

**SAN ROCCO • COLLABORATIONS** 2A+P/A on Memphis \* Sandra Bartoli and Silvan Linden on Eileen Gray and Le Corbusier \* Maria Bergamo on Venetian stonemasons \* Bernardina Borra on Co-op architecture \* Ludovico Centis on Le Corbusier in La Plata \* Benedict Clouette and Marlisa Wise on Venturi and Scott Brown in Baghdad \* Roberto Damiani on pedagogical experiments by Colin Rowe \* Job Floris on Kahn and Venturi \* Fabrizio Gallanti on copyright in architecture \* Francesco Garofalo on De Renzi, Libera and Vaccaro \* Kersten Geers and Andrea Zanderigo explore the double life of the Gallarate project \* Hamed Khosravi on Kahn, Tange and Isozaki in Tehran \* Giovanni La Varra on the same project according to Kahn, Stirling and Ungers \* Markus Lüscher on Boston's Custom House \* Daniele Pisani on the house on the Kundmannngasse \* Valter Scelsi on Casa Malaparte \* Arturo Scheidegger on VKhUTEMAS \* Pier Paolo Tamburelli on McKim, Mead & White \* Oliver Thill on the Neue Wache \* Federico Tranfa on Milan's metro \* with photos by Carlo Cisventi, Bas Princen and Giovanna Silva

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# EDITORIAL

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 today 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 Gallarate, 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 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 zones of no control (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 a lot of importance on the architects called upon to begin construction – for they defined the rules of the game – and to conclude it – for these 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, ...). 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 an extremely derivative type of 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 the design of the new city. 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.