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## FORGOTTEN ARCHITECTURE

indecisions on time and history, environment and its construction. some things, vague in their relation with time and architecture, will not be explained here. confusion rises. there's a mess. the history is behind our back. will it overtake us one day? will our presence on this planet be forgotten in the future?

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*la morte non è nel non poter comunicare, ma nel non poter più essere compresi [1].*

passing is something unavoidably linked with life and human existence. the fleetingness is time. *we can build only if we are able to dwell time. so far, architecture has been considered in its relation with space. the fact that the space – occupied, disposed, ordered and built by architecture is a historical space, has been mostly ignored. a space where we do not build like the ancients did even if we live there like they did. therefore what has changed is the way of life, the way we inhabit a space, and this change is the sign of the times. so architecture should be considered in its relation with time [2].*

*écrire, écrire n'importe quoi. tout se qui me passe par la tête: les carotes sont cuites...[3].*

time and history, from a practical point of view, are the same thing. due to their deep *aesthetical* and conceptual great work of cleansing, things that were mediocre or not good enough are gone. therefore our conscious is based on what was good enough to last, what was sifted out is no longer available as far as cognition and building are concerned. for good and bad, we are all fruits of selective evolution where some things get eliminated.

we build our future on this selective, sifted, idealized and ideal history. life used to be so much better!

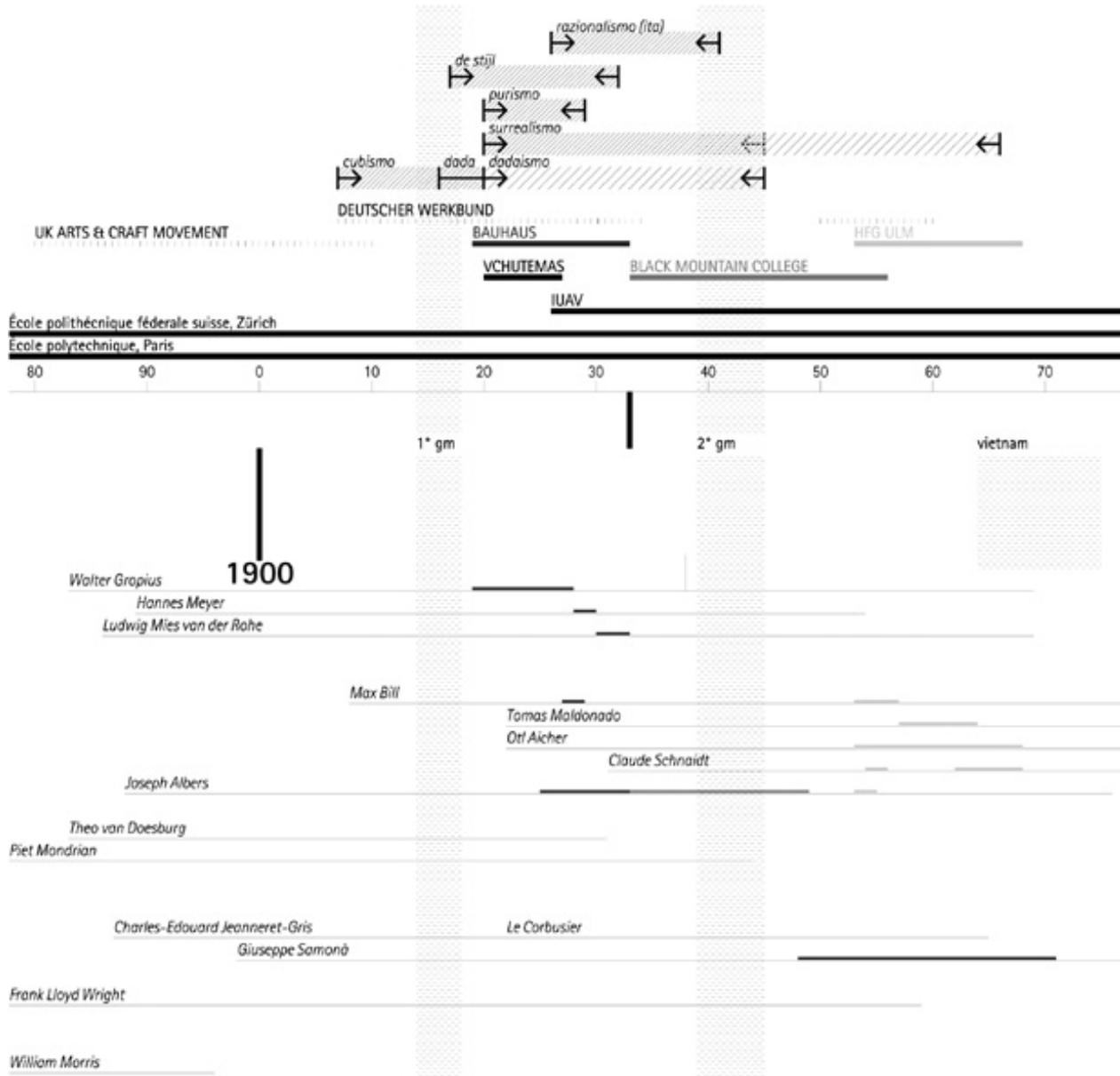
now it's disgusting (architecture is so ugly!) good old days – so beautiful instead.

*es gibt'sienoch, die guten dinge* it's a slogan of *manufactum*, a network of resellers and on-line shop with *these good old things* – perfectly reliable, of a craft-work quality, typical for that obviously better past we miss so much. we do not even care a lot about rather strong industrialization, smelling like *werkbund*... or even pre-*werkbund* if one can find things designed by the *bauhaus*, from *wagenfeld* to *brandt*, as well as *bialetti* coffee makers and *swissfix* pencils...

*a mia madre piacevano molto le feste, le feste come questa: oggi sarebbe venuta qui. valentina, ti ricordi quando ci comprava le "nogatine": metà cioccolatino metà caramella. le "nogatine", oggi non le fanno più. a ottobre un giorno arrivava a casa e diceva: "indovinate cosa vi ho portato...". ma noi lo sapevamo già, erano i primi mandarini della stagione. ora, invece, ci sono le ciliegie tutto l'anno, le fragole tutto l'anno, ma che ricordi avranno un giorno questi bambini, eh?! [4].*

however, the past was also made of strong smells and miasmas described by *carlomariacipolla* [5]. a description terrifying and precise enough to give us a sensorial picture opposite to the architecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. like horse lanes of new paris described by *Baudelaire* [6]:

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schools & teachers, partial timeline, lorenzo cotti, 2009

*eh! quoi! vous ici, mon cher? vous, dans un mauvais lieu! vous, le buveur de quintessences! vous, le mangeur d'ambrosie! en vérité, il y a là de quoi me surprendre.*

*– mon cher, vous connaissez ma terreur des chevaux et des voitures. tout à l'heure, comme je traversais le boulevard, en grande hâte, et que je sautillais dans la boue, à travers ce chaos mouvant où la mort arrive au galop de tous les côtés à la fois, mon auréole, dans un mouvement brusque, a glissé de ma tête dans la fange du macadam. Je n'ai pas eu le courage de la ramasser. J'ai jugé moins désagréable de perdre mes insignes que de me faire rompre les os. et puis, me suis-je dit, à quelque chose malheur est bon. je puis maintenant me promener incognito, faire des actions basses, et me livrer à la crapule, comme les simples mortels. et me voici, tout semblable à vous, comme vous voyez!*

*– vous devriez au moins faire afficher cette auréole, ou la faire réclamer par le commissaire.*

*– ma foi! non. je me trouve bien ici. vous seul, vous m'avez reconnu. d'ailleurs la dignité m'ennuie. ensuite je pense avec joie que quelque mauvais poète la ramassera et s'en coiffera impudemment. faire un heureux, quelle jouissance! et surtout un heureux qui me fera rire! pensez à x, ou à z! hein! comme ce sera drôle!*

so, where's that beautiful past of yours if you wade through mud trying not to stir up the smell, that past of tuscany told by cipolla where the streets are literally full of dirt and dung, the past full of *boiling* gutters, of wooden privies attached to the palace of nobility façade, the past with no fridge, no central heating, no television...

some years ago, withwe took our guest for a walk around the old city centre of locarno,down the cobblestone-covered street with two even stone lanes, typical of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. and it seemed like she was (slightly) terrified. we tried

to explain that everything had its functional reason: the even ground for a carriage and the cobblestones for a horse that defecates even when trotting. to be honest, i still don't understand that terrifying matter. the girl is a horse rider by the way, but she rides only in the paddock or uncontaminated nature. without a proper vision of the history devoid of that every day life aspects. on the other hand, it seems like there's a conventional vision of the past where everybody lived in a fully served highly decorated palace. i can't be wrong saying that palladio was the architect of all (on his plans you will never find a bathroom), then some others, a bit worse, here and there, like alberti.

that is soldonis'shistorical-architectural perception, in which different times are mixed up in a single aseptic category: *history*, that should finally be verified. asking students a question whether renaissance was rather in the first or maybe in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and getting an answer – statistically rather in the first part, always makes me laugh...

*laisse moi guider tes pas dans l'existence,  
laisse moi la chance de me faire aimer,  
viens comme une enfant au creux de mon épaule,  
laisse moi le rôle,  
de te faire oublier:  
le temps qui va,  
le temps qui sommeil,  
le temps sans joie,  
le temps des merveilles,  
le temps d'un jour,  
temps d'une seconde,  
le temps qui court,  
ou celui qui gronde..." [7]*

in 1924, mies opened a conference saying:

*(...) today we use to speak about construction more than ever yet we have never been so far from its essence before. for that, this very day, the ques-*

tion of the essence of art of construction and decisive importance arises. indeed, only when this essence is recognized clearly we will be able to wage decidedly this war on fundamental principles of the new art of construction. till then there will be but chaos of the opposite forces. (...) the purpose of a building is its authentic meaning. the buildings of all times served for all but real purposes. however, those purposes were of different type and character. a purpose was always conclusive for a building, through that purpose a building achieved its sacred or profane form.

our historical education has dimmed our view of these things. for that reason we always confuse the effect with the cause. and we are convinced that the buildings existed because of love for architecture. even if the sacred language of the cathedrals is a result of a purpose.

*this is how it is, not the other way.*

*each time the purpose changes the language same as means, material and technique [8].*

then the discourse moves towards a figure of a craftsman and the relation with the industrialization and industry in general... then, in some other presentation of the same year, he starts this way: *it is not the architectural form itself but the fact that antique temple, basilica and mediaeval cathedral were the work of the entire epoch and not of a single person what makes them so meaningful [9].* the article touches upon the question of a value of a *public* work and the conclusion is to renounce every *romantic approach*, i.e. the one of the craftwork as well, to finally enter the modern age and become children of their own time.

in the same time (1926) hannesmeyer in *neue welt* wrote: (...) *every age requires a proper form. our mission is to give our new world a new form with modern means. but our knowledge of the past is a burden on our back, there are some obstacles in our advanced education that tragically block our*

*new ways. (...) the pure construction is a feature of a new world of forms. a construction form has no national peculiarity, it is always cosmopolitan, it is an expression of an international concept of architecture. internationality is a prerogative of our time. today each faze of our expressive culture is mostly constructive. but as human idleness is what it is, it's not surprising at all that this approach can be find purely only where the ancient greeks and luis xiv feet never stood: in publicity, typography, cinema and photography [10].*

*ordre et climat méditerranéens*

wheathercategories by albertosartoris [11] have more sense than lot of categories created by architecture historian. from both – context and reaction to the context as well as words by mies and meyer – points of view, it is about having considered europedirectly on the basis of environmental predominance on one hand, and taking indirectly into account environmental influence on the construction of the society and therefore architecture on the other.

it is about having grasp and understand the very nature of the new architecture, of dwelling the new world.

that classification by sartoris has never been in a favourably condition even though as far as i know it's the only encyclopaedia, and we are speaking of encyclopaedias, that put the new architecture in order according to its proper categories and ideas. the *landscape* of the contemporary architecture is created and shown for a very first time. the term itself is obviously considered open and coherent...

francescotentori was right sustaining years ago that criticism and history of architecture should be left to architects. we can infer it from words by mies and meyer that architect seems to and should be omnivorous somehow. it would allow placing architecture inside a context, including its own internal context, to tract its movements on social and political levels. a delicate but necessary effort.

what is the use of writing about avant-garde without taking into consideration the horrors of war explicit this way for a first time? the terrifying impact of the great war, the trenches, the bodies torn to pieces, the soldiers coming back to growing and evolving towns with some parts missing. there is no sense in dealing with bauhaus without dealing with various werkbunds/arts and crafts and the relation between germanwerkbund and english arts and crafts, the very first conceptual change of craftsman figure and profession.

*architecture, libre: é mouvoir* [12].

i would like to finish with some sort of generalization. nowadays, we have 3 different types of texts and essays. one of the texts like those of vittoriogregotti, *architettura e postmetropoli, contro la fine dell'architettura, l'architetturanell'epocadell'ince ssante*, balanced high class writing, almost like an encyclopedia. one including texts like *ilbuonabitare*

by inakialbaros, texts written by young generation of those who teach or are about to teach, trying to put the reality into categories what makes them difficult to read. last type are short text regarding mostly recent projects like the splendid articles by paolaantonelli in domus for instance or her comments and essays on exhibitions she supervies, like *design and the elastic mind*.

i was told that it making comments with names is never the most advisable thing to do, yet i believe that we are now at that point where we have to move from with all the strength we have, the strength of mies and meyer, the one used by design and graphic design, two worlds of a vitality to be envied. the dead condition of the false political correctness (with the total incorrigibility of the project) that animates our universities becomes really embarrassing. what architects our schools can build?

the nature will adopt everything.

## ENDNOTES

[1] pier paolo pasolini (...)

[2] umberto galimberti, *l'architettura e le fugure del tempo*, sta in *tempo celeste*, 1987.

[3]damienodoul, *en attendant le déluge*, (film) 2004.

[4] nanni moretti, *la messa è finita*, (film) 1985.

[5] carlo maria cipolla, *miasmi e umori*, il mulino, bologna, 1989.

[6] charles baudelaire, *perte d'auréole*, sta in *le spleen de paris*, paris, 1864.

[7] charles aznavour, *le temps*, 1965.

[8] ludwig mies van der rohe, *quello che intendiamo per formazione elementare*, sta in *gli scritti e le parole*, a cura di v. pizzigoni, einaudi, torino 2010.

[9] ludwig mies van der rohe, *architettura e volontà dell'epoca*, sta in *gli scritti e le parole*, a cura di v. pizzigoni, einaudi, torino 2010.

[10] hannes meyer, *scritti 1921/1942, architettura o rivoluzione*, marsilio, 1969.

[11] alberto sartoris, *encyclopédie de l'architecture nouvelle*, hoepli, milano,1948 (2a ed. 1956).

[12]ozenfant, *art*, j. budry, paris, 1928.