

Long Abstract

Theme 1 **Theory-based relevance of doctoral research in Architecture**

Artistic processes for the foundation of a "new architecture", 1950-70

The relationship between art and architecture has been expressed differently over time. During the 20th century, it experienced a crucial and subversive phase of exploration. Despite the profession's progressive specialization, the importance of preserving and strengthening the relationship between the two disciplines was emphasized by Le Corbusier's famous definition of a "synthesis" of the arts (Le Corbusier 1928) and Gio Ponti's promotion of a "composition" of space, painting and sculpture (Ponti 1932). However, what the relationship between art and architecture was destined to generate in the second half of the century drove research concerning a synthesis to its extreme consequence: a critical revision of architecture itself, including its role, forms, boundaries and content. Beginning in the 1960s, creative processes, figurative suggestions and critical positions in art were experiments against the backdrop of the break with early-century avant-garde movements and became the starting point for the founding of a "new architecture" (Celant 1968) that has since been described as "radical" (Celant 1972), "visionary" (McQuaid 2002) and "fantastic" (Rouillard 2004).

New Architecture no longer wanted to construct buildings but to question about human destiny, just as art no longer wanted to represent landscapes and portraits but to make visible the invisible condition of humanity (abstract art). New Architecture abandoned any reference to technical and functional aspects and focused on the perception and experience of an artificial environment, just as art abandoned painting and sculpture for the study of the space between objects and human beings who, driven by their senses, define space (environmental art). New Architecture went beyond the dimension of the building and the city to imagine fantastic visions of occupation of the landscape, just as art abandoned galleries for the scale of territory (land art). New Architecture focused on the lifestyles of primordial communities in order to guarantee a new ecological balance, just as art shifted its focus to primordial materials (arte povera). New Architecture placed the human body at the center of its research, undressed and altered to the point of becoming cyborg, just as art welcomed the body as a tool and subject of research (body art). New Architecture abandoned the formal object in order to focus on cognitive processes and symbolic values, just as art itself became a concept (conceptual art). New Architecture denounced the invasion by consumer society, just as art exasperated and deformed capitalist myths and rituals (pop art). New Architecture freed itself from the traditional representations of the discipline (plan, section, axonometry) to devote itself to the production of full-length films, just as art explored moving images (video art). "Alles ist Architektur", declared Hans Hollein at the same time as Joseph Beuys expressed his motto "Everything is art".

The aim of the research is to reveal how the foundation of that "New Architecture" was influenced by contemporary artistic experimentation, to extend the body of references from which the "New Architecture" took shape, and finally to study the works produced by the protagonists of that "new architecture" in the light of contemporary artistic experimentation. The research, although still at an early stage, has already identified some central themes for understanding this relation. Superstudio is one of the research's protagonists and it has been studied through the pictorial work of its founding member Adolfo Natalini, during his formative years (1956-66). Unpublished archive documents (drawings, sketches, paintings, notes and notebooks) are now revealing how graphic techniques, methods of representation and even theoretical visions used in painting by Natalini (who experimented with different pictorial languages, such as figurative, abstract and pop) have been reflected on Superstudio's work. The research is investigating Paul Klee as a crucial reference for Natalini — who was mentioned among his notes in 1964 — and how Klee's volumes *Theory of Form and Figuration* influenced Superstudio's work. Based on this discovery, the research

aims to go back to the origin of the group's foundation and to re-read the group's photomontages as compositions of abstract geometric volumes on various landscapes. The entire work of Superstudio thus becomes an expression of an art that is not evoked for aesthetic or formal purposes, but for processes and methodologies: art is a "means of cultural updating", as Natalini writes in his notes (1966).

Bibliography

- Ponti G., *Pittura e scultura nell'architettura moderna*, in "Domus", n. 53, May 1932, p. 248.
- Apollonio U. (Ed.), *XXIX Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, exhibition catalogue (Venice, Biennale di Venezia, 14 June-18 October 1958) Stamperia di Venezia, Venice 1958.
- De Micheli M., *le avanguardie artistiche del novecento*, Schwarz, Milan 1959.
- Klee P., *Teoria della forma e della figurazione*, Feltrinelli, Milan 1959.
- Klee P., *Teoria della forma e della figurazione. Volume II. Storia naturale infinita*, Feltrinelli, Milan 1959.
- A. Natalini, *Ragioni Diverse-Mostra d'Arte Astratta*, exhibition catalogue (Pistoia, Università Popolare, 6-29 February 1960), 1960.
- Kidder Smith G.E., *The New Architecture of Europe*, Penguin Books, London 1962.
- Fischer E., *The necessity of art*, Penguin Books, London 1963.
- A. Natalini, *Barni-Natalini-Ruffi*, exhibition catalogue (Pistoia, Sala Ghibellina, 6-19 June 1964) Museo Civico, Pistoia 1964, s.n.p. .
- Amaya M., *Pop as art a survey of the new super realism*, Studio Vista, London 1965.
- Vivaldi C., *La Scuola di Pistoia*, in "Collage", n. 6, September 1966, pp. 73-76.
- Natalini A., *La Pop Art e la progettazione architettonica*, seminar, Faculty of Architecture - University of Florence (with prof. Arch. Leonardo Savioli) A.A. 1966/67.
- Celant G., *Critica come evento*, in "Casabella", n. 330, November 1968, pp. 54-55.
- Grohmann W., *Paul Klee*, Garzanti, Milan 1968.
- Kirby M., *Happening*, De Donato, Bari 1968.
- Jencks C., Baird G., *Meaning in Architecture*, Barrie and Rockliff - The Cresset press, London 1969.
- C. Vivaldi, *Barni Buscioni Ruffi. Un'avanguardia in Toscana*, Fantini, Rome 1969.
- Branzi A., *Il ruolo dell'avanguardia 2: L'africa è vicina*, in "Casabella", n. 364, April 1972, pp. 31-38.
- Celant G., *Radical Architecture*, in E. Ambasz, *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*, exhibition catalogue (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 26 May - 11 September 1972), The Museum of Modern Art, New York 1972, p.n.n.
- Navone P., Orlandoni B., *Architettura "radicale"*, documenti di Casabella, Milan 1974.
- Celant G., *Preconistoria*, Centro Di, Florence 1976.
- Codognato A., *Pop Art. Evoluzione di una generazione*, Electa, Milan 1980.
- Banham R., *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment*, Chicago Press, Chicago 1984.
- Battcock G., Nickas R. (eds.), *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, E.P Dutton, New York 1984.
- Beardsley J., *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, Abbeville Press, New York 1984.
- Pansera A., Vitta M., *Guida all'arte contemporanea*, Marietti, Casale Monferrato 1986.
- Pettena G., *Hans Hollein: Opere 1960-1988*, Idea Books, Milan 1988.
- Corà B. (ed.), *Fernando Melani. La casa-studio, le esperienze, gli scritti, dal 1945 al 1985*, Electa, Milan 1990.

Rossi A., *L'architettura della città*, Città Studi edizione, Milan 1995.

Pettena G. (ed.), *Radicals: Architettura e design 1960-75*, La Biennale di Venezia - Il Ventilabro, Venice-Florence 1996.

McQuaid M. (ed.), *Envisioning architecture: drawings from the Museum of Modern Art*, MoMA, New York 2002.

Alberro A., *Conceptual art and the politics of publicity*, MIT, Cambridge-London 2003.

Lang P., Menking W., *Superstudio: Life without objects*, Skira, Milan 2003.

Le Corbusier, *Lo Spazio indicibile* in R. Tamborrino, *Le Corbusier: Scritti*, Einaudi, Turin 2003, p. 246.

Menking W., *Superstudio: Life without objects*, Skira, Milan 2003.

Poli F. (ed.), *Arte contemporanea: Le ricerche internazionali dalla fine degli anni '50 a oggi*, Electa, Milan 2003.

Klee P., *Confessione creatrice e altri scritti*, Abscondita, Milan 2004.

Lewallen C. M., Steve S., *Ant Farm 1968-1978*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 2004.

Rouillard D., *Superarchitecture: Le futur de l'architecture 1950-1970*, Éditions de la Villette, Paris 2004.

Van Schaik M., Macel O. (eds.), *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956-76*, Prestel, Munich-Berlin-London-New York 2005.

Sadler S., *Archigram: Architecture without architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge-London 2005.

Wolfler Calvo M., *Archigram/Metabolism: L'utopia negli anni Sessanta*, CLEAN, Naples 2007.

Celant G., *Artmix: Flussi tra arte, architettura, cinema, design, moda, musica e televisione*, Feltrinelli, Milan 2008.

Stauffer M. T., *Figurationen des Utopischen: Theoretische Projekte von Archizoom und Superstudio*, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Berlin 2008.

Steiner D., Porsch J., *The Austrian Phenomenon: Architectural Avant-Garde Austria 1956-1973*, Birkhauser Publishers, Basel 2009.

Gargiani R., Lampariello B., *Superstudio*, GLF editori Laterza, Rome 2010.

Celant G., *Arte povera: Storia e storie*, Electa, Milan 2011.

Conte L., *Per una cronologia della ricezione di Klee in Italia*, in Comis G., Della Casa B. (eds.), *Klee-Melotti*, exhibition catalogue (Lugano, Museo d'Arte, 17 March – 30 June 2013) Kehrer, Heilderberg 2013, pp. 130-143.

C. Di Stefano, *Biennale 1958. Il Leone d'Oro a Marc Tobey e la consacrazione dell'arte di tipo americano*, in "Venezia Arti", vol. 24, June 2014, pp. 47-51.

Fergonzi F., Tedeschi F. (eds.), *Arte italiana 1960-64. Identità culturale, confronti nazionali, modelli americani*, proceedings of study day (Milan, Museo del Novecento-Gallerie d'Italia, 25th October 2013), Scalpendi, Milan 2017.

Crompton D., *Archigram: The Book*, Circa Press, London 2018.

Rossellini A., Gargiani R., *Valori primordiali e ideologici della materia da Uncini a Lewitt: Sculture in calcestruzzo dal Novecento ad oggi*, Aracne, Rome 2018.

Gargiani R., Lampariello B., *Il Monumento Continuo di Superstudio: Eccesso del razionalismo e strategia del rifiuto*, Sagep, Genoa 2019.