

CALL FOR PAPERS

San Rocco 6: Collaborations

San Rocco is interested in gathering together the widest possible variety of contributions. San Rocco believes that architecture is a collective knowledge, and that collective knowledge is the product of a multitude. External contributions to San Rocco might take different forms. Essays, illustrations, designs, comic strips and even novels are all equally suitable for publication in San Rocco. In principle, there are no limits – either minimum or maximum – imposed on the length of contributions. Minor contributions (a few lines of text, a small drawing, a photo, a postcard) are by no means uninteresting to San Rocco. For each issue, San Rocco will put out a “call for papers” comprised of an editorial note and of a list of cases, each followed by a short comment. As such, the “call for papers” is a preview of the magazine. The “call for papers” defines the field of interest of a given issue and produces a context in which to situate contributions.

Submission Guidelines: **A** External contributors can either accept the proposed interpretative point of view or react with new interpretations of the case studies. **B** Additional cases might be suggested by external contributors, following the approach defined in the “call for papers”. New cases might be accepted, depending on their evaluation by the editorial board. **C** Proposed contributions will be evaluated on the basis of a 500-word abstract containing information about the proposed submission’s content and length, and the type and number of illustrations and drawings it includes. **D** Contributions to San Rocco must be written in English. San Rocco does not translate texts. **E** All texts (including footnotes, image credits, etc.) should be submitted digitally in .rtf format and edited according to the Oxford Style Manual. **F** All illustrations and drawings should be submitted digitally (in .tif or .eps format). Please include a numbered list of all illustrations and provide the following information for each: illustration source, name of photographer or artist, name of copyright holder, or “no copyright,” and caption, if needed. **G** San Rocco does not buy intellectual property rights for the material appearing in the magazine. San Rocco suggests that external contributors publish their work under Creative Commons licences. **H** Contributors whose work is selected for publication in San Rocco will be informed and will then start collaborating with San Rocco’s editorial board in order to complete the preparation of the issue. Proposals for contributions to San Rocco 6 must be submitted electronically to mail@sanrocco.info before 30 September 2012.

Architecture is a collective knowledge produced through the efforts of a multitude. Within this multitude, two forms of collaboration unfold: a synchronic one, which connects producers operating in the same moment, and a diachronic one, which connects all design attempts in a multifaceted *Architectura Universalis*. Synchronic collaborations end up producing single things, crystallizing a multiplicity of desires in a single hybrid object. Diachronic collaborations emerge as relationships connecting distinct objects, with genealogies slowly (and unpredictably) developing across time and space. Synchronic collaborations are based on diachronic ones. The possibility of collaboration now relies upon a broader “agreement with” all previous architecture. To put it another way, collaboration today is based on collaborations of the past. Indeed, it is possible to collaborate precisely because there is a shared body of knowledge that provides the basis for agreement. Collaboration is possible because architectural knowledge is *one* and *given*, and thus inevitably *shared*.

Synchronic collaborations are, of course, accidental, for they are influenced by external factors and thus run the risk of failure. They might result in a sort of blur, a strange yet promising overlapping of separate worlds that encounter one another briefly (e.g., the San Rocco housing complex, the incredibly delicate first design for the Brera Academy proposed by Terragni, Lingeri, Figini and Pollini, or the astonishing compactness of De Renzi, Libera and Vaccaro’s second version of the Palazzo Littorio). Collaborations can produce intriguing dialogical works that are born from a controlled clash, collages whose constitutive components are roughly combined, with sharp breaks and brutal changes where they meet and overlap (e.g., the beautiful roughness of the Callaratese, especially because Aymonino was still not totally sold on Rossi at the time, or the sharp confrontation of Ammannati’s stiff courtyard and Vignola’s multi-layered exedra at the Villa Giulia, or the abysmal

distance separating the two Neoclassical restorations of the broken ends of the Colosseum). Collaborations depend upon a general discipline, a somehow anonymous *architecture without authors* that goes beyond the contributions of individuals (e.g., St Peter's as it was actually built in comparison to the distinct ideas of Bramante, Sangallo, Peruzzi, Raphael and Michelangelo). Collaborations can result in a sort of distortion, a displacement that somehow reconfigures the intellectual content of the design while introducing a certain estrangement into the object itself (e.g., Krier's drawings of Stirling's architecture or Isozaki's remix of Kahn and Tange in Tehran).

Collaborations can also fail, and in several ways. They can produce relatively generic compromises that somehow recall the boredom and uselessness of an all-star game (e.g., the Ministry of Public Health in Rio or the UN in New York). At their worst, collaborations can result in true disaster, and this usually involves a very personal argument (as occurred in the cases of both the Rothko Chapel and the Four Seasons Restaurant by Philip Johnson and Mark Rothko).

Diachronic collaborations result in completions, superimpositions, restorations. This type of collaboration was extremely common when monumental buildings took more than twenty years to complete. As a consequence, buildings were thought of from the very beginning as something that would take more than the lifetime of a single architect to be built, and would thus have to be handed off to others for completion. In these cases, the possibility for collaboration was inscribed within the object from day one: architecture's unavoidably long-term time frame forced architects to accept the virtual inevitability of collaboration and required them to adapt to the ambivalence of the architectural object. In the end, style did not matter that much (e.g., the surprising tolerance of the Gothic on the part of architects like Bramante and Vignola). As a result, collaborations involved a particular notion of precision, one that was neither mechanical nor modern, but rather more abstract, less obsessed with maintaining control and more open to the potentially positive results of misunderstandings. This kind of abstraction

was surprisingly tolerant. Construction was not just execution: formal decisions were not limited to the architect, who left undefined zones (Bramante, for instance, as opposed to Brunelleschi) where the contributions of workers could appear. Collaborations among architects somehow rested on a larger collaboration among masons. This process, of course, placed at lot of importance on the architects called upon to begin construction – for they defined the rules of the game – and to conclude it – for they eliminated the possibility of new alterations. So, in the case of St Peter's, the fundamental contributions to a century of collaboration were those of Bramante and Bernini, the first and the last.

Collaborations require a common ground. As far as collaboration in architecture is concerned, there are two fundamental possibilities: collaborations based on a shared grammar (e.g., as in the Renaissance) and collaborations based on shared extra-disciplinary values (e.g., the case of the Modern Movement). Of course, the first type, being easier and more down-to-earth, and avoiding complicated political/social/metaphysical arguments, is somehow the more effective (and far less subject to sudden crises of beliefs, bouts of depression, revisions, regrets, reconsiderations, Team X's committed defeatism, etc.). At the same time, however, these collaborations are also more predictable and, as "spiritual affinities", they can easily evolve into something entirely closed to anything outside of them (a collaboration in order *not to collaborate with anybody else*, as in the case of the "Tendenza").

Collaborations require organization, from the school of Raphael to McKim, Mead & White, and from the Bauhaus under Hannes Meyer to SOM: certain principles produce certain methods of production and, in the end, a certain set of forms. Raphael deliberately tried to erase the difference between his work and that of his apprentices. In the case of McKim, Mead & White, the sources of their extremely derivative work – mainly Roman Renaissance architecture as understood through Paul Letarouilly – became the everyday toolbox used in the production of a new kind of metropolitan architecture. Letarouilly's graphic standards were a code for

McKim, Mead & White; thanks to this code, it was possible for the firm's hundred employees to learn an efficient grammar and immediately use it in their designs. During his short-lived tenure at the Bauhaus, Hannes Meyer turned nihilism into a sort of didactic experience, systematically using collaboration as a device to restart design over and over. In a repeated act of collective erasure, architecture re-emerged purer than before every time.

San Rocco 6 tries to imagine potential forms of collaboration that would suit contemporary conditions of production for architecture. In the pages that follow, *San Rocco* presents a list of cases we would like to know more about.

• Eureka's •

On our favourite page of *S, M, L, XL* – page 644 – there is a wonderfully childish pastel drawing: an elevation comprising a grey rectangle with red, green and yellow dots (somehow resembling the skin of a swamp fish, like a carp, or of a poisonous toad) on top of a black-and-gold podium.

Below this, Rem Koolhaas wrote: "First formal drawing (Georges Heintz). Astonishingly absurd, astonishingly beautiful. Beyond all exploitation, there is also altruism at work: OMA – [a] machine to fabricate fantasy – is structured for *others* to have the eureka's."

• Abbasabad •

At a certain moment, somebody from the Pahlavi family asked for a gigantic master plan for a business district in Tehran. The architects selected for the job were Louis Kahn and Kenzo Tange. They both designed something, but then Kahn died in 1974. After that, Tange no longer wanted to be involved and left his design in the hands of Arata Isozaki, who was temporarily unemployed at the time. Isozaki had to combine the two architects' designs into a single master plan (a strange task, somehow reminiscent of Philip II's idea – which was immediately abandoned – to have Juan de Herrera merge the projects for the Escorial by Palladio, Tibaldi and Vignola). Ayatollah Khomeini, however, displayed no interest in the project.

• Callaratese •

Carlo Aymonino and Aldo Rossi were two pretty different architects when they designed the Callaratese housing complex. Some measure of curiosity in one another is still readable in their buildings, however, and a strange sense of competition, too – a competition in being committed, communist, intellectual. The Callaratese complex is a funny place indeed.

• Distorted •

The second competition for the Palazzo Littorio (Headquarters of the Fascist Party) was less glamorous than the first one: it involved a less fancy location (Viale Aventino instead of the Via dei Fori) and a less ambitious programme. This time, Adalberto Libera decided to team up with Mario De Renzi and Giuseppe Vaccaro. The new team abandoned the radicalism of Libera's proposal for the first competition and produced an unbelievably compact palazzo with a simple (and, at the same time, odd) trapezoidal plan. Somehow the baroque curves of the first Libera project got packed into the trapezoidal box. The proposal's restraint is impressive. In contrast to the complex design for the first competition, it is simply a block, a monumental, awkward, uncomfortable volume. As a result, every space inside is strangely distorted, as if it were melting in the hell of the city.

• Two Halves •

The Villa Giulia is divided into two halves, a round one by Vignola and a rectangular one by Ammannati. The two halves do not cohere with one another. They are also very different in style: the round part is flat and calm, while the rectangular one is edgy and sculptural. There is a gap that remains between them. A simple door attached to Ammannati's courtyard delicately remarks upon this infinite distance built into the project. The slow movement along the curve of Vignola's U-shaped porch leads the visitor *outside* the rectangular court. A complex dialogue of imperfectly mirroring spaces is activated. The visitor is endlessly invited to enter the building, and yet although you enter, and enter, and enter again, you are nonetheless always still on the outside. Everything is fake, particularly the world.

▪ Where Do the Rockets Find Satellites ▪

The Satélite Towers are located in Ciudad Satélite, in the northern part of Naucalpan, Mexico. The towers are the result of a collaboration involving Luis Barragán, Jesus Reyes Ferreira and Mathias Coeritz.

The project's five triangular prisms are conceived as a landscape monument, one of Mexico's first large urban sculptures, and are positioned at the intersection of Manuel Alvila Camacho Boulevard and the Paseo de la Primavera. Their triangular plan alters the visitor's perception of the towers depending on his or her point of view, resulting in an entirely distorting perspective and creating a surprising multiplicity of effects. The triangles weave their way through traffic, continuously reshaping the space between them. Coeritz originally intended the towers to be coloured in different shades of orange, in order to underline the spatiality of the complex by limiting all of its other aesthetic qualities (including colours), but the towers were ultimately painted red, blue and yellow.

▪ Brera Project 1 ▪

In the end, the design was too light, and too much steel was needed (considering the sanctions against fascist Italy at the time). The courtyards were too small (actually, they were not courtyards), and the building was too close to the old Brera palace. As a result, no building was built. Then Terragni/Lingeri and Figini/Pollini had a fight. The second (1938) and third (1940) designs were not particularly interesting: heavy, obvious, very generic modernist/fascist Italian architecture of the 1930s and '40s. Still, the Brera project 1, a collective work, remains – lighter, happier, simpler; no rhetoric, no pretentious “poetry”, no “purism”, no “futurism”, no provincial “modernism”, no provincial “classicism”, no “Sant’Elia”, no “symbols”, no “fascism as a house of glass”; Terragni's talent without Terragni's intellectual mediocrity.

▪ The House on the Kundmanngasse ▪

In 1925 Margaret Wittgenstein hires Paul Engelmann to design her new house on the Alleegasse in Vienna. In 1926 – with the design of the project already largely complete – the location is moved to the Kundmanngasse

and Ludwig Wittgenstein is paired with Engelmann to complete the design. Wittgenstein does not transform the overall plan (which was conceived for the former plot!) but introduces a number of small corrections in various rooms. He frantically changes the dimensions of the pavement slabs, and moves doors and alters ceiling heights by a few centimetres. He modifies the house with shifts that are never of more than a metre. It never occurs to him that he could modify the overall scheme instead.

▪ Two Collaborations, Four Seasons ▪

Was Philip Johnson a good architect? The design for the Four Seasons Restaurant inside the Seagram Building on Park Avenue in New York encourages us to think so. Of course, Mies's building played a role in influencing Johnson's approach. The result of the collaboration between the two architects is the starting point for a second collaboration. In 1956 Mark Rothko was offered a commission of \$35,000 to decorate the most exclusive room of the restaurant. “I hope to ruin the appetite of every son of a bitch who ever eats in that room,” Rothko admitted to John Fisher, the director of *Harper's Magazine*. His proposal, which was never realized once he decided to withdraw his paintings, would have made the “richest bastards in New York” feel as if they were “trapped in a room where all the doors and windows are bricked up”.

▪ Deere & Company ▪

When in 1957 Deere & Company asked Eero Saarinen to build its new headquarters in Moline, a city in north-western Illinois, Saarinen was busy with the complex curves of his proto-expressive project for TWA. The idea of the boxy corporate building complex did appeal to one half of the Saarinen practice, however. Not only had Saarinen himself set the standard for this prototypical collection of big boxes with his first major commission, his project for General Motors, but Roche and Dinkeloo, two of the chief architects in his own firm, had developed this model of corporate rationality to a decadent extreme.

The Deere project was no exception, and as a result of Saarinen's sudden death it became a brilliant epitaph

of big, open, ambiguous modernist corporate architecture designed with equally ambiguous authorship. The original Deere complex was a strange set of prehistoric modernist boxes connected with bridges that housed both people and tractors and was entirely clad with super-heavy COR-TEN steel and elegantly placed in classicist fashion on the shores of a little artificial lake. In 1975 matters got even more complicated, for at this point both Saarinen and Dinkeloo were dead and Kevin Roche was asked to extend the John Deere complex once again. In many ways Roche's extension follows the original layout of the site, but his architecture is nonetheless entirely new.

In accordance with his own typological discoveries, the flat, enclosed building turned inward on itself like a curiously lost winter garden in a sea of green it completely ignored.

• Lafayette Park •

Mies provided the details for Hilberseimer's master plan for Lafayette Park. The biggest urban development built by either of the two architects, Lafayette Park is ultimately successful because of what appears, at first glance, not to have been designed: the landscape. Recent accounts credit Alfred Caldwell as the American mediator between both Mies and Hilberseimer and, perhaps more importantly, German *Geist* and American pragmatism. The result is a modernist environment devoid of radical modernist principles that is nonetheless radical – a tabula rasa that preserved the trees, or a razor-sharp steel-and-concrete framework that only underlines the original landscape, which grew back fifty years after construction. If delaying construction rescues architecture from ideology, then this is certainly true in the case of Lafayette Park, for this remnant of idealized modernism became a lush backdrop for monumental (and somehow public) nature in the middle of a shrinking city.

• In the Crack of Dawn •

In 1992, Mullican and Wiener produced a small graphic novel. There are no people in it. The only things you see are a couple of axonometric views of a city of some kind and a set of slogans. *In the Crack of Dawn* seems to be

about a city that is just about to wake up, as if the two authors were breathing life into it together. As we would expect, Wiener's slogans evoke everything and nothing: "(Landscape) out there, (landscape) city . . . here (place), not quite there (place)" Their careful wording brings Mullican's imaginary world to life. Mullican had been developing a sort of parallel universe during much of the decade preceding its visual representation in the graphic novel. Still, until then, the different art pieces were representations of a personal universe, not representations of a city. Wiener's intervention turns Mullican's world into a real, albeit uninhabited, city. Neither as personal as Mullican nor as ephemeral as Wiener, the little book they collaborated on presents a strange architectonic construction: the city as a project.

• Berliner Lehre •

It is possible to make a case for perceiving Ungers as the non-practicing architect. If one accepts this, then it was Ungers the teacher who was the architect. As a teacher he was never alone. The ideas floating around the TU Berlin made perfect sense to younger, more talented minds. Many of the projects collected in each of the school's handsome reports (which were designed as a sort of magazine) stand out from the sea of sameness by displaying crucial ideas developed within the consistent graphic style employed; they are easy to spot. It was only in the context of the boundless production at the university that Ungers could create his virtual firm. It is an office of abundance, celebrating the saturation of work, in which only the very special rise to the top almost automatically. In retrospect, it prefigured the working methods of OMA, whose preference for the architectural exception follows a Darwinist *laissez-faire*ism curiously rooted in strict collectivism.

• Cadavre Exquis •

In 1978 Koolhaas and Zenghelis participated in the competition for the expansion of the residence of the Irish Prime Minister in Dublin. Hadid entered the competition with her own project, thereby ending her collaboration with OMA, although she did continue to teach with Koolhaas and Zenghelis at the AA. The theme of the competition was also assigned to the students

of their Diploma Unit. It comes as no surprise, then, that the two proposals share an almost identical general plan divided into two parts according to the programme. While Hadid went down her very idiosyncratic path of distortions of Suprematist figures and extreme gravity-defying design, Koolhaas and Zenghelis applied the Surrealist notion of the *cadavre exquis* that characterizes their very early competition proposals for historical locations in European city-centres. One part of the project was designed by Koolhaas (the residence of state guests), and the other, by Zenghelis (the Prime Minister's residence); then they were joined in a Lautréamontian way as the "resultant of the fortuitous co-existence of two autonomous structures". In their bigger projects, this method was capable of working as a management tactic that facilitated the collaboration of the group's members – who were still not organized as a proper office at the time – despite their nomadic movement between London, Rotterdam and Athens. In the case of the Irish Prime Minister's residence, it produced a sort of subconscious hybrid: a glimpse of the most exotic OMA, where the two personalities clearly emerge in all the richness of their individual potential. Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis's architecture, beyond all further packaging.

▪ Social Housing in Locarno ▪

As time has passed, all of the claims asserting the supposed affinities between the members of the so-called Ticinese school have revealed themselves to be nothing more than a fictional, purposeful construction. Nevertheless, certain collective oeuvres have achieved a tremendous level of quality, one that clearly goes beyond the mere sum of the individual talents, thus showing that the shared repertoire of modern architecture was at least capable of setting up a mutual understanding of the different available poetics. Just such a delicate balance can be found in the social housing complex designed by Luigi Snozzi and Livio Vacchini for the city of Locarno in 1964. Vacchini's structural(ist) take on modernism fortunately reduces Snozzi's hermetic purism, while the sensitivity of the latter softens the rigidity of the former. The design is a tender, Lilliputian megastructure.

▪ San Rocco ▪

San Rocco is a social housing complex made of a few larger courtyards immersed within a sea of smaller ones. In the project, two fragments of a potentially endless array of courtyards are separated and slightly rotated. You have the suspicion that the fragments were separated by some sort of accident – what Rossi calls a "fact". The arbitrariness of history appears in the depressed outskirts of Milan. You are left to wonder where this history comes from. Something mysterious remains trapped within the design's stubborn rationality. In contrast with Crassi's typical work, the didactic explanation is missing. And contrary to Rossi's usual work, there are no personal memories. Here rationality and irrationality both belong to the city, not to the architects.

▪ Flamengo Park ▪

Flamengo Park is seven kilometres long and has a total area of 120 hectares. The park was designed by Afonso Reidy and Roberto Burle Marx from 1954 to 1959. It provides space for an expressway, an artificial beach, banks, bridges, tunnels, museums, monuments, recreational areas and, above all, more than 1,000 plants and trees. Burle Marx believed that the collection, identification, propagation and recomposition of the Brazilian flora in urban parks in such large quantities and in such striking compositions was a way to re-build an intimate relationship between the citizens and flora of Brazil. Flamengo Park is an *aterro*, meaning that it is completely artificial, for an *aterro* is an area reclaimed from the sea through the addition of soil or landfill. In this case, the Aterro do Flamengo was created through the destruction of the Morro Santo Antonio, a mountain situated in the centre of the city. As a result, one of the most famous parks in the world, the largest green area in Rio de Janeiro, is a fake; it is thus not so different from The Palms in Dubai, just designed a bit better.

▪ Rivera and Kahlo's House ▪

The studio-houses of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo and the small photographic pavilion attached to them for Guillermo Kahlo were designed by Juan O'Gorman, a personal friend of Rivera, and built in San Angel Inn, a neighbourhood in Mexico City. O'Gorman created a

home strictly related to the artist couple: two smooth concrete blocks that are independent of one another yet linked by a narrow bridge connecting their rooftops. The red block represents Diego and the blue block represents Frida, while the bridge connecting the two symbolizes the bond of love between them (although, in the end, they didn't live in the houses together for very long). The house is a modernist *machine à habiter* with a romantic, colourful touch. It looks like the factory that produced the entire aesthetic world we associate with modern Latin America, from García Márquez to Maradona. Protected by fences made of cactuses, Frida and Diego ran the factory (half Willy Wonka and half Willy Coyote) producing the Marxist candies they wanted to distribute to the entire world.

▪ **Ronald Davis House (or the Collaborative Illusion)** ▪

In 1972 Frank O. Gehry completed a large box-like residence and atelier for the painter Ronald Davis. Situated in the hills of Malibu, the simple, corrugated-steel volume transported the art-friendly typology of the loft space outside the city. In its extreme simplicity, the project was quintessentially Gehry at the beginning of the seventies: a single low-tech volume dominated by diagonals in both section and plan. Here, however, more than abstractly referring to a group of anonymous buildings in Los Angeles, the geometrical distortions of the box seem to quote the work of the client, who at that time was busy exploring the line between two-dimensional and three-dimensional representation. As in a Davis painting, from certain angles it is hard to judge whether the house might be a highly distorted volume whose roof is standing in front of the observer, or a flat screen divided into areas with textures following different patterns. The perspectival illusion is enhanced by the finishing of the roof (the same dark corrugated steel that covers every surface) and by the large irregular skylight placed in the middle of it, which is far too similar to a conventional (i.e., vertical) opening. The house is a false perspective for a painter of false perspectives.

So what about Gerhard Richter's house by Roger Diener? Or Anselm Kiefer's house by Ricardo Bofill, or Piero's house by Alberti?

▪ **Krier / Stirling** ▪

Leon Krier worked for James Stirling because he had been impressed with Stirling's architecture from a distance. In many ways, after he joined Stirling's practice he was disappointed. The flow of information and inspiration he had imagined streaming from master to apprentice had turned out to be much more ambiguous. Krier's work was influential for Stirling, however. His peculiar black-and-white perspectives, vulnerable and seemingly unfashionable, served as a springboard to another universe for Stirling. There has been a lot of debate about the authorship of these simple linear drawings, in retrospect it has become clear that this body of work was the key to their collaboration. This is particularly interesting given that perspectival images were never part of Stirling's repertoire; he drew mechanical axonometric drawings. Krier's perspectives pushed Stirling's work toward a dream of the city, maybe not the real city, but a city nonetheless.

▪ **Novissime (or a Collective Exercise in Subtraction)** ▪

In 1964, a large group of architects and planners from the architecture university of Venice (IUAV) led by the school's dean, Giuseppe Samonà, and comprising a bunch of its young assistant professors – including Costantino Dardi, Luigi Mattioni, Valeriano Pastor, Cigetta Tamaro, Luciano Semerani, Egle Renata Trinccanato and Gianugo Polesello – participated in the competition for what was then the new island of Tronchetto in Venice. Their entry, which was significantly (and ironically) called "Novissime", or "the very new (banks)", reveals a highly specific attitude regarding the introduction of modern architecture into historical contexts. When asked to provide a realistic design for the Tronchetto, the team responded by rethinking the urban system of Venice as a whole. They proposed the removal of the two bridges connecting the city with the mainland and their replacement with an elevated monorail. Two sleek, oblong objects set in the lagoon close to the city's edge were supposed to act as transportation interchanges. Along with these, to continue the process of a physical erasure of modernity, all of the edges of the city were to be returned to their state in the 18th century, before an imperfect version of modernity had clumsily ruined

the city's shape. As a consequence of this approach, obviously, the Tronchetto island did not appear in the design. The Novissime project is a utopia, one that expresses more than a hint of nostalgia for the city's supposed golden age. Radically modern yet also radically nostalgic, the Novissime proposal remains a tremendous collective manifesto designed by a bizarre group of extremely different personalities who never tried working together again. It was a powerfully radical vision for the future of Venice, one achieved only through erasures. Here the eraser was the ultimate common ground for a heroic attempt at creative nihilism.

• Cemetery •

The cemetery was designed by Asplund and Lewerentz over a period of more than thirty years through a very pragmatic collaboration: they divided the tasks, so each designer took care of different elements. After Lewerentz's exit from the project the design was continued by Asplund alone. The design focused on the landscape, although it nonetheless somehow disregarded it. The beautifully designed sequence of steps leading up to the place of contemplation/remembrance at the top of the hill ends with a vista overlooking the buildings, offering the rather sinister view of the crematory's chimney and the smoke rising into the sky.

• Palazzo Thiene •

Inigo Jones reported that "Scamozzo" and "Palmo" had told him that Palazzo Thiene was designed by Giulio Romano and executed by Palladio. This sounds reasonable. The Thiene family had close ties to the Dukes of Mantua and it is probable that they wanted to have a design by their ducal architect. Whether this is true or not, Giulio died in 1546 and the job was passed on to Palladio, who always treated the work as his own (Jones: "yet Palladio sets yt downe as his owne"). Palladio probably flattened the façade and tempered the exuberant decoration originally envisaged by Giulio. Today the palazzo sits incomplete and silent, large and empty. Something is quietly missing, but nobody knows what. Both architects probably knew this and, in their different ways, did not care. There is no particular mystery here, just the discreet charm of bourgeois patrons who wanted to

become aristocracy, and just the perfect suitability of classicism (no matter what kind) to the urban context of the wealthy north Italian plains.

• Binoculars •

In 1985 Claes Oldenburg, Coosje van Bruggen and Frank O. Gehry were invited to hold a workshop in Milan. As it happens, many drawings and models were produced and one of these was a small design for a theatre and library in the form of a standing pair of binoculars. By early 1986 the models had become a fixture on Gehry's desk. As Oldenburg once remarked, "One day we received a telephone call from Gehry and Jay Chiat, a client, who had been pondering a maquette in progress for the new Chiat/Day advertising agency to be located on Main Street in Venice, California, not far from the Pacific Ocean. The design so far consisted of two highly disparate structures, one boat-like, the other tree-like. Now Gehry wanted to join them in the centre with a third structure of a sculptural character that would mediate between the two and anchor the building, but he was not yet sure how to define it. Looking for something to demonstrate what he had in mind, he placed the little binoculars – which serendipitously almost fit the scale of the model – in the centre of the Chiat/Day façade."

Oldenburg's binoculars make Gehry's building look clumsy. The *objet trouvé* of his beloved artist puts his architecture into question. It is hard to understand why he had to create so much trouble for himself with such a specific shape when so many (relatively harmless) other ones were available.

• True Love •

The intense relationship between Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers lasted for a decade. It was a professional affair that played itself out in well-tempered environments: home extensions, industrial housing, innovative hospital modules and experimental boxes. Then came the Beaubourg: a public square together with a gigantic multifunctional box open to almost every possible cultural programme. The Beaubourg functioned like an urban Swiss Army knife, ready to host never-ending Summers of Love. The 1971 competition entry's edges were

later softened by unavoidable legislative restrictions and construction challenges. The programmatic public participation and layout flexibility had to be reduced. But in the end, the Beaubourg did not break its promise to flood the Marais with infinite metropolitan energy. It is the *Power of Love*.

▪ **Copy / Paste** ▪

In order to produce the main waiting room of Penn Station, McKim, Mead & White copied the frigidarium of the Baths of Caracalla and enlarged it by twenty percent. The operation lends support to the idea of automatic architecture. Architects seem to be highly irrelevant in the face of a common architectural grammar to which they must yield. Penn Station celebrates the amazing and annihilating triumph of an architecture without authors. Individual contributions disappear within a radically public and anonymous knowledge. Producers are just required to display a certain delicacy in the way they couple given solutions with given plots, and talent must only suppress itself in a silent act of devotion to the city. Yet this combination is strange, so much so that it is *almost obvious*. Common sense seems to enter the scene at exactly the same moment that it makes an exit. Why, in the end, would one make a station in the form of an ancient bath complex? Why would one hide all this disciplinary knowledge in the complicated, yet totally unspectacular, transplantation of the frigidarium of the Baths of Caracalla to the middle of a major 20th-century railway station?

▪ **Neue Wache** ▪

In 1816 Schinkel built the Neue Wache, a guardhouse for the troops of the Prince of Prussia, in the form of a free-standing quadrangular building. The structure is framed by four sturdy corner towers and is introduced by a pronaos. Over a century later, Tessenow won the competition to transform the building into a war memorial dedicated to the victims of the German wars. Beyond the elegantly massive Doric pronaos, Tessenow staged an impressive, almost empty space composed of stone revetment on walls and floor and a flat, white ceiling. An oculus lets light in. Almost as a reaction against Schinkel's historicism, Tessenow renounced his usual

citations of the classical language and designed what is potentially his most abstract architectural work. It is, however, impossible not to relate the open central oculus to the one in the Pantheon: this solution provides us with new insight into the sequence of spaces Tessenow set up. Thus, the combination of Schinkel's pronaos with the smooth, vast inner space with its oculus seems to rewrite the sequence found in the Pantheon in a simpler, squarish German version.

▪ **Dress Sexy at My Funeral, My Good Wife, for the First Time in Your Life** ▪

Johnson's most ambiguous small building is probably the one he couldn't finish. Johnson has never been the king of ambiguity, and blunt as his towers and complexes were, even his small buildings – including the glass house – read as architectural one-liners. These kinds of one-liners are difficult to pair with an obscurist as dark as Mark Rothko. When Rothko was asked by the De Menil family to create a pavilion for all religions, Johnson-the-chameleon seemed the obvious choice as the architect to design the installation. Perhaps in a monumental overreaching, the architecture was supposed to support the canvas of the paintings following a Semperian ideal with which Johnson must have sympathized. Unfortunately, the painter's heavy, autonomous work did not allow much room for architectural frivolity. The architect was supposed to provide the backdrop, one that served the needs of the artwork. However, Johnson, who called himself and architects in general whores, did not exactly feel that way, and the proof lies in the different incarnations of the form of the odd building – a temple, a folly. Perhaps the building's design was too funny; Rothko is not known for his great sense of humour. Whatever the case may have been, the delayed yet eventually completed chapel displays a surprising simplicity in all its clumsiness.

▪ **Jefferson and/versus Hamilton;**

Jefferson and/versus L'Enfant; and McKim, Burnham, Olmsted and/versus Jefferson ▪

America is a grid filled up by nature, and this grid defines nature as something to be conquered. America was indeed conquered by restless armies of private

speculators who “conquered” land in order to sell it back to farmers. The result is a country famously lacking peasants and villages (see Tocqueville and the amazing Sombart’s *Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten kein Sozialismus?*). The capital had to represent this country of speculators who liked to think of themselves as farmers. So, there was supposed to be a grid because the whole country was divided up by a grid. In addition, the metropolitan structure required to make this landscape efficient had to fit into the layout of the city. Jefferson’s ambivalent grid (and its complex relationship with Jefferson’s idea of nature) had to be combined with Hamilton’s awareness of the need for a centralized (metropolitan) hierarchy. The political conflict/collaboration between Jefferson and Hamilton survived first in the conflict/collaboration between Jefferson and L’Enfant, and then later in the urban layout of Washington, D.C. Jefferson sketched a proposal, a grid to be built south of Georgetown. L’Enfant in turn proposed a radial system with thirteen centres (the number of federated states at the time). The final result is a combination of the two. In 1900, 109 years after the design of the Jefferson/L’Enfant plan, the McMillan Commission – whose members included, among others, D. Burnham, F. L. Olmsted, Jr., and C. F. McKim – undertook a restoration of the previous design, extending the Mall and relocating Union Station. Shortly after the Chicago Columbian Exposition, which was perhaps the only brief moment in which the U.S. really trusted cities, the most convinced metropolitan architects ever to emerge on American soil united to try make the American capital into a truly urban realm.

▪ Restorations of the Colosseum ▪

The Valadier restoration of the western portion of the Colosseum (1820) is a polite Neoclassical completion of the four orders, simply built with brick and using travertine only for the bases and the capitals. The Valadier buttress mildly slopes down, widening by one bay at each level. The ancient monument could be preserved with relative ease. According to Valadier, there was no gap to bridge, for architecture had not changed much in the last thousand years. In contrast, the Stern restoration (1806) on the eastern part of the building looks

like the desperate last-minute effort of a drunken Cyclops determined to stop his cave from crumbling. Stone blocks look as if they had been frozen while falling into the enormous plain-brick buttress. With only fifty metres and just fourteen years separating the two restoration efforts (with Stern’s restoration being the earlier!), the two buttresses establish totally different relationships with the past. Here idyllic and apocalyptic views of classicism coincide in the very same building that once give birth to them.

▪ Vkhutemas Exercises ▪

Vkhutemas (Higher Art and Technical Studios) was a school founded in Moscow in 1920 that lasted only seven years. The school’s goal was incredibly ambitious: to create a totally new kind of art that would correspond to the “new man” who had appeared after the Revolution. Expectations were high and criticism emerged quickly, starting with Rodchenko in 1923. The history of Vkhutemas is torn between this amazing ambition and the disappointment that followed. In the short time between its launch and its failure, it produced some delicate, amazing, mysterious objects. Some of these objects are preserved, mostly anonymous models that do not betray their immense desires. It is not easy to decipher the meaning or scope of these objects, which lie somewhere between sculpture and architecture. Nonetheless, the collection emanates an incredible energy, like a complete formal world that was never realized, or a kindergarten of unborn dreams.

Facing page:
Architects and officials
at the World’s Columbian
Exposition in Chicago in
1892, photographed by C.
D. Arnold.
Historic Architecture
and Landscape Image
Collection, Ryerson and
Burnham Archives, The Art
Institute of Chicago, Digital
File #20540.
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The call for papers for *San Rocco 6: Collaborations* will be exhibited at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale in the form of a collection of objects displayed on a table. We would like to thank all of the people who helped us produce these objects.