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## Editor's Letter

*Patrick Lynch*

The term Civic Architecture occurred to me one day towards the end of my PhD research, as a perfect description of creative work that is oriented towards city life. The epithet civic, immediately distinguishes architecture that is not.

We live in a period of intense opinions, but, arguably, of very weakly developed subjectivity. Christopher Nash memorably described late 20th century America as *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) and Saul Bellow referred to "the moronic inferno" of modern life (*Humboldt's Gift*, 1975) even before the rise of the internet.

The Journal of Civic Architecture is going to be a refuge from all that: a place for writing and imagery that is reflective, serious, and I hope, insightful and pleasurable.

This first issue, published on Mid-Summer's Eve 2018, somewhat deliberately brings together a series of themes that might be loosely described as portraiture. The question of architecture as autobiography reveals in fact that the civic character of Pleznik's cemetery is the fruit of a profoundly emotional and empathetic imagination. Tom de Paor's *Palace* cinema is not only the work of a powerfully situational memory, but also, I think, somewhere where the extreme atmospheric character of Galway merges with the dream world of film: an expanded threshold that frames the town as a subject of contemplation. These, and the other projects, poems and essays in issue 1, locate creative energy in the city, in the everyday world of work and human meaning; suggesting I believe, that communicative cultural expression emerges from these common conditions, revealing them to us anew. There are other connections between the contributors that have emerged rather obviously from my own experiences and interests: Ireland, Galway in particular; religious architecture; poetics; nature; technology, etc. My hope is that this developed subjectivity is sufficiently interesting to make you want to become a regular reader of the JoCA.

Issue 2 will be published on the Winter Solstice in 2018, and will concern landscape. Alberti's described ornament as a form of "second nature", an essential aspect of civic culture. Similarly, Hans Georg Gadamer convincingly argued (in *Truth and Method*, 1960) that art is essentially ornament. Art experience is a mode of sharing in the natural conditions of human imagination, the ornamentation of reality. JoCA seeks to further this dialogue.



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Photographs of Palas by David Grandorge and Peter Maybury (p17); Dysart by Peter Maybury; The New Crematorium by Ionana Marinescu; Žale by Geoffrey James.

Thanks to all the contributors, and to Alexandra Smith for invaluable help with this publication.

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is a teacher and researcher at Liverpool School of Architecture who is interested in the material culture of interfaces. He studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge and then Architecture at Manchester. As a by-product of an long running and unsuccessful attempt to define what a tune is, he has created a model of all the tunes in the Western musical canon as a single solid object which will be published in 2018.

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##### PATRICK LYNCH

is an architect based in London. He studied at Liverpool and Cambridge universities, completing his PhD at The Cass with Peter Carl, Joseph Rykwert and Helen Mallinson in 2015. He has taught at The Architectural Association, Cambridge University, The Cass, University College Dublin, Liverpool University, etc. He established Lynch Architects in 1997. Recipient of numerous awards, their projects have been widely published and exhibited, including The Venice Biennale in 2012, the Irish pavilion at Venice in 2008, and the Milano Triennale in 2017. He is the author of *Civic Ground* (2017), *Mimesis* (2015), and *The Theatricality of the Baroque City* (2011).

##### JOSEPH RYKWERT CBE

is Paul Philippe Cret Professor of Architecture Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania, born in Warsaw, he emigrated to England in 1939. Following architectural studies at the Bartlett School of Architecture and the Architectural Association, he taught at the Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm before becoming Librarian and Tutor at the Royal College

of Art in London. In 1967 he became Professor of Art at the newly-created University of Essex where he remained until 1981, when he was elected Slade Professor in the Fine Arts at the University of Cambridge and later Reader in Architecture. He took up his appointment in Philadelphia in 1988. Joseph Rykwert has lectured or taught at most major schools of architecture throughout the world and has held visiting appointments at Princeton, the Cooper Union, New York, Harvard Graduate School of Design, the University of Sydney, Louvain, the Institut d'Urbanisme, Paris, the Central European University and others. He has held several research and fellowships; his publications include: *The Golden House* (1947); *The Idea of a Town* (1963 *On Adam's House in Paradise* (1972); *The First Moderns* (1980), *The Necessity of Artifice* (1982); *The Brothers Adam* (1984), a new translation of Alberti's architecture treatise, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (1989, with Robert Tavernor and Neil Leach), *The Dancing Column* (1996) and *The Seduction of Place* (2000) and *The Judicious Eye* (2008). In 1984, he was appointed Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Joseph holds a number of honorary degrees and is a member of the Italian Accademia di San Luca and the Polish Academy. He has been president of the international council of architectural critics (CICA) since 1996 and was awarded the 2014 Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

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##### CINO ZUCCHI

is an architect and academic. He studied at M.I.T. and the Politecnico di Milano, where he is currently a Professor. Cino has taught in many international design workshops and has been Visiting Professor at the Harvard GSD. Author of articles and books on matters of architectural and urban theory, he participated in various editions of the Milano Triennale and of the Venice Biennale of Architecture, where he was the curator of the Italian Pavilion in 2014.

## Dysart

*Tom de Paor*

A derelict farmyard at Greystones, south of Dublin, is reworked as a paradise garden.

The foreshortening is exacerbated between the yard and the field pattern, pushing views between the mountain and the sea.

The forced perspectives are multiplied through the cut and fill of building, and making ground to walk around.

Bank, hedge and wall make smaller fields and climates, some are ponds.

Trees are planted.

Material is arranged, mineral or vegetable as a collection of rooms.

All in concrete; there is no distinction made between the constructions, some are roofed.

Glazing, insulation and services are applied with an eye for tolerance.

Inside becomes outside as room and yard become interchangeable and compounded, like a small town.

Inhabitation becomes a question of degree.

Photographs by Peter Maybury





## Palas

*A conversation between Tom de Paor (Cambridge, Mass.) and Patrick Lynch (London), April 2018*

“If you haven’t contributed to and improved the network of communications and atmospheres of a place, but simply disrupted it, then your work isn’t creativity, it’s just production.”  
 –Dalibor Vesely, Seminar at Eric Parry Architects, London, October 21st 2014

2ND APRIL

PATRICK LYNCH: I’ve just spent the day (a rainy Bank Holiday) with David Grandorge, looking for the first time at his photographs of your kino-palace at Galway.

I’m curious to know how you reacted to photos of the building made in the extreme weather of the place? Obviously these are unusual photos of a newly opened project, and it’s clearly not often that rain is allowed to pour in to parts of a civic building. Or is it so unusual? Medieval cathedrals were remarkably porous, in every sense I think. Before we get on to Dalibor Vesely’s comment, and in order to do so directly, I’m very interested to know more about your interest in the presence of the natural world in architecture. I remember the deep glee that we experienced swimming in Siza’s concrete pools at Leca: it seems that Galway was an ideal spot for your imagination, liminal, ruinous, cinematic, over-run with cars, in profound need of some cultivated wilderness?

3RD APRIL

TOM DE PAOR: There is one picture by David—a three quarter view, where there has been a shower earlier high on the building, like a watercolour. Sometimes, after rain, the façade around the corner dries to leave a wet drawing of the stairs behind, as the moisture is retained longer through the section. Recent pictures of the Pump House in Clontarf show how the staining has made the north façade more three dimensional as I had hoped, as it throws off the rain to the occasional pool, but now, up close, the canted concrete has an under storey of yellow lichen, which is lovely. I notice that in Galway too where the south façade seems to blur and become greenish blue over the winter and bloom before being burned away in the first sunny days. The convolutions of the old town behave, of course, as microclimates. To prop Merchants Road up was essential for continuity, which forced the gable, and placed great pressure on the program—too big for the back garden site. With no room for a foyer for the cinema proper, a staggered gap between tower and house allowed light and air and

views deep and high into the section, producing the effect of an object building in the town and making a place. It brings with it the weather, and the ticket kiosk becomes a corner shop, with all its colour.

From this, the staircases are extensions of the street, to wrap around the tempered rooms within. A species of outside, atmospherically, is allowed in as far as the cinema lobby, right to the top of the building; when the environment becomes artificial, in a door-swing. There is condensation of course, occasionally, which is beautiful.

I feel that it is all manmade, or all natural, at best; and so, our pleasure of swimming in Siza’s drawing.

12TH APRIL

PL: I’m not sure why, but the prevalence of programmatic issues—or rather, everyday life, use, reality, you know, whatever terms we like to use as architects to talk about the practical demands that life places on design—always seems to lead to richer and weirder solutions. I think you noticed this quite early in your career, no?

13TH APRIL

TDP: Yes, Paddy. Buildings are weird. They inevitably mirror and distort their need. There are so many everywhere, always in play in the alibi of use—private, commercial, or public. Early on, in the rough and tumble of making small things, a sign, a stair, a shop the idea was realized in the problematisation of technique. It still is.

What is the problem? “Complexity and Contradiction”, I suppose, which on re-reading, makes a long apology for the picturesque; giving license towards richer and weirder solutions, a widening of the subject to capture a larger audience, elevating compromise to science, rather than art. So, the building regulations extrapolate to become aesthetic order, and if applied judiciously, generate architecture, as we know. Ordinary buildings do this effortlessly, to become extra-ordinary in many small ways, but not Architecture.

Of course, compounded, we can be taken by surprise in this unusual space—the type people go to on their holidays, richer and weirder, and yet legal—where the logics of landscape, structure and use are compounded with, and produce, a typology of experience. It is no wonder that Alice in Wonderland was written by a mathematician.

Whether a hair salon, gallery, or cinema, all involve scrutiny, and all have the theatre of servant and served. The amplification of these positions—the plan, its lighting, whether artificial or natural, the

# THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

Form and Matter, Craftsmanship and Industry,  
Concept and Technique

*Luisa Collina and Cino Zucchi*

When the flush of a newborn sun fell first on Eden's green and gold,  
Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched with a stick in the mold;  
And the first rude sketch that the world had seen was joy to his mighty heart,  
Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Wherefore he called to his wife and fled to fashion his work anew—  
The first of his race who cared a fig for the first, most dread review;  
And he left his lore to the use of his sons—and that was a glorious gain  
When the Devil chuckled: "Is it Art?" in the ear of the branded Cain.

They builded a tower to shiver the sky and wrench the stars apart,  
Till the Devil grunted behind the bricks: "It's striking, but is it Art?"  
The stone was dropped by the quarry-side, and the idle derrick swung,  
While each man talked of the aims of art, and each in an alien tongue.

They fought and they talked in the north and the south, they talked  
and they fought in the west,  
Till the waters rose on the jabbering land, and the poor Red Clay had rest—  
Had rest till the dank blank-canvas dawn when the dove was preened to start,  
And the Devil bubbled below the keel: "It's human, but is it Art?"

The tale is old as the Eden Tree—as new as the new-cut tooth—  
For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows he is master of Art and Truth;  
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,  
The Devil drum on the darkened pane: "You did it, but was it Art?"

We have learned to whittle the Eden Tree to the shape of a surplice-peg,  
We have learned to bottle our parents twain in the yolk of an addled egg,  
We know that the tail must wag the dog, as the horse is drawn by the cart;  
But the Devil whoops, as he whooped of old: "It's clever, but is it Art?"

When the flicker of London's sun falls faint on the club-room's green and gold,  
The sons of Adam sit them down and scratch with their pens in the mold—  
They scratch with their pens in the mold of their graves, and the ink  
and the anguish start  
When the Devil mutters behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is it art?"

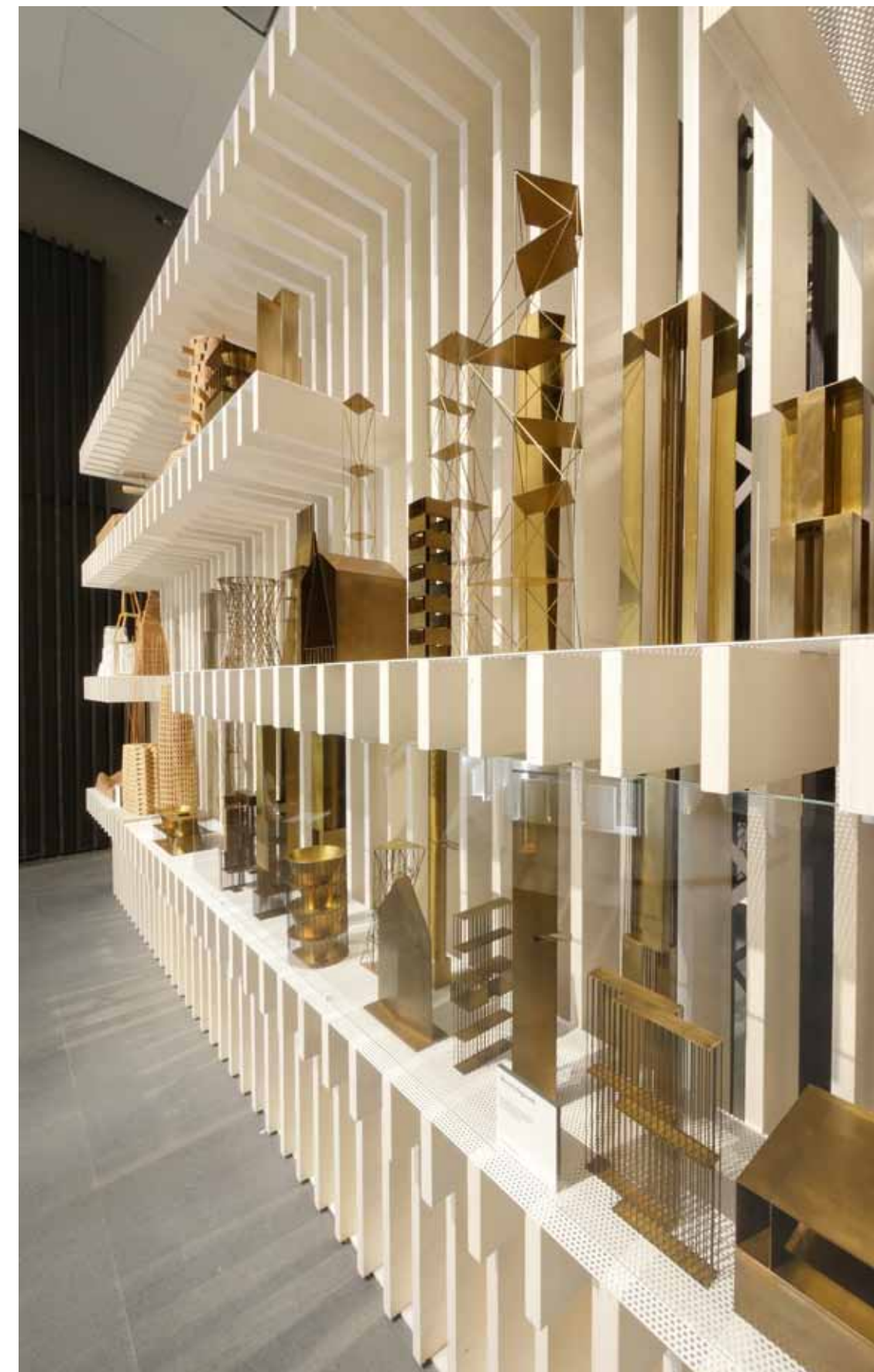
Now, if we could win to the Eden Tree where the four great rivers flow,  
And the wreath of Eve is red on the turf as she left it long ago,  
And if we could come when the sentry slept, and softly scurry through,  
By the favor of God we might know as much—as our father Adam knew.

Rudyard Kipling, *The Conundrum of the Workshops*



- 1 “The use of wickerwork for setting apart one’s property, the use of mats and carpets for floor coverings and protection against heat and cold and for subdividing the spaces within dwelling in most cases preceded by far the masonry wall [...]. Wickerwork, the original space divider, retained the full importance of its earlier meaning, actually or ideally, when later the light mat walls were transformed into clay tile, brick, or stone walls. Wickerwork was the *essence of the wall*. Hanging carpets remained the true walls, the visible boundaries of space. The often solid walls behind them were necessary for reasons that had nothing to do with the creation of space; they were needed for security, for supporting a load, for their permanence, and so on.” Gottfried Semper, *Die vier Elemente der Baukunst. Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Baukunde*, F. Vieweg, Braunschweig 1851 (Eng. transl. by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Hermann, *The four elements of architecture and other writings*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989, pp. 103–104).
- 2 “Architecture, in its relation to the fine arts as well as in its own right, will be a major theme of our considerations. Yet these higher realms of art represent only *one* of the outer limits of the field to be investigated. In this field we also encounter those simpler works to which the artistic instinct was first applied: adornment, weapons, weaving, pottery, household utensils—in a word, the industrial arts or what are also called technical arts.” Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten; oder, Praktische Aesthetik. Ein Handbuch für Techniker, Künstler und Kunstfreunde*, Frankfurt am Main 1860 (Engl. transl. by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Michael Robinson, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetic*, Getty Publications, Los Angeles 2004, pp. 72–73).
- 3 Gottfried Semper, *Style*, p. 107.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 5 The manuscript cited, from 1852, preserved in the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum ref. 86.FF.64., enabled Semper to obtain a teaching position at the National School of Design from its director, Henry Cole. “Most of the productions of Art and Industry wear a Mixed Character, and are related to more than one of the above given four families [note of the editor: it goes without saying that the thing also applies to the works in metal]. They must be placed and arranged together in the Collection so as to form the intermediate Members between the extremities or limits of the Collection, which are formed by the objects representing the pure fundamental motives.” Gottfried Semper, *The Ideal Museum. Practical Art in Metals and Hard Materials*, (MAK Studies) Schönbühler Editor, Vienna 2007, p.57, cited on the blog by Giovanni and Francesco Mazzaferro (English version) <http://letteraturaartistica.blogspot.it/2015/11/gottfried-semper.html>.
- 6 Gottfried Semper, *Style*, p. 106.
- 7 For the criticisms made by Laugier and Lodoli of Vignola’s classic system of orders, and the different positions held by various architects and theorists (including Piranesi) in the second half of the eighteenth century, see Cino Zucchi, *Costruzione e linguaggio classico*, in “QA, Quaderni del dipartimento di progettazione dell’architettura del Politecnico di Milano”, n. 14, Ottobre 1992, pp. 128–141, and related bibliography.
- 8 Bernhard E. Bürdek, *Design: History, Theory and Practice of Product Design*, Publisher for Architecture, Basel 2005, p. 21.
- 9 The word “Design” appears already in the name of the magazine (*The Journal of Design and Manufactures*, founded in 1849) and the school (*School of Design*, established in London in 1837) both directly associated with the figure of Henry Cole.
- 10 John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, John Wiley Publisher, New York 1849.
- 11 “Building is a biological process, building is not an aesthetic process. In its design the new dwelling becomes not only a ‘machine for living’, but also a biological apparatus serving the need of body and mind. The new age provides new building materials for the new way of building houses:
- reinforced concrete  
aluminium  
ripolin  
synthetic rubber  
euböolith  
viscose  
synthetic leather  
plywood  
asbestos concrete  
porous concrete  
hard rubber  
bitumen  
woodmetal  
torfoleum  
canvas  
wire-mesh glass
- silicon steel  
asbestos  
pressed cork  
cold glue  
acetone  
synthetic resin  
cellular concrete  
casein  
synthetic horn  
rolled glass  
trolite  
synthetic wood  
xelotect  
tombac
- we organize these building materials into a constructive whole based on economic principles.”
- In Hannes Meyer, “Bauen”, within Bauhaus, year 2, n.4, 1928 (reprinted in Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century Architecture*, The MIT press, Cambridge - Mass, 1975, pp. 117–120).
- 12 Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995.
- 13 Ernst Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (The Wrightsman Lectures, V. 9), Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1979. The mathematician Heinrich Heesch had catalogued the twenty-eight possible repetitions of a ‘tile’, leading to the theoretical study of what came to be called ‘tessellation’. For a rigorous treatise on the tessellation of a surface and its symmetry groups, see also Slavik Vlado Jablan, *Symmetry, Ornament and Modularity*, World Scientific Publishing, River Edge (New Jersey) 2002.
- 14 Adolf Loos, *Ornament und Verbrechen*, 1908 in *Ins Leere gesprochen*, *Trotzdem*, Herold, Wien-München 1962 (Eng. transl. by J. O Newmann and J. H. Smith, *Ornament and Crime, in Spoken Into the Void: Collected Essays, 1897–1900*, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago and the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, New York, MIT Press, Cambridge 1982).
- 15 Konrad Wachsmann, firstly apprentice to Heinrich Tessenow and later to Hans Poelzig, became one of the major experts in wood construction and later, after his escape to the USA, a theorist of spatial reticular systems based on standardised metal joints. See Konrad Wachsmann, *Holzhausbau. Technik und Gestaltung*, Ernst Wasmuth Verlag AG, Berlin, 1930 (Engl. transl. *Building the wooden house: technique and design*, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1995) and Konrad Wachsmann, *Wendepunkt im Bauen*, Kraußkopf-Verlag, Wiesbaden 1959 (Engl. transl. *The turning point of building: structure and design*, Reinhold, New York 1961).
- 16 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage*, Plon, Paris 1962, (Engl. transl. by George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, *The savage mind*, The Garden City Press Limited Letchworth, Hertfordshire, 1966).
- 17 “La tecnica cerca sempre di ottenere la più piccola forma possibile e la più grande energia, accetta la forma solo in quanto inevitabile, per il resto la tecnica nega la forma. (...) We certainly value the simple technical form overwhelmingly for the economic values it nurtures in us. We can value technical form very highly, yet still not want to have water pipes mounted visibly on the walls of our rooms.” In H. Tessenow, “Die technische Form”, in *Hausbau und dergleichen*, Bruno Cassirer Verlag, Berlin, 1916 (Engl. transl. by Walter Jessen, “House-building and Such Things”, in Richard Burdett and Wilfried Wang, *9H: On Rigor*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p.15).
- 18 Codice Atlantico, fogli 328 v-a (dated 1508–1510).
- 19 Codice Atlantico, fogli 283 r-b (dated 1494), 283 v-c; Ms. H, fol. 89r.
- 20 Collezione della Casa Buonarroti, inv. 13A, 14A, 16A, 17 A, 22A, 24 A, 25A, 26A (dated around 1529–1530).
- 21 Preserved in the Uffizi, shelf mark 589 Ar.
- 22 Arnaldo Bruschi, Adriano Carugo and Francesco Paolo Fiore (curated by), *De Architectura traslato commentato e affigurato da Cesare Cesariano, 1521*, anastatic copy, Il Polifilo, Milano, 1981.
- 23 Philibert de l’Orme, *Le premier tome de l’architecture*, Frédéric Morel, Paris 1567.
- 24 Sebastiano Serlio, *Il primo libro d’Architettura*, 1537, anastatic copy, Edizioni Forni, Bologna 1987, p.16.
- 25 “May I take you to the shores of a mountain lake? The sky is blue, the water green and everywhere is profound tranquillity. (...) But what is this? A discordant note in the tranquillity. Like an unnecessary screech. Among the locals’ houses, that were not built by them, but by God himself, stands a Villa. The creation of an architect. Whether a good or bad architect, I don’t know. All I know is that the tranquillity, peace and beauty have vanished. (...) And therefore I ask, why is it that any architect, good or bad, desecrates the lake? The farmer does not. Nor does the engineer who builds a railway along the shore or scores deep furrows in its clear surface with his ship. They go about things in a different way. [...] (The farmer) is making the roof. What kind of roof? A beautiful or ugly one? He has no idea. It’s just a roof. [...] Is his house beautiful? Yes, just as beautiful as a rose or a thistle, as a horse or a cow. [...] Like almost all city dwellers, the architect lacks culture. He lacks the sure touch of the farmer, who does possess culture. The city dweller is a *rootless*.” Adolf Loos, *Architektur*, 1910, in *Ins Leere gesprochen*, *Trotzdem*, Herold, Wien-München 1962, (Eng. transl. by Wilfried Wang, with Rosamund Diamond and Robert Goddill, in Adolf Loos, Yehuda Safran, Wilfried Wang, Mildred Budny, *Architecture, in The Architecture of Adolf Loos: An Arts Council Exhibition*, Arts Council of Great Britain, London 1985, pp. 104–105).
- 26 Adolf Loos, *Intérieurs*, 1898, in *Ins Leere gesprochen*, *Trotzdem*, Herold, Wien-München 1962 (Engl. transl. *Interior design: Prelude*, 1989, in Adolf Loos, Adolf Opel ed., *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, Riverside, California Ariadne Press, 1998, pp.51–55).
- 27 Bernard Rudowsky, *Architecture without Architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York 1964.
- 28 Enzo Mari, *autoprogettazione?*, Corraini, Milano 1974.
- 29 Giulio Carlo Argan, in Enzo Mari, *ibid.* p.34.
- 30 “At one extreme we have a kind of teaching that relies on the novice’s very gradual exposure to the craft in question, on his ability to imitate by practice, on his response to sanctions, penalties, and reinforcing smiles and frowns. [...] The most important feature of this kind of learning is that the rules are not made explicit, but are, as it were, revealed through the correction of mistakes. The second kind of teaching tries, in some degree, to make the rules explicit.” in Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1964, p.35.
- 31 Douglas Hofstadter, *Variations on a Theme as the Crux of Creativity*, 1982, now in *Metamagical Themas: Questing for the Essence of Mind and Pattern*, Penguin, New York, 1985, pp.

Photographs of the Sempering exhibition at Milan Triennale 2017







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