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EDITORIAL

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION. TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN THE ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE

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Design and construction are intimately linked to each other and have always been an inseparable couple. Only if the design is linked and finalized to the construction do manifest a full, well-defined, clear, and complete value. Designing is codified communication, sometimes only at a technical level, sometimes with the value of an implied quality that varies in many ways, ascending in a few cases to the masterpiece. Designing means giving a spatial and constructional solution to a predetermined requirement in a complex system of needs, constraints, and conditions. It is merely the instant just before the construction; the entire process, however, is continuous.

Design is knowledge intended to manage and control building systems and materials, representing the work's identity, what characterizes it, and what qualifies it. Nowadays, it is associated with the concept of Sustainability, intended as an unavoidable added value to the process in terms of participation, control, non-invasiveness, feedback availability, reversibility, and resilience. Contemporary designing also took on multiple demands to be translated into functions, structures, and spaces. Economic and market globalization and the continuously changing needs of the new "liquid society", as defined by Zygmut Bauman, have also changed the way of conceiving, designing, building, and living architecture globally. This change has been mainly fostered by the internet, digitization (in its broadest meanings and versions up to the "digital twin" of everything, and eventually of the human being), social media, the frenetic and fast world of connections and communications, big data, new formal and aesthetic role-models. The aestheticization processes have extended to all fields and are increasingly intertwined with those of economy and consumption. Mistakenly, the notion, meaning, and value of Art – including Architecture and Visual Arts – coincide with their communication, improperly confusing means with aims.

Whether once Sullivan asserted "Form follows function", today we could update the motto by saying "Form follows the market".

Contemporary Architecture, including the narcissistic and bizarre works of a few Archistars, sometimes assumed to be authentic "creative divinities", is the child of these times. It is technologically complex, new, different, captivating, and arouses in ourselves astonishment and wonder. It is able to make people dream, sometimes reaching such high levels of popularity and pleasure to cross that half-open but still open door of the collective unconscious. The building process has been enriched by constantly growing technological innovation, and the widespread presence of special materials, with better and more reliable features and performances. Designing, building, maintaining, managing, reusing, and redeveloping, become complex, multidisciplinary work, sharing a few principles. Some have been irremovable since the dawn of time, and some are subject to continuous, necessary and indispensable evolutions, innovations, and updates.

Suddenly, the imponderable came out, the new event, unforeseen and unpredictable; the outbreak of Covid-19, after which the world is not and will not be the same anymore. This event claimed a rethinking and redesigning of private and collective living spaces. At the same time, it involved a similar change in public, work, study, meeting and relationship spaces in general, reformulating standards, reviewing regulations, and redefining design criteria.