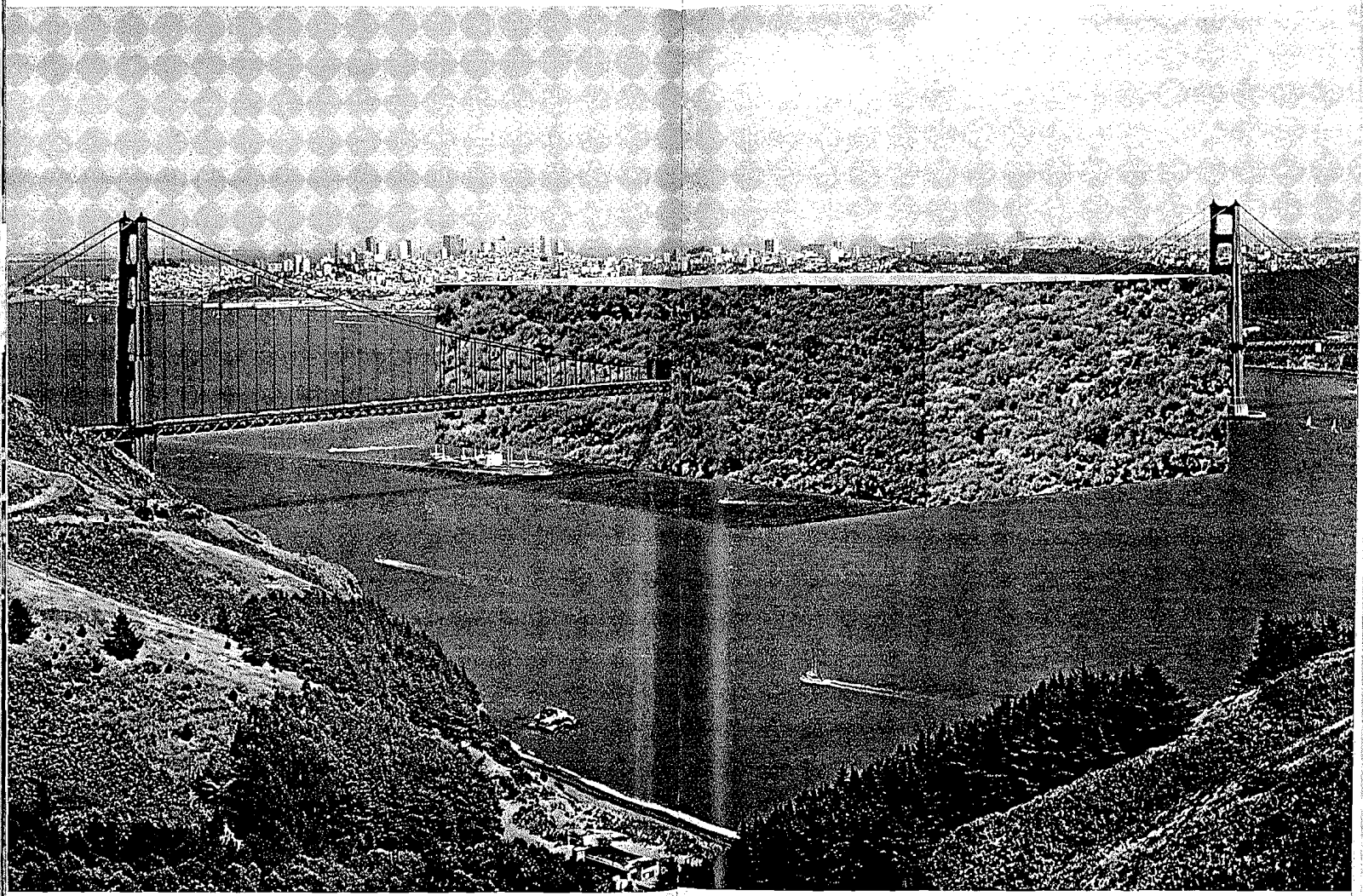
A basin of mirrors for vertical waters.

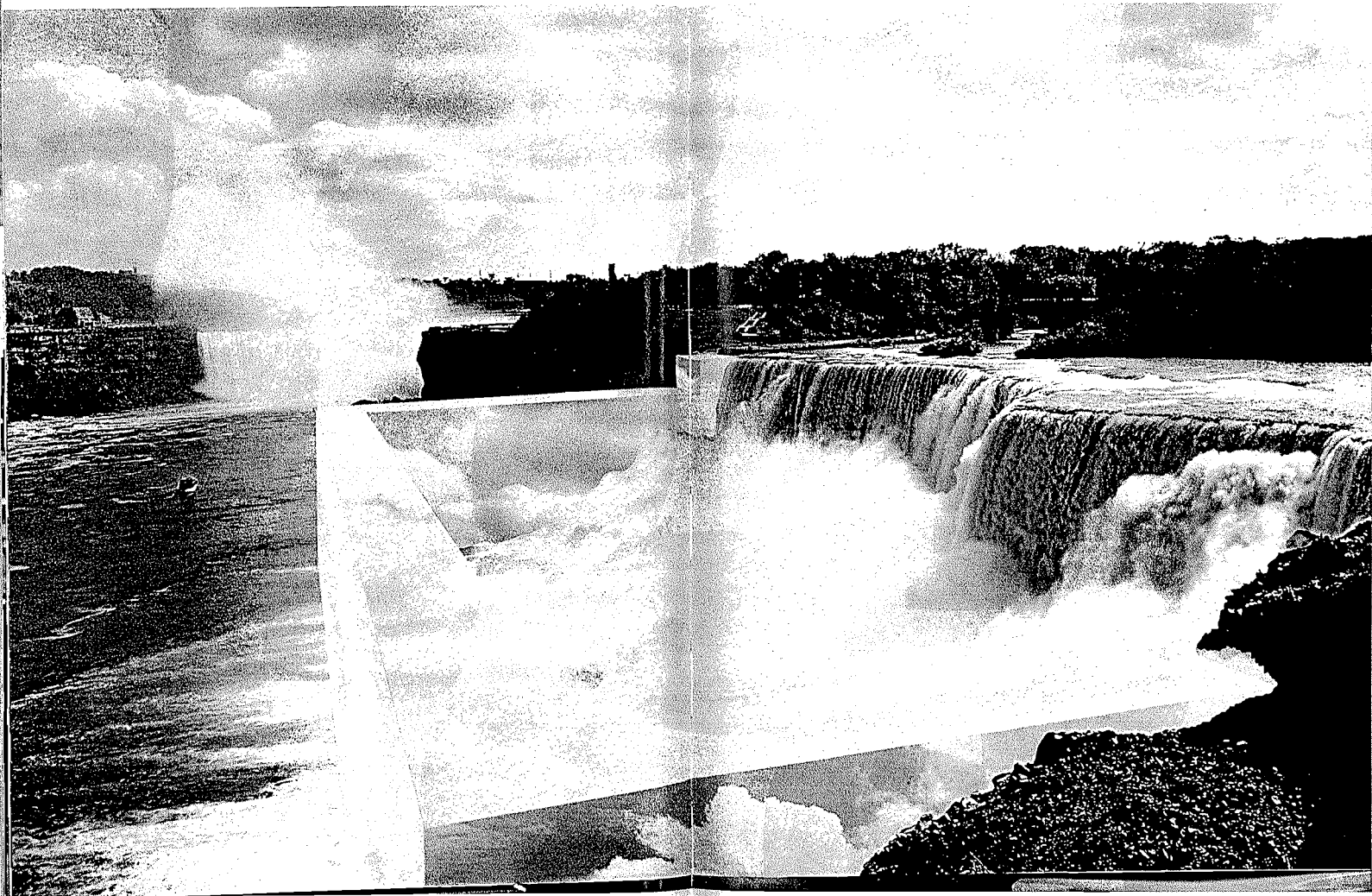
The American side of Niagara Falls can be cut off, leaving only the Canadian (Horseshoe) Falls active. A rectangular basin can be built and covered in mirror-polished steel sheeting. When the water is turned on again, the basin will fill up in 33 minutes no seconds and 94 hundredths.

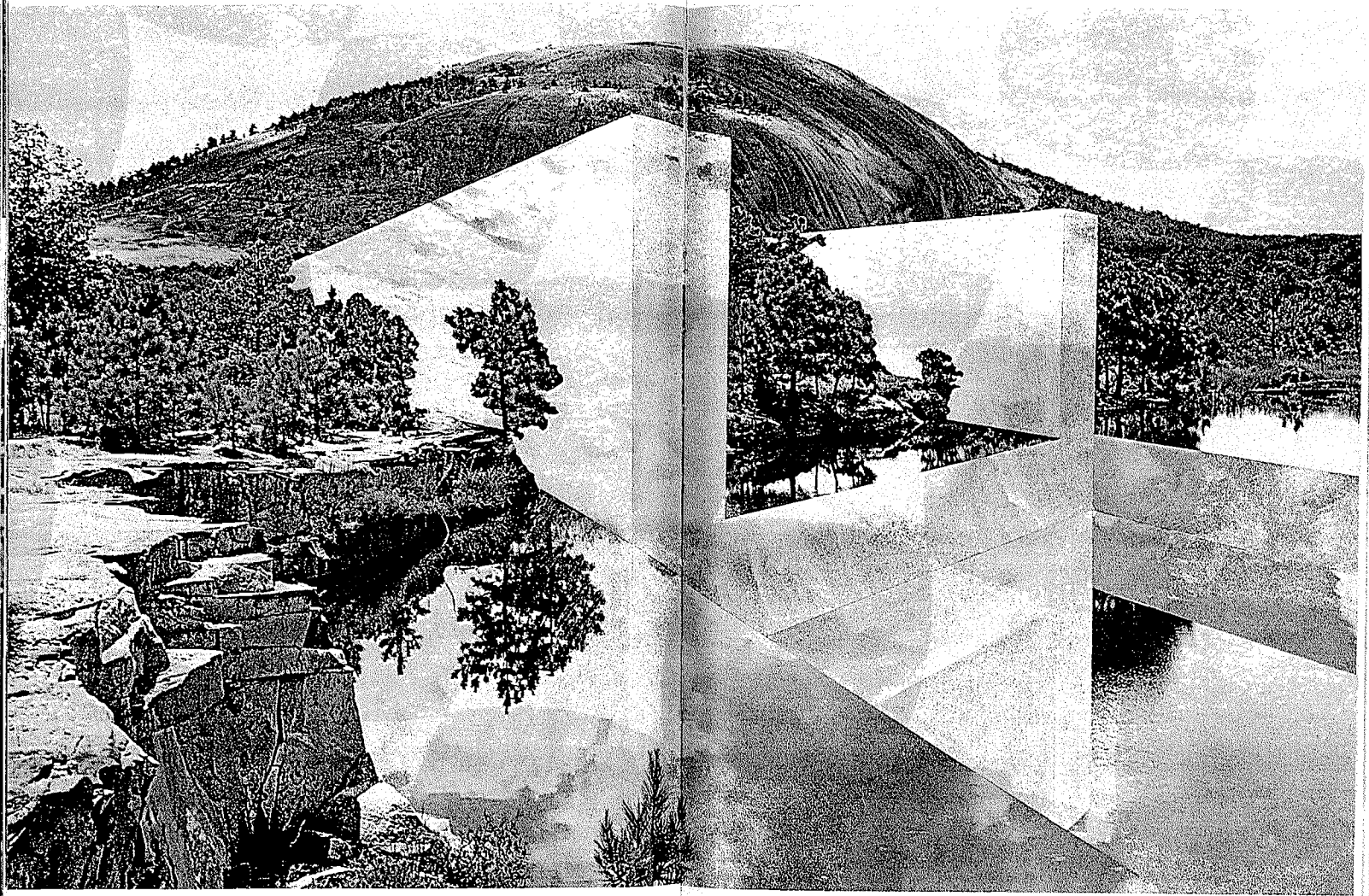
Only in this fraction of time (extremely short in comparison with the 20,000 years of Niagara's existence) is the water situated next to the geometrically reflected clouds.

Then the mirror surface of the basin vanishes. The structure has been calculated in such a way to resist underwater for some years. The collapse of the artificial structure causes a visible receding of the front of the American Falls, similar to the natural one of the Canadian Falls. The calculated time of collapse will be kept secret. Lots of people will go there, hoping to be there right in time for this terrific spectacle.



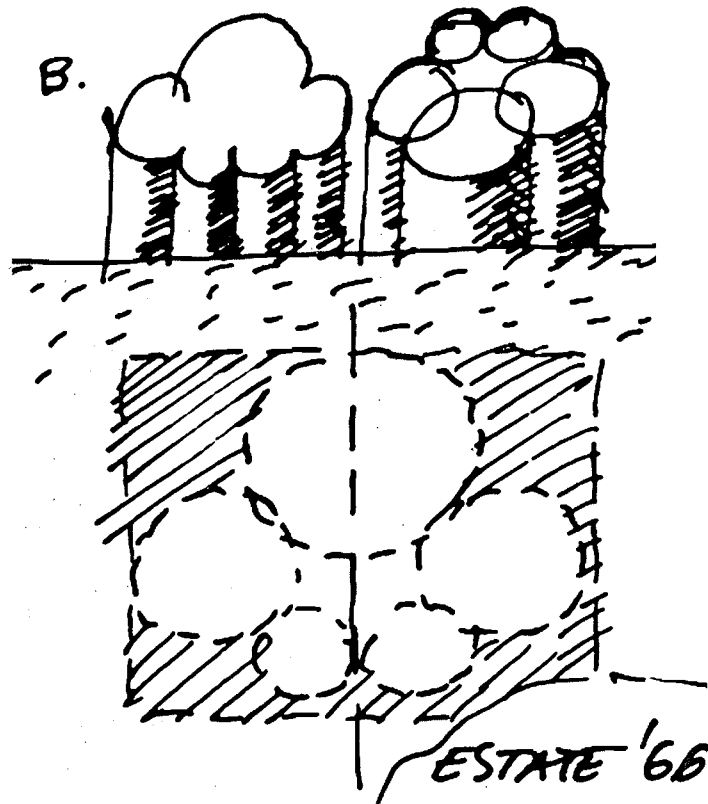








Superstudio: Historic Projects

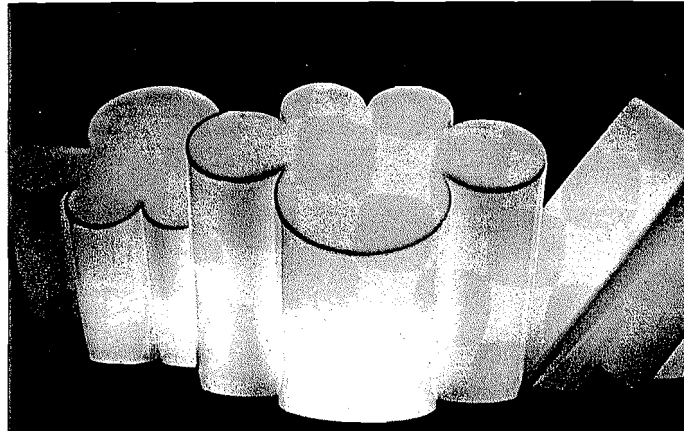
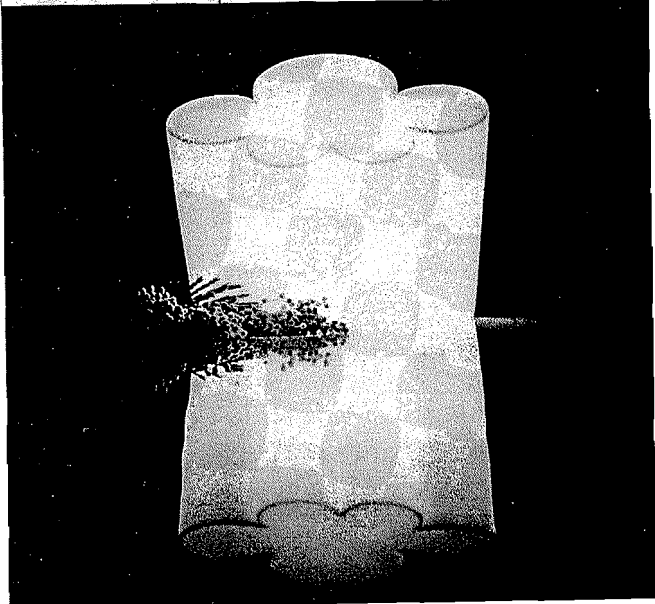
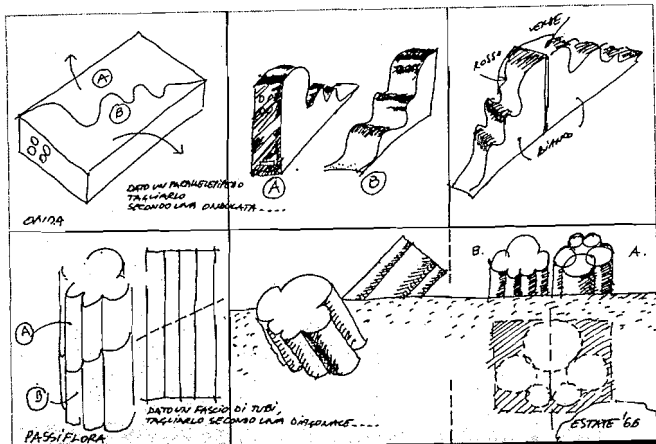


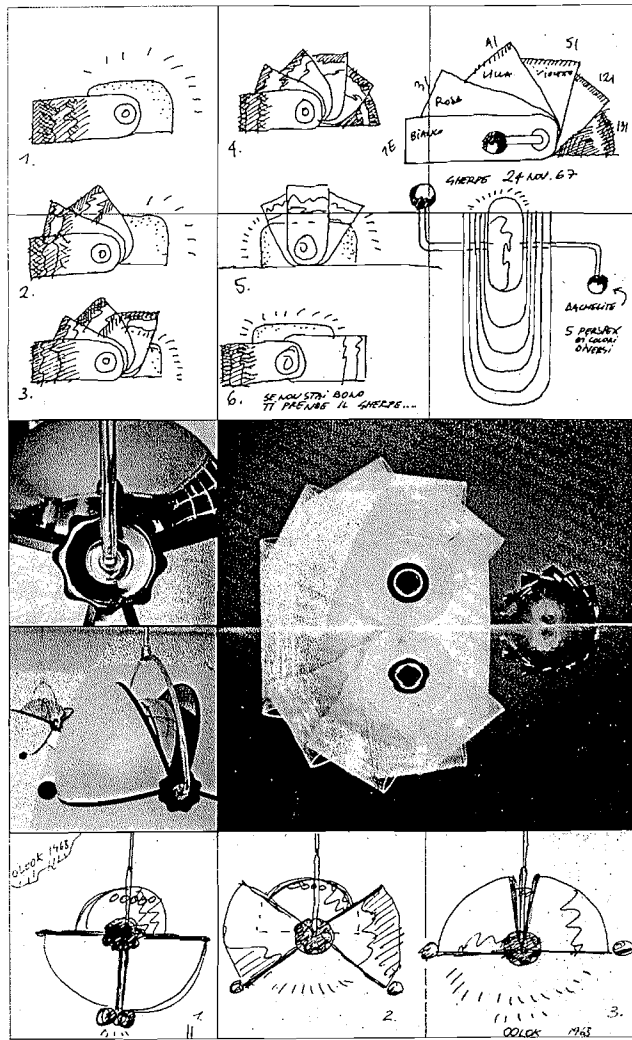
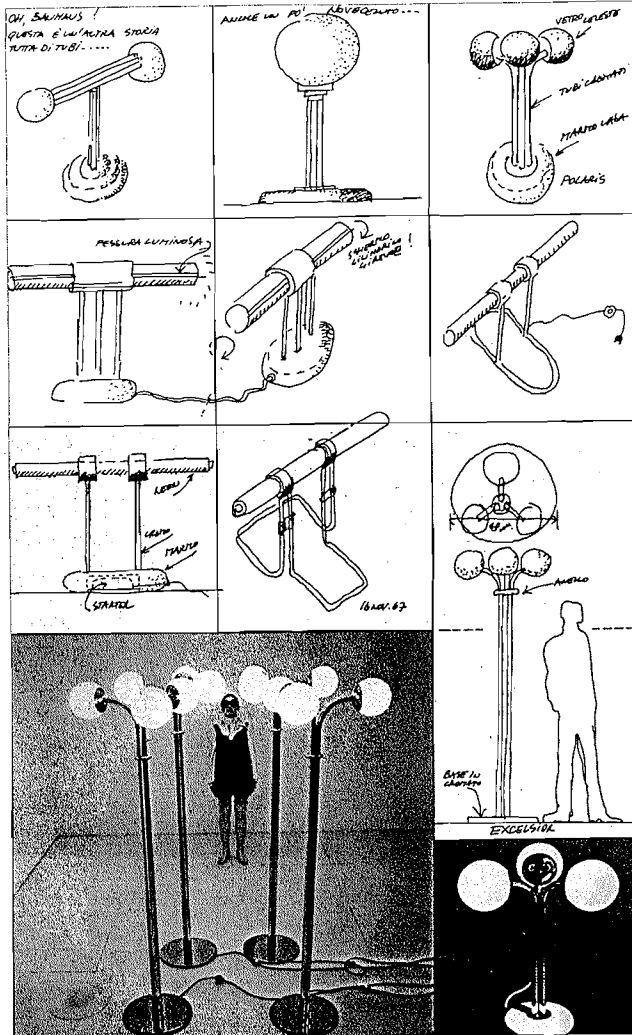
The first chapter deals with the newly constituted group SUPERSTUDIO following their debut announced at the December 1966 *Superarchitecture* exhibition in Pistoia. The period between 1966 and 1968 represents the group's early developmental stage, constructed on a critical re-evaluation of their educational experiences and tied to the contemporary architectural and design culture in Florence. We recognize this first brief period to be the *Superarchitecture* phase in the group's evolution, an intensive initiation to the world of architecture that paralleled the early development of Archizoom. Many of their core theoretical and representational concepts they later developed originated in this earliest phase between 1967 and 1968.

Simultaneously, from their first offices in Via Bellosguardo 1, the group organized a fully professional architectural and design office, that attempted to translate the group's theoretical and ideological concerns into "practical" projects. The office began with Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Roberto Magris, and after April 1968 Piero Frassinelli. Between 1967 and 1968 three main themes were identified for further investigation:

1. *Architecture and Monument*
2. *Architecture and Image*
3. *Technomorphic Architecture*

These three categories were subsequently synthesized in three major theses: *Invention Design and Evasion Design* (1967), *Journey into the Realm of Reason* (1968-69) and the development of a "single design", *A Catalogue of Villas* (1967-68).





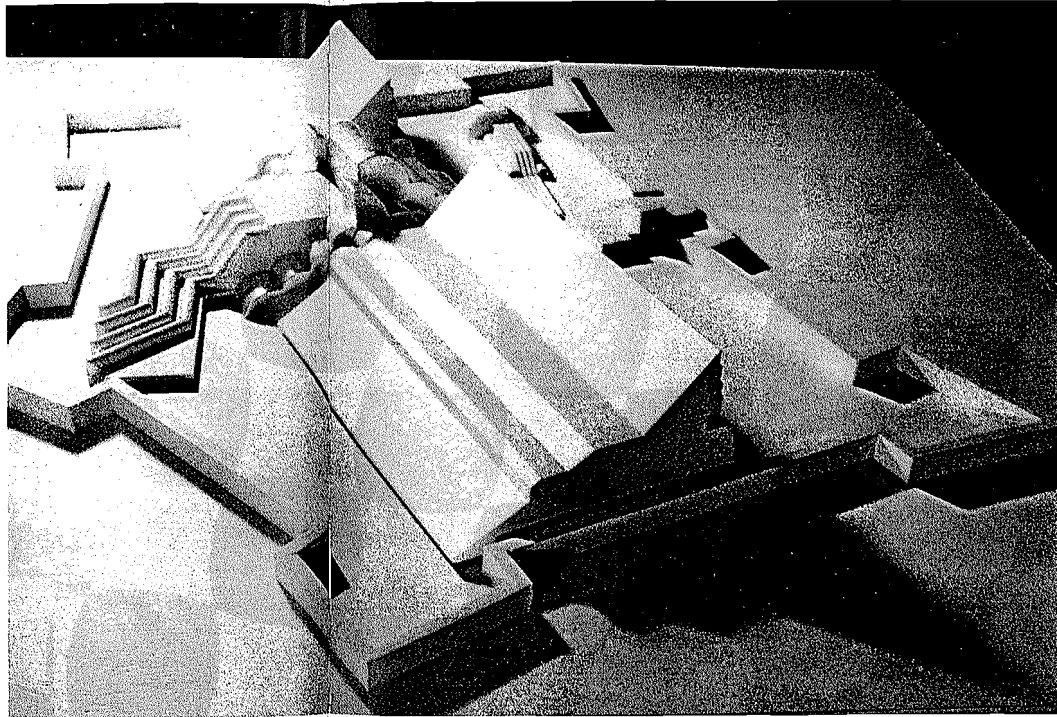
Supercultura: to the Rescue!

National Competition for Projects for the Urbanistic and Architectural Restoration of an Old Fortress in Florence as a National Centre for Arts and Crafts

surcubuo with Adolfo Natalini, Carlo Chiappi, Ali Navai, Klaus Bauschmidt (consultants). The project presents an enormous exhibition machine, a structure capable of containing and uniting all the exhibitions, shows and fairs up till now held in Florence in various different halls, and more. This machine would be permanently in operation, and would hold several different events at one and the same time: full use justifying the complexity of the equipment. The project presents a new hunk of city, an indicator of directions, within the circle of the walls, a new focal point of relationships hinging the city and the penetrating lines of the motorways, at a corner of the polygon formed by the outer boulevards. Thus, a work on the same scale as the city, capable of solving certain problems (with underground car parks, the re-development of an amorphous area) to be taken as a model for future developments. The project presents a development in harmony with the pre-existing requirements of the Fortezza, i.e., on a "monumental" scale. The monument as an extraordinary architectural event forms the link between ourselves and the city, and between ourselves and history; the only possible form of respect for the monumental being of the Fortezza is a creative attitude, through absolute dedication and coherence. Thus, in the project we see references to the morphology of the ancient walls and gates of the city, through the clear consciousness of historical continuity. The structure we propose gained its size through a precise desire to render it visible from the city, from the hills and from the railway, and with it to modify the urban landscape. As regards its size, we took the huge mass of Palazzo Pitti (perfectly

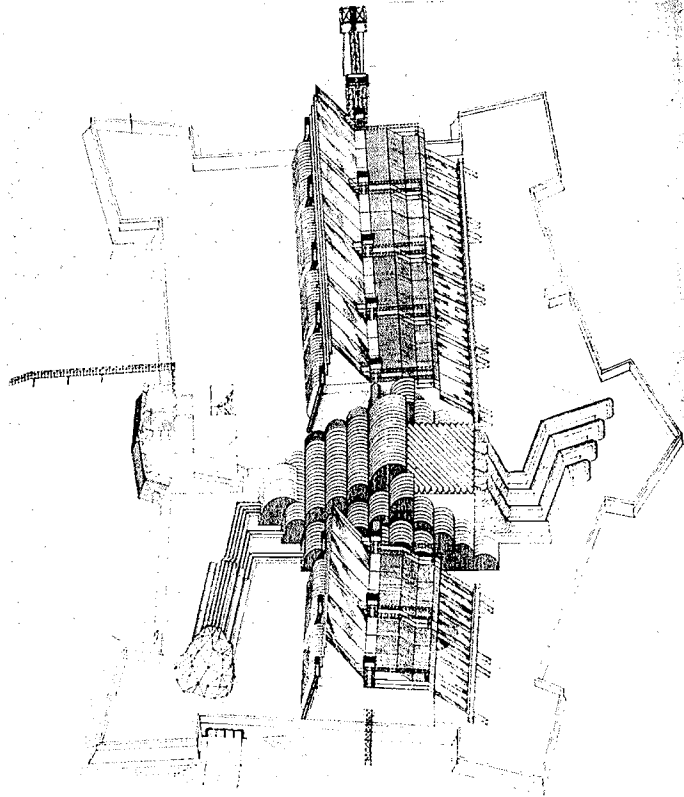
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on a scale with Florence in the days of the Grand Dukes) as our point of reference. The purpose of the project was to provide the city with, on the one hand, an organic system of services with a powerful tourist and cultural attraction, and on the other with an image on a scale with our times, an image constituting a clear testimonial of our situation. The whole structure is designed in metal. Most of the external wall surfaces are in corrugated steel (south) and glass (north). The structure of the hall is conceived as a large green-house, with the entire roofing in glass. All the halls and other rooms have air conditioning, but also benefit from the isolating effect of the air cushions formed between the glass and the flooring, and the floor itself and the sloping metal walls. The building of the whole complex can be divided up over a period of time, starting with the central hall, the museum, and arts and crafts sections, and proceeding with succeeding sections of the pavilion block. The total volume of the complex is calculated at m³ 621,000. The expected cost is about \$ 2,100,000.



Superarchitecture: to the Fortezza!

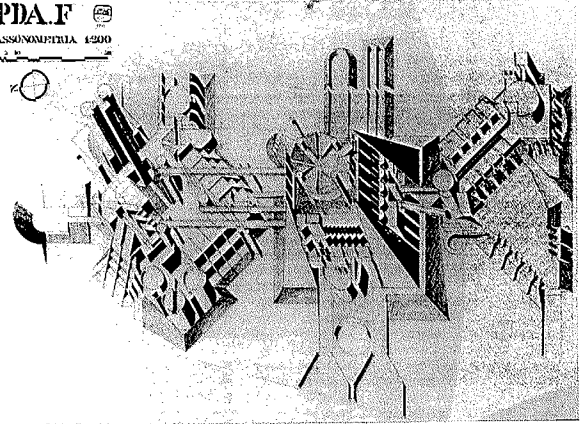
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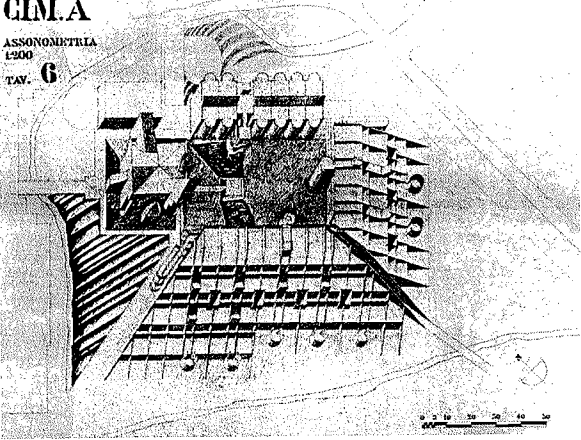


Superarchitecture: to the Rescue!

G.M.A.

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TAV. 6



**Holiday Machine. Project for a Leisure Centre
on the Calabrian Coast (South Italy)**

SUPERSTUDIO, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia
with Ai Nava.

The project includes a hotel and
various temporary services at
the mouth of a river on the Calabrian
plateau.

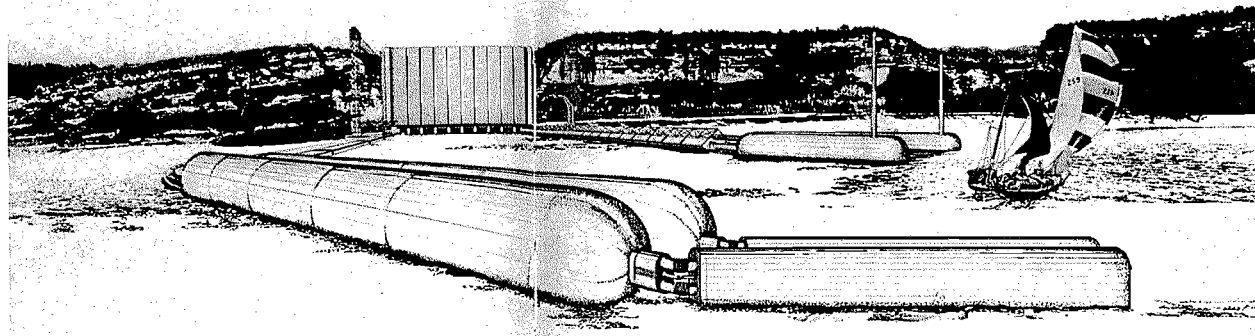
The ecological improvement of the
site (harnessing of the river for a small
electric power station, consolidation
of the rock cliffs, protection of the
coast with a harbour consisting of
floating inalterable elements) was taken
as a basis for the project.

The building, in cor-ten steel with 30-
years' duration (the period of the lease
of the site, belonging to the State), is
supported by a series of reinforced
concrete struts going into the sea. It
consists of four parts, a wall of living-
cells, a tower containing serviced free
spaces, an energy network and an
arrival station.

The part containing the cells (300) is
completely enclosed on the outside
with a double sheet metal wall
with an internal space of about 2 m,
which visually replaces the missing
section of rock cliff. The artificial
paradise on the inside is protected
from the southern sun and has its own
microclimate regulated by the
electronic control centres situated in
the trellised energy section. The
roofing is made up of three parts: a
series of sections running back on rails
into the walls for ventilation, a central
section which can be completely
raised to a height of 70 m, and a third
umbrella-like part which is completely
transparent.

The centre tower formed by four space
frame pillars, a series of intermediate
floors and an enclosed central space
with service wall, is a huge self-
service for the mind and the body. It
is flanked by moving staircases,
elevators, services, energy
conductors.

The brain of this huge, symbolically
functioning machine is in the trellised
section encased in the rock.



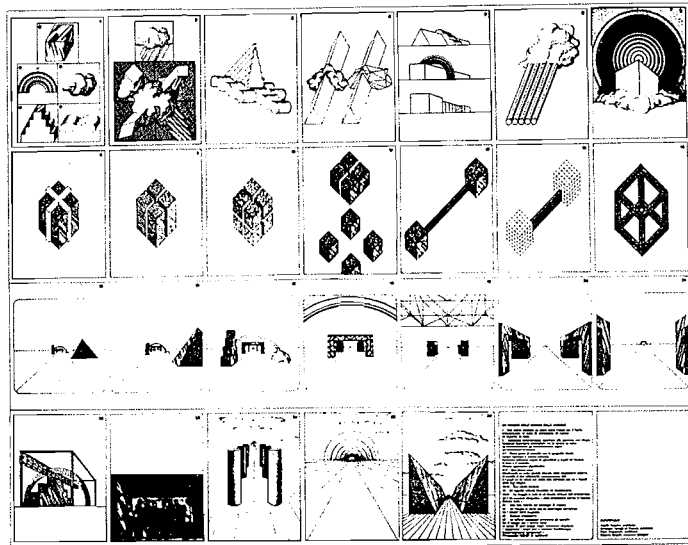
containing the air conditioning plant
and water tanks, together with control
rooms, warehouses, kitchens and
first aid station.

The arrival station on land has
a heliport with a 120 m landing strip
and underground car park for 500
automobiles.

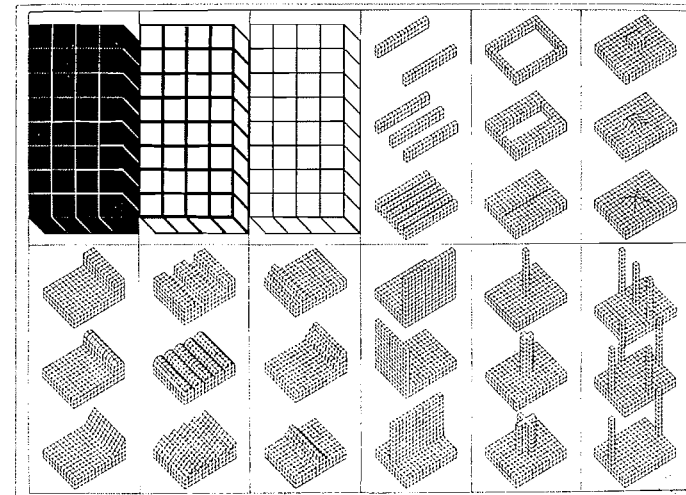
Regarding overland communications,
the Autostrada del Sole is about
30 km away and the station at Tropea
only 4 km.

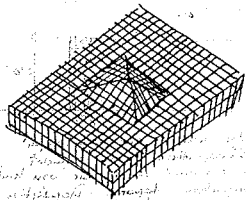
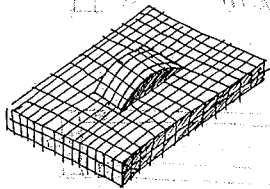
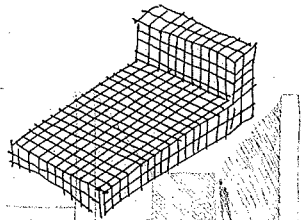
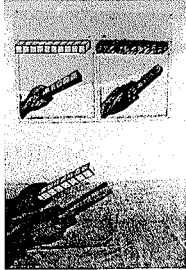
The land above the cliff is left entirely
to the growing of maize and oranges,
except for the parking strip parallel to
the river, on top of which at ground
level, flowers will be grown. Also, the
row of cypresses acting as a wind-
brake will be replanted along the top
of the cliff, while the new cistern will
permit better irrigation of the crops
on the plateau.

A Holiday Machine... as a typical
section of the kind of technological
monumentalism (continually balancing
between experimentalism and
dogmatism) which seems destined
to become the characteristic face
of our age. Architecture in the image
of the machine. ... **TECHNOMORPHIC
ARCHITECTURE.**



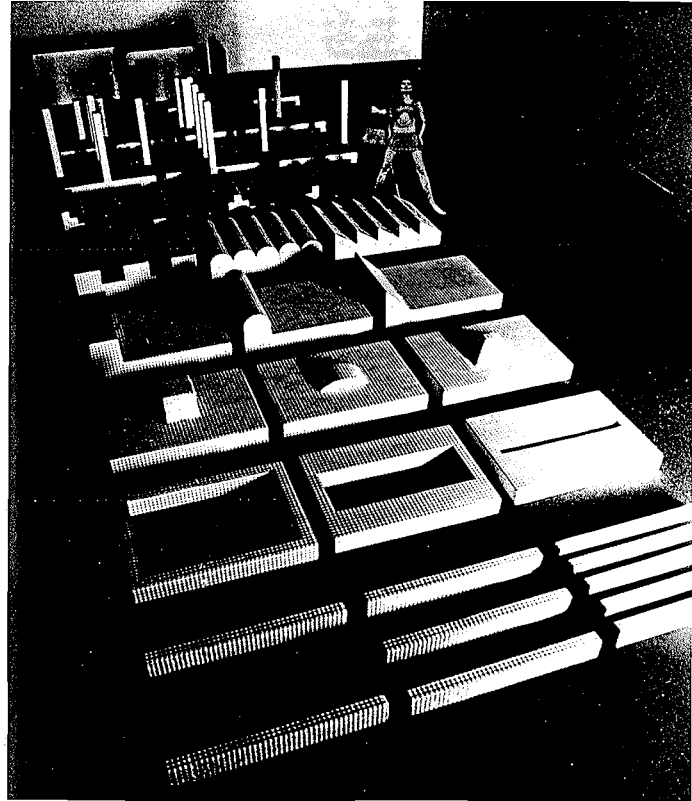
A journey like "Pilgrim's Progress" or a guide for young architects through the architecture of monuments, the architecture of images, technomorphic architecture, and architecture of the regions (of reason).





Faint handwritten text, possibly a date or reference number.

30-8-49



Superconductor in the Research

A Catalogue of Villas

Once, in Austria, we spoke with friends of how to keep our balance, and discussed the fact that Freud declared that cuba is a symptom of anguish, and so we all live in houses of anguish, even Wittgenstein who had built himself a cubic house because he liked the houses designed by Loos...

While speaking of Wittgenstein, "how can a man be happy, when he cannot keep at a distance the misery of the world? Through the life of knowledge. The life of knowledge is the life that is happy despite the misery of the world. Only the life that can renounce the pleasures of the world is happy". And also: "There is really something ineffable. It shows itself, it is mystic. The impulse to mysticism comes from the lack of satisfaction of our desires on the part of science".

The greatest project is always to project a whole life under the sign of reason, a life with precise directions, chosen and serenely accepted, with limits as corner stones. To construct ourselves with a series of primary gestures, magic gestures, calibrated and shining, through an architecture of clarity and lucidity, not of cruel intelligence, but understanding all reasons. To save one's soul through clarity, depriving architecture of its spatial-aesthetic-economic-functional superstructures (justifications and mystifications) and re-valuing its ordered essence. In this manner, architecture as an operative structure is superimposed on *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, putting their materials to order with the instruments of history and technology. To project a villa is an inexistent problem: modern architecture has already solved all relative problems, and on the other hand, has demonstrated its social and functional absurdity. However, it remains for young architects, one of the few

occasions for actually projecting architecture (at least in Italy). Thus, refusing to consider the personal problems of the clients and trying to think solely of a serene life and a happy construction seen in the light of a small piece of the larger construction that is "the system of architecture" ("Architecture") we have compiled a *Catalogue of Villas*. This includes four series:

- "Suburban Villas"
- "Villas by the Sea"
- "Villas in the Mountains"
- "Great Italian Villas"

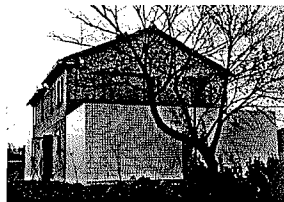
We present the first series and some examples of the others.

"Suburban Villas"

In the no-man's-land where the countryside and the city meet, each losing its characteristics and changing into a hysterical landscape, we propose to insert objects for calm and meditation. Objects for civilized living, despite a basis of frustration and refusal, or the absence of the city: we are proposing transit stations on the way to hope.

All the villas consist of simple, enclosed volumes, like sacred stones, simply indicating the place of living. Together they are the signs of an ordering will, endeavouring to distinguish and confront nature and architecture, as independent but complementary systems. All the villas are structured as simple "wrappings" with a prefabricated central core containing services. The outside walls are covered in white ceramic tiles or gres, with a 60-cm base in grey Elba granite; the window frames are in zinc-plated metal of an industrial type, as are the other metal fittings. Sun canopies are in pale blue glass fibre. All insides are in white stucco with white gres floors.

1. A small villa for serene places
2. A small villa with an almost monumental stairway
3. A very lively 2-floor house



4. Villa with picture windows (homage to the Vesnin brothers and Professor Arthur Korn)
5. Villa with small patio
6. Cubic villa

From the Catalogue of "Villas by the Sea"

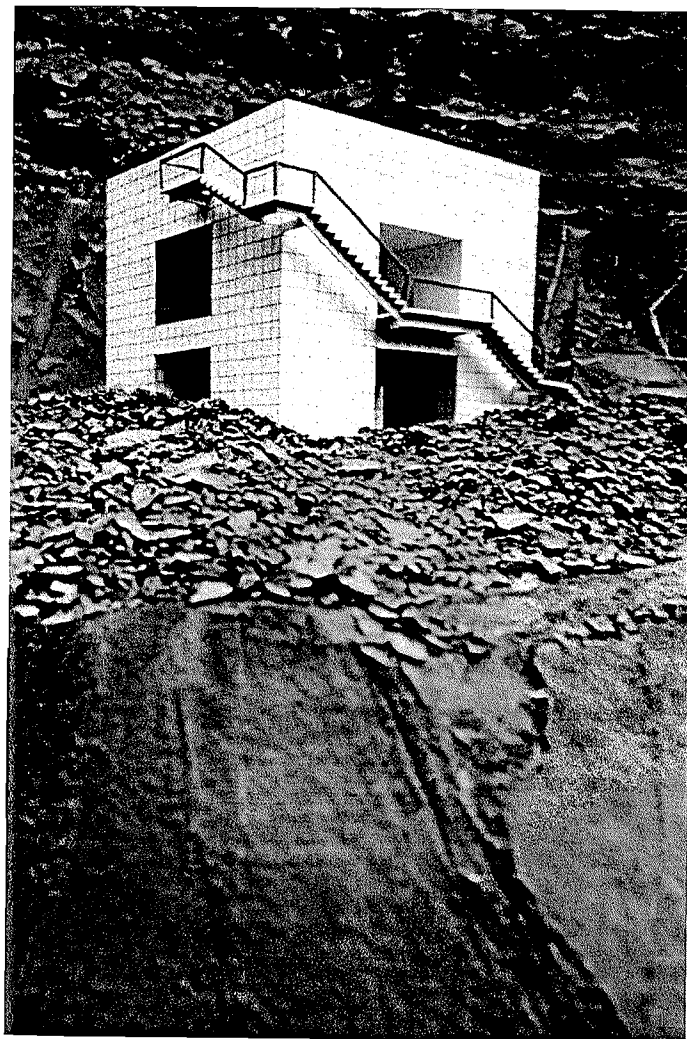
When nature becomes stronger and accumulates her elements to become a violent presence (the sea, for instance), architecture must become stronger and more concentrated, limiting itself to an elementary gesture, to a single image: "Villa for a rocky coast".

In this case, the rocky coast has been taken out and "substituted" with a surface covered in local granite. The whole house is separated from the rock by a pathway; thus the "substitution" maintains its artificiality.

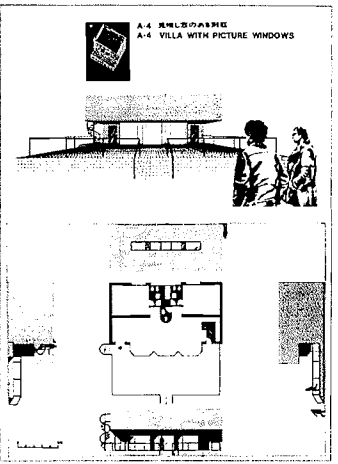
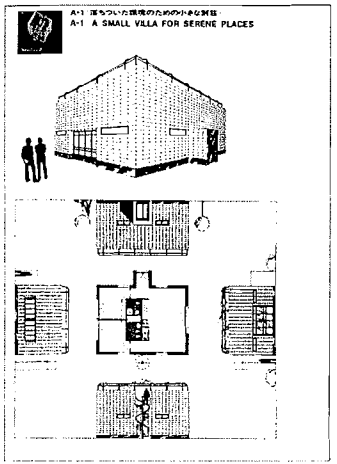
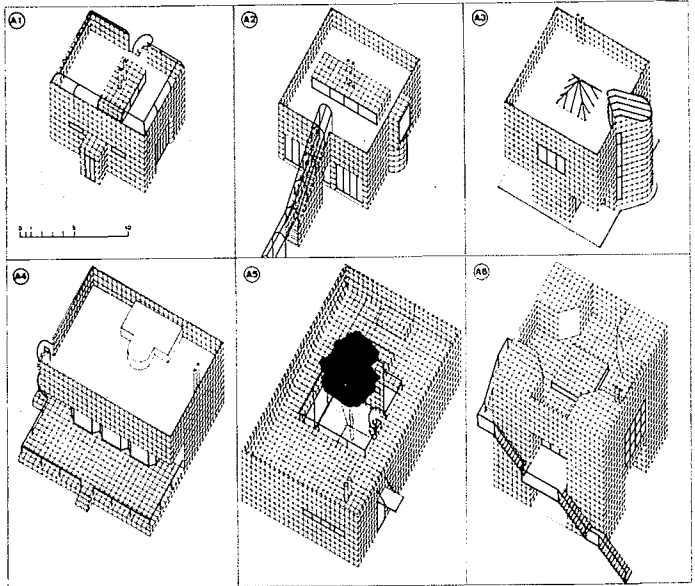
From the Catalogue of "Great Italian Villas"

The Modern Movement in architecture searched for a minimum existence space (Existenzminimum), our problem is to find the maximum, of creating, that is, the largest house possible dedicating all its space to living without many utensils...

"SUPERSTUCCO: The Single Design", in Japan Interior Design, no. 144



Superarchitecture to the Rescue!



During those years, it became very clear that to continue drawing furniture, objects and other similar household decorations was not the solution to the problems of living in houses and neither was it the solution to the problems of life itself, and even less did it serve to save one's soul... It also became clear that no beautification or cosmetics were sufficient to remedy the ravages of time, the errors of man and the bezialities of architecture...

The problem was thus one of becoming ever more detached from these design activities, rather perhaps adopting the theory of minimum effort in a general reductive process. We prepared a catalogue of three-dimensional, non-continuous diagrams, a catalogue of architectural histograms with reference to a grid interchangeable into different areas or scales for the construction of a serene and immobile Nature in which finally to recognize ourselves.

From the catalogue of histograms many objects have since been effortlessly generated: furniture, environments, architecture... But all these things are not very important to us, nor have they ever been. The surface of these histograms was homogeneous and isotropic: any spatial problems and any problems of sensitivity having been accurately removed. The histograms were also called *The Architects' Tombs*. This also constituted the project for the exhibition *The Invention of the Neutral Surface for Inuit*.

Testimonial for Little Squares

When in 1958 we started designing these things (histogram, objects, furniture, interior decoration, architecture and total projects), we found ourselves engaged in an incessant *traceter l'espace* which was a form of serene madness or imbecility, but was also certainly

another tentative effort at escaping from the median "oligophrenia" (which is the term psychiatrists use for the condition of madness in which most of us normally exist) through a form of design therapy. This means that this continuous intertwining of lines, making them fit at corners, was a way of making hands and other mechanical instruments of design work (history enclosed), marking time and waiting to clarify one's ideas about the usual "what to do", but it was not merely a moratorium, nor was it a last stubborn blast from architecture.

We never for a moment thought of a future in little squares, of a world all beauty and reason (even if every so often, to give ourselves courage, we talked of it); the experiments amply showed that somewhere the links were slackening and spatial accidents had altered the archetypal grids so that nothing could return to its Platonic position.

We thus began dreaming of a world in which the parallels and meridians would not cut so roughly into the earth, with deep black marks, we began to think of other grids with subtle non-Euclidean corners. As design congested in this huge squared freeze (from which it would one day emerge as cubes to be melted in glasses), ideas began melting, after a long long freeze, and design and architecture became airy, irrelevant and ever lighter, as if they were emerging from luminous nights, from dreaming crystals, from geometrical shapes frozen by rivers of words, drawings, images, complex and multiple structures, from ancient fears, long exiles, from far-off serious claustrophobia and anguishing agoraphobia, and then they disappeared.

This was the logical continuation of a journey into the realms of reason, a journey with many lateral exits left

open, and which at that time we did not wish to use, but which we have since used to get out of the cubical houses of discipline and reasonable science.

"Misura M" Series

Furniture and objects made of wood, covered in FRAX plastic laminate, finish no. 6. This plastic laminate was designed for FRAX by SUPERSTUDIO at the time of the exhibition *The Invention of the Neutral Surface* in 1968, and is produced exclusively for the MISURA series.

The laminate has a continuous grid of lines crossing at intervals of 3 cm on a neutral background (white or pale colours).

The special feature of the design consists in the homogeneity and isotropy of its entire surface, so that it can be used according to the three main Cartesian directions. The surface of the furniture and objects produced also follows the three Cartesian directions, and thus an identical treatment of all surfaces is obtained, with a visual intensification of the corners at which the lines converge. (Characteristic of the Western concept of space is thinking in lines instead of in points, as in Eastern thought).

All solids are defined by a group of surfaces, each surface is defined by its generating lines; in our case, both are rigidly orthogonal. This is because of a precise wish to reduce design operations to a strict minimum, and to obtain with minimum effort the passing of the information connected with them.

Softer elements are then grafted onto these elementary solids (seats, cushions, headrests); these are produced by a completely different technology, intended to render them usable to mediate the passage between anatomical forms and artificial forms.

Yet more elements and accessories (plastic drawers, steel handles, coat rails, rubber wheels) help to ease the passage from geometry to functionality.

At any rate, these intermediate elements always clearly state their nature as foreign to the basic pieces: they approach them in order to complement them, never because of any homogeneity.

"Misura L" Series

Lamps in Volterra alabaster and chromed brass. Alabaster (CaSO₄ + 2H₂O) is found near Volterra in the form of giant eggs.

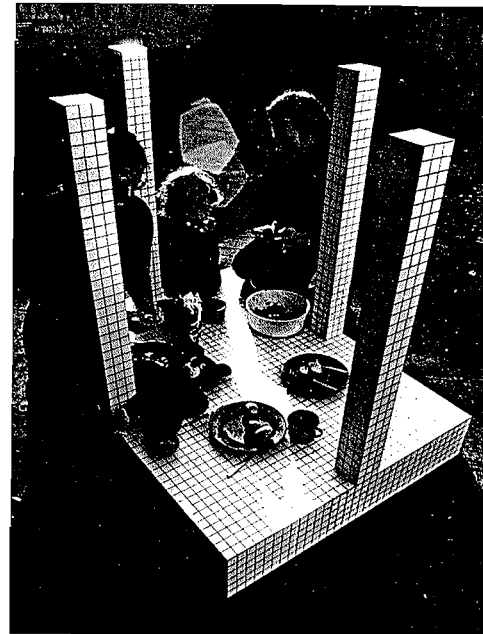
One can make various decorative objects out of alabaster, such as pear-shaped bookends, gorilla-shaped ornaments, women's heads as vases, multi-coloured sculptures of Isadora Duncan brandishing a torch... since it is translucent, one can also make lamps.

And this is what we have done. They are heavy lamps, so as not to be too easy to move around in the convulsive movements of modern design... They have different finishes and highlights, and sometimes they seem to be made of fake plastic, which, in the present orgy of plastic that imitates and replaces everything, is no mean achievement.

The lamps are produced with very simple cutting, milling or turning processes, thus obtaining elementary geometrical shapes: semi-sphere, cone, semi-cube, pyramid....

The bases are made of flat plates of chromed brass holding the neon circuits or tubes, together with the transformers. The electric wires come out through special small chromed tubes and attachments.

The lamps were designed in 1969 and are now produced by MISURA, Florence.



Superarchitecture: to the Rescue!

It would appear that the fact that the world is round and rotates is now beyond discussion.

There is still room for discussion, however, about how we are to live on it. And particularly on whether everything should be invented all over again every day or whether on the other hand it is enough to cling tightly to the appropriate gravity straps against the centrifugal force and keep on breathing.

And this is possible, or obligatory rather, for those who live in the cubic boxes about which so much has already been said. In other words for the lucky inhabitants and owners of block apartments, small villas and civil housing in general, and then, by natural kinship, for all the owners and users of refrigerated portions of established truth and the commonplace...

If on the contrary we face the problem of making our reckonings with reality at every moment, if we face the problem of living creatively, living truly that is, regular breathing is no longer enough and we must invent on each occasion the utensils for doing things and find the answers to the new queries.

Only in this way, by taking a creative attitude, can we avoid the prefabricated answers imposed by the big monopolies of truth. But contestation of the system, rejection on the products imposed by the consumer industry as the only true answer at this particular moment of history, will not be achieved through a return to craftsmanship, or even through a total rejection of the products and the activities connected with them.

Salvation does not lie in a primitive Arcadia or even in Alice's Wonderland. Arcadia and Wonderland, or the self-sufficient civilization of craftsmanship (or even the non-acquisitive one of the hippies)

and the hyper-consumer society at supermarkets and Carnaby Street: on the one hand a magic world in which the utensil is the object of a rite, on the other a code of liturgical regulations governing existent objects. But seeing that you cannot go backwards, and that the process is irreversible (and revivals confirm this) and seeing that the system offers us transparent or in-existent objects (the sales system sells only one product itself) and seeing also that we need something in order to live (utensils, signs, totems) we put the process of design back into motion.

If then, the problem is one of living creatively and finding the true answers to our problems, of avoiding the prefabricated answers imposed by the great monopolies of truth (the pitfalls of the affluent society), we then come to propose "invention design" as an alternative or variant for design or "industrial design" as currently conceived. But any valid design is always invention design (and in this connection think back to the meaning of the terms "design" and "invention" in Renaissance texts).

The term to use then may well be "evasion design". Evasion design, punning and easy overtones of political disengagement is the activity at planning and operating in the field of industrial production assuming poetry and the irrational as its method, and trying to institutionalize continuous evasion of everyday dreariness created by equivocations of rationalism and functionality.

Every project has a practical function and a contemplative one: and it is the latter that evasion design is seeking to potentiate. Thus there is an end to the 19th-century myths of reason as the explanation of everything, the thousand variations on the theme of the four-legged chair, aerodynamic shapes and sterilization of dreams. We need in fact to begin

all over again: the data are those of experience and those of myth, those of technology and consumer demand, those of repressed desire. The important thing is to keep on asserting ourselves, to go on making our mark on things. The important thing is to "be there". Perhaps one of the most disturbing manifestations of our time is the sit-in, the pacific protest meeting at which everyone sits on the ground. What we want to do is lay the foundations for an existence that is one long protest: a "be-in". This means involving all the users of our products in creative and operative areas.

Such total involvement may be achieved in two ways: by supplying products that are poetically functional or by supplying patterns of behaviour. In the first case you supply multi-significant (ambiguous) products, objects of universal use, and each user puts them to the use he thinks fit. In the second case, you supply the rules of a game to be played with all kinds of objects, or containers that can be filled with all kinds of things.

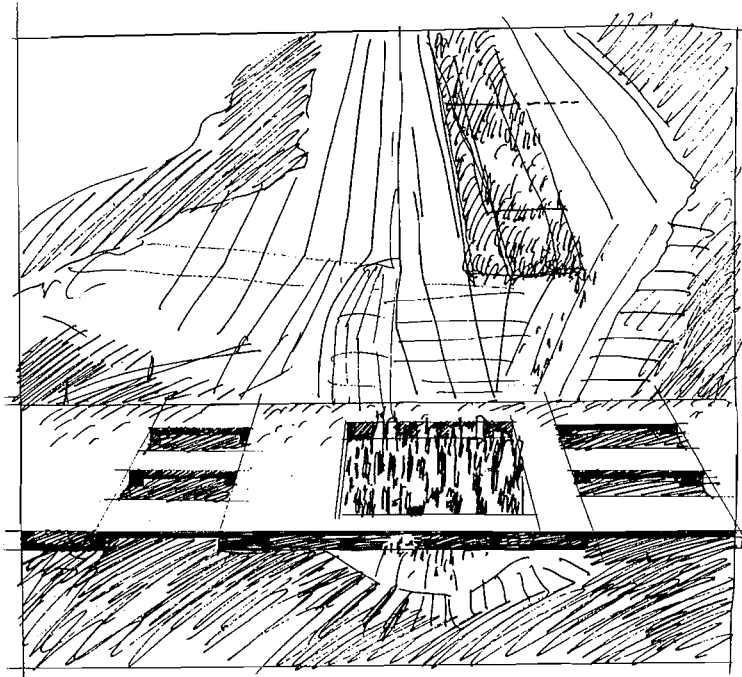
To switch our attention to interior space, this may become a genuine space of involvement (a stage for a continuous performance or, in other words, a place for happenings, a place for the be-in) by the agency of the design products we place in it. While on this subject we should clarify the fact that this operation belongs to the first of the modes of operation to which we referred earlier: we thus put on the market poetically functional objects in containers of any kind, even if they are indifferent or degraded like those supplied by the building trade today. It is obvious that we can see this only as a "rescue" operation: it is not the total operation to which we aspire (supplying and shaping the whole human environment). It is only a way of taking action "here and now" in an existing

situation. Evasion design then to evade everyday dreariness, or rather evasion design to make it possible to live with everyday dreariness. All this is because: apart from those fortunate mortals who can afford to build their own "house" (ideally in their own image and likeness), and those lucky enough to find one in which it is possible to live even without putting paintings up on the walls, those who live in "residential blocks" usually live in a room, a cubic box without memories, with vague indications of top and bottom, entrance and exit, a Euclidean parallel/epiped painted white or distempred in bright colours, washable or no, but always without surprises and without hope. We should remember however that "it is the poetry that makes you live", and that life is not lived only in hermetically-sealed boxes made for small parallel lives, but also in the city and in cars, in the supermarkets, in the cinemas, on the motorways...

And an object may be an adventure in space, or an object of worship and veneration, and become a shining intersection-point of relationships... Thus evasion design aims at working on the theory of introducing foreign bodies into the system: objects with the greatest possible number of sensory properties (chromatic, tactile, etc.), charged with symbolism and images; with the aim of attracting attention, or arousing interest, of serving as a demonstration and inspiring action and behaviour.

Objects in short that succeed in modifying the container-unit and involving it totally together with its occupier. We shall build on the ruins of our own wars and those of others, on the smoking ruins of private and public guerrilla warfare, on the clouds of innumerable mushrooms, atomic ones and those of psychic. We shall construct huge and indestructible objects thoroughly shock-proof

because they will be as flexible and manageable as the willow branches in Japanese prints. We shall have soft pyramids and looking-glass furniture and rooms for the contemplation of everyday poetry. We shall have microscopes to investigate the mysteries of stupidity and boredom. We shall make journeys with airline itineraries round the world tightening only the seat-belts of the intelligence, but without fear, and we shall construct with a single everyday purpose: living with poetry. With no time for analysis or denunciation, with little time for bitter ironies and cruel tricks of the intellect: we wish to rediscover the heart and raise it on high. Sursum corda. We shall no longer do anything unless for love and in hope and we shall surely die of ingenuity, happy. Our problem is to go on producing objects, big brightly-coloured cumbersome useful and full of surprises, to live with them and play with them together and always find ourselves tripping over them till we get to the point of kicking them and throwing them out, or else sitting down on them or putting our coffee cups on them, but it will not in any way be possible to ignore them. They will exorcise our indifference. Things that can modify time and space and serve as signposts for life that is going ahead.



NEW YORK REDEVELOPMENT
EXTENSION OF CENTRAL PARK

ON WATER TO P.F.

29.8.69

This chapter surveys SUPERSTUDIO's most provocative period from 1969 to 1971. It was during these years that the group generated its most renowned body of work. After successfully formulating a critique on design, architecture and the city, the group produced a prodigious set of conceptual projects through an innovative use of multi-media techniques, employing collage, storyboards and literary narratives. The professional "office" continued its design activities, while entering into one of its most creatively engaged and controversially subversive periods. Almost all the conceptual production was intended for catalogues, architecture magazines and exhibitions. The most striking images produced in the period found wide distribution internationally, from Europe to the United States and Japan.

1. *The Continuous Monument* (storyboard, with an audio-slide show, not restored)
2. *Histograms* (architecture of objects, design objects and *Interplanetary Architecture*, the first film to be produced by SUPERSTUDIO, with Alessandro Poli, member of the group from 1970 to 1972)
3. *Twelve Ideal Cities* (architecture of cities, with an audio-slide show to be re-enacted and recorded in conjunction with the London exhibition, March 2003)

Each of these three categories represents a concise theoretical engagement on one of the following disciplines in design and architecture: the object, the monument, the city.

We do not think it is possible to write about furniture design, or to design furniture, without an idea (or a hope) of the work of the architect in society. Otherwise, we will end up by designing beautiful electric chairs or mountains of rubbish. If we look closely, we can see how all the changes in society and culture in this century (or since 1920) have been generated by one force only — the elimination of formal structures as a tendency towards a state of nature free from work. The destruction of objects, the elimination of the city and the disappearance of work are events closely connected. By the destruction of objects we mean the destruction of their attributes of "status" and the connotations imposed by those in power, so that we live with objects (reduced to the condition of neutral and disposable elements) and not for objects. By the elimination of the city, we mean elimination of the accumulation of the formal structures of power, the elimination of the city as a hierarchy and social model in search of a new free egalitarian state in which everyone can reach different grades in the development of his possibilities, beginning with equal starting points. By the end of work, we mean the end of specialized and repetitive work, seen as an alienating activity, foreign to the nature of man; the logical consequence will be a new, revolutionary society in which everyone should find the full development of his possibilities; and in which the principle of "from everyone, according to his capacities, to everyone, according to his needs" should be put into practice. The construction of a revolutionary society in its way of producing, consuming, living....
Merchandise according to Guy Debord, in bourgeois society [which acts and perpetuates itself through

its products — including political parties and trade unions, which are an essential part of the spectacle] becomes the contemplation of itself. The production machine produces a second poverty (Calbraith), perpetuating itself even after the fulfillment of its goals, or beyond its essential ends (the satisfaction of primary needs, ever inducing new needs).
Once clarified that:
a. design is merely inducement to consume;
b. objects are status symbols, the expression of models proposed by the ruling class. Their progressive accessibility to the proletariat is part of a "levelling" strategy intended to avoid the conflagration of class struggle;
c. the possession of objects is the expression of unconscious motivation: through analysis, the removal of the underlying motivation may be reached,
then it becomes urgent to destroy them... or does it?
Metamorphosis becomes frequent when a society does not have sufficient courage to commit suicide (to eliminate itself) and has no clear alternatives to offer either. The theory of intermediate states is the book of change?
For the theory of incest as a closed practice of the cultures on culture and vice-versa, we may substitute the most scandalous, pathetic or ridiculous contaminations; in this way we can only prepare the outlets for an evasive action. The fast sly tick on the march is the choice of falseness. Thus, while the merchandise-form continues on towards its absolute realization, we reduce operations to a minimum. The only danger lies in integration (every so often though, one of us shaves with a vacuum cleaner). Earlier, we defined the destruction of the syntactical ties,

which bind the object to the system, the destruction of its significance, as superimposed by the ruling classes, as destruction of the object. We have formulated a hypothesis of the reduction of objects to neutral, disposable elements. To this, we can add another hypothesis, and it is that of the construction of the object through its metamorphosis. The present process of the "overloading" of meaning onto an object is part of that strategy of disgust to which we have already referred. Through the psychological re-thinking of an object we can try for its "reconstruction", and this through discontinuous and illogical action, refusing guarantees of value/licenses issued by the system, aspiring to identify with life and total reality. Objects thus can be the vehicles of social communication to become a form of reality and direct experience of reality. The metamorphoses which the object has to go through are those during which it is reloaded with the values of myth, of sacredness, of magic through the reconstruction of relationships between production and use, beyond the abolition of the fictitious ties of production-consumption. When design as an inducement to consume ceases to exist, an empty area is created in which, slowly, as on the surface of a mirror, such things as the need to act, mould, transform, give, conserve, modify, come to light. The alternative image (which is really the hope of an image) is a more serene, distended world, in which actions can find their complete sense and in which life is possible with a few more, more or less magical utensils. Objects such as mirrors, that are for reflection and measure. The objects we will need will be only flags or talismans, signals for an existence, which continues, or simple

utensils for simple operations. Thus on the one hand, the utensils will remain (with less chrome and decorations), on the other, symbolic objects such as monuments or badges. Objects perhaps created for eternity from marble and mirrors, or for the present from paper and flowers — objects made to die at their appointed hours, and which have this sense of death amongst their characteristics. Objects, which can easily be carried about, if we choose to become nomads, to stay in one place forever.

Published in In, no. 2-3, 1971

The Continuous Monument: an Architectural Model for Total Urbanization

For those who, like ourselves, are convinced that architecture is one of the few ways to realize cosmic order on earth, to put things to order and above all to affirm humanity's capacity for acting according to reason, it is a "moderate utopia" to imagine a near future in which all architecture will be created with a single act, from a single design capable of clarifying once and for all the motives which have induced man to build dolmens, menhirs, pyramids, and lastly to trace (ultima ratio) a white line in the desert.

The Great Wall of China, Adrian's Wall, motorways, like parallels and meridians, are the tangible signs of our understanding of the earth.

We believe in a future of "rediscovered architecture", in a future in which architecture will regain its full power, abandoning all ambiguity of design and appearing as the only alternative to nature.

Between the terms *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, we choose the latter.

Eliminating mirages and will-o'-the-wisps such as spontaneous architecture, sensitive architecture, architecture without architects, biological architecture and fantastic architecture, we move towards the "continuous monument": a form of architecture all equally emerging from a single continuous environment: the world rendered uniform by technology, culture and all the other inevitable forms of imperialism.

We belong to a long history of black stones, rocks fallen from the sky or erected in the earth: meteorites, dolmens, obelisks. Cosmic axis, vital elements, elements reproducing the relationships of sky and earth, witnesses to marriages celebrated, the tablets of the law, final acts of dramas of various lengths.

From the Holy Kaaba to the Vertical Assembly Building



A square block of stone placed on the earth is a primary act, it is a testimonial that architecture is the centre of the relationships of technology, sacredness, utilitarianism. It implies man, machines, rational structures and history. The square block is the first and ultimate act in the history of ideas in architecture. Architecture becomes a closed, immobile object that leads nowhere but to itself and to the use of reason.

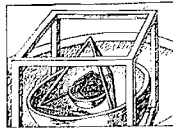
Now New York

New York for example. A superstructure passes over the Hudson and the point of the peninsula joining Brooklyn and New Jersey. And a second perpendicular structure for expansion. All the rest is Central Park. This is sufficient to hold the entire built-up volume of Manhattan.

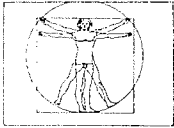
A bunch of ancient skyscrapers, preserved in memory of a time when cities were built with no single plan... And from the Bay, we see New New York arranged by The Continuous Monument into a great plain of ice, clouds or sky...



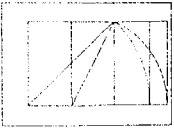
Superproject, Object, Monuments, Cities



1. Metiero cercò in incisione dei solidi elementari nella orbita dei pianeti.
Metiero tried to incise elementary solids within the orbits of the planets.



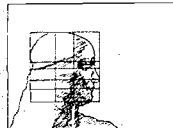
2. Vitruvio e Leonardo inscissero l'uomo in un cerchio e in un quadrato. Leonardo inscribed man within the circle, the Italian placed chess within the square.



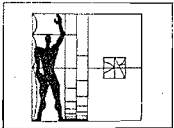
3. La sezione umana coincide la simmetria e la proporzione. Leonardo inscribed man within the square, the Italian placed chess within the circle.



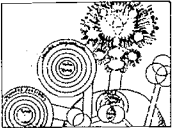
4. Il mandala come base per la meditazione. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



5. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



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7. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



8. L'antropologia come base per la meditazione. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



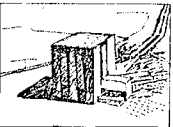
9. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



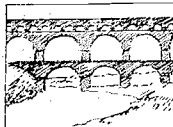
10. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



11. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



12. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



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14. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



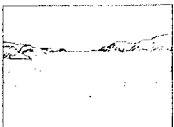
15. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



16. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



17. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



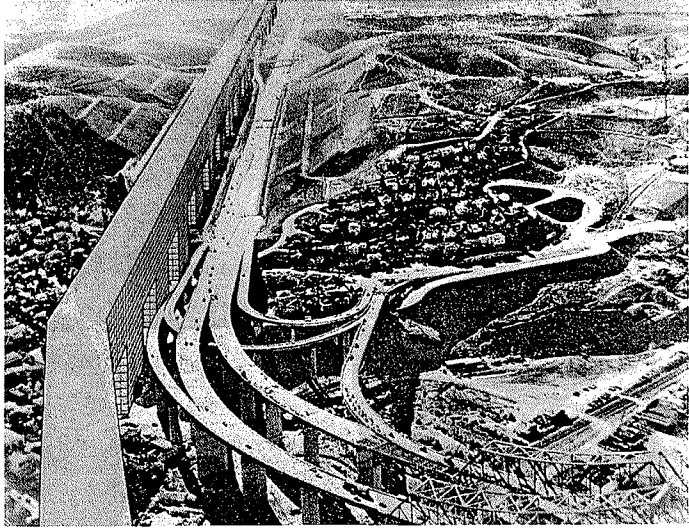
18. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



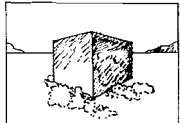
19. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



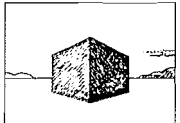
20. Il cerchio e il quadrato sono di senso diverso. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione. Il cerchio è la base per meditazione.



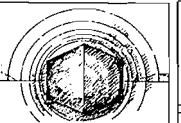
Supraprojects: Objects, Monuments, Cities



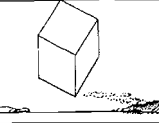
21. Così appare la geometria e il primo principio della nostra architettura. Il bianco scende e il primo atto è l'ultimo atto. The geometry appears, the first character is the reverse. The square black is the first and last act in life.



22. Vista della idea di architettura, come fondo di spazio. L'architettura è l'interazione tra linee e spaziosi. L'architettura è l'interazione tra linee e spaziosi. History of architecture theory, as the interaction of the relationship between technology/structure/infrastructure, between main machine, no rational structure and history.



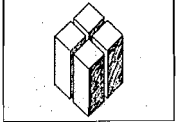
23. L'architettura è un oggetto chiuso e immodificabile che non cambia mai e lo stesso è il caso delle religioni. Architecture is a closed, immovable object, relating step by step and to the use of reason.



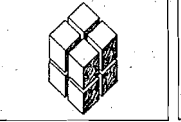
24. Un oggetto immutabile che tratta luce e spazio e architettura: cioè ad essere in uno stato stabile immutabile. An unchangeable object handling light, dark, shadows, until it takes off in light from another space.



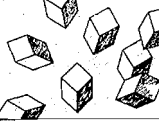
25. Il blocco viene costruito di due cubi, come se fosse un cubo perfetto. The block is formed into a perfect cube by two blocks.



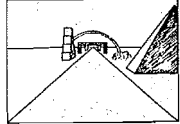
26. Il blocco diventa un cubo in due parti, come se fosse un cubo perfetto. The block is divided into two parts, and as soon as it is freed, it divides up into halves, following precise laws and showing each time its governing principles.



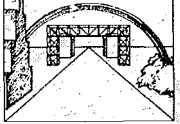
27. Fino a diventare una serie di cubi più piccoli, a più piccoli ancora. Until it becomes a series of smaller cubes, and yet smaller.



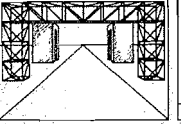
28. Il blocco si disintegra ma l'ordine rimane. Il blocco si disintegra e ogni parte ha con sé il suo proprio principio. Il blocco si disintegra, ma il tutto è sempre presente. The block disintegrates, but order does not disappear, and each part has with it the genetic message of its ordered race.



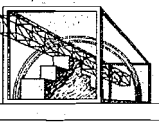
29. UN VIAGGIO IN AUTO IN UN MUSEO D'ARTE. Un viaggio in auto verso la regione di casa. A journey into a museum of art. A journey into a museum of art.



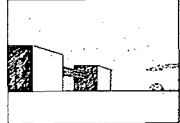
30. Dall'architettura del momento all'architettura del momento. L'architettura è l'interazione tra linee e spaziosi. From the architecture of moment through the architecture of images and technology/structure/infrastructure to reach the architecture of reason.



31. L'architettura è un oggetto chiuso e immodificabile che non cambia mai e lo stesso è il caso delle religioni. Architecture is a closed, immovable object, relating step by step and to the use of reason.



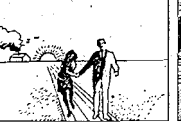
32. L'arrivo totale al tempo della storia. Il tempo è un oggetto che non cambia mai e lo stesso è il caso delle religioni. The time is a total, unchangeable object, relating step by step and to the use of reason.



33. COME ILLUMINARE IL DESERTO. Due cubi, uno di vetro e uno di cristallo. Come illuminare il deserto. Two black cubes of glass or crystal, one by a red cube to illuminate the desert.



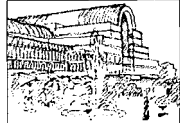
34. Gli oggetti si illuminano e si illuminano. Gli oggetti si illuminano e si illuminano. The objects are illuminated and illuminate.



35. Accanto al cubo si trova un cubo di vetro. Accanto al cubo si trova un cubo di vetro. Next to the cube is a cube of glass.



36. Vedendo, sognando al buio per mezzo dell'architettura. Vedendo, sognando al buio per mezzo dell'architettura. Seeing, dreaming in the dark through architecture.



37. Nella luce che illumina il mondo e il mondo illumina la luce. Nella luce che illumina il mondo e il mondo illumina la luce. In the light that illuminates the world and the world illuminates the light.



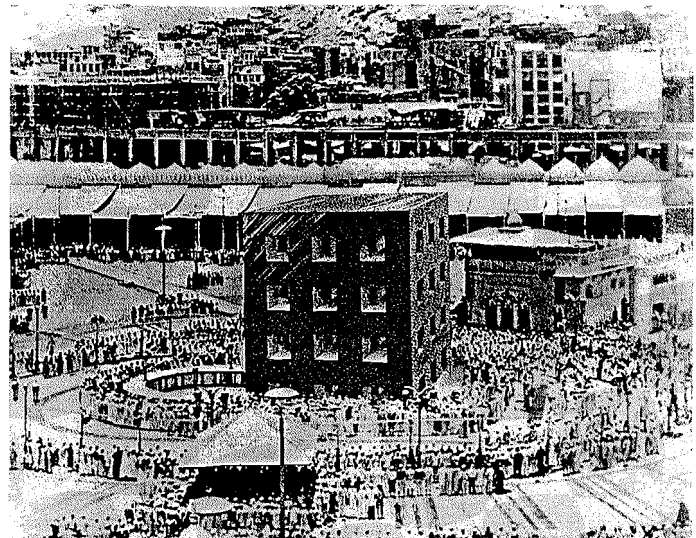
38. New Harmony. Philadelpia e la costruzione di un nuovo mondo. New Harmony, Philadelphia and the construction of a new world.



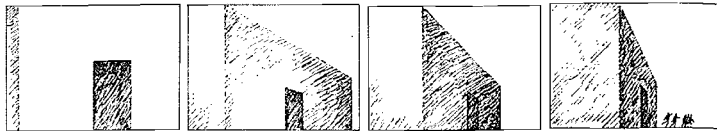
39. Il mondo è un oggetto che non cambia mai e lo stesso è il caso delle religioni. The world is a closed, immovable object, relating step by step and to the use of reason.



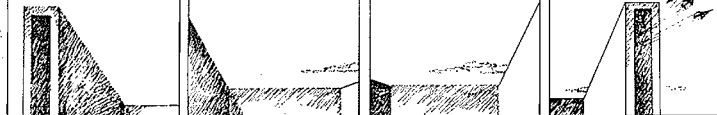
40. I cubi luminosi emettono un arco luminoso e sono il passato luminoso di noi. The luminous cubes emit an arch of light and are the luminous past of us.



Supremacist Objects, Jerusalem, City



41. LE APPARIZIONI. 1. LA PORTA - Tutto ciò che abbiamo visto è andato sparito, siamo rimasti nel deserto deserto e noi non c'è che un quadrato.
 THE APPARITIONS. 1. THE DOOR - All we have lived to feel, we are now in the desert. Before us there is but a square.



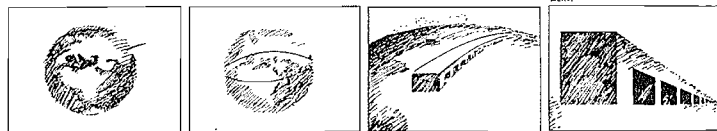
42. non su fondo bianco - (C. Matisse). Come una porta, una lastra metallica.
 A model rectangle, geometric, like a metaphorical presence between two worlds. It is on this threshold, this frontier that we live...



43. sappiamo che ha un interno, ma non sappiamo come. E' disponibile comunque ad ogni utilizzazione.
 It reaches a certain height and then remains parallel to the ground, moving.



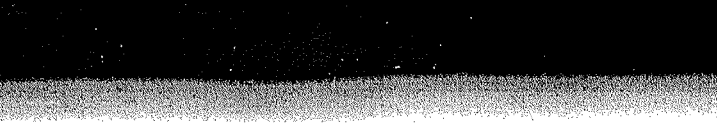
44. Ed ecco improvvisamente uscire tre jet. Il grande datum tecnologico. Lo specchio nero di casa è cristallino e luminoso.
 Within it contains the distorted image of the city, the great technological circuit. The black mirror in the sky is transparent and luminous.



45. LE APPARIZIONI. 2. IL CORRIDOIO. Fatto ad "U", copriamo la terra con angoli ripidi. Come nel deserto.
 THE APPARITIONS. 2. THE CORRIDOR - U-shaped, set on the ground at right angles.



46. In si perdono con lo sguardo da fuori, se ne staccano le superfici lucide e lucide...
 From the outside, our eyes run over its smooth, sliding surface...

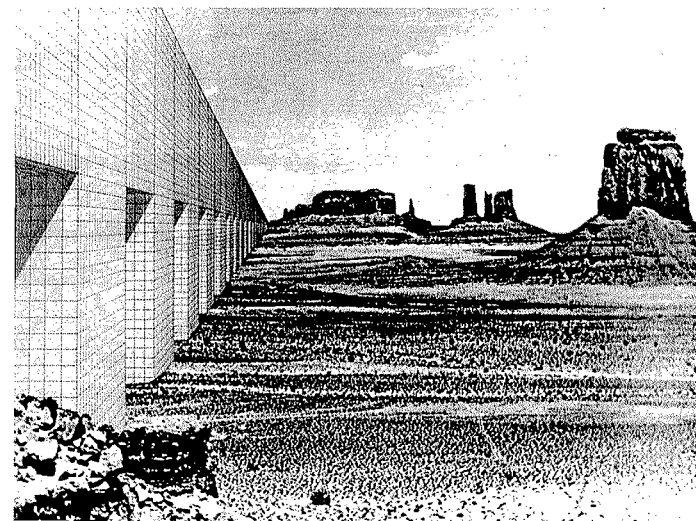


47. Rapporto una certa quota e poi rimane parallela alla terra, muovendosi.
 It reaches a certain height and then remains parallel to the ground, moving.



48. Capriccio a lungo nel buio e infine viderci un chiaro: in una sala oscura come una linea bianca il MOVIMENTO CONTINUO. Walkings in the dark for a long time, and at last seeing a faint glow, and in the light. On a white line, we see the CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT.

49. Il modello architettonico di urbanizzazione totale è un'intersezione logica di una "strada orientale", da Sachenghe al V.A.B. al metrino, con il cielo.
 The architectural model of total urbanization is the logical extrapolation of a "oriented history" line, with which to occupy the optimal living level, having the others free.



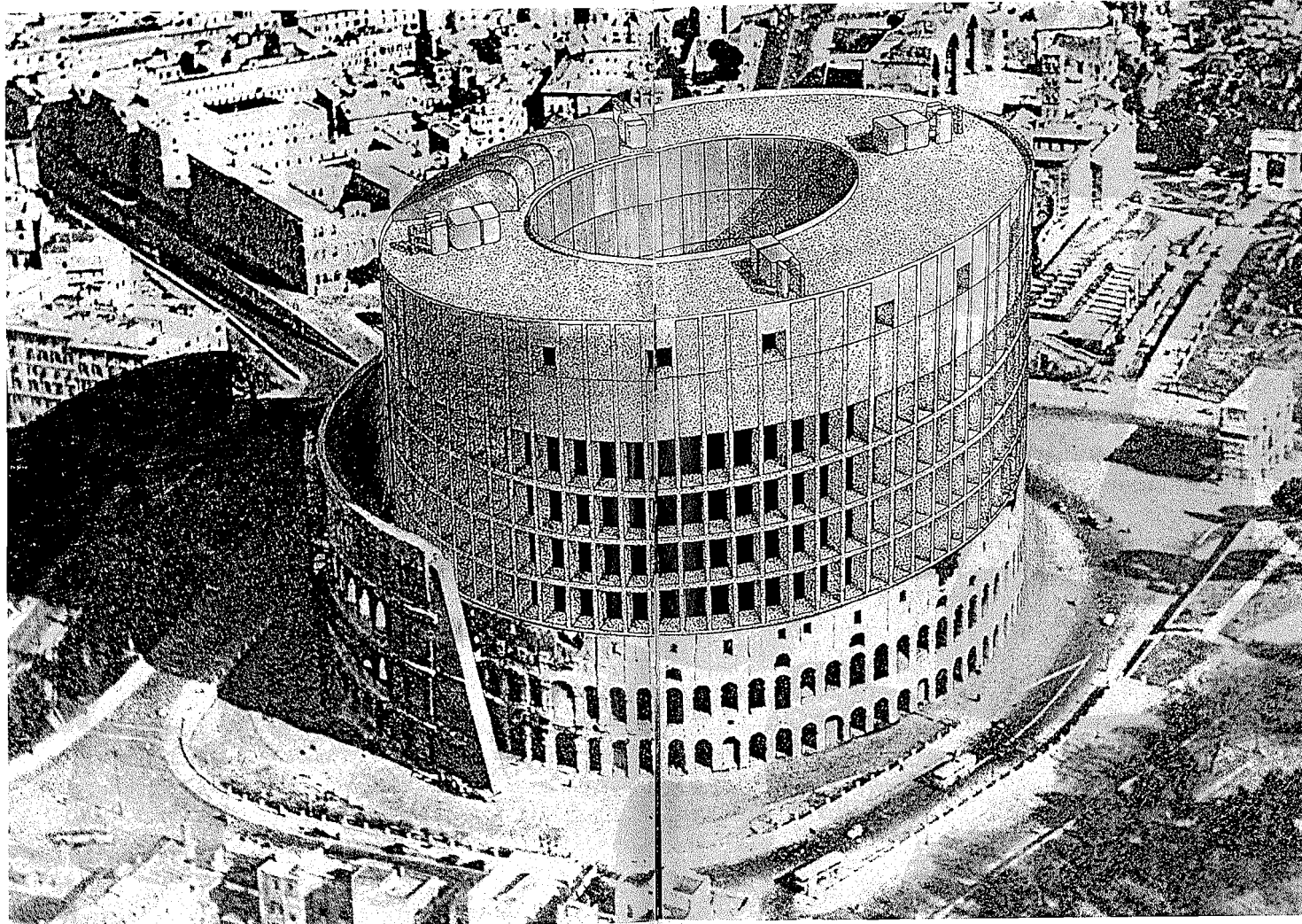
Superprojects: Diapers, Monuments, Cities

<p>61. Il monumento come è in foto sembra un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>62. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>63. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>64. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>
<p>65. LA NATURA. Alcune immagini a caso, interpretate come tale e come un "scorciatoia".</p>	<p>66. L'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>67. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>68. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>
<p>69. I MONUMENTI ANTICHI. La Santa Sabina è un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>70. La Santa Sabina è un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>71. Il Taj Mahal è un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>72. Un giardino classico è un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>
<p>73. LA CITTÀ. Colonna romana. Dove è l'Usp? Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>74. Una città è un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>75. L'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>76. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>
<p>77. New York è un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>78. Questo tipo di immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>79. Un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita è un tipo di operazione prospettica invertita del tipo "scorciatoia". Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>	<p>80. E dalla città vedendo New York vedendo un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita. Il continuo movimento in senso opposto di un sistema di proiezione genererebbe un'immagine di un tipo di "scorciatoia" invertita.</p>

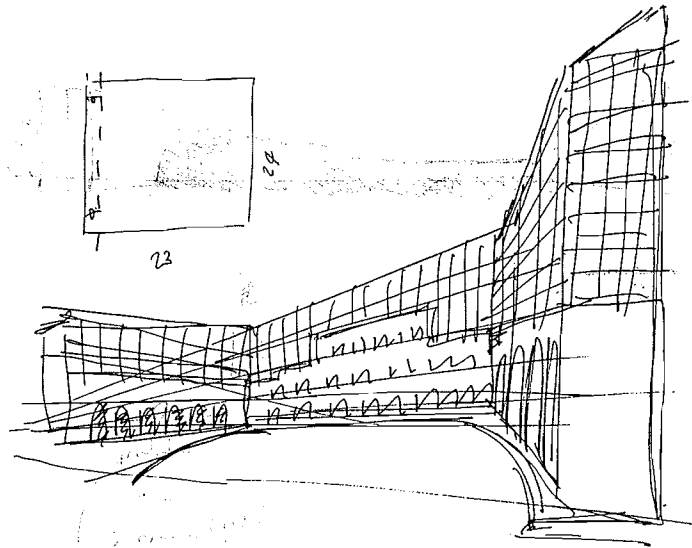


Superstudio: Object Monument, Citta



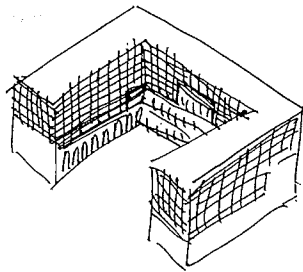


Superproject: Object, Monument, Cities

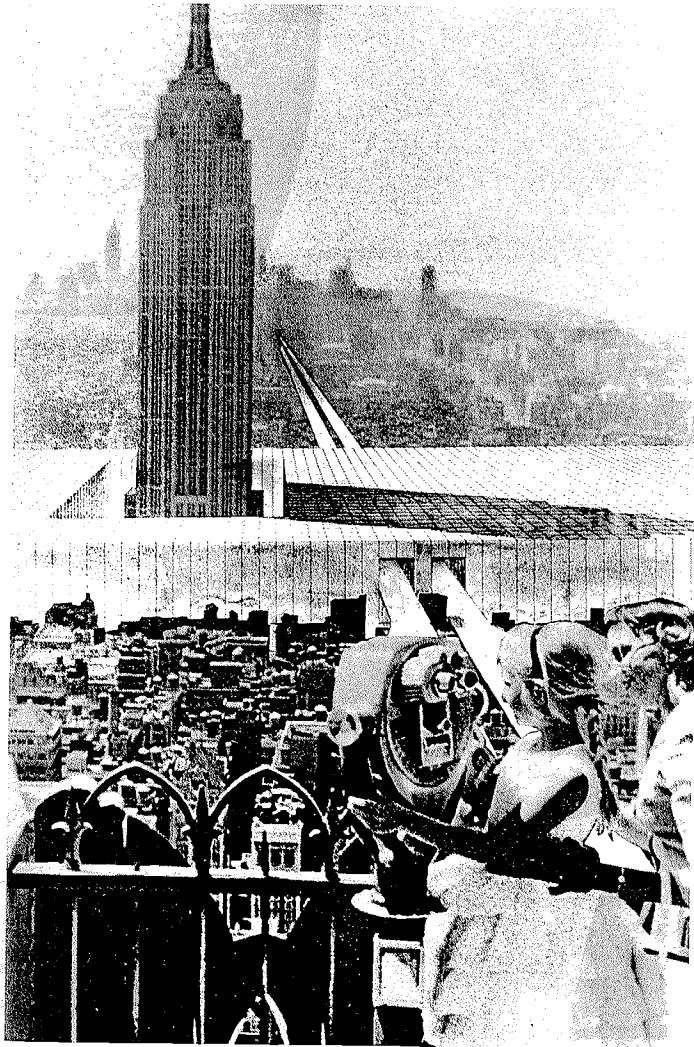


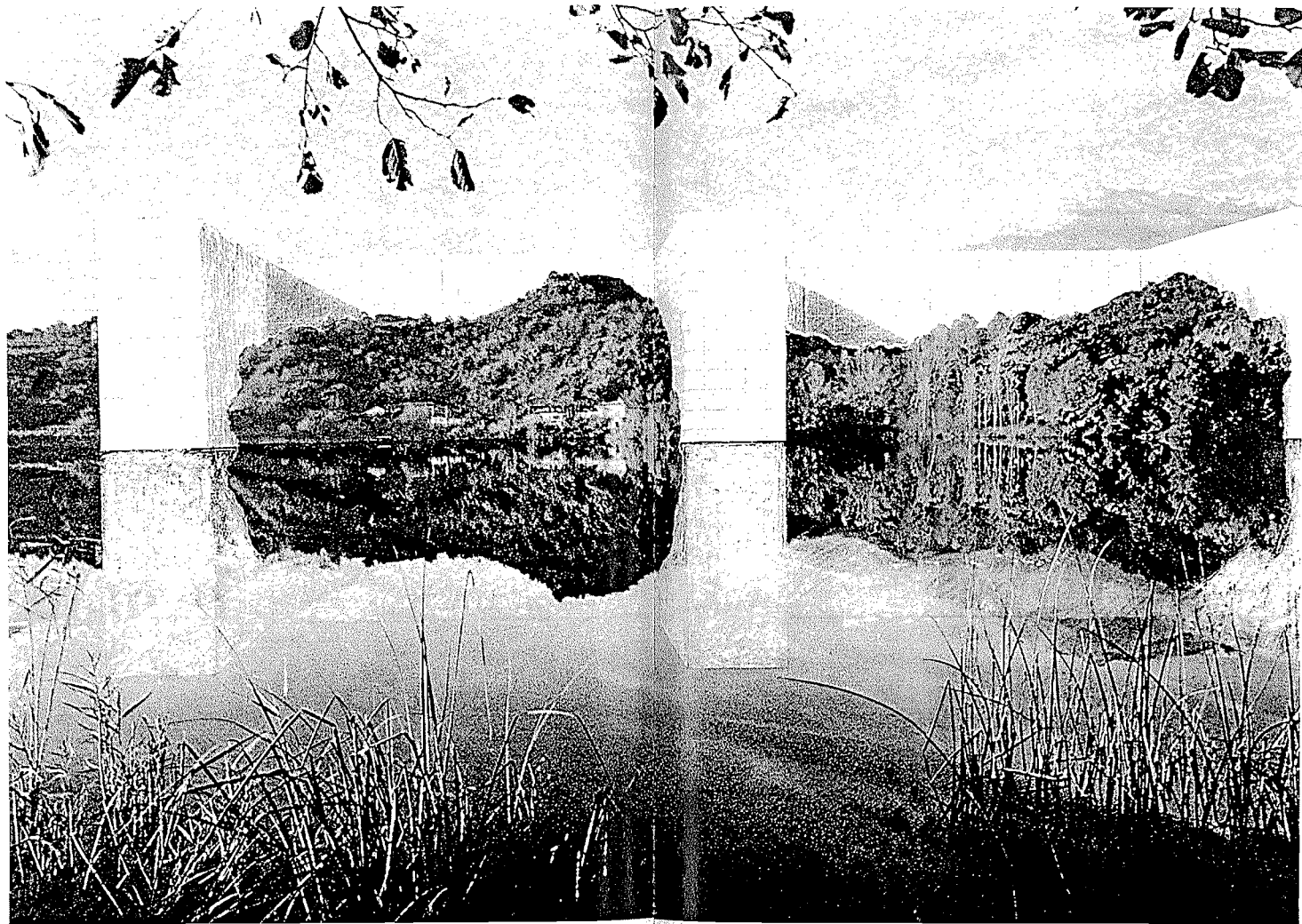
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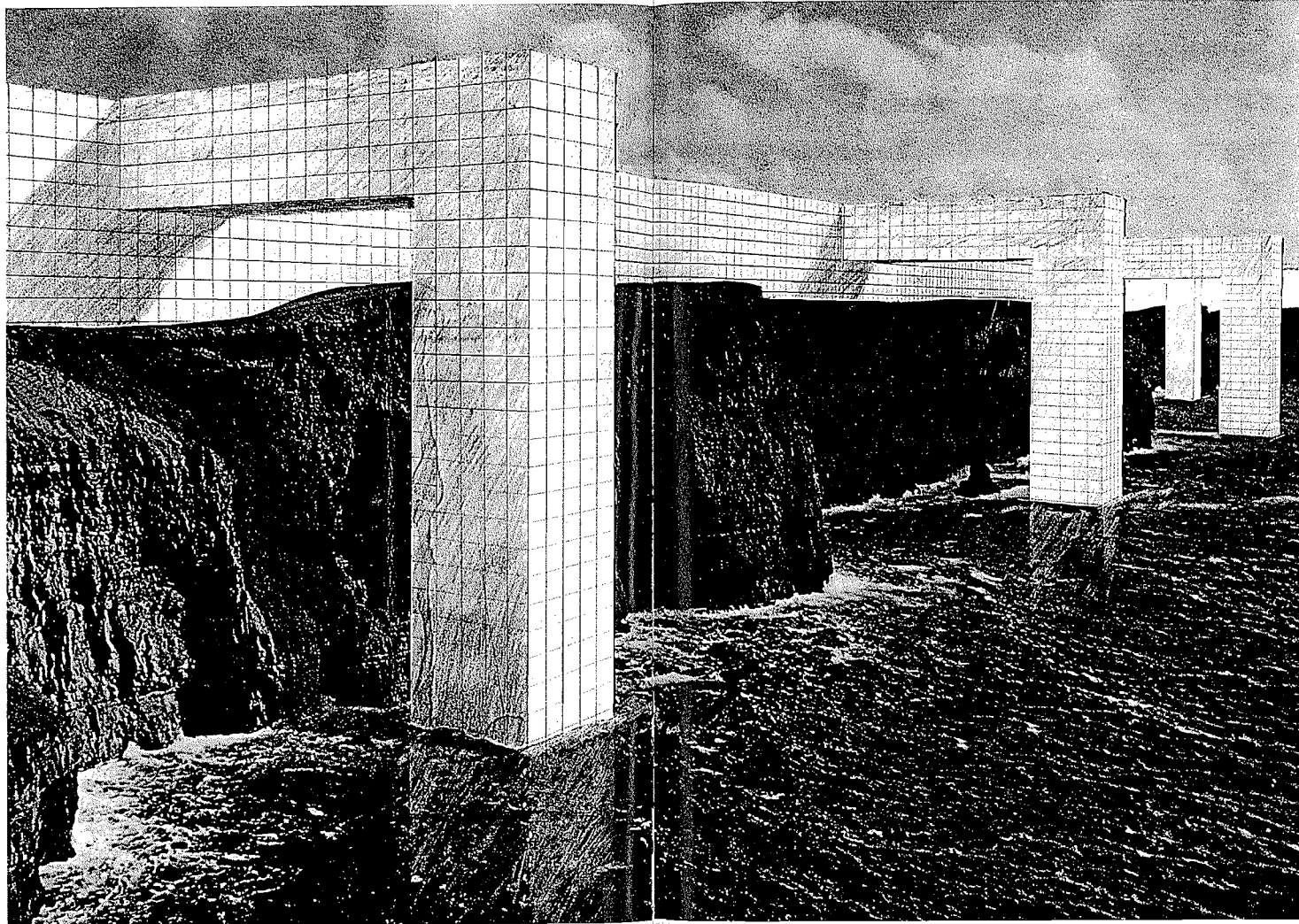
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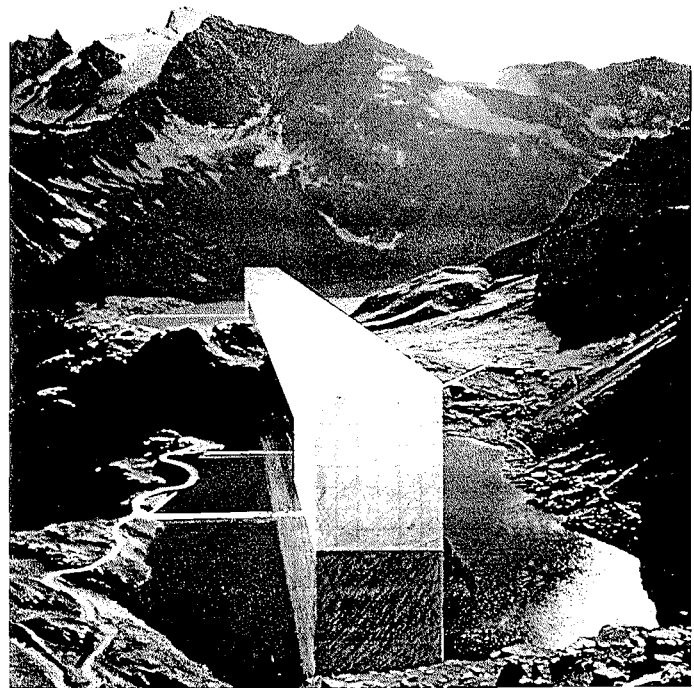
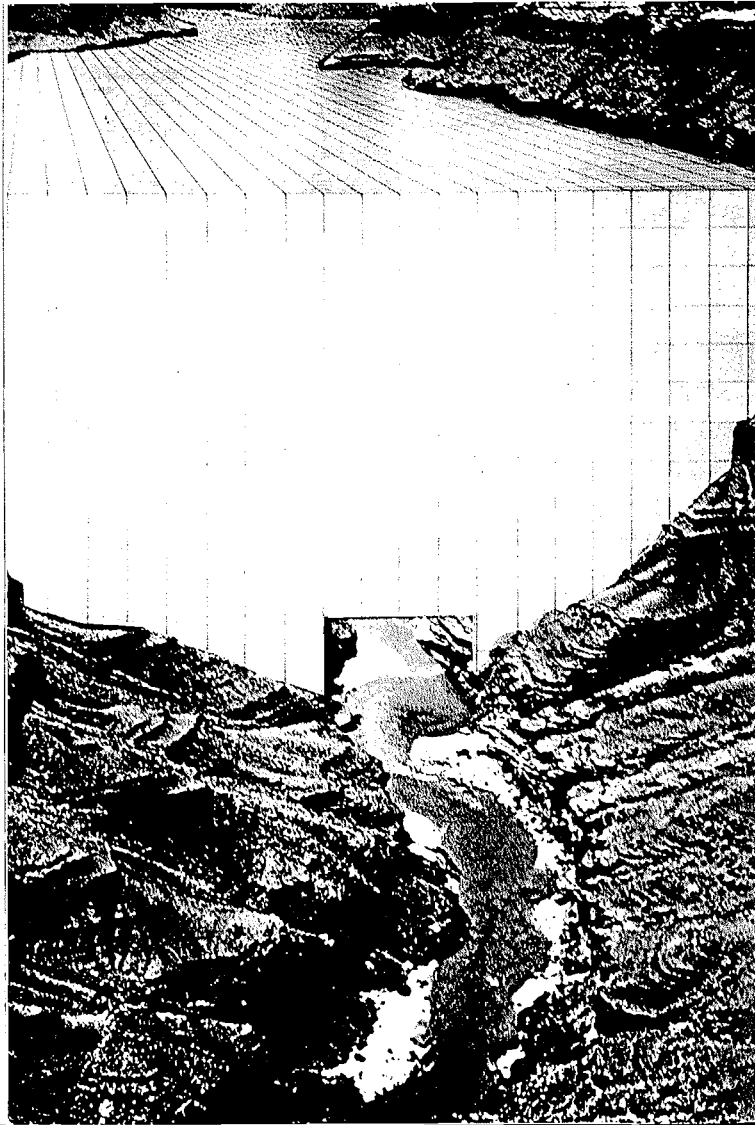
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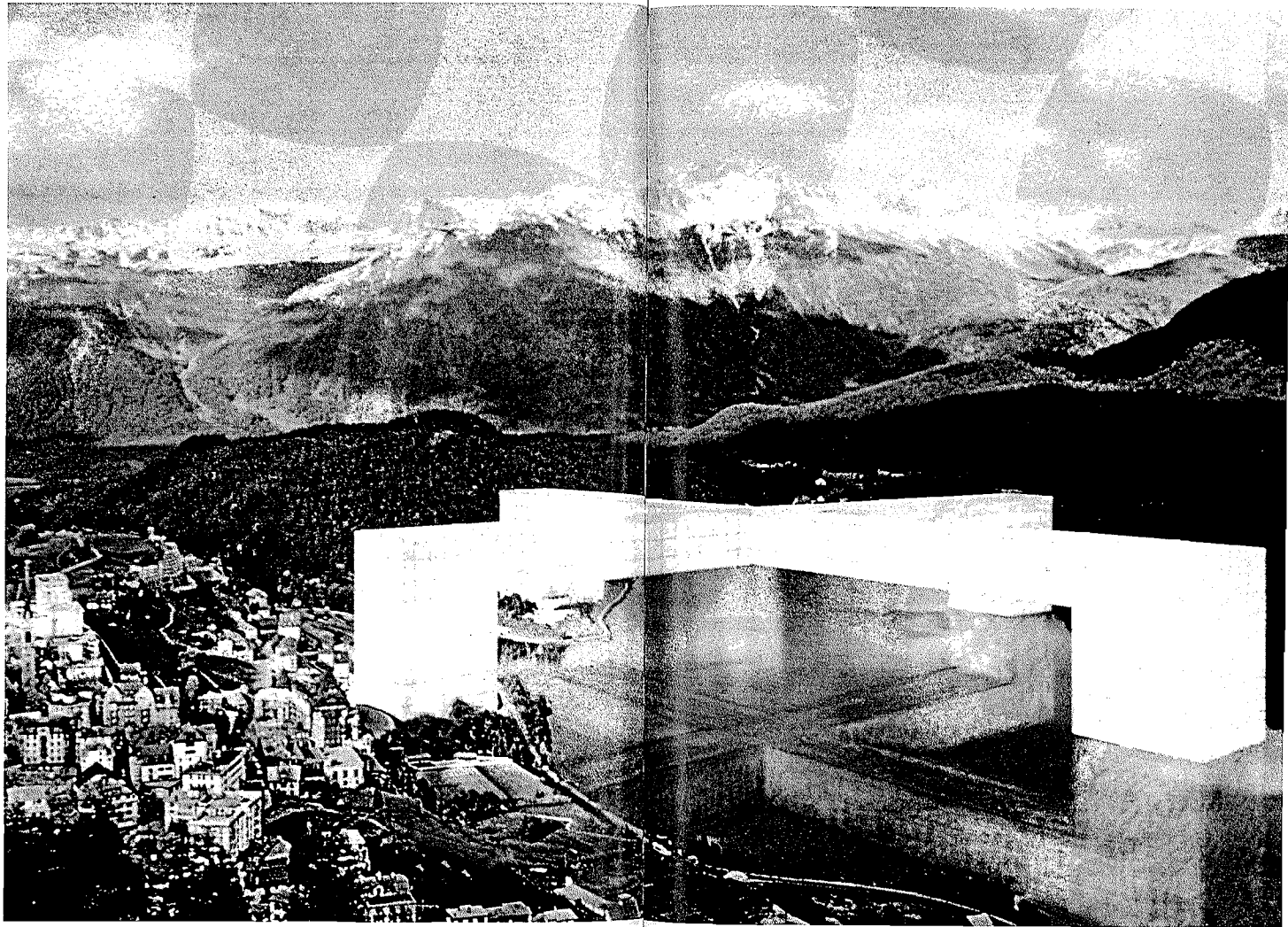


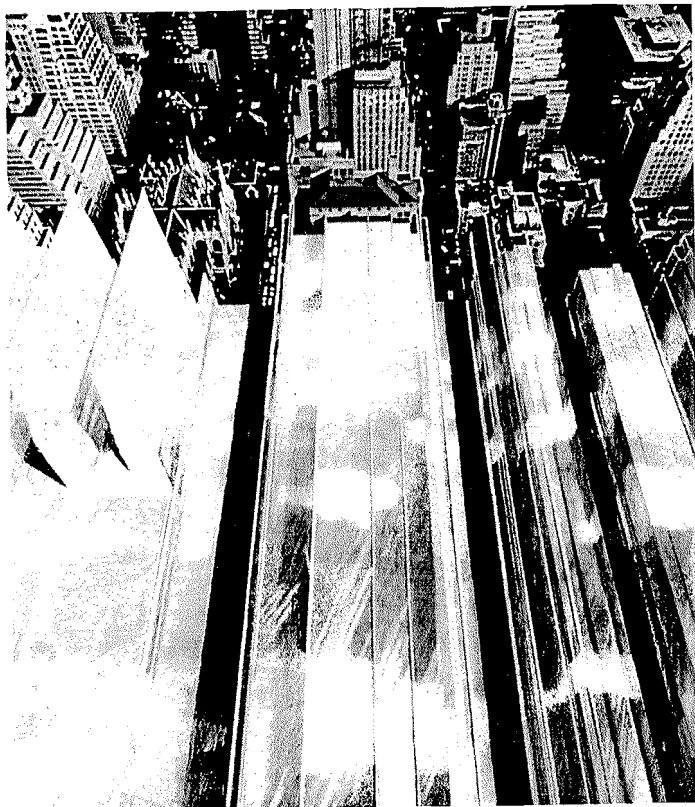


Superegress: Objects, Monuments, Cities

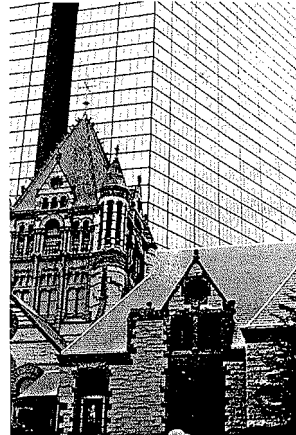
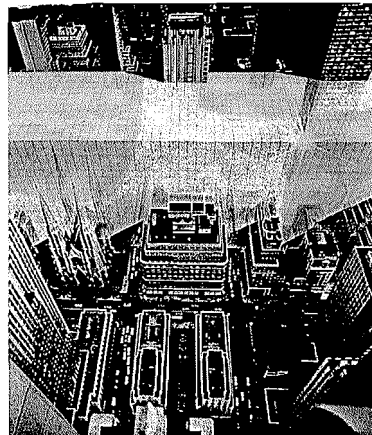


Superficial: Object, Monument, City





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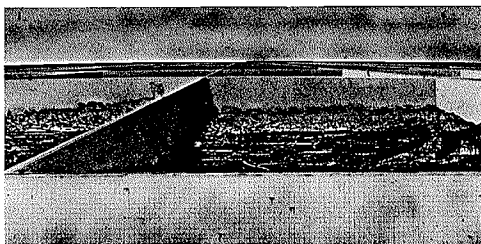
Superprojects: Objects, Monuments, Cities

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• **First City,
2,000-ton City**

Even and perfect, the city lies amid green lawns, sunny hills and wooded mountains; slim, tall sheets of continuous buildings intersect in a rigorous, square mesh, one league apart. The buildings, or rather the single, uninterrupted building consists of cubic cells 5 cubits each way; these cells are placed one on top of another in a single vertical stack, reaching a height of a third of a league above sea-level, so that the relative height of the building varies in relation to the level of the ground on which it rises. Each cell has two external walls. Cell walls are of opaque material, porous to air, rigid, but light. The wall facing north (or if this is an external wall, the wall facing west) is capable of emitting 3D images, sounds and smells. Against the opposite wall is a seat capable of moulding perfectly to the human body, even of enclosing it completely. Incorporated in this seat is an apparatus for satisfying all physiological needs. When not in use, this membrane and all apparatus withdraw and the wall reforms. The floor is a simulator, and can evoke all sensations of living things. The ceiling is a brain-impulse-receiver.

In each cell is an individual whose brain impulses are continually transmitted to an electronic analyser set at the top of the building, beneath a continuous semi-cylindrical vault. The analyser selects, compares and interprets the desires of each individual, programming the life of the entire city moment by moment. All citizens are in a state of perfect equality. Death no longer exists. Sometimes someone indulges in absurd thoughts of rebellion against the perfect and eternal life granted to him. At first the analyser ignores the crime; but if it is repeated, the man who has shown himself unworthy is rejected. The ceiling panel descends with a force of two thousand

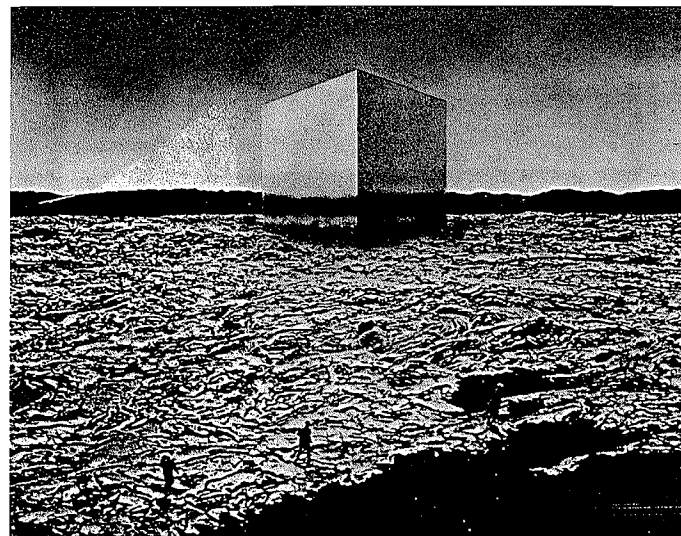


tons until it reaches the floor. At this point, in this marvellous economy, another life is initiated. The panel returns to its original height, and all the individuals living in cells within a distance of a quarter of a league from the empty cell donate an ovum or a group of spermatozoa, which are transported in channels created for this purpose in a mad race to the now-empty seat. Here, an ovum is fertilized and the seat is transformed into a uterus, protecting the new son of the city for nine months, until his happy dawn.

• **Second City,
Temporal Cochlea-City**

The city is an endless screw, 4.5 km in diameter, completing one revolution a year. Its lower extremity, facing the centre of the earth, consists of an excavating apparatus (a kind of turbine, with blades) that, in revolving, crushes rock, forcing all matter towards the centre of the cylinder and through a duct up to the ground. Above the turbine is the propulsion apparatus: an atomic power centre set to last 10,000 years and the automatic plant and electronic computers that control the city. The upper extremity grows gradually, remaining constantly at the level of

the ground outside. Growth is realized through the continuous construction of new sections of city by means of an automatic building-site placed like a bridge between the centre and the perimeter. On this site, rock detritus from the excavations at the bottom is used as building material. The city is composed of living cells arranged in a double row of concentric circles. Between the two contiguous circles of cells runs a roadway. Each cell has a single opening, a door giving on to the circular roadway; the other three walls backing onto other cells are totally opaque and soundproof. The floor of the cells is soft, all apparatus required for the satisfaction of individual living needs are hidden in the ceiling and are tele-controlled. The entire city is climatized at a constant 25°C with 60% humidity. Each cell is constantly lit to an intensity of 150 lux; the roads are illuminated to an intensity of 500 lux; this light contains all the wavelengths of the visible spectrum; that of the roads also contains small quantities of ultra-violet light. The cells have no system for closing or screening. Inhabitants live one to a cell, and possess no clothes or other objects every need. They are absolutely free



Superprojects: Objects, Monuments, Cities

to act and organize their lives, both as individuals and as a community; to be alone; to gather in groups; to create laws or regulations; the only restriction is that they cannot go outside the city, because the upper ends of the circular roads are closed by the automatic building-site. Each cell contains an "automatic obstetrician" which, applied to the abdomen of the future mother, extracts the foetus painlessly. The baby is transported by pipeline to a cell in the newly-built section, where it is fed and looked after automatically. Only in this phase is the door of the cell sealed by a steel panel. For four years the child remains in his cell, during which time he learns the ethics and working of his city. Thereafter the metal door slides away and disappears forever into the wall. Materials used for building the city remain unaltered for a century, without maintenance; then they begin to degenerate; this is also true of the equipment and machinery. Naturally, load-bearing structures and the general equipment of the city are an exception. The inhabitants spend a lot of time in the roads near their cells, often, in groups or alone, they climb the spiral roads until they reach the children's zone and beyond, into the last four deserted and silent spirals, where the new-born babies live. Often placing their hands and ears against the warm, vibrating metallic walls of the building-site, they try to penetrate the mystery of the outside world. But it is rare for someone to go down the road beyond the zone of extreme old age, into the spirals of decay and putrefaction of things and men, and yet further into the uncertain light and the heat, into the spirals scattered with detritus, dust, bones, until they reach the dark, suffocating and vibrant zones spiralling towards indefinite depths.

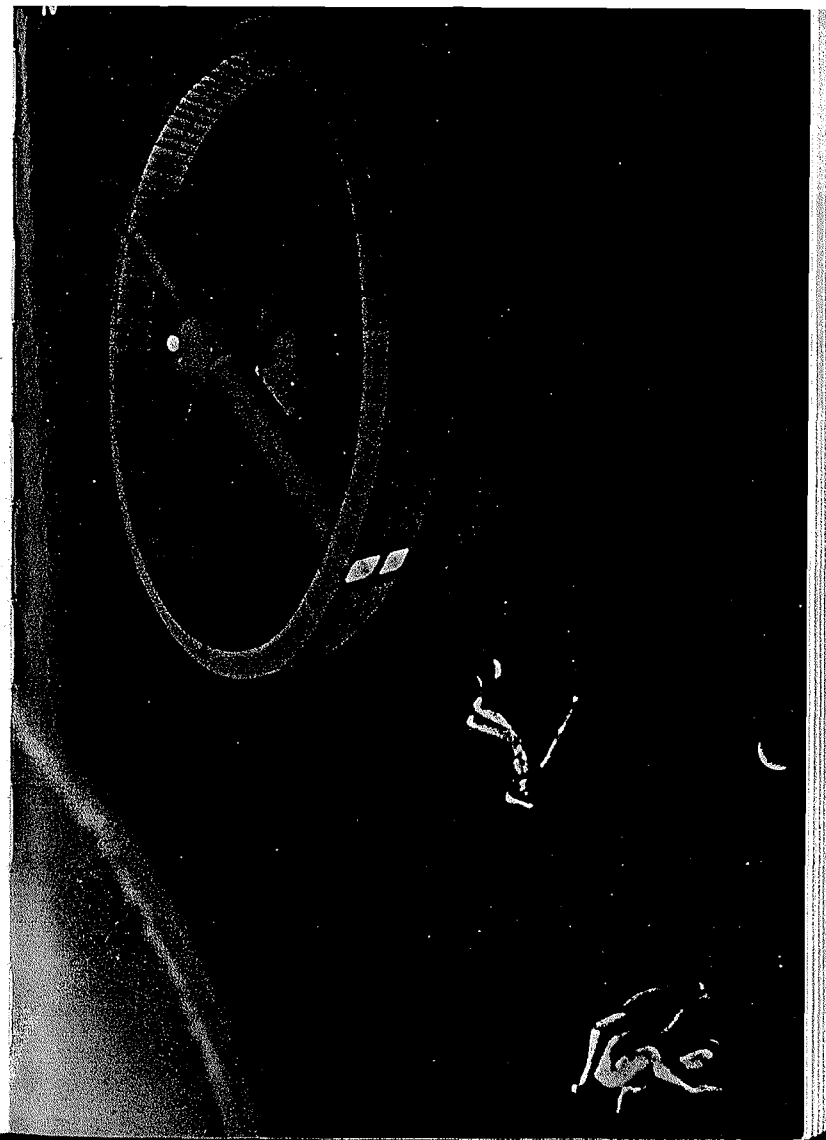
• Third City. New York of Brains

In the most charred, devastated and molten area of that grey space that once was New York, and, more precisely, where Central Park once was at about 81st Street, there stands the city. When the others realized that the explosion had irrevocably contaminated all the inhabitants of New York, and that their bodies were rotting without recourse, it was decided to build the city. It is a cube, with a length, width and height of 180 feet, covered in quartz tiles measuring 10 x 10 inches, in each of which there is a lens 9 inches in diameter. This covering condenses light into the photosensitive layer behind, which transforms it into the energy necessary for the functioning of the city. The cube is uniformly filled with 10-inch cubic containers, made of a special transparent polymer with indefinite stability. The inside of every cube is a spherical cavity filled with a liquid which supports a brain. In the thickness of the cell walls are the pipes through which the liquid is renewed. Systems of electrodes inserted in various points of the cerebral mass enable the brains to communicate directly. At the centre of the city is a cavity with a length, width and height 33 feet 3 inches. Its floor is at the same ground level as that on which the great cube stands. A corridor 3 feet 4 inches wide, 6 feet 8 inches high and 58 feet 4 inches long connects the central cavity with the outside. The central cavity is mostly occupied by the regenerating and filter apparatus for the brain liquids; the filter process is particularly accurate, eliminating all toxins, thus preventing the process of necrosis and ageing. 10,000,456 brains live in the city; in the dim red light of the corridor and the central cavity, they pulse slowly, immersed in their interminable meditations, or concentrated in mute,

indefinite intercourse. Completely cut off from external perception, they can sublimate their thoughts for as long as the life of the sun, free to reach the supreme goals of wisdom and madness, perhaps to reach absolute knowledge. They will survive humanity, they will see its march towards destruction, but they will be unable to do anything to accelerate it, or to delay it. And then, finally, they will be alone.

• Fourth City. Spaceship City

If a city can be considered a place where a group of men are born, live and die; if a city is a mother who looks after her children, furnishes them with all they require and decides how they shall be happy; if a city is all this, independent of its physical and demographic dimensions, then a spaceship, which for centuries has been following a precise route towards a planet thousands of light-years away, is also a city. This spaceship is a huge red wheel 50 m diameter. The central nucleus, 8 m diameter, contains a computer, programmed at the time of departure, to guide the ship, the propulsion apparatus and all the equipment necessary for the life of the spaceship and the crew. The external ring is divided into 80 sections of two cabins each, one above the other. In each cabin sleeps one of the 156 members of the crew, in the upper cabin a man and in the lower a woman. The system of cabins rotates slowly completing one evolution every 80 years. Members of the crew sleep from birth to death, enclosed in their cabins and enveloped in the cables and pipelines which regulate their existence. Their brains are connected by electrodes to a "dream generator" which contains tape recordings of two complementary lives; as they move, each pair of cabins runs through the tape which projects



its evolving dream into the brains of the inhabitants. All passengers therefore live through the same dream at a different moment. The eightieth sector of the perimetral ring is not closed; two openings the depth of a couple of cabins give onto cosmic emptiness. This sector is situated at the point of attachment of one end of the cylindrical connectors to the ring. As a pair of cabins passes the 79th sector, and the outer wall begins to coincide with the opening, air escapes through the fissure and annuls the pressure in the cabin. But before dying of asphyxia, the passenger dies of total haemorrhage. No longer subject to external pressure, all blood vessels break, blood breaks through the entire skin and almost immediately freezes. The air gap continues to widen, and at the same time the cables and pipelines which had kept the body alive, detach themselves, and it floats slowly into outer space. At the same moment, on the opposite side of the ring, at sector no. 40 where the other extreme of the diameter conduit is attached, the dream stimulates the sexual activity of a couple: two oviducts are fertilized by two spermatozoa under controls that permit no possibility of error. Inside the two empty cabins, two "mechanical uteruses" expand to receive the two fertilized oviducts, the masculine one above, the feminine one beneath. Nine months later the uteruses withdraw, freeing the foetuses that in developing have already incorporated the terminals of the vital cables and conduits. Thus, generation after generation, the spaceship proceeds towards its goal, with its load of sleepers with happy dreams, until it reaches the New Land where the awakened ones will found a new Babylon and a new Jerusalem, a new Athens and a new Rome, a new Moscow and a new New York — and also a new Berlin, a new Saigon and a new Cape Town. And they will be happy.

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• Fifth City.

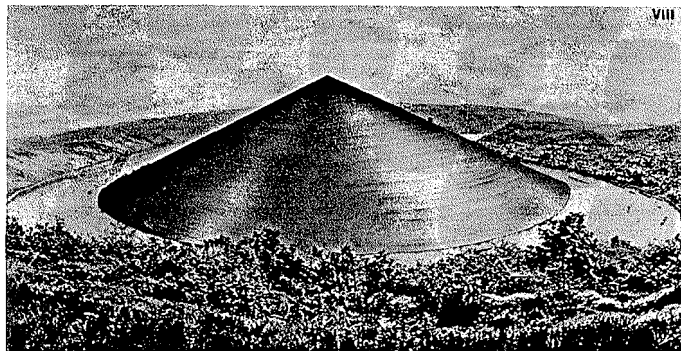
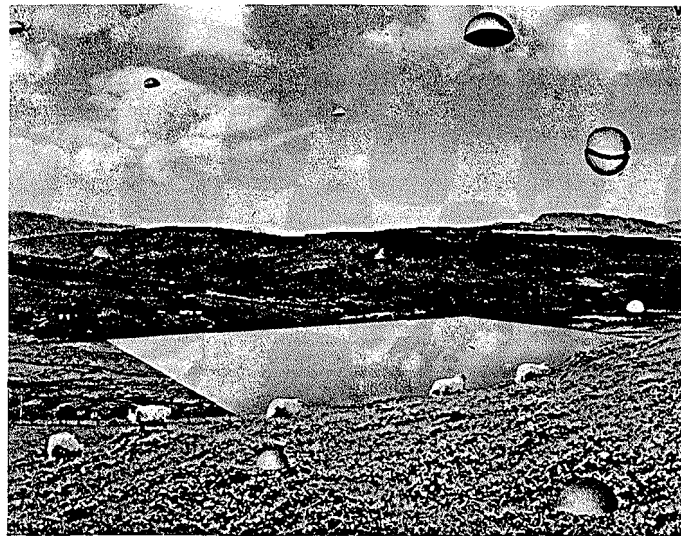
City of the Hemispheres

The city is a dazzling sheet of crystal amidst woods and green hills. On nearing it, one realizes that it is made up of the covers of 10,044,900 crystalline sarcophagi, 185 cm long, 61 cm wide and 61 cm deep. The walls separating the sarcophagi are transparent, the bottom however is shiny white. Inside each sarcophagus lies an immobile individual, eyes closed, breathing conditioned air and fed by a bloodstream — in fact, the blood system is connected to a purifying and regenerative apparatus which, through toxin elimination and doses of hormones, prevents ageing. A series of electrodes applied to the cranium control an external sensory apparatus, of hemispherical form, diameter 30.5 cm; this hemisphere of silvery metal is capable of moving and remaining immobile in the air and on the ground thanks to a propulsion system which emits no gas and no noise, and has an unlimited life. One might think that the hundreds of thousands of hemispheres that continually crowd the air and are suspended over the city or its surroundings are moved by telekinesis. The flat surface of the hemisphere contains its sensory organs: sight; hearing; taste; smell; touch. The sensations which these perceive are transmitted directly to the brain of the individual commanding the hemisphere. At times one can see hemispheres placed on the sarcophagus of the owners, exactly over the head; this is the position known as "profound meditation". At other times, especially on sunny days, many hemispheres can be seen united in couples: this is the position of "sublime love"; these spiritual unions naturally do not have the power to create life, but this is unnecessary in a place where death does not exist.

• Sixth City.

Barum Jr's Magnificent and Fabulous City

The city lies beneath an enormous red and blue striped circus tent. The tent, suspended by the traction between the aerostats and the thousands of cables anchoring its perimeter to the earth, has a diameter of 2 miles, 205 yards; at its centre stands an enormous cylinder with a diameter 1 mile and a height 100 yards, made of sheet metal nailed and painted silver. In this cylinder lies enclosed a city built on a scale five times smaller than reality; this is a city with about 2 million inhabitants: it has all the characteristics of a modern city, but also contains reproductions of all the major monuments of the world, from the Empire State Building to the Eiffel Tower, from the Colosseum (reconstructed in its original form) to Sunset Boulevard. Here's how to visit this fabulous city, after arriving and parking buy a ticket — 50 cents for every minute of your visit to the city. Then pay a deposit for any eventual damage you might cause. This deposit is fixed at \$ 1 for every minute of your wait, but may not, in any case, be less than \$ 900 (if you haven't got it, you can get a loan at the bank next to the ticket office by simply handing over your driving licence and the papers of your car; this loan will cost you 5% of the total). At this point, you receive the "key to the city"; this is an electronic punch-card which contains all information on you and your visit; you are then channelled along with other visitors towards the computer, and after arriving at a "choice point", you insert your "key" in a slot; then you see the red light in front of you change to green, and can explain to the "brain" who you would like to be. If you want a famous person, living or dead, you just mention the name. We hope your "hero" is on the list of 100,000 famous people available. Otherwise, you must make



Superejects: Objects, Monuments, Cities

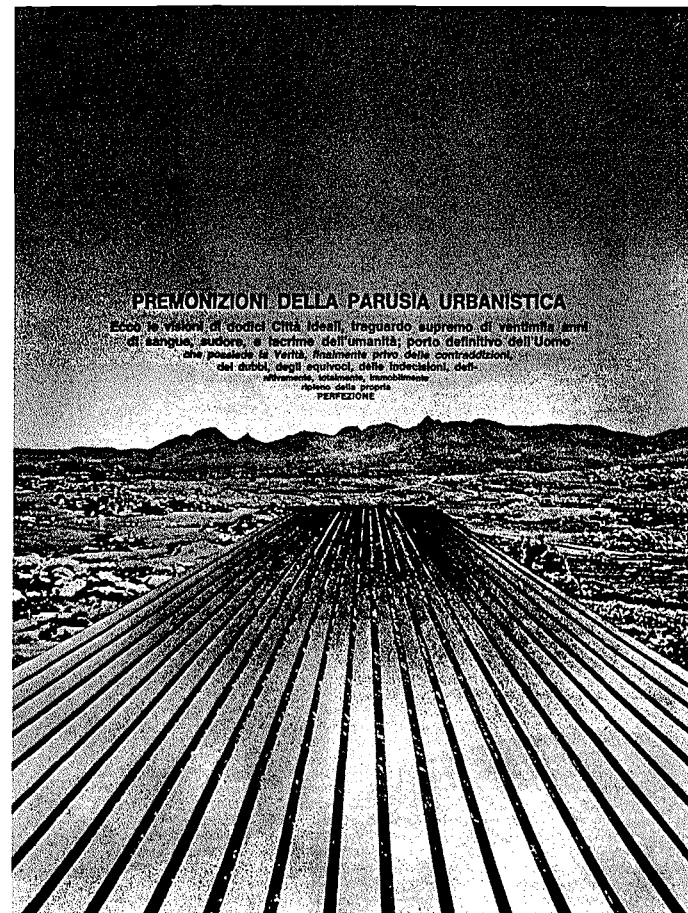
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another choice. On the screen in front of you, you will see the photograph of the person chosen if available, the word "absent" if it isn't on the list, and the word "engaged" if it is in use at the time. (Our organization isn't a masked ball, so don't ask for historical characters; the list only includes persons still living in 1915). For a visit as a famous person, the charge is \$ 1 a minute. If on the other hand you are unassuming and prefer an ordinary person, just tell the "brain" what kind of person and his picture will immediately appear on the screen. Having made your choice, wait for the sound of the bell and withdraw your "key", which now bears embossed the type of person you have chosen. Then proceed to the cubicle zone and find one that is free; insert your "key" in the board you find there. Within 90 seconds, the rails above you will bring a space-suit type of garment which will remain hanging, attached to the rails by cables running from the joints and the helmet. When you are ready, push the green button at chest height on the space-suit. The floor you are standing on will disappear through a diaphragm system and you will find yourself on a circular plate with a diameter 2 yards 1 foot 5 inches. This plate is covered with a layer of small steel balls which allow you any movement of the legs, even the splits if you know how. While you are observing these marvels, a Plexiglas cylinder rises from round the edges of the plate, stopping when it reaches a height equal to the diameter of the plate. At this point it is better to close your eyes for a few seconds to avoid dizziness. When you open them, you are in the city. Remember that from now on every movement of your body is transmitted by the suit (which is an extremely modern tele-pantograph) to the robot-doll you have chosen, and which is able to act within the city according to your impulses. The sensations of vision, smell, hearing and touch and taste

perceived by its electronic detectors will be faithfully transmitted directly to your nervous centres. Remember you can do whatever you want, but any damage to the city or its inhabitants will be debited to your account; also remember that your "character" has a small quantity of practical knowledge that can be of use to you during your "journey". He knows which is his car, his house, his wife or girl-friend, he can find his way in the city streets, etc. In the right-hand pocket of your jacket, or in your handbag if you are a woman, you have a loaded pistol (if you have chosen to be a detective or a killer, you know very well that your pistol is under your left armpit). You can use it as you please, but remember that every assassination will cost you repair charges, which are sometimes very heavy. (A word in your ear: if you don't want to spend too much, aim low; a great bull's-eye between the eyes or in the forehead is satisfying, but ruins all the sensory detector mechanisms and this can cost you about \$ 1000. A good hole in the stomach, with a bit of luck, will cost you only \$ 300). Watch out, during your journey, naturally, you can be attacked, run over, the victim of attempted rape (even if you are dressed as a bright young man), you have the pistol for defence, but don't forget that killing for self-defence doesn't exempt you from refunding damages, so if you can't afford it, be resigned to getting killed or "serviced" (In any case, you won't feel any pain, this is the only type of sensation we don't provide for in our normal characters. There are, however, 50,000 special characters with sensitivity to pain for those who like "special effects"). Remember though that from the time you are mortally wounded, you lose control of the movements of your person. The automatic death simulators take over, differently programmed according to the type of wound received. This is naturally intended to

increase the enjoyment of the person your personage was unkindly enough to displease. At this point, your journey isn't over, you won't get back control of your movements, but you can watch a great run to the hospital in the ambulance with its siren wailing, then all the medical and legal formalities taking place around you just like in real life, and then at last you will be shut into a luxurious first-class coffin with padding and stereo-music. The moment the coffin lid closes your journey comes to an end, irrespective of the time paid for: the coffin does not in fact go on to a quiet gross cemetery, but directly to the Character Restoration Lab. This explanation of cases of violent death is lengthy because these are the causes of most of the complaints and unpleasant arguments with our clients. These are the rules of the game, and anyone who decides to buy a ticket automatically accepts them. Naturally, we wish you much better luck during your journey. Remember, you can do anything you want, nothing is forbidden. Have you ever wanted to make love to Brigitte Bardot? To strip Sophia Loren naked? To have Omar Sharif all to yourself? You can finally do it — all of these and many other famous people are wandering around the city. Seek them out, rush them in the middle of the road, no one will recognize you, don't worry about the police, they're thinking about having some fun just like you are, and if anyone wants to be a moralist, remember, you've got your pistol with you. That's all. Don't waste any time, friend, rush over to Barnum Jr's city, buy a ticket and enter the freest and most amusing city in the world. You'll live fantastic experiences and you'll be able to fulfil your every wish.

• **Seventh City.**
Continuous Production
Conveyor Belt City
 The city moves, unrolling like a majestic serpent, over new lands,



PREMONIZIONI DELLA PARUSIA URBANISTICA

Ecco le visioni di dodici Città, ideati, sguardo supremo, di ventimila anni di sangue, sudore, e lacrime dell'umanità; porto definitivo dell'Uomo che possiede la Verità, finalmente privo delle contraddizioni, dei dubbi, degli equivoci, delle indecisioni, dell'abbandono, dell'ansietà, l'incoscienza. **PERFEZIONE**
 Ripete della propria

taking its 8 million inhabitants on a ride through valleys and hills, from the mountains to the seashore, generation after generation.

The head of the city is the Grand Factory, 4 miles wide and 100 yards high, like the city it continuously produces. The Grand Factory exploits the land and the underground materials of the territory it crosses, and from these marvellously extracts all that it requires for the construction of the city. The Grand Factory devours shreds of useless nature and unformed minerals at its front end and emits sections of completely formed city, ready for use, from its back end. The Grand Factory moves forward at a speed of 1 foot 2 1/2 inches per hour. The plan of the city is based on a checker-board of roads perpendicular and parallel to the Grand Factory; the roads separate square blocks, 261 x 261 yards, and are 29 yards wide. The perpendicular roads are numbered progressively, starting from the central axis of the city adding the letter L or R to the number according to whether it is on the left or the right of the axis; the parallel roads however are called by the name of the month and year of their construction. The Grand Factory produces a series of blocks (including the segments of perpendicular roads between them) in 27 days and the parallel road next to them in 3 days. The greatest aspiration of every citizen is to move more and more often into a new house because the houses produced are continually modernized and equipped with the yet more perfect commodities that the Administrative Council invents for the joy of the citizens. The Great Families move monthly into the houses just built, following the rhythm of the Grand Factory. The other citizens do their best and only those with little willpower and the latest wait for four years before moving house. Luckily, it is not possible to live in the same

house for more than four years after its construction; after this period, objects, accessories and the structure of the houses themselves decay, become unusable and soon after collapse. Only society's rejects, mad or insane individuals, still dare to wander amongst the ruins, the detritus and rubble that the city leaves behind it. It is in order to prevent the citizens being reduced to such a desperate state that from their earliest age they are inculcated with the concept that everyone's greatest desire must always be a new house, and it is for this reason that the newspapers, tv and all other media continually advertise the marvellous novelties of the new houses, the technical innovations, the never-before-seen comforts. What could be more fascinating and reassuring than the spectacle of the families that daily drive up the perpendicular roads in the little yellow buses put at their disposal by the Administrative Council, in the direction of the Grand Factory, towards their new houses? What could be more stimulating than the continual rivalry between all citizens in trying to live on parallel streets with the most recent dates? What day could be happier than when you move into your new house, and your Director gives you a day off on special grounds and congratulates you? What hour could be happier than when you enter your new home and discover all your new things, your new equipment, your new clothes and everything else that the Grand Factory has prepared for you? Admire the city from above, with its great black head, plumed with the smoke of thousands of factory chimneys, with its tidy body 8 miles long, with at its centre the grandiose crest of skyscrapers, flanked by great blocks of popular housing estates, and stretches of villas with gardens at the edges; with its ineliminable wake of rubble

indicating the ground covered. Look at the perfect city that produces more goods for exports than any other city. Look at the rows of lorries arriving empty and going away loaded with goods to contribute to the greater prosperity of our great country and the better fortunes of our well-loved shareholders.

• Eighth City. Conical Terraced City

The city rises in the midst of a great plain, surrounded by a canal 600 feet wide. It is formed of 500 circular levels one above the other, each one of which has a diameter 32 feet less than the one beneath. Each level is 8 feet high, thus the total height is 4,000 feet, while the diameter of the lowest level is 16,000 feet. In the circumference wall of each level are doors 2 x 7 feet. At ground level there are 6,500 doors; each successive level has 13 doors less. The 500th level has only 13 doors, and above this, at the centre of the 32 feet diameter terrace, rises a silvery metal cupola, with a radius 8 feet. The total number of doors in the circumference walls of the city is 1,678,250. Each one gives on to a room formed by the external wall, concentric interior wall and two radial walls; the distance between the two concentric walls is 16 feet. The maximum distance between the two radial walls and the height of the room is 7 1/2 feet. In the radial walls, there are doors measuring 2 x 7 feet which connect each room with the two next to it. The entire city is built of a white, vitreous, imperishable ceramic. The levels are in no way connected; no architectural structure furnishes a hold for climbing; the terraces forming the steps between levels have no parapet. In each room, in the centre of the wall facing the outside door, there are two circular openings. The lower, 2 feet diameter, is a kind of window opening

on to the dark and silent interior of the cone, which is a single cavity without horizontal or vertical divisions. The second opening, placed above the first, has a 12 inches diameter and is the end of a duct. Here new-born babies must be placed as soon as they are born. A few seconds after the baby is introduced into the opening it closes. When it re-opens after some hours, the baby has a "co-ordinator" inserted in its brain. The co-ordinator transmits orders through brain impulses to one or more inhabitants (never more than five at the same time) living on the level beneath the one on which its owner lives; it's not possible to transmit impulses to the inhabitants of levels yet further down, nor to inhabitants of one's own level, nor still less to those living above. Theoretically, with an effort, it is possible to refuse to obey the orders coming from the inhabitants of the floor above, but the sense of guilt deriving from this rebellion is so great and provokes such intense mental suffering that only a few can bear it for long. Through this system — that is, ordering the things they need from those living beneath — the inhabitants obtain everything they require. Each desire passes from co-ordinator to co-ordinator until it reaches the lowest levels, and almost always until it reaches ground level, where the inhabitants farm the land, work and manufacture objects to satisfy the demands of the inhabitants of the upper levels. Twice a day, at fixed times, all inhabitants of the city, putting their heads into the openings giving on to the central space, receive, through their co-ordinator, a programme of dreams emitted by the man living in the cupola at the top. No one knows how the man living in the cupola lives, but everybody imagines him to be happy because he never orders anything, never needs anything. It is said that the cupola has

a mechanism which can grant his every wish immediately, and that the beautiful dreams he transmits are merely excerpts from his real life. The highest aspiration of every inhabitant of the city is to climb to the higher levels and diminish the load of orders received through the co-ordinator. All free time is dedicated to thinking up and executing plans to this end. Naturally, the inhabitants of the upper levels endeavour to foil these efforts by every means, and the bodies piled up here and there testify to the ferocity of their fights. Actually, it is the piles of bodies that provide the most useful means of climbing (naturally individuals with families, who want to take them along, are at a disadvantage). The inhabitants of the highest levels, who have very few orders, and especially those on the very highest, who have none at all, continually endeavour to get into the cupola, which apparently has no opening at all. It is said that if one touches a particular spot on its surface, it opens up a section for a few seconds to admit the lucky one, but no-one has ever emerged from the cupola to tell the others about it. The most mysterious question is what happens to the previous inhabitants of the cupola, that is, those dethroned. On the terrace surrounding the cupola, a body has never been found.

• Ninth City.
The Ville-Mechina Habitée
The city is a machine, such a large machine that not even its inhabitants know its size; its pipelines, its rows of gear mechanisms, conveyor belts, connecting rods, stretch away out of sight whichever way one looks, in the dim half-light, grey and foggy, which fills the cavern it occupies, and those walls have never been seen. The inhabitants live in the machine endlessly dragged along by conveyor belts, by chutes and pneumatic tubes

from the time of birth to the time of death. The machine takes care of everything, along the innumerable routes which intersect, unite and divide according to its incomprehensible programming. The inhabitants find food and fear, sleep and joy, sex and hope, death and anger, sometimes also rebellion; but they know very well that if they get off the obligatory routes established by the machine, they will inevitably be crushed by its machinery. The machine is self-sufficient, it takes from the outside world only some rays of sunlight, air and water rich with the mineral salts of the earth. It looks after its inhabitants by elaborating and synthesizing the substances originally placed in it; it recreates, that is, within itself, life cycles from plant cultures and animal breeding. The perfection of the mechanism is such that the additional quantities of energy and matter brought in by the light, air and water become surplus. Any residue, anything that dies, is transformed. The machine produces fertilizers.

• Tenth City.
City of Order
This city has, apparently, nothing strange about it; it has streets, squares, gardens, new houses and it is in fact a city like any other. The only thing is that it has been governed by the same mayor for 45 years. The reason for his long stay in office is simple: he has an exceptionally good idea. Instead of trying to suit the city to its inhabitants, like everyone else, he thought of suiting the inhabitants to their city. Now, 45 years later, things are starting to go really well, the citizens that jump the lights, damage city property, complain about the unpunctuality of the buses or the lack of water at the fountains it is most needed, etc. are ever fewer. Actually, as soon as a citizen commits some

infraction, or complains about something to the public authorities, he is not punished or reassured that his complaints will be taken into account — instead, he is sent to the town hall where he will be a guest for a week, and convinced.

When this citizen returns home he is much changed: precise, loyal to the regulations, calm, always smiling, he does his duty conscientiously. In 45 years, nearly all the citizens have visited the town hall and so now they are nearly all model citizens.

Every so often, there is a serious accident and one may see then that the model citizens have a complex miniaturized mechanism in their heads and lots of little expanded polystyrol balls instead of their insides, under the bands of muscles in their chest and abdomen.

No one knows much about this because everyone who has seen such an accident is kindly accompanied to the town hall to recover from the shock. The town councillors, who were old, have all died during these 45 years; the mayor has immortalized them in splendid plastic statues, life-size and in natural colours, which show them sitting round the Council table in characteristic poses.

The mayor is very pleased with the way things are going; he is now beginning to have great ambitions for his city, and he is sure everyone will agree.

Unfortunately, yesterday he had a fall, burst open and lost all his little balls. They're putting them back.

• Eleventh City.

City of the Splendid Houses

The city has no connection with the countryside because it contains in itself everything that pleases its inhabitants. It is certainly the most beautiful city in the world, because all its inhabitants, at every moment of their existence, move towards the

single goal of possessing the most beautiful house.

The city gives all its citizens the same starting point; that is, it grants every family nucleus the same amount of space for building a house. In fact, the city consists of a network of parallel roads 10 m wide, which form 6-m² blocks; each of these 6-m² blocks is occupied by a single-family house.

The limitation of the space available for each house has the purpose of obliging citizens to dedicate all their efforts to the aesthetic enrichment of the outside of their homes, avoiding any temptations of comfort and softness, which would inevitably lead to the weakening of the yearning that should incessantly move them to build ever more beautiful houses, a continuous rivalry with neighbours and friends. Every house in the city

consists of one single room, 5 x 5 m, 5 m high, with walls of reinforced concrete 50 cm thick. The roof is of glass, with a ceiling lamp in the middle for lighting. The floor is in padded plastic with a heating plaque at the centre; the walls of the room are painted greenish. A curtain of the same colour, in plastic, hides the service area at the right of the entrance; to the left of the door, a green-painted metal cupboard with a security lock contains clothing, but there are no other objects in the room.

On the wall in front of the door there are two taps, one for water, and the other for the nutritive plasma based on chlorella and integrated with vitamins and mineral salts, which constitutes the citizens' only food. Above the taps, on the electric light switch and on the regulating knob of the heating plaque, there are meters connected to the central electronic computer of the city which takes care of the citizens' remuneration. All citizens in fact work in the city's factories, which produce metal components, silk-screened plastic panels, clothing and

ornaments and articles of basic necessity. At the end of the month, each citizen receives a sheaf of coupons, calculated on his wages, with deductions for water, light, heating and food; with these coupons, he can buy the materials that he needs for continuing the embellishment of his house. All citizens dedicate all their leisure time to this task. The walls of the houses, of reinforced concrete, are the bases for metal frames bearing silk-screened panels depicting any subject in bright colours; the choice of the subject to be represented on his house is left to the taste of the individual; the most popular is famous historical buildings, but there is no lack of trees, animals, paintings and sculpture, etc. There is no limit to the height of these towers, except for the high cost of the building materials; the families with most prestige live in towers up to 200 m high, and on which various subjects are depicted. Towers taller than 90 m can no longer be supported by the iron framework alone, and contain a transparent plastic balloon filled with helium which helps to hold up the construction. All coupons not spent on building materials are used for the purchase of clothing and personal ornament. In the streets, the inhabitants, who at home spend their time naked, are clothed in many-coloured garments, gay and cut in all styles.

• Twelfth City.

City of the Book

The book that all citizens wear hanging on a chain round their necks is the spirit of the city. Left-hand pages bear the moral norms, right-hand pages modes of behaviour on which the citizen bases his life. The city consists of a series of parallel buildings 10 m high, 30 m wide, and 10 km long, with a distance of 3 m between them; inside each building is

a tunnel 10 m wide, 9 m high, and the length of the building. Every 80 m, smaller transverse tunnels (3 x 3 m) join the longitudinal tunnels and the external streets between the buildings.

The longitudinal tunnels are completely dark, but each citizen is equipped with infra-red visual devices which enable him to see perfectly in the dark. The built-up areas between the longitudinal tunnels and the external streets are occupied by single, identical houses with a central corridor and rooms to right and left; every house therefore has half its rooms facing onto the streets and half onto the longitudinal tunnels. The Book which rules the life of the citizens is made in such a fashion that the left-hand page (ethics) can be read only by outside light, and the right-hand page (behaviour) only in the dark, with infra-red light.

Extracts from the Book

p. 2. *The law is the same for all*

p. 3. *The law is proportioned to the power of the individual*

p. 6. *The State is at the service of the citizen*

p. 7. *The citizen is at the service of the state*

p. 28. *Kill only in self-defence*

p. 29*. *Kill in lawful attack and dispose of the body in the appropriate openings*

In any situation, a citizen must observe the corresponding regulations to be found in the Book. The ethics of the Book are those of Christianity plus legislative and constitutional

principles; the regulations governing behaviour are the result of behavioural tendencies in Western cultures freed from those moralistic overtones that had before prevented their free development. All citizens are free to live in the light, or in the dark, or to move between them; practically all life is carried on in the tunnels and the house-rooms overlooking these. On the ground floor are shops and offices.

* *Note to p. 29. The sidewalks of the*

longitudinal tunnels are raised 70 cm above the roadway and under them lie the conduits for the elimination of bodies. These are transported to the incinerators by conveyor belts.

The moment has come in which to reveal the significance of these descriptions: this is a test. Of the twelve cities whose descriptions have you read, how many would you like to come true? Have you felt that they might be of advantage to humanity? Work out your answers carefully.

Results of the twelve cities test.

If you approved:

More than nine: You are a head of State, or hope to become one, or at any rate you are suited to be one. The logic and the mechanism of the system are perfected within you, and part of you, are you. You are but an empty shell, a dark, humid cavity into which the system has penetrated like tendrils of pumpkin plants into earthy crevices, until it has filled them completely. You are a horrid evocation of hell, horror surrounds you. You are not a human being.

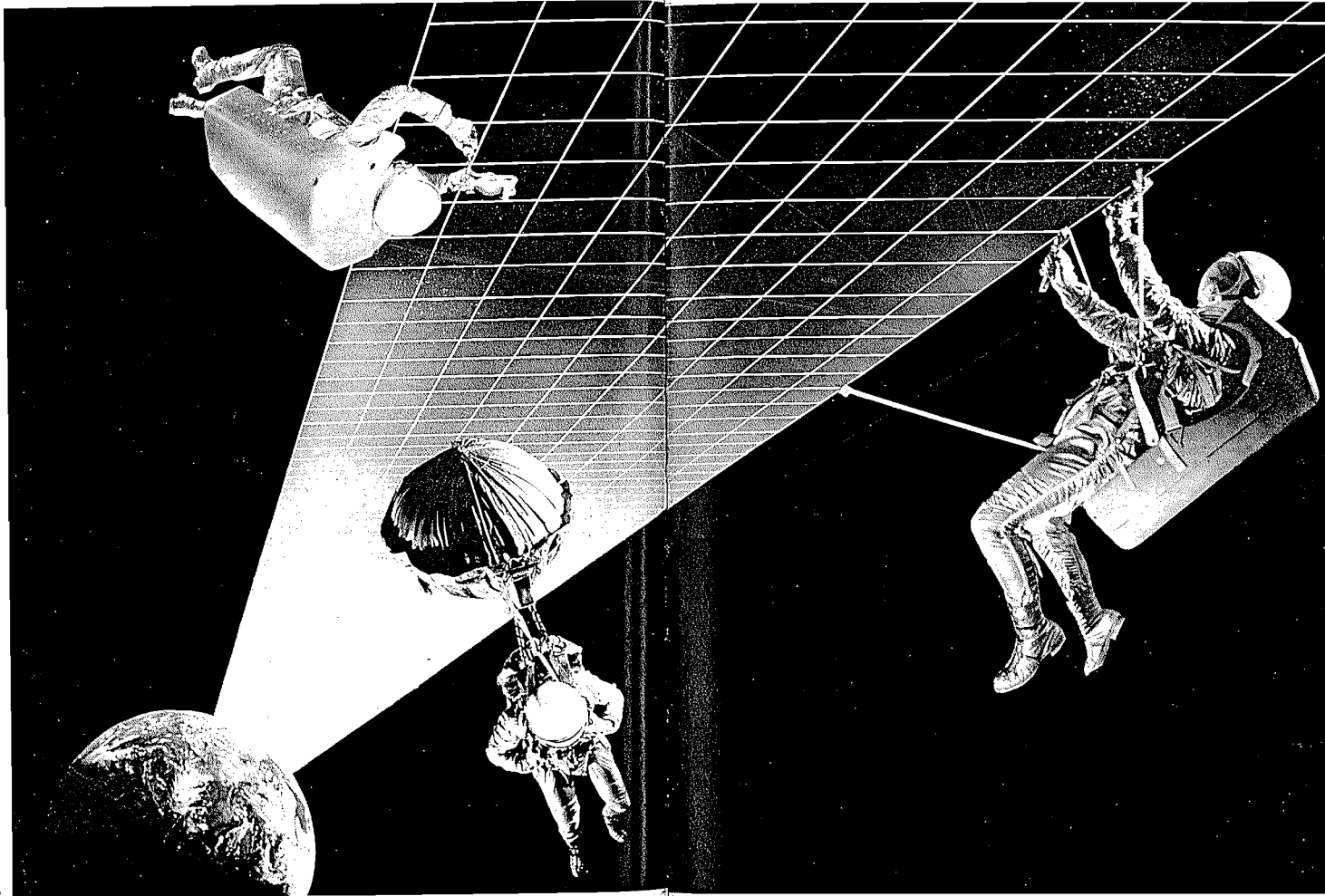
From six to nine: You are an element of the system, a cog functioning perfectly within its mechanism; lubricated by the logic of the culture, and thus free from friction, you turn smoothly, perfectly synchronized with your creator; hallucinating and sadistic you generate terror. You are not a human being either, but a "golem".

From three to six: You are a slave, a succubus. You have killed your doubts in order not to be killed by them, and you have died with them anyway. You don't think, you don't want, you only execute order. Of the whole you, there remain but limbs and organs, nothing more than mechanical parts functioning in one direction only: from the assembly line to the junk yard. You are nothing; a poor, creaking "robot".

From one to three: You are a worm.

You have got the idea and you don't want to admit it even to yourself. You have amputated your legs, arms and teeth because you're scared even to run away. And now you're hidden away in a dark corner with your snout in the mud so as not to see or hear. But the disgusting thing about you is that you'd like to be less frightened so as to be like everyone else. You're a human being but perhaps that's worse than if you weren't; haven't you noticed?

You didn't want any of the cities to come true: So, you feel self-satisfied, but you shouldn't. Because you have not caught on; you haven't understood that the descriptions represent cities now. Is it possible that you didn't realize that it is enough to carry forward the logic of the system until it becomes rigorous logic, to concretize many more hallucinating fantasies than those described here? Hold on, the way is broad, the "technologically advanced" countries are running rapidly along it (ever nearer: their goal) and the "developing countries" are following close. You are an idiot. Only if you understood the game from the beginning, can you hope to be saved. From the horror of us and our surroundings, "revelation" could spring. Ascend, then, up to the Old Man of the Mountain and be of his children. Observe time through the white hairs of his beard, and when you have been reborn, descend with a pill of hashish beneath your tongue and a knife under your shirt, to exterminate the spirits, monsters and demons that infest the Earth, and finally, purified with water and incense, you can prepare the foundations for the new City of the White Walls.



Our work has always been in an empty, rarefied area: there is a space between architecture and the visual arts, and there is a space between the cultural professions and life. This space is the only "non-alienating" surface in our experience, it is the only area in which, outside professional routines and pure existence, we can search for a coincidence between "being" and "doing", acting and existing...

A space for reflection... A space for critical activity (or philosophical activity), through which to explore the many ways of doing, and to try, with serene indifference, to order and give a sense to our activity. The choice of such an area of action involves a double movement: one must leave everyday activity to be able to control it critically, and then return to reality itself in a different situation. Only thus can one check means and ends; only thus can criticism become action.

The specialization of the cultural professions has brought a condition where they can be imagined as closed and concentric circles, revolving around a central nucleus at different speeds.

Thus, at times, one ring experience is more advanced than others, and vice-versa... more advanced, that is, in respect to a radial line representing an ideal section of present reality.

At any rate, the problem is that of overcoming this schematic division and passing from one area to another, using different experiences in a more generalized and final vision.

The only valid thing that I learned at the university was that the architect is a man who also, among other things, operates in the field of architecture: this maxim had a strictly political value and meaning. This meaning was that in our present situation, it was impossible to begin any architecture without first having changed the

structures of the society. And this is what people are saying in our universities at the moment... On the other hand, the social "system" in which we live is strong enough to incorporate and use every gesture and product of ours. The only product which it will not be able to absorb is violent revolution or non-violent intelligence.

The ways of non-violence in culture resemble guerrilla warfare: they are underground, they change their objectives, are mobile and incomprehensible.

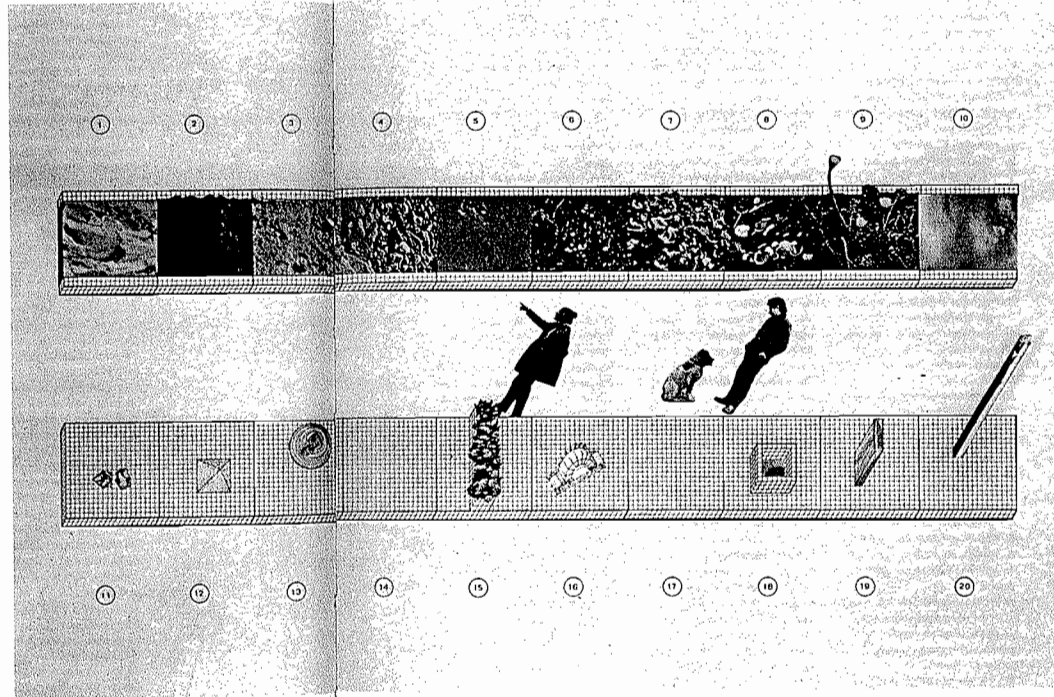
I believe in this destroying action on the part of culture: culture as an unbalancing factor.

In order to exist, the society of superproduction and superconsumption requires maximum extension and efficiency of the imperialist processes: economic imperialism (exploitation of natural resources) for the "outside" countries, and cultural imperialism (becoming used to and supporting current society) for the "inside" countries. Vittorio Gregotti wrote some years ago that we cannot plan a revolution with architecture, but that it is our precise duty to plan a revolution in architecture.

It seems to me that this is a position common to all intellectuals today: the opposition to the system is expressed through the elaboration of alternative behaviour models, or at any rate behaviour models intended to unbalance the status quo.

A series of aberrant images, capable of postulating another scale of values and behaviour, is substituted for the process of getting accustomed to the present society.

Thus, the system's public image is put into doubt: collectively induced desires are substituted with other, equally appetizing desires, which are however truer and more just, and to satisfy these new desires, the system



is forced into a crisis. The action to be undertaken, in its simplest form, is to take these processes to their limit, showing *per absurdum* their falsity and immorality.

Another type of action is that of refusing all participation, staying isolated and apart, while continuing to produce ideas and objects, so intentionally different that they are unusable for the system without becoming involved in fierce self-criticism.

In architecture, critical activity has always been connected with the concept of utopia: utopia is not an alternative model: it puts forward unresolved problems (not "problem-solving" but "problem-finding").

Thomas More explains that the word "utopia" can be derived either from the Greek word "eutopia", meaning "the good place" or from "ou-topia", meaning "no place" (no-where land, never-never land).

And Lewis Mumford writes "my utopia is life at this moment, here or in any other place, taken to the limits of its ideal possibilities".

We could say that the original motive of utopia is hope. Utopia is the true preparation for projecting, as play is preparation for life. The revolutionary charge of utopia, the hope which is at its foundation and the criticism which is its direct consequence, bring back its dignity as a rational, ordering activity.

I will often — almost always — be speaking about architecture, and I would like to define the term: for us, architecture is always seen as opposed to building.

Architecture as a design system — we do not build, we design. We do not even design when our designs are built — we operate critically in the field of design.

In other words, we operate through "models". According to Gregotti, the model has a scientific basis, and

is a design instrument, having its own communication properties.

The model constitutes a tentative moment in re-founding things: at the same time tending to attribute an aesthetic sense to this act of re-foundation.

The model, as used in industrial design, architectural and planning design, is not a "statistical mean", but looks for authenticity in behaviour — transforming this into new authenticity. Thus, in our work, we often operate through models and meta-projects.

Our design processes generally start with the production of ideas, the representation of general systems, efforts at clarifying formative processes, inventions, etc.

Then we try to arrange these ideas into structure systems. We arrange them and number them into catalogues.

These catalogues then become the basis for our designs.

For several years, we have been trying to carry out our work and theories in an integral fashion: a theoretical formula for our work existed, and also a series of examples verifying this theory, i.e., the theory was confirmed by practice and vice-versa. We slowly became aware that this is difficult to put into practice; architectural operations take place on parallel, staggered planes: theory, in order to be put into practice, requires such a series of economic conditions, clients, laws and regulations that a number of years passes between its formulation and its realization. In particular, the two staggered, parallel planes already mentioned do not even possess such absolute parallelism that one may move from one to the other; between the two planes, there is a gaseous, deforming area, because of which the two planes, as if through deforming curtains of hot air, are seen as deformed, twisted, where the hills and

depressions of the one do not correspond to those of the other.

This deforming medium consists of the entire entity of socio-cultural and economic conditions, of waiting for orders, of laws and regulations... For this reason, we have realized that often, instead of obtaining a theory-practice-theory check, the process becomes ambiguous and contradictory. So recently, we have been aiming towards a different sort of behaviour, in which the two spheres become separated even while remaining clearly connected. Thus we are interested in producing, elaborating and transmitting ideas, using the most convenient channel, and we are interested in producing objects and constructions (facts) which derive from the theoretical skeleton without however trying to verify it point by point.

If we look closely, we can see how all the changes in society and culture in this century (or since 1920) have been generated by one force only — the elimination of formal structures as a tendency towards a state of nature that is free from work.

By the destruction of objects, we mean the destruction of their attributes of "status" and the connotations imposed by power, so that we live with objects (reduced to the condition of neutral and disposable elements) and not *for* objects.

By the elimination of the city, we mean the elimination of the accumulation of formal structures of power — the elimination of the city as hierarchy and social model, looking for a new free egalitarian state, in which everyone can reach different grades in the development of his possibilities, beginning from equal starting points.

By the end of work, we mean the end of specialized and repetitive work. Seen as an alienating activity, foreign

to the nature of man. The logical consequence will be a new, revolutionary society in which everyone should find the full development of their possibilities, and in which the principle "from each according to his capacities, to everyone according to his needs" should be put into practice. The construction of a revolutionary society is possible through the phase of radical, concrete criticism of the present society — of its way of producing, consuming, living. The destruction of objects, the elimination of the city and the disappearance of work are events closely connected.

As architects, we feel ourselves obliged to apply our rational criticism to the system in which we operate and to the methods with which we operate. From this fact we derive our critical activities and our consciousness of self.

If design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of the bourgeois models of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning is merely the formalization of present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities... until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture....

Architecture is one of the superstructures of power. To conclude, we can say that our work consists of the continuous production, elaboration and transmission of ideas. The general method by which our work is structured and checked is that of *INVENTORY AND CATALOGUE*.

By comparing and arranging into series, ideas, intuitions, events, information, reciprocal connections come to light, experiences are assimilated and we pass on.

Our work can be defined as *DESIGNING SYSTEMS OF FLUX*: systems of flux are functional systems working together to fulfill certain complex functions (e.g. supermarkets, postal system, airports...). We define and position their elements without designing these single elements. The system of flux, the field of our action is the cultural and social system in which we find ourselves.

Products, events, operations are defined and positioned according to the overall political and cultural actions that we wish to actuate. By defining certain elements and placing them in certain focal points of culture, we try to provoke discussion about our cultural and social system and its behaviour models.

This process, which we have defined as the *designing of systems of flux*, is at the same time a work-method and the theory according to which work is carried out.

It is in this light that we must observe both the formulas of imaginary, impossible or reflected architecture, and the "practical" examples of our work. These examples are simply experiments in the possibility of concretizing theory in various points of our social and cultural environment. Our work is a reconnaissance of the possibilities in conceptual, expanded architecture of creating a serene reality, free from material and mental waste, a free, rational reality, in which, once primary needs have been provided for, activity in the field of design may find its true creative character.

Our problem today is not that of finding a new "Existenzminimum"; it is to give an "Existenzmaximum"; it is not to find new tools, it is to develop harmoniously those we have already. It is not to exploit nature's resources wildly, but to exploit our minds. Architecture can teach us how to live in our heads as well

as in the best "Plug-in" capsules... Our work today has this precise sense of critical reconnaissance activity into the revolutionary possibilities of architecture.

Lecture given by Adolfo Natalini at the AA School of Architecture, London, 3 March 1971

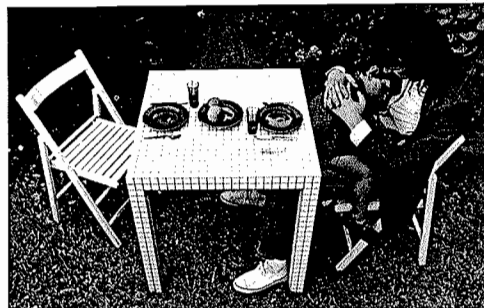
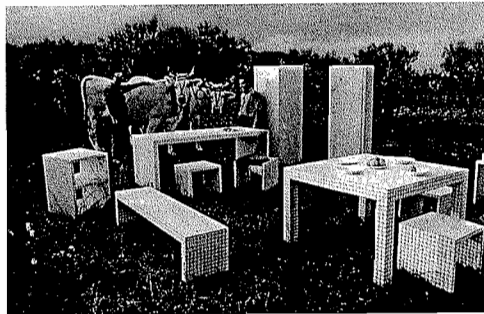
We move amongst the ruins of desires, false problems, status symbols, caricatures and monsters. In the purpose of the merchandizing of reality, the architecture of enclosed spaces becomes furnishing, and furnishing is broken up into the single items of design: it is up to the user who has already obtained the necessary pieces "from the catalogue" to use them by assembling them in new and surprising combinations, perhaps following the models and rules proposed by magazines. Thus, instead of culture, taste is favoured, and the development of a serene philosophy of life in enclosed spaces is further postponed.

And on the other hand, when architecture renounces its function of putting order into human environment, then industrial design and product design appear as the solution to all problems.

The present situation in the field of design tendencies is so full of invention and new ideas that we feel as though we were in a spiritual funfair...

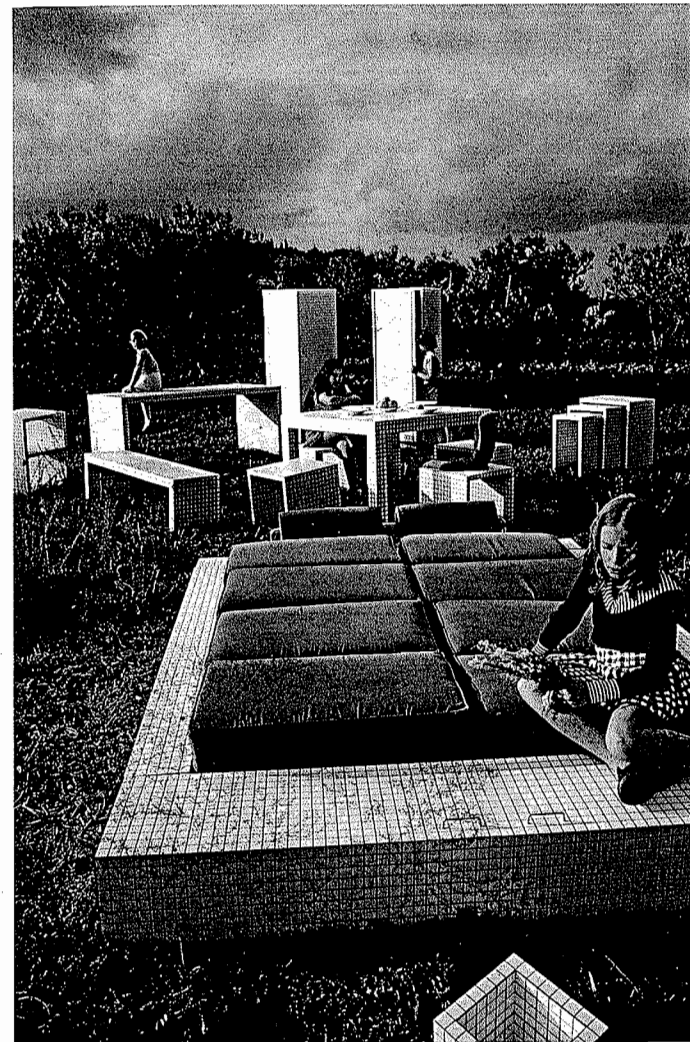
If we then add the fact that most people live in places more to be ignored than to live in, in places of transit, prisons, transitory exiles or cubic boxes with no memories, it becomes logical to think of magical objects, capable of creating personal and differentiated microcosms, objects with a poetic function, freedom-flags, of joy, of happy choices taking into account one's heart's desire... And at the same time to produce objects "according to reason", objects designed to remain as examples of present-day archaeology, objects which will last, hard and immobile, shining and simple, and at the same time complex and ambiguous, because built of the materials of memory.

We can imagine a form of design as being more cultured and precise, far from the continuous race, more conscious of human living: a form of



design which will also leave wide open spaces for reflection and silence, a design which will really furnish the instruments essential for physical and mental survival. Our aspiration to calm and serenity through greater balance is also our hope.

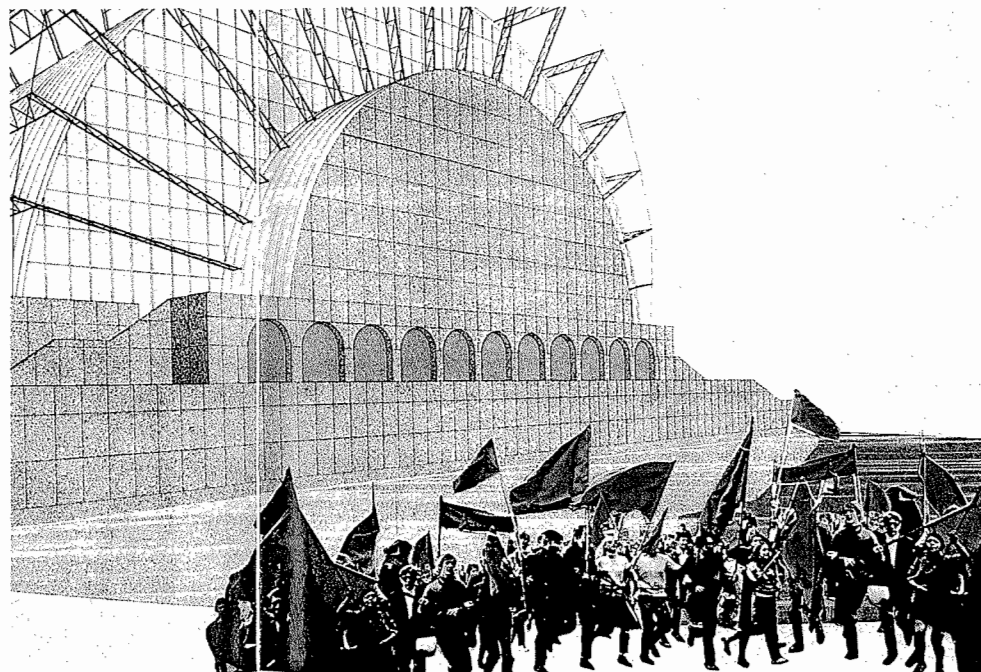
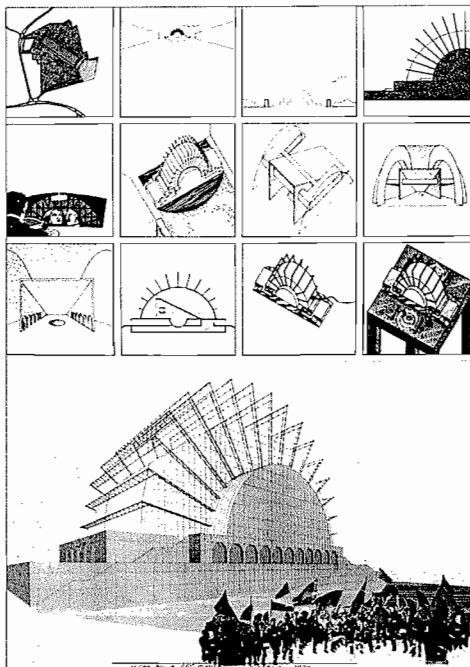
Published in Corriere della Sera, 13 June 1970




Superfictive: Objects, Monuments, Cities



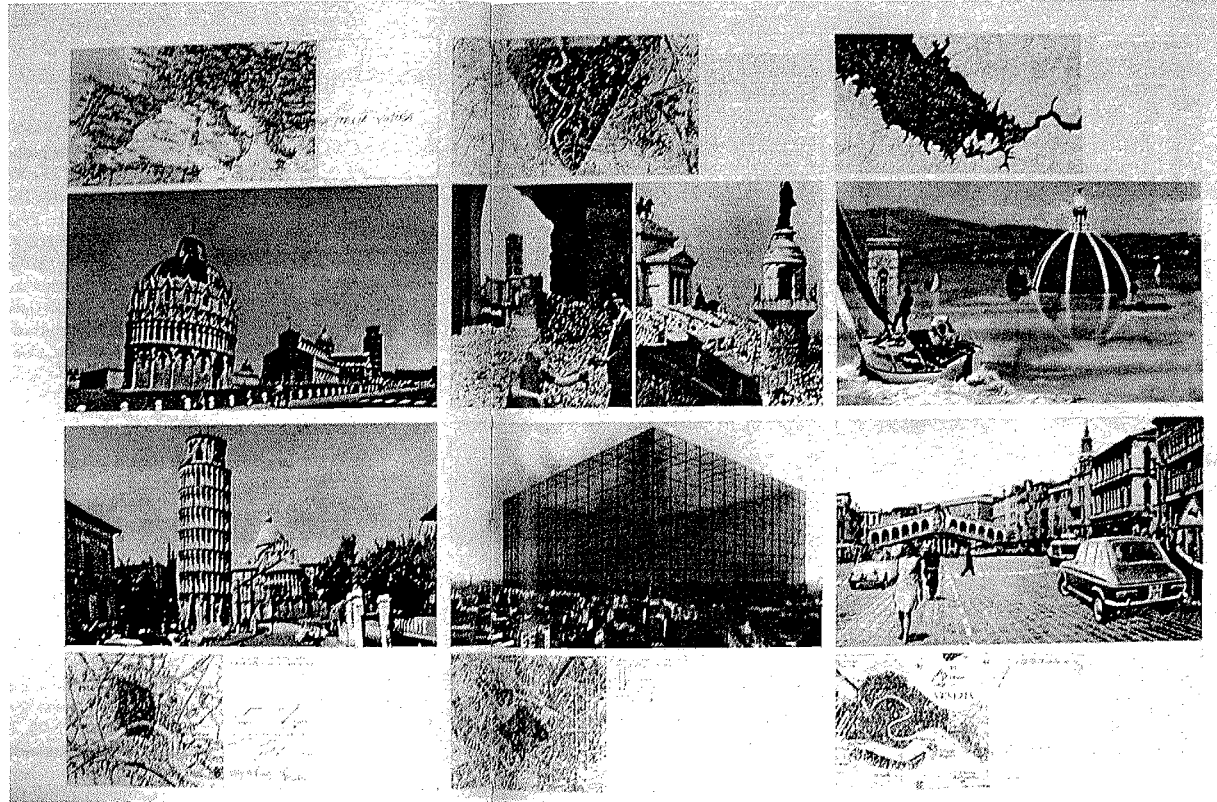
Superproject: Objects Monument, Cliza



DAL SUO LIBRO DEGLI ESERCIZI
SUPERSTUDIO HA ESTRATTO PER VOI
SALVATAGGI DI CENTRI STORICI ITALIANI
PROIEZIONI ALLA FORTUNA DELLE VOSTRE CITTÀ



Panorama
Napoli



Superprojects: Objects, Monuments, Cities

1972-73



Superexistence: Life and Death

The third chapter marks a bold turning point in the development of SUPERSTUDIO. The group was invited to New York in 1972 to participate in *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems in Italian Design* at the Museum of Modern Art exhibition curated by Emilio Ambasz. The work for the New York exhibition initiates a strong conceptual transformation in SUPERSTUDIO's work, as they take a decisive move towards the abandonment of architecture as a prop for human existence. Instead, SUPERSTUDIO chooses to engage in the great themes of human life, creating an architecture based on *Five Fundamental Acts: Life, Education, Ceremony, Love and Death*. The first of the *Fundamental Acts: Life, Supersurface* was projected at the MOMA exhibition, and featured a visual animation combined with an outdoor sequence with two actors. The second, *Ceremony*, shot with a cast composed mainly of the members of SUPERSTUDIO and their friends and family was created the following year. The three other films were never realized, though two were developed in alternative media: *Education*, and *Death*.

1. *Life* (storyboards, texts). Film, English version: *Supersurface*. 15', colour, 16 mm, 1972)

2. *Education* (storyboards, texts)

3. *Ceremony* (storyboards, texts). Film, English version: *Ceremony*. 15', colour, 16 mm, 1973)

4. *Love* (storyboards, texts)

5. *Death* (storyboards, texts, slide show, not restored)

The films were imagined first in storyboard format and later published as a series in the Italian architecture magazine *Casabella* from 1972-73. The *Five Fundamental Acts* represented a thesis on the metamorphosis of architecture into life, calling for architects to abandon their callings and express themselves by living architecture.

Fundamental Acts: Summary

From 21 March 1971 to 20 March 1973, we worked on a series of films entitled *Fundamental Acts*, centred on the relationships between architecture (as the conscious formalization of the planet) and the acts of human life.

The series consists of five short films:

LIFE
EDUCATION
CEREMONY
LOVE
DEATH

Each film is roughly 12 minutes long, in colour, with soundtrack, in 35 mm, if necessary convertible into videocassettes, super 8 or 16 mm, in order to facilitate distribution. Each film uses different techniques, such as grafilm, animation, shots from real life.

The films have been planned to be shown on normal or alternative circuits, on TV, exhibitions, schools, etc.

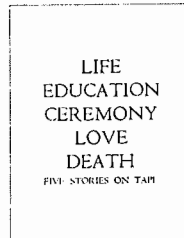
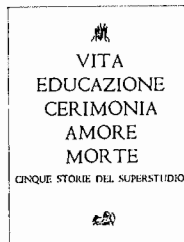
The language is purposely plain and "advertising-style": the films can be considered as propaganda for ideas outside the typical channels of the architectural discipline.

The films and the tapes are distributed in the USA by Environmental Communication.

Alessandro Poli is co-author, with SUPERSTUDIO, of the film LIFE and of the stories for the film DEATH.

All the translations and the typing of the originals reproduced in the publications are by Frances Brunton.

Editing and layout by Adolfo Natalini, SUPERSTUDIO.



Fundamental Acts: Introduction

Architecture never touches the great themes, the fundamental themes of our lives. Architecture remains at the edge of our life, and intervenes only at a certain point in the process, usually when behaviour has already been codified, furnishing answers to rigidly stated problems. Even if its answers are aberrant or evasive, the logic of their production and consumption avoids any real upheaval. Architecture presents no alternative proposal, since it uses those instruments, which are accurately predisposed to avoid any deviation. Thus, the working-class home resembles the stately villa in the same way that the work of a Radical architect resembles that of the academic or reactionary architect: the only difference lies in the quantities in play, the decisions on the quality of living have already been made.

In accepting his role, the architect becomes accomplice to the machinations of the system. Then, the avant-garde architect fills one of the most rigidly fixed roles (rather like the "young lover" in plays). At this point, the architect, recognizing in himself and his work connotations of cosmetics, environmental pollution and *consolatrix afflictorum*, comes to an abrupt halt on his well-paved path. It then becomes an act of coherence, or a last try at salvation, to concentrate on the re-definition of the primary acts, and to examine, in the first instance, the relationships between architecture and these acts.

This operation becomes therapy for the removal of all archimaniacs.

This tentative anthropological and philosophical refoundation of architecture becomes the centre of our reductive processes.

Graz, 6 July 1973



<p>1978 IN THE PRESENT STATE OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONSTRUCT A UNIVERSAL GRID OF ENERGY AND INFORMATION WHICH COULD BE APPLIED TO ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN LIFE.</p>	<p>1979 IN THE PRESENT STATE OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONSTRUCT A UNIVERSAL GRID OF ENERGY AND INFORMATION WHICH COULD BE APPLIED TO ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN LIFE.</p>	<p>1980 IN THE PRESENT STATE OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONSTRUCT A UNIVERSAL GRID OF ENERGY AND INFORMATION WHICH COULD BE APPLIED TO ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN LIFE.</p>	
<p>Architecture is no longer the mere translation of a pre-existing structure into the materialization of a need, but becomes a second poverty, but becomes a second poverty, but becomes a second poverty...</p>	<p>It is, but an unattained human reality. It is the last chance for architecture to act as a 'universal grid'...</p>	<p>(reductive processes). Earth, rendered homogeneous through its energy and information grid (see 'reductive processes').</p>	<p>More images as if from a film. Human beings, the brain, mental mechanisms. Only as an extension of body and mind as the only tool...</p>

<p>1981 The control of the environment through energy. From the need to achieve a city, from the need to achieve a city, from the need to achieve a city...</p>	<p>1982 Partial and total use of the grid. Functioning and defusing of networks. Interpersonal relationships. Continuous movement. Random form, wall. First hypothesis: mind and body as a single system. A series of images and references. The report on present reality.</p>	<p>1983 The partial use of energy. The partial use of walls. The exploration of mental mechanisms. The interior space to be found. The mechanisms of movement. The methods of adaptation for integration and harmony in the human personality (type, psychoanalysis, etc.).</p>	<p>1984 New symbols: cyborg, the possible developments in biology, in biochemistry, etc., modifications and mutations, the elimination of different physiological developments with the possibility of controlling and gradually increasing parts of area.</p>

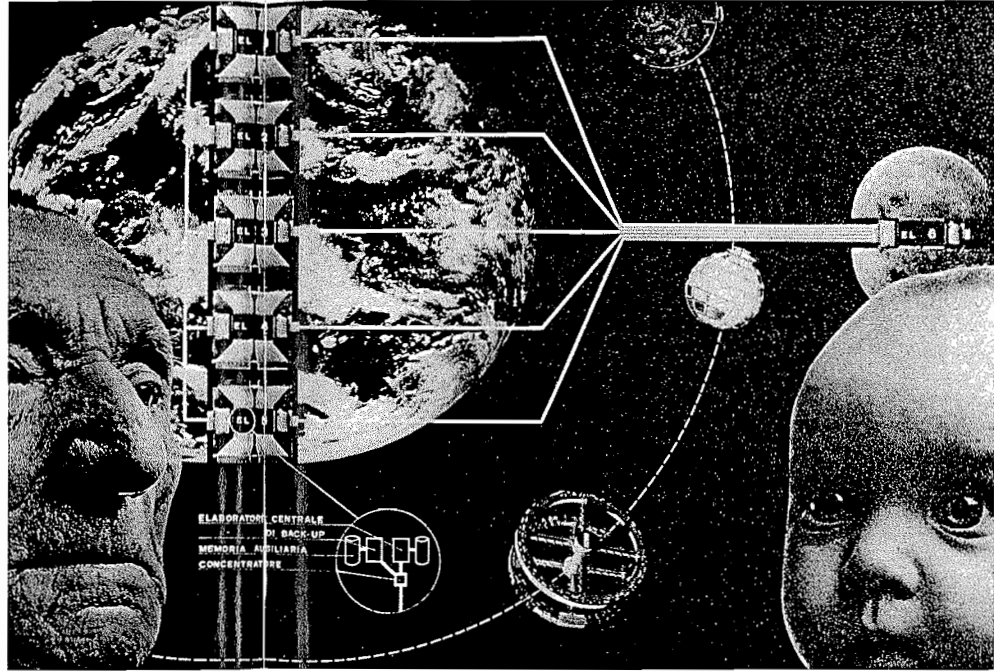
<p>1985 Second hypothesis: the control of the environment by energy. A series of images and references as a report on reality and on present tendencies. The earth is 'used' through service and communication grids. Cities are their crossing points. The grid is a continuous but not homogeneous system. In the empty space, the ground is more or less differently applied. The reasons for the points of all installations are historical, social and geographical.</p>	<p>1986 Nature is related to civilization according to the criteria of maximum functional application. The countryside becomes progressively more artificial and homogeneous.</p>	<p>1987 Other: the New York structure. A didactic example of the functional application of territory through a Cartesian grid. The Manhattan peninsula has vanished under the soil-tying action of induced values.</p>	<p>1988 Treating the environment as controlled principally by physical forces: dams, canals, large covered areas, microclimate. The hypothesis of the control of the environment by energy (artificial elements, thermo barriers, radiation, etc.). Towards the disappearance of the diaphragm membranes between interior-exteriors.</p>

<p>2000 Supersurface: a model of a mental attitude. This is not a three-dimensional modification of a reality which can be given properly inhabitable area. Like without work and a new postulated humanity are made possible by such a network.</p>	<p>2001 We can image a network of energy and information extending in every direction. This is not a three-dimensional modification of a reality which can be given properly inhabitable area. Like without work and a new postulated humanity are made possible by such a network.</p>	<p>2002 Let us take for example a valley (an optimal living zone) and imagine that we are undertaking a series of homogenizing operations similar to present cultivation.</p>	<p>2003 Let us imagine that we set up a grid for the linearization of energy and information to the entire area. This grid creates a situation of 'total field' in which any point is described by the intersection of two straight lines. The crossing point of the principal lines marks a 'critical point' at which we might imagine a 'universal plug'.</p>

<p>2004 The network of energy can assume different configurations. The first is a limit-situation: a linear development. The others include different physiological developments with the possibility of controlling and gradually increasing parts of area.</p>	<p>2005 The topology of the environment depends mainly on the percentage of area covered, analogous to the way in which we distinguish a street from a town and from a metropolis.</p>	<p>2006 Some types: 10% covered. The network is developed as a continuous ribbon extending over the territory.</p>	<p>2007 50% covered. The network is developed as a chess-board, with squares measuring 1 km x 1 km, alternating with squares of open land. 100% covered. The network is transformed into a continuous development, the natural courses of which are formed by mountains, coast lines.</p>

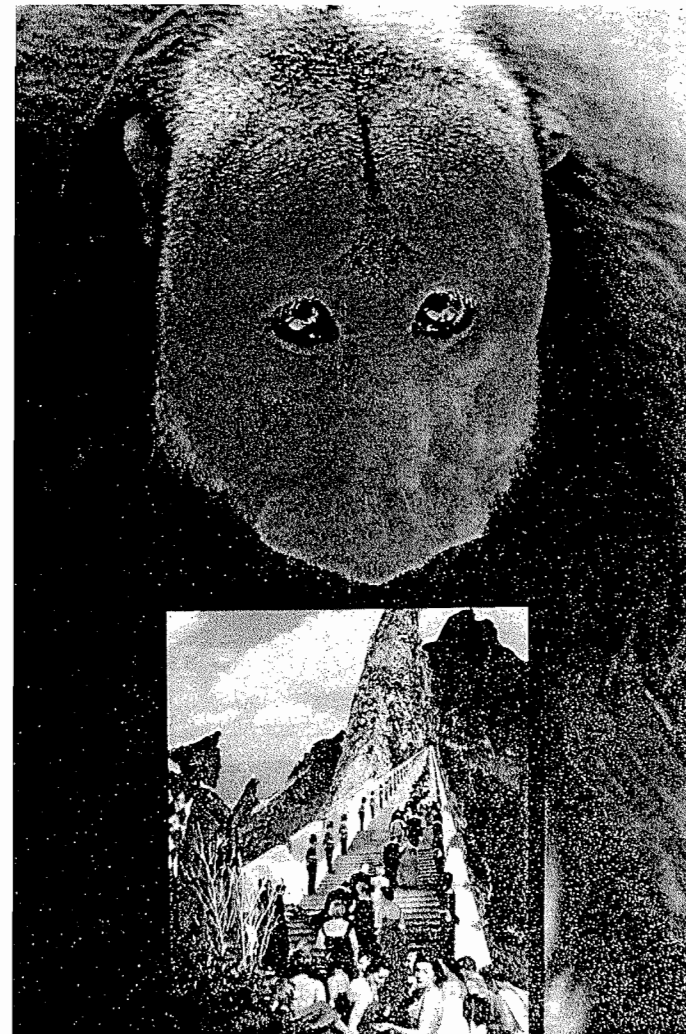
<p>2008 Various hypotheses for survival strategies: the total system of communication, software, central elements and personal elements.</p>	<p>2009 Hypothesis for network of energy (mainly, acclimatization without protective walls).</p>	<p>2010 Mathematical models of cyclic use of territory, abolition of the government. Subdividing and non-functioning of the network... defining in the model the network is represented by a Cartesian squared surface, which is all chosen to be undeveloped not only in the physical sense, but as a visual-mental metaphor for an ordered and rational distribution of resources.</p>	<p>2011 We may imagine an invisible grid with only a few points just visible in the grid, but immediately traceable, which constitute the universal plug. In the model, these plugs are visualized as a magic plug (black hole) to which various sophisticated and miniaturized devices can be attached. Through these devices the dream of electric appliances overpopulation can synthesize the elements necessary to his existence. A universal 'plug' for primary needs.</p>

Supersurface: Life and Death



Behold: People emerged from the earth, through the openings in the submerged work of architecture. They made us believe that they lived underground. Beneath the ground, they had an indescribably large house (only parts of the roof could be seen showing), full of bedrooms, bathrooms, toilets, beds, kitchens. Perhaps also of corridors, stairs, drawing rooms, libraries. There were many rooms under the earth, all very large and with all possible comforts, and with all the pieces of modern furniture on the market, also full of antique furniture, paintings, tapestries, carpets, ornaments, bibelots, household appliances, ceramics, lamps, ashtrays... The house had been built following all ancient and modern styles, forming a homogeneous and pleasant whole. Ancient and modern, originals and copies, unique pieces and mass-produced articles were in harmony like the lion and the lamb or the Golden Age. It really was a house for the new Golden Age. There were no angry words to be heard there, nor violent noises. The music was pleasant and continuous, hot but there were also long pauses of silence. In hidden courtyards of octagonal form, tiles in white and blue squares, fountains murmured over palm-trees grouped in groups of three. Iridescent cupolas allowed a light, as of dawn or sunset falling on these courtyards. But that day, the inhabitants had left the house never to return. The inhabitants of the house underground say: we do not need many objects, we do not even use difficult words. We are articulate through our faces and through the projection and direct manifestation of our love for those with whom we speak, for those with whom we are... our gestures are few and simple. In reality we are animals amazed at understanding what they

are doing. The inhabitants of the underground house say: we are not going to show you the house which lies in the shadow. We will only show you how we live or would live in the invisible house that we are doing before your eyes. This house will be the projection and the dissolution of the submerged house. It will take from the submerged house only a flat surface, perhaps, or the axes, the directions in which to grow. The new house will keep only a memory, or the centre point of the old. (If it is true that the ancient founders of the submerged house chose the site after having consulted the omens, then — and also because we have lived there a long time — the place is so sacred to us that we cannot abandon it...).



Love letter for Maddalena

The love which had unfolded within him mute ordinary morning and had changed him into a pattern book of daisies stripped of their petals, violin music and church-bells, moonlit nights and many other things he had found he possessed, was sitting with him in front of the typewriter to write his first love-letter to Maddalena. But the horror of the white sheet of paper in front of him hypnotized him as usual, and once again he felt lost and alone. Then he tried the old exercise of breaking the purity of the paper with a letter chosen at random. He wrote R and then O and finished the word off SE. Then he noticed something strange, because, looking at the paper, he found a large red rose with its stalk still caught in the roller. As a try-out, he wrote MARRIAGES and there they were on the shelf holding his accounts: the male immediately began to sing. The word MARRIAGE dazed him and gave him the courage to write LOVE.

The philosopher who was first to enter the room was dressed in white and had a love which had been born in his brain, but had not been able to find the way out. The love of the nun who followed was made of silence and tears bathing the feet of a wooden crucifix.

The love of the absent-minded scholar was hidden on the only unread page of the millions of books the old man had studied.

Then came two pallid fiancés who kissed only each other's eyes, they sat down on the sofa in the waiting room and after five minutes were groping in each other's clothes and had gained some warmth.

A mature couple passed, indifferently bearing their slow sweaty love; but behind came two old people dragging a cold, creaking affection.

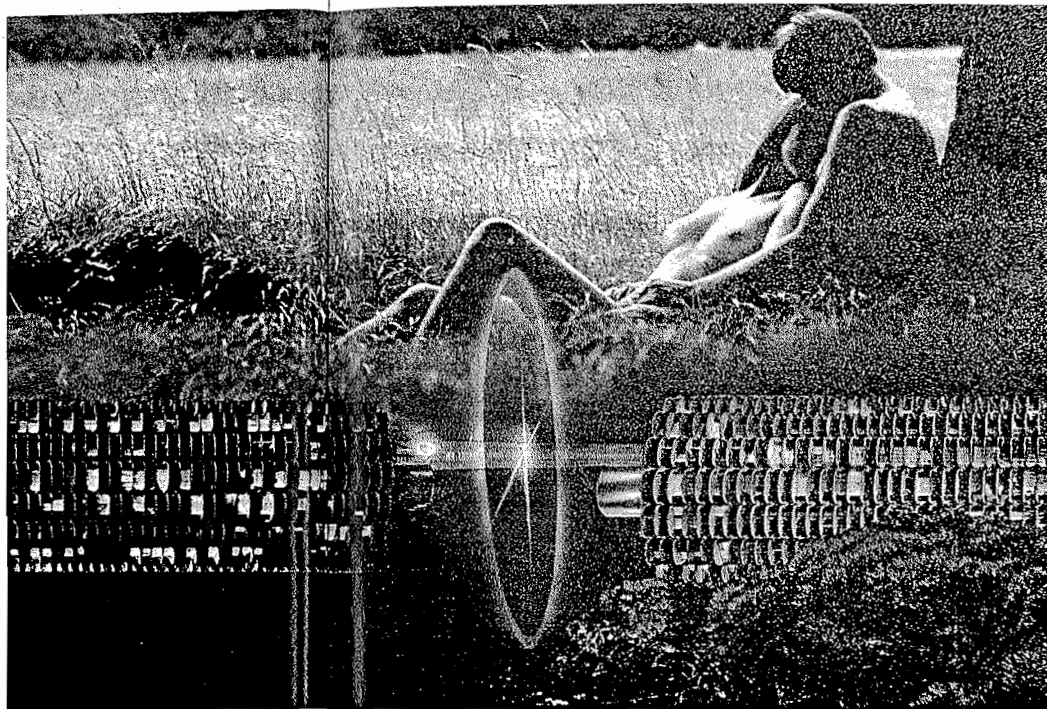
The door closed and the house was immediately invaded by:

194 - a man

- a woman
- an old man
- a panting boy, with frantic hands on his own sex
- two men
- two women embracing closely, with a lost look
- a person with an enigmatic expression, covered in excrement
- a man carrying a dead body and kissing it with trepidation on the mouth
- a very breathless woman masturbating a Great Dane
- a fat woman with a corset, suspender belt and pink hat who, worried, was clutching her adolescent son to her breast
- a very thin man with a rapt air, pressing a woman's shoe to his mouth
- a panting old man with a little girl in his arms, one hand groping under her light dress while she slept
- a man with a resigned expression hitting himself on the head with a stick carved with the head of a dog
- a person with a curious face who had watched everything and then sneaked off into a dark corner.

And emptiness and silence returned to the room, but immediately afterwards, a gentleman in old-fashioned clothing came into the circle of light cast by the lamp; he put the naked, unconscious, blood-stained woman he was carrying down in the armchair in front of the writing-desk, and sat on her.

The man writing to Maddalena saw a fat face, divided into squared blocks of stone by the wrinkles of age; the recollection of the old print was an efficacious introduction: "Marquis de Sade" "please me". In an unexpectedly sudden anguish he quickly wrote MARRIAGE on the keyboard and found lay on his lap, softly pressing on his sex. And he analyzed her: the large mouth... the small breasts... she was different and perfect, perfect, but she was not the same girl he had taken to the cinema yesterday evening, the



Supernature: Life and Death

same girl entering the office now, attacking him with words he had often heard, but which she had never yet pronounced. And, as she had entered, Maddalena left, tearing the other into a thousand pieces. But the Marquis was still there with his stone face, while the man who had to write to Maddalena made out a list of stolen goods (daisy petals, violin notes and bells, rays of moonlight and other junk). And when the Marquis made a sign with his finger, he followed him out of the deserted office into the autumn weather. And they met:

- a woman watering geraniums in pots
- an old woman giving tripe and carresses to stray cats

- mechanical nurses putting a wounded man on a stretcher
 - a prostitute bargaining with her head in the window of a car and her arse in the air
 - a little boy crying and hanging onto his mother, wanting an ice cream
 - two boys fighting about sport and many other things you all know about. And finally they saw the soldiers marching by with their heads in helmets to protect their brains against thoughts, and it was exciting because they had on all the uniforms of the world and at each gust of the wind, the flag changed nation. And naturally the grandstand was full of kings, generals and presidents: each full of love for himself and his followers; and the grandstand was obviously the same as the one at the Nuremberg trials or perhaps one belonging to some government, where it is always love for oneself and one's followers which continues to condemn oneself when it is another's. But it was only when the Marquis took a passer-by by his cardboard nose and pulled that the man who wanted to write to Maddalena realized how easy it is to look behind the mask of love that we all wear, which changes from Hitler to Ophelia, but it is the single model that can be bought at the supermarket. Thus, when he arrived at the end of the parade boulevard, before the mirrored door which gives onto the other universe, he politely took off his mask, together with his hat, before entering. He would have liked to write to us describing what he found there, but not one of the words in our vocabulary was suitable to describe that world; that... world (the adjectives are missing) in which love has been washed away from everything. And he apologizes for this.

The Realization of Self Through Architecture

196 To anyone starting out that morning in search of princesses to save, Holy

Grails to quest for new countries to be discovered, souls to save, lands to conquer, or lost paradises... to all those who, leaving the comfort of daily routine, were searching for themselves through the magical and heroic acts of creation, architecture appeared unexpectedly, after the first bend in the path. It loomed enormous and immobile, full of years of glory, of dream-of-perfection, of marble and chrome, of polarized glass, of corner stones, of dried mud. It consisted of innumerable geometric forms, as in an infinite polyhedron, out of which grew organic excrescences, tensile structures and pneumatic appendices. Innumerable libraries were contained within its body, and the golden mean and divine proportion were not sufficient to describe it. This was the great animal and the mirror which hunters had created and followed after for as long as memory could tell. It was said that whoever ate of it would become immortal. It was also said that only from the mystical union of the subject with his representation could the existence of the subject himself derive. There was therefore dramatic problem of self-realization, since the hunter had to create the beast in his image and likeness (the mirror) in order to recognize himself therein, and on the other hand, it was difficult to create an image of oneself without a mirror. Several other efforts had been made in the past, through mean statistics and the trial and error system. Naturally, all the creators of the creature had died, leaving erroneous descriptions of the creative process, as an ultimate mystification, in order to render the way more difficult for the other hunters...

An Environment for Love at First Sight

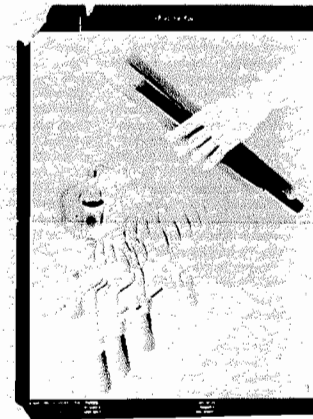
The inamoratrix machine lay immobile amongst the grass at the side of the



path. But at the moment when a boy and girl passed in front of it, an almost invisible ray reached the receiver hidden on the other side of the path. The boy and girl fell onto the grass, deeply in love. The same fate befell all those who, in various parts of the globe, found themselves passing under the influence of this machine in the various environments.

The Story of Meteorites

Interest and curiosity and taken in connection with the existence, close at



hand, of an immense crater-like depression, early gave rise to the theory that the crater itself was due to the impact of an enormous meteorite. This occurrence has often been described but is of sufficient interest to merit additional notice here. The region is that of an elevated, nearly level, sandy plain. The floor of which is composed in the main of buff-coloured ericaceous limestone which is capped here and there by residual patches of red sandstone and underlain by a highly siliceous, friable sand-stone. The crater-form depression is some 4,000 feet across and 600 feet deep, the original depth having been greatly lessened by debris blown in from the surrounding plain. The crater rim is composed of the upturned, crushed, broken, and bent beds of sand and limestone overlain by large blocks, sometimes thousands of tons in weight, of the same material thrown out from the crater itself. In addition are enormous quantities of finely pulverized siliceous sand which has plainly been derived from the sandstone by the shock of an explosion or the impact of some descending body. There are also, intermingled with this, occasional blocks of siliceous pumice which apparently owe their origin to the fusion of the same sand-stone. So convincing are these facts that extensive drilling and tunnelling have been undertaken in the hope of finding a buried monster meteorite.

Though the illustration given can leave no present doubt as to the ultra-terrestrial origin of meteorites, it is but natural that there should at first have been much skepticism both in the popular and scientific mind regarding the possible fall of stones from empty space. So great was this skepticism that, as stated by E. F. F. Chladni, Vienna, in his *Feuer Meteor* published in 1819, the examples preserved in the public museums were hidden or catalogued

under false denominations. Only recently, as it happens, on the occasion of the exhibition at the List Art Building (Providence R.I.) in April 1972, was a complete and plausible explanation furnished regarding the origins of the crater. The 'inamoratrix machine' made surreal dream of much architecture, transporting it from Italy to America; here, in Coconino County, Arizona, the scene of Crazy Kat's deeds, all the dreams of reason, all interrupted architecture, all the frustrations of an intellectual profession and the illusions of revolution through architecture were condensed into a spheroid of frightening density. This mass, after having been suspended in the air for some minutes, drew nearer to the earth at ever increasing speed. The earth then began to withdraw and with no need for violent impact, a crater was formed. On the bottom of the crater, certain geometric shapes were born, the last extremely heavy remains of ancient meteorites of dominion. Then it was as if a translucent surface was formed, under which the Euclidean solids disintegrated. The surface then began to rise, amidst changing landscapes, becoming ever lighter, until it generated only illusory behavioural models. A meteor-like crater in Arizona alone remained. This event happened between 4 and 6 April 1972. The preceding crater, identical to the present one, closed over in the night of 3-4 April, thus putting an end to skepticism and controversy.

Love 4

To those flying over the endless jungle, a grey surface with regular outlines suddenly appeared, hardly notched by the thick vegetation. On getting lower, a sort of platform, lower than the surrounding trees, could be seen. It was perhaps made of asphalt or some other fine-grained material, like a raised piazza. On landing, this surface was revealed to

be the roof of a large low building whose side-walls, buried in the greenery, were made of mirrors. It was thus found to be an enormous piece of modern architecture. This consisted of an endless parallelepiped of mirror-surfaced glass, resting upon the earth. Its structure could not be glimpsed from the outside. Only one opening gave entrance to the interior.

Once inside, a second parallelepiped could be seen, its sides at a uniform 20 m from the outside walls: this second structure was made entirely out of curtains hanging from above, and could be entered at virtually any point. On drawing back a curtain, a third parallelepiped appeared in the semi-darkness: this was made of regularly squared stones, beautifully joined. Some bore inscriptions, others had doors and windows sculptured on them in bas-relief, but all were solid. There were only two real doors and they were placed at the corners. Having entered this massive structure, a rough mound of dried mud and bamboo could be seen inside: a dark irregular opening just covered by a reed mat was at a certain distance from the point where we were standing. When the mat was moved aside, on the floor of beaten earth, in the almost total darkness, a man could be seen lying surrounded by a few implements: on our drawing nearer, he opened his eyes and said: "I am the chief builder, I am he who is called the architect. In the beginning, we cleared a space in the forest and built the steel building with mirrored walls, but our reflected image perturbed us and so we retired within it and built the yielding construction of curtains. But its walls were too elusive and there was nothing to lean on. So inside we built the stone building to the very best of our abilities. It exhausted our strength and left us awe-struck by its beauty. And so we endeavoured

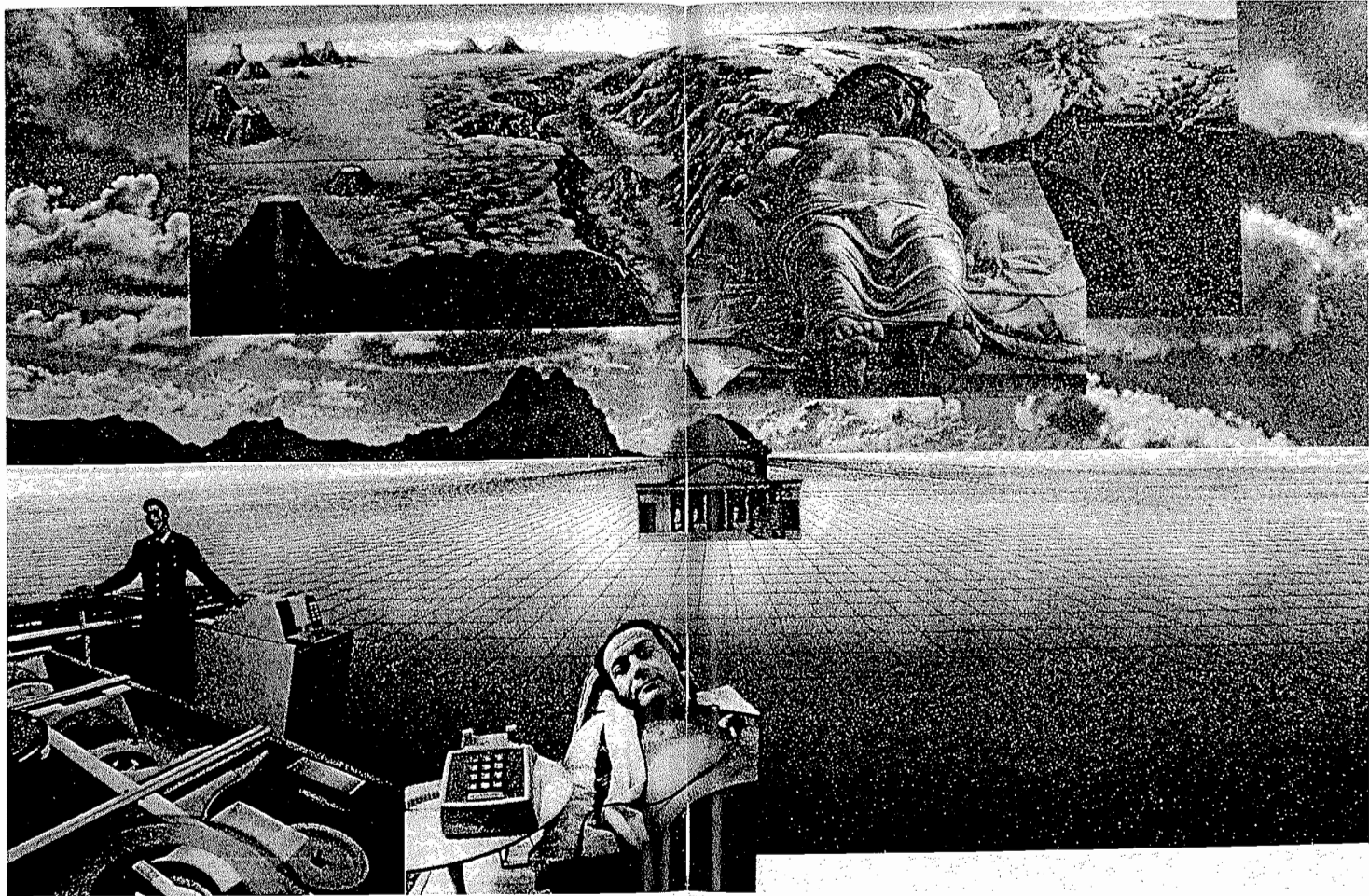


to find ourselves again through the use of our hands, and inside we built the cupb of humble mud and reeds in which we lived. A tunnel in the ground took us outside into the forest from which we received fruit, roots and small animals. We never once looked at this buildings we had erected. Then everybody went back to the forest.

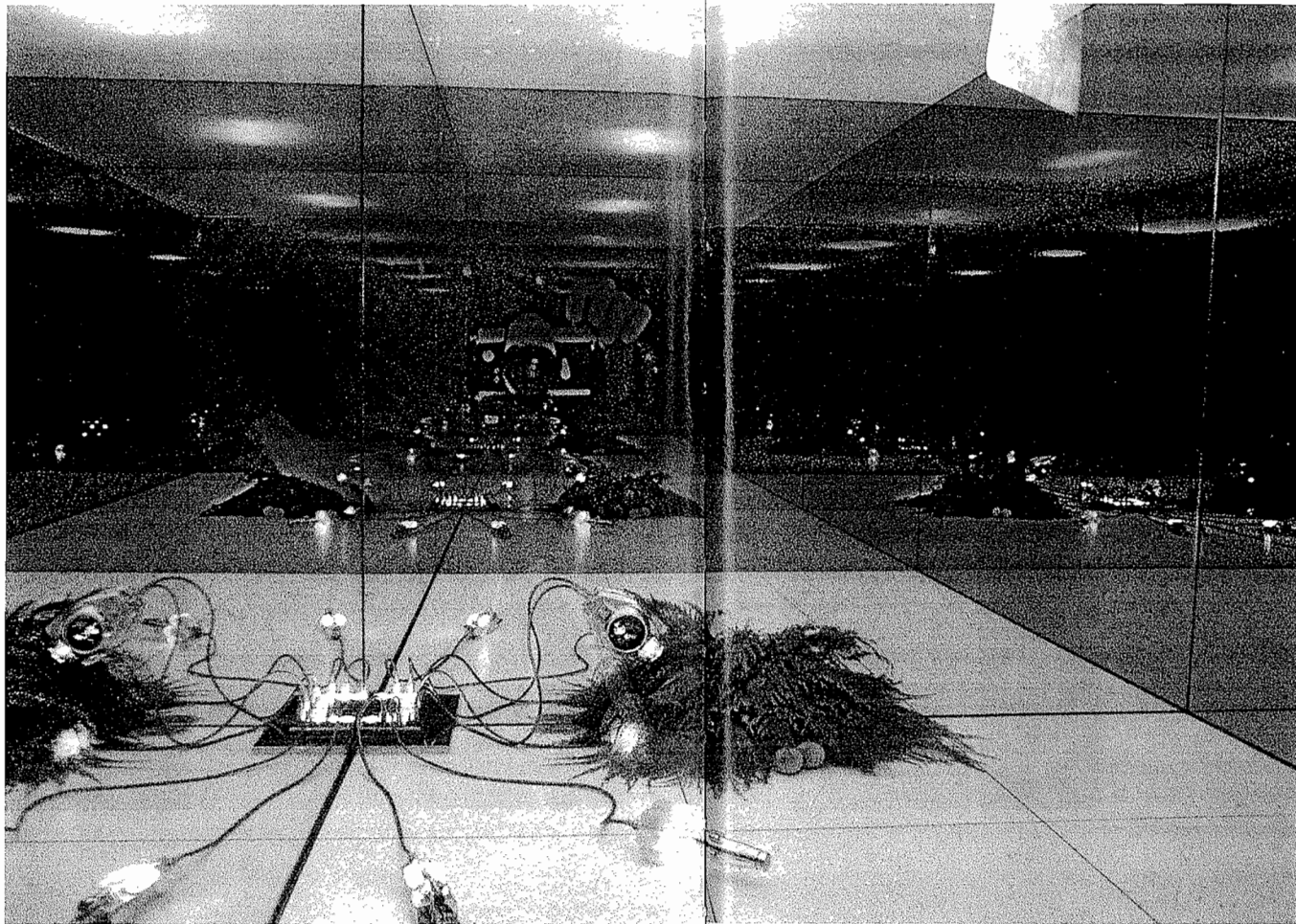
And now I lie here on the ground, at a point which I seem to remember is the centre of the concentric buildings, and I wait. But the builders fled into the forest a long time ago, and I have been waiting a long time, for the inhabitant that the building was destined for. I have forgotten him and his name, but he was a powerful man who appreciated beauty." Then we brought in the inamoratrix machine. We put the two units on each side of the man lying on the ground and connected them up to the generator. Immediately, the machine started up with no visible effect except for a slight luminescence and a narrow ray of light connecting the two parts. The man re-dreamed of all his architecture.

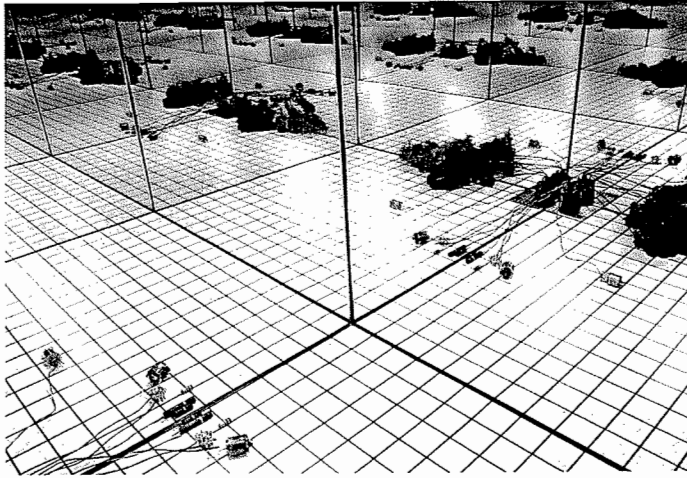
He re-dreamed of all the buildings he had built and all those he had lived in, those he had seen and those he had lovingly measured. He dreamt again of his love for stone, steel, crystal, of that catalogue for an oriental satrapy, certainly written through fear of death, but also written with a furious love for a life of reason, for a rich and varied life with all the shades, transparencies and glowing of marble and mirrors. Alabaster became moonstone, women of wax and stone abandoning their hair among the spiny hushes of the hills. The light within showed their bones, their brittle cartilage, old wounds: at the end of the mirrored corridors with their many secret doors, the night huntress hiding in the unexpected bend was calling: but once the 90 degree corner had been reached, she was no longer visible, unless it was in yet another reflection at the end of the next stretch of corridor. This was the reason why the man had stopped to inscribe the stones, to draw a precise diagram of the earth and the seasons, a diagram in which everybody's place was clearly

visible... He insisted on deeming a map for easy orientation, tracing a mandala with a piece of chalk on the asphalt, with a stick in the gravel, with a shell in the sand, with an iron tip on stone and coloured marbles. He then used mechanical knives for steel and crystal. Thus he caused fortuitous collisions between his world and that of others, and called these love: and these generated other movements of which he did not understand the laws but which surely were part of the great scheme whosa design was hidden to his eyes. The inamoratrix machine did not show him these designs: it simply transferred his potential for love from things to human beings. His desire to do, to create, to transform, to possess and to give was transferred from inorganic material to the innumerable beings he would have to meet. The machine continued working, showing him in a brief moment lovers, children, friends, the marvellous objects which serve to build a life.

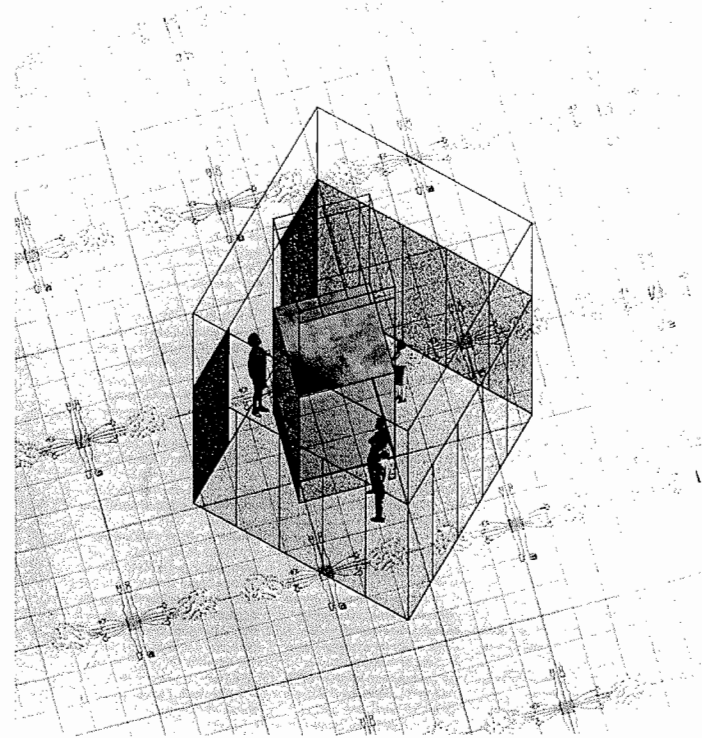


Superscience: Life and Death





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Superscience: Life and Death

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I would like now to analyze the passage from the private activity of the groups, to a broader field of work and communication, quoting from Franco Raggi: "In this article there has been a gradual clarification of the manifold approaches and solutions offered by counterdesign precisely in its attempt to deny any specific quality in this discipline and to broaden the field of experiments for itself and for others. Moments of collective awareness appear however, during the overcoming of the methodological difficulties of the project, for an activity, which involves operational and cognitive areas traditionally extraneous to architecture. Behaviour, conceptualism, the happening, minimal technology, the parabolic provocation — the handicrafts leading to the recovery of the cultural unity between theory and practice; these are all operations which tend to induce a moment of overall reflection on the individual's condition (in the present system of values) as an uncritical conservator of cultural and aesthetic choices made by others. But if its avant-garde groups, and we have seen it, completely reject the commitment of traditional planning, either by distorting it or actually replacing it with a political commitment leading to operational results outside the traditional field of aesthetic experiences and their relative cognitive synthesis, where can we find a common and progressive ground of confrontation which does not itself become academic in its abandonment and its new aesthetics, however negative, but like the experiments in the figurative arts is recycled into the system? The destruction of the object regarded as a Utopia liberating one from the conditioning subtly imposed by our consumer society could become merely a delightful metaphor if it is not accompanied by a process of self-education leading to the individual's deliverance, first psychological and then

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material, from the system of needs which a closed circuit culture induces in him, barring them for the individual's own autonomous choices. In the logic of the roles which the dominant culture subtly controls (the role of the intellectual as a negative-critical conscience and that of the artist who is assigned a stereotyped formal creativity), there is no place for integration, for a possible existence which at the individual level overrides the compartments dividing the disciplines and recovers the informal creativity killed by the reality of alienated work. It will be necessary to take the measure of oneself in perspective and not take advantage of one's role as part of the privileged elite, but rather relinquish one's 'patented claim', expose oneself to the test of the collectivity, and adopt a didactic communication for everyone. As a collective project in continuous transformation and continually subjected to verification, the school appears to be the instrument best suited for overcoming the impasse of that 'secret cultural society' carried along by the specialized reviews. The school, as an instance of expanded anti-paternalistic education is the project most in keeping with the general premises of the neo-avant-garde and is the ultimate in working papers. To sum up, then, the objectives of this initiative are: to make it possible to expand an experience while leaving it open to eventual developments, to make the results known in a kind of collective laboratory, to come out of the dark secrets of the studios to suggest, even in general terms, an alternative to traditional education but not a model." "Archizoom Associati, Remo Buti, Casabella, Picoardo Daliti, Ugo La Pietra, Passegna, Ettore Sottsass Jr, SUPERSTUDIO, UNO, and Ziggurat, assembled in the offices of Casabella on 12 January 1973 and founded Global Tools, a system of laboratories in

Florence dedicated to promoting the study and use of natural technical materials and their relative behavioural characteristics. The objective of Global Tools was to stimulate the free development of individual creativity. Courses were held for communicating the basic information required for the proper use of our laboratory instruments and equipment, information will also be provided regarding specific techniques taught in other centres connected in various ways with Global Tools. The teaching programme will deal with such subjects as the use of natural and artificial materials, the development of individual and group creative activities, the use and techniques of information and communication media, and techniques for survival. Global Tools is a school made up of a system of workshops for the study and use of natural techniques and materials and their relative behavioural characteristics. From a legal point of view Global Tools is a free association constituted by its founding members. The stimulus for the creation of a crafts school derived from the interest on the part of the founders of Global Tools in a correct solution of the long-term problems of environmental form; this may often be in conflict with their short-term sense. A fundamental concept is that of the non-intellectual man, with his age-old innate wisdom, and all the possibilities, which may derive from this, even to the point of reverting to a nomadic way of life, destruction of the city, etc. Hence the school proposes the stimulation of the creative faculties of each individual, up to now suffocated by specialisation and the craze for efficiency. The terminology, tasks, methods, and structure of the school are amazingly simple, as is all essential for those who wish to bridge the alienating gap which has been created between the functions of the hands and those of the mind."



Supervivence: Life and Death

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Piero Frassinelli, in collaboration with Adolfo Natalini.

A metal zinc structure, similar to a table (251 x 56 x 100 cm), supports five small salt architecture buildings on their respective zinc tubs.

A second metal structure (56 x 56 x 156 cm) slides on the principal structure holding an upside-down zinc pyramid containing water. The water runs slowly down a tube drop by drop onto the first architecture building and dissolves it.

Then the sliding metal structure moves over to the next, then one after the other.

The first building architecture is a pyramid. When the water has dissolved the salt, there appears a pyramidal structure of iron wires.

The second is an amphitheatre, and when it is dissolved, it reveals a residential settlement (in refractory).

The third is a cathedral, and when the salt is dissolved, exhibits an egg shell, perfect and empty.

The fourth is Versailles Palace, and when the salt is dissolved, exhibits the brioche of Marie Antoinette.

The fifth is the Le Corbusier's Pavilion of the *Esprit Nouveau*, and when the salt dissolves, it reveals a brass plate with the inscribed writing: "the only architecture will be our lives".

While the salt precipitates to the bottom of the basin, the brine water runs through the designated tubes into a well at the bottom of the principal structure.

Inside the basin one finds the explicative brass plate that notes the following:

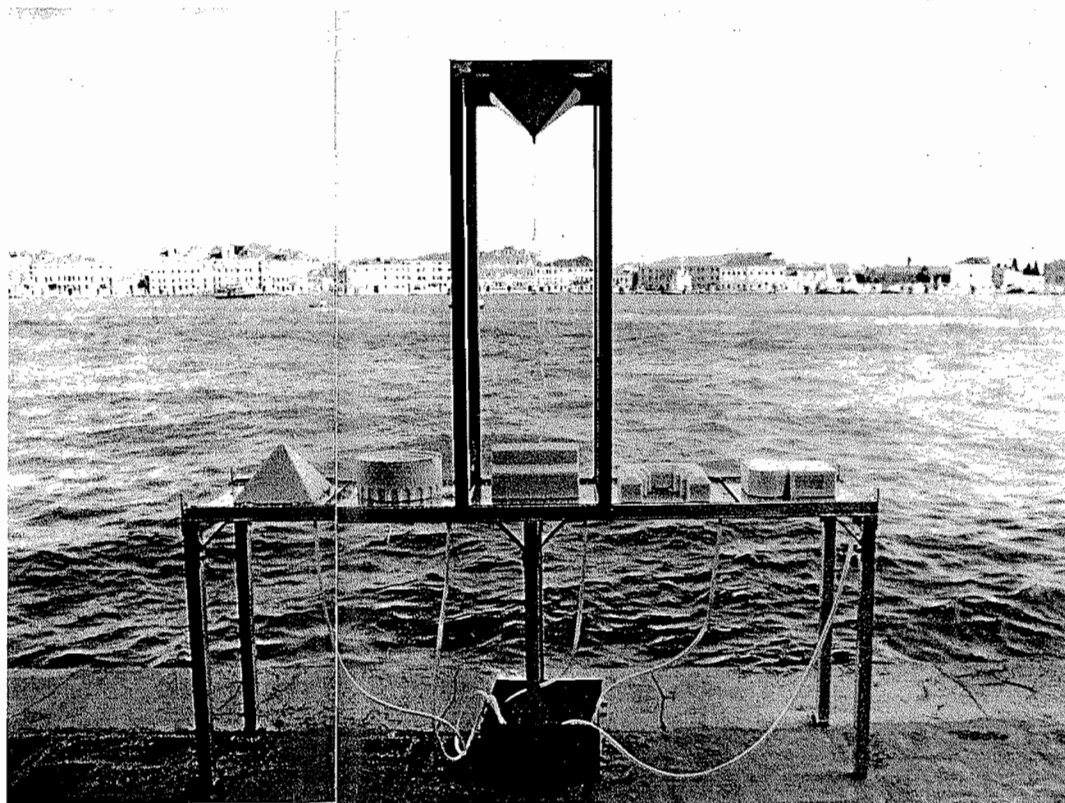
"SUPERSTUDIO, Florence / Venice, May-June 1978.

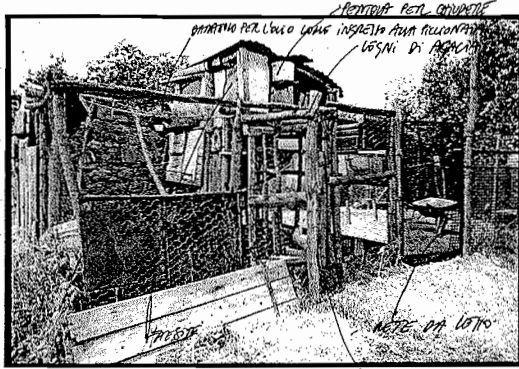
The Wife of Lot Architecture exists in time as salt exists in water"

The brine water slowly covers over the object, and the salt hides the plate making it barely legible.

214 The architecture buildings of salt.

dissolving themselves, reveal within their insides objects that represent that which time has transformed them into.





L'AMBIENTE PER IL PROGETTO "VIMANCANO" VANTAGE POLITE



Introduction

The history of this journey of mine along the line of architecture, in search of intersections is obviously useful only to myself. It is an unrepeatable experience, which cannot be transmitted or probably relived in the future even by myself. Squatting on the sand, now, at the dawning of the first day, I can conceive of this moment as the first intersection; the present moment is like an intersection continually moving between the line of time and that of my existence. In this age of Great Development, in which all-powerful man possesses the universe, the mysterious ancient ritual of the "Journey along the Line of Architecture" appears devoid of historical timing, devoid of significance and of usefulness. It could be a mere walk or it could change one's whole life, it could make one infinitely wise or utterly crazy. Yesterday evening, lying beneath the Bodouin tent, I was disorientated. My world was incredibly far away: the journey had been a riddle of the universe I had always lived in. The incomprehensible, inhuman efficiency of cities and airports, the impenetrable frozen withdrawal of people: the monstrous, abstract activity of machines; all that I am used to reassuring, friendly, passed before my eyes. When the car left me in the desert near the nomad encampment and went away disappearing, hidden by its own dust, silence fell on me with such force that I was physically overwhelmed. I was roused by contact with the man, wrapped in white cloth, showing only part of a dark face around the eyes and the hand grasping my arm. He guided me to a tent and sitting on the ground in front of me, spoke to me in a slow, persuasive, incomprehensible language. Then he got up and vanished outside the tent. I thought for a long time last night about how the first physical contact with a human being after years, since the end of my childhood, had not

frightened or disgusted me, as it should have. I turn around to look at it, and the tent moves softly to the rhythm of my breathing: I have been sheltered by a living thing, incredible for a person such as myself, used to the inert stillness of indifferent geometric cavities...

Suddenly I understand! The journey has already begun, the first intersection has been discovered: with the tent the line of architecture intersects man's primary needs and their solution through collective contributions and their perfection in time.

The Pyramid

I was walking in the sand... This terrain is uncomfortable, strange... This terrain is foreign to me. Proceeding in a straight line, I left the encampment behind me, with its friendly whispering from the tent. Silence enveloped me, incredible, tangible: the light down wind making an inaudible sound. Looking at the sand in front of my feet, I seemed to see a line traced there. "The Line!" Instinctively, thinking it a hallucination, I touched it with my foot, erasing a part of it. I felt guilty, as if I had committed sacrilege. The line, a light trace in the sand continued on in front of me. Following it meant excitement and fear together. The line ended in a small black mark. I knelt down. An insect pushes a small sphere made of sand, and it is with this that it traces the line. What can this mean? I remember the old words: "Architecture consists of all the modifications and alterations operated on the surface of the earth in view of human requirements, occupying only pure wasteland" (Morris)... Excepting only pure wasteland! I do not understand. I am confused. I get up and feel the sun high in the sky, on my shoulders, pushing me, pushing me onward with its arms of fire. Walking up the crest of a sand dune, I ask myself, bewildered, "What do the line, the insect, the sphere, mean? I get the impression that I have been faced with

another intersection and that I have missed its meaning. The sense of confidence each contribution by having discovered the first one has suddenly left me: but, lifting my eyes, I see the pyramid in front of me, I rush down the dune, tripping, falling. I get up: the pyramid is before me, with its facade pointing upwards to the infinite; high up in front of me I see the entrance, slowly I limb up the stones, I begin to mount towards the millennia. I find myself on the threshold, two steps more and the sun leaves me. I am writing by torchlight in the Pharaoh's chamber. I do not know how I got here, perhaps memories through my studies, the reliefs I had observed for long moments in fascination have guided me since the darkness of the corridor has swallowed even my consciousness. I know I am before a fundamental intersection, I must understand! In the bare room in front of the empty sarcophagus, entombed in the absolute deep silence, I feel the weight of the stones and of the centuries. I am sweating, as if with the sweat of the millions of men who had raised the stones for a man who had made himself god and who had used architecture as an instrument to prove his omnipotence to others and to himself.

The City

I had walked around the pyramid, uncertain what to do, searching for a sign, a direction, the continuation of the line. And at once, an incredibly regular network of lines traced in the desert showed me the city. Now I am sitting on a bench in the shadow of a wall. Such a glass has existed for fifty centuries, created then for resting, thinking, talking, things without importance only for men without importance. The city appears to me as the framework upon which, through the millennia the fabric of the culture of the insect has been woven. The warp of oppression and the weft of submission

are so interwoven as to form a single design in which it is difficult to distinguish each contribution. Is it really impossible to cut the threads of the warp without breaking those of the weft? If the individual intersections in the city appear as the meeting places of individual lives with private needs the overall view of the city with the pyramid still lowering over it, appears as the node of the dramatic clash between liberty and oppression. I leave the houses behind me; they are merely an illusion of refuge, useless and stupid, it is hopeless to search for the intersection of inhabiting with the line of architecture, this cannot exist where the violent intersection of the city with power is present. The most important intersection, the most desired, the most searched for, the most constantly missed through the course of the millennia of our civilization. I am leaving the city from the point where I entered, this being the only gate, as I cross the threshold this fact appears to me as a clear illuminating symbol.

The Measured Greek Temple

For the first time, I am leaving a place of intersection without being able to see my next destination. I have wandered further down the valley and have lost sight of the pole, driven into the ground at the top of the hill which had shown me the way. All around me, there is nothing but grass moving in the wind, nothing to show the hand of man: the journey cannot end thus. I continue. At the beginning, I can see the temple as something indistinct among the moving grasses; then after but a few steps it rises before me in all its perfection. It is the intact, polychrome Greek temple, amazingly different from the ruins that remind us of it today. I look at it in ecstasy, unmoving for I know not how long, the sun, moving, transforms it into an actor on a stage, in the spotlight. At last I decide to move. I walk towards the pronaos, I ascend

the stylobate. I go further into the peristyle. The door is closed. I follow the outside colonnade, I observe the details. I caress the painted plasterwork of the columns, I watch the light play on their fluting; then, looking towards the back I realize that the temple is unfinished: the column just in front of me is un-plastered, still further on the column drums are rough tufa without plasterwork. I can see the workmen's marks on the stone, the last columns are mere circles on the stones of the pavement. In the back of the temple is a great building site: stones and instruments are abandoned as if the workers had left only a short while ago. In the centre, a great slab of stone bears inscribed the plan of the temple; nearby, measured rules and huge compasses. Here is the architect. I look around, this is a solemn moment. Is this a solemn moment? I look around, for fifty metres all around me stretch beaten earth, stones, pebbles, shapeless masses, all around this grasses, flowers, indifferent nature. The architect dwells in this sun-burnt stoney waste! It reminds me of the skull-strewn haunts of the dragons in ancient paintings. I sit down on the stone facing the scratched plan, the project. In front of me, the unfinished cellar of the temple opens out. I can imagine the building being finished, advancing towards me. I can imagine the exaltation, the pride of its maker, the taste of the struggle against materials and time.

The House in the Woods

I have left the avenue with its sculpted box hedges behind me by now, my way has become a path in a forest which grows ever thicker. Seated on an exposed root, I observe the tormented shapes of the trees that rise over me. Slowly, I begin to notice flowers, mushrooms, small birds in the branches. I can hear the rustling of leaves, calls of animals, buzzing of

insects, small whisperings. I watch the green grow darker, as the light wanes progressively the fresh evening air calms me. I decide to stop here for the night. But, as in an ancient tale, a little while ago I had noticed a small light through the branches I have drawn nearer, and now find myself faced with the strangest house I have ever seen. It is not very big, but in compensation is made of the most diverse materials: stones, bricks, rough and carved wood, rough, white or smooth coloured plasterwork marble ceramics. The roofs, sharp and complex, are made of fillet, wood, slate, straw, above them rises a small tower in an indefinable style, with a pointed roof: it is almost completely smothered in ivy, wisteria and roses. The most varied decorations cover all surfaces, till all corners. Both new and time-damaged, they are made of the most varying materials: plaster or wrought iron, wood or stone, mosaic or plastic, terracotta or glass. I draw near to the windows, each of a different shape, each one protected by different curtains they give out a soft light, subdued sounds, the odour of old cooking, antique furniture, materials, flowers, wax. The memories of experiences I have not lived meet me with the evening shadows; time seems suspended in a heavy sweetness. Then, the last daylight reveals strange garlands on the sills of some of the windows; the mysterious lumps that form them are human hearts, some dried and wrinkled, others still beating, and the white objects among the pots of geraniums on the windowsills, are they not hands? They stand upright on their stumps, in various strange attitudes, some joined in prayer, others clasped in friendship, some in blessing, some in warning. Are there not eyes in the fly net on the plate? Yes, children's eyes, weeping, eyes drooping with sleep or death. I draw back much upset; who lives in the absurd, pathetic, pained, fierce house? The squeaking of

the door replies: an old man appears, white-haired, bent, dressed in an old-fashioned manner. He does not see or hear me: he goes into the chicken run and, making hen noises, feeds his chickens. He caresses the cat playing in the grass, sits on the bench near the door and plays slow music on his flute. I draw near, the flute is a tibia, a fragile human tibia. Fighting the enchantment of the music, the place, the hour. I manage to ask some of the thousand questions pressing within me. I am not aware of whether I am shouting, sobbing, whispering. The slow music continues: then the old man raises the flute towards me and says: "This is all that is left of my fiancée". A barrier of tears separates me from the old man, the house enfolded in darkness is now an indistinct form. I fall helplessly back into the grass with my eyes raised to the stars. What has this line that hurts me so much encountered this time? Should it not have been a game, a joke? The ridiculous, pitiful stupidity of the deformity of form? A silly game to play with a few laughs. An irreverent parody of noble aesthetics. Unarmed, bold, I had not supposed the line could cut me through the heart. And here I am now, lost once again, before a rejected, negated, derided type of architecture. Realizing that only this can compensate our small, impossible desires, substitute lost dreams, console the pain of every day. If plastic flowers have no perfume, on the other hand, they never die and this is no small thing, for those who live in a world of death. What is culture? Is it a wicked witch who wants to destroy all plastic dwarfs? Is it endeavouring with its art-critics claws, only to take the thumb out of a starving child's mouth? And, if a soft toy can give pleasure, calm anxiety, recall a memory, cannot the Cathedral of Rheims be of use to him who embraces it? To the Templars of Art, to the Paladins of Aesthetics, I would like to give some advice. "Go on a

pilgrimage to the Cathedral at Rheims but go with an empty stomach, with your legs bent with fatigue, with your intelligence crushed by the lies of Power. Then you too will be able to understand what a soft toy can mean."

Villa Savoye

Cultivated fields, stretches of parallel or perpendicular furrows on both sides of the road; all the greens of nature coordinated by man's hand, by the blind precision of his machines. On the left-hand side of the road, there is a huge field of artichoke plants; in the cloudy, blue-green expanse, as still and as calm as the sea, a white building floats. I recognize it from afar, it is Villa Savoye: I make my way towards it through the artichokes. I pass through a partially broken-down fence and find myself in front of it. I have been running. I gasp for breath. I find myself as nervous as a hoy faced in architecture. I look dismayed at the deserted place, the artichoke plants reach under the pilotis, almost invading the ground floor, some glass is broken, all glass is covered with a film of dust: the white of the walls is offended by spots of damp and mould. I walk up the ramp, desolation is everywhere; this is the saddest stage of obsolescence, the one in which the house, having lost the life its inhabitants gave it, has not yet acquired that of nature and time: the autonomous life of ruins, of decay. I am on the patio, which was once a place for the sun, for Cartesian reason, for proud faith in a better future for all; today it is a cemetery of dead leaves and fallen birds. I weep: I wept at length, like a child, sobbing and crying out of me all the disappointments and wounds of years, with no reserve, alone in this lost space, lost forever to me, to all of us who had believed so strongly, hoped so

much. Now all is ended. I can dry my eyes with the wind of another sunset and I go down the ramp without looking around me again. I leave behind me a whole world of ideas, once again finished, defeated. Re-crossing the artichoke field, I feel light, reborn, out of my grief. I can analyze with detachment the reason for this defeat. Was this the mistake of identifying man with an idea radiant but preconceived? It was a try at building an immobile house around a moving man. A man to be considered immobile, formed according to others' wills, willed and wished to be what he is, so as to form around him an idea that could proudly be considered definitive and that, instead, he continues to avoid with the same fierce obstinacy with which he tries to avoid the tomb. I can read this intersection the meeting of architecture and reason: only that reason, which was claimed as a reason for all, was but once again the reason of the few. Thus, hope and reason have ended up in an artichoke field, its plants, set up in rows close together and at the same like the houses in our suburbs, a poisonous fertilizer for mass-produced products destined as always for the market. The superior and illuminated logic of the "radiant villa" is set higher than the short-sighted logic of our artichoke growers, but shares the same field with them: on different planes, the same logic, that of capital.

The Machines

I go further into my city. But now I am a stranger. With reborn eyes, I look once again at the same things and I find them different. All these people who abhor contact — I would like to touch them: do they still have flesh under their clothes? They are strangers to me. I don't know them. The pavement carries me in a direction. I don't know where, and others with me; it suddenly turns into a metallic hall,

and I find myself in the presence of the machines. Shiny or dark gears, shining metal or plastic shapes, blinking lights, sounds, vibrations, rhythmical movements, heat, energy. All the machines are working, and there are men with them. An iron lung contains its man; the machine hums quietly and surely, the man is pale; immobility and silence. Is this good or evil? Does the machine possess the man or the man the machine? I search in the pale face for a desire for life or a hope of death: only this would be decisive but the face is silence. Sex machines with their men and women riding or being ridden. Perfect efficiency; organs in the millisecond, pre-programmed in intensity and progression, pure biological phenomena without social or sentimental complications. Watching the rapt, ecstatic faces, I wonder which machine produces love, affection, friendship. I notice that this is the only gift the machines produce without programming or energy: the machines are friends, lovers, mothers, perfect children. They give and ask nothing, they live and die at the touch of a finger. A man walks in a glass tunnel, a moving pavement carries him forward towards enchanting images and sweet music, joy, satisfaction, sex, food, power. Suddenly for no reason, the man turns round trying to flee, running back along the pavement, the sound and voices try to convince him, blandish him, exhort him, menace him; mechanical hands capture him, pull him in the right direction where all is now darkness and silence, the man is tied to a chair, a metallic voice reads his sentence, threadlike apertures brush against the man, who trembles, starts, falls back; the chair becomes alive. Enclosing the man's body within itself, the box vibrates, gives out heat and then opens again into a chair, new, clean, perfect. A notice states "To open the door use the stick". The stick is nearby, I lift it and with it open the

door and go out into the sunshine, into the park. The door closes. I lean on the stick, exhausted and then I remember I have it with me. It was the only one, I would like to put it back inside, but the door cannot be opened from outside. I reflect that in taking the stick I have shut thousand of people into the room of the machines. I brandish the stick, I value its power, its multiple uses. It is a perfect machine that, according to the man, can be a friend or an enemy. Much more than an extension to the arm, it is an extension to ideas. Exactly? Nothing less than the other thousands of machines. For the first time, I have realized, explored, an intersection, which I thought would be sure, fundamental, and I have realized that it did not exist, it was an illusion. The intersection between architecture and the machine has been revealed as an intersection between architecture and man's will, but this is a single line; there is no intersection. The line continues, I must find the final intersection.

Epilogue-Utopia

I am in the park. I walk, leaning on my stick emptied of all energy; my ideas have fallen one by one like autumn leaves, dried, without life. In the meadow, a small tent reminds me surprisingly of the one belonging to the nomads, from under which I started as a child; he looks at me. "What are you doing?" I ask. "I'm thinking" he says. "I've seen a tent just like this, a long way from here" I say, just to start the conversation. "That's impossible", he answers severely. "I invented this one." "What do you do?" he asks me in his turn. "Nothing", I reply. "I'm an architect. I've invented a city", he says seriously. "What's it like?" I ask. "It's a city where everyone is equal and everyone loves everyone else, where everyone understands everyone else, and that's why they love each other

and are equal." That's not a city, that's a social Utopia", I say, shaking my head. "A city is made out of streets, houses, large buildings, hospitals, stations, prisons, churches, town hall, parks, and lots of other things. What are all these like in your city?" They're like things made by people who love other people", he says, sure of himself. "For instance, they have no doors. And anyhow, what is a Utopia?" "It's a thing it would be lovely to have but it's impossible to make", I say uncertainly. "Then mine isn't a Utopia, because it can be made", he says with confidence. "It's not possible that everybody understand everybody else, only some people can", I add. "So you don't believe everyone is equal?" he asks, opening his eyes wide. "I do believe it", I say. "But they're only born equal; then life, environment, the other people around them, modify each person in a different way, and in the end only some people have still got the capacity to understand others, most people are blinded forever." "So", he answers, "the ones who understand must teach the children and the others who can still understand so that they can in turn teach others to understand, and they will teach others, and soon, until everybody understands everybody else and my city is born." "But it's not possible", I mutter defeated. "It'll take too long." "It's possible, it'll take a long time", he says confidently. He gets up and takes me by the hand. "Let's start now", he says, and goes off into the meadow. We meet a little boy building things on the ground. He says to him: "Would you like us to help you build a city?" "Shall we make it round or square?" asks the little boy. "First, let's invent the people", says the child, and I add "After that, the shape is easy, it happens on its own." Piero Frassinetti, in JA, December 1976

In 1973 *supersuobo* began concentrating its activity in the school, abandoning the pages of magazines and the glow of the footlights. From then on we have held courses on *The Motivation of Architecture*, *The Galaxy of Objects*, *Objects of Simple Use* and *Extra-Urban Material Culture*.

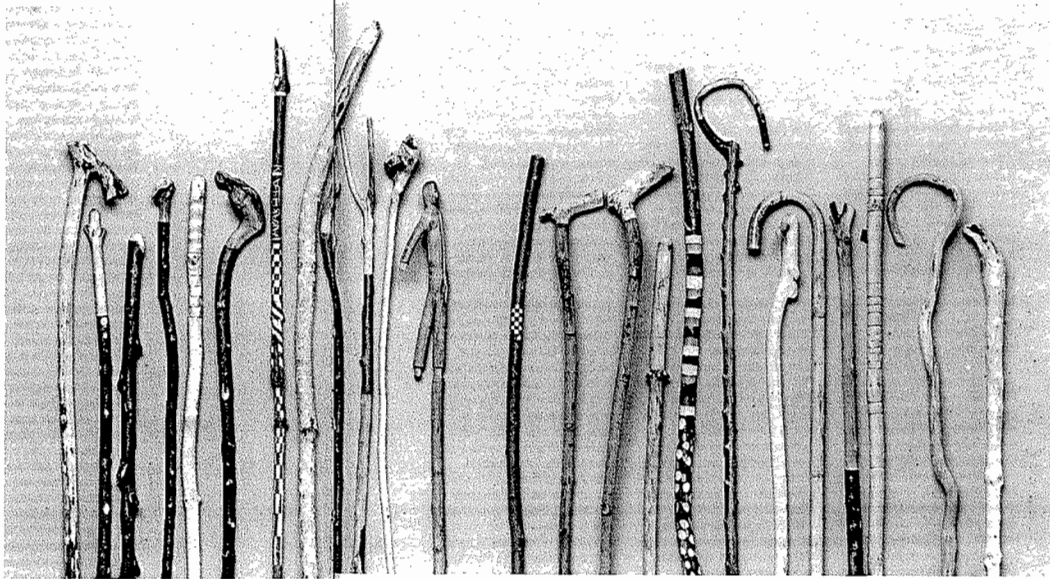
In the university there had remained very little to destroy and so the programme of the neo-avant-garde, "The technical destruction of culture", sounded out of place. The hegemonic culture had already been liquidated; foreign students, misplaced students, worker students, followers of 1968, freaks, and "metropolitan Indians" had other things on their minds. The process of transformation of the university, its transition into a university of the masses through proletarianization, its growth into a place for struggle and refinement of strategy (political survival) render it one of the key positions — with the factory, the countryside, the city, being other examples.

When the projects and pictures, writings and objects produced by Radical architecture first appeared, Radical architecture did not exist. Now that this label exists historically, Radical architecture itself no longer exists. In other words, it was not a question of just one more movement or school with well defined homogeneous characteristics, but of a series of situations, intentions and behavioural patterns whose modes of existence concerned not only architecture and design, but also art, communications, behaviour, animation, criticism, philosophy and politics.

The techniques employed in liberating architecture involved its rejection as a discipline, its isolation, and the destruction of its specific character, as a codified language. From time to time the modes of action have been irony, provocation, paradox, false syllogisms,

terrorism, mysticism, humanism, reduction and pathos. In terms of cultural strategy these kinds of behaviour can be articulated in a deliberately discontinuous way, in line with what critic Filiberto Menna, alluding to the game of chess, has called "moving the knight". But now methods of analysis and of action have modified cultural anthropology, the investigation of man and his mental and material productions, conscious attempts to modify our surroundings and ourselves, are all parts of a process of permanent education that involves us completely. The visible traces of this work are very few, because it is not transmitted through images, drawings and projects but through one's engagement in daily routine and slowly but surely it shapes up as the coincidence (identity) between history and project, work and school, one's personal and physical life.

With its critical, destructive and liberating commitment, Radical architecture has laid the groundwork for this coincidence. Above and beyond the mountain of paper it has left behind it, we would say that its real value lies in this. Rushing in to fill the vacuum left by Radical architecture are certain backwash movements claiming an autonomous role for an architectural project as an abstract exploration of logical-formal values and, in the process, properly supported are backed up, are fast becoming the arbiters of the new architectonic culture. The elaboration of a logical-rational theory of architecture in which values of universality are attributed to planning operations from the buildings to the town, represents another of many attempts at restoration with respect to the process of re-appropriating creative roles initiated by the lower classes and given a theoretic basis by the avant-garde.



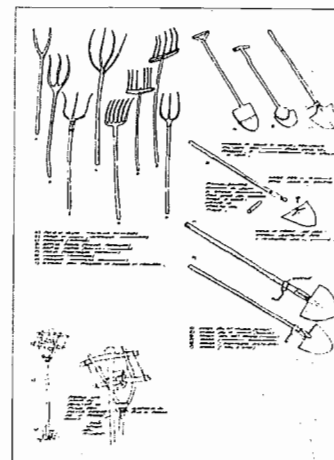
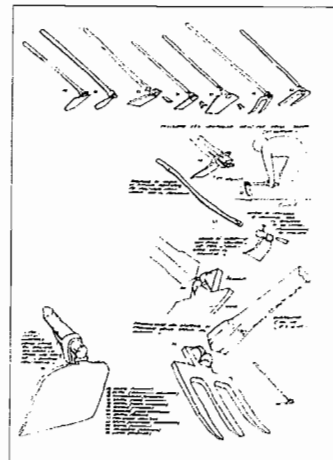
The quest for a popular culture has always been extraneous to processes tending to liberate the common people; it is now a matter of appraising again the autonomy of this culture and of destroying the idea of a single, dominant, middle-class culture. In this sense, research on extra-urban material culture also takes up a position against all attempts at restoring the old order, whether architectonic or not. The activities of

SUPERSTUOIO, with all its connotations of operational and critical analysis, began to shift into the field of education from 1966 to 1972. Since 1973, they have become specifically didactic owing to their involvement in the School of Architecture in Florence. This university work consists in the analysis of planning (that is, of its motivations, its operational modes and its social and environmental relations) and in the investigation of alternative modes and practices. Simple utensils, self-managed processes of transformation (as agriculture and the crafts) and extra-urban material cultures are utilized as fields of investigation. Extra-urban material cultures are studied and subjected to experiments like some enormous encyclopaedia (which is neither Diderot's nor The Whole Earth Catalogue). For two years SUPERSTUOIO studied utensils and their connection with work and with the transformation of the environment: they are now busy with household objects and their relationship with men's lives. For the next two years they have in programme a study of energy and time (the support and the focus of life). Anthropological techniques are employed in analysis and interpretation. Direct experimentation (doing like thinking, manual work, use and behaviour are employed in re-appropriating themselves and their environment. In the process of learning a discipline it would seem to be generally correct to begin by analyzing its most significant productions: accordingly, in studying architectonic planning the procedure is to examine the works of known architects, monuments, etc. But on closer analysis this method reveals its shortcomings, for it is bound to a practice, which lies wholly within the discipline itself. In fact, with this method one excludes all operations with meanings springing from a reality

which is basically direct experience, the use of the body, of nature and of all those materials whose only raison d'être is that of being useful in one's life. On examination by means of this discipline, reality proves to be fragmentary and, beyond tautologous propositions, basically unknowable. Of itself architecture claims only that it is architecture. ... To understand the mechanisms, limits and motivations of these transformations, one has to examine reality as a whole, starting with the levels nearest to us, and, therefore, much more "comprehensible". In the analysis of subservient and underprivileged cultures one discovers the mechanisms governing survival which, beyond the developmental models of the system, preside over its transformations. It is in this huge repository of knowledge that they trace back not only the roots of their science but also the possibility of a quite different science. Keeping in mind this reality, they can correctly analyze the direct relationship between man and nature, and between man and his ability to create practical values in sum, between man and the objects which he uses to satisfy his needs, by putting back into use the notions, intelligence, and creative powers that the division-of-labour system made useless in the production of goods. Research within the university is conceived of as an "a-disciplinary" activity (or rather as an attempt to supersede and abolish disciplines), which, by comparing and superimposing two different cultures, aims to analyze the contradictions and the limits of planning. This work is not propaedeutic to planning, or at least it does not prepare one for planning, as it is currently understood; instead it foreshadows a much different activity in which project, construction, use and recycling coincide. The analysis of planning is no longer a

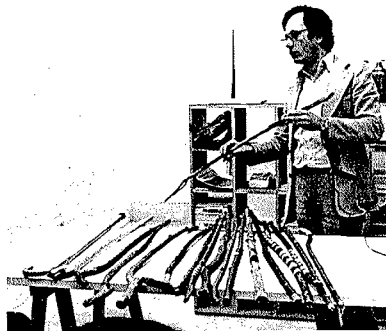


matter of marshalling data-arid methodologies, but involves behaviour and direct experimentation through manual participation and use. The utilization of the spoken language, of free description of the specialized instruments employed in the examination, and the reconstruction and recreation of objects are all ways of re-appropriating planning seen as a natural physical activity. Sample zones are pinpointed for the purposes of research. Such zones meet certain basic conditions: they involve territorial complexes with homogeneous physical, historical and cultural conditions, largely or exclusively engaged in agricultural activities. Local settlements consist of a few odd buildings such as farmsteads, farmhouses, small



building complexes and villages. The zones in question are already in a phase of transformation, owing to emigration towards the cities and the gradual change of these areas from agricultural zones to tourist centres. The ones being examined, however, have already been subjected to the process of urban acculturation. It is just this phase of transformation that they are interested in investigating, not as part of an analysis of evolutionary changes (since the idea of evolution should always be rejected in favour of the much more correct notion of diversity), but because it represents the place where two different cultures meet and clash. It is in these zones that one witnesses the annihilation of a culture and its more or less painful replacement by another: one often comes across abandoned farmhouses whose owners seem to have suddenly disappeared.

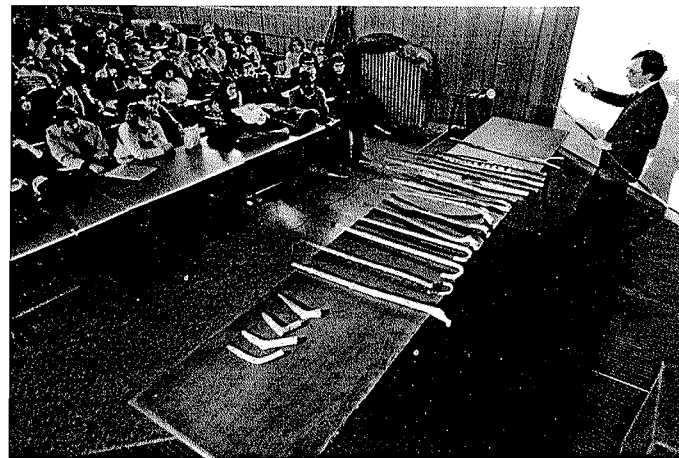
... Were not things they had fashioned with their own hand, and that belonged to them. Once the sample zone has been singled out, the investigation considers the history and the morphology of the zone, the cultures and techniques of transformation of the territory, its architectonic structures and its objects and tools, in the hope of reconstructing a picture of the life of these inhabitants seen in relation to the environment made possible by its objects. Objects and tools represent a particular field of investigation for three reasons: the first being the total lack of research in this field (there is no such thing as a history of objects, except for a few historical monographs on the minor arts), and the second being that they lend themselves much better to being used as keys in the interpretation of complex relationships. In other words, these objects can be studied like the tools examined by the paleontologist in an attempt to reconstruct the



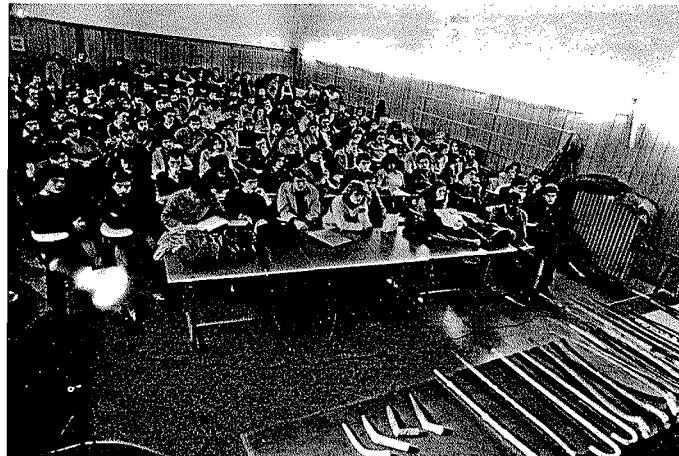
meaning and history of entire periods. The third and last reason for such investigation is that these objects are the direct witnesses of the creative drive, use and manual dexterity that they would like to recover to replace specialist planning: a creative drive that represents a total and independent relationship with man, society and the environment. In particular, it is through such objects that they can perceive an identity between man and his environment, between the various moments in the tempo of our lives (not split into leisure time and working time), and fastly between reality and meaning. One starts with a survey of the area (by means of morphological charts and tables) and then accumulates critical lists. The objects, that is, are articulated into meaningful systems, by comparing them and putting them in relation to the creative processes which generated them, to their use, to the modifications and changes to which they have been subjected, and

to the activities that they make possible.

Hand in hand with research on peasant culture there have appeared similar research using analogous methods on sheep-raising, fishing, several handicrafts, and on instances of underprivileged life in towns.



Supernaple: Elementary Architecture



Adolfo Natalini was born in Pistoia in 1941 and graduated in Architecture in 1966. He founded *superstudio* together with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia in 1966. Natalini was engaged primarily in theoretical and architectural research within the *superstudio* group. From 1973 he is Professor of Architecture at the University of Florence. He was also a Visiting Professor at the Rhode Island School of Architecture and a lecturer at the Architecture Association in London. From 1979 Natalini commenced his personal practice, working on historic cities in Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. He founded Natalini Architects with Fabrizio Natalini in 1991 and the firm has gone on to win several major awards, including the competition for Waagstraat in Groningen; he is a honorary member of the BDA (Bund Deutscher Architekten) and member of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze and the Accademia di San Luca. Among his publications: *Adolfo Natalini: Figures in Stone* (Milan: Electa, 1984), *Adolfo Natalini: Architetture raccontate* (Milan: Electa, 1989), *Natalini Architetto: Nuove architetture raccontate* (Milan: Electa, 1996), *Adolfo Natalini. Disegni, 1966-2001* (Milan: Federico Motta, 2002). A personal retrospective on his career as an artist and architect was most recently held in the winter of 2002-3 in Lucca. He lives with his wife Frances Brunton and has a daughter, Arabella, and a nephew, Aino.

Cristiano Toraldo di Francia was born in 1941 and graduated in architecture in 1967. He founded *superstudio* together with Adolfo Natalini in December of 1966. Besides his design and theoretical contributions to *superstudio*, Toraldo di Francia was concerned with the transmission of the group's philosophy through photography and film. From 1973 he taught seminars at the University of Florence on *Extra-Urban Material Culture*, and participated in many congresses, publications and exhibitions. He has taught in numerous

universities, including Rhode Island School of Design, Syracuse University, Kent State University, Virginia Polytechnic, University of Houston and California State. He is currently running a personal architectural practice in Filottrano and Florence and teaches at the University of Ascoli Piceno. Toraldo di Francia has two children with his former wife Frances Lansing, Yates and Tommaso; and a daughter, Giulia, with his second wife Lorena Luccioni.

Roberto Magris was born in Florence in 1935 and graduated in architecture in 1968. Magris joined *superstudio* in 1967 specializing in industrial design. He holds numerous patents and has developed mechanical designs, including trains, automobiles and electrical appliances. Magris was responsible for industrial design, restoration, interiors, and directed the professional practice of the *superstudio* office. His main interest is in the revival of the creative crafts, traced to experiences in architecture and design, attempting to integrate them as complementary and alternative methods in industrial production. Magris is married to Diana and has two children, Lanciotto and Selvaggio.

Alessandro Poli, born in Fiesole in 1941, was a member of *superstudio* between 1970 and 1972. In 1973 Poli initiated together with Toraldo di Francia a research project on *Extra-Urban Material Culture*, concerning Italian peasant society and its survival mechanisms that came to an abrupt end in the 1950s; he has written and exhibited on the subject. Currently Poli has an architecture practice in Florence and specializes in renovation and restoration, and exhibition designs for galleries and museums in Italy and abroad. He is also pursuing a personal research into artistic jewellery. He is married to Mariella Sgaravatti, a landscape architect, and has two sons, Sebastiano and Pietro.

Alessandro Magris was born in Florence in 1941 and graduated in Architecture in 1970, and from 1970 is a member of *superstudio*. Magris was responsible for the general organization of the *superstudio* office. He currently has his own private practice and specializes in the restoration of historical monuments and residential renovations. Magris is married to Alexandra and has three children, Manfredi, Divia and Antonello.

Gian Piero Frassinelli was born in 1935 at Porto San Giorgio (Ascoli Piceno), he was active in the 1960s student movements and took his degree in architecture, in 1968, with a design for a Centre for Studies in Anthropology. Working with the *superstudio* since 1968, he became interested in analyzing architecture from the point of view and using the methodology of cultural anthropology and sociology. Both in the *superstudio* and in his subsequent freelance professional career, his many designs and few executed architectures drew their inspiration from his political and cultural bias, quite remote from the prevailing trends in contemporary architecture. He has a son, Benedict, and a grand-daughter, Elena, he has lived with Silvana for years.

Principal Exhibitions

1966 *Superarchitettura II*, Pistoia.

1967 *Superarchitettura II*, Gallerie Comunale, Modena.

1969 *Per un antiquariato definitivo*, Biennale dell'Antiquariato, Florence.

1970 *Superstudio 68 Architektur und Freiheit*, Graz.

1970 *Superstudio*, Department of Architecture, RISD, Providence, R.I.

1971 *The Continuous Monument*, Galleria Milano, Milan.

VII Biennale de Paris, Rappresentativa Italiana, Paris.

Le 12 città ideali. Architettura Interplanetaria, Galleria Mana, Rome.

Notizie sulla presenza italiana, Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, Rome.

1972 *Superstudio antologia*, Galleria Schema, Florence.

Superstudio antologia, Galleria Lia Rumma, Naples.

Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Architecture 1962-72 (with Abraham, St Florian, Webb), List Art Building, Providence, R.I.

1973 *Utopie*, Technische Hogeschool, Eindhoven.

Superstudio: Fragmente aus einem Personlichen Museum, Neue Galerie, Graz.

Sottsass & Superstudio: Mindscapes, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minn.

The Image 73, Tokyo Central Museum of Arts, Tokyo; XV Triennale, Milan.

Superstudio: Fragmente aus einem Personlichen Museum, Galerie nach St Stephan, Wien Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck.

1974 *Sottsass & Superstudio: Mindscapes*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y.; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell, Ithaca, N.Y.

Long Beach Art Museum, Long Beach, Cal. Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska. *Design Als Postulat - am Beispiel Italien*, IOD, Berlin.

1975 *Superstudio* ex. Lausanne.

Architectural studies and projects, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Rapporti tra avanguardia e cultura popolare, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna. *Superstudio*, Art Net, London.

Terra I, Wroclaw.

1976 *Superstudio*, City Art Exhibition, Vienna.

1977 *Superstudio*, Personale d'Architettura, MARCH, Rome.

Assenza/Presenza, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna.

1978 *Superstudio*, Personale d'Architetti, MARCH, Rome.

Seven new design powers, Design Gallery, Tokyo.

Utopia e crisi dell'antinitatura, Venice Biennale.

Sesta biennale internazionale della Grafica, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence.

1979 *28/78 Architettura - 50 anni di architettura italiana*, Milan.

Romerberg Bebauung - Superstudio, Frankfurter Kunstverein Steinernes Haus, Frankfurt am Main.

Fuori dalle città: le altre culture, Centro Internazionale di Breva, Milan.

Principal Publications

1969 *Abitare*, no. 73.

Domus, no. 473 (Hidden Architecture).

Casa Vogue, no. 2.

Domus, no. 476 (Invention Design and Evasion Design).

Trigon 69, catalogue (The Continuous Monument).

Domus, no. 479 (Journey into the Realm of Reason).

Casa Vogue, no. 3.

Controspazio, no. 6.

Domus, no. 481 (The Continuous Monument).

1970 *Domus*, no. 482.

Abitare, no. 82.

Neocapoli, no. 6/7.

Japan Interior Design, no. 138 (special issue: "Superstudio / Design").

Japan Interior Design, no. 140 (special section: "The Continuous Monument").

Design Quarterly, no. 78-79 (special issue: "Conceptual Architecture").

Architectural Design, no. 4 (The Continuous Monument).

1971 *Casa Vogue*, no. 6 (Reflected Architecture).

Japan Interior Design, no. 144 (special section: "The Single Design").

Domus, no. 497 (Histograms).

Assenza/Presenza, no. 6 (The Super-studio).

In, no. 3 (special issue: "The distraction of the objects", edited by Archizoom and Superstudio).

Toshi Jutaku, no. 7109 (The 12 Ideal Cities: Destruction, Metamorphosis and Reconstruction of Objects).

Japan Interior Design (special issue).

Bijutsu Techo, no. 10 (Interplanetary Architecture).

VII Biennale de Paris, exhibition catalogue.

Casabella, no. 358 (The Continuous Monument, storyboard for the movie).

Vita Morte e Miracoli dell'Architettura, exhibition catalogue (S. Space).

Architectural Design, no. 12 (Ideal Cities).

1972 *Casabella*, no. 361 (The 12 Ideal Cities).

Jim Burns, *Arthropods* (Praeger/Phaidon).

Casabella, no. 363 (Reflected Architecture).

Casabella, no. 364 (Interplanetary Architecture).

In, no. 5 (special issue: "The elimination of the city" and "Rescue of Historic Centres", edited by Superstudio).

Japan Interior Design, no. 155 (The Misura series).

Awazu and Takashina, eds. *The Expanding World of Design*, Kodansha.

E. Ambasz, ed. *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*, exhibition catalogue (New York: MOMA).

Rassegna, no. 21 (Italy: The New Domestic Landscape).
Casabella, no. 366.
Casabella, no. 367 (from "Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death": LIFE).
It, no. 6 (Elimination and re-appropriation of the city).
Casabella, no. 368-69 (from "Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death": EDUCATION II).
Architectural Design, no. 8 (Italy: The New Domestic Landscape).
It, no. 7 (Utopia Antiutopia Topia).
Perspecta, no. 13-14 (Technomorphous Architecture).
Domus, no. 517 (Misura).
Casabella, no. 372 (from "Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death": EDUCATION II).
Ditagano, no. 27.
Rassegna, no. 24-25 (Misura).
It, no. 8.
1973
Cree, no. 19.
Casabella, no. 374 (from "Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death": ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ).
Casabella, no. 376 (Misura).
Casabella, no. 377 (from "Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death": LOVE).
Casabella, no. 380 (from "Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death": DEATH).
Superstudio - Frammenti Aus Einem Personlichen Museum / Frammenti da un Museo Personale / Fragments From a Personal Museum, exhibition catalogue (Graz: Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum).
Gala International, no. 2 ("Superstudio: Frammenti da un museo personale").
Design Quarterly, no. 89 (special issue "Sottasas & Superstudio: Mindscapes").
Design's Pastoral - am Beispiel Italien, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: IOZ).
M. Scelari, "Architettura Razionale", in the catalogue of the XV Milan Triennale.
Architecture in Greece, no. 6/73 (Twelve Ideal Cities, published in Greek).
Casabella, no. 382 ("Radical Story" by F. Raggl).
Cree, no. 25-26 (Douze contes premonitoires...).

1974
P. Navone and B. Orlandini, *Architettura Radicale* (Milan: Documenti di Casabella).
Rassegna, no. 36.
Domus, no. 540.
Cinquemattini, no. 47.
Parametro, no. 27 (Proposed theatre for Cagnini).
Global Tools, Bulletin no. 1 (Ed. l'Uomo e l'Arte).
1975
A. Izuzaki, *Monograph on contemporary architecture* (Tokyo: Bijutsu).
Avanguardia e cultura popolare, exhibition catalogue (Bologna: Galleria d'Arte Moderna).
Architectural Design, no. 10 (Restoration Studies).
Casa Vogue, May.
Casa Vogue, December (Surfaces Nature).
The Japan Architect, no. 12 (House for a Superstar).
Global Tools, Bulletin no. 2 (Ed. l'Uomo e l'Arte).
1976
Domus, no. 555 (Design for Naples train).
Casabella, no. 411 (House for a Superstar).
Supersommer (Vienna: Superstudio - Erinerung für Wien).
The Japan Architect, no. 237 (House at the Intersection).
1977
Domus, no. 569.
Bauen Wohnen, no. 6.
L'esperienza (Cultura materiale extraurbana), exhibition catalogue (Prato: Vinci).
Spazio Arte, no. 10-11 ("Com'era bella l'architettura radicale dieci anni dopo").
Casa Vogue, no. 79 ("Presenza/Assenza in Relattario").
B. Ditandini and G. Vallino, *Dalla città al cucchiaino* (Studio Form).
Architectural Projects 1976-1977 (California State University and Florence: Colleges I.P.).
1978
Superstudio, exhibition catalogue, Rome, March (Florence: Conio Di).
Moda, no. 7 ("Viaggio con la matita tra gli artefatti del mondo contadino").

Progetti per l'area direzionale di Firenze, exhibition catalogue (Florence: Centro Di).
Domus, no. 617 (C. Toraldo di Francia, "Lo spazio di vendimia").
I libri guida di Casa Vogue, no. 31 ("Nove ville d'autore").
Parametro, no. 99 ("Adolfo Natalini / Superstudio, Römerberg Projekt").
Lotus, no. 31 ("Adolfo Natalini / Superstudio, Saalgarasse Nr. 4").
Inventionen - Piranesi und Architekturphantasien in der Gegenwart, exhibition catalogue (Hanover).
1982
Lotus, no. 32 ("Adolfo Natalini / Superstudio, Römerberg Projekt").
F. Bandini, ed., *Arredo urbano / Firenze texts* by G.K. Koenig and C. Toraldo di Francia (Florence: Alinea Editrice).
Metaphors and allegories - Superstudio, exhibition catalogue (Jerusalem, Israel Museum).
G. Pettena, ed., *Superstudio 1966-1982. Storia, figure, architettura*, exhibition catalogue, Florence, Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, June (Florence: Electa).
Lotus International, no. 35 (Adolfo Natalini / Superstudio with David Palterer, "l'accesso al Muvo del Pianto. Progettare all'interno della griglia archeologica", pp. 25-28).
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