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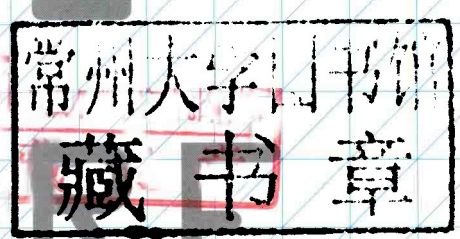
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CONCEPTUAL ARCHITECTURE

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PREFACE

by Massimiliano Fuksas

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My approach to work definitely isn't systematic. Rather, it is organised around a flow of ideas. I'll repeat that. "Ideas and not concepts." Probably because I don't like the word "concept." It seems pragmatic in a way, almost as if the strategy came before the feeling. Concept is a reductive term. It doesn't reveal the depth of feelings or their intensity. Ideas almost always come to you when you don't expect them. What interests me is simply creating the conditions required to make this alchemy possible. How does creation occur? It can come unexpectedly during a journey. While you're writing or painting. When you wake up in the middle of the night or in the morning before the sun rises ... Almost never when you're designing. Nothing can take the place of ideas, which come before the project, indifferent to our fears. The places come to us with our eyes half open. When you close your eyes you can walk through a space, observing how the light penetrates its areas, how people will move inside what will be a building. What I've always been interested in are the flows, the landscapes created by the movement. The places of transitions. I have little interest in their form. I should again emphasise, and I probably never tire of repeating it, that architecture isn't a discipline, isn't a linear process, and that creation isn't, fortunately, born of methodology. Changes in frequency made up of accelerations and moments of the greatest calm can in part tell the story of the process and my work. They are as different from one another as magnetic waves and the waves on the sea: they unquestionably belong to the same family but no two are alike.

My vision of the world happens through a sort of intellectual and spatial nomadism... No, there isn't and I don't want there to be a Fuksas method! I do everything I can to stop my work from being exportable, declinable. There's a condition of well-being in which

you manage to communicate the emotions you feel. I'd rather have a life project than a formal project. Do we need to do things so that our work is consistent with existence? I can find traces of my life in every fragment and project, but having said that I am against an autobiographical life. I can only add that any programme for a project should always be put in crisis.

I became an architect because my mother was afraid I would become an artist and, to her way of thinking, artists were people who never had any money. Anyway, I have never met God, or a psychoanalyst for that matter. I prefer other things. I can say that I decided to enter the architecture faculty in order to make my mother happy, but in fact it was a faculty that did not interest me in the least, it really did not excite me at all. My mother has always been very pragmatic; she was a philosophy teacher and always a communist. She was therefore convinced that her son must get a good degree. I did not really agree with her, I never have. I left home at the age of sixteen and went to school as usual, but painting was everything to me, it was the only thing that I really loved. So even though it may seem paradoxical, I started university, without any desire whatsoever to become an architect. Only as time went by did I start to fall in love with this discipline. Anyway, when I started to study at the university, I did not know anything about architecture and that was terrible. In Italy an Architecture High School does not exist, there is only the University. A law dating back to the fascist period established the creation of a faculty of architecture, somewhere between Engineering and Fine Arts. The sum of the two disciplines resulted in a course that was ferociously difficult. There were 39 exams. 19 of these had to be passed in the first two years, otherwise the student was not

admitted to the third year. Again, to keep my mother happy, I took all the exams which was crazy. Despite all this I knew nothing which shows that one can do anything without knowing anything. There are hundreds of useless exams. I finished them all, before the scheduled time too, so I spent 6 months in Denmark. I visited Jorn Utzon's studio where I went back to work the following summer and, at the same time, I began to look very carefully at contemporary buildings. On the whole, I didn't think they were that bad. When I came back, I wasn't so in love with architecture anymore, but I began to do some work on the subject. I read books, copied plans and cross-sections. I was simply trying to understand. The only subject I was really interested in was the History of Architecture. Contemporary art, on the other hand, was my life, my real love. I have always refused to revere any master, but there have been some people in my life that I am thankful for and to whom I could dedicate many of my projects. The first is Jurgis Baltrusaitis, an art historian, known mainly for his studies on anamorphosis and the fantasy world of the Middle Ages. He was Lithuanian as well and, when I lived in Paris, we used to meet frequently. I really liked seeing him as he reminded me of my roots and I could speak to him using the few words of Lithuanian that I still remember.

The other person I would like to remember is Giorgio Caproni, one of the most important Italian contemporary poets and one of the greatest translators of Celine. His works have been translated all over the world. He was my primary school teacher and I often used to go to his house in the afternoon when school had finished. We have always been very close. He played the violin and adored electric trains that we often assembled together. We built landscapes, while I read him my poems, which were clearly those of a ten-year-old child. I was mad about poetry and his world. Another person I owe a lot

to is Giorgio Castelfranco whom I have known since I was a child. I met many artists through Castelfranco including Giorgio de Chirico whom I worked with for a while, in his studio in Piazza di Spagna. At the time I did not feel alive if I didn't paint every day. Anyway, I am sure that all my projects show that my reference points certainly do not come from architecture. My interests as well as my training have always been closer to art. I love Burri, Fontana, Fluxus, Gordon Matta Clark, Beuys, ArtePovera and Land Art, the world of violence and poetry, the world of Krzysztof Wodiczko and Pierpaolo Pasolini. In other words, I am interested in becoming part of a process that is different from the architecture in which we live every day.

Architecture Without Dogma

by Mareike Dietrich, 3deluxe

"Concepts were then, and remain today, the primary walking sticks with which we navigate new space and reshape ourselves. There is no reason to deny architecture the power of this extraordinary transformative engine. Concepts are the architecture of hope."
Sanford Kwinter¹

"Architecture is a machine for the production of meaning." Arata Isozaki²

Analyzing contemporary architecture with a view to theoretic and/or formal coherence one will come to the conclusion that its most significant characteristic is pluralism – a stylistic spectrum that withdraws itself from any doctrinaire claim of authority. Instead of a universal architectural theory, the work of today's architects is based on a variety of individual concepts. This corresponds with 21st century's society which is characterised by an increasing tendency towards individualisation. Concepts, contrary to theories, do not demand absoluteness, intellectual conclusiveness and consistency in application. Moreover, they allow for an extremely playful and individual approach to designing and building.

If we apply the term "conceptual architecture" to particular contemporary buildings, of which a selection is shown in this book, we have to state on closer examination that its meaning has changed since its invention in the seventies. Originally inspired by the theoretical principles of conceptual art, postulated in the sixties by artists such as Sol Le Witt, Joseph Kosuth and others, conceptual architecture has meanwhile developed its own regulations. It can still be said, however, that, similar to conceptual art, the communication of the idea underlying the building is more relevant in conceptual architecture than to justify it in a traditional way by means of functional, constructive or technical aspects. In architecture, too, a far-reaching paradigm shift took place which entailed an intended

dematerialisation of the built object. Still, conceptual architecture today possesses very sensual and atmospheric qualities that can particularly be attributed to a delicate handling of materials and details, again lending more significance to the product of the conceptual process. In contrast to conceptual art, the effect of dematerialisation and the accompanying impression of sublimity, that is beauty liberated from the constraints of reality, can only be reached through superior workmanship. Innovative materials and methods of construction are required to hide the traces of the production process and the technical requirements of a building without transforming it from an object of utility into an object of representation with restricted usability, or more, into a work of art for its own sake.

The current practice of visualizing architectural concepts with highly aesthetic renderings whose perfect manner of representation relates the planned buildings to artworks or sculptural objects creates the often elusive demand that the completed buildings should evoke the same impeccable homogeneity. In the case of the Leonardo Glass Cube this impression could be achieved by the consequent implementation of jointless surfaces in the interior and exterior – the result of a time-consuming and insistent planning process whose final conclusion was the usage of a material previously applied only in the interior for the cladding of the façade pilasters.

A further principle of conceptual architecture that can also be traced back to conceptual art lies in the involvement of the viewer, or rather the user, and in the intention to change his perceptual habits. This has long since been an essential aspect of 3deluxe's work, and it has not only been realised in interactive exhibitions and experience-oriented interior designs but can also be found in our architectural projects. The transparent print on the glass façade of the Leonardo Glass Cube opens up the passage to a fictional space in which graphically

illustrated photographs of elements derived from the surrounding landscape mingle with the reflections of their models in reality. This hyper-naturalistic meta-level of architecture with heightened aesthetic appeal leaves room for individual associations, stimulating the observer's imagination and expanding reality with immaterial and fictional components – elements of potentiality. Some contemporary architects defy stylistic and theoretic dogmas, and much in the same way their works also reject definite interpretation although being based on a strong concept. Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. Conceptual architecture evokes deep subjective emotions, be it through a yet unseen formal language or the intense experience of atmospheres. The high degree of individualization distinguishing today's architecture is another contradiction to conceptual art, which is defined by repetitive techniques. So let us trust in the transformative power of concepts and believe in a fundamental reformation of 21st century's architecture. Concepts are the architecture of hope.¹

¹ Sanford Kwinter, "Concepts: The Architecture of Hope," Harvard Design Magazine, Fall 2003/ Winter 2004, Number 19

² Cited from Paul-Alan Johnson "The Theory of Architecture: Concepts Themes & Practices," Crystal Dreams Publishing, 1994

Golf Club Hostivar

Architects / ADR s.r.o.

Photography / Iveta Kopicova, Stepan Vrzala

Floor area / 4,658.4sm

PUBLIC

The golf facility has restored natural wetland conditions from a previously poorly maintained urban environment and has created there a vast oasis of greenery, recreation, and sports.

The ground plan of the facility is formed by two interconnected rectangles situated in a line along the north-south axis. The western side includes a parking area. In the other directions the building is surrounded by the sports facility. The voluminous arrangement is formed by the main block with two overhead levels: a flat roof and with a block of the indoor sports centre with a cantilever roof. The roofing system in a membrane form creates a dominant point above the terrace of the restaurant situated on the first overhead level.

The building has two main communication cores. The core at the main entrance connects the entire building from the basement (cloak-rooms and background facilities) through the first overhead level with a restaurant, golf shop and indoor golf up to the second overhead level where a golf club and the administrative offices are situated. The other core serves as a service communication hub between the first overhead level of the indoor golf and the golf club on the second overhead level.

Along the southern facade are commercial premises – restaurants with a terrace. The main expression element of the facade is formed by glazed parts in a combination with the lining made of the Cembonite system boards.



