Francesca Zanella · Giampiero Bosoni ·
Elisabetta Di Stefano · Gioia Laura Iannilli ·
Giovanni Matteucci · Rita Messori ·
Raffaella Trocchianesi   *Editors*

Multidisciplinary Aspects of Design

Objects, Processes, Experiences and Narratives

OPEN ACCESS

Springer

Springer Series in Design and Innovation   37

Editor-in-Chief

Francesca Tosi, *University of Florence, Florence, Italy*

Series Editors

Claudio Germak, *Politecnico di Torino, Turin, Italy*
Francesco Zurlo Ⓘ, *Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy*
Zhi Jinyi, *Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China*
Marilaine Pozzatti Amadori, *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil*
Maurizio Caon Ⓘ, *University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Fribourg, Switzerland*

Springer Series in Design and Innovation (SSDI) publishes books on innovation and the latest developments in the fields of Product Design, Interior Design and Communication Design, with particular emphasis on technological and formal innovation, and on the application of digital technologies and new materials. The series explores all aspects of design, e.g. Human-Centered Design/User Experience, Service Design, and Design Thinking, which provide transversal and innovative approaches oriented on the involvement of people throughout the design development process. In addition, it covers emerging areas of research that may represent essential opportunities for economic and social development.

In fields ranging from the humanities to engineering and architecture, design is increasingly being recognized as a key means of bringing ideas to the market by transforming them into user-friendly and appealing products or services. Moreover, it provides a variety of methodologies, tools and techniques that can be used at different stages of the innovation process to enhance the value of new products and services.

The series' scope includes monographs, professional books, advanced textbooks, selected contributions from specialized conferences and workshops, and outstanding Ph.D. theses.

The volumes of the series are single-blind peer-reviewed.

Keywords: Product and System Innovation; Product design; Interior design; Communication Design; Human-Centered Design/User Experience; Service Design; Design Thinking; Digital Innovation; Innovation of Materials.

How to submit proposals

Proposals must include: title, keywords, presentation (max 10,000 characters), table of contents, chapter abstracts, editors'/authors' CV.

In case of proceedings, chairmen/editors are requested to submit the link to conference website (incl. relevant information such as committee members, topics, key dates, keynote speakers, information about the reviewing process, etc.), and approx. number of papers.

Proposals must be sent to: series editor Prof. Francesca Tosi (francesca.tosi@unifi.it) and/or publishing editor Mr. Pierpaolo Riva (pierpaolo.riva@springer.com).

Francesca Zanella · Giampiero Bosoni ·
Elisabetta Di Stefano · Gioia Laura Iannilli ·
Giovanni Matteucci · Rita Messori ·
Raffaella Trocchianesi
Editors

Multidisciplinary Aspects of Design

Objects, Processes, Experiences and Narratives

Springer

Editors
Francesca Zanella
Department of Engineering "Enzo Ferrari"
University of Modena and Reggio Emilia
Modena, Italy

Elisabetta Di Stefano
Department of Humanities
University of Palermo
Palermo, Italy

Giovanni Matteucci
Department of Philosophy
and Communication Studies
University of Bologna
Bologna, Italy

Raffaella Trocchianesi
Department of Design
Politecnico di Milano
Milan, Italy

Giampiero Bosoni
Department of Design
Politecnico di Milano
Milan, Italy

Gioia Laura Iannilli
Department of Philosophy
and Communication Studies
University of Bologna
Bologna, Italy

Rita Messori
Department of Humanities, Social Sciences
and Cultural Industries
University of Parma
Parma, Italy

Contents

Operazione Arcevia. Existential Community. The Reality of the Experience and the Utopia of the Vision

Anna Mazzanti[✉]

Dipartimento Design, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
`anna.mazzanti@polimi.it`

Abstract. Operazione Arcevia (OA) is an urban settlement project, born for the purpose of the social, economic, and touristic regeneration of a marginal area in the Marchigiane hills, characterized by its postwar exodus. Conceived between 1972 and 1974 on the initiative of the businessman Italo Bartoletti, like every newly constituted city it was designed with a political and cultural identity by the architect Ico Parisi in collaboration with two renowned critics (Cripolti and Restany), a psychologist, and a large number of artists (Arman, César, Ceroli, Soto, Staccioli, among others). OA remained in its germinal phase, and this was indeed its final result, the fruit of participative work presented at several exhibition events: Venice 1976; Rome 1979. In this ideal city imagined by the erudite group of operators, along with its utopian aspects, there are also practical ones and design hypotheses that can still inspire and provide food for thought: the close collaboration between planners and artists; anti-monumental intentions for art with a social nature and characterized by shared practice; built-up urban relations and the landscape dimension; the coexistence between productive and residential communities and temporary communities, both touristic, in terms of hospitality, and as a secular space in which to take refuge. Cooperating together with Parisi and the critics were 33 artists who together created *tavole progettuali* (design boards) that combined design, technical design, photographic images, and collages, i.e. fully-fledged works of art and creativity.

Keywords: experience · environment art · site-specificity · art and architecture dialogue · community

"Operazione Arcevia": designed for
humans on a human scale
I. Parisi, 1974

The project analyzed here has contrasting but dialectical features: an 'existential' experience and at the same time a futuristic and utopian project that never reached an executive phase, hence, both a real and a mental project. The complexity of *Operazione Arcevia. Comunità Esistenziale* reflects the richness of the process of elaboration, underlying a model of original practice, presented in 1976, two years after it was developed, at the Venice Biennale in the *Ambiente come sociale* section curated by Enrico Crispolti, among the first figures involved in *Operazione Arcevia*. Later, in 1979, the materials produced were exhibited at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome. The many

models, drawings, and other materials that were given to the Gallery for the exhibition are still held there today [1].

In the early 1970s, Palazzo di Arcevia was a small hilly area in the Marche region with a population of 600, in the province of Ancona. The population had fallen during the postwar period when its residents chose to move to the cities. Italo Bartoletti, a local builder who was active in Como and who knew and collaborated with the architect Ico Parisi, a native of Sicily but Comasco by adoption, took on the task of promoting an initiative aimed at repopulating and valorizing this area [2]. The intention was that of implementing an "existential community": neither a project that came down from above, nor a tourist village (although it would involve a hotel with 50 rooms and a 'secular retreat' for solitary guests); nor would it be a model determined according to pre-established schemes (like so-called treatment centres) [3]. We shall see whether the intention was successful. No doubt the enterprise constituted an 'experience' founded on critical-theoretical practice and on the interdisciplinary dialogue between skills as well as between aesthetic, poetic, psychological, and political aspects. *Operazione Arcevia* thus called into play a design method that was an alternative to traditional ones, which intended to "verify the changes in its process" [4], and that created an equal dialogue between all the actors involved in designing the layout for the urban plan. This practice would have repudiated the monumentality of an aesthetic intervention dialectical to the architectural and urban context as had been hypothesized by Francesco Somaini along with Crispolti in a seminal poetic text titled *Urgenza nella città*, dated from 1972. What should have emerged, according to Parisi, was an alternative urban habitat, "capable of acting positively on the behaviour of the persons living there" [4]: but the community that was imagined as being in the image of its inventors did not exist. The purpose of this essay is to discuss just how innovative and plausible the project-workshop designed by Ico Parisi and his collaborators was.

Bartoletti, after hiring the architect in January 1972, accepted the following January the "extension to the concept of existential community" [5], and thus the creation of an interdisciplinary technical commission in March 1974, active from the month of April.

> "Under the guidance of the architects Mario di Salvo and Ico Parisi, our company is planning a 'town centre' in Palazzo in the Ancona area. The goal of this initiative is to restore and enliven these agricultural-mountainous areas […] and to suggest a different way of living, isolated from noise and the pressure of the system, and as self-sufficient as possible (agricultural – artisanal – residential, and so on, recovery). The cultural and stimulating value of this initiative will be addressed to the integration between the arts and architecture in a constant manner, designed by a team of architects-artists-critics; the result will be a new example of the public use of the artwork" [6].

Italo Bartoletti turned to four figures who were already aware of the Parisi method, of which they had been the 'critical analysts and testers' for the *Casa esistenziale* (1972), a previous project and one directly linked to *Operazione Arcevia*. These were three art critics, Enrico Crispolti, Iole De Sanna (who would turn down the invitation), Pierre Restany, and a psychologist, Antonio Miotto. (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Ico Parisi, The protagonists of Operazione Arcevia**.** Ico Parisi, *Auto-Architettura* by Fatima, photo and photomontage,1974. From *Operazione Arcevia. Comunità Esistenziale*, 1976, pp. 41, 33.

The notes that Enrico Crispolti saved describe an intense work, a series of notes and plans that emphasized poetic priorities and practices. Whether these were site-specific interventions or sculptural and visual works, the authors' "on-site activity," the "rapport with the local artisanry," and the planning of "periodical animation" were absolutely necessary [8]. *Dibattito a Arcevia* was a list that summed up the aims: a turnaround in the depopulation phenomenon, and the revival of the agriculture and the artisanry. In the background was the experience of Volterra 73, in which Crispolti, together with the Volterra artist Mino Trafeli, less than one year before had mediated a critical dialogue between the artists and the territories in its social and productive complexity as well. But with Arcevia, Parisi aimed towards a project of "reintegrated humanism," a "new model of cultural experience" [8] involving settlement that was permanent, not temporary.

However, that attempt to imagine a community risked appearing like a "model of abstraction" that was concluded in Parisi's compositional drawings, which combined a design project, artistic intervention, and photographic reproduction. Concrete inquiries were made of the space and the artists had a real opportunity to verify their own aesthetic ideas environmentally. OA [9] was thus a theoretical-architectural process of construction and composition, a visualization workshop, measured on a real collective crossing of the territory, which in a certain sense dispelled the criticism of its being a utopia. Toing and froing that was accurately documented by the architect's camera lens. Nonetheless, OA remained a mental operation in the form of a hypothesis that was susceptible to changes all the way to the final execution, should this occur.

The existence of the existential community would be guaranteed based on the jobs that the project would generate, akin to the growth of a medieval city [10], although the settlement imagined *ex novo* was determined based on modern needs and customs. Parisi affirmed that it was necessary to "favour alternative models, involving in a process of the rationalization and improvement of the quality of life all the local resources that could be manouvred, controlling tourism as well, and therefore the short-term consumption of the landscape heritage" [11]. An audacious [12] difficult plan, "filled with poetry,

utopia", wrote Pierre Restany, entrusted to avant-garde languages, a breath of fresh air aimed at freeing the outskirts of its selfish isolation. The artists were given the chance to participate "in the adventure of the project," a scale of experiences that had never been achieved before, remarked Crispolti, an expert on participative dynamics [13]. The prospect of a "new example of public fruition of the artwork" [14] attracted a large group of artists, environmental sculptors, poets, musicians, and filmmakers. The multidisciplinary languages would have produced a wide range of plastic-visual interventions, imagining habitative volumes, public service spaces, ones for recreation, dedicated to worship, sports activities, reflection.

Still today the operation reveals all its "pioneering force due to the choral amalgam of the different participating personalities" [15] intent on overcoming the ornament and the monument with dialectical contributions determined even as early as the first reconnaissances they conducted in the field, meticulously recorded in the pages of the book in the manner of a chronicle, and the gradual "assumption of a three-dimensional concreteness" [16], all the more exemplary before today's crisis of the physical that is increasingly being replaced by virtual space and time [17].

But in the end OA remained 'virtual' as well, because it was a community imagined without a community, created only in those drawings where it was instead an intentionally and intensely 'existential' experience according to the visionariness that was typical of the 1970s. By going 'against the grain' it intended to bring back to the centre the individual and his or her natural needs, "isolated by the noise and the pressure of the metropolitan system", making it as 'self-sufficient' as possible as it related to the "agricultural-artisanal-residential revival" of the outskirts. These premises are still valid in our own day and age, which is distinguished by problems of environmental sustainability and by ones related to globalization, which proved to be so vulnerable during the recent pandemic, and at the same time generated processes of counter-exodus favoured by the new potential of working remotely. At the time the aim was for the social qualification/"of the habitative fabric", ecological qualification/with "the search for the values of life and the relationship with the environment", human qualification/with "the relaunching of creative and manual skills", and, lastly, cultural qualification "by bringing back to art the common heritage", outside of the museum, and with a practical goal [18]. These aspects connoted the artists' proposals and consequently Ico Parisi's designs, in which the first inhabitants were none other than the authors themselves. "We'll build a village for ourselves and go live there. We'll work there and tend our garden. Enough with life in the city", said Tonino Guerra. "And what if someone got tired of it? 'Then they could either go back to the city, or not eat that day', Antonioni replied" [19]. Along with Burkhardt we might object to the need for a verification, which, to be honest, is often Crispolti's and Miotto's recurring concern in the pages of the catalogue: the avant-garde cannot be carried out without involving those who truly experience the problems for which an attempt is made to solve them theoretically beforehand; art cannot be an intellectual projection alone [20].

The solutions put forward were too visionary and not suited in scale as related to their habitability to be able to be implemented: this was true, for instance, as concerned Carrino's cementless habitative modules, Balderi's egg-garage, Soto's water-storage-fountain-clock tower, or Staccioli's huge out-of-scale reclining geometric form that was

supposed to serve as a diaphragm with which to observe the landscape outside of the complex. Alik Cavaliere, who was part of the critical conscience that enlivened the internal debate, cast light on the risk of creating a sort of amusement park for tourists or a nice museum with souvenirs. This fate would in a certain sense also affect the new Gibellina in Sicily. Indeed, the complexity of the interventions that was predicted reveals an ideal community that, while it leveraged the idea of "rationalization improving the quality of the *social fabric* with an *urban and cultural one*" [22], ran the risk of becoming an "artistic babel, in spite of the fact that Parisi, in his pursuit of the model of the existential community, aspired to "bestowing a new human dimension on the settlement" [23]. Miotto as well saw in OA a significant warning against "the individual selfishness and the decadence of social sentiment" [24]. The problem would remain the verification and the appropriation of part of a non-existent community.

To be able to turn things around, Restany explained, the "way of poetry" was chosen, capable of "changing the human dimension of the landscape" [25], an inspiration that was emblematically also included in OA's graphic logo, which Parisi had extracted from one of the pictures he had taken during Fatima's performance *Autoarchitettura,* co-conceived by Parisi himself and held on July 25, 1974. (Fig. 1) The outfit worn by the performer which becomes synonymous with habitative space opens up like a flower that grows out of the dry soil of Palazzo d'Arcevia and. in the photomontage that is derived from it, visualizes a landmark in the foreground against the background of the residential community of Arcevia [26].

At the core of his urban plan Parisi situated the productive community and therefore the community/recreational/sports areas around the residential area. The interdisciplinary cooperation between the operators aimed to generate a layout that would influence the residents' behaviour as positively as possible, the same active therapeutic value that had affected the meaning of the *Casa esistenziale*, which, with its ambitions as a small residental community, naturally represented the precedent to Operazione Arcevia.

1 From the Casa Esistenziale to Operazione Arcevia

In the late 1960s Parisi had started up a process to revise and reflect on the disciplinary limits that would have brought out "another side of architecture" [27], as Pierre Restany wrote. It was first manifested in 1968 in the Contenitoriumani, sculptural containers in the negative, designed together with the artist Francesco Somaini as a first utopian analysis of the concept of living of either the individual or the community, which developed into the ensuing hypothesis for *Casa esistenziale*, 1972, "a residential environment and an individual space – wrote Barbara Radice in 1974 – susceptible to suggesting the chance to 'be' rather than the need to exist" [28] and in so far as it was a hypothetical project the way that OA would be. Used for the "spiritual activities" required by man to "best understand the voices of others" so that it can "ensure itself that it is capable of being in a real social co-existence" [28] as Parisi reassured Crispolti, who had just returned from the shared experience of Volterra 73. His 'emotional' environments would thus have aroused a "new desire to adhere to the principles of freedom, respect, and morality, underlying a constructive life in common" [29]. In this sense, as a "awareness that could redefine the relationships between itself and the world" [30], it was a sign of the existential community.

Parisi had triggered a series of collaborations with artists in a new role vis-à-vis the architectural space, no longer reflecting the integration between the arts, but rather "friction and emotional contrast", no longer decor, but rather iconic presences capable of determining the quality of the space [31]. César, invited to think in an architectural dimension, imagined a layer of polyurethane cladding the house whose essential forms would have been exalted by the energetic flow of the material in a dialectical contrast made evident by the authors of the book *Ipotesi per una casa esistenziale*. Published on the occasion of the two exhibitions at the Galerie Germain in Paris and at the Inarch, Palazzo Taverna in Rome, in 1974, in the series Biblioteca d'arte contemporanea by Beniamino Carucci, directed by Crispolti, unsurprisingly, the text collected the evaluations of those who would become the theoretical-critical soul of the subsequent Arcevia project: Enrico Crispolti, Antonio Miotto, and Pierre Restany. Equally important in the book is the extent to which Parisi's photographic lens is expressive, by insinuating itself in the model of the Casa Esistenziale based on an elementary structure with a triangular section and two slopes-walls that from the roof sloped down to the ground, recreating a continuous and open hut-like space, "introverted and asymmetrical architecture" [32] with which the works of Duane Hanson and Charles Close are in tension, and that would return to be Arcevia's distinctive profile. The photographic image now replaces the normal graphic design previously used by Parisi, and emphasizes the "space-individual-action rapport in which the artworks are situated". This very personal technique has been referred to as 'topo-aesthesia' [33], capable of shaping the architectural space in a strongly interpretative sense. Especially from the 1970s Parisi's photographic practice was enriched by the dialogue with the drawing [34]. Parisi developed a fully-fledged model of visual communication of the architectural-artistic design founded on the virtual narrative qualities of his montages mixing photographic collages and technical drawings, and including animated photographs of the models in scale that become concrete hypotheses, "morphological peculiarities" capable of defining with immediacy an environmental situation and consequently honing a new method of planning – as pointed out by Ratti in the exhibition catalogue *Percorrenza fotografica*, 1977 [35]. Parisi would later say it was a method of "environmental verification and the interpretation of the goals," proof "that the power of the image at a mental level surpasses and is capable of replacing that of architecture itself." Hence, the image is the architecture" [36]. Through his photo-graphic drawings, in the space of the existential house spiritual needs are juxtaposed with material ones, and priority is given to the "poetic proposals" in that they are "existential premises", rather than to objects of everyday consumption. This semantic meaning can also be seen in the scale of OA's urban plan.

2   Operazione Arcevia. The Coordinates of the Project

Hence, from the house to the territory. Miotto had written: "Ico Parisi's project [for the house] could have a significant development in society", it could encourage "responsible choices and mental activity" [36] from the "perspective of the central theme of the relationship between the individual and the group" [37].

OA would develop precisely in the practice of "constant psychological and critical verification" [38] through the constant shared activity that represents its patrimony.

A leitmotif that combined the practice of the cultural operators [39] characterized the cohabitation between works and styles, between what was built up and creative intervention, and between the natural and the environmental space. A patrimony of collaborations whose genesis, detailed in the 'open documentation', as well as being photographic and specific, in the book represented the project in itself that assumed three-dimensionality and its completeness, albeit hypothetical and open, in the graphic layouts and in the *tavole di visualizzazione* (design boards). As was previously noted, this becomes the only possible form of design for Parisi, who from pure architect, as "mediator between the parties", became an "artistic operator" in a dialogue on an equal standing with the other artists and with those who could contribute via creative, psychological and mental stimuli [40]. In Crispolti's own words:

> Realistically, the Arcevia operation must be accepted for what is now out in the open as concerns its first threshold: that is, the complete definition of the project.

> The project is inevitably abstract, with respect to the reality and to its realization, which will subject it to inevitable criticism and rethinking. Instead it is real in so far as it is such. And it is only in this sense that the operation has a precise concreteness, for now.

> What is real and culturally relevant about it is an experience in scale that has never been achieved until now, I believe, by the collaboration between current artists (some of them the acclaimed protagonists of avant-garde art in the recent decades) and an architect designer who is also avant-garde. A collaboration not by exterior additions but by direct, inventive participation at the time of the project.

> Already independent from its realization from this point of view (The second threshold will be developed in the future), at a design level "Operazione Arcevia" represents a great cultural experience, in which one can recognize a multiple creative commitment of the utmost interest [41].

The debate held on 13 July 1975 at the "casa della gioventù" in Palazzo d'Arcevia concluded the encounter-cum-survey with the artists [42]. In its choral genesis it "specified the ends, means, and formulae of this plan". Although we cannot go into it in detail here, certain important features should be pointed out. Parisi worked on the generation of the existential community, which, coming to terms with the specific case of Arcevia, is like the model of a vaster theoretical reflection addressed to modern man and to contemporary society, entreating such choices in order to transform the need to be into the will to live. The proposals put forward by the artists could varied greatly: a minimum and flexible intervention, conceived for a collaboration with the local artisans, offered by Arman, or structural one put forward by César and others, both the energy of critical signs (e.g. Somaini, Staccioli) or iconic ones (e.g. Balderi), a certain animated dimension suggested by transversal creativity such as that of Antonioni and Guerra, who think in terms of scenes that are sensitive to emotional activation, they all perceive, however, Parisi's entreaty towards the possibility of a direct experience, one that is usually absent in the cities where isolation and solitude are predominant, says Crispolti. It was unprecedented to give absolute freedom and availability to the artists, encourage them to carry out a "very wide range of interventions" (beyond the "legge del 2%", which was the

only tool available as concerned including art in architecture on a public scale). In those years of militancy, the critic was well aware of this. The architect who collaborated with artists visualized the project with plans, drawings, and a model that served to create the spatiality and generate any questions. In 1979 in Salerno, when interviewed by Crispolti, Parisi particularly recalled César's, Soto's, and Burri's substantial contributions to OA's profile, and he likened the experiment to a great twentieth-century abbey, built by its own ideal inhabitants, in a condition of captivity, Crispolti added [43].

I suoi appunti presentano tanti elenchi di nomi, sempre suddivisi in tre raggruppamenti che rispondono alla proposta di «tre possibilità operative: la prim*a* integrat*a* nelle architetture, l*a* seconda in campi liberi, la terz*a* presenta una collaborazione fra artisti e artigiani» [44]. Nel menzionare alcuni interventi emblematici, prendiamo dunque spunto da tale tassonomia operativa, sebbene poi nei fatti mutilata della terza possibilità [45], la collaborazione con gli artigiani, prematura nella fase astratta del progetto. Fra possibilità strutturali, modificazione del paesaggio e percorsi animatori, fluttua l'impronta del metodo Parisi con la sua tensione organica, l'antagonismo dialettico fra spazio e opera da cui scaturisce quello 'choc emotivo' in linea con gli effetti dell'intervento scultoreo nella città studiato da Somaini e Crispolti.

His notes contain many lists of names, always divided into three groups that correspond to the proposal for "three operative possibilities: the first one integrated in the architecture, the second one in free fields, the third one unveiling the collaboration between artists and artisans" [44]. In mentioning some of the emblematic interventions, let us start from this operative taxonomy, albeit actually mutilated by the third possibility [45], the collaboration with the artisans, premature in the abstract phase of the project. Fluctuating among the structural possibilities, changes in the landscape and animated routes is the imprint of the Parisi method with its organic tension, the dialectic antagonism between space and work which triggers that 'emotional shock' in line with the effects of the sculptural intervention in the city analysed by Somaini and Crispolti.

In Arcevia the collaboration with César is resumed; he relates to the architectural context in order to imagine two of the most iconic interventions [46]: two concrete pillars in the form of a thumb, one of them supporting the roof on the piazza side, the other on the pool side; a second intervention recalled the roof of the *Casa esistenziale*, functioning here as an element adjoining the two buildings, the artisanal labs, and the graduate school for the applied arts. The artist confirmed that he was "capable of architectural thinking and dimension" [47] via the "emotional provocation" generated by the tension between the structural function and the impression of fluidity, recognized inventive qualities of the "greatest French sculptor of his generation" for Pierre Restany, the guarantor for French artists in the operative community of Arcevia. Among them is Soto, an Argentinean op artist living in France. Soto studies a chromatic hypothesis for the walls of the houses of Arcevia by analysing the chromatic and luministic spectrum inside the Palazzo as the seasons change – many years before David Tremlett, for instance, would do something similar in Ghizzano, a hamlet in the province of Pisa [48]. Soto also designed one of the few urban elements that would be built on the orographic profile of the urban settlement, the water storage container that also served as a tower/fountain via a forest of pipes recalling the studies of the *Pénétrables Sonores*. For the plaza of the shopping and artisanal centre featuring outdoor activities, Alberto Burri and Mario Ceroli suggested

plastic architectural solutions symbolizing sociality: in order the scenic-sculpture stage surrounded by five lowered arches for the purpose of supporting the stage equipment and a window overlooking the landscape for anyone stopping in the piazza of the performances where the building for commercial activities is also located. Ceroli transformed the outside into a wide natural wooden staircase featuring a triangular section capable of joining the plaza level with the lower one of the area where merchandise was loaded and unloaded (Fig. 2). The intention to generate a dialectical integration in the urban plant was shared by all (although 33 interventions were planned the location was imagined for 32, since, perhaps because the differing evaluations of OA, the sculpture by Alik Cavaliere is not indicated on the plan).

Fig. 2. Mario Ceroli's stair-steps in the *tavola di visualizzazione* (design board) by Ico Parisi. Diary of the Ceroli, Crispolti, Parisi operations. From *Operazione Arcevia. Comunità esistenziale*, 1976, pp. 142–143

It should also be noted, by looking at Parisi's model and plan, the extent to which OA measured itself up to the orography of the territory [47]. The centrality of the landscape is pre-eminent in the numerous surveys and opportunies to exchange ideas, returning in other projects conceived for outside of the urban density. Similarly, Staccioli and Somaini saw sculpture as a tool that could be used to provoke and activate a critical reading of the environment. Hence, Staccioli modified the section in plan view of semicircular tiers to be used as an open-air theatre: he unrolled it, projecting it in a very long quadrangular plinth with a blade-like ending, towards the countryside, towards the "outside". An "arrow towards the landscape" [48] if it had ever been made, a symbolic plastic-architectural core joining the residential area and the outside world, and, as a "'foreign body' [of impact], the entreaty to an action of removal" [49] sounding a warning for the value of nature that must not be simply an intellectual discussion around a table [50].

Somaini as well, only because of his affection for Parisi, with whom he often collaborated, took part in OA with two proposals concerning the borderline where nature encounters human intervention. He intervened on the edges of the "futurized medieval citadel" [51] without recognizing the features of its own ideal habitat based on urban intervention. Somaini presented two ideas: the first would allow nature to "take back possession" of its spaces through climbing plants and native grass types; the second was deserving of various *tavole di visualizzazione* (design boards) reproduced in the

catalogue simulating a furrow left by an animistatic sculpture by Somaini as it rolled away from the inhabited area.

It was only with Alik Cavaliere that the artists' doubts and critical participation in the debate could not seem to find a compromise. "I have the feeling that people go to this village to see what the artists have done, and not to see that the inhabitants live well because they have been given the chance to live" [52]. Cavaliere no doubt casts light on the project's weak points, its utopias, its risks of being instrumentalized politically. In the end the sculptor's bronze work would not be localized on the map. In the end the bronze work that the sculptor had planned to make would not find a location on the map, nor would the model be shown at the Biennale, arousing the complaints of the author as "artist and citizen" [53]. Nonetheless, encouraging the artists to dare in their inventiveness and in their freedom to choose, regardless of the words and the ideas of the technical committee, was above all the idealistic and libertarian voice of Restany, who was convinced that an understanding between the artist and the territory could be born out of the unpredictability and the spontaneity in the way the spaces were used: "to my mind, he declared, the existential motivation is poetic; if someone truly wants to change the human dimension of a site, of a lanscape, then he will have to consult the artist, and give the artist the absolute word" [51]. Miotto made the necessary adjustments: a person might decide to be "slightly more lyrical, leave the system behind to enter a more lyrical path, much freer from everything, but at the same time try to do something that was right".

Parisi's open project thus includes poetic and psychological inventions for a lyrical identity. Tonino Guerra's toponymy opts for temporary names that would be tested by the inhabitants. The writer also imagined a *Cimitero per morire più volentieri*, filled with gardens, flowers, and birdcages.

For Michelangelo Antonioni covered paths protecting their users from the bad weather are like psychological filters, connecting parking areas and homes, a purifying limbo of a passageway between social and private life. His project included light games, views, polymaterial floors on which the users steps' could be heard, all of which contributing "to putting the inner rhythm in perspective" [54]. Crispolti's and Miotti's "chances for life" can never be separated from the artistic proposals that involve concrete opportunities for the return of the population, with artisanal workshops and the revival of farming. They forced themselves to imagine the percentages of residents, around 600 inhabitants, and short-term stays, and the relationship that could have been generated between the different groups. In Miotto's words: "it is important to keep in mind the dimension of the community that is a sufficient guarantee of integration" [55].

Restany instead always added a fluid way of looking at things aimed at underscoring the non-conventional "systemic flexibility" [56] of a Parisi, as Flaminio Gualdoni described him, the fertile dissolutor of technicistic statues", curious, all-emcompassing, and irreverent" in his "workshop of the possible" [57]. Asking the artist to structure a space for conflict and encounter meant giving the artist the chance to become the antagonist of the anti-monumental structure itself. Not only was there in the Arcevia project an ambitious experiential message, that is still valid albeit simple: to produce the model of a community aimed at favouring the renewal of human relations, inducing the inhabitants

to a "new awareness of nature" and of "existential nature", that is, the favouring of a lifestyle.

In the *Diario delle operazioni* is this multivocal and dialectical variety of voices that consolidates ideas. Arcevia thus represented a "cultural exemplary fact" but one that was extremely theoretical [58] and paradoxically at the same time the fruit of a suitably shared interdisciplinary experience. Restany wrote about it again from Venice in July 1976, at the height of the Biennale, where Crispolti was curating the section dedicated to multiple typologies of participative experiences, proposals for social environments, to which he devoted a series of unconventional expository focuses that he called "open documentation". Set up in the auditorium at the Giardini, they represented "snapshots" of the "operative situations" "mostly devoid of the objectual product or still in the process of actuation, which thus excluded the exhibition of the 'results'" [59]. Liquid situations that foreshadowed current formulae were based on the documentary materials that were provided by the protagonists and on the presence of the same. At the same time, in fact, debates-exhibitions were held. The one dedicated to OA was held on 4 September art the opening of the documentary exhibition with an intervention by Parisi, Crispolti, Miotto in conversation with Bruno Zevi and Lamberto Lambertini (Fig. 9).

3 «Documentazione aperta». Beyond the Conceptual

For Crispolti the curatorship of *Ambiente come sociale* was the chance for a critical reflection on the means of expression also with respect to the role of the expository method that was often restricted to a stylistic expressiveness as its declination. Hence, it was decided to overcome the clichés of the traditional displays with more agile ones. Based on the radical position of those times, the curator overcame the formalistic exaltation to promote an open practice, perhaps precisely according to the action example of the processes implemented in Arcevia, which of all those documented was the most theoretical experience, at the same time focused on the pertinence of the means of communicating an "open" process and one that could constantly be remodulated: "a willingness that corresponds to the critical and self-critical manner of existentially managing one's own cultural-social operativity" in political declination [60].

In the typewritten pages of *Per una mostra dell'ambiente*, a critical and methodological reflection, the documentation was considered a repeatable model and the bearer of problematic tensions. It bore witness to the process and measured up to the new systems of mass communication. Indeed, the display rooms included photographic projections, sound, multivisions of slides and tapes, debates, and the free consulting of magazines and books that the visitor could make xerox copies of in order to create a personal catalogue [61].

Akin to the exhibition design, which from room to room became immersive and interactive [62], the book about Arcevia also and in parallel details each aspect of the genesis of the project. A journey in dialogues and constructions, between words and visual testimonies, and via a chromatic filter that in its pages tells of the moments of doing and practicing like in the interstitial rooms of the central pavilion at the Biennale. It should come as no surprise that the book dedicated to OA was conceived precisely for this occasion.

Crispolti, a clear-sighted critic of his own experiences, in 1997 spoke of the "semantic redemption of the architectural possibilities" [62]. In times of radical manifestations with conceptual and minimalist tendencies, OA "proficuously tried out a relationship of plastic-visual planning (…) qualifying the environment": an architectural redemption [63] imagined on that scale of 'experiences' featuring collective participation.

In the ongoing debate on the virtuous implementation of the " law on 2%" [64] on the significant regeneration and overcoming of terminologies that are no longer sustainable, like the term aesthetic "embellishment", which calls to mind the ornament, the case of Arcevia demonstrates all its relevance through its structural works, where the artistic dimension lies in the integration of design. Indeed, it was founded on a balancing of the interdisciplinary contributions and on a willingness to cooperate even between critical positions that did not intersect, via constructive debates and then the care for the environment forever respected as a space for integration and balance, essential points today also as concerns the regeneration of peripheral areas. Pierre Restany was right to insist, in that Venetian summer at the Giardini di Castello, the extent to which that project, even from a theoretical standpoint alone, was "a fact of culture" and "a point in modern history" [65], the standard-bearer, we might add, of design forms developing among the disciplines.

References

1. Another copious series of drawings, sketches, plans is instead held at the Fondo Grafico Ico Parisi at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna of Modena
2. Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P. (eds.): Operazione Arcevia. Comunità esistenziale. Editrice C. Nani, Como (1976)
3. See in particular: Caratteri dell'operazione e particolarità del progetto, p. 10
4. Ico Parisi. In ivi, p. 458
5. Comunità esistenziale di Palazzo d'Arcevia. Notiziario n.1, Como, p. 17 (1975)
6. Archivio Biblioteca Enrico Crispolti, Roma, hereafter ABEC, Operazione Arcevia, Arcevia (blue binder), Invitation to Ernico Crispolti, from I.Bartoletti, Como, 14 March 1974
7. Crispolti's notes in the margin of Relazione programmatica di un nucleo di nuova formazione in Comune di Arcevia, typescript held in ABEC, Arcevia binder, clearly reveal the authoriality of the structure of the catalogue
8. ABEC, Operazione Arcevia, Arcevia (blue binder), Notes on 28 April 1974
9. Hereafter the initials OA will stand for the full name Operazione Arcevia
10. Restany, P.: La nostalgie du Moyen Age au Village Existentiel. Le Figaro, (5 September 1975)
11. Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany, P. and in particular Parisi, I.: "Operazione Arcevia" open project, p. 31 (1976)
12. The project triggered a certain debate on means of information. See, for instance, Zevi, B.: Fermo posta, Genio City. L'Europeo, XXII, 37 (1976)
13. Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany, P. and especially Parisi, I.: "Operazione Arcevia" open project, p.19 (1976)
14. Cf. note 8
15. See Gennari, C.: Operazione Arcevia. Comunità esistenziale senza comunità, senior thesis ins Contemporary Art History (2010-11) (advisor Crispolti, E.). Included in ABEC, Faldone: Operazione Arcevia
16. Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P., and especially Parisi, I.: "Operazione Arcevia" open project, pp. 28–32 and the section Diario delle operazioni (1976)

17. Crescentini, M., Cosmogonia urbana, Mimesis, Milano-Udine, see in particular the Afterword by Lorenzo Fiorucci, pp. 89–99 (2019)
18. Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany, P.: This is what repeatedly emerges from the accurate annotations and transcriptions of the recordings made during the meetings of the technical committee, p. 318 (1976)
19. Seicento artisti votano falce e zappa. In Tempo, 14, p. 107 (1976)
20. Burkhardt in Summa, F.: L'Arte della città, Regione Abruzzo, Pescara (1998)
21. See the debate with the politicians and administrators involved in Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany, P., pp. 447–463 (1976)
22. Parisi defines the ethical premises and the components of analysis in OA as belonging to these three points: the number of inhabitants and their provenance; the relationship with the environment and orographic study; artistic presences distributed so as to constitute a "continuing visual dialogue in all the paths taken by the community" Parisi, I.: Foto a Memoria, Nodo Libri, Como, p. 105 (1991)
23. Ivi, p. 6
24. Miotto, A. In Restany, P. In Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P., p. 23 (1976)
25. Ivi, p. 456
26. Gualdoni, F.: Percorso. In: Ico Parisi. La casa. Electa, Milano, p. 104 (1999)
27. Parisi, I.: Letter that was never sent to Bruno Zevi, 1984. In: ID., p. 110 (1991)
28. Crispolti, E., De Sanna, J., Miotto, A., Restany, P.: Ipotesi per una casa esistenziale, Carucci, Assisi-Roma (1974)
29. Parisi, I.: Operazione Arcevia. "Progetto aperto". In: Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P., p. 28 (1976)
30. Deggiovanni, P.: Ico Parisi. Parafrasi per un mito moderno. In: Ico Parisi: & disegni, Nuova Alfa Editoriale, Modena, p. 11 (1994)
31. See Crispolti, E.: Ipotesi per uno spazio di esistenza. In: Crispolti, E., De Sanna, J., Miotto, A., Restany, P. (1974)
32. Parisi, I, p. 101 (1991)
33. Parisi, I.: Percorrenza fotografica 1934–1976, Nani, Como (1977)
34. Ivi, Parisi himself explains: "up until 1972 [I used the photographic means] to memorize the encounters, for the research, and also for some of the choices. Afterwards, photography became a real and valid means for me, for architectural planning"
35. Crispolti, E., De Sanna, J., Miotto, A., Restany, P. (1974)
36. Miotto, A.: Meditazione sul "Progetto per una casa esistenziale". In: Crispolti, E., De Sanna, J., Miotto, A., Restany, P. (1974)
37. Parisi, I.: Operazione Arcevia. «Progetto aperto». In: Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P., p. 28 (1976)
38. The first public announcement of OA took place during a round-table discussion at the Inarch in Rome dedicagerd to the Casa esistenzialem, with Parisi, Crispolti, Restany in attendance. See Comunità esistenziale di Palazzo d'Arcevia. Notiziario n.1, Como, p.19 (1975)
39. Crispolti, E.: Realtà dell'Operazione Arcevia. In: Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P., p. 19 (1976)
40. Recorded and transcribed it was added to the Diario delle operazioni. In: Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P. (1976)
41. The recording of the conversation with Crispolti, held in 1979 for the Chair of Contemporary Art History in Salerno, is included in ABEC, Operazione Arcevia, audiovisual section
42. Ivi, p. 293
43. Ivi, p. 417
44. Ivi, p.144. Parisi,I.: (1991), p. 98

45. Ivi, p. 97
46. Parisi had already worked in the hillside landscape of Arcevia. For Bartoletti he had created the Padiglione di Caccia (Hunting Pavilion) in 1961, renewing the traditions of low-income housing with low and convergent volumes in the convivial central position of the dining room featuring a vast umbrella-like cover in larch, mimetic of the natural architecture of the oaks all around. The model would later be replicated in the cover for the outside veranda of the Hotel Corte dei Butteri, Osa, near Orbetello, Grosseto (1962). Padiglione di Caccia Arcevia Ancona. In: "Domus", n.417 (1964); Ico Parisi e Luisa, Serca, Chiasso (1970)
47. Parisi-Staccioli, Como 9 September 1975. In: Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P. (1976), p. 410
48. Ivi, p. 259
49. Ivi, p. 394
50. Ivi, p. 239
51. Ivi, pp. 426–427
52. Letter from Alik Cavaliere to Ico Parisi, Milano 6.9.1976 Fondo Parisi, Operazione Arcevia, Pinacoteca Civica Modena
53. Parisi-Staccioli, Como 9 settembre 1975. In: Parisi, I., Bartoletti, I., Miotto, A., Crispolti, E., Restany P. (1976), p. 239
54. Ivi 295
55. Ivi, p. 93
56. Ivi, p. 292
57. Ivi, p. 297
58. Gualdoni, F. Ico e Luisa. In Gualdoni, F (a cura di), Ico Parisi & architetture. Nuova Alfa editore, Bologna, p. 7 (1990)
59. A characteristic that excluded it from the attention of studies concerning the participative experiences of a cultural and political nature in the 1970s in Italy from A. Pioselli (2015) to M. Tanga (2020)
60. Catenacci, S.: "L'ambiente come sociale at the 1976 Venice Biennale": notes from a book that was never produced. In: In corso d'opera. Ricerche dei dottorandi in Storia dell'Arte della Sapienza, 1. Campisano, Rome (2015), p. 320
61. ASAC, Fondo Storico, Serie Arti Visive, 250, Arcevia, Comunicazioni stampa 95, La Biennale '76, "Operazione Arcevia" open project, typescript, p. 3
62. Catenacci, S., p. 320 (2015)
63. Crispolti, E.: Architettura in forma. Arte In, 10, 48, febbraio, p. 76 (1997)
64. "Art and Public Space", edited by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture and the Foundation for the School of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Rome, Silvana Editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo 2023. The conference had dedicated one of its study sections to the topic of updating the law on 2%. The proceedings are forthcoming. https://www.fondazionescuolapatrimonio.it/ricerca/arte-e-spazio-pubblico/
65. Crispolti, E.: Ambientalmente quarant'anni dopo "Volterra 73", "Gubbio 76" (e "Gubbio 79"): storia, critiche, prospettive. In L'esperienza dell'arte pubblica e ambientale tra storia e conservazione. Edifir, Florence, p. 27 (2020)