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ABSTRACT

**OTHERWHERE'S" LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
COULD NOT BE LESS NATURAL THAN A ROSE CULTIVATED IN A VIVARIUM**

Dear architects, dear friends we are experiencing a very dramatic moment in our world / Western system. It makes no sense to mouth easy words, because looking at the reality we find that all kinds of work, be it manual or intellectual, is in deep depression. We live in dark times, in which the meaning of the word **crisis** is thousands of times longer than its short spelling.

The powers of the politics and economics of Europe do not know yet how to deal with a crisis of the social and economic system that involves and upsets almost all nations. Citizens, old and new, on the continent are in trouble but it is not the fault of the newcomers.

The world of intellectual professions, among them architects and young architects first, is suffering as it never did in the first hundred years of liberalism and neo-liberalism, called democracy, but in reality not yet neo-democracy.

The western cities are full of people who cannot stand the economic downturn that unfortunately is still increasing.

In this not very comforting scenario, the values of Landscape do not light up, as they should, the tired Architecture and broken Cities. The new Architectures fail to mark the re-illumination of the cities, be they small or large.

In Europe, the cities in the last 100 years have expanded from 3 to 10 times their initial population and have increased, in some cases, maybe 20 times the surface area of its territory.

In this way, complex cities have sprung up, often unclear, where first the social problems and subsequently the economic ones have expanded in an unsustainable way.

The architects and Architecture, a matter of public interest, because of this are suffering incredibly.

The general crisis is giving a marked slowdown in the hasty growth (often dilated and dispersive) of this generation of boundless Cities.

We must use this break, hopefully short, to rethink the course of Landscape history, to ensure that new strategies of regeneration can produce effects in the direction of urban growth and social cohesion.

For our part, as architects we must be prepared to give our valued contribution, when the economy recovers, because it will be essential to reverse the trend of growth, especially one that has consumed excessive land in a horizontal manner, dissolving the city and its values.

Therefore, on the one hand we must prepare the necessary processes useful to reorganise and densify, on the other hand to regenerate the soft parts of the city and even those trivial ones, passed down to us by history, but now no longer able to contain the functions of the modern life, more dynamic than in the past. So many historical parts of the old town, not just the ugly ones, are left by the inhabitants in a desperate loneliness and a gradual abandonment, till their structural deterioration.

This does not mean that the solution is to replace with the demolition of buildings without the use of intelligence, but to penetrate the consolidated city with new architectures, also by means of joints and overlaps, taking due account of the original quality of the buildings to be replaced or regenerated, as also the quality of any urban context in which they have been achieved.

In the process of urban regeneration and replacement of building, last but not least, we shall have to take into account the materials and technologies available, especially those experienced in the local context where the good architectures have been implemented and remained for centuries of urban history and passed on to us.

Therefore, we need beautiful, but above all, good architecture related to its TOPOS.

In this direction I want to remind, myself first, that one cannot translate, through improvisation and recycling of signs, the local emotions in an architectural language foolishly globalized.

We cannot have everywhere the same smell of the earth and the composition of the same colors as the one where we were born or where we have lived consciously for a long time, I mean like those of our maternal: "other side of the world."

When we speak in our native language we can modulate the tone of voice, know how to give the correct pause between consecutive expressions, we are exercised in how to give strength to the uniqueness of some words used in our speeches.

Of course we must have the humility to research how, our fruits of Architectures and Cities, could be fully understood by a large audience of users that, even occasionally, are visiting our other part of the world, that could be our city, as well as the simple open or closed place where we seek refuge when we feel the need to stay private.

That's why in this rapidly changing world we are checking, especially in Europe, the existence of common parameters, I want to say that for that reason we must begin to deal with similar problems, on the table of all European countries. Nations of the East or the West it makes no difference.

Our nations are sharing, by choice and by force, the same way of international relations, even with local peculiarities, but despite the arrogance of the great market economy, since the peoples of Nations did not have a flat history, in each of them the originality of the local culture and the consequent needs stand out.

Needs must be met without selfishness on the part of territories that come from wealth and assume to keep it unchanged.

Selfishness indifferent to what happens on the other side of the world, which can be within the walls of the same city or even beyond the road that we face.

By centuries of European history, often dramatic, we have inherited a mix of behaviors that we were forced to share, even those very far from each other point of view, I mean the local economy, culture, emotions and, not the last, the way to intend the architectural answer to the local needs.

### **THE LANDSCAPE FIRST AND FOREMOST**

The landscape can be considered (not defined) as a "cultural resource" as it combines environmental, ecological and natural features, that together with the urban settlements, both historical and contemporary, provokes visual appearances, objective and subjective. However, the result is always an emotion that links landscape, culture and health!

Thus, the landscape is seen as a holistic entity perceived by humans and, having a distinct character, it identifies the different landscapes that can be easily recognized. Such variation defines the regional diversification.

The physical products built in the landscape are more beautiful or uglier if the shape, utility and needs must respond to the specific needs - social, architectural, environmental - and even those related to the healthy that we required in the setting of design the landscape.

### **LANDSCAPE DOES NOT EXIST IN NATURE**

We cannot build in the landscape because this place, since it is not abstract, does not exist as an entity preconceived.

The landscape is shaped by the intrinsic ties between the natural and man-made environment and its inhabitants, by the relationship of local culture and the economic resources of the land and all this is related to tangible and intangible goods

The landscape exists, therefore, if we will make it through a creative act, taking into account that during the process of responsible creation we should verify if and how to achieve the goal of good and beautiful landscape, which must produce at the same time health and Happiness.

### **THE FRAGMENTATION OF CITIES AFFECTS THE VALUES OF LANDSCAPE**

Human activities have invaded, not always rationally, the natural environment and also the parties “free or residual” of the landscape already urbanized.

Over the last thirty years, these activities have increased considerably. In this way, the fragmentation of the landscape, caused mostly by the high and widespread urbanization has generated its environmentally negative effects, even for the effect and as consequence of the diversity of coverage and impact on the natural environment.

Today, even for this reason, the problem is the inadequate integration of environmental concerns and social needs.

As it is easy to note, almost all the cities around the world have high fragmentation values along the transportation corridors, increased by the dispersion of public and social services that in equal way generate the density and the dispersion of housing, but also by the empty urban space or by the sites, built or unbuilt, which were first used and then abandoned.

The social fading, mainly in the big cities fractured in several parts, affects even dramatically the landscape.

The result is dramatically sad!

At this point even the great symbolic values belonging to the history of a Landscape become residual, undecided, suspended.

### **HOW TO BUILD OTHERWHERE LANDSCAPE AS USEFUL STORAGE**

When we try the starting point for designing a shape that exists in the nature, we could only perform an action partially correct, without exaggerating, because we cannot create for similarity.

I’m not the only one, but I dislike building without regard to the utility, durability, solidity and Otherwhere’s ethics, because the “globalized” beauty, by herself, has always implied useless professional operations and subsequently pointless transactions of cultural pollution.

These distorted passages have filled many parts of the cultural landscape!

In the recent past the exasperation of these intimate and irritant beliefs have wrongly generated, on the one hand, the rigidity of constructivism and, on the other hand, the unnatural post-modern process and, in the end, the “anything and everything” of many new architectures.

### **RIGENERATING FRACTURED CITIES AND FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE: WORK AND LEISURE, UNEMPLOYMENT AND STRESS INTO THE (ANY) LANDSCAPE**

If cities are broken is not the architects or planners fault. The fractures were generated not only by the shame of sprawl but also by the fact that more and more parts of the landscape have been abandoned to their nature, which was not to be lonely.

Many factories have closed down, while others are become hazardous industrial waste, the tapes rail of the last century, a lot of unfinished housing, but also quarries, mines and bogs, and already cultivated areas were left without human supervision, and so other places have become again inaccessible.

## **THE OTHERWHERE'S CARTA**

We started at Rome meeting on December 11, 2012 with the theme on "Durban OTHERWHERE special session" - that is, how to initiate, in the Durban congress, a joint event, for the Work Programs AsaF + Heritage + Ares.

At that meeting I have presented a "document called OTHERWERE CARTA", improved in tandem with Nikos Fintikakis. After I have presented the CARTA at Durban Council meeting, then voted unanimously by the Council members.

In OTHERWERE CARTA - we deal with the complexity of "glocal" World, ie as:

1. Encode the identity as characteristics of the territory of OTHEWERE, in which
2. The complex system of planning social, cultural, environmental, architectural values and historical heritage, is the legacy with which to deal, because all together give to the territory "its" quality, but not without checking, on the other hand, the levels of
3. Fragility, environmental degradation and shortage of resources (such as the amount of light, water, air, soil and subsoil, the various forms of energy), aware, as architects, that all of these are necessary, because we need to
4. Look for a balance between the positive use of local peculiarities (OTHEWERE) and the need to be connected, without undergoing any distinction and / or supremacy, with the ratio of horizontal globality, so as not to risk marginalization or even the isolation.
5. This process (research and codification) is useful to create a basic layout, a sort of pre-analysis, which helps to distinguish the values of the area (HERITAGE) from its own resources (listed by UNESCO, based on the degree of utilization) and may contribute, in the end, on how and what to do to
6. Get a self-sustainable project that is capable of generating material transformations "in a responsible manner," as good architecture and human settlements of different density, as well as the complex plots of non-urbanized environment, not excluding from this process the various infrastructures that equip and tie in the length and breadth of the local and the global territory.

## **THE ACT OF DESIGN: WHAT SHOULD THE ARCHITECTS DO**

Not all episodes of architecture, at any scale, in the built landscape could be considered less natural than a rose grown in a garden center and then no one could say, unabashedly, that the hands of the gardener are less invasive than those of architects.

We have to be aware that we cannot use, in OTHERWHERE, the same coatings or roofing systems or provide the same amount of energy, (for example where volumes are equal), for both new buildings and for those renewed or converted to new uses, different to those originally intended.

It is inconceivable that SOCIETIES, CITIES and BUILDINGS, then LANDSCAPE in Berlin, Valencia, Khartoum, Santorini or in any OTHERWHERE in the world can be treated and designed in similar fashion, to be then used in the same way by the people of OTHERWHERE who may have different environments, different cultures and history and other needs, obviously not only for ARCHITECTURE.

We can affirm that the "extraordinary landscape" is the result of an agreement of places, natural and/or artefacts, which together with the noises and smells produce a large and visible (enjoyable) harmony in a positive relationship with people.

Our common effort is to transform any landscape into an extraordinary example of ordinariness.

However, since in the Vivarium named Landscape we are not the only actor who decides the whole process that generates the landscape, we felt helpless so many times. In front of difficulties in the construction of a healthy landscape, we could only force ourselves to improve the human happiness of OTHERWHERE. This is not a small task to be considered as insignificant.

We must be aware that in places of high historic preservation and cultural and environmental our intervention should have the same care as a rose grown in the vivarium, one of the most beautiful that we choose to give it to someone special.

We must keep in mind that the landscape has a lot more life than a rose, whether or not cultivated, and the audience of the people who live in this place is much broader than the one you love.

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