WORKS

Edited by Alessandra Capuano

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Works
Fall 1997/Spring 1999

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Fratelli Palombi Editori
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THE AURELIAN BLUEPRINT

The city of Rome is not a "one-line," but a rich, evolving intersection and collision of centuries of ideas. The Aurelian wall of the city was used as a point of reference for urban collector that summarizes the whole history of Rome from the Ancient period until contemporary times. A sort of "blueprint" of history, a datum that provides a series of typical case studies. The scope of the design studio was to introduce the student, weekly visits to Rome, to an understanding of the city, providing the basic knowledge of its urban structure and architecture through a series of analytic and interpretative studies. The reading of Rome was conducted together with the design of a small project developed on given sites along the Aurelian wall. In addition to the site, five pathways (that included the sites at one point) were used to relate the site to the urban structure and to analyze the city from a broader point of view.

The Aurelian wall as an occasion to discuss ideas and projects in the framework of the contemporary city. A system considered not only as the limit of the ancient city, but also as evidence of the multiple presences of today's city. Four areas were selected for the investigation: Pincio/Villa Medici, Piazza Flaminio/Porta Salaria, Tempio di Minerva Medica/Porta Maggiore, Porta S. Sebastiano/Porta Ardeatina, Testaccio/Monte del Cocco.
LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE

Together with its stratified identity, Rome features an incredible mixture of the natural landscape. Evidence of it is clearly still visible in certain areas of the urban fabric, in which nature is preserved almost unchanged and plays a crucial and valuable role in the configuration of the city. Few views on this original landscape of the Roman campagna around Rome are preserved as fragments in a museum, within the urban texture. Landscape and architecture can be identified as two key words for investigating Roman architectural themes. They can both be understood in a broad sense. Architecture is not merely the frame of ancient Rome but, in general, evidence of the past landscape can be seen as the key piece of natural elements in the city. The city of Rome can be read as the link between landscape and building, where architectural and natural elements are strictly connected and produce a continuous and interesting condition.

Within these two themes, students were asked to elaborate on issues or categories of investigation, such as: topographical modeling, stratification, borderlines, spaces, context, and all these four categories is the question of the section. The architectural section of parts of Rome reveals its specific character of a city built on mass, plasticity, openness, etc. The sites to be considered are in central areas of the city of Rome: the Borghetto di Sant'Angelo, adjacent to Via della Pergola; the Baths of Caracalla in Trastevere; the Villa Celimontana close to the Colosseum. These areas are some of the essence of natural landscape above mentioned, at the border of dense-built neighborhoods. Students intervention had to develop in the edge of this two conditions and participate in both.

CONCEPT: the design proposal revolved to engage the urban context and the landscape and had to develop a sequence of spatial elements, from public to semi-public to private and from outdoor to indoor, to outdoors. Such elements could be atriums, courtyards, circulation, terraces, etc.

PROPOSAL: the peculiarity of the assigned site characterized by the dialectic of contrasting conditions: natural and artificial / residential and cultural area / work and disorder / stability and instability. The ground had to represent physically the understanding of the site as intervention between public and private, inside and outside, above and below, etc. Therefore, the project had to consider the ground and the surrounding environment as main areas of research. The ground and the base of the building represented connection, spatial continuity, transition, relationship, etc.

The section represented one of the most important means of control of the project, according to its location (site) and according to its importance, either to the modeling of the surface.

PROGRAM: all programs had to be small institutional structures of 1000 sq. m, including all outdoor spaces. Students had to define a work and an assembly pattern of inter-building: taking into consideration the above-mentioned issues as well as the introduction in the architectural definition of the dialectics that, locally, Rome is a specific condition and as interpretation of a sequence of believable archetypes of the architectural tradition, locally meaningful (i.e., walls, bestiary, rats, mass, space, etc.) and the "world" as reference for new landscape communication, new technologies, homogeneity, etc. The interpretation of the archetypes is therefore subject to invention.