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Architecture for a creative city. Piacenza towards Expo

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Piacenza 2014

*from ecological landscape
to architectural design*

ARCHITECTURE
FOR A CREATIVE CITY
Piacenza towards Expo

OVER TURNING THE SOIL

introduction by Giuliana Bonifati



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The idea

The idea starts from the concept of "graft" and its reverberation, in the space and the time, which has the capacity to activate new processes of transformation and modification of the urban fabric. This process, based on the principles of connection and interaction between different parts of the city, many of them less used, defines new spaces that can be identified as open enclosures.

This "opening" that allows the interpenetration of parts of the city into new places, define a system which in the same time is protected but open, organized but free, where the walls are identified as a design element, not as an elements that separate.

The space find its identity with a physical, psychological and metaphysical opening towards an evolution in space and time that is defined in the process of transition between the enclosure and the labyrinth. Following this process of transformation sets the attempt to give a rational order, although represented by a sense of disorder and confusion.

The practice

The architectural practice is defined by the plastic modelling of the soil; the materia conceived as a unique element was kneaded



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by real operations in order to define a harmonious system consisted of overlapped shapes that intent to build a metaphysical landscape projected towards a new horizon. The carried out actions belonging to the process of modelling of the materia and closely linked to the primary element of the soil, are gestures of subtraction and addition taking different intensities.

To dig

The excavation subtracts materia to the mass, defining interior spaces. "The action of subtraction, either horizontally or vertically", can be considered as the maximum intensity of the gesture, "the result of this action is to create a cavity, a hollow space" [1]. "The excavation becomes a tool of finding its bowels, the proof of the buried past." [2]

To extrude

Addition of materia, generally transferred from one place to another, to form a rising again. The action tends to alter the morphological native soil, setting new orographic configuration, a new topography.

To cut

Crossing, pierce side to side the material mass, generating an emptiness. It is associated with the need to put in relation carved underground space with the external space and to guarantee continuity of the ground.

To carve

Cutting through the surface of the material, causing a scar on the ground to determine an inevitable interruption of the Earth's mantle. It is an action that does not end at the surface but continues in depth through the layers that define the material.

These actions are transformed into shapes, and from shapes to spaces. A cut can be a passage, a wall can be a separation or a connection; an excavation defines spaces, light and shadow; an extrusion, which is configured by the positioning of the subject previously extracted, generating volumes and shapes.

The project is consisted of an elevated and inclined monumental plate that defines the open spaces of the large square related to a system of minor open spaces, and under the soil, the space of the landscape museum. The platform with inclination to the south, assumes the function of the shell concealing the underground city.

The soil is inhabited by a system of geometrically regular spaces, interpenetrating one to another, giving rise to a controlled labyrinth, accepting the theme of the landscape in its different determinations.



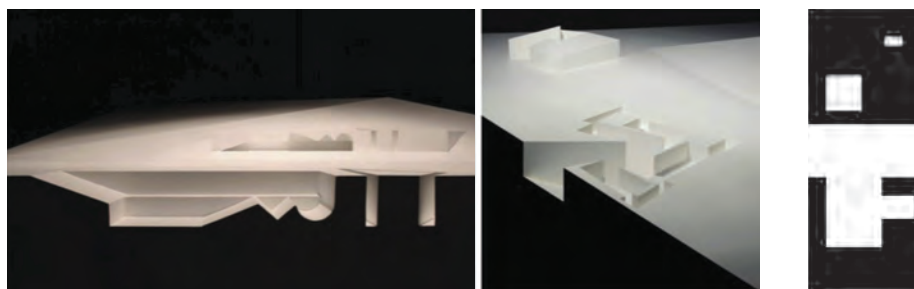
The landscape museum

Plato, in his dialogue *Timaeus*, writes: "Nature becomes landscape by remaining itself or through modifying *téchne*, enters into the human time". The landscape is closely related to the human glance, it is a movement, an interpretation, a criticism, feel and understand their surroundings. [3] Today the landscape is in the centre of the debate that tries to define its essence and conceptualize its meaning; this process leads to the abstraction of the reality in constant transformation. Space and time play a decisive role. The passage of time makes the landscape unique, fixing the current image.

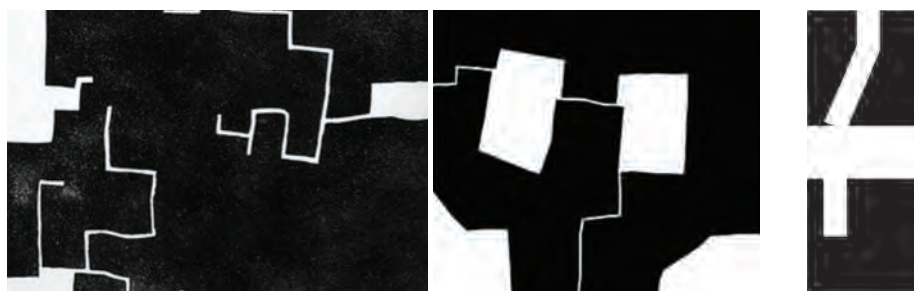
The landscape as an entity in continuous transformation, *laboratory* of living and building, it is simplistic to place it exclusively in naturalistic-environmental areas; the cities are complex landscapes, where interplay of the elements that affect the appearance have to be understand.

The project of a new museum of landscape, has the aim to decline and interpret the theme of the landscape, studying under three categories, which are explained and also related to the different layers of the architectural composition.

DIGGING



CUTTING



EXTRUDING



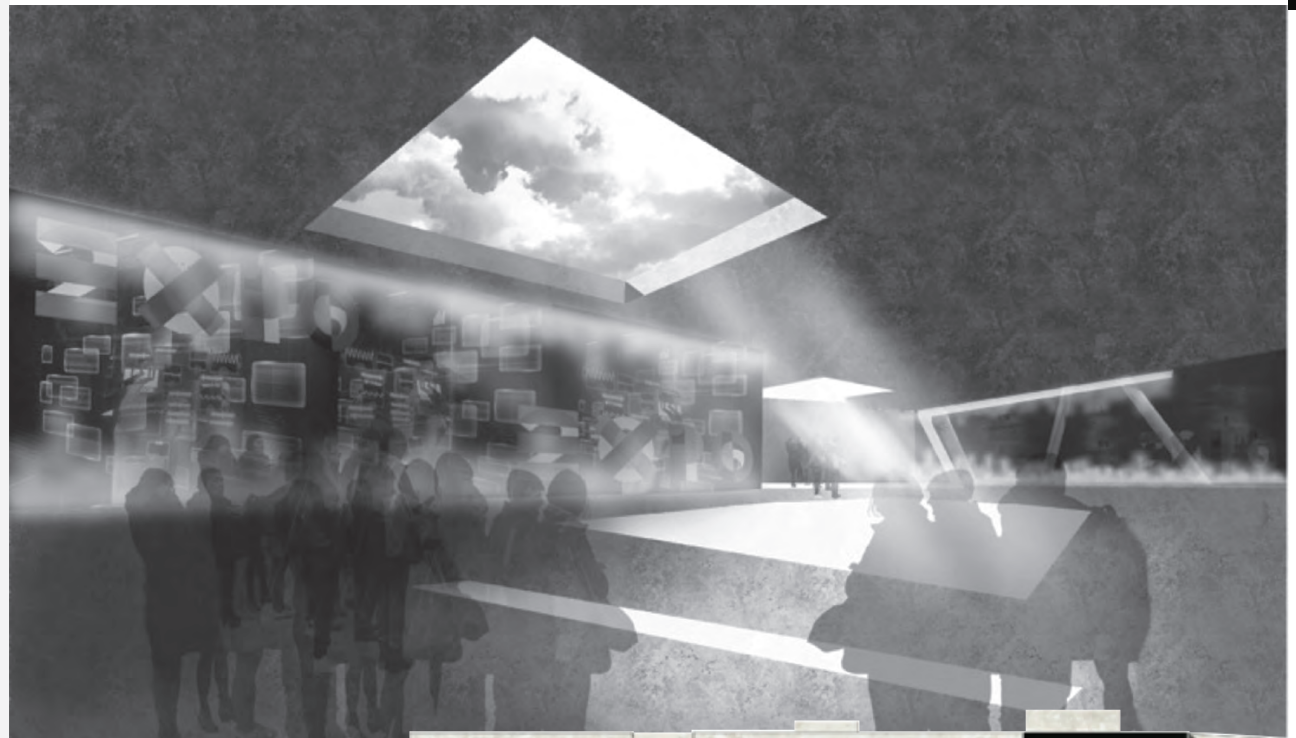
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Landscape as construction

The construction of the landscape, that unfolds in the project as the element of connection with the city, is meant as a metaphor for the transformative process that takes place as a common thread the periodical and metaphorical transition of the nature from the third landscape to controlled and designed built landscape. Breaking the wall that separates the city from the military area in the north part of the project, it is to become an area of the third landscape, which Gilles Clément defines it as a place left to all the organic beings that make up the territory in absence of human decision.

This process of gradual conquest of the nature give form to the progressive construction of the natural landscape through the controlled design of the spaces and the artificiality of the natural element, that from a tree becomes a pole, or a portal, from lawn becomes artificial cover.

Landscape as a representation



section

The second underground level hosts the places of the representation of the landscape, which is the real exhibition space, where the landscape is told in its various manifestations in history. Painting, poetry, sculpture are the tools for reaching the spectator. This space is designed in such way to accommodate the exposures permitting on one hand the interaction between each other giving rise to an exchange of information for the construction of a narration of the landscape, and on the other hand, the definition of concluded circumscribed thematic areas.

New multimedia landscapes

Inside the volume that wedges in the main enclosure, which is the layer "in between", is part of the media landscape. The media landscape is made up of all those high-tech devices, which allow the projection into the future of the landscape that until now has been considered only as tangible. Through the use of screens, projections, sound, light, the place becomes a dynamic space where the viewer has to interact through the senses and is projected towards a new future horizon.

The landscape of memory



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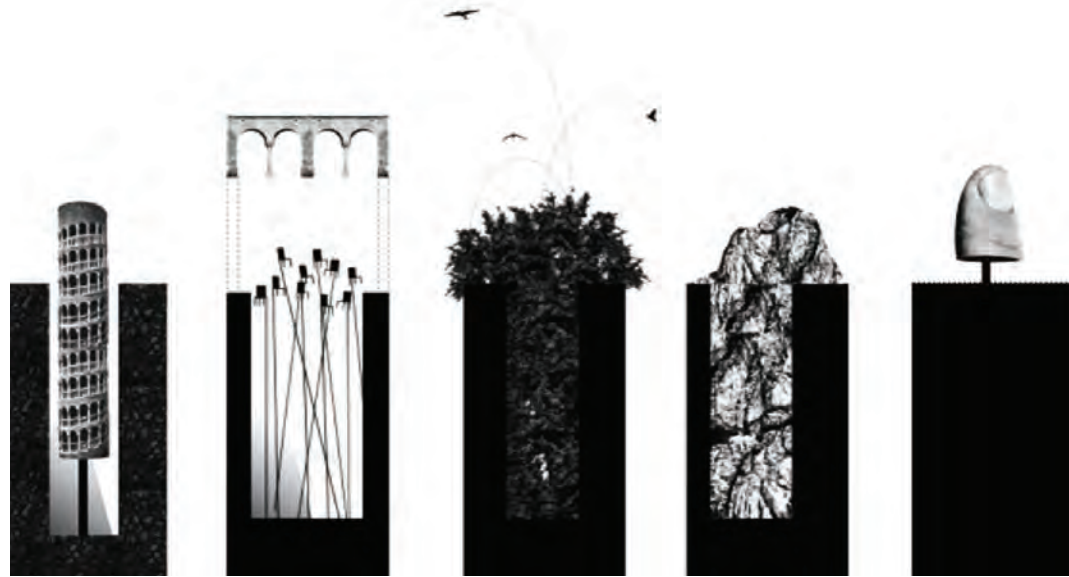


diagram - different action with the soil

The tower designates the entire architectural system, this element represents the section link between all these layered landscapes that are built in the comprehensive evaluation of the landscape of Piacenza. The memory, through the operative tool of the section, connects the different landscapes represented, which projecting in this hollow cylinder define a new landscape composed by multiple landscapes. Individual memories, read and ephemeral, overlap with collective memories, more solid and lasting, transmitting "eternal and immutable truths in the vortex of the flow and change" [4].

This operation is part of that process of regeneration of an abandoned place, reactivating and returning to the city.

[1] Luigi Cocchia, "L'Architettura del suolo", Alinea editrice, Firenze 2005.

[2] Rafael Moneo, "La solitudine degli edifici ed altri scritti".

[3] Massimo Venturi Ferriolo, "Percepire paesaggi. La potenza dello sguardo", Bollati - Boringhieri, 2009.

[4] David Harvey, 1993.

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