

MAY 2023
ISSN 2974-8216

ADH JOURNAL ISSUE N. 01
HERITAGE CITIES AS A PROJECT

ISSN 2974-8216



A

D

H

ADH
JOURNAL OF
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
AND HISTORY

HERITAGE CITIES AS
A PROJECT *ISSUE N.1*

ADH JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND HISTORY
The Journal of Architectural Design and History is a biannual magazine, undergoing a double-blind peer review process, realized within the framework of the UNESCO Chair in Architectural Preservation and Planning in World Heritage Cities at the Mantova Campus of Politecnico di Milano.



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863



POLO TERRITORIALE DI
MANTOVA

DEPUTY EDITOR

Federico Bucci

EDITORIAL BOARD

Elisa Boeri, Elena Fioretto, Claudia Tinazzi

EDITORIAL STAFF

Francesco Bacci, Samanta Bartocci, Alessandro Benetti, Alberto Bologna, Stefania Campioli, Annalucia D'Erchia, Luca Cardani, Federica Causarano, Francesca Giudetti, Luciana Macaluso, Fabio Marino, Martina Meulli, Lorenzo Mingardi, Beatrice Moretti, Michela Pilotti, Elena Pozzi, Rosa Sessa

PHOTO BY

Gabriele Basilico, Luca Campigotto, Luca Capuano, Roberto Conte, Annalucia D'Erchia, Daniele Molajoli, Silvia Sgariglia, Franco Raggi

ARCHIVE

American Academy in Rome, Archivio Basilico, Archivio Gae Aulenti, Edoardo Tresoldi

SCIENTIFIC-EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Ángela García de Paredes Jean-Philippe Garric Ana Tostões
Elisa Valero Ramos Bianca Gioia Marino Andrea Sciascia
Filippo Lambertucci Chris Whitehead Anthony Vidler

The editorial staff is available for any acknowledgements of photographic and archival credits that could not be identified.

GRAPHIC LAYOUT

Parco Studio

WEBSITE

adh.journal.mantova.polimi.it

HEADQUARTERS

Politecnico di Milano, Polo Territoriale di Mantova

ISSUE N.1,

Heritage Cities as a Project May 2023

PERIODICITY

Biannual Magazine

ISSN

2974-8216

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

Publi Paolini Via R. Zandonai, 9,
46100 Mantova

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL | FEDERICO BUCCI (POLITECNICO DI MILANO)

P.6 **WRITING *ON* ARCHITECTURE**

ESSAYS

ESSAY BY IMAGES | EDITED BY ANNALUCIA D'ERCHIA (UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI BARI), BEATRICE MORETTI (UNIVERSITÀ DI GENOVA) AND CLAUDIA TINAZZI (POLITECNICO DI MILANO)

P.8 **AROUND THE MEANING OF THE PROJECT *DIPTYCHS* AS ASSONANCES, DIVERGENCES AND OVERLAPS**

ESSAY FROM THE ARCHIVE | EDITED BY ELISA BOERI (POLITECNICO DI MILANO) AND FRANCESCA GIUDETTI (POLITECNICO DI MILANO)

P.20 **GAE AULENTI: *THE FUNCTION OF HISTORY***

ESSAY | DANIELA BUSTAMANTE (UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE)

P.26 **THE PRESENT OF A NEW PAST *UPDATING THE GENEALOGY OF ANDEAN COLONIAL CITIES***

ESSAY | ÖNCÜ BAŞOĞLAN AVŞAR (MUĞLA SITKI KOÇMAN UNIVERSITY), İLKE TEKİN (MUĞLA SITKI KOÇMAN UNIVERSITY), BORA YASIN ÖZKUŞ (MUĞLA SITKI KOÇMAN UNIVERSITY)

P.36 **THE AMBIGUOUS PERIOD IN VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE OF A LIVING HERITAGE: *CITY OF MUĞLA IN TURKEY***

ESSAY | SHEN JIALIANG (INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR)

P.57 **FICTIONALIZING CITY: *WANG SHU'S ARCHITECTURE THEORY***

LECTURE



P.81 **EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA *ARCHITECTURE UPON HISTORY***

EDITED BY ELENA FIORETTO (POLITECNICO DI MILANO) AND FABIO MARINO (POLITECNICO DI MILANO)

REVIEWS BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

P.88 **Roma Interrotta. Time stood still in Nolli's plan of 1748**

EXHIBITION

P.92 **From Las Vegas to Rome, fifty years later: photographs by Iwan Baan**

EXHIBITION

P.96 **Santiago de Compostela: How history and future went together**

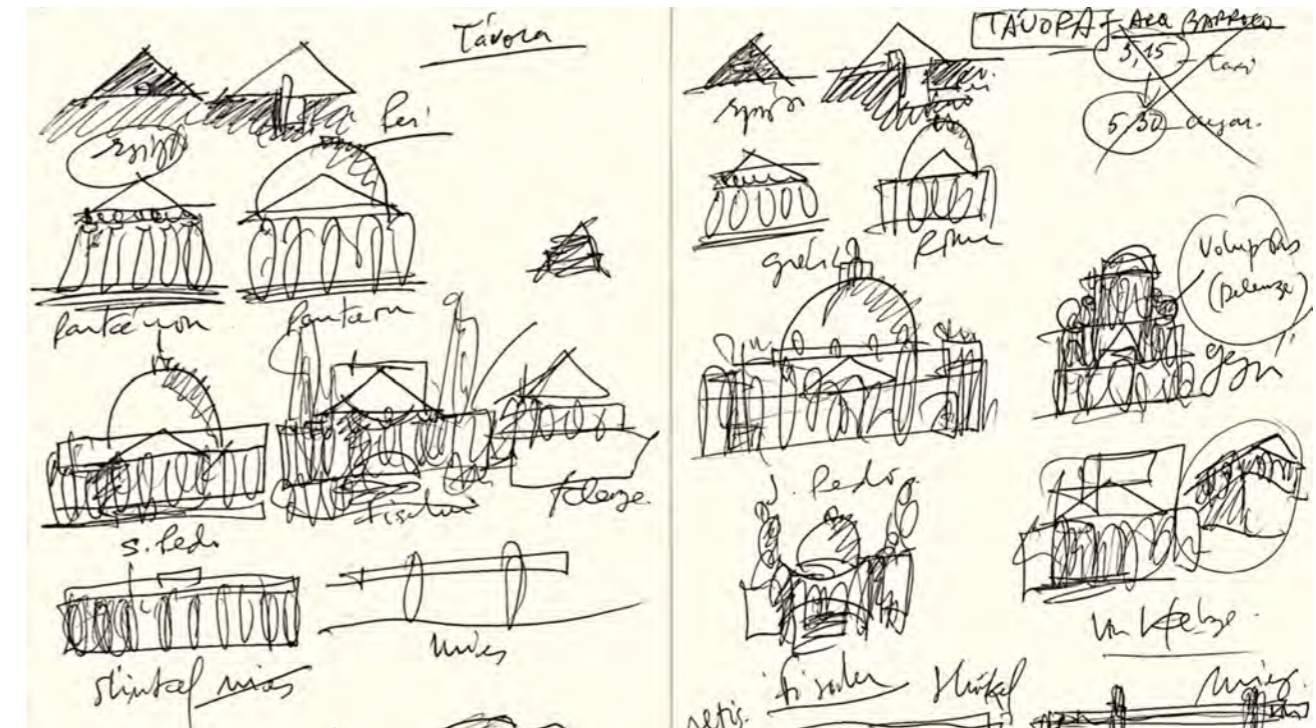
BOOK

P.100 **The tradition of a legacy**

BOOK

EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA *ARCHITECTURE UPON HISTORY*

Edited by Elena Fioretto (Politecnico di Milano) and Fabio Marino (Politecnico di Milano)



TITLE
Architettura sulla storia

GUEST SPEAKER
Eduardo Souto de Moura

DATE
Friday, May 20th, 2022

EVENT
MANTOVARCHITETTURA 2022

LOCATION
Palazzo della Ragione, Mantova

This lecture was held by Edoardo Souto de Moura during MANTOVARCHITETTURA festival, in May 2022 at Palazzo della Ragione. Following a meticulous transcription, it was decided to report the most significant passages of the conference (in italics), interlined by short curatorial notes. These notes aim to link the sequences, supporting a potential reader, no longer a spectator of Souto's conference. In the same way, it was necessary to select the contents, although the great variety of topics was largely covered. In the translation from spoken Italian to English it was not possible to give back the word similarity that occur between two neo-Latin languages, such as Italian and Portuguese. An attempt was made to preserve the spontaneity of the off-the-cuff speech through the use of punctuation and references to the orator's gestures (in square brackets).

On the occasion of his "last lecture" as a professor at Polytechnic of Milan, Edoardo Souto de Moura [ESDM] shared some "arbitrary fragments" on the topic of the project.

When I use this expression [arbitrary fragments], I remember a Rafael Moneo's speech. He talks about arbitrariness by saying: when someone does architecture, always begins with an arbitrary decision.

In the process of designing, an architect uses and follows a code that is not so much arbitrary, but rational.

What is the project? The project is doing the research, because, after all, the project is making a code to build, which cannot be arbitrary, but must be rational. In the sense in which Aldo Rossi intends rational architecture. So, I use this system by Rafael Moneo of choosing arbitrariness to arrive to a logic that can be more rational or more “emotional”. Well...I quote others for my speeches.

ESDM defines himself as an architect, not as a theorist. But he is an architect who needs theory in order to inject contents into his projects, and who aspires to communicate something. And he quotes a Portuguese proverb:

Se não tens cão, caça com gato. Well...I don't have a dog to do architecture. So, I use two cats, that I love so much! One is Deleuze...the other is Calvino.

The first “cat” mentioned by ESDM is Gilles Deleuze who conceived philosophy overturning the dialectical formulation, dominant after Hegel, and its construction of linearity and unity. On the contrary, Deleuze proposed a non-linear rhizomatic system that allows an open circulation of multiple concepts, favouring diverse paths and unprecedented connections. The second one is Italo Calvino. ESDM always carries his famous book “American Lessons. Six proposals for the new millennium”, because he thinks that this book is useful for an architect who aims to experiment the themes of lightness and gravity.

Today the topic of the lesson (because times may change my concerns) is about lightness and gravity. Since everybody knows Calvino's famous book about the six lessons for the new millennium, I got that on lightness. I need it a lot. Calvino gives examples in literature, but it is very easy to cut off the word literature and replace it with the word architecture. He explains that in literature there are two ways of dealing with gravity, or lightness that is the opposite. There is a way - and he gives examples - that in front of gravity and weight one can simulate this role. The other is to invent the opposite. And to think that it's impossible to invent this lightness, which is false...being able to get its own identity of weight, opacity, gravity, to define its finite physical dimension.

Well...I have used both formulas in my work. I do not defend either one or the other because, I think, in the world, in architecture, in art or in science...there is not only one way of doing things.

Through a series of images of more or less recent projects, ESDM shows in which ways he defines his own idea of lightness. Illusory lightness, realised without leaving a trace. Such as the entrance he designed for a monastery in Portugal: a stone staircase that leads to a sliding glass door.

I like the contrast of the sliding door within the old wall. A brutal job. To build this glass door, which seems neutral, peaceful, I destroyed the wall, which was a double wall. I designed a frame, a sliding door, and I built the wall again. A very heavy job...without leaving a trace.

But in doing this, ESDM does not want to recur to arts as an endorsement.

Indeed, because I am an architect, I do not like the architect-artist. I think architecture is a profession. And I am convinced that the current weakness of architecture is that architects are pretentious, they want to be artists. And I also observe this attitude among students.

Conversely, speaking about gravity, ESDM recalls a lecture by Fernando Tavora. An excursus that begins with Ancient Architecture.

Tavora talked about weight, about gravity, using the pyramids of Egypt as an example: the purest form to respond to weight and gravity. It is the form that gives mostly an image of stability and rest. It is the Egyptian pyramid that, 5000 years later, becomes the glass pyramid.

Between the pyramids of Ancient Egypt and Ieoh Ming Pei's glass pyramid in Paris, a multiplicity of signs and fragments stimulate and inspire the architect, from Bernini to Schinkel to Alvaro Siza and Mies van der Rohe. The last one is precisely mentioned to reject the simplifying rhetoric of the Modern Movement that denies history. On the contrary, ESDM refers to Mies' holidays in Greece, and he reflects on the importance of history.

After the Egyptian pyramid there's the Parthenon, whose pediment has the same shape; then, the Romans arrive and take the Greek temple and add a dome. And later the Baroque. Bernini uses this architectural form opening its arms, and takes over the city. The Baroque that begins to transform architecture into urbanism. Sixtus Quintus with the obelisks, the radial city, and all the rest. Afterwards, the very complex development of the Baroque by the Germans, such as Fisher von Erlach and that enormous drama. So much drama that people get tired and move back again. Because I think that History works in this way [Souto mimes a sine wave]. And here again comes the longevity of the classic. With Leo von Klenze and the pure Greek temple, which has greatly influenced Schinkel who builds the Altes Museum...I don't know, I haven't counted it, with fifteen, twenty or twenty-five columns...and Mies who says “but if I have steel, why do I take twenty-five columns, if I can do everything with two, or one!?”. And Mies himself built, I think in 1925 or 1924, this glass skyscraper, with organic shapes, and the same building is also built after by Alvar Aalto, Siza and many others.

So, this is a way [understood as modus, method], a very artificial way of understanding the history that interests me. Not real history, but history that I can manipulate to design my own projects.

The pyramid continues to have a strong ascendancy for the project. Even the inverted pyramid, used by Oscar Niemeyer for the Caracas Museum. Also ESDM is recurring to this shape for a convention centre, although he is not yet fully satisfied with the proportions achieved. The shape of the pyramid was also chosen for an installation at the Lisbon Triennale.

And to continue with the “pyramids” issue, I was invited to do an installation at the Lisbon Triennial. I immediately made it clear that I am not an artist, but an architect, and I can do something I care about. I made models on this theme. A concrete pyramid, a stone pyramid and a glass pyramid. All displayed in a beautiful room where the floor was very precious. We made this structure that presented three themes, and the effect was that temporal perspective, meaning that the past and history, if read, can explain the present day and not the other way around.

ESDM manipulates history, and uses it in his projects. He is interested not only in pyramids, but also in windows.

I have a great fear of drawing windows, and we have talked about it many times already, but I still have this fear, really! Every time I am afraid to forget something! We see this reference in Paestum, that recalls window openings. The Romans then added a rectangular body where the dome rests. And this is the succession of the classic. And then comes Michelangelo, who was tired of the classic. He was a baroque artist, violent. Violent in the intellectual sense. Michelangelo built the

Porta Pia, whose design was changed ten or twenty times. And I like this distortion of the rules. The central door, almost anthropomorphic, the eyes and the four openings. And the tower, which is the opposite of the pyramid, that is unstable, and you can see the central body almost moving.

ESDM illustrates another pictures of an art installation on the theme of the window, created for the Venice Biennale.

Well...what does my installation mean? It is about the theme of windows in the three proportions: the vertical, the horizontal, and the non-window, thus the negative.

And let's see the vertical window, with the thickness. So, the proportion is always the same: width, height and depth [ESDM mimes these concepts, raising his hands in the air]. That's what gives beauty. That's why when I open windows...I feel sick! They seem to be made of paper. They look like a moving scenery [ESDM makes a fluttering gesture]. The proportions of these windows: in some cases, they are fine, while in other cases they are not. But why? Because the windows, for example in a monastery, are 1.2 meter thick. They define an autonomous space, not a negative. And this interests me, but today I cannot make walls one meter deep, because they would kill me. So, [in Venice] I fixed a point that is the tower. Then this is the wall you pass through, and one enters and sees the tower on the left, with the proportion of verticality and depth.

Then we have the horizontal window that does not require thickness. It is the Berlin window, by Bruno Taut, who, in order to build social housing, could not afford to introduce windows with of three- or four-meters heights. So, he thought of rotating the window (there is a beautiful article in Casabella from the 1960s about Bruno Taut and this peculiarity). I used this reference for an apartment building in Porto, where the mutation of the windows follows the mutation of the interior typology. Many times, I tell the truth, I liked to change the window according to the variation of the interior typology, in order to have an alibi and to avoid unnecessary exceptions.

And, at last, the non-window. The void. Like Le Corbusier did, with nothing. The landscape entering inside the house.

The non-window allows ESDM to leave the shores of artistic installations and move on to a project of patio houses he is currently completing in Lisbon. This is a typology that has been used in several occasions by the architect.

This is a place, nice and contradictory of the suburbs. There is a road that ends there, in front of a small church. It's was a village. And later, the horrible postmodern buildings. Lisbon used to like the Postmodern...not all...it was a period! There is this void, almost triangular, where they asked me to design residential buildings. So, keeping in mind this village imaginary, that for me is beautiful, I draw these patio houses, which are a bit of a negative of this site. They resemble a Wild West town: a street and houses on both sides, on the left and on the right. The front that faces the street is closed, except for the entrance door and the garage. It is a fragment, an island.

The project for Lisbon offers ESDM the opportunity to reflect on the different designs based on the patio typology which, however, result into different outcomes each time. There are many factors that mark this difference, such as the construction site, or the clients' requests.

It's the third time I've used this typology, and every time I do something different...And I like this evolution, like the Germans change the photo camera Leica. Even if it has changed, it remains the same. Always the same shape, and always much better. Like the Volkswagen, or the Porsche, the 911 which is always the same, but is always a little wider (like me!). It is always the same type, and I think that technically it is better and better.

Once again ESDM talks about Porta Pia, referring to Deleuze's book "Le Pli. Leibnitz et le Baroque". This is the occasion to discuss about the construction of the universe, that after all is also a matter of architectural representation. ESDM refers to Paul Klee's Angelus Novus, in Walter Benjamin's interpretation, with its meaning of a future raised from the ashes of the past. Klee's Angelus Novus serves ESDM to recall his experience as a young architect at Alvaro Siza's studio.

Siza spent his life drawing angels. And he often represented them in the form of fragments. There is a text, a beautiful one, by a minister of education who was a poet. He wasn't bad as a poet, but he was a disaster as a minister. I don't know if he read Benjamin, but he talks about this angel who flies over the ruins of the world, which represent the past, and he flies so close to them that he falls apart because he is too attached to reality. It means that progress cannot stay inside reality, so closed, but it must stay out of it. And Siza has drawn so many angels, that in the end he designed buildings in China similar to the form of angels. That building, for me, is not one of Siza's masterpieces, because it is too much. It is a bit like Tabucchi who studied Pessoa so much, that he turned into Pessoa himself.

Then ESDM illustrates an on-going project for the Polytechnic of Milan, at Leonardo Campus. His project will be located above an existing pavilion designed by Ignazio Gardella. For this reason, his project faces the constraints imposed by the Superintendence.

I make a very light building, where the pillars are almost not visible. I use the air conditioning tubes not like in the Centre Pompidou, where they have a decorative function. In this case, they are part of the structure. A very light structure, fully glass covered, which does not touch Gardella's building. I almost wanted to conceal the building. So I conceived the main façade as a mirror glass. But then I thought that it would have been a form of cowardice! Doing something I don't want to be seen. So, I'll use clear glass.

To go back to the subject of lightness, not as a philosopher but as a professional architect, ESDM shows a building that has just been completed in Bruges, designed for exhibitions and multiple uses, talking on the construction site and its complexity, particularly the relationship with the municipality and the developers. Interventions inside the historic city, or on the pre-existing buildings, often generate doubts and perplexities. And once again there is not a unique design attitude. Later on, ESDM remembered a shared experience with Siza, in the project for the restoration and extension of a monastery.

This is a topic that I really like...and I worked on it many times with Siza, who is always a master. It is a monastery, and we have to transform it in a museum. In the 60s, I think, the main façade was modified, because it was a judge's private office, who had opened a door to access inside with his own car. While Siza realized the new museum, I renovated the old building.

So, the first thing was to destroy the former entrance, that had been

added, replacing it with a new, baroque window, symmetrical to the other. The second thing was the demolition of the corner, and waiting for Siza, who would come with his new building. And Siza did a beautiful thing. Instead of intersecting his volume with the ancient wall, he moved it back a bit. He reconsidered, corrected the direction, and entered at another point. It does not directly touch the surface perpendicularly. (Paf!) Siza comes in, approaches, and says "it doesn't look good", so he goes back, changes the angle, and then he goes.

Seriously...Siza is a baroque architect, who I like. And he enjoyed doing the staircase, like Michelangelo did the Library [Laurentian Library]. The point is that he uses marble, he makes these shapes, which look bizarre, but they are beautiful. The problem arises when his new extension and my restoration have to intersect: my design in wood and granite, while Siza's design with marble. There is a door, specifically, where our projects must meet each other. So, I did one in white marble, to begin to enter Siza's world.

ESDM concludes the slideshow of fragments with a personal project.

And now I am making a home. After nineteen years, the municipality of Braga paid me for the stadium. And I have money. And I don't know what to do because I've spent my life working. What can I do? My mother died and left as a legacy to my brother a house and some money to my sister. I, on the other hand, received some corn fields (which are worthless to me). Next to my mother's house there was a land for sale, with a ruin. I bought that land, and the ruin is beautiful. It is always my theme: ruins. But not in the sense of romantic contemplation, like for the British. I like it because I'm not the author of the ruin. I go there on site very often, every Sunday instead of the church service. I draw, and it is the ruin that asks me for something. It means that the ruin is operational, it is willing. I like this word. The ruin does not meet my needs. I manipulate everything. I don't like slanted corners. I don't recuperate anything. I'll build a contemporary house with old stones. I change everything and I design everything in order to figure out if I need the ruin or not!

And to manipulate the ruin ESDM doesn't recur to history, but to the tricks of a stonemason.

And again, an image of a floating stone! The walls are almost completed, and this is the man who makes my house. He's a man I've always worked with. He's a historical figure. One who works stone (is it called a stonemason?). He is a brilliant stonecutter, who worked fifteen years in France, cutting stones, and raised two children with his wife in a caravan. We renovated two monasteries together. And I design his house. When he asked me, I told him "I'm modern!". And he said "I know you!". The problem was his wife. I went to his house, with the model. Shyly I said "Madame, I don't know if you like the house I'm going to do", and she answered looking at me "I'm sure I don't like it". At this point the best was to leave, but the husband said "no! I like it a lot". And now I've invited him to build my house. And he does a trick, beautiful. I don't like the old taste, deformed, folk. I like making contemporary houses with the stones that are there. So, I don't like having sloping walls, and he adjusts them with metal cables and wood. He rotates the walls and puts them vertically straight. He teaches me how to complete it. Now a little video to finish. It's beautiful. The stonecutter explains to me with drawings how I have to do the project. And I finish. Can I translate something? Can we watch the video? No? There it is! Go, go, thank you!

ESDM bids farewell with images of this intimate construction site, where he goes every Sunday to listen and admire these tricks, which are anything but illusory, artistic, or philosophical.

