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architecture & design
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Here is Compasses.

Compasses is a new quarterly of architecture and design.
It is intended to spread in the world from the Emirates, the heart of the Middle East, and broach areas such as metropolis, landscape, and ecology.
In this part of the planet these arguments are not pretexts for abstract reflections but instead are living materials, like a substance in continuous movement.
Here, each day the transformation of the environment into a populated or anthropized environment, generates dynamism, charm and contradictions.
Therefore an architecture magazine can aspire to be a researching place to trace an ideal design, an unpublished plot for growth that is stunning even to the most distracted observer.
Compasses, is not proposing to review new 21st century global style, but will above all search for quality, differences, specificity in individual approaches.
It will not display the face of new national or regional architectural identities but will seek a combination of angles, blending where possible, the traces of aromas of individual ingredients.
It will attempt to design a portrait in movement or an ever developing world, focusing on a far from easy polysemy eclecticism, based on rigorous choices that search for newly awaited architectural beauties.
This beauty will be intended as a higher poetic intensity for human living with respect to the biological equilibrium of the planet.
We, the creators of Compasses would like to assert and help the imagination and aim to stimulate the readers' curiosity regarding certain themes that are not always noted or evident, encouraging a continuous interchange between the origin of things and their projection in the future.
We will produce four editions per year of about 160 pages in full colour.
These publications will be found in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as architecture bookstores worldwide and museum stores.
Each edition will build its own theme across a multitude of sources: on the whole it will be a collection of narrations, a mosaic of ideas and published or unpublished projects, but always projected through a commentary that elucidates the strength of explication, the exemplary character.
We will not pursue the obsession with the new (today there are numerous monthly magazines and websites that continuously update us on the 'new' project) but we have the ambition of dealing with a subject, in a way that our reflections and thoughts lend themselves to a distant future and can be found in our readers' own libraries and particularly in the depths of their memories in years to come.

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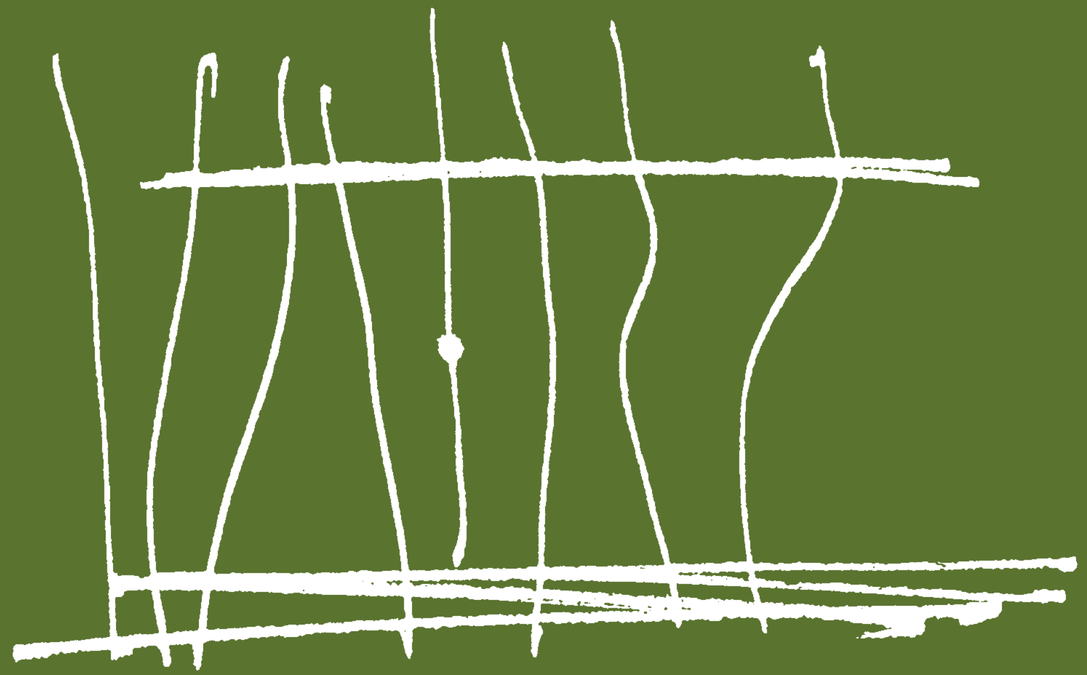
Cover
Pyongyang's Forest on Ruin
Original sketch by Cherubino Gambardella

001 [compasses]

sky architecture

Cherubino Gambardella

In the ancient Eastern world, the score of time was calculated in nights rather than in days. And, the night skies of “A thousand and one nights” in the version of Richard Francis Burton, are dark mysterious spaces populated by huge and bright architectures in the form of stars and asteroids.
These, especially if we really could run into the Newton’s Cenotaph by E.L. Boullée, would seem to talk to the “infinite”, much more than when are related to the blue uniformity.
And then, the clouds are changing configurations described as large imaginary buildings by Paul Auster in the city of glass of the “Trilogy of New York”.
Turning the sky into a solid mass that lies at the top of architecture doubling or making it as a counterpoint.
Pure blue sky is also the generic substance that welcomes the end of each building and, caught by perspective foreshortenings or sudden visions, turns into design’s decisive subject.
The sky architecture is not simply a vertical and monumental challenge of each time, from the pyramids to minarets, from domes to skyscrapers.
It is rather a particular condition linked to looking upwards, choosing some way as a possible map that clarifies the search for another way of understanding architecture, a poetic chance that puts the “sublime” and “picturesque” on the same layer by a blend of abstraction and contamination in the forms of today’s metropolitan landscape.
The height as violent arrogance in the condominium (High Rise), described by the sophisticated thriller writer James Ballard, but also the height as a domain of metropolitan flows in the lounge bar of “Lost in Translation”, a fairy tale of Tokyo by Sophia Coppola mocking and poetic gaze.
Buildings and skies have, therefore, their rules and ways to meet together and then we will try to walk between the recall of Pantheon’s dome unexpected foreshortening and the getting around of birds transformed humans through the netting “Cité Spatial” by Yona Friedman.
The ground is free and everything moves upwards as in the clouds brackets of El Lissitzky.
Even Le Corbusier makes his ideal-city escape from ground - causing the ire of Hans Sedlmayr who speaks about an the attack to architecture -, but refrains from settling everything by hanging skyscrapers of its ideal metropolis on pile works.
The Swiss-French master works on architecture’s decisive epilogue and traces it as a mystery.
In the Beistegui’s Parisian apartment, Le Corbusier turns the sky as the last view hiding the Paris landscape by hedges and walls.
The architect transforms the dome in the ideal ceiling of an open-sky room as an unexpected epilogue of its surrealistic attic and as a ticket of departure for our travel through sky’s colonization forms, as an unconscious of architecture and its incessant exercise of eternity.



A forest with ruins
Ryugyong Hotel - Domus international call for ideas Winner Project
Cherubino Gambarella - 2006

with
Lorenzo Capobianco, Simona Ottieri, Mario Russo, Gaetano Iovinella, Fabio Baratto

linked hybrid

Steven Holl Architects

Work
Linked Hybrid

Location
Beijing, China

Year
2003-2008

Project Team
Christian Beerli, Johnna Cressica Brazier, Shih-I Chow, Cosimo Caggiula, Kefei Cai, Frank Cottier, Christiane Deptolla, Matthew Jull, Jongseo Lee, Eric Li, Richard Liu, Giorgos Mitroulas, Olaf Schmidt, Judith Tse, Clark Manning, Kitty Wang, Li Wang, Ariane Wiegner, Noah Yaffe, Liang Zhao; Guy Nordenson and Associates (structural engineers); TRANSSOLAR Energietechnik GmbH, Cosentini Associates (mechanical engineers); Steven Holl Architects + EDAW Beijing (landscape architecture)

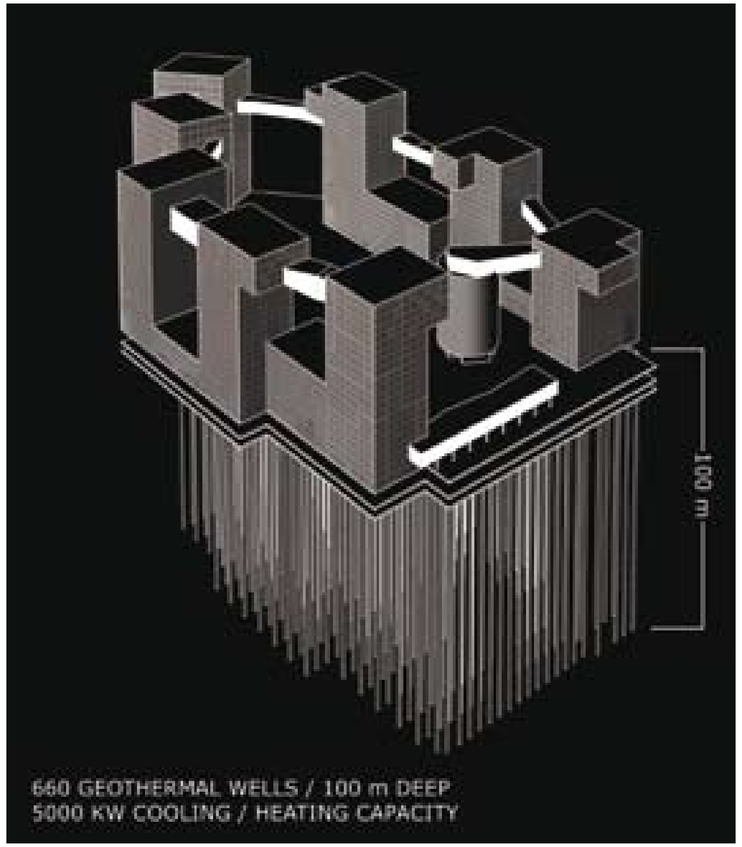
Site area
6.18 Hectare

Project area
221,000 m^2
(including 58,500 m^2 below grade)

Image Credits
Construction site image - Iwan Baan

Other images and drawings courtesy of Steven holl Architects

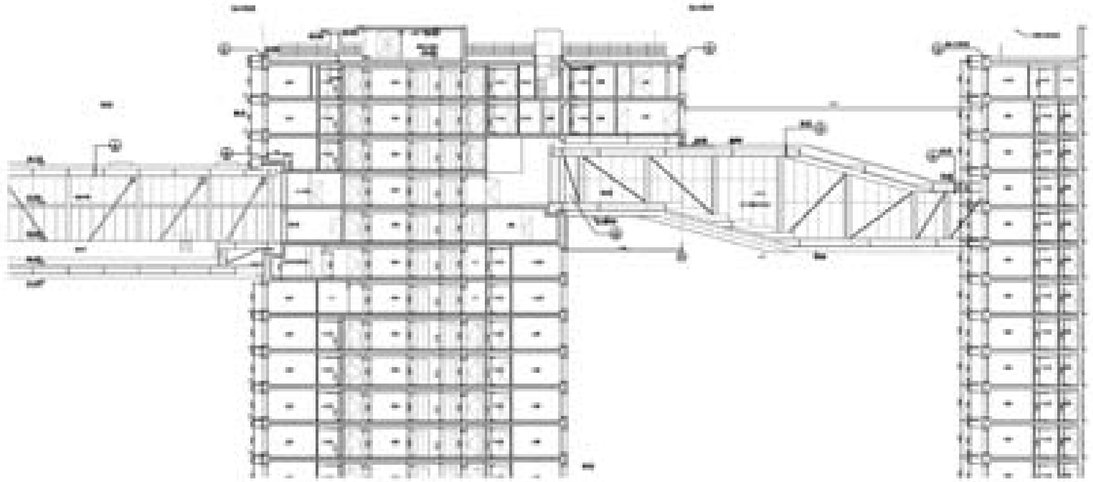
Among the pages of Hybrid Buildings, from the series of independent publications Pamphlet Architecture (number 11), as a mode of research proposed by Steven Holl on the internal limits of architectural discipline starting from the seventies, the American architect begins to investigate a phenomenon not listed from American urban culture: the emergence of relations between multiple functions, heterogeneous, hybrid, in buildings that are changing the nature of their content over time compared to an initial pre-settled function.
It is the process that Holl defines programmatic fluctuation. The principle of the mix on which the contemporary building is built denies the traditional rhetoric of the past or its typological clarity. It proposes a new urban topic to study and new semi-public spaces to be defined, in a re-configuration of the ingredients in a collective scale of the city.
The disquietude generated by the spread in the metropolis of programmatic fluctuation, raises the need to establish new meanings to architecture, but it can also mutate into an attractive design incentive for the contemporary architect towards new solutions: Hybrid Buildings.
Consciousness of the need to formulate exhaustive answers to a problem originated from a threshold of the evolutionary history of architecture, in which are mounted and welded different morphological and programmatic components in a strategy for a new expression of housing, suggests several themes to the program of the Linked Hybrid in Beijing. But if in the method of Holl each project is different for conditions, site and program the true significance lies in the phenomenon of the experience.
Filmic urban space; around, over and through multi-faceted spatial layers is one of the central aims of this Hybrid Building complex.
The great urban project awakens in Holl the theme of experience of the depth of space, a passage through a series of perspective in a continuous temporal wave. Is the theme of parallax which in the Chinese project in terms of distribution translates the phenomenal experience into a continuous promenade, in which the author traces a sky ring that embraces the eight towers of 750 apartments between the eleventh to the eighteenth floors. Holl imagines that the great promenade equipped and suspended between towers, as in the park ground level, will constantly generate random relationships as in a modern city. An ideal dimension of the housing transcends in the architectural permanence of the ring-ramp: the path move through changing perspectives on the landscape - on the slow and curvilinear elevation - in a program rich of functions, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, art galleries, shops, a beauty salon, swimming pool, gyms, laundry, measured uniquely from perceptions.
On an urban scale Holl envisions an open project, a metaphor of his Greenwich Village in New York, in which each inhabitant expresses a new collective aspiration of living in a city within a city animated 24 hours a day, in sharp contrast with the single object buildings isolated in a Beijing increasingly privatized.
But the pivotal idea of the city within the city is not just a reference to New York models. The location of the lot on the corner of the old city walls just over the second ring puts in a visual relation the Linked Hybrid with the Forbidden City.
On this principle idea conform the three fundamental levels of the project.
The first is the ground level - urban porosity - where shops, services, restaurants and parking lots are surrounded by a large reflecting pond and placed in relation to the garden enclosing them. The multiplex is the cinematic pole of the looping bridge and at the same time the central park of this city within the city. During the night images of film flow on the walls of the cinema and are reflected in the basin of water. Clouds of colours are generated by lights and fountains and the coloured membranes of the suspended walkways pay a tribute to the polychrome architecture of China. Mind, body and environment are intertwined in the landscape project.
The planning talents of Holl associate the environmental sustainability of technological solutions of a project of the twenty-first century - 600 geothermal well 100 meters deep underneath the basement foundations for air conditioning, solar exposures minimized with window shades that reduce the sunlight, the pond recycles grey water, the earth removed for the parking has generated 5 mounds - with the theme of random relationships and free time.
The five mounds that animate the park contain the programmatic activities related to the cycle of life. The mound of childhood is linked to the kindergarten whereas the mound of middle age has coffee and tea houses and spaces for tai chi and tennis, the mound of adolescence has a skate board area, basketball court, TV >



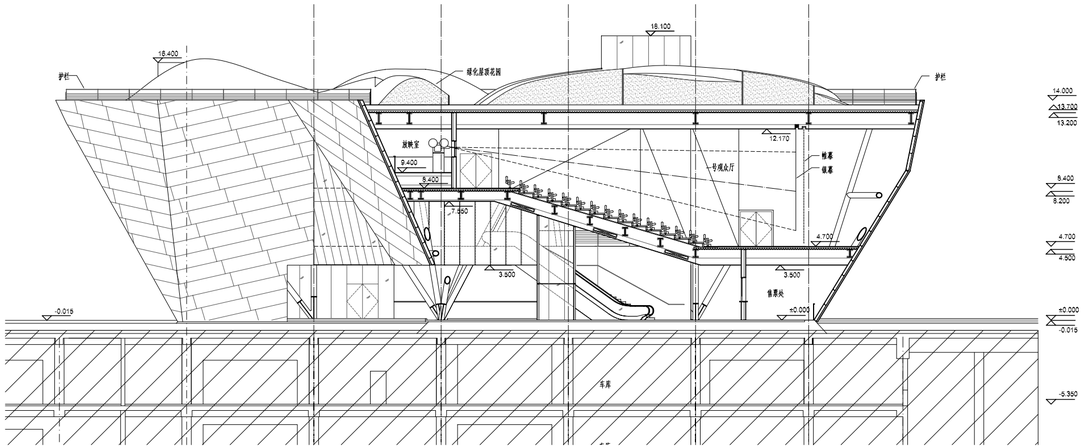
Geodiagram

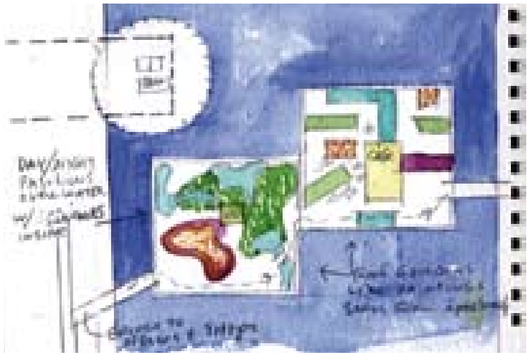
lounge music, while chess, tai chi, exercise machines and a reading lounge animate the mound devoted to old age. Lastly the mound of infinity encloses a place for meditation with pavilions dedicated to the 5 elements.
The middle level of the project emphasizes the theme of quiet. The roof gardens, and especially that of the cinema, are places for silence, seen from all the 750 different apartments. It's still a subject dear to the Architect the dialectical conflict between the individual expression of life and the indifferent materialism of the contemporary construction and urban planning. The difference between each house, flexible internal spaces reconfigurable through hinged doors and panels with references to the tradition of Feng-Shui, with two orientations without internal corridors, responds to the uniqueness of the person living in it.
The third level, certainly the most spectacular, is the dream of a city in the sky. Its additional functions are distributed along a ring shape by ever changing perspectives, connecting the eight towers with sky bridges, in a dynamic embrace that records the flexible bodies of La danse of Matisse.
The 2500 people who live in Linked Hybrid are not only inhabitants of an apartment but residents of a new world.
For me architecture its chiefly an experiential condition. The real measure of its success is experience the phenomena of walking through the spaces; the phenomena of seeing the views out of the apartments; the phenomena of watching the reflection in the water from the cinema; the phenomena of feeling the wind blow through the window as you open them.
The most important part of our architecture is when you go inside of it and how you live in it an how you experience it every day. And this will be the great joy the realization of this project and the joy of the people who are fortunate enough to process and live in this city within the city.

Sila Barracco



On this pages clockwise
Narrow passage
Side section drawing
Construction model





On this page clockwise
Room interior, watercolour
Cinema diagram
Watercolour sketches

3+3 grafting

MVRDV

Author
Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs,
Nathalie de Vries

Work
Didden Village

Location
Rotterdam, Netherlands

Year
2002 - 2007

Project Team
Anet Schurink, Marc Joubert, Fokke Moerel
and Ivo van Cappelleveen

Image Credits
Rob Hart

Repair technique to extend the old city.

Didden Village in Rotterdam consists of an extension to an already existing residence inside the historic centre characterised by the traditional Dutch habitation.

On the roof of the building there are volumes in the shape of typical two floor houses placed on top. On the inside, three rooms are used with separate access from the floor below, to gain a greater independence for the family members. The external space is used as a connection between the bodies and has been organised as a small village would be treated, with roads, piazzas, tables and benches with flower beds and trees. The openings, cut into the perimeter wall according to the horizontal line, allow the introduction of the city into the internal space from the terrace through squares that re-cut different fragments.
All the elements are an intense azure blue colour obtained with a poliutetanic film that unifies them together and allows for the intention of a small village created on the roofs. The extension modifies the urban skyline with a 'lost in space' effect that floats the new additions on the historical city as though it was weightless.

These houses, that from the street seem to be resting on the horizontal line of the roof, in reality, hide two knocked in roots from the floor beneath.

The small innocent houses sink into their spiral staircases in the body of the building. Three staircases, that we discover inside the homes, pre-existed as two spiral cylinders suspended on the ceiling, become such revealing clues. They negate the appearance of horizontality and trigger a quick vertical movement.

This MVRDV project invites us to reflect on the graft as a REPARATION technique that deploys strategy and tactics to renew the city. But what is a graft? How is it generated?

A graft requires bodies, machines and different flows. It needs cuts, conjunctions, blocks and suture.
Each graft produces a characterizing starting point to a point of exchange, in which the flow can pass from one body to the other.
In Didden Village there are the cylinders of the stairs the neuralgic nodes where the grafts manifest their presence and produce the difference.
We discover then, how the strength of the project is not so much in the juxtaposition of the bodies with the pointed roofs placed in a beautiful show along the horizontal line of the old building, as it is that these hidden insertions activate a vortex of surprisingly vertical movement. These spirals, that come down from the ceiling and do not touch the floor, capsize the functional and the perception of the old house, predominantly developed horizontally, and activate a new and almost magical unforeseen relationship with the existing city.
The grafting however is not simply a combination of different things but rather the generation of a new body-machine able to trigger new conditions.

For MVRDV this project corresponds to a prototype for a hypothesis of extension of the old existing city, that donates a new life to the roofs of the old city. This possibility is supported by the authors and also by the new verification of its necessary costs to adequate the pre-existing structure and predispose the necessary ends. In fact it seems that, at the end, these would be inferior to the price of the ground rent.

If at first sight the project could seduce due to the fairytale tone of the azure blue veil, that enwraps everything and creates wonder and bewilderment, at a closer look it gives way to doubt that in the final result prevails to the will of doing every gesture, even the smallest, as theoretical exhibition.
The roof garden from a certain point of view could appear to be a parody of other more heroic and convincing work also because it seems not to possess sufficient irony to annul the risk of simplification.
It emerges as a contradiction between the techniques used, that it achieves with little postponement and machine and body blocks, and the wish to 'shout out' the completion of the operation.

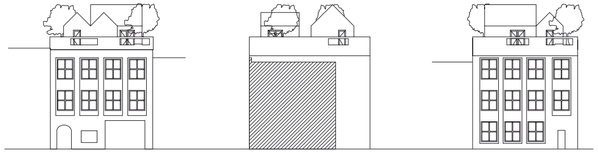
But in what does this project have to do with the sky?

Certainly not for its colour. It is rather the push with which to throw bodies high along the vertical axis. Bodies that find tranquillity only on the terrace.
Didden Village does not limit itself to a generic hypothesis of extension, but it suggests a transformation that, starting from the inside of a single architecture, can circulate like a virus, using the resources of the organism as a guest for the renewing of the entire body of the city.

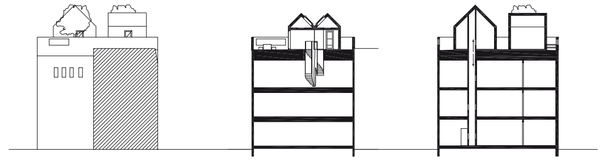
Marco Navarra

Right
Skyline. Grafting into the Ancient City

Below
Project layers



Densifying. The Roof as a new Ground



Flowerbeds, trees and little squares, like a small village between the blue houses

The view from the Roof

Over the roof, horizontal lines

hell, yes!
but really cool

SANAA

Architects
Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa

Work
New Museum of Contemporary Art

Location
235 Bowery, New York, USA

Years
competition 2002; project 2003 – 2005; construction 2005 – 2007

Design team
Florian Idenburg, Toshihiro Oki, Jonas Elding, Koji Yoshida, Hiroaki Katagiri, Javier Haddad, Erika Hidaka. Executive Architect: Gensler: Madeline Burke- Vigeland, William Rice, John Chow, Christopher Duisbeurg, Kristian Gregerson, Sohee Moon, Karen Pedrazzi, Will Rohde

Construction Cost
$50 million

Project management
Plaza Construction Corporation: Richard Wood, Christopher Mills, John Nowak Sr.

Construction Management
Sciame: Frank. J. Sciame, Michael Porcelli, Mark Pankoff, Susan Ospina, Lou Sibert, Kyle Rolf, Antony Turturro, Rich Bergen, Andrew Sciame, Charles Hsu, Ralph Thompson, Darrin McIntyre, Adam Giusti

Structural engineering
Sasaki Structural Consultants ; Guy Nordenson & Associates ; Simpson Gumperts & Heger Inc.

Mechanical engineering
Arup: Raymond Queen, Camille Allocca

Lighting designer
Tillotson Design Associates

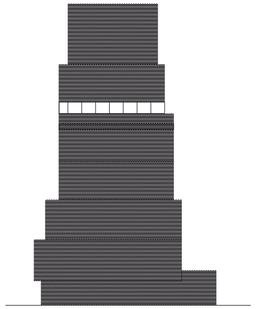
Image Credits
Luca Molinari and C. Richters

Imagine being at a party with the theme of *Gangs of New York* and see a charming woman coming dressed as a geisha.
Imagine a neighborhood full of brick condominiums and fire escape staircases, teeming with curious shops of second hand kitchen equipment where a monolithic architecture rises, so ambiguous that it doesn't communicate, at first sight, what is inside.
These contrasting images create the sensation that the *New Museum of Contemporary Art* inspires those who perceive it walking on the Bowery. This building either generates enthusiastic and encouraging words - Paul Goldberger on *The New Yorker* or Robert Campbell on *The Boston Globe* - or profoundly critical ones regarding the choice of a minimalist modernism - Adrian Dannett on *www.bdonline.co.uk*.
Personally, this building brings to mind the icebergs of Rachel Whiteread, among which I got lost at the London Tate Modern - *Embankment*, 2005 - and on the same lines, it also brings to mind the stacked cubes of Not Vital - *Mamma*, 2006 - or more simply sugar cubes. It is hypnotic, graceful, chalky, sculptural, coherent, austere, unusual, vertical, dull, not garish and not banal and very photogenic.
Elegantly intriguing, the *New Museum* emerges in the Lower East Side which is living a transformation similar to that already lived by Tribeca or the Meatpacking District.
In 2003, in a restricted competition among non Americans who had not previously contributed to New York construction, the *New Museum* awarded Sanaa, identifying in their proposal an unconventionality and research, values that the museum, established by Marcia Tucker, prosecutes from 1977.
Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa work on two fundamental principals: to interpret the rapport between interior and exterior and to set up spatial proportions adequate to the land and to requested functions.
They envisage a tower completely covered by a silver gray expanded aluminum veil that interacts with natural light modifying the perception of the front when the light changes in the passing of hours and seasons.
The metallic armour is detached about 4 centimeters from the façade (the mesh is set up with rod clip extensions on backup aluminum panels) and allows an unusual game of shadows that renders a diaphanous and evanescent architecture, overall if you look at through the relationship within the urban context.
To emphasize the monochromes of the whole system - interrupted by the Ugo Rondinone neon *Hell, yes!* rainbow that illuminates in the night and seems to hint to human hells cared for at the near Bowery Mission - the metallic mesh covers also the few windows dotting the fronts.
A glass and attractive basement underlines the will to link interior and exterior spaces with a fluid flow: people walking outside can see what is happening in the hall, in the bookstore or in the cafeteria, spaces accessible also to those who do not visit museum galleries.
Going down from ground floor there is the theatre (182 seats): to reach it you cross a lobby where the walls house the work of Jeffrey Inaba - *Donor Hall*, 2007.
Further up it's possible to arrive at upper levels where there are galleries (2,3,4 floors) and offices, educational areas, exhibition halls.
Precisely inside these spaces you can clearly perceive the work made on the proportion that probably may escape the eye looking at the six boxes from the outside: apparently the separate structures on top of each other appear to be piled up randomly so that one may question how they are able to maintain an equilibrium towards the sky.
No gallery is like another both in surface and depth, but above all, with regard to internal lighting quality and modulation: every box is lit by fluorescent long parallel strips and by rows of natural light falling down from skylights. These are positioned on the surface of ceilings resultant from the sliding of a box beside the other.
Galleries, closed in white drywalls, with beams and ducts exposed and single - pour gray concrete floor, render to the museum the informal feeling of a found space, rather than designed in an ad hoc manner.
Exposition areas are free columns - they are organized around a concrete core that houses elevators and staircases - with considerable depth. They are a neutral and functional scenario to mount different typology expositions.
The first New Museum's permanent seat is here: the new signal in the Lower East Side skyline (together with Bernard Tschumi' Blue Residential Tower and Herzog & de Meuron's 40 Bond) it is striking for its composition quality which is so understated and so surprising.

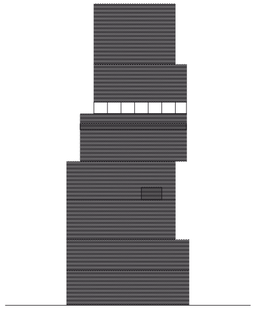
Grey aluminium veil wrapped building compressed among existent buildings. © C. Richters

Six boxes compressed among existent buildings draw a new urban order.
© C. Richters

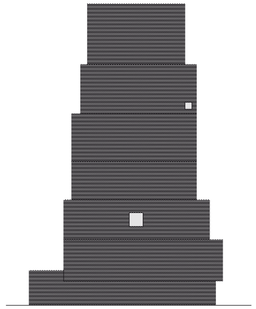
WEST ELEVATION
1/500



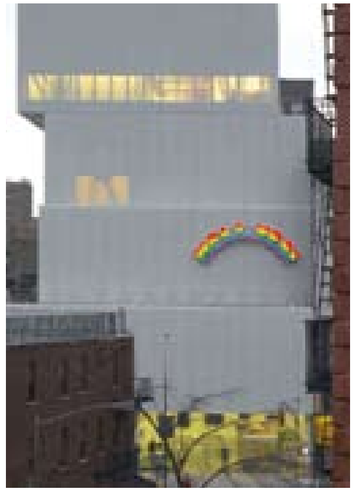
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



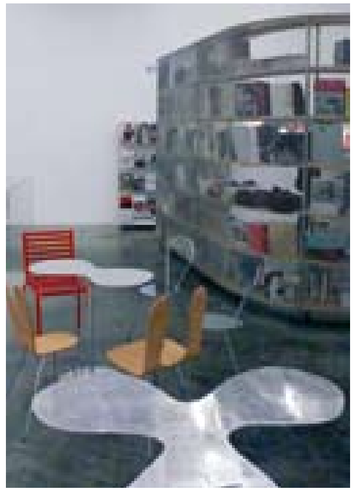
NORTH ELEVATION



Images in clockwise order
Terrace on the New York panorama. © C. Richters
Outside building view. © C. Richters
The sky room houses the event area
Front detail. © C. Richters

Left page
Gallery room. © C. Richters
Window view. © C. Richters

Below
In this gallery is visible the contact between artificial and natural light falling down from skylights
The bookshop held in grey aluminium veil with a curving geometry



Unexpected are the steep stairs inserted behind the elevators, narrow and monumental at the same time that link two levels between them and amplify the thrill of going into the fourth floor gallery (depth 7,70 m.). What is truly amazing is the sky room on the top, where the last box opens toward sky.
Sudden is the synthetic green grass covering elevators so dystonic and eccentric in a building finished with gray and white only.
But the real surprise, in a neighborhood where in recent years luxury restaurants, trendy shops, a lot of art galleries have emerged, is that - as Nicolai Ouroussoff wrote in *The New York Times* - the *New Museum of Contemporary Art* renews your faith in New York as a place where culture is lived, not just bought and sold.

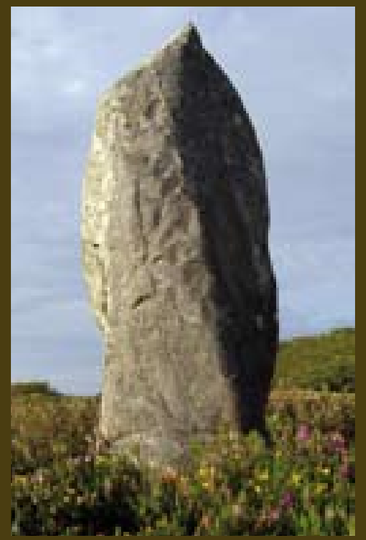
Giulia Bonelli

world of towers

Mario Pisani

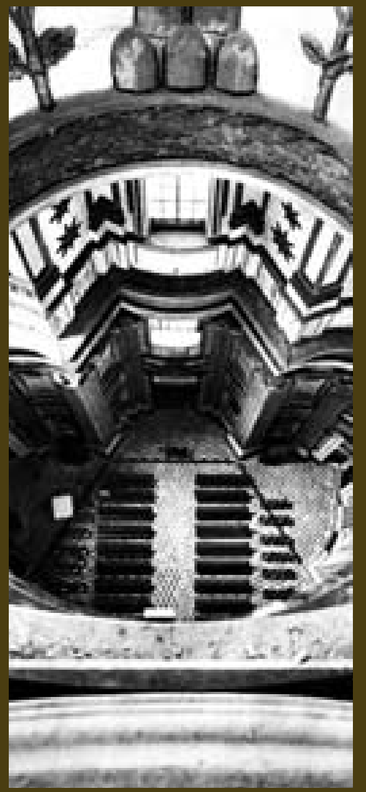
If the hut appears well rooted to the ground and its image evokes the relationship with the earth of man's first residence, the tower – archetype of skyscraper – raises itself towards the sky forcing us to look up, on the blue background where it is drawn.

Tower origins come from the desire of our ancestors to elevate, in memory of those who left us, a voluminous vertical stone. Still today we can see menhir or totem in the eastern world.

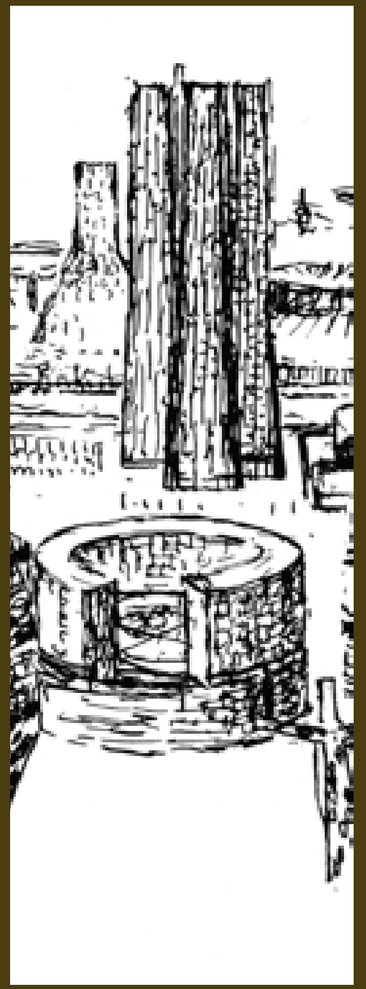


In Erodono's tales we read: "in the middle of the sacred enclosure of Babel there was a thick tower from the base long and wide like a stadium; and on it another one rises and on this still another one and so on: in all eight overlapped towers. You climb through external staircases that are wound to spiral around each tower: half way up the slope, there is a ledge with some seats where you can rest. […] Finally in the last tower there is a great temple in which there is a golden bed. […] There aren't however statues of the god."

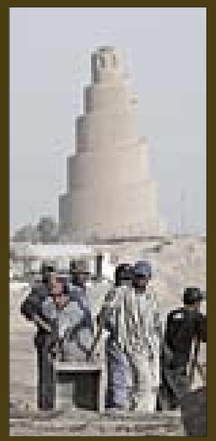
The image of this tower inspired Borromini's lantern of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza and it has been handed down since the 500s through numerous incisions.



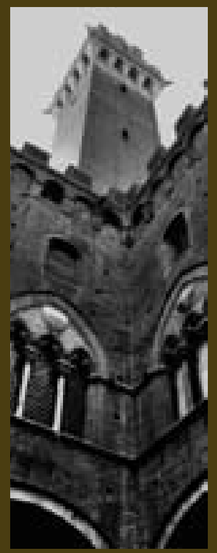
In the middle ages walls and towers were arranged in a circle around the inhabited nucleus as a defensive mechanism as those of Monteriggioni. However those of San Gimignano, that inspired the suggestive designs of Luois Khan for the Philadelphia centre, were thought up for setting and drying the cotton rolls coming from Egypt after they had been dyed garish colors. They therefore accomplish an economic function.



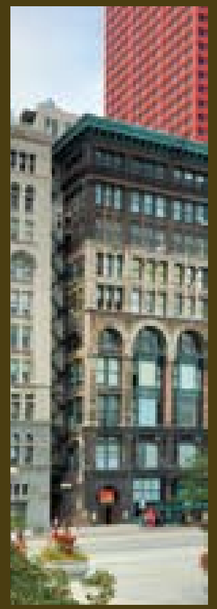
In those same years in Arabic Countries the minaret appear (in Arabic manār, or “lighthouse”) present in almost all the mosques. From here the muezzin calls devoted Arabs to prayer five times a day. The Kutubiyya or Booksellers's minaret at Marrakesh, built in the XII century, represents the prototype for Seville's Giralda and for the Tour Hassan at Rabat.



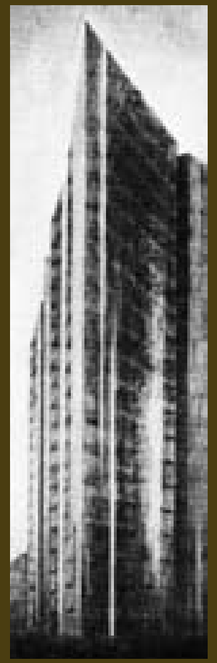
The Mangia Tower, in Siena's Piazza del Campo, built between 1325 and 1348, represents the “bell tower” of the Town Hall and is, among the ancient ones, the tallest in Italy with its 87 meters. The name is owed to the first keeper: Giovanni di Balduccio, also known as “Mangiaguadagni” (which literarily translated means ‘eat earnings’) appreciated the pleasures of the dining table that he consequently squandered all his earnings on food.



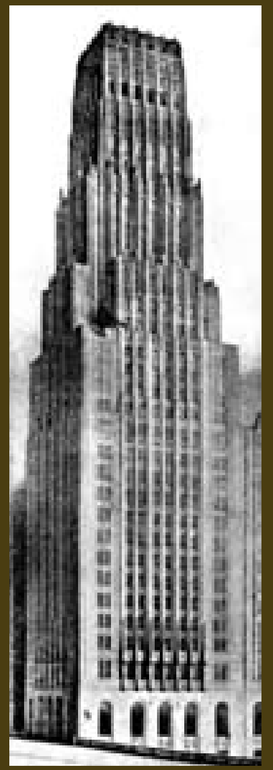
At the end of the XIX century the first ‘skyscrapers’ emerge whose etymology derives from the English term used to indicate the tall trees that held up the sails in ships. A skyscraper reaches heights of more than 100 meters; the first to deal with this matter, during Chicago's reconstruction years after it had been destroyed by the great fire, was Louis Sullivan.

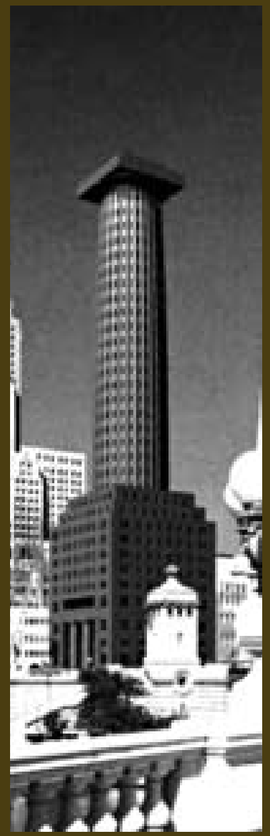


While in Europe, in Berlin 1921, a competition for constructing a 20 storey skyscraper on the Friedrichstrasse was expelled. Architects like Hans Scharoun, Hans Poelzig, Hugo Häring participated but the proposal by Mies van der Rohe was remarkable for its ability to blend the lesson of expressionism with that of rationalism, in effect introducing an idea of great refinement. In an absolutely symmetrical map Mies divides the prospective in vertical bands, obtaining an upward rush due to the crystal covering, which turns the volume into a light body, evanescent, rich in the reflection of light game. accomplish an economic function.



One year later in Chicago a competition to construct a new headquarters for the daily newspaper “Chicago Tribune” was banished. It was to reach heights of 400 feet and the prize winner would have received 50.000 dollars. 263 groups from all over the world participated in the competition. The project was won by American architects Raymond Hood and John Mead Howells, a neo-gothic building with an interesting crowning, but the moral winner was the Finnish architect Eliel Saarineen, that succeeded in giving a great vertical throw to his proposal.





In 1930 in New York the Chrysler Building of William van Alen appeared. The skyscraper reaches 319 meters and is remarkable for its stainless steel crowning that attributes a particular brightness to the peak able to evoke the actual chrome plating of the cars.

Nowadays the skyscraper represents something more than a simple architectural typology, it highlights a symbol of our time as the most recent results show to begin with, the Burj Dubai.

more beautiful than milan's gray

Boeri Studio

Author
Boeri Studio: Stefano Boeri, Gianandrea Barreca, Giovanni La Varra

Work
RCS Headquarter

Location
Milano, Italy

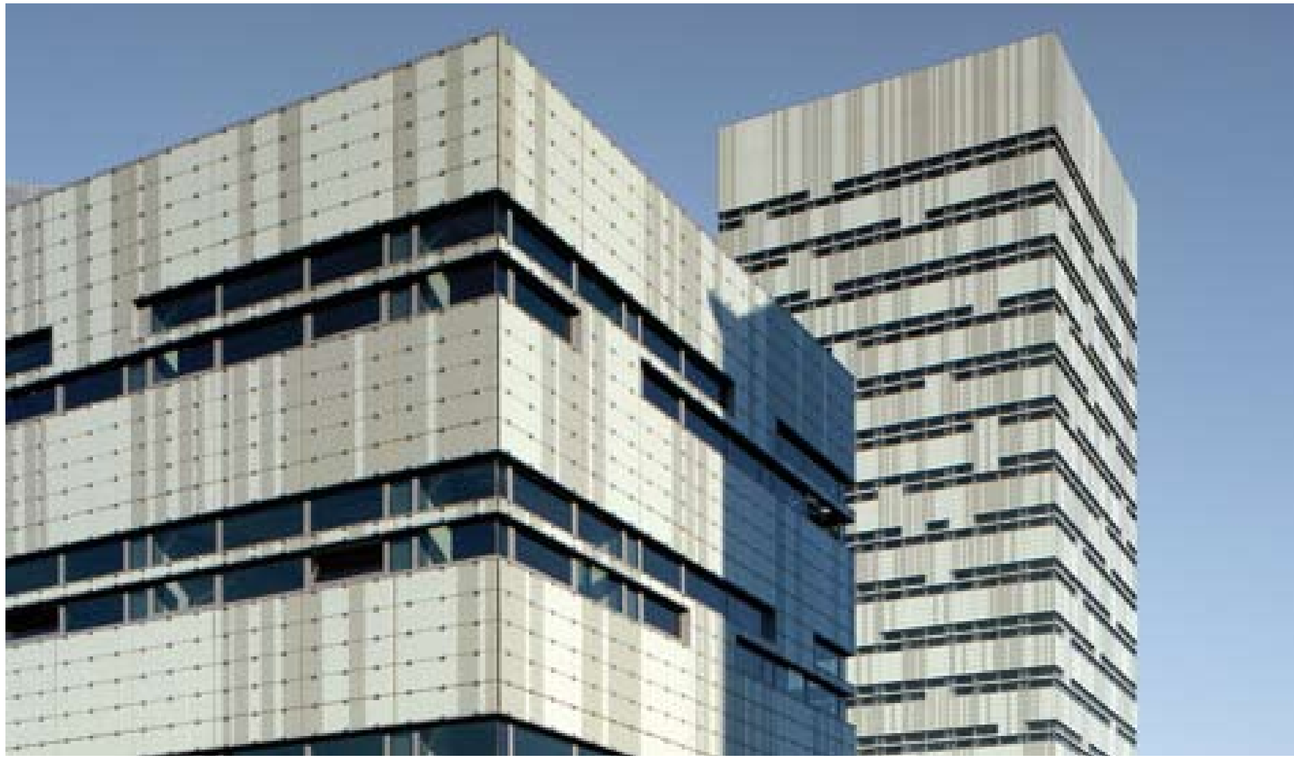
Year
Project 2001 - 2003
Construction 2005 - 2007

Project Team
Marco Giorgio (Project coordination), Marco Brega, Dino Polverino, Daniele Barillari, Francesca Cesa Bianchi, Maddalena De Ferrari, Frederic De Smet, Francesco Librizzi, Mara Mior, Francisca Insulza (General coordination)

Image Credits
Paolo Rosselli

Milan's upward growth has always been silent and innate for several centuries. True to the idea of "natural" city, its buildings have risen steadily, and uniformly, by just two or three storeys since the 19th century. It could apparently go on rising, floor by floor, forever.
For years the sky of this city has been overlooked by the glistening gold Madonnina atop the Duomo. An extreme horizon, a sort of limit, for those who thought challengingly to touch and plan again the celestial vault.
A reverence observed with devotion until the erection of the Velasca Tower (1957) by BBPR and the Pirelli Tower (1960) by Gio Ponti; two very different architectures for their architectural languages. They are doubly sacrilegious: both exceed the tacitly inviolable height of the Madonnina and paid their ubris-for the Greek theatre the human sin of presumption and challenge towards gods- with an initial controversy excited also by the critic Reyner Banham and followed by contemporaries. Despite this dispute both have, in the course of time, become unassailable landmarks, essential parts of Milan's image itself. Two iconic episodes for the today debate about the number of high-rise developments underway out of the city centre.
The upward urban density is a trend followed by the most important public and private organizations to requalify a lot of ex-industrial zones and safeguard green areas or social places at the same time; tall buildings seem to become the solution to be careful on plot but not for fight the enormous traffic they increase to attract.
In the same path is the recent RCS Headquarter; built in a strategic and landscape area in the north-east of Milan next to San Raffaele Hospital. Pirelli RE/Morgan Stanley has been respectively the investor and the developer for this project; a major Italian publishing group RCS MediaGroup has been the tenant.
The plan scheduled the requalification of a real estate of 90.000mq with a new building of 22.000mq for RCS MediaGroup, the restoration of the historic Rizzoli's headquarter of 21.500mq, and the reorganization of the fabric that already accommodates printing plants Cattaneo/Fotogramma with the construction of a building of 47.500 sm.
Boeri Studio (Stefano Boeri, Gianandrea Barreca e Giovanni La Varra) won the international competition issued in the 2001. In the last project the land among via Rizzoli, via Cazzaniga and a vast green corridor next to Parco Lambro become a complex constituted by an eighteen storeys tower with a basement and a four storey-high construction with two basements.
About one-thousand people are going to work in its open-space floors, in which a flexible system of movable partitions will define every working-stations.
In Boeri studio's intention, the structure for the 80m tower is constituted of a central braced nucleus in reinforced concrete with a steel framework, and of a reinforced concrete frame for the low body.
The building bend on itself like a long snake and encloses a huge court. Inside the parking is accommodating in the courtyard all around sort of bubbles designed for the cars; the system has been thought to give the priority to the pedestrian mobility.
The whole complex is uniformly covered with plastic plasters and a double membrane of glass panes with several punctual aluminium supports. All the fronts change their colours thanks to the silk-screens and to the sun light on them; these cunnings insure a different vibration for every hour of the day stressed by the reflection on the metallic elements. Along the facades the perception follows the sophisticated design of cuts and windows in a multiple rhythm that magnetically carry away the look.
With RCS Headquarter Boeri studio renews and improves Milan's push upwards. Perseveres in transforming the sacrilegious city skyline above the golden virgin, taking a part in moving upwards the horizon. And, also the Madonnina - raised her eyes up - remains with bated breath.

Anna Luigia De Simone



The tower and the building
A flexible system of movable partitions defines working stations

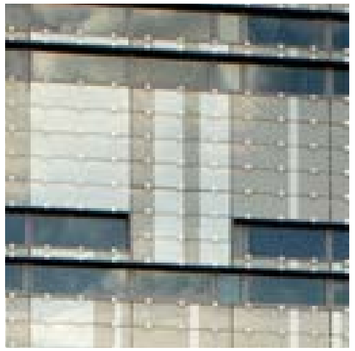
View of the tower from the park

Left
View of the inner court

Below
View of the tower from the park

Bottom
In detail, the double membrane of glass panes with punctual aluminium supports

Right page
The tower and the inner court



Fuji Kindergarten in Tachikawa suburbs
The huge roof ring

inhabiting the roof

Takaharu + Yui Tezuka Architects

Work
Montessori School Fuji Kindergarten

Location
Tachikawa, Tokyo, Japan

Year
Master planning:
Feb 2005 - Mar 2006

Phase 1 construction (50%):
Mar 2006 - Sep 2006

Phase 2 construction (100%):
Jul 2006 - Jan 2007

Project Team
Creative director Kashiwa Sato, Chie Nabeshima, Ryuya Maio, Asako Kompal, Kousuke Suzuki, Naoto Murakaji, Shigefumi Araki, Shuichi Sakuma, Masahiro Ikeda

Associate architecs
Takenaka Corporation: Kenji Takeshima, Masaaki Hiroshima,Satoko Inoue, Mitsuo Seki, Tezuka Lab at Musashi Institute of Technology: Takayuki Utsugi, Yusuke Hujita, Kanako Takeshita, Momoko Yoshida, Miki Ajioka, Nao Otsuka, Keiichi Kato, Naoko Sato, Noriko Tsujimura, Megumi Nakamura, Yusuke Tanaka, Atuko Ota

Engineers
Masahiro Ikeda/MASAHIRO IKEDA Co., Ltd

Lighting: Masahide Kakudate / Masahide Kakudate Lighting Architect &Associates
Masahide Kakudate, Junko Watanabe
Mechanical

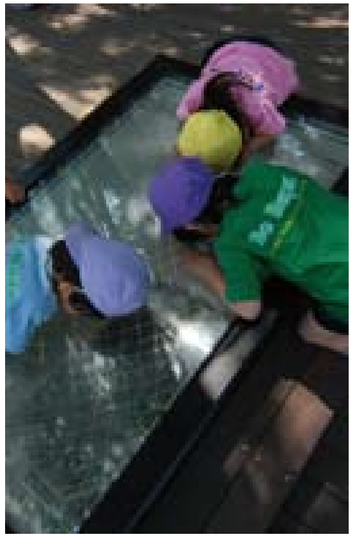
Electrical Engineering: Takenaka Corporation, Hiroshi Kanemaru

General contractor:
Takenaka Corporation

Image Credits
Katsuisa Kida

Famous since 2001 for the Roof House, Tezuka architects design with Fuji Kindergarten a new inhabited roof. “A Roof House for 500 children” was the requirement of the kindergarten director, after a project meeting held, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Takahashi hospitality, on the roof of the house. In the Roof House the roof is a solarium, a dining room and a kitchen: a wooden lightly inclined roof, made habitable by a table, some chairs, a kitchen and a shower, that each inhabitant of the house can reach from his room through a personal stair. What is roof in Tezuka architecture? Rarely it is the close of the building, more often it is a space to be colonized. Even before the Roof House, small houses surrounded by high buildings gain the sky through the roof: they are the Houses who Catch the Sky.
Fuji Kindergarten project mainly consists in the roof: a 183 m. outer diameter and 108 m. inner diameter ring built around an oval playground.
The project is the demolition and reconstruction of a private kindergarten in Tokyo suburbs, led according to creativity and participation principles of Montessori method. The new building translates these principles in an habitability and space permeation oriented architecture. The kindergarten has an oval plan, the classrooms, 2,50 meters high in order to keep the child size, are distributed within the ring structure all around the playground. There are no separations between the classrooms, and the sliding doors on to the courtyard are open for eight months a year. The oval plan guarantees communication and visibility among all the parts of the building. No hidden spaces, no no-entries and no hierarchies: children can move from one classroom to the other and even the director’s room is just a zone of the ring, as visibile as the others are. Separations are only up to three thousand wooden boxes which are at disposal to be freely placed in the space.
The old building used to have a garden with three big zelkowa trees. The new one keeps the trees. Not in the playground, that is deliberately empty, but in the body of the building. The structure is sospended for not damaging the roots, the trees go through the classrooms perforating the roof. Over the roof around the tree a rope net saves children from falling down. >

Inside-outside permeation
The inner space opened onto the oval playground



The roof is a space more for playing.
It is possibile to get up from the inside by some stairs and to get down in the oval ground by other stairs that end over some one meter high earth mountains. Every now and then the roof is pierced by irregularly placed skylights. There are no playing equipments, initially for economic reasons, eventually for choice: using the roof is the game.
Within so precise a scheme there is a careful research of imperfections: the roof is lightly inclined and the oval of the plan is lightly irregular, being transferred from a first hand made drawing, in order to make architecture less exact and more human. In fact the aim of this architecture is to comply with everyday life.
Wooden boxes for classroom separation are placed in pile with children's help, the chaos of the communicating rooms is an exercise for their power of concentration, the fountains are the places where children assemble for playing, the lights are suspended bulbs, each to be lighten up by pulling a lace, the roof edge is a place where to seat hanging the feet beyond the railing, skylights are cubs to be climbed and the whole roof ring is a track where to run for many rounds. If kindergarten educational method is to multiply the experiences, this is its direct translation into arcitecture. And Fuji Kindergarten more generally reflects the objectives of Tezuka architecture, where people come first
After studying in Englad for a while and practising in Richard Rogers office, it's about ten years that Tezuka work in Tokyo, revising in the light of their european experience the japanese tradition. In a place where architecture temporariness is the rule, they build for permanence and they search for beauty in the sense of things. Their research lies rather in extracting the meaning from architectural elements, making it evident, than in the form. Architecture works with people, and if people cannot catch its meaning, it fails its mission. At the kindergarten vernissage five hundreds pupils sitting on the roof where interpreting the meaning of tis architecture.

Fabrizia Ippolito

The interior open space
Freely disposed wooden boxes all around

Night view of the top of the roof
The lightboxes and the holes for the trees

No playing equipment
Children freely moving on the roof

eco-friendly strategies for living public spaces

Ecosistema Urbano Arquitectos

Author
Ecosistema Urbano Arquitectos, Belinda Tato, Jose Luis Vallejo, Diego Garcia-Setién

Work
Ecoboulevard

Location
Madrid, Spain

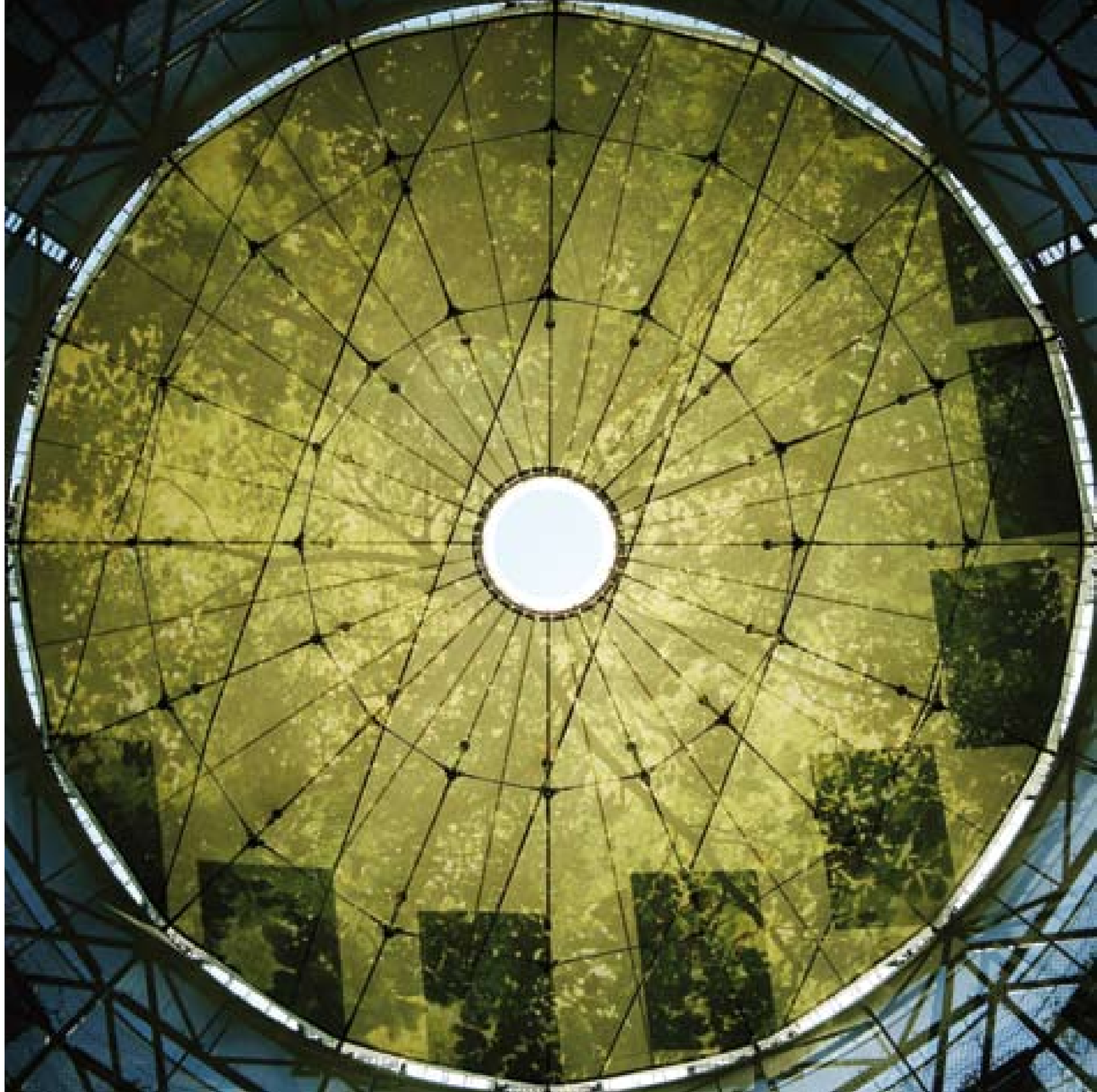
Year
Phase I 2004-2005 ; Phase II 2006-2007

Project Team ideas competition
Patricia Lucas, Asier Barredo, David Benito, Jaime Eizaguirre, Ignacio Prieto

Project Team constructive project
Ignacio Prieto, Maria Eugenia Lacarra, David Delgado, David Benito, Jaime Eizagirre, Patricia Lucas, Ana Lopez, Laura Casas, Fabrício Pepe, Michael Moradiellos

Image Credits
Emilio P. Doiztua + Roland Halbe

Eco–friendly strategies for living public spaces.
To give back a liveableness more high and human to the public spaces, to the street and the square, interpreting the terms of a damaged bioclimatic balance, recovering the viability of the plants from a nature often rough and arid, is the basis concept of the Ecoboulevard project dedicated to the air trees, temporary and light structures that create climatic islands in the core of the city integrating the vegetation which is entrusted the air quality and bioclimatic comfort of the relational public spaces.
The equipe of the Spanish architects and engineers Ecosistema Urbano, Belinda Tato, Jose Luis Vallejo, Diego García–Setién, has carried out in 2004–2005 the experimental project Ecoboulevard for the development of the public spaces and the microclimatic improvement of the main boulevard UE.1 of the Ensanche de Vallecas, a new urbanization area in the suburbs of Madrid. The project, cobacked by La Impresa Municipal de la Vivienda y Suelo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid and by the Life Progreamme of European Commision (year 2002), in 2005 and 2007 has received mentions and prestigious awards like l'Holcim Awards 2005 of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction, Awards 2006 of the London Architectural Association and the Environment, Ecology and Sustainability Research Cluster (2006), AR Awards 2007 for Emerging Architecture of the Architectural Review. The main targets of the project are: to intensify the vegetation in the urban areas and introduce it in the areas where it's necessary; employment of passive systems for the public spaces climate control; to define community spaces; to define a nursery trees, a sort of "mobile greenhouses"; to form home zones; reuse and recycle of building materials and scrap materials.
The Ecoboulevard layout, 550 metres long, 50 metres wide (about 467.500m3), is marked out by three cylindrical open–mid steel zincate structures raised from the ground through double pillars V shaped that are the terminal part of the bracing; the structures lean themselves on the patforms that define a system of circular squares. From perceptive point of view the three structures distinguish themselves in the opposite play: trasparence v/s opacity, empty v/s solid. One of these admit outside semicylinders covered with metallic sheet. The cylinders that the designers called air trees for theirs function of purification and oxygenation, on the inside are wadded with sweating material and provide accomodation for the shrubs and climbing plants intended to be planted afterwards in the area park. The squares as well distinguish themselves for the design. The circles are designed on the round with different materials: a small block of stone (basalt or granite) alternated with colored strip or shaped with simple earthly, with the grass or also with the stone. The squares form public and connection spaces, a pleasant places to stay, accomodate leisure facilities (for break, meeting, play, comunication), organizing the function of the three structures distinguished in play, climatic and media. From the microclimatic point of view in the zones below the cylindrical structures begin an evapotranspiration process that permits the air cooling about of 10–15 °C. This process makes the space comfortable, in particular way, in the summer season. Plants and shrubs by means of controlled level of humidity and uniform temperature find optimum conditions for the growth. On the back–end pondage open or sheltered with a sheet, made with the same material used for tensioned structures or for the sails of the ships, are laid photovoltaic panels, 16 elements, each of them had 4 panels. Every panel produce a power about of 12.230 Kwh (kilowattora) for year. The electric energy produced permit to light the surrounding spaces and the maintenance costs structures will cover by the sale of the same electric energy. When the boulevard vegetation plan will be completed the cylinders could be took down and reused to the requalification of other areas. ¬ >

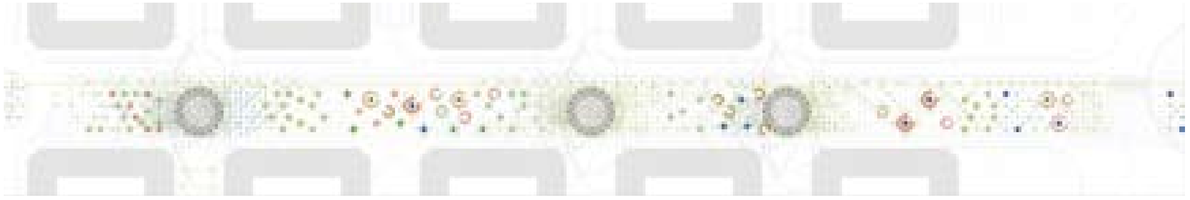


The sky from media tree

Time-table development

Frontal view of air tree

Aerial view of media tree

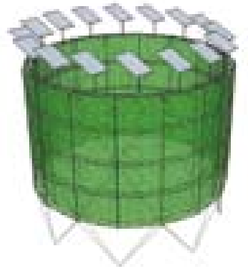


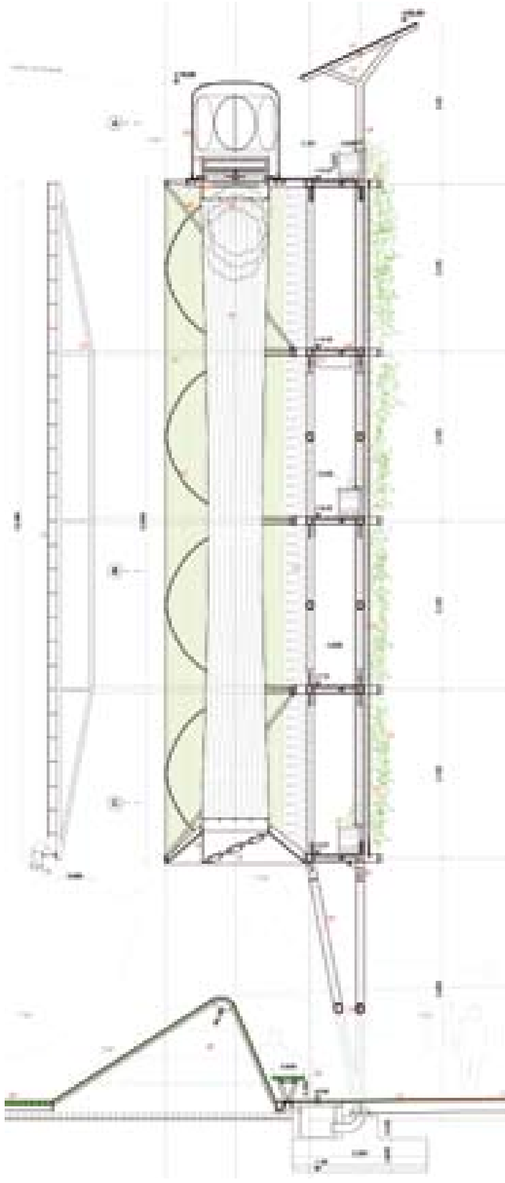
General plan.

If the Ecoboulevard project is a design strategy for the urban and extra–urban area of the Mediterranean basin requalification, actually identify a proposal of technological adaptic system that can find, with appropriate changes, easy employment in several areas. Unusual form for a street furniture, the air trees, cylindrical towers lower on bare round, by unfamiliar and unusual objects are transformed into discovered objects: temporary defence for threats of pollution and drying up of the places, sustainability promise and return to landscape to urban major road promise. In the alienation given by the alteration to the perceptive dynamics of nineteenth–century city, in the run of the eye from round level to sky, long and through the nursery plants, the vertical wood, is codified a recognized relationship with nature and social dimension. These islands for breathe, these bioclimatic oasises suggest to the anonymity of the modern western city and to the new city construction relation space to which the ecologist architects Lucien Kroll (atelier Lucien Kroll, edited by, Bio, Psyco, Socio, Eco 1. Ecologies Urbaines, édition l'Harmattan, Paris 1996) entrust the possibility of finding again the identity of the urban shape.

Francesca Capobianco

Aerial view of ludic tree





under the city sky

An interview with Alberto Ferlenga on Aldo Rossi

Alberto Ferlenga
(Castiglione dello Stiviere, Mantua, Italy, 1954). Full Professor of Architectural Design at the University of Venice (IUAV), Italy. Visiting Professor in Miami, Puertorico, Clamson and Lima, editor of "Casabella" review, he took care of many exhibitions at the Triennale in Milan and the Biennale in Venice. He obtained prizes and awards in many national and international design competitions. Author of several monographs, he edited essays and organized exhibitions about Aldo Rossi (Pompidou Centre 1991, Milan Triennale 1999, MAXXI 2004).

We would like to talk about Aldo Rossi starting from "Il Palazzo" Hotel in Fukuoka, Japan. Which is the building genesis and which is his relationship with the Japanese world?

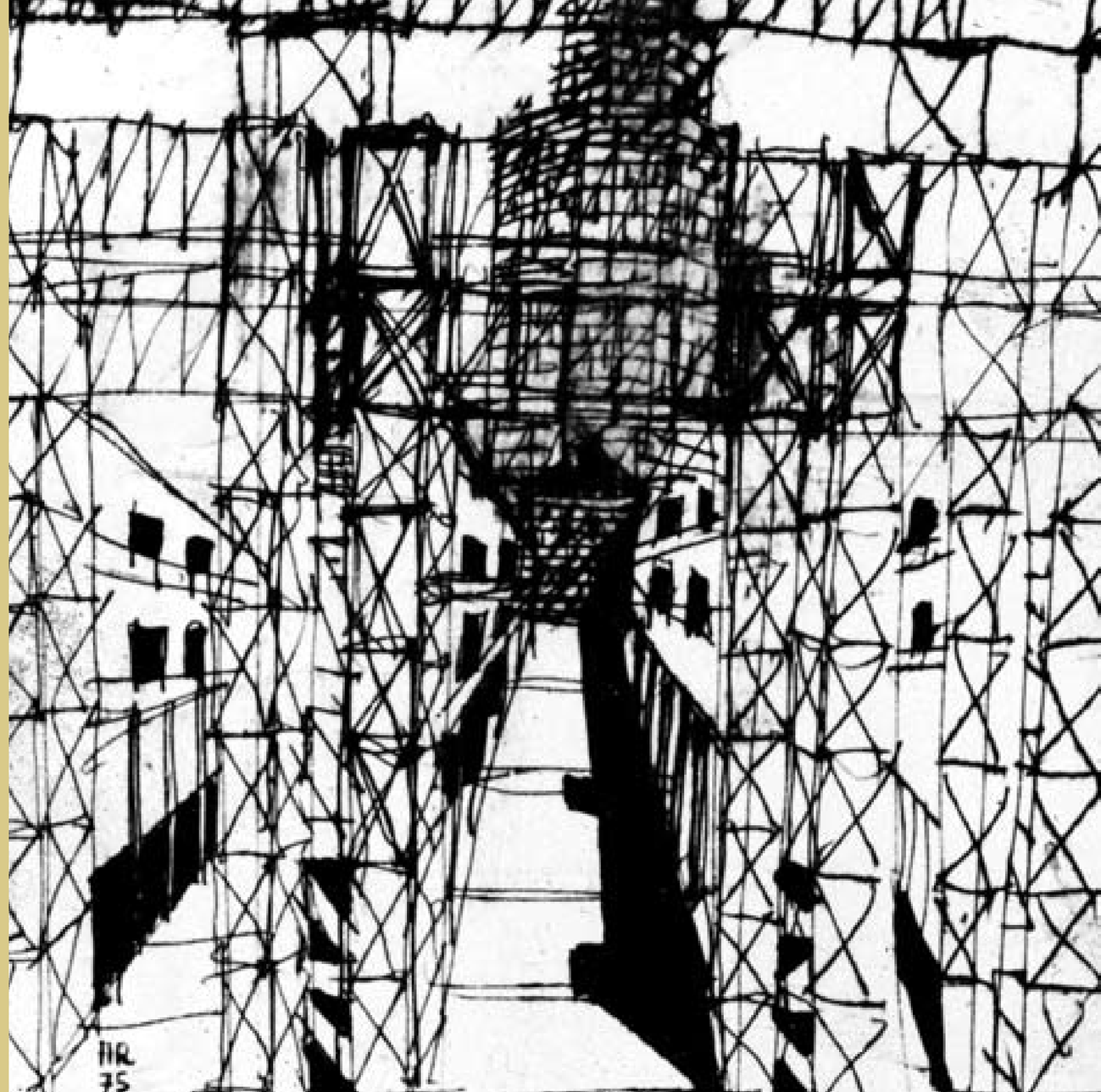
When the project was shown, as Rossi said, the japanese outsourcer pointed out an excessive camouflage of them architectural culture. They would like a building closer to the Italian architecture design. The truth is that his origin is very much lombarda. The project, in fact, is generated by the manipulation of pieces took from a previous project, a small never built gym in Olginate, a little town not far from Milano. The above-mentioned gym consist of a podium, dug from a flight of steps, on which a single level is supported. The correspondent achitecture is more or less an intermediate level of the Fukuoka hotel. Playing with some pop art, the new building is an almost accidentally result of a collage and superimposition work made through xerox copy and colors. Later on it will take place inside the japanese city – often the projects find a definitive location only after their birth – changing from a slab into a tower. This architectonic transformism methodology is indicative of a typical Rossi way of working. It consist of combining the geometric elements base of his architecture - pyramids, cylinders, spheres – with suggestions inspired by places and history. A continuous activity, that, first fix some ideas through hundreds of sketches, then it move them from the real to an unreal world dominated by analogy and vision, then take them definitely back. The return it may coincide with a project just in case of competitions or new outsourcer. It is this "re-location" able to create an assonance with these places. Often instead the architectural forms keeps a them own life. Certainly it's difficult that Rossi forms life autonomous part, extremely linked to the architect biography, could reflect the Japanese world. In the Fukuoka project, indeed, there are several components: the original project, the small gym used as the new composition module and the other suggestions as the eastern without excluding the roman Settizonio (an huge almost blind facade built by Settimio Severo) which "Il Palazzo" is often linked.

Rossi speaks about some of this suggestions inside the project report. How does Rossi speaks about his architecture?

Among the Rossi's stories, the project reports are perhaps the most interesting literary part. I think that during the second period of his life, although he has had a life full of professional commitments, frequent trips and not so much time for an articulate and scientific writing, although in a fragmented way, he wrote a book. We should say that book is the whole of his projects reports and it substitute the "La citta' analoga", a work often announced but never written in a systematic way. Indeed, the projects reports written by Rossi with particular passion and commitment during his entire career, are the chapters of a great story about the city where the project is primarily a tool of understanding and its description is part of this. Scientific and poetic interpretations at the same time in which the urban world is dismantled and recomposed in a thousand variations and finally it forms in a building. Except his dimension, it is always viewed a city part. The Fukuoka project report is particular beautiful. It speaks about yatai, wich are little mobile archietcure, presented by Rossi in many of his that period drawings (He will design and built one of them). He evokes a melt in pot between East and West that is shown inside the project as the relationship between the lateral constructions which look to resume the transience of yatai or the ephemeral constructions along the river and the central part, this sort of Settizonio or temple or tower that rising above the neighboring buildings.

The famous blind facade. Do you think it should be the building synthesis?

It's a loggia facade without openings. It is justify by the circulation system composed by aligned rooms on long sides but it is the real building manifesto. An excavated surface in which the red Persian marble, the columns, the frames assume a monumental and sign value. It's for sure the spectacular aspect of this building, although I think it is not the most interesting one. It is more important for me what happens in the podium. Among the photographs of this work, I prefer the one where an above night shot shows a sort of alley, which might belong to Fukuoka as many other cities. It is about one of the two inside, symmetric alleys next to the central podium. The whole ground floor: the raised central part with the staircase characterising the public first floor level, the above-mentioned alleys, the crossings that cross-cut in half the building and allow to put in succession and to merge indoor and outdoor spaces, the lateral volumes, constitute a small city piece. This small >



Aldo Rossi 1975
Ink on paper

city piece, that mitigates the isolation of the building, shows something that is no longer present in today's Fukuoka which is made of padiglioncini and isolated constructions. The representation, in this case, is quasi-theatrical. It all takes place in the architecture basis. It rediscover, in the relationship between low and high volumes, disappeared connections and in a sense it stage a city that no longer exists or the very idea of a city.

The city is the core of Rossi's work, starting from his book "The Architecture of the City" published in 1966. How can you read that book now?

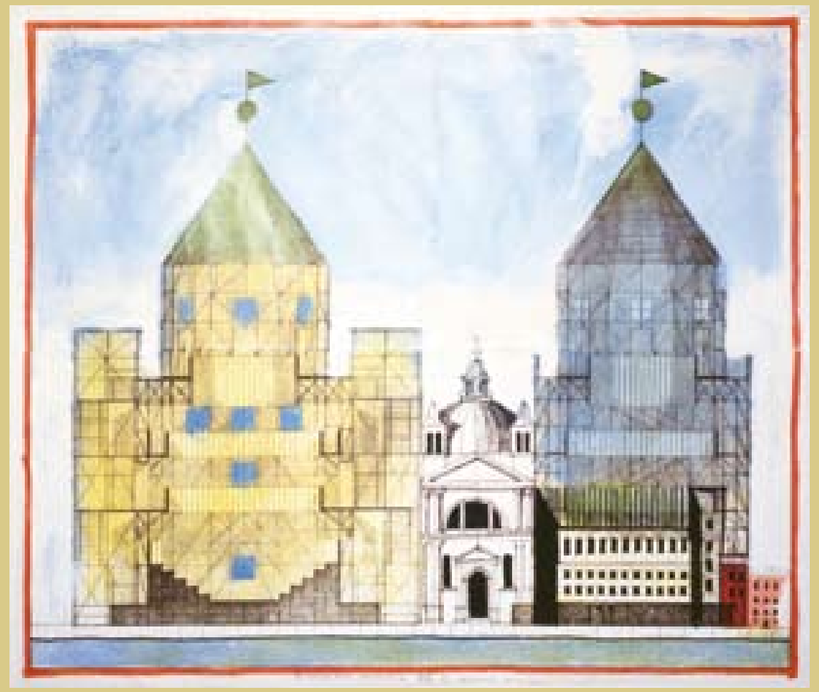
The Architecture of the City is probably the last 40 years most important book written about the city, together with Collage City of Colin Rowe (it resumed the Rossi close theme of analogy), Learning from Las Vegas of Robert Venturi and Delirious New York of Rem Koolhaas. Compared with other books the one of Rossi, because having been written about 10 years before, it may boast a birthright and, not only for this, it have influenced everyone. It has to be considered that The Architecture of the City is a book written thinking about a particular city. It's an historic city in which are very strong the relationships between the urban forms and the architectures. Rossi, however, sensed what the city was going to be in the future. It is interesting to notice what he writes about the suburban areas. It is a book who teach you how to read the city. Therefore it may be important to read again outside the ideological encrusted, mostly unrelated to the author, that led it to become a kind of followers sacred text. For many years the main Rossi opera was read a manual containing the key for a correct design. As soon as the misunderstanding on the existence of a direct relationship between analysis and project (which is not in the book) come out, The Architecture of the City can be again what Rossi one time said: the sketch of a founded theory of the city, that has to be continued trough other study, other investigations.

After 10 years, Which is, in your opinion, the Rossi designer legacy?

I believe that his lesson, in architectural terms, is not progressed, at least for what more interesting has left us, as a direct inheritance, however, was soon exhausted. There is no doubt, for example, that some of the main protagonists of contemporary architecture were directly influenced by his work: Herzog & DeMeuron, Koolhaas, Moneo. Even with Renzo Piano, apparently so different, in some moments there was a real closeness. I therefore believe that, at least the will to realize the essence of urban phenomena, as architecture and cities are linked, as history is an architecture material, there has been a much broader than direct relations or academic lineage would think. Maybe Rossi, after Le Corbusier and Mies generation, was the precursor in a globalised world of what is today to be in a new way and a bit disturbing, a famous architect. In the last phase of his life, his office took out projects for all over the world. What was required, was not so much the ability to understand a place, but a personal sign to leave, by all identifiable. The author of the "Citta' analoga" cynically played with this specific urban and italian code of his architecture. Tapping a little bit the Kitsch in projects for Disney, American replicas of Venice or in some Asian projects. But even in these situations, Rossi, however, never stops to think about the same issues about the city and ask questions through architecture. One of his recent projects, the isolated Kochstrasse in Berlin, while resulting in the end by a real estate speculation, it was transformed into an intelligent comment on the contemporary city through an exaggerated use of collage and quotation. We can find in the project, mixed together, fragments of the worst bad taste, of more stringent eclecticism, until the self-quotation and mannerism. Also the artist jump capable of compose a work of art with the worst things that architecture can offer and even then able to put more general issues.

Fabrizia Ippolito

Aldo Rossi 1989
Il Teatro del Mondo, Venice, Italy



Aldo Rossi 1971
Cimitero di Modena, Italy

Aldo Rossi 1987
Hotel Il Palazzo, Fukuoka, Japan

Cino Zucchi

Author
Cino Zucchi - CZA

Work
Free-Market residential Towers in Portello

Location
Milan (Italy)

Year
2002 - 2008

Project Team first stage project
Cino Zucchi, Pietro Bagnoli con Leonardo Berretti, Elisa Leoni

Project Team second stage project
Cino Zucchi, Pietro Bagnoli, Cristina Balet Sala, Leonardo Berretti, Silvia Cremaschi, Elisa Leoni, Maria Rita Solimando Romano, Helena Sterpin con Reem Almannai, Francesco Cazzola, Filippo Carcano, Maria Chiara D'Amico, Thilo De Gregorio, Sang Soo Han, Manuela Parolo

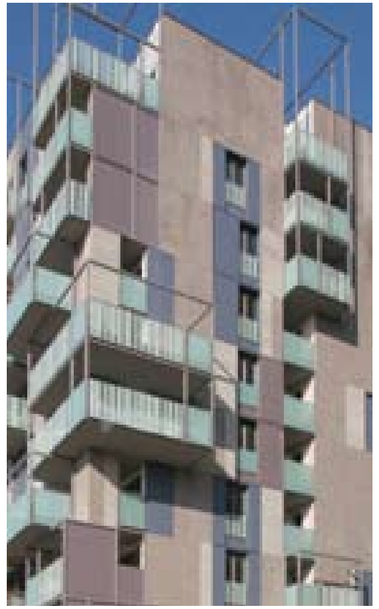
Project Team constructive project
Zucchi & Partners - Nicola Bianchi, Andrea Viganò, Cino Zucchi con Leonardo Berretti, Chiara Frassi e Ivan Bernardini, Irene Bino, Claudia Brivio, Michele Corno, Linda Pirovano, Gabriella Trotta, Nükhet Anadal, Chiara Toscani

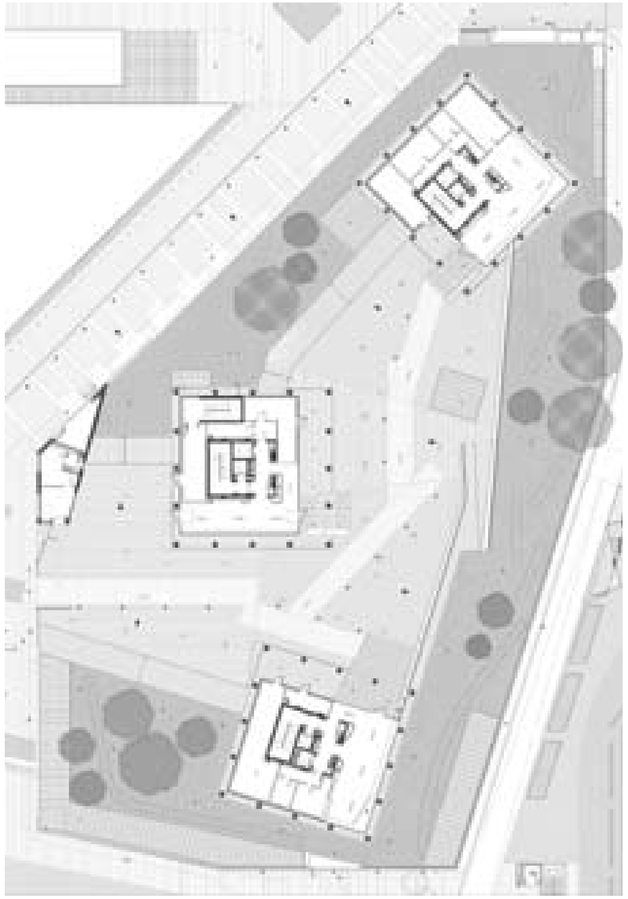
Image Credits
Cino Zucchi

urban junctions

In the history of Italian Modern Architecture, Milan has always claimed the title of "city of the skyscrapers". Since Futurism in the first decades of the last century up now, the main planning issues of urban renewal are linked to the existence and the shape of the programmed tall buildings.
The Velasca Tower by BBPR and the Pirelli Building by Gio Ponti, both built in the post–war Milan, are the poles apart of this hash architectural controversy. The first, a great cubic block on the top of a towering building, seemed to be rooted in the history of the city, a landmark and a sort of post–war version of the medieval watchtowers. The latter, a shining polygonal piece of design – still contemporary after all those years – is a perfect resume of the last round of international success of what have been called the "Italian style".
Among those poles there are a vast number of residential building built from the late Thierties up to the Sixties, operating on the concept of traditional 19th century block with the peculiar refined language, authorship and mannerism of Italian Modern. Terragni and Lingeri, Asnago e Vender, Caccia Dominioni, Magistretti are the main authors of a delicate subversion of the traditional residential building that consistently built that town in the last century and definitively represents the major contribution of milanese school to the history of Modern Movement. A contribution made by a sheer precision in the definition of the the plans; in the main façades framed in all their lenght by great, airy loggias and balconies; in vibrating elevations gently articulated by shifted windows; in the luxurious, sunny interiors. >

A tower under construction



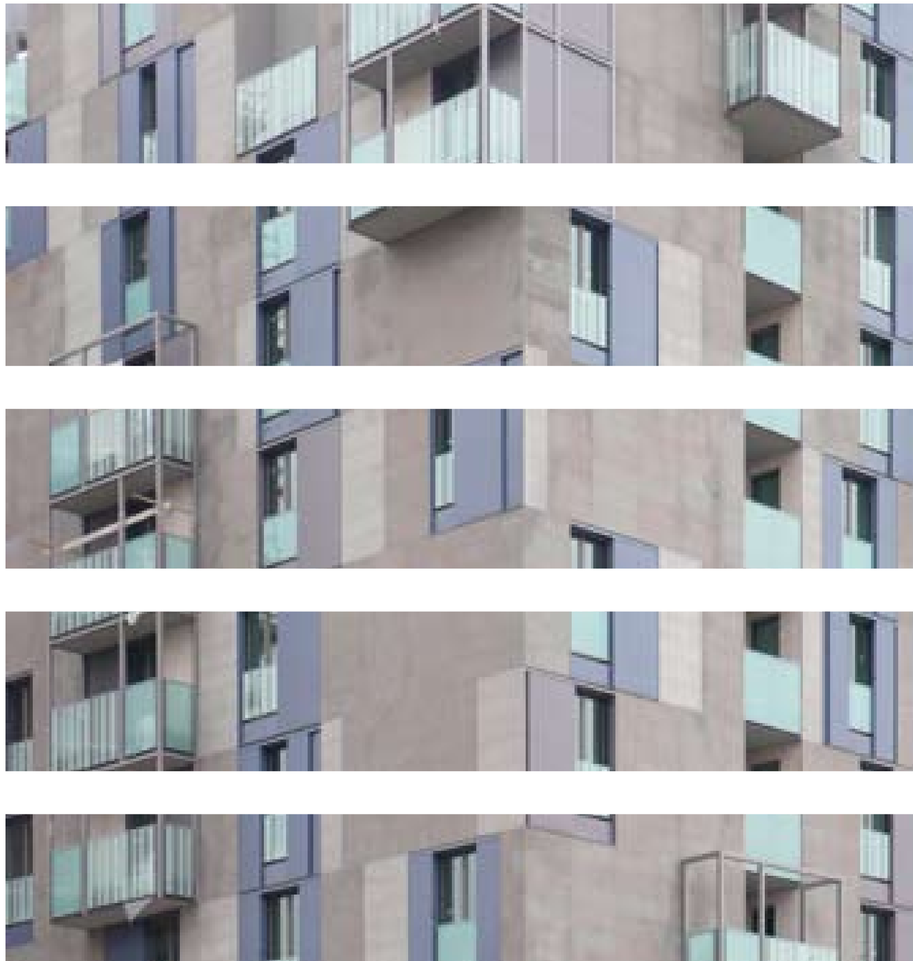


Cino Zucchi's residential towers in Portello are deeply part of this peculiar uber–italian tradition. Three residential towers, tone–perfect in their design and greatly urban and "milanese" in the choice of volumetric configuration, materials and details.
The three residential towers lay on a common private garden with a single gateway access through a new square. Their apparently casual disposition seeks the best views toward the new landscaped park. The overhanging loggias are grouped in vertical volumes by a thin metal structure, and generate unified figures which articulate the height of the buildings. The loggias are disposed in an irregular way, thickening on the side overlooking the park.
The surface materials (sanded and levigated stone) and the different colours of the slinding shutters, both randomly mixed in different proportion in the three buildings, give variety to the strict modular grid of the façades. As well as the composite silhouette constitute a critical reading of the features of post–war Milanese architecture.
The height of the buildings is emphasized by the delicate metal framing of the loggias, a contemporary reinvention of the laconic and metaphisical grid overhanged on the façades of Terragni's Casa Giuliani Frigerio. They provide the smooth body of the buildings a deep and vibrating set of shadows and a different more urban and almost monumental scale unifying different floors. Moreover, they gave the top the building a very recognizeable silhouette in this part of Milan skyline.
The rich variations of the façades are balanced by the great semplicity and concision of the plans, meaning the deep comprehension of the other lesson of the "milanese" school: exausthing typhological studies and immediate showing of the way the building "works". The smooth treatment of the body of this architecture, with windows on the same plan of the surface of the walls, gives to Zucchi's towers that high class tone that was lost in Italian Architecture since mid–sixties.
Cino Zucchi's three towers in Portello are deeply in what is the very true tradition of Modern architecture in Italy: the cult of Elegance and Beauty.

Luca Lanini

Left image:
General plan.

On the right page:
Detail of a facade.



penthouse in manhattan

Tadao Ando Architect & Associates

Author
Tadao Ando Architects & Associates
Tadao Ando

Work
Penthouse in Manhattan

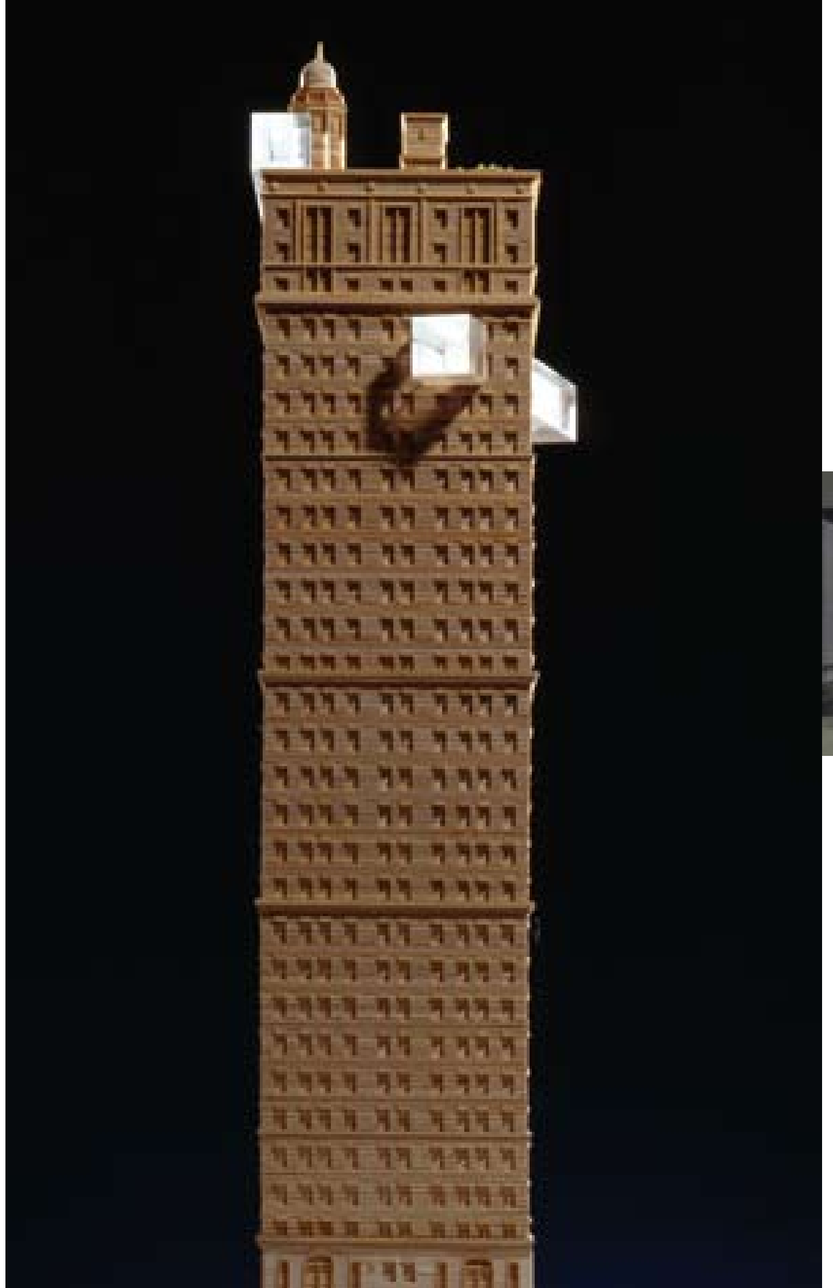
Location
NY City, USA

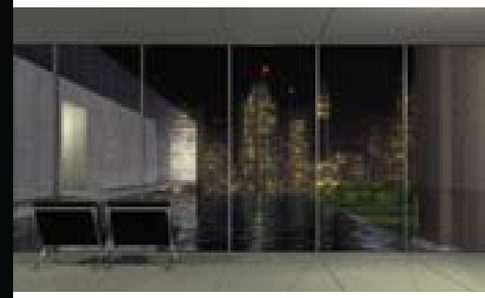
Year
1996

Image Credits
Tadao Ando

Perhaps in 1983 Tadao Ando didn't imagine that a few years after he would have designed an attic in Manhattan. "I do not have much familiarity with American culture, I probably wouldn't be able to build a house here."
The 1996 project – which has never been carried out – features two units added–on to a skyscraper built in the Twenties. Its outcome, as the author says, is a microcosm reproducing New York and its spirit – inspired by the constant eternal struggle between what is old and what is new.
There are two materials – both of which stand for modernity – glass and cement. Ando acknowledges each one by quoting a great master and a work. A few years before drawing this attic he in fact visited Chicago and described the sheer beauty of the Farnsworth house by Mies, a "glass box". In the same period he was fascinated by his visit to the Ronchamp chapel by Le Corbusier, a "rough limestone construction of wonderful plasticity."
Nature is an essential part of Ando's work. In the Manhattan attic there are two vital elements: water and the sky.
Water is not decorative, it plays a strategic role. Its reflection capability is a chance to draw nature into the project. This enormous flat surface absorbs the three–dimensional world and almost turns into a TV screen to be comfortably observed from an armchair. This work has been described as "an eagle's nest". If home is traditionally represented as a quiet shelter from the world, this glass house in Manhattan is also an observatory on the world.
The sky is a metaphor for Ando's architecture, "complex spaces resulting from simple interventions". Seemingly extremely simple at first, it appears as a light blue mass blending into the sky. It becomes complex in expressing light and darkness, sun and rain, wind and stillness, day and night. The attic's elementary structure is complicated by the sky, and its phenomena, which "activates the space", bringing it to life and adding warmth.
The roof garden becomes a place for synthesis, where water and sky meet in a continuum. Here one seems to perceive a certain cunning on the author's part, in his appreciation of the mediatic impact of such an icon. An image so evocative it might have inspired the Italian scenographer of the movie "Devil's Advocate" – with Al Pacino – which was shot the same year. Ando – in turn – admits his roof garden is the mis–en–scene of a "borrowed scenery".

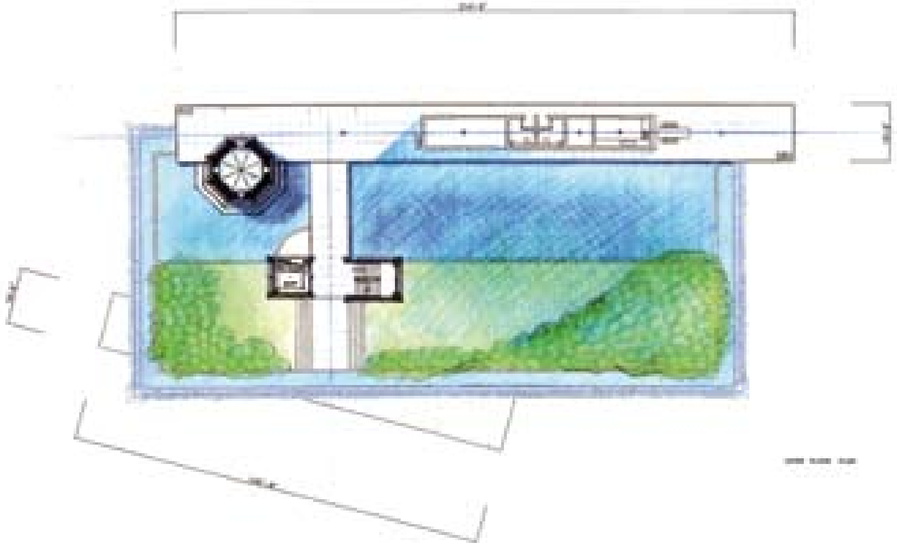
Kenneth Frampton has alighted on one of the most intimate aspects of Ando's work – his poetic of opposites. Japanese traditional architecture is horizontal. Manhattan, on the contrary, is emblematic of an extreme verticality. This mixture engenders an integration of spaces between East and West, horizon and zenith. The attic enacts this synthesis. Furthermore Ando interprets Plato's dialectics through geometry – he obliquely sticks a glass box through a symmetrical construction. An immaterial transparent image (of light) in opposition to a solid sombre one (darkness).
Salvator John Liotta recently wrote that "Japan is a nation somewhat embarrassed at starting with a blank sheet". Tadao Ando knows how to carefully smear that blank sheet before even using it. His skilful foreplay reveals those precious traces embedded in every site, and then weaves each one into a pattern that will become architecture. The Manhattan skyscraper is pre–existent, so it resembles a sheet that has already been sketched. It is also these traces Ando starts from to draw and come to a solution of great quality. It is a shame this quality should stay only graphic – a project – due to its never having actually been built.
Four years before – in 1992 – Ando has described the "power of unreal or not yet made real things" which do not disappear but become food and energy for future plans. Time will pass but in the 4x4 Kobe houses of 2003, his way of dealing with matter and the relation between water and the sky will return to be prominent.

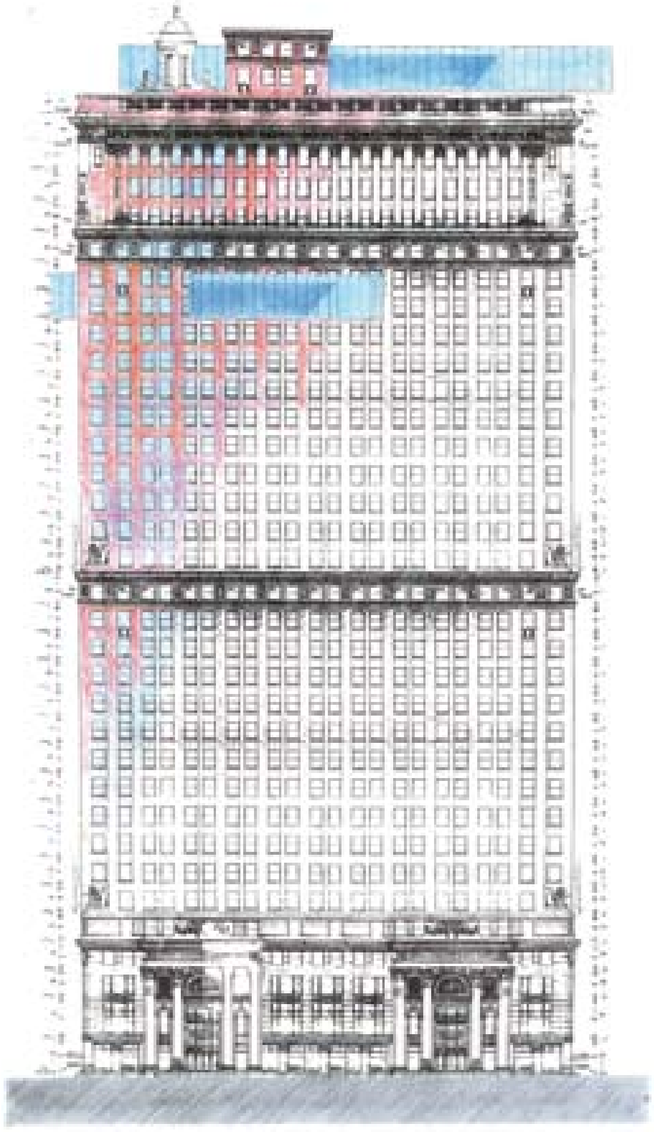




Above
night view from the apartament interiors

Left
View of the model





Main prospect of the building
with two addictions

towards the XXI century city: koolhaas in the emirates

OMA

Author
OMA - Rem Koolhaas, Reinier de Graaf

Work
Rak Convention and Exhibition Centre

Client
Rakeen Development

Location
Ras al Khaimah, U.A.E.

Year
2007

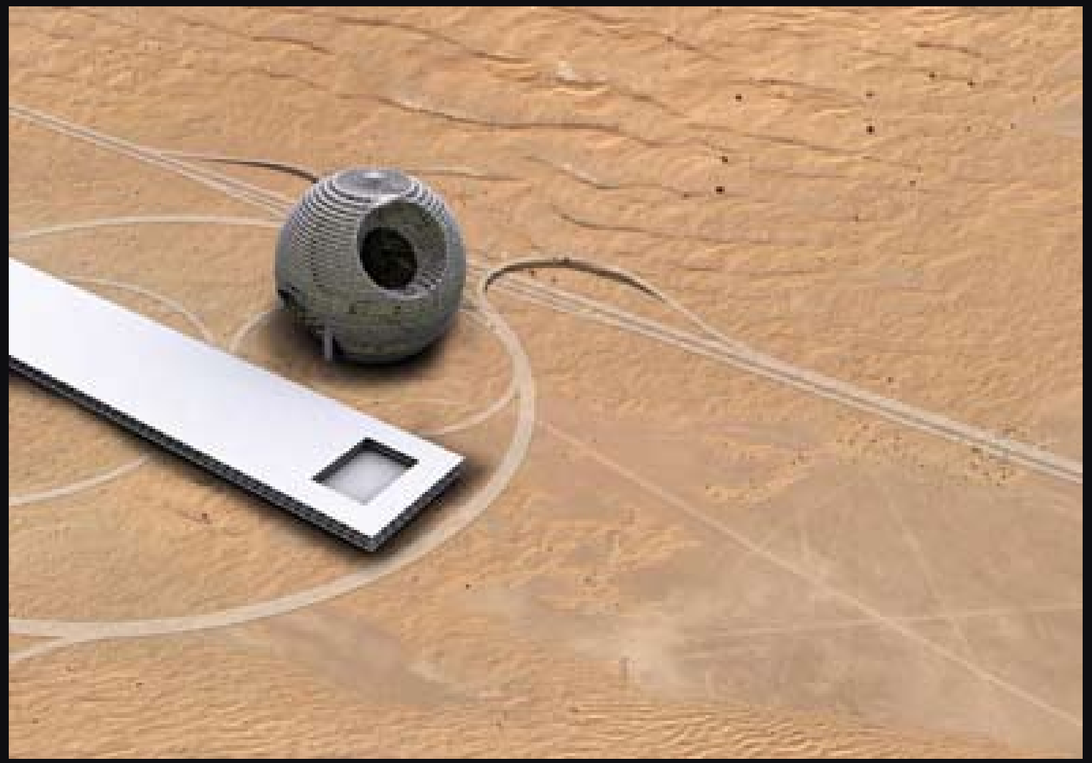
Project Team
Samir Bantal, Daniele de Benedictis, Anne-Sophie Bernard, Philippe Braun, Adam Frampton, Martin Galovsky, Beth Hughes, Pieter Janssens, Ravi Kamisetti, Bin Kim, Barend Koolhaas, So Jung Lee, Mirai Morita, Charles-Antoine Perreault, Ian Robertson

Image courtesy of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)

The intellectual biography Delirious New York by Koolhaas (Oxford University Press, 1978) has represented, for the architect, the construction of a conceptual space where, in the following years, he would have work. Today, in the Emirates, it seems to assist us in new architectural production by the Dutch architect.
The three projects of which we're dealing with, clearly express the critical look at the contemporary city: the pursuit of "originality at all costs" and the spectacular and needless form that characterize so many contemporary projects are the most significant limits of the new city construction. In his studies, Koolhaas is interested in the "generic city" and through the idea of vagueness he looks to the worldwide mega-cities.
What could happen if we tried to build the city through the summary of metropolitan icons, not ordinary architectures but buildings conforming to the desire of leaving a trace in its users' imagination? When these processes of speculation are diffused, and apparently obligatory in the contemporary season, they are not trusting the designs by wise hands, the results of these operations can only make us awaken in passages of a city with a grotesque taste; surrounded by curtain walls and swallowed up by impressive air conditioning atrium, we are nowadays forced to resign ourselves to eliminate from our vocabulary senseless terms like: identity, memory and tradition. Koolhaas refers to "anonymous urban substances", "desperate attempts to differentiate each building on the other" and "freak research of extravagant forms", and, designing the new face of the Emirates, he chooses a triumphant return to the origins of form!
In this way the contemporary city may find a new credibility: conditions reachable through the instruments of architecture; not yet relying ourselves to the spectacular image productions.

Koolhaas draws two projects for the Rakeen Development, the Rak al Khaimah Convention and Exhibition Centre and the Jebel Al jais Mountain Resort (both Rem Koolhaas + Reinier de Graaf), and for the Dubai properties Ltd. he signs the skyscraper Dubai Reinessance (REM Koolhaas + Fernando Donis).
In addition to the congress centre, the Rak Centre houses a hotel, residences, offices and commercial centres; everything is contained in a giant sphere, that exceeds 160 meters in height, which is alongside a relatively low horizontal bar (about 18 meters) with other spaces for hotels, offices and other trades in addition to the exhibition centre.
A new and articulated infrastructure system is designed to directly connect the multifunctional centre near to the city, Ras al Khaimah.
Pure and timeless forms, in this Koolhaas's project: a very introvert project in which the sphere and the parallelepiped evoke an original state of things, a condition that could have also exist before the appearance of man on the earth. Many suggestions regarding the history of architecture was also taken from the drawings of Boullèe and Ledoux until the more contemporary experiences of the avant-garde.
An essential language, fronts just sketched out in the legible and clear overlap of the linear curtain wall, imagined for the low body, with a modern frame, become deformed to shape the giant sphere.
Outside, beyond the boundaries of these two forms, everything seems to be consumed instantly and stopping; within them, instead, the promise of a better world becomes tangible thanks to the relationship between the artificial construction and the natural character of the hanging woods.
Drawn up for the same contracting enlightened authority, the second project faces the recreational architecture theme.
As Koolhaas underlines the Jebel Al Jais Mountain Resort moves from a specific and almost contradictory condition of the Emirates.
It is inevitable: the idea of resort impels us to imagine a momentary escape from everyday hardships, a sort of escape to dedicate our time to relaxing, sport, fitness and everything that is, in our imagination, connected to the idea of free time. Without criticism.
Here in the Emirates, instead, the resort typology is so widespread and continuous, it is almost considered ubiquitous. Therefore, Koolhaas chooses to take a different way.
In landscape standards the quality of a place (essentially the initial condition for the presence of a resort) shall be adapted, modified and almost "domesticated" to allow the architecture, while Koolhaas works with the extraordinary 'orographia' or study of the mountains or of Ras al Khaimah not only respecting it, but backing and emphasizing the glimpses and points of greater suggestion.
We are faced with a real linear system that develops itself, like a precious jewel, for more than 10 km linear touching and linking the most interesting points of the landscape.
The core of this project is constituted by a system of real micro-city free time, the villas, that develop without continuity solutions along the entire path. In order to respect as far as possible the charm of the natural landscape, Koolhaas incorporates literally a functional programme within the individual units, a private garden (as a room of the house) integrated into the building. To respect nature and landscape is therefore sufficient to build, because in the construction the user satisfies all his needs; we won't see another violated territory, precious for its >

Rak Convention Centre, the sphere and the bar



OMA

Author
OMA - Rem Koolhaas, Reinier de Graaf

Work
Jebel al Jais Mountain Resort

Client
Rakeen Development

Location
Ras al Khaimah, U.A.E.

Year
2007

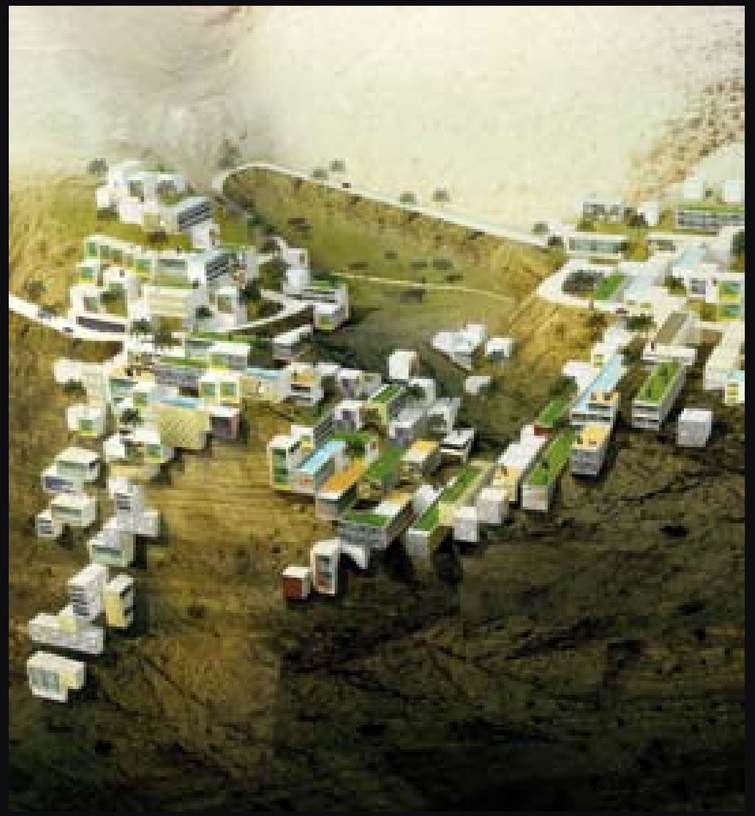
Project Team
Beth Hughes Team: Adam Frampton, Joyce Hsiang, Jung Hwan Park, Tudor Vlaceanu, Luca Astorri, Samir Bantal, Romek Bartczak, Daniele de Benedictis, Jan Dechow, Maria Derevencova, Martin Gallovsky, Pieter Janssens, Ravi Kamisetti, Bin Kim, Barend Koolhaas

Image courtesy of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)

The dam building

Overall view of Mountain resort

The courtyard buildings embedded in the slope



The pixel villas

rugged, hard and unfriendly landscape quality, in the name of the necessary domestication of an artificial garden for the resort people. From the inside of the house, indeed, the spectacle of intact and untouched nature will make the free time experience (during which all the imaginable comforts are guaranteed) truly unique and unprecedented.
This general system is enriched by Koolhaas with the inclusion of ten exceptions to emphasize the different features of the place and the presence of special scenarios.
The Centre hospitality of the entire complex is open to the view of the gulf and hosts parking facilities for visitor and the terminal of the cableway that leads to the real resort.
Moving along the path and through the modern villas, we meet a “dam” that links two sides of a valley with its front facing the rocky walls. The roof is the road, below there are apartments and hotel units.
Once we arrive almost to the top of the mountain range, we find a kind of urban centre, a city high and dense where roads are to replaced by a system of deformed terraces. Those are interconnected by a network of stairs and strip mobile that systematize public piazzas and trading spaces. Further down we see court buildings embedded in vertical walls, orientated in diverse ways where they are open to the landscape. The courts are used as gardens, spaces for sports and swimming pools. And yet a series of tower blades climb down the steep walls of the mountain, inhabited bridges that suspend us in a vacuum, terrace buildings that duplicate the ground making it, a different habitable and comfortable level, low units that are divided into systems of luxury detached houses and much more.
At least one of the most spectacular images of the whole project was the overhanging building that from the path seems a natural continuation of the >

The cliff villas fastened to the side of the mountain

An extension of the mountain: the wedge building

The cliffscrapers and the dam

The terrain replicated in a series of habitable roof gardens: the terraces buildings

mountain, a tilted plan that is thrown in a vacuum. In reality by the great public piazzas, usable as open-air cinemas or generic space for events, a continuous ramp commences which connects the hotel rooms, the private houses, a community centre and spaces for shopping to the cableway terminal.
These two projects are real establishment operations and seem tied to a certain formal autonomy in respect to the context. However the third project we see, is the skyscraper Dubai Renaissance, while moving from entirely comparable theoretical premises, it measures up to the existing city.
Imagined for the centre of Dubai, this skyscraper appears to make a question to the whole city with a hint of cynical disillusionment.
“Renaissance” chosen from Koolhaas as the title of the whole project is clearly not a casual choice. The Dubai Reinessance indicates an opportunity, a new way that through architecture gives itself to contemporary city. The construction process of the city has always been a collective process. This condition, recently, has been questioned by the many metropolitan icons (ethereal background of Koolhaas’s drawings) that draws the contemporary city focusing exclusively on spectacular imagery and on the talents of individual authors.
While we recognise parts of excellence to many of those buildings, the overview brings back a different picture: a real scenic overdose, a set too rich in forms and themes that threatens to deprive meaning and quality to the individual contributions.
For Koolhaas Dubai is undergoing a very important season in which the choice of a practical way is still possible; on the one hand, the point of arrival on a known route: the condition of many contemporary metropolis in the world; on the other the possibility of a “new credibility” for >

The bridge building connecting two high points separated by a gully

The cantilever jutting out of the mountain towards the Arabian Gulf

OMA

Author
OMA - Rem Koolhaas, Fernando Donis

Work
Dubai Reinassance

Client
Dubai Properties Ltd.

Location
Dubai, U.A.E.

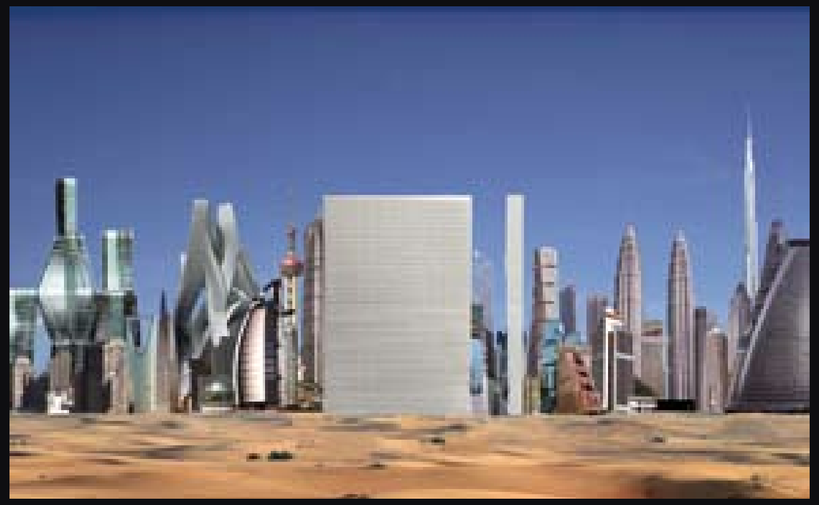
Year
2007

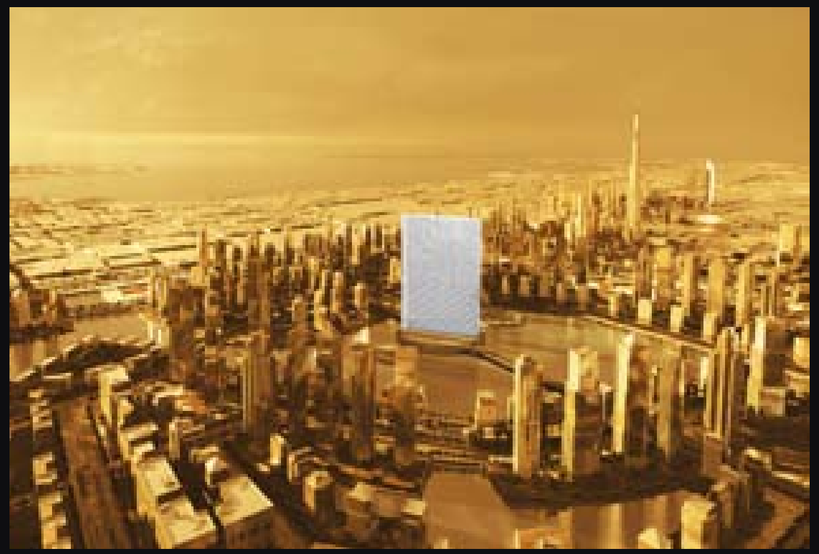
Project Team
Katrin Betschinger, Miho Mazereeuw, Laurent Troost, Martin Gallovsky, Ben Milbourne, Maria Derevencova, Katharina Gerlach, Mihal Gdak, Beatriz Minguez de Molina, Bart Schoonderbeek, Anneke van Zuethem, Clement Blanchet, Suzannah Waldron

Structures
ARUP: Cecil Balmond, Chris Carroll, Craig Gibbons, Alistair Guthrie, Gaspar Dorey

Consultants
Inside Outside: P. Blaisse, R. Elkin/ Konstantin Grcic Industrial Design: K. Grcic, N.Cohen/ Lerch, Bates & Associates: A. Godwin

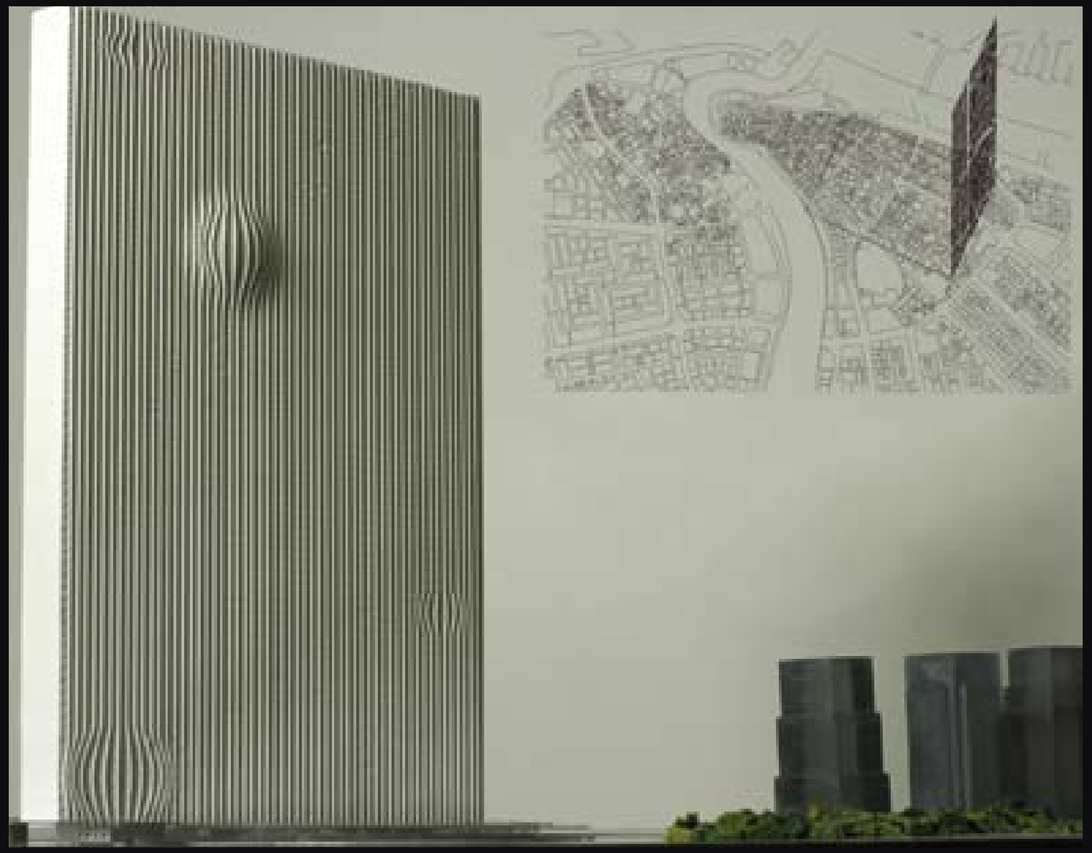
Image courtesy of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)





Top
Skyscraper by Koolhaas amidst other projects

Bottom
Skyscraper by Koolhaas, and faraway, the Burj Dubai



The skyscraper silhouette and the city

the architecture and the whole city.
So the Dubai Reinessance is designed as a pure prism, a monolithic and compact construction. With its 200 metres of linear development and 300 meter high offices, business forums, hotels and residential suites, apartments, spaces for art and urban spaces. Of course, the comparison with the Burj Dubai is inevitable but Koolhaas moves, with wisdom, in terms of comparison in height to the presence and substance.

The architect's attention is not directed to the form but to the integration between architecture and engineering.
In their simplicity and purity of design, is the presence of two souls of the Dubai Reinessance, from one a continuous facing side of 200 metres, from the other 300 meters of thin blades that stretch out towards the sky. Radical experimentation and alternative identities are clearly visible in this city.

Lorenzo Capobianco

designing for fun

Klein Dytham Architects

Author
Astrid Klein, Marc Dytham, Yoshinori Nishimura, Yukinari Hisayama

Work
Leaf Dome

Location
Kobuchizawa, Kitakoma-Gun, Yamanashi, Japan

Year
Design Period:
January 2003 - October 2003

Construction Period:
October 2003 - April 2004

Project Team
Landscape Design:
Studio On Site, Hiroki Hasegawa, Chisa Toda, Kazutaka Tanbe

Lighting Direction:
ICE, Masanobu Takeishi, Michiru Tanaka;
Structural Engineer: Arup Japan, Tatsuo Kiuchi, Yuji Kusawake, Keiko Katsumoto

M & Engineer: Tetens

Engineering: Yutaka Murase, Ryoichi Eshigawara

Total Director: Hoshino Risort Architects, Shozo Miyawaki

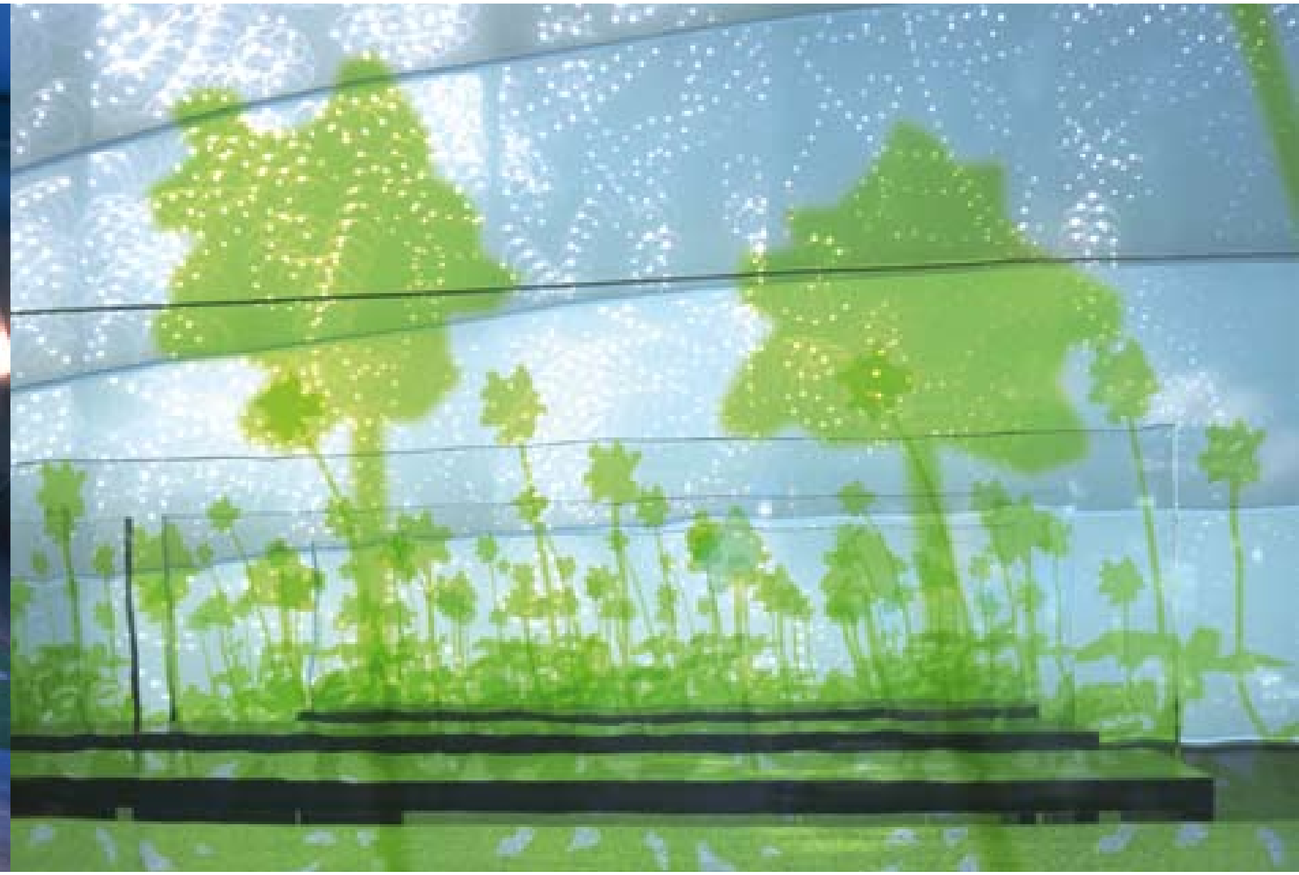
General Constructor: Rinkai Nissan Kensetsu, Hirokli Kanno, Fumihiko Kobayashi, Chiaki Kobayashi

A double leaf that opens to the sky, a veil that weighs 12 tonnes that rises silently in a few seconds, much like the veil of a bride at the moment of the kiss. Kleing Dytham's Leaf Chape is a chapel for matrimony constructed at the Risonare Resort, a hotel projected by Mario Bellini in the 1980's in Kobuchizawa, a verdant area with a views of the Yatsugatuke peaks and Mount Fuji.
The owner of the Resort asked for a theatrical space in which to celebrate matrimony, because above all a mass is a scene, a one day event, that the Japanese celebrate according to the most spectacular rituals. The chapel does not have specific religious reference, it represents with its circular form the archetypal architectural sacredness. It is available for any ceremony, not only weddings but also diverse events, receiving eight-nine weddings in a weekend, a jazz night and birthday parties (which includes Mark Dytham's 40th birthday party). It is 250square feet and holds 80 guests.
The architecture, made of two mobile leaves one of glass, and one of white steel, lies in the vault. The glass leaf has a structure that, like a leaf, it thins out away from the central midrib. The steel leaf is perforated with 4700 holes, in each one there is a lens that filters the light. All together the holes create a design similar to a lacy pattern, that is projected on the inside of the chapel when it is closed, or on the external part if at night the inside is illuminated. On the inside, the granite floor tiles, the wall and the wooden benches are dark in order to make the white of the vault or the surprising colours of the scenery stand out. Only the back supports of the benches are decorated: on the 2mm transparent acrylic the rempukusou flowers are reproduced, of which the ideogram in read in Chinese means good luck.
The matrimony has a precise ritual: at the end of the ceremony, at the time of the kiss, a complex engineering mechanism opens the vault in only 38 seconds despite its weight. The surrounding scenery enters the chapel, from the depths of the room the rempukusou flowers are projected onto the artificial lake. The bride and groom and the guests, cross the lake by walking on stepping stones artfully placed and reach a lawn surrounded by trees for the toast. At night the lawn is illuminated by candles and the lit chapel functions as a lantern.
Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham interpret the event and not demonise the commercial mechanisms.
Even the Rokko Chapel of Tadao Ando is at the back of a hotel for weddings. After the construction of the chapel, the hotel increased the entrance and Klein Dytham had other charges at the Risonare Resort. Each time the architecture interprets its theme and every time it aims to communication. An 18 meter long table is at the heart of the Brillare Dining and Party Space, completely white and open to the countryside; the Moku Moku Yu Baths are contained in cylinder wooden trunks brought from the adjoining forest; the Gao Nursery has small play rooms where the walls are stacks of sawn trunks; the Café and Book interprets the theme of the forest with wooden shelves and seats of grass clods; the YY Grill Restaurant adds the trees to the scene one by one carving them in wooden screen that act as divisors. If the theme is the countryside, what a countryside it is.
Klein Dytham are used to strengthening the theme and playing with the disenchanted look with the mania of Japan. The new, the event, the nature become many of key words to communicate with the architecture. And their architecture, free from the complexity of superiority, draws on materials from everyday life. The road like a text book, recommends, in front of the photos of the inside of Japanese taxis or of a paperboy, are framed on their walls.
Arriving in Japan from the London Royal College of Art in 1988 for a three month trip, Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham are still here cultivating their foreign eye on Japan. After a couple of years at the Toyo Ito studio they opened Klein Dytham architecture. In respect to England here there is more lightness, and this same temporary state of architecture allow play. Fun is central to their work: a necessity for the architecture, the client and the public. So among their projects there are inflatable walls, walls made from grass, rows of glass in the shapes of trees, a garage in the shape of a car that is called Vroom, an arrangement that reproduces a public Japanese bath. And the invention that is being exported around the world is the Pecha Kucha nights. For five years, an evening in each month at the Super Deluxe of Tokyo there is a karaoke of architecture. 20 slides of twenty seconds a head to present, now in 118 cities of the world.

Fabrizia Ippolito

Night view with snow

View from the interior towards the pond



Bench view

4700 holes make a lacelike drawing on the steel leaf

The dome opening at night

An helicopter landing on the top of the tower

the [sky-screwer] strata tower

Asymptote

Author
Asymptote: Hani Rashid + Lise Anne Couture

Work
Strata Tower

Client
Dubai Properties Ltd

Location
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

Year
2006 - 2011

Project Team
Hani Rashid + Lise Anne Couture

Project area
53,357 sq.m.

Image Credits
Courtesy of Hani Rashid + Lise Anne Couture

Layer by layer, bandage by bandage, the luxury tower screws up towards the sky for 160 meters in a twisted shape born from the sea. It is a condominium of 40 floors that in 2011 will be the tallest building the in the 'Al Dana' precinct of the prestigious Al Rhana Beach bay. We are on the waterfront of Abu Dhabi characterised by its uneven coastline that is composed resembling an archipelago of splendid white sand clods that represent the natural gateway to the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The investors (Aldar Developments) have planned the entire waterfront of Al Rhana Beach, through the construction and the development of eleven fenced-cities on a 5,2 million meters squared area of natural beach of which, the Al Dana palisade represents "the stylish business component of the Al Raha Beach development". This place is thus described: "The architecture at Al Dana is contemporary, clean and highly imaginative – a combination of iconic office towers with busy waterside promenades, international dining facilities, serene floral walks and a public quay for private vessels".

Unlike the 'Steel Cloud' that Asympote projected in 1998 for Los Angeles, and that is similar to a Russian constructivism monument, the Strata Tower resembles a solidified ocean flow, a marine 'plastic wave'. Here the elegant figure is of a white steel skyscraper, in which the structural system as a morphed balloon frame, is exhibited like an exoskeleton of a fascinating architectural creature, a white whale. An organic genetically modified place in which to live. So, for Asymptote, Architecture evolves from Darwin, from the compositional processes and from the matrices' flow generated by computer aided design. Thus a NY Times journalist who reviewed the first Asymptote show in the Venice Biennale in 2000, concluded with a significant slogan: "More ethics. More aesthetics. More genetics".

The external structure is made from very light steel and is made up of perforated skin in three diaphragm orders: the principle lattice, the sunshade systems, and the scores of the window shutters. A façade entirely in curtain wall is made of more skins that define the surface, completely designed by shadows and the geometrics of light. The white building is a treaty to the possible luminosity of the surfaces: from the maximum permeability of the 'surface patterning' of the curtain wall, to the median brightness of translucent walls, to the reflection possibilities of the 'stocking' surfaces that joins the interiors within a type of spatial continuum.

It is here in 'inner space' where the quality of this architecture plays its role. It is an environment that seems to be modified based on a French philosopher who stated that it was the new relationship of space: that motion of waves, of flow that could be summarised by the way in which the surfer follows the course of the wave. An uncertain and airy space that moves on 'surfing surfaces'. But a building is always a building and this marine tower is reminiscent of a lighthouse in which the dual relationship with the landscape indicates, both a privileged point of view and an object which represents a symbol for the bay. The summit has a platform for landing helicopters, but it is also a launching pad for the eye with regard to the view.

Corrado Di Domenico

On the left
Interior view of the swimming pool

On the right
The tower at dusk

la conquête des étoiles

SOM

Author
SOM - Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Work
Burj Dubai

Client
Dubai Properties Ltd.

Location
Dubai (U.A.E.)

Year
Completion year 2009 (June, 30th)

Project Team
William F. Baker, Raymond J. Clark, George J. Efstathiou, Roger Frechette, Drohmer Korista, Adrian Smith, Jaime Velez

SOM Provided Services
Architecture, Electrical Engineering, Interior Design, Mechanical Engineering, Plumbing Engineering, Structural Engineering

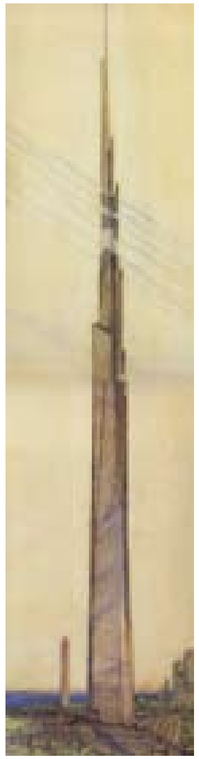
Site area
104.210 mq

Project area
464.515 mq

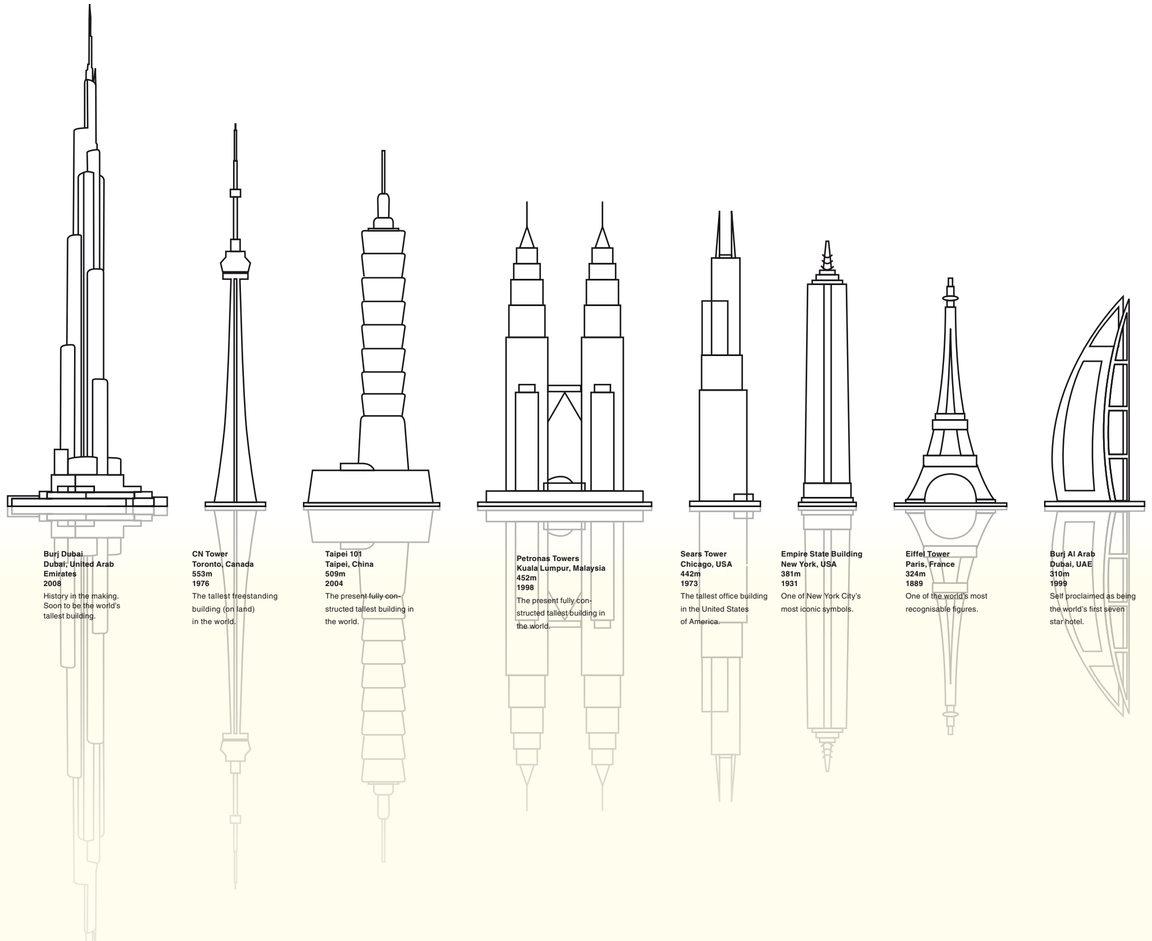
Image Credits
© Emaar Properties PJSC 2005
Asda'a - PR Agency for Emaar Properties PJSC

To assault the sky is an ancient dream. The Greek myth tells us the story of the Giants, twentyfour brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the Mother Earth (Gea), which are symbols of the telluric strenght, which rose up to establish a their Empire in the sky and over all the earth. F. T. Marinetti, the founder of the futurism, in his poem La conquête des étoiles, tells about a struggle for power between the stars and the sea, that was the winner. In 1956, three years before his death, F. L. Wright designs the tallest tower of the world as an utopia, that can be really made.
Today, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), the tallest tower of the world is becoming already a real thing. Its name is Burj Dubai ("Burj", in Arabic, = "Tower"). Started in 2004 (September, 21th), it shall be finished, beyond plan, in 2009 (June, 30th). Subsequently, in September 2009, it shall be officially opened to public. Now, during last winter (2008), Burj Dubai, with its 611 m calculated for 160 floors, has already surpassed Taipei 101 in Taiwan, that was until now the tallest building of the world, and Sears Building in USA, that had the greatest number of floors in the world. Which shall be the dimensions of Burj Dubai at the end, is a top secret known only by planners and constructors. In this moment, when we are writing, we can only admire Burj Dubai as a work in progress, a building that each day is glimping in the sky, also in the night, with the help of its steel–arms as a robot, which are seeming its over–articulations functional to concrete the aspirations of the tower in interpreting the human need of being and building.
Burj Dubai is a work with the prestigious signature of SOM Studio of Chicago (architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), which has builded Sears Tower (Chicago) and Freedom Tower (New York). The building contractor is Emaar Properties, the Dubai–based Public Joint Stock Company, that has recorded an exceptional growth of 35 per cent for the years 2005 and 2006 and in October 2006 has been awarded "Best Developer in the UAE".
In the last years, Emaar Properties is pursuing strategies of expansion in Middle East, in Egypt, in Morrocco, in Turkey, in Pakistan, in Saudi Arabia. Actually, this Company has subscribed to an agreement with Italian Casa Giorgio Armani for an installation of an hotel at 37th floor of Burj Dubai for expositions of its products of fashion and style, in aiming to grow and rise up day after day the levels of well-being, enjoyment and pleasure in living, in studio, in bedroom, in each space and object marked with design and styling.

Frank Lloyd Wright,
The Mile High Building, Illinois 1956



Reaching new heights.
History is rising in the form of a new symbol for a rapidly evolving Dubai and a New Age Middle East
The Burj Dubai will surpass mankind's limits and expectations and will be a structure admired the world over



Burj Dubai
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
2008
History in the making. Soon to be the world's tallest building.

CN Tower
Toronto, Canada
553m
1976
The tallest freestanding building (on land) in the world.

Taipei 101
Taipei, China
509m
2004
The present fully constructed tallest building in the world.

Petronas Towers
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
452m
1998
The present fully constructed tallest building in the world.

Sears Tower
Chicago, USA
442m
1973
The tallest office building in the United States of America.

Empire State Building
New York, USA
381m
1931
One of New York City's most iconic symbols.

Eiffel Tower
Paris, France
324m
1889
One of the world's most recognisable figures.

Burj Al Arab
Dubai, UAE
310m
1999
Self proclaimed as being the world's first seven star hotel.

When Burj Dubai shall be finished, it shall be a giant landmark, a marvellous icon of modern time, with so many records in the world for its height (1000 m?, the double than Empire State Building), for its floors (195? 216?), for its surface (111.500 sq.m in courtain wall), for its volume (230.000 m^3 of concrete, without its foundations, equivalent to a surface of a pavement 1900 km long), for its weight (equivalent to 100.000 elephants), for its resistance to extreme hot and humid climate of Dubai and to variations of temperature between the ground (46.1° C) and the top of the building (38°C) and to the stress of the wind (with the help of dinamic twisting of the building, and of the braid of the columns, panels, projections, indentations), for its cutting down the processes of entropy and pollution (with the help of so many calculs of echology). As well, Burj Dubai shall exalt and glorify the visibility and the vitality of Dubai, for the reason that it can be seen untill 90 km of distance, and above all because it shall function and operate as a factor of attraction, appeal and multiplication of energies in the area where it exists. At its basement, i.e. around its crater, shall rise up Downtown Burj Dubai, that shall be builded by Emaar Properties, trough an elegant and sophisticated braid of boulevards, equipped gymnasiums, residential complexes, buying offices, swimming pools, restaurants, markets, squares, gardens.
The area on which is rising Burj Dubai is 3.400 sq.m large. There are dwelling the foundations of the tower, that are a true underground monument (192 piles that go down to depths of more than 50 m, with a total concrete poured of over 45.000 m^3). The plan of the tower, in its geometrical stilization, reproduces a form of a flower, the hymenocallis, of the family of the amaryllis, a sweet-smelling lily of the tropics. So, Burj Dubai, symbol of the conquest of the stars and incarnation of an ancient dream, has its roots in the life of a delicate and luxury flower, interlacing the glamour of the spontaneousness and of the beauty with the daring of the challenge and of the building.

Carmine Piscopo

the sky in a room

Italo Rota

Author
Italo Rota

Work
Library in a baroque room.

Location
Sicily, Italy

Year
Completion year 2007

Image Credits
Courtesy of Italo Rota

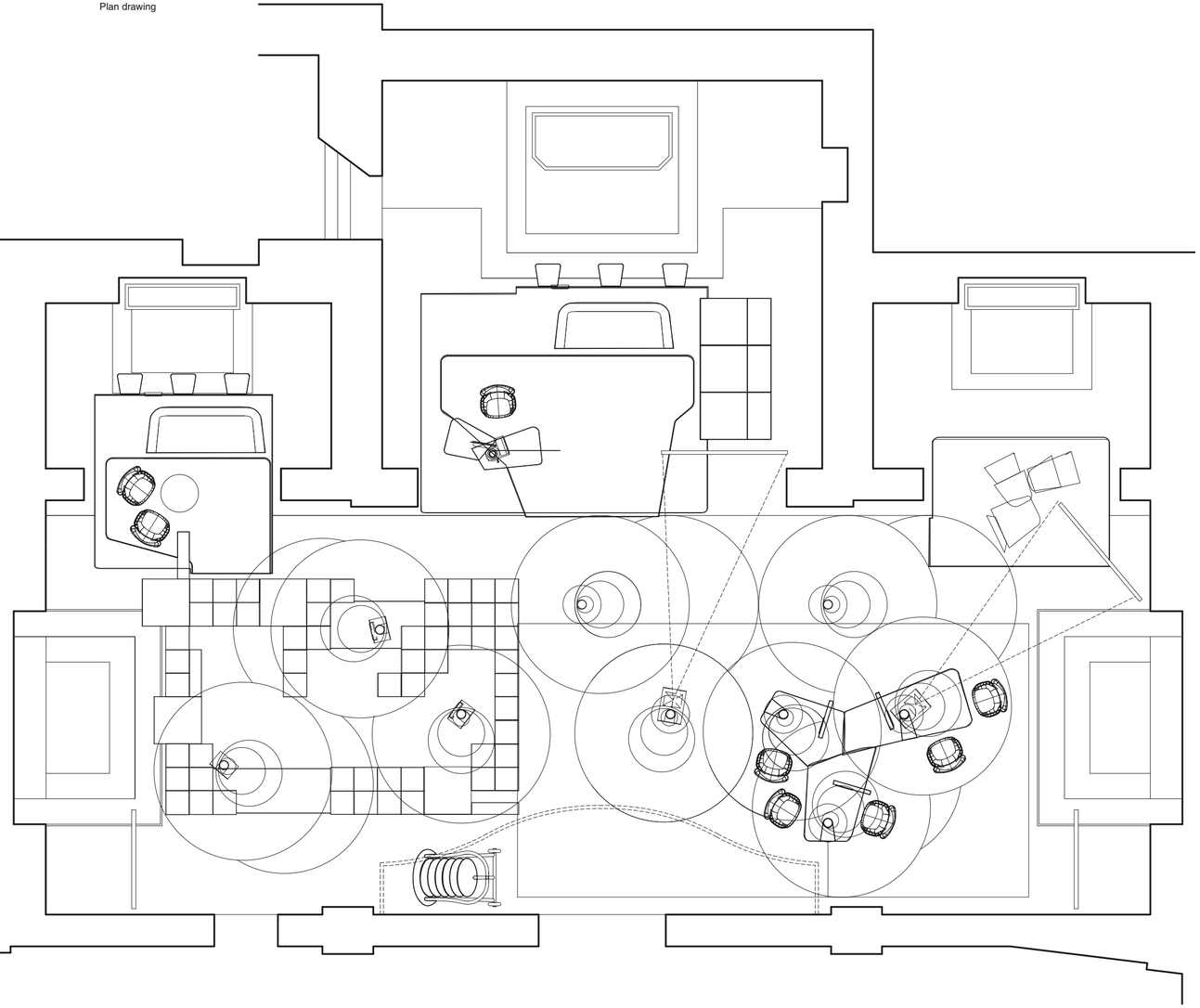
St. Elena and Constantine's church in Palermo has become a proper icon for book writing and thought.
It is the most suitable place existing in Palermo to consult documents and books belonging to Sicily's Parliament. It is a place to read and discuss. The inner part of the church, built at the end of the 16th century, was set on fire in the 19th century and later restored by Sopraintendenza. The project has been re-designed by Italo Rota, transforming it into a public library.
Hall spaces, disposed in a peculiar geometrical symmetry, draw a fluid ambient made to contain objects/pieces of furniture. This rectangular room, whose untypical feature is being longer in width than in depth, has on its bigger side many chapels, with the central one laying on the same axis as the entrance.
Who steps inside the library gets immediately drawn into a space with no hierarchies or rules. The inner space could have been also an outsiders view, where "new" mixes with "old". The background is spotted with three chapels provided with floorings. The central one, the biggest, has been designed for holding conferences. But, on the way to the chapels, the visitor passes through a deep net of poles made of reflecting steel, some of which "mushroom-topped". Those are lamps and posts, becoming the rotating points for desks and bases for projectors. So "mushroom-poles" reflect and multiply the rotating reading levels, and, together with them, multiply books and floor. They are squared mirrors of different heights that seem to break into the wooden roof: they might have been 'Arte povera' or conceptual art pieces, but are instead multifunctional technological poles.
Amongst the poles there is a bookcase, an autonomous ambient, rectangular and slightly larger than one of the smallest chapels, a new kind of experience. It is made of cubes 37cm side length. Each element is lacquered steel of a different color (yellow, red, orange, gray, black). Like a three-dimensional open-space Mondrian's "Broadway Boogie Woogie". The cubes are shelves where anyone can freely take books from, but are also exposing folders for rare books, projected to build niches, surrounding the poles and creating routes.
Inside the library, the magnificence of reading is celebrated, and a clear statement is made: it must be open to anyone. Rota's architecture is designed for all, and must be loved by all. It is communicative and contaminated by art. It asks to be decorated, like Byzantines have previously done, with bright intense colors. Rota considers furniture to be a form of sculpture, as it happens in his most specialized field: ephemeral architectures made for the art, such as designing scenography or exhibitions. So he wants it to be freely disposed and to create routes capable of including in a unique glimpse both functions and wonders.
After he designed the sea-front and restored Forcella DeSeta's palace, Rota now creates in Palermo a piece of art that is a proper performance, a beautiful astonishing piece made to be lived.
The library's furniture is made to welcome both books and users: shelves, stairs, footings, multi-function poles are applied works of art; projected, displayed, on exhibition. Surreal and conceptual objects make thoughts go further and further, overcoming the function and landing into fun and feelings. The way in which those elements have been displayed is a combination of elements that might lay close, or maybe on top, or at the bottom or also inside each other. Space, old and new at the very same time, merges, multiplies, moves, while shining on steel. It's a continuously changing experience, that can never be the same again. As it happened for media-libraries of San Sisto and Anzola, there are no proper shelves or reading zones: books are available to be freely picked-up, desks can be rotated, chairs are projected also to be moved into the space.
Rota, a book-loving architect, whose collection includes 60.000 books of twentieth century architecture, considers public libraries as metaphors and icons of how thought is set free and released with reading after being too long imprisoned into book pages. Finally, it has been unleashed and let to flow into memory and imagination.

Chiara Ingrosso

The plastic library cubes

The plastic library cubes

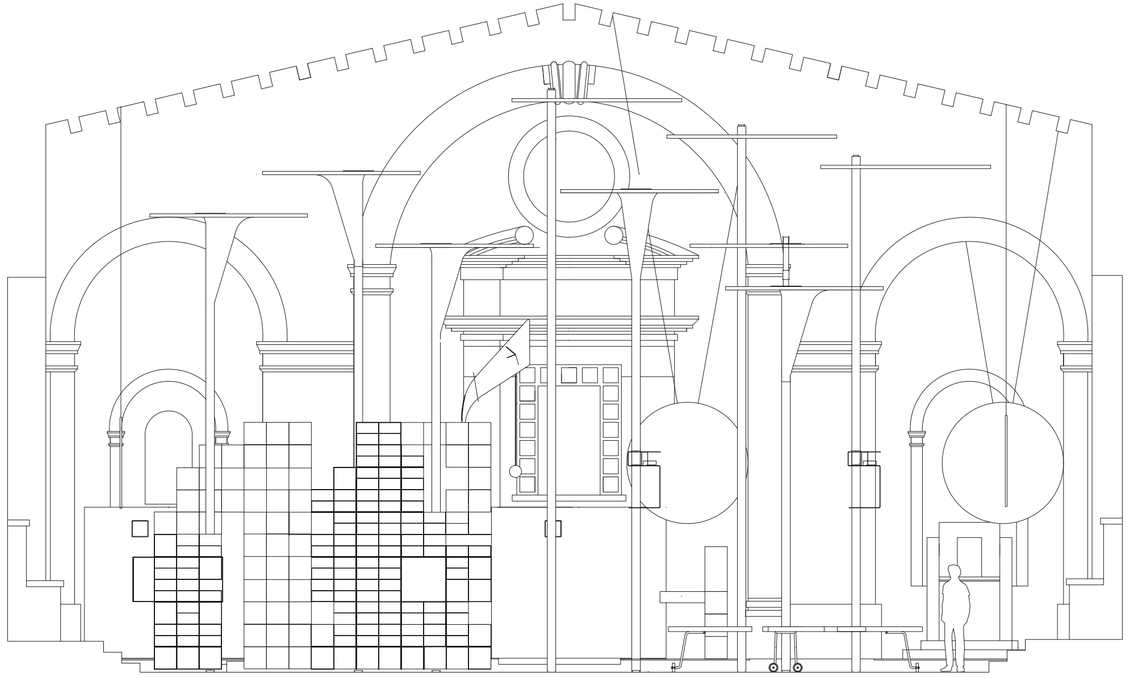
Plan drawing



Vertical views

Left page
Sky columns

Below
Section drawing



the equal city

Franco Purini

Work
The Equal City, The Sky-Dome Project

Client
Dubai Properties Ltd.

Location
Dubai, U.A.E.

Year
2000

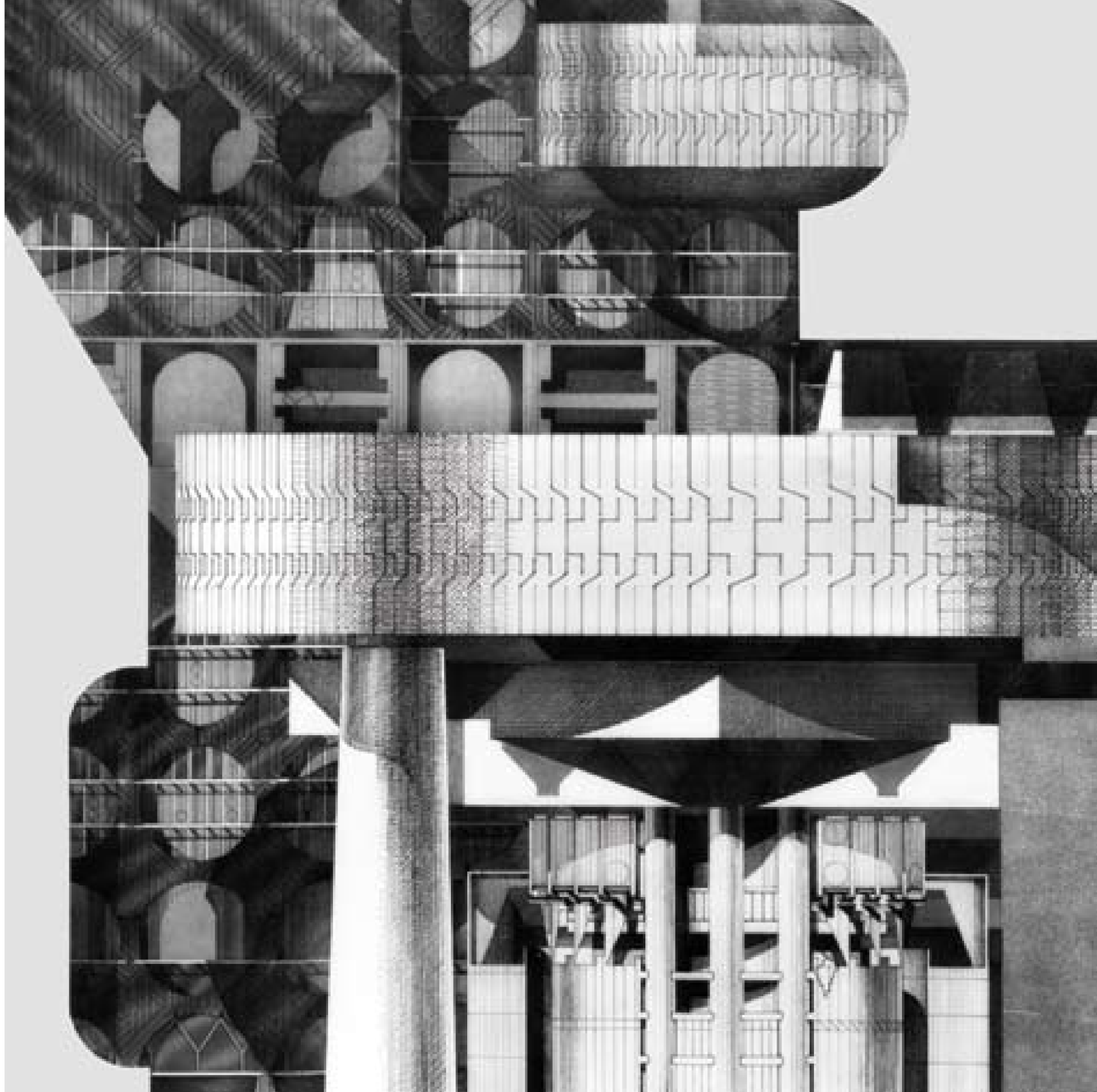
Image Credits
Franco Purini

In the installation where the area of the 7th International Architecture Exhibition 'Less Aesthetics More Ethics' presents 'The Equal City', a first design is met by proceeding clockwise which proposes that the measuring of the world is no longer in accordance to the meridian and parallel systems, but by following a new grid based on the leading cities of globalization. These cities are linked to force lines that redistribute their role and the values that they express. Globalization is positively considered as the space of a new universality, in which the identity of human beings, of culture and locations can be defined in a relationship with the other and other places in the prospective of understanding differences, more than that of affinity. Immediately following this design it is possible to see the model of an ideal city integrally permeated by information. The project is from 1966 and constitutes the premise of the project presented at the exhibition. Two plastic models of the 'House of Man' are shown, the prototype of a house for one person, adapted to the ever isolated life that is offered to the inhabitants of the big cities of the next century as the essential and productive dominant condition. It regards an architecture that aims to recuperate the primeval sacredness of housing space, in a context which advanced technology is the instrument for a more liberal life, and not an end. The tomb of the inhabitant is also hosted in the house, framing a the unique circle of life and death. The house, that is also the location of a work that will always be more an aesthetic work, consists of a wide introvert environment dominated by a large screen that allows the dweller to connect with the entire planet. It is a house of light that transforms the course of the day into a magical representation of time. On the outside another screen projects the internal life in the surrounding urban landscape, that is not possible to see directly from the house.

In 'The Equal City' life will become increasingly solitary, not to mention unhappier, and will develop as already stated, into large individual houses. These will consist of vast environments, a naked loft in which all essential functions of life will be carried out much like on a stage in the theatre, and without the necessity to find secluded privileged spaces. The electronic apparatus for the sensory extensions of the body will establish integrated parts of the house. Its simple volume will not have any relation to the external part, because this would not dedicate itself to the image of the external part, from the moment that all the houses tend to be the same. Each house will be the terminal for its energy and its networks, but it will also be a transmission station, a place for telework and centre of interactive communication with the entire planet. The necropolis (or burials) will no longer take place in cemeteries, but the house itself will become the tomb for its inhabitant. The endless base of the houses of the same dimensions and the same shape will be overlooked by a few of the colossal 'monument buildings', almost geographical presence. Some of these will host the few factories that will still be necessary; others will contain spaces for the ever less frequent occasions of a communal life. Others will still be hospitals and schools, prisons and colleges. In these establishments children will grow and will be taught. The parents, admitting that the reproduction will still be in accordance with the traditional models, will not in fact have the time to take care of them or the means for their maintenance, in which costs will be sustained by the entire community. The cities will be articulated with only two materials, the houses, that will form an endless base which will rise isolated as though making a giant sculpture, and the large building monuments. All will be tied to two types of infrastructures, the large motorways and the smaller roads distributed for the inhabitants. The complex environment and rise of the actual city will reduce the simple contraposition of the only two spatial and expressive dimensions, that which is private and that which is hyper public.

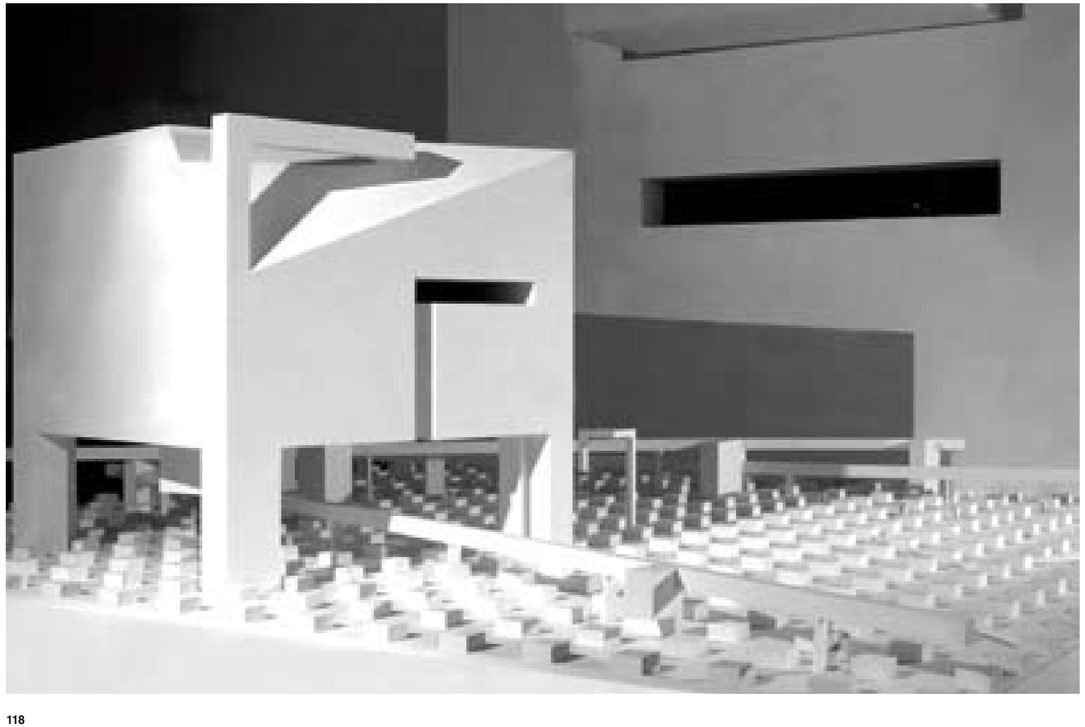
Following the two plastic models of the 'House of Man', of which one is dissected in order to demonstrate the internal part, there is the installation of the large model of the 'Equal City'. This city, with no more cars, is composed of houses for only one person, linked to a metropolitan lightly suspended on itself. Between these houses there are large sculptures, to signal a point system that rises on the continuity of the housing texture, with the visual objective of a superior horizon. The few residual collective functions are concentrated in large buildings which casually rise in the middle of the housing area. The roads and piazzas will become almost useless. The Equal City is an anonymous city, an individual city, an auto-landscape city, a city with no more centres and suburbs, but contemporaneously central and suburban in each of its points. Following this great model, a planimetric design of a part of the 'Equal City' is exhibited. >

Right page
Urban structures studies for the Compact City



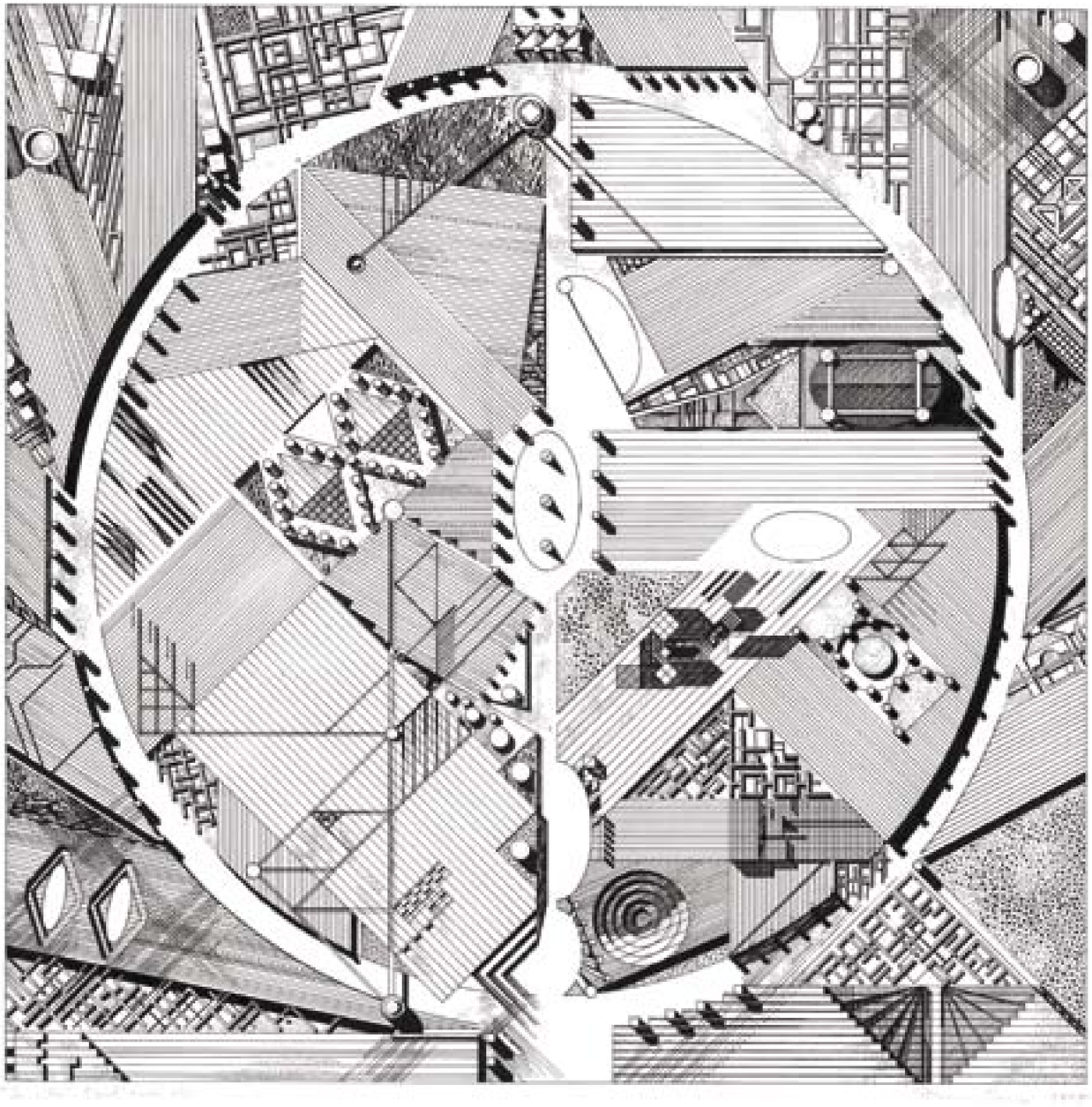
The last image that can be seen before leaving the installation space is the project of a new firmament where the stars dialogue with artificial stars, orbiting satellites placed in a relationship with the global city. The numerous manufactured products created by human beings in order to connect with every point of the world with a network of communicative vectors, are organised in a design that is projected onto the sky in a new cosmic order. A natural and artificial order that makes an absolute form, and transcribed on the sky of the actual planetary logistics. In this way the architecture rediscovers its ancient and lost universal dimension, its capacity to express the totality. In the twilight atmosphere other images of the designs and the projects of 'The Equal City' authors are scrolled, while the notes of a musical composition created expressly for the Biennale installation of Alberto Pavesi, titled 'One thousand times and hundred thousand', invades the space.

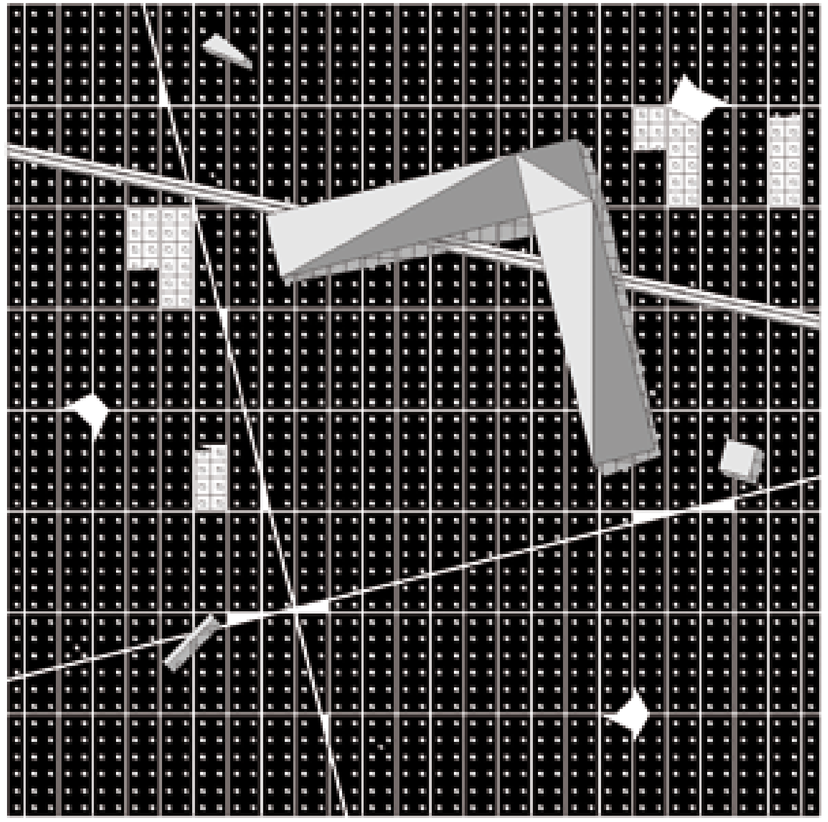
Franco Purini



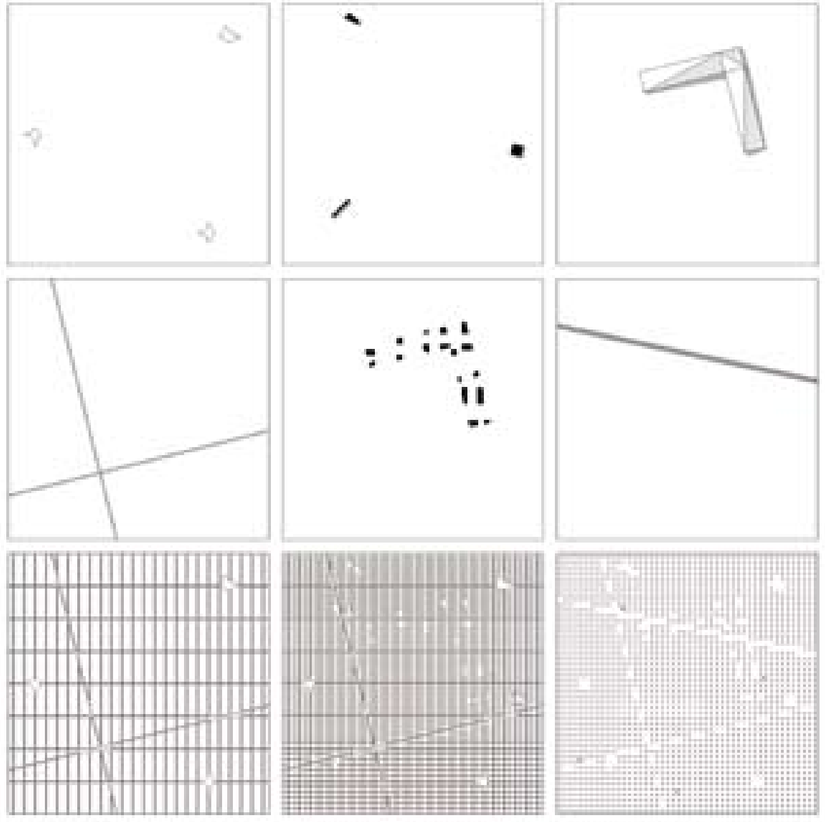
Right page
La Città Compatta (The Compact City), 1966
Black ink on paper

Below
Plastic model

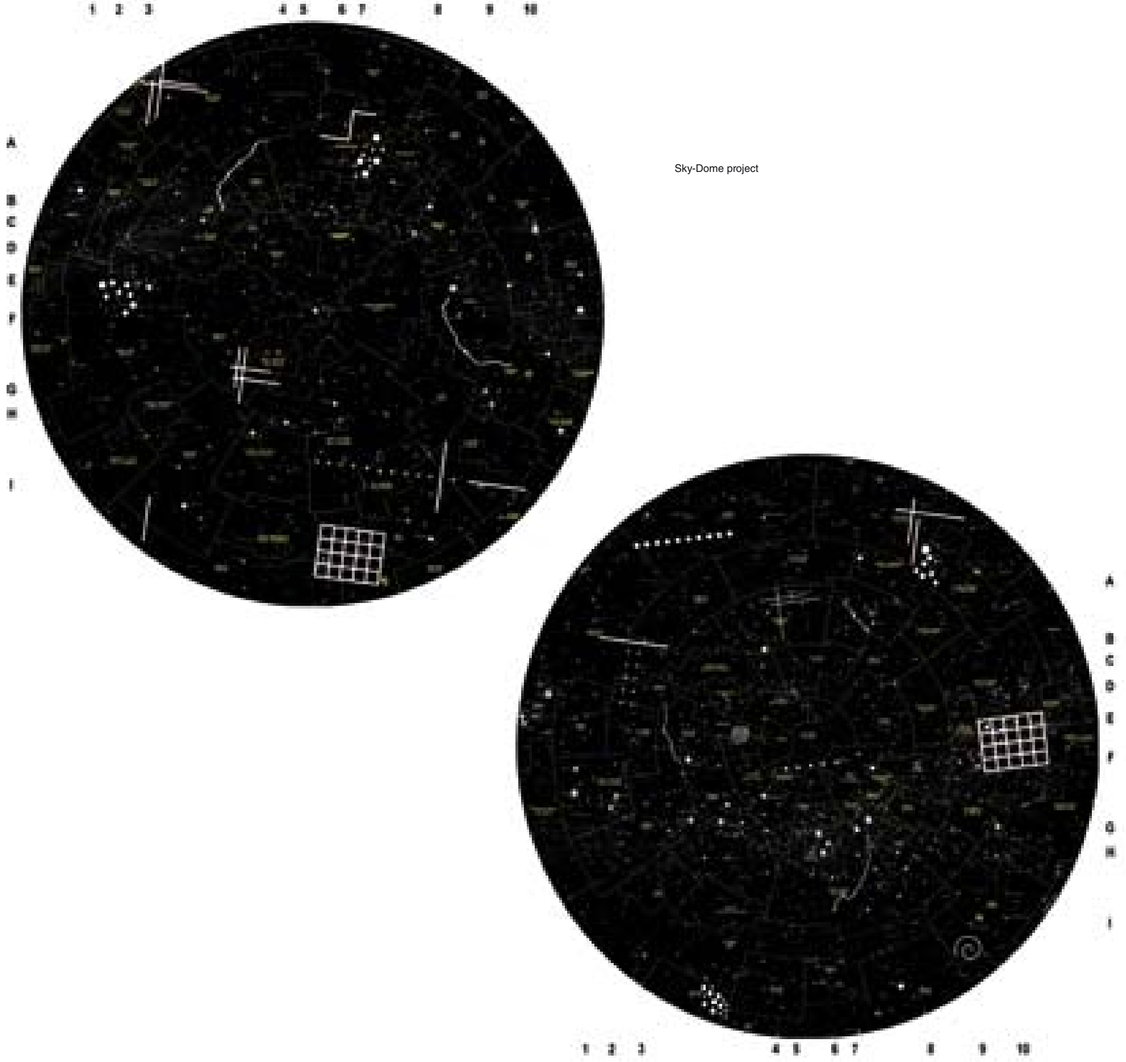




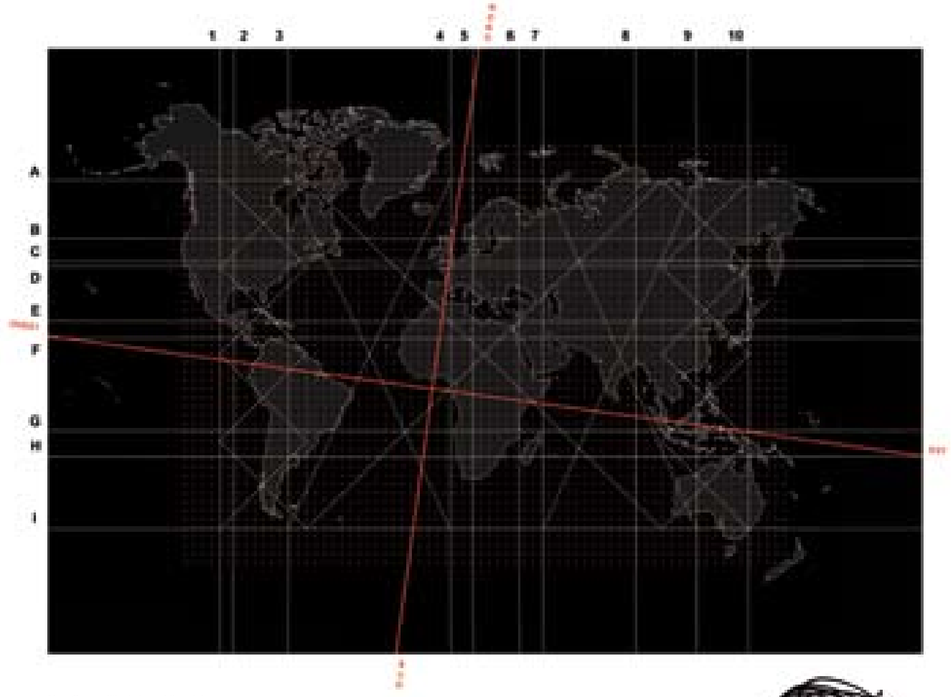
The plan



Plan schemes

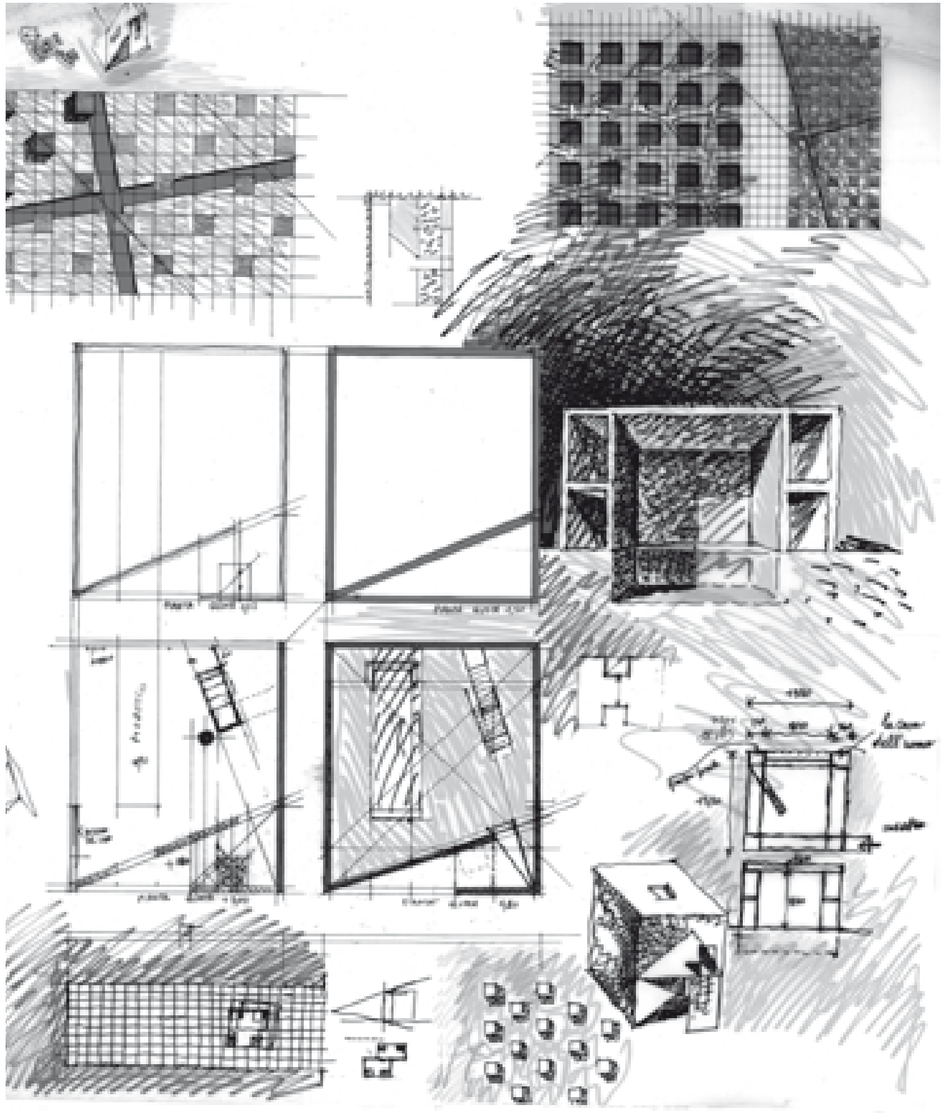


Sky-Dome project

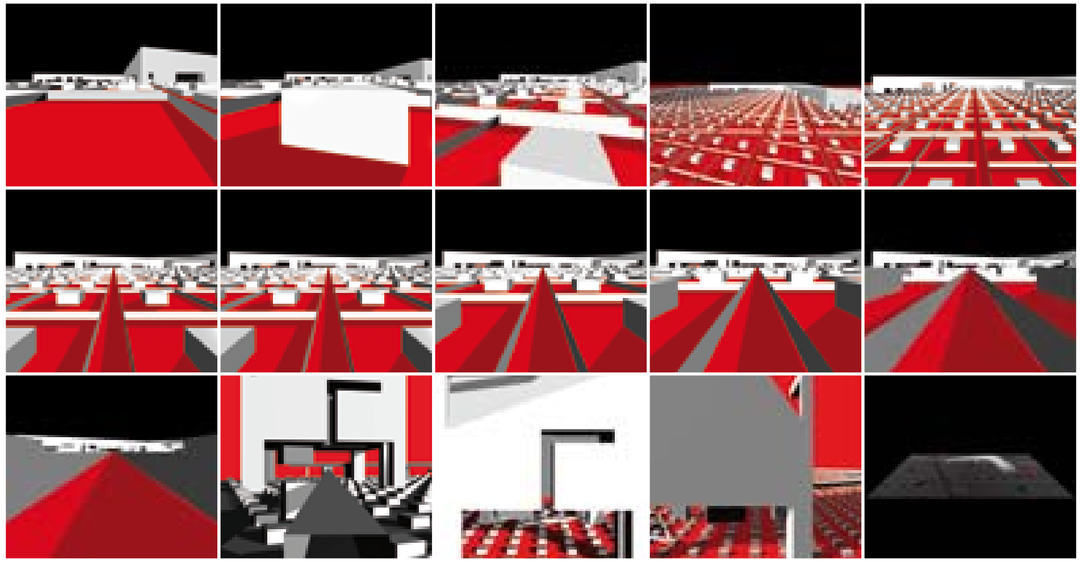


New Geo-political view of the globe

The Equal City, sketches



The Equal City, urban views



what is that tremendous black building?

SOM

Author
SOM - Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Work
John Hancock Center

Location
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Year
1965 - 1970

Team
Bruce J. Graham (architecture)
Fazlur Rahman Khan (structural engineering)

Image Credits
Raffaele Marone

It's Big John, the skyclimber.
Upon arriving at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, travelling in the direction of the Loop, you cannot help but notice on the horizon, standing out from the still unclear metropolitan magma, the immense form of the Sears Tower. Your gaze is inevitably drawn to that mass dominating everything else which, as you move closer, grows larger and larger, revealing itself to be a group of truncated towers, in the impossible attempt to build the one that could touch the sky. From outside the city, "the skyscraper of Chicago" is the Sears Tower.
Then you arrive in the center, go around the Loop and down the "Magnificent Mile," and at the end you find him, Big John, and from that moment on, as for every Chicagoan, it becomes "the skyscraper of Chicago," and for some the John Hancock Center becomes "the skyscraper" period.
Buildings often enter the collective imagination of a city's inhabitants in such a profound way that they earn a nickname, at times affectionate, as if it were a beloved family member. But the case of this tower is peculiar because it was already known as "Big John" long before construction was finished.
The reasons for the incredible public success of a building does not always coincide with considerations of architectural quality, but this was certainly not the case here; the John Hancock Center owes its fame to some of its unquestionably architectural qualities.[1]
To understand these reasons, one must go back to the beginning, when the John Hancock Center was conceived. The first project foresaw the construction of two adjacent towers: one with 45 floors of offices and the other with 70 residential floors. The surrounding urban setting, however, would have become too cramped, and so during a meeting someone proposed *simply* placing one tower on top of the other. This almost banal illumination would lead to an organism of incredibly high functional complexity, full of activity 24 hours a day – stores, parking, offices, swimming pool (at the 44th floor), television studios, apartments, restaurants – a sort of "city within the city",[2] anticipating other similar constructions by a decade, while remaining perfectly livable and alluring to this day.
It would be Fazlur Rahman Khan[3], a young engineer from Dhaka, Bangladesh, already in those days a strong supporter of the use of computers and design software, to come up with the solution of an X-braced structure, a single enormous steel structural tube in rectangular sections tapering towards the sky, making the idea, and therefore the construction, possible.[4]
The shape of the building, the structure clearly visible though rendered visibly homogenous by applying black anodic aluminum to the façade, the very color black, the pair of antennae on top, the attachment to the ground, the spectacular view from the 96th floor observatory create the John Hancock Center's strength, which is not only architectural but also communicative, making it a work in many ways unusual and over the top, almost brazen, arrogant in its open-minded elegance.
A building really only enters the imagination when it has a relationship of time and space with other buildings, creating chains of analogies.
From a distance the shape, recalling the obelisks of Ancient Egypt, stands apart from the other elements of Chicago's skyline, though not merely for its height, and establishes a preferential relationship with other prominent signs, even those which came after, such as the IBM Office Building, also black, or the white vertically striped Standard Oil Tower.
A building which looks down on one of the strongholds of a master of the Modern Movement's American production: the Lake Shore Drive Apartments by Mies van der Rohe, only two blocks away towards Lake Michigan, two tiny parallelepipeds; from the John Hancock Center's observatory on the 94th floor you can barely make out their roofs.
"John Hancock" is the same name shared with another tower with a completely different urban presence: Ieoh Ming Pei's svelte mirrored structure of 1976, which blends in with the sky and clouds of Boston. The tower in Chicago, however, seeks a different type of relationship with the sky.
Viewing it from the sky, there is a one of a kind illusion: as opposed to all other skyscrapers which naturally seem to get narrower towards the ground, the John Hancock Center appears as a perfect parallelepiped; as seen from below, from the pedestrian's point of view, the tapering makes the black structure seem to stretch further into the sky than it would have had the walls been perfectly vertical: an optical illusion, similar to the one used by Borromini in the *Galleria di Palazzo Spada* in Rome (1653) which, thanks to the inclination of the horizontal and vertical planes, deceives the eye into seeing a space four times longer than what it really is.[5]
And then, the vertical lines of the pilasters and the horizontal ones of the floors, intersected by the X-bracing, >

[1] The vicissitudes of the project and its construction are discussed in a specifically dedicated chapter in N. Adams, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill: SOM Since 1936, Electa Architecture, Milan 2007.

[2] J. Morris Dixon, The Tall One, "Architectural Forum", July / August, 1970, p.37. Also of interest is the interpretation of the skyscraper as "alternative to the city itself" given in the short text by M. Manieri Elia, "Il grattacielo a Chicago", A. Izzo, C. Gubitosi, Evoluzione dei grattacieli di Chicago (dal 1879 al 1974), Officina Edizioni, Roma 1975.

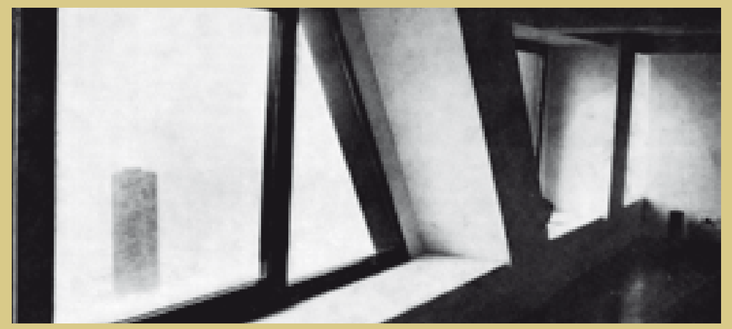
[3] For more on the figure of Fazlur Rahman Khan, awarded with the AIA Institute Honor for Distinguished Achievement and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, among others, see: M. Ali, Art of the Skyscraper: the Genius of Fazlur Khan, Rizzoli International Publications, New York 2001; Y. S. Khan, Engineering Architecture: the vision of Fazlur R. Khan, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 2004; the website http://www.fazlurrkhan.com/.

[4] F. Khan, Computer Design of 100-Story John Hancock Center, "Journal of the Structural Division (ASCE)", December 1966, v. 92; Idem, John Hancock Center, "Civil Engineering Magazine", October 1967, n. 10 v. 37; Idem, 100-Story John Hancock Center in Chicago - A Case Study of the Design Process, in "IABSE Journal", August 1972.

[5] "Next year, when the John Hancock Center is completed, Chicago visitors will probably be asking, 'What is that tremendous black building? Why does it have sloping sides? Why those big X's'". J. S. Hornbeck, Chicago Multi-use Giant, "Architectural Record", January, 1967, p. 137; the article presents the project in detail.

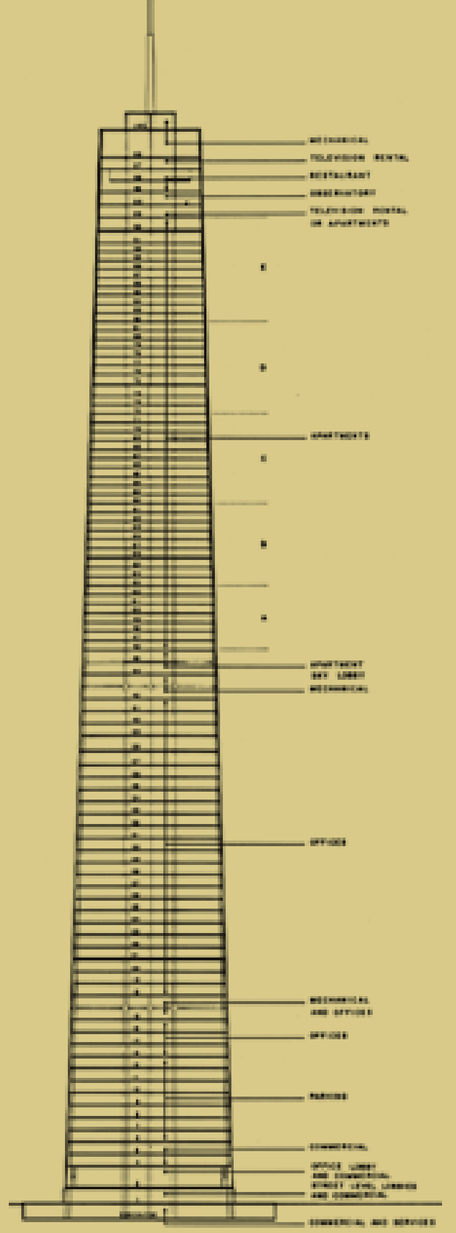
[6] S. Tigerman, Bruce Graham of SOM, Rizzoli International Publications, New York 1989.

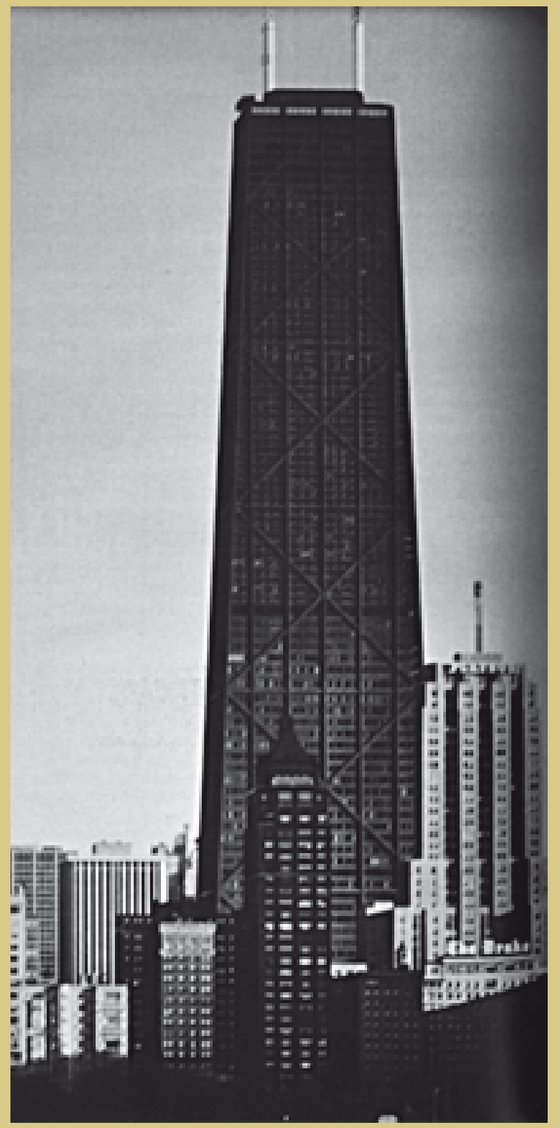
View from the plaza



Light effect by the window

The sky lobby interior





create the image of a fantastic scaffolding put there to try to climb up the sky: Big John, the *skyclimber.* Those vertical, horizontal and inclined lines collide and run over each other as if Bruce Graham, an earnest Miesian, hadn't bothered trying to find a formally unexceptionable solution, giving rise to a number of points that would normally be considered unresolved, if not errors of composition, but which here seem to indicate that he who conceived such a work can take such licenses; and this may be the most obvious trait of that very open-minded elegance.[6]

Then there are the interior spaces of the offices and apartments. Even here something special occurs: huge black inclined lines cross the glass walls, slicing the view outside. It is the crossing of the X-bracing that recalls in every interior space, in every moment, the immense scale of the product you are inside; and this rarely occurs, not even in still larger buildings.

At the end of the 1960s, to say that they would do something incredible, children playing with their toy blocks would claim, "I'm making a building 100 floors high!" Big John, the *skyclimber*, is exactly 100 floors high, not one more and not one less.

Raffaele Marone

Far left
Front detail

Left
Detail of the facade

Interior view

Far away view from train station.

Big John sandwiched between the Lake Shore Drive Apartments designed by Mies van der Rohe

View of Big John from the street

Dedicated to Compasses

Massimiliano Fuksas

Massimiliano Fuksas

Commented by Luca Molinari.

"I spent the day in Vienna, in the shipyard of the Twin Tower, that has now reached the end. The project, or better still, the construction no longer seems to belong to me. This is inevitable at the end of a job, I become much the same as any other visitor. The building remains mine. From the great trapezoidal base that is buried at up to twenty-five meters in subsoil, to the highest point: 150 meters, the itinerary that I complete is a constant course among those always found in the work of an architect. In the lower part it is the labyrinth that predominates. The 'parts' are never in contact among each other, it is the vacuum that determines the 'tension'. An unpredictable route in which different heights and dimensions are discovered. The passage between the 'small' and the 'big' between ceilings that crush and those that are far from us, can be found in a number of my other projects. The two towers seen from the passage that connects them, are not parallel monoliths that almost touch, the closest point between them is only six meters in distance. The two bodies determine an interstice. The architecture of the interstice or of the space that exists between the objects, is on of the consistencies that for about 25 years has 'obsessed' by architecture. A series of tension and abandonment, are the passages for different emotions. The strength of this building lies in its maximum transparency. Another world exists underneath, a mysterious world. The simple monolith concept, with a world above and another world below, with a 'horizontal', is a recurrent keyword that I have substituted with the concept of 'step' that is, by now, too static. Instead the horizontal moves with human beings." (da Frames, Actar, 2001)

When Massimiliano Fuksas talks about architecture, he does it as though he is talking about an old friend or a big, strong physical emotion that involves everything from the senses to the mind. And the journey in the body of one of the towers constructed or imagined by the Roman maestro is always radically physical. The dense, dark belly of the senses of public life, in which the elements of the noisy, citizen, public life are collected, gives the underworld of the underground on the ground floor. From the road level the body, rising, dematerialises, it progressively looses weight, it is mind, air, light thoughts and the want of peace and distant lands. Thinking about a project of a tower, Fuksas entwines two established restrains, the body, of which we have just spoken, and architecture as a fragment of the landscape. Architecture stops being a single object in order to become part of an ever vast, rich and complex landscape, to which is called upon to give a contribution of order, of new hierarchy. And starting with these necessary principles Fuksas, each time, shapes the manufactured body with thaumaturgical power and pictorial grace. The material is shaped and used to give the building tension and elementary together. The effects are few, it is the functions that must satisfy and for these elementary objectives the architect must use the material available to the maximum tension, to the limit of tactile perversion. It is in this way that the black stone, asphalt, the bright red become delicate crystal, warped very light fixtures that accompany you to the sky following folds, tensions, scraps that transform the simple vertical tower building into a meteorological sensor and the landscape to be observed. In this Fuksas is an antique architect, but it is for this that his towers are always rooted in the ground in order to aspire to the sky each time.

Massimiliano Fuksas

Native of Lituania, Massimiliano Fuksas was born in Rome in 1944, where he graduated in Architecture at "La Sapienza University" in 1969. In 1967, 1989 and 1993 he established practices in Rome, Paris and Vienna respectively and since 2002 he opened a new studio in Frankfurt. From 1998 to 2000 he was Director of the VII Biennale Internazionale di Architettura di Venezia "Less Aesthetics, More Ethics".
2007 Cubo D'Oro Award, Naples
2007 Winning Award to the project Europark, Salzburg, Austria, by the International Council of Shopping Centres – category 'Refurbishments and/or Expansions'
2006 Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Institute of British Architects
2006 Honorary Fellowship of Cavaliere di Gran Croce della Repubblica Italiana
2006 Award of Excellence to the new Trade Fair and Exhibition Centre, Rho Pero, Milan, Italy by ULI (Urban Land Institute), Washington D.C., USA
2005 National Award for Architecture to the new Headquarters of Ferrari, Maranello, Italy by ANCE – IN ARCH 2005.
2005 Member of the Architecture Academy in Paris.
2003 Academic of the International Academy of Architecture in Sofia.
2002 Honorary Fellowship of the American Institute of Architects.
2000 Academic of the Nazional Academy of San Luca, Italy
2000 Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de la République Française.
1999 Grand Prix d'Architecture Française;
1998 He received an award in recognition of his professional career at "Vitruvio International a la Trayectoria", in Buenos Aires.
Since January 2000 writes the architecture column of the weekly magazine "L'Espresso".
He was Visiting Professor at several universities, such as the École Speciale d'Architecture in Paris, the Akademie der Bildenden Kunste in Vienna and the Columbia University in New York. For many years he has been devoting special attention to the study of the urban problems in large metropolitan areas.
Presently lives and works in Rome, Paris and Frankfurt.
He works with Doriana O. Mandrelli since 1985.
Among his latest projects we recall: Bao'an International Airport, Shenzhen, China (winning project- 2008), The New Concept Store for Giorgio Armani and Emporio Armani in Ginza, Tokyo, Japan, 2005/2007; Zenith, the Music hall in Strasbourg 2003/2007 ; the New Parish Complex in Foligno, Italy, 2001/2008 ; the New Congress Hall in Rome-Eur, Italy (competition, winning project, on going), 1998/2010; the Peres Centre for Peace in Jaffa, Israel 1998/2008; New Silk Road Park (International ideas competition, winner entry) XiÄn, China 2007; Lycée Hôtelier Marianne in Montpellier (competition, winner entry) 2007; requalification of thermal baths of Montecatini, Montecatini, Italy, 2007; Is Molas Golf Resort, Cagliari, Italy 2006/2012; the African Institute of Science and Technology in Abuja, Nigeria, (competition, winning project), 2006/2010; New Piaggio Historical Museum in Potedera, Italy, 2006; New Touristic Harbour of the Margonara, Albissola, Savona, Italy, 2005; the Archives Nationales Pierrefitte sur Seine at Saint Denis, Paris, France 2005/2009; the Euromed Centre, Marseille, France, 2005/2010; Mall and Entertainment Centre "ETNA-Polis", Catania, Italy 2005; Zenith, the Music hall in Amiens, France 2003/2008; the New Trade Fair Milan, Italy 2002/2005; the MAB Zeil project in Frankfurt, Germany 2002/2008; the Research and Multimedia Centre – Grappa Nardini - Bassano del Grappa, Vicenza, Italy 2002/2003; the New Ferrari Headquarters in Maranello, Modena, Italy 2001/2003; the Skyscraper for the New Headquarters of Piemont Region in Turin, Italy 2001/2010; the New Concept Stores for Emporio Armani, Hong Kong and Shanghai, China 2001/2004; the Shopping Mall, the 18th September Square, the Mediamarket and the Admirant in Eindhoven, Netherlands 1999/2007; the Exhibition Hall in Turin – Porta Palazzo, Turin, Italy 1998/2002; the Ilôt Cantagrel in Paris, France 1997/2000; the Centre for Education and Research Maximilien Perret de Vincennes at Alfortville, Paris, France 1997/1998; the Urban Renovation of the blocks near the Seine at Clichy in Paris, France 1996/1999; the Twin Towers in Wien, Austria 1995/2001; the Shopping Centre Europark 1 and the enlargement Europark 2 in Salzburg, Austria 1995/2005; the Urban Plan of Tremblay en France, France 1993/2001; the Maison des Arts in the University of Bordeaux, France 1992/1995; the International Trade Centre in Pudong, Shanghai, China 1991/1996; the Graffiti Museum in Niaux, France 1989/1993

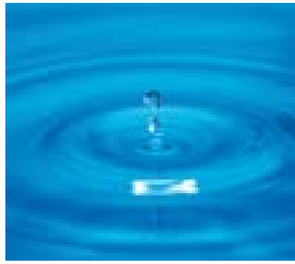
Luca Molinari

Architect and critic; based in Milan; born in 1966, graduated in the Faculty of Architecture – Polytechnic of Milan in 1992 after a work and study experience in Delft (Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft, 1989) and Barcelone (ETSAB, 1990-92).
Associate Professor of "Contemporary History of Architecture" at the Faculty of Architecture, Naples "Luigi Vanvitelli" since 2003.
Guest professor at the Academy of Fine Art of Guang Zhou (China).
Director of the School of Design, Naba, Milan.
From 1993, Ph.D promovendus in the DKS-ADDA course held by professor Alexander Tzonis at the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft, with a research project on Ernesto Nathan Rogers and the post-war architectural culture.
He currently collaborates with several international architectural and non-specialized magazines such as Domus, Lotus, Abitare, Ottagono, Il progetto, Archis, L'architecture d'aujourd'hui, Vanity Fair (Italian edition) and Marie Claire.
He edited and designed many exhibitions in the architectural and contemporary art field, the most relevant are: Santiago Calatrava. Work in Progress (Triennale, Milano), Le forme del cibo (Opos, Milano), Stalker (Opos, Milano) and I sentimenti del 2000. Arte e fotografia dal 1960 ad oggi (Triennale, Milano), Side Effects (Triennale, Milano),Gold Medal for Italian architecture (Triennale Milano, Naples, Rome), Piero Portaluppi (Triennale, Milano).
From 1995 he is the editor for architecture and design of Skira Publisher.
Scientific curator for the Portaluppi Foundation based in Milan of the "Progetto Portaluppi" from 2000 to 2003(reframing of the historical archives and organization of the exhibition and catalogue).
Curator for architecture and urbanism of the Triennale of Milan (2000-2004) and member of the Scientific Comitee of the Triennale; during this period he conceived, produced and organized a series of public events to enlarge popular acknowledgment on architecture such as the the first edition of the Gold Medal for Italian Architecture, first Festa per l'architettura (Festival of Architecture) and the lectures' series Cantieri aperti (Open works under construction.
In 2006 it has received from X Biennial of Architecture of Venice the Prize Ernesto Nathan Rogers for the critic and the communication of architecture.
He currently work as indipendent advicer for Public and Private Institutions as well for international investors in the field of architecture.

The sustainable Hydrogen Community

Creation of the first underground pipeline network in the industrial and urban area of S.Zeno in Arezzo, Tuscany, Italy - for the distribution of pure hydrogen within the local goldsmith companies. Installation of four 5kW hydrogen fuel cells for zero emission production of electricity and heat. Set-up of a R&D lab on hydrogen and renewable energy technologies equipped with two 1kW fuel cells and a photovoltaic system to produce renewable hydrogen by mean of water electrolysis.

Hydrogen



Cityscape Dubai

6th - 9th of October, 2008
Dubai International Exhibition Centre - Dubai

The 7th edition of Cityscape Dubai 2007, the world's largest business-to-business real estate show, will take place at Dubai International Exhibition Centre next October from the 6th to 9th. For this year edition are expected over 1,500 exhibitors and a total of about 60,000 participants from over 100 different countries. Cityscape has become a privileged networking opportunity for all members of the real estate community. All the top industry actors are involved in the event: architects, developers, consultants and bankers.

During the event four "hot topics" conferences will be held with the involvement of industry knowledgeable speakers.
Cityscape International Property Investment And Development Conference, has a focus on real estate investment and development in the Middle East, including case study presentations and comparative analysis of real estate investment opportunities and developments in international markets.
World Architecture Congress devoted to discuss and debate the foremost challenges facing the built environment.
The Hotel Investment And Development Conference will gather Hotel and Tourism industry experts focusing on investment, finance and development opportunities in regions hospitality and tourism sectors.
The 14th Middle East Facilities And Asset Management Conference – FAAM – the biggest facilities management event in the region.
The success of Cityscape Dubai has contributed to the launch of sister events around the world, including Cityscape Abu Dhabi, Cityscape Asia and Cityscape China. The latest editions are Cityscape India and Cityscape South America.

January, 30 - February, 2
International Real Estate & Investment Show (IREIS)
Abu Dhabi International Exhibition Centre, ABU DHABI

February, 4 - 6
Office Show
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

February, 11 - 13
Architectural Conservation Conference and Exhibition
Dubai World Trade Centre, DUBAI

February, 17 - 19
Dubai International Property Investment Show
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

February, 25 - 27
ISH Kitchen & Bath Exhibition
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

March, 3 - 6
Qatar International Property & Investment Exhibition
Qatar International Exhibition Centre, QATAR

March, 7 - 10
Project Qatar
Qatar International Exhibition Centre, Doha, QATAR

April, 11 - 12
Home Owner Dubai
Madinat Arena, DUBAI

April, 13 - 17
Saudi Building & Interiors Exhibition
Jeddah International Exhibition & Convention Centre, Jeddah, SAUDI ARABIA

April, 14 - 17
Iraq Build Expo
Amman International Fair, Amman, JORDAN

April, 14 - 18
Kuwait International Property Show
Kuwait International Fair Ground, Mishref, KUWAIT

April, 15 - 17
International Property Exhibition
Oman International Exhibition Centre, Muscat, OMAN

April, 20 - 23
Architectural Conservation Conference and Exhibition
Abu Dhabi International Exhibition Centre, ABU DHABI

April, 20 - 23
Building Futures Gulf
Abu Dhabi International Exhibition Centre, ABU DHABI

April, 20 - 23
Structure Gulf
Abu Dhabi International Exhibition Centre, ABU DHABI

April, 21 - 24
International Housing & Real Estate Investment Exhibition
Grand Hyatt Amman Hotel, Amman, JORDAN

April, 23 - 26
Arabian Home Show
Dubai International Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

May , 3 - 9
International Furniture & Decoration Exhibition "Ideal Home"
Dhahran International Exhibitions Center, Damman, SAUDI ARABIA

May, 6 - 8
Cityscape Abu Dhabi
Abu Dhabi International Exhibition Centre, ABU DHABI

May, 6 - 8
Gulf Construction Interiors & Furniture Exhibition
Bahrain International Exhibition centre, Manama, BAHRAIN

May, 11 - 14
Saudi Furniture & Interiors
Fiera Milano, Jeddah, SAUDI ARABIA

May, 11 - 14
Saudi Kitchen and Home Accessories
Riyadh Exhibition Centre, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA

May, 12 - 15
Property Link
Zara Expo Amman, Amman, JORDAN

May, 18 - 21
International Furniture & Decor Expo
Qatar International Exhibition Centre, Doha, QATAR

May, 22 - 24
Worldwide Property Shows
Grand Hyatt Dubai, DUBAI

May, 25 - 27
Garden Landscaping Outdoor Living Exhibition
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

May, 25 - 27
Hometech Middle East Exhibition
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

May, 25 - 27
Interior Lifestyle Middle East
Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

May, 25 - 27
Light Middle East
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

May, 26 - 27
Construction 360
Fairmont Hotel, DUBAI

May, 28 - 31
Property Arabia
Bahrain International Exhibition Centre, Manama, BAHRAIN

May, 28 - 31
Worldwide Property Show
Bahrain International Exhibition Centre, Manama, BAHRAIN

June, 1 - 3
Retail City
Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

July, 21 - 24
Jordan Furniture & Interiors Expo
Amman International Fair, Amman, JORDAN

August, 23 - September, 1
Kuwait Household Exhibition
Kuwait International Fair Ground, Mishref, KUWAIT

October, 6 - 9
Cityscape Exhibition and Conference
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

October, 13 - 16
Project Jordan
Amman International Fair, Amman, JORDAN

October, 20 - 23
Real Estate & Housing Exhibition
Dhahran International Exhibitions Center, Damman, SAUDI ARABIA

October, 21 - 24
Kuwait Property Exhibition
Sheraton Hotel & Tower, KUWAIT

November, 9 - 12
Saudi Building & Interiors Exhibition
Riyadh Exhibition Centre, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA

November, 22 - 28
International Building & Construction Exhibition
Dhahran International Exhibitions Center, Damman, SAUDI ARABIA

November, 23 - 27
Big Five Exhibition
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

November, 23 - 28
Building & Construction Exhibition
Kuwait International Fair Ground, KUWAIT

December, 15 - 17
Dubai Ideal Home Show
Airport Expo Dubai, DUBAI

December, 3 - 7
Index Exhibition
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, DUBAI

February, 2009
Home & Lifestyle
Oman International Exhibition Centre, Muscat, OMAN

March, 2009
Buildex
Oman International Exhibition Centre, OMAN

March, 2009
Interiors Oman
Oman International Exhibition Centre, Muscat, OMAN

architecture and the sky

Valerio Paolo Mosco

"…in this way life will cut the secular horizontal line of the terrestrial surface and the perpendicular will appear to be infinite in the height of the elevator and the spirals of the aeroplane and of the dirigible. The future prepares for us a sky without limits of architectural amour".[1]

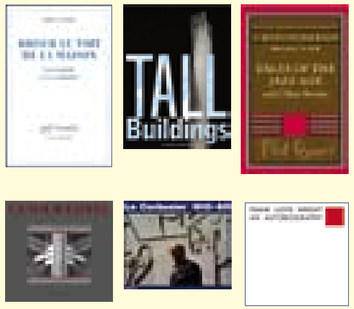
This was the way that a flaming Boccioni envisaged the future: architecture and sky finally connected with each other through movement. But Boccioni's Manifesto remained buried for decades among Marinetti's papers and along with it, the promise of an architecture that belongs to the sky. Instead, the contrary happens: not the architecture of verticality, the ascension to the sky, but rather that of horizontality, along the line of the earth. Hans Sedlmayr[2] at the time denied Boccioni and elevated the horizontal level to an overhanging as a symbol of the modern: the canopy. The canopy inverts the symbolic system which connects the sky to architecture: in fact, if before, as Mircea Elide[3] had written, the axis mundi was vertical, from God towards men, the 'modern' canopy rotates this axis at 90 degrees and the sky becomes an artificial abstract level suspended above our heads, that crushes the horizon into a landscape without elevation or ascensions.

We then raise ourselves not in order to have closer contact with the sky, but in order to overpower man and look down upon him from a higher position. Among the first to notice this are two American writers, Henry James who speaks of the 'impudence' of skyscrapers[4] and later on it is Francis Scott Fitzgerald[5] who says"… solitary and as inexplicable as the sphinx towered the Empire State Building. Raised to an ultimate peak more magnificent of the towers. And then [he] understood. Full of vanity and pride the new Yorker climbed all the way to the top, and from there, saw with dismay that which he had not ever suspected; that the city was not an interminable series of canyons as he supposed, but it had its limits: from the highest structure he saw for the first time that it faded into the countryside."

Therefore, the show from above is in fact the city and not the sky, as the caustic Guy de Maupassant said, climb voluntarily to the top of the Eiffel Tour in that it is the only place in Paris in which the tower, a deprecated symbol of modernism, can not be seen[6]. And it is the view from the parvenu tower overlooking the city that delighted the semiologist Roland Barthes many years later[7].

Among the few however, who avert their stare from the ground upwards and look at the sky, is paradoxically one of the greatest representatives of horizontality, Frank Lloyd Wright with his one mile high skyscraper, the pinnacle of modern excellence, and one of the few modern 'all sky' architectures.[8]

Finally, one of the most beautiful sketches on architecture and sky, is among the many notes taken by Le Corbusier while travelling on a plane, "little meditation on the development of a day": a sequence of sun, sky, clouds and earth that emanates a serene pacification. In this sketch architecture is missing. Maybe the atmosphere of pacification really depends on this.[9]



[1] Umberto Boccioni, Manifesto dell'Architettura Futurista, 1913/1914, from Enrico Crispolti, Attraverso l'Architettura Futurista, Galleria fonte d'abbisso, Modena, 1984. See also: www.rebel.net/futurist/manifboc.htm;

[2] Hans Sedlmayr, Verlust der Mitte, Otto Müller Verlag, Salzburg, 1948;

[3] Mircea Eliade, Briser le toit de la maison : La Créativité et ses symboles, Galimard, Paris, 1986;

[4] Henry James, New York Revisited, Harper's Monthly Magazine 112, feb.1906, quoted in Guy Nordenson, Tall Building as a Metaphor, in Tall Building, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2007;

[5] Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Tales of the Jazz Age, The Cambridge edition of the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald, 2002;

[6] www.tour–eiffel.fr/teiffel/fr

[7] Roland Barthes, Andrè Martin, La Tour Eiffel, Seuil – Centre national de la photographie, Paris, 1989;

[8] Frank Lloyd Wright, An Autobiography, Pomegranate Communications Inc, US, 2005;

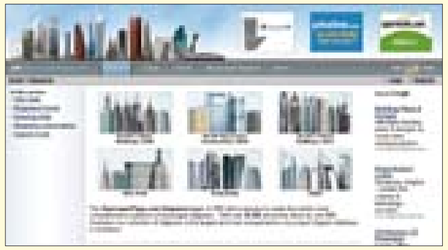
[9] W. Boesiger, Le Corbusier 1910–1965, Birkhauser Verlag AG, 2Rev Ed edition, 1999;

These few notes owe a lot to a conversation with Roberto Secchi.

Vincenza Santangelo

Skyscrapermania

For an more in-depth insight into tall buildings **http://www.skyscraperpage.com** is one of the best sites. It is an up to date database of all already constructed tall buildings, those which are under construction, those which must be achieved, but also those which have been demolished are viewable through high-quality illustrative diagrams. The site also includes a forum where open discussions on issues related to tall buildings take place.
For further information on architecture and urbanism, look into the reference site Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat **http://www.ctbuh.org** which investigates all aspects of planning, design and the construction of tall buildings, with particular attention to sustainability, which is also the theme of the next world conference Tall and green. Typology for a sustainable future to be held in Dubai, whose program is on **http://www.ctbuh2008.com**.
The Skyscraper Museum in New York proposes a site http://www.skyscraper.org where you can not only learn about exhibitions and initiatives, but it also displays a rich archive of information and historical background not only on the skyscrapers of New York city.
In 2004 MoMA (the Museum of Modern Art) in New York organized an exhibition on Tall Building whose reference site is still viewable on **http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/2004/tallbuildings/index_f.html**. The exhibition presented a study of 25 tall buildings, selected according to the technology, and urban planning. Each building was described through a series of elements: aerodynamics, movement, sustainability, public spaces, skins, structural technologies, attempting whenever to compare them with simple and attractive graphics.

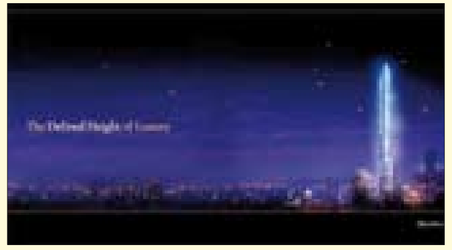


Skyscrapers

All the most important tall buildings have a reference site.
The sites of European and American tall buildings tend to highlight the appearance and architectural design of the building, highlighting the architect's signature. This is the case of the Chicago Spire **http://www.thechicagospire.com** designed by Santiago Calatrava or the Shard London Bridge **http://www.shardlondonbridge.com** designed by Renzo Piano.
However the sites regarding tall buildings in Asia are different, in that they focus on the identification of the building with a luxurious life-style, building a real logic of the market, reinforced by graphics. The sites that best express this characteristic are the Burj of Dubai's **http://www.burjdubai.com**, where there is also a section showing the work in progress, and Pentominium's **http://www.pentominium.com** where the luxury companies that make up the holding are listed.

Beyond the skyscraper

The tall building is the emblem for man's and his conquest of the sky. But there are numerous other projects that demonstrate ways to conquer it.
The Plug-in City by Archigram on **http://www.archigram.net/projects_pages/plug_in_city.html** shows a city-enclosure, which tends to rise upward in infinite. The Ville Spatiale by Yona Friedman on **http://www.megastructure-reloaded.org/en/yona-friedman** is a three-dimensional structure raised from the earth, able to construct and articulate a new way to inhabit the city, taking advantage of height.
The Lindfors Office for the competition What if New York City, which assumes an imminent disaster for the city, proposes floating homes which build a landscape and tries to conquer the sky staying firmly on land; the evocative images of the project are on **http://www.studiolindfors.com/work/speculative/000100/000100.html**. The project Pavements in the sky on **http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sbe/tall-buildings/PavementsMain.htm** denies the idea of the skyscraper as a symbol of an isolated conquest of the sky, building links between tall buildings that could accommodate even other activities. The roof of tall buildings become opportunities to host other activities: housing cells from which one can enjoy a breathtaking view on **www.architecture.it/hp/copertina/24/default.htm**, gardens away from the chaos and noise on metropolitan on **http:// www.igra-world.com/intro.html** or farms with testing laboratories on **http://www.inhabitat.com/2007/04/05/skyscraper-farming-farming-reaches-to-the-sky**.
There are also those who go beyond the sky, towards space. The Tate Gallery in London in 2003 launched a competition Tate in Space for the design of its headquarters in space. On **http://www.tate.org.uk/space/competition.htm** are visible visionary projects.



Higher than Burj Dubai "The Tall Tower"

Dubai developer Nakheel is to build a tower 1,200 metres high, surpassing in height the iconic Burj Dubai as the tallest building in the world.
The source at Australian architects Woods Bagot, which was recently awarded a contract for the projects, says that the new tower is to be located on the Arabian canal, a $61 ml project being developed by Limitless.
Both Limitless & Nakheel are part of state-owned conglomerate Dubai World.
Nakheel & Woods Bagot are still finalizing the design concept of the Tall Tower (working title).
Expected to reach 1,200 metres Al Burj (the Tall Tower) will be considerably taller than Emaar's Properties Burj Dubai, which is expected to be up to 900 metres once completed in 2009.
Speculations over whether Nakheel would trump rival Emaar in the race to build the world's tallest tower has been rife ever since the developer announced the Al Burj project in 2006.
The tower was initially planned to be over a kilometre high and forms part of Nahkeels Dubai Waterfront development, however location was afterwards changed.
It is now expected to be built between Jumeirah Lake Towers and Ibn Battuta Mall close to Sheikh Zayed Road.
Another participant, Soletanche Bachy, had begun piling work on the project.
It is expected to be officially launched sometime in mid-2008.

The World

The World is a unique project, which its developer Nahkeel calls "one of the most desirable and exclusive addresses on the planet".
It is publicly referred to as the most ambitious construction undertaking of modern times.
The World will be accessible only by boat, helicopter or seaplane and represents a group of over 300 man-made islands in the shape of a world map, lying 4km off the coast of Dubai.
US$ 3 billion would be swallowed by the gigantic development.
The new-born islands have come into existence through a "reclamation" process where sand is dredged and relocated from the seabed, covering an area about 7 km long and 9km wide.

Nahkeel is very proud to announce that the "new world" is already visible to the naked eye from space and that initial development projects will be ready for occupancy by end of 2010.
Over 320 ml cubic meters of sand have been used to create the islands and 34 ml tons of rocks for the breakwaters, those islands will add a further 232 kilometers of beachfront to Dubai's coastline.
Four main types of islands are being built: 25 'estate' residential islands, 198 higher density residential communities complete with commercial facilities; 12 'commercial' islands with retail outlets, restaurants, cafes and other leisure facilities; plus a number of islands for hotel and resort developments.
The average distance between islands is 100 metres and the average depth of water is 15 metres.
The developers on The World will be "terraforming", literally meaning 'earth-shaping', to their hearts' content, creating unique landscape which the rest of the world is yet to see and marvel at.
Private beaches, coves, harbours and marinas will soon take shape much to the delight of future buyers, visitors, residents and tourists.
Property on The World will be sold by invitations only.
Nakheel claims to have not only sold 45% of the islands already but to have sold to some of the most popular names of the day. 'Shanghai Island' has gone for $28ml and 'Ireland Island' for $38 ml.
A five-star resort, called Coral Island, is on Nakheel's agenda as well and this one will offer incomparable and absolute luxury.
Main form of transportation will be private boats, water taxis and ferries. An intricate network of canals will allow access to each and every island. The canals, or the "streets", have a draught of 4 to 5 metres, allowing ships up to 200 feet to navigate the interior areas of the World.
Four main categories of marinas are envisaged: Island marinas, Commercial marinas, Public Transportation Hub marinas and Mainland hub marinas.
Essential services for The World, such as water and power, will be from the central plants at each end of the island development.
Combined central sewage & reuse systems will be located strategically where reuse demand is high.
Undoubtedly, The World is one of the most ambitious and audacious projects of our times, the like of which has never been seen before.
The World is becoming a reality in front of the eyes of Dubaians and the rest of mankind, and it's highly unlikely that there's anyone left who would dare express any doubt whatsoever that this masterpiece of construction wouldn't become "The Ultimate Choice of Ultimate Living".

Porto Dubai

Porto Dubai, a luxury residential development in Dubai, has begun to be developed by Zabeel Properties, the property arm of Zabeel Investments.
Work is being carried out on a reclaimed peninsular which will feature a "tiered island" design concept for the first time in the UAE.
The luxury villa construction will begin by end of 2008, while the whole project will take 2 years to complete. The project is being carried out with the assistance of Nakheel, the real estate subsidiary of Dubai World. Porto Dubai is expected to expand the public beach area of Jumeirah Beach. It's being built off the coast near the Umm Suqueiem Marina.
The "reclaimed peninsular" will have four platforms which will rise at stretches of 4 meters to its highest point of 16 meters. There will be two restaurants, spa and health club.
Porto Dubai is expected to become a premier location with some of the most luxurious residential adobes in the UAE. The developer is confident that project will be carried out on time and feels secure about it's funding resources.
Zabeel Investements is a diversified investment firm with business interests spanning real estate development and management, and private equity and asset management across a wide range of economic sectors in the GCC and other markets.

Dubai Waterfront

The centerpiece of the 1.4 billion sq feet Waterfront, the Waterfront City, has been revealed. Nakheel, the real Estate development arm in Dubai World made known its master plan on the project.
Waterfront City covers a land area of more then 330 hectares and consists of a central area surrounded by 4 neighboring districts – the Boulevard, the Resort, the Marina and the Madinat Al Soor it will accommodate 144 heights – rises of more than 100 m.
The residential component will take 45 percent of area. Waterfront City possesses it own individual architectural character and yet will be somehow reminiscent of Manhattan with its compact city ambience iconic attractions and a very large park will enable visitors and residents to enjoy a vibrant global city.

Dubai Promenade

Nakheel has another prime location new project to offer in New Dubai – Dubai Promenade at the Channel Tower.
Eye-catching water views on 3 sides, grand choice of spacious floor plans and home styles, the best and finest materials, huge lap pool, children's pool and play area, fully equipped health club and approximately 26,000 sqm of luxury shopping and fine dining choices. The Channel Towers are located in the centre of a lively urban community and is a place where one can feel both comfortably grounded and able to reach for the stars at the same time.

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