SAN ROCCO ISLANDS
#1 Winter 2011

San Rocco
Dorsoduro 1685/A
I-30123 Venezia
+39 041 0994628
www.sanrocco.info
mail@sanrocco.info

Editor
Matteo Ghidoni

Editorial Board
Matteo Costanzo, Francesca Pellicciari, Giovanni Piovene, Giovanna Silva, Pier Paolo Tamburelli

Graphic Design
pupilla grafik, Salottobuono, Paolo Carpi

Copy Editor
Krystina Stermole

Website
Michele Marchetti,

San Rocco is an idea by:
2A+P/A, baukuh, Stefano Craziani, Office KGDVS, pupilla grafik, Salottobuono, Giovanna Silva

For information about San Rocco or to offer your support please visit www.sanrocco.info or contact us at support@sanrocco.info.

San Rocco is published three times a year.

San Rocco uses Arnhem and Ludwig typefaces, designed by Fred Smeijers in 2001/2002 and 2009. They are published by Ourtype.

Paper: Munken Linx, 100 g/m^2
Cover: Fedrigoni Tatami, 250 g/m^2

Printed in February 2011 by Publistampa Arti Grafiche, Pergine Valsugana (Tn).

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San Rocco is registered at the Tribunale di Venezia. Registation number n.15, 11/10/2010.

ISSN 2038-4912

On the previous page: Model of Fort Boyard by MONADNOCK. Photograph by Bas Princen
Fort Boyard: the Voluntary Prison of Architecture or the futile frolic of Sebastien de Vauban? Above all, it is the perfect refuge for sidelined divas and former starchitects who are handpicked to live out their last days in this secure fortress in the middle of the Atlantic. They are fiercely attracted to this remote community because of the overexposure it provides thanks to the television shows broadcast from it around the world. Once you're in, this bastion of smugness and divertissement forces you to participate in game shows as one of their flamboyant cast. Tough competitions play themselves out around the clock, including solving de Vauban's riddle that "it would be easier to catch the moon with your teeth than build a replica of Fort Boyard", and the participants are guaranteed to have the full attention of all cameras present. The purpose of victory is ambiguous, as the divas tend to flee at the first opportunity due to a lack of elegant distractions. The architects, on the other hand, being accustomed to providing free labour, remain there until the end of their days, surrounded by the joy of perfect geometry. *Job Floris*

EDITORIAL

An island is any piece of land that is surrounded by water.
An island is any object lost in an endless extension of a uniform element. As such, the island is *isolated*.
The island is by definition remote, separated, intimately *alternative*.
The island is *elsewhere*.
Islands can be natural or artificial: atolls, rocks, volcanos, oases, spaceships, oil rigs, carriers.
In his *L'île déserte*, Gilles Deleuze divides islands into the *oceanic* and the *continental*. Oceanic ones are "originary, essential islands". Continental ones are "accidental, derivative islands".
San Rocco 1 will try to use *oceanic* and *continental* as categories to explore *the possibility of architectural islands*, either literally or by analogy.
Oceanic islands are the *radical* islands, truly *isolated*, not only in space, but also in time. Oceanic islands have no past. Oceanic islands are immediately a "new world", a reconstruction, a miniature, a utopia. Oceanic islands need to contain everything, because they cannot rely on anything else. Oceanic islands are "a world", one that appeared all of a sudden. Oceanic islands are fortresses (and fortresses are always doomed to surrender). Contrary to an archipelago, which is *a project of a civilization*, an oceanic island is a project of a world (and *a project of escape*).
Continental islands, on the contrary, are the product of the erosion of a continent. Continental islands are linked to something that exists close by or that existed sometime before. Like icebergs, they are the ruins of what previously contained them. Continental islands are fragments. They presuppose a totality (either lost or promised), to which they belong. Continental islands can be part of a larger ensemble: a continent, an archipelago, a city. Continental islands are "urban" islands. They host the domesticated heterotopias that are necessary in a city: prisons, zoos, hospitals, theme parks.

TWO DESERTED ISLANDS

Mark Lee

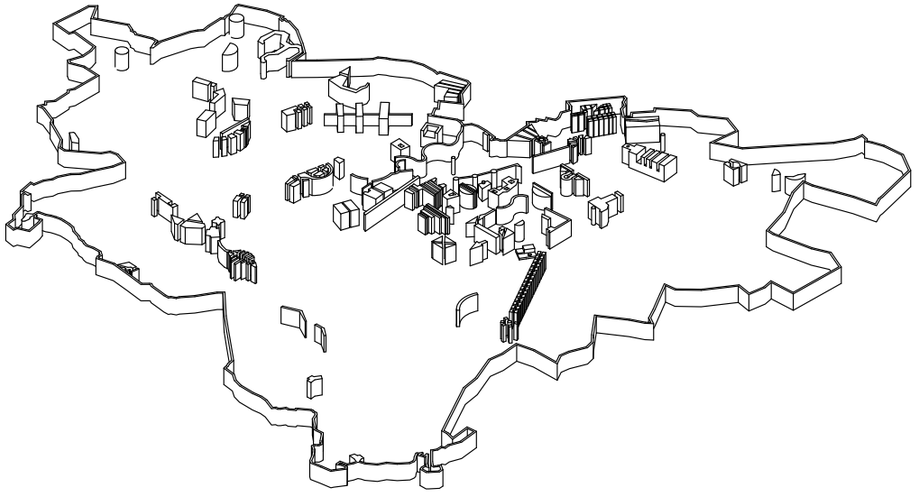
Islands and Boundaries

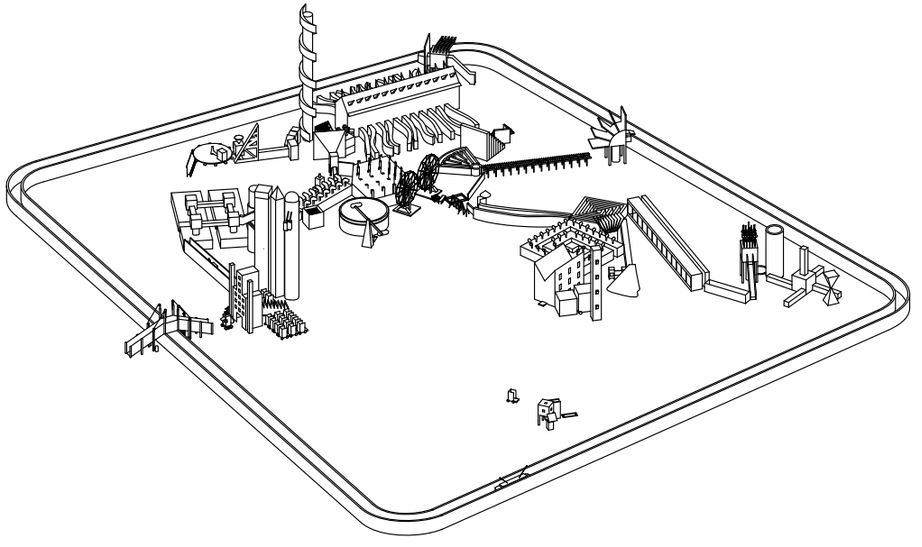
While recent research in architecture has generated a set of theoretical inquiries into the dissolution of boundaries, this trajectory is being countered by the opposite propensity for a search for limits and the decisive definition of borders. On one hand, the impetus behind the dissolution of boundaries, whether substantiated by desires for interconnectivity, indeterminacy or multiplicity, has seemingly reached an impasse. On the other hand, the proliferation of privatized, single-use programs such as gated communities, special economic zones or tax havens has reinvigorated a renewed interest in segregated organizations and their impact on cities.

Consequently, the study of island and archipelago organizations and their potential as generative models in the contemporary city has gained momentum within current discourse. Rather than viewing such island-like monocultures as fissures within the inclusive mentality of globalization, these organizational models provide opportunities to promote alternative forms of connectivity through the precise demarcation of limits and borders. Characterized by impermeable, hard boundaries and limited checkpoints, island and archipelago organizations are spatial segregation taken to the extreme, a world of fragmentation where definition triumphs over blurring, separation over combination, destination over nomadism.

Two Berlin Islands

Given Berlin's seven-hundred-year history as a repository of island organizations of varying degrees of effectiveness, certain models that responded to the city's specific social political circumstances at





Facing page: O. M. Ungers's "Green Archipelago" and J. Hejduk's "Victims".