

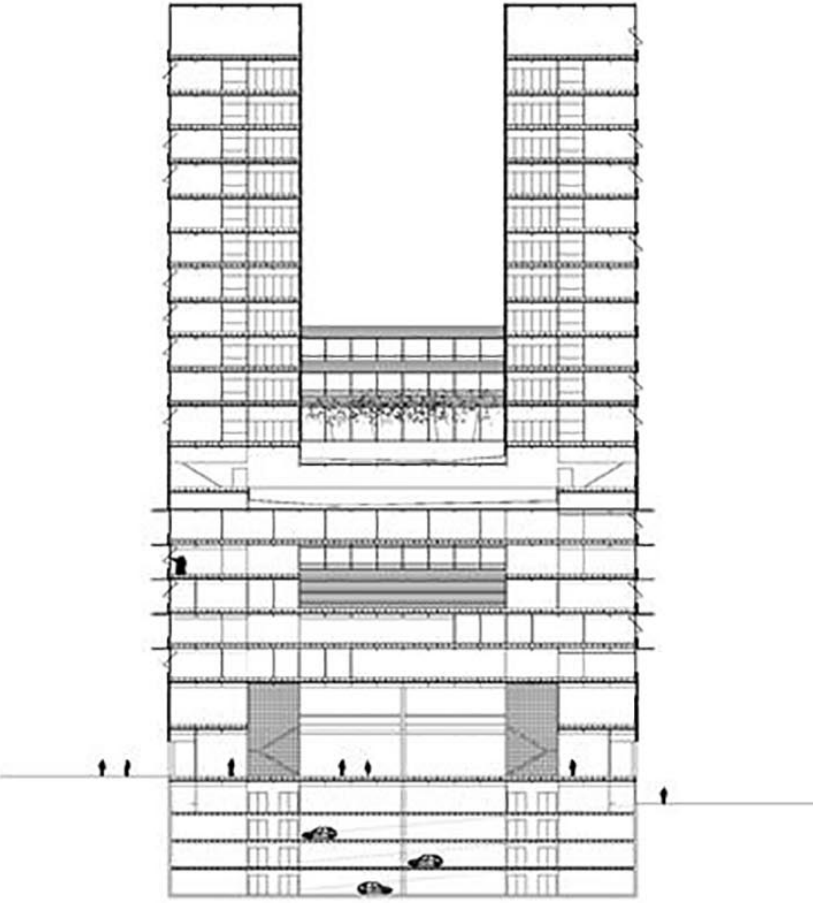
URBANITIES

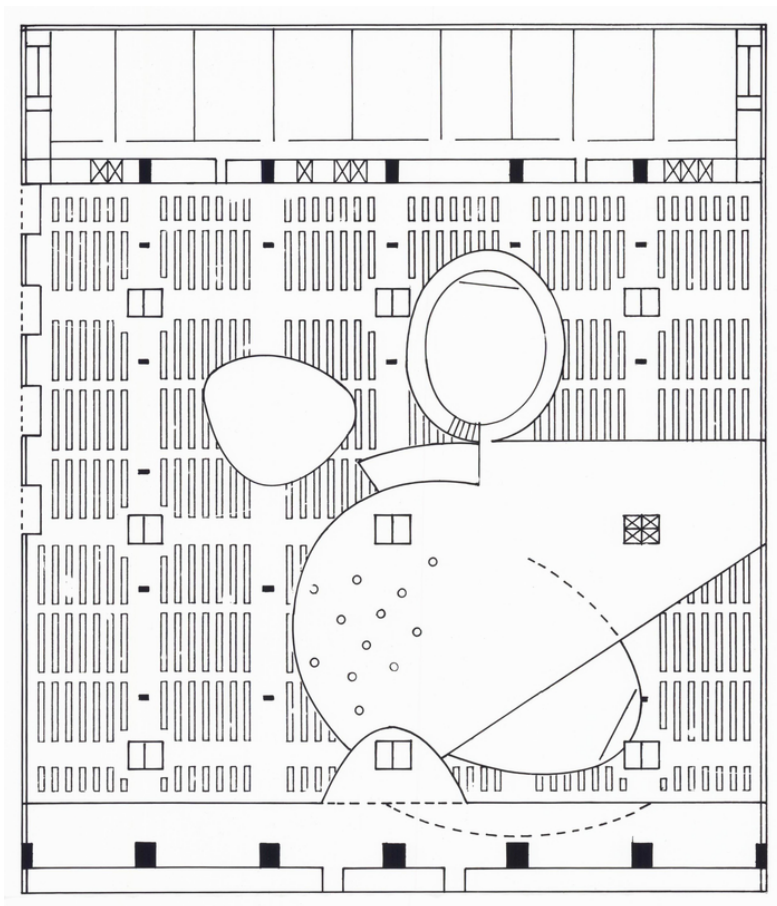


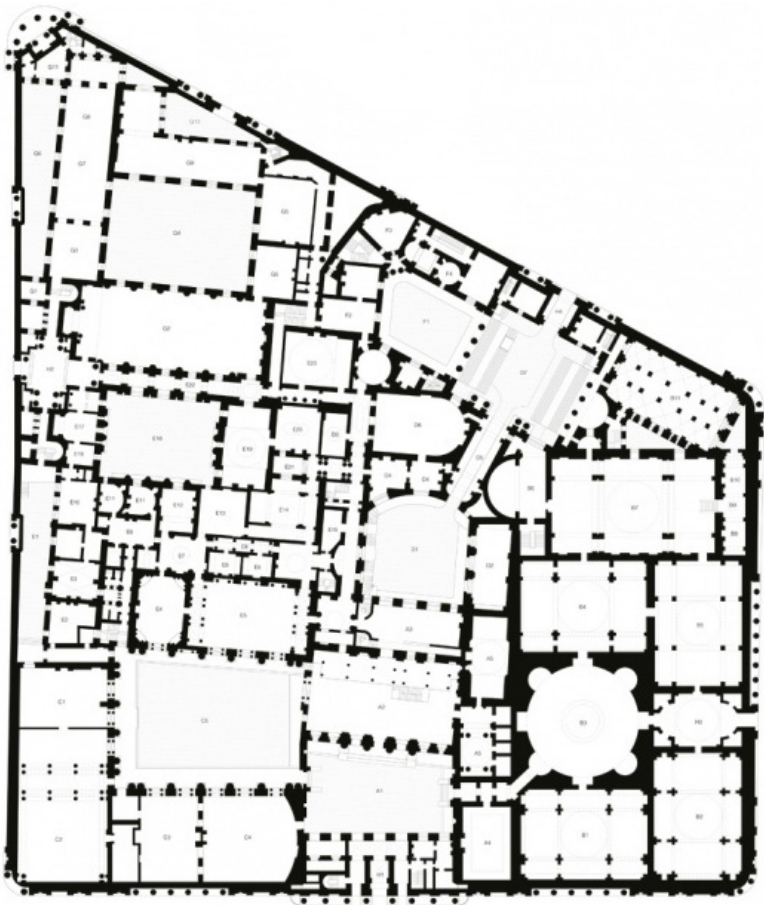


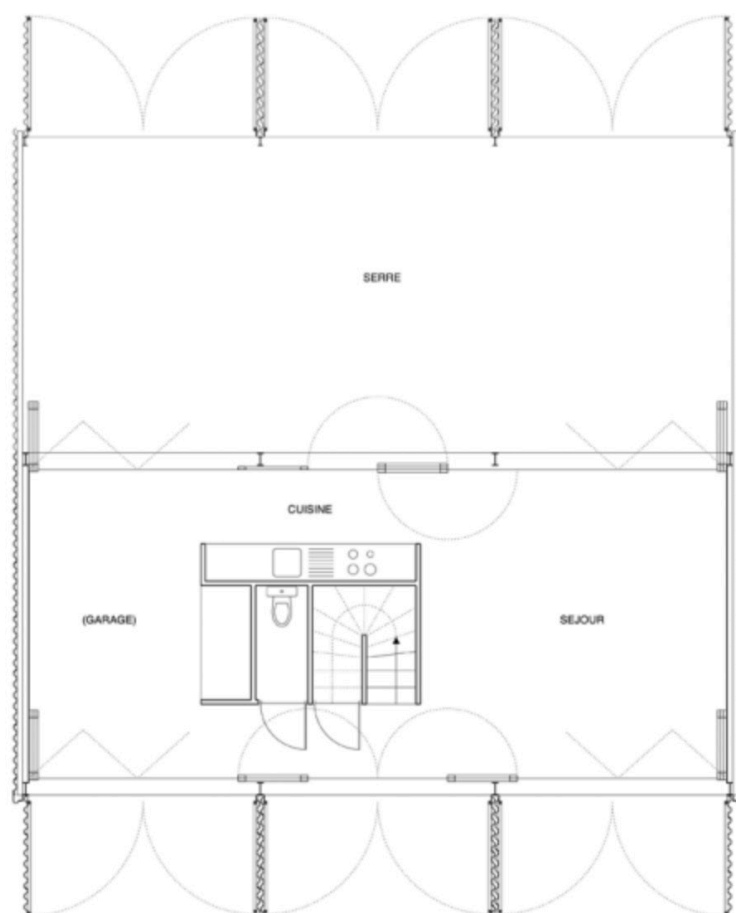












urbanity (n.)

1530s, from Middle French *urbanité* (14c.) and directly from Latin *urbanitatem* (nominative *urbanitas*) "city life; life in Rome; refinement, city fashion or manners, elegance, courtesy," also "wit, raillery, trickery," from *urbanus* (see *urban*).

urban (adj.)

"characteristic of city life, pertaining to cities or towns," 1610s (but rare before 1830s), from Latin *urbanus* "of or pertaining to a city or city life; in Rome," also "in city fashion, polished, refined, cultivated, courteous," but also sometimes "witty, facetious, bold, impudent;" as a noun, "city dweller," from *urbs* (genitive *urbis*) "city, walled town," a word of unknown origin.

The word gradually emerged in this sense as *urbane* became restricted to manners and styles of expression. In late 20c. American English gradually acquiring a suggestion of "African-American." Urban renewal, euphemistic for "slum clearance," is attested from 1955, American English. Urban sprawl recorded by 1958. Urban legend attested by 1980.

In opposition to all who would derive the arts from a single vital principle, I wish to keep before me those two artistic deities of the Greeks, Apollo and Dionysos. They represent to me, most vividly and concretely, two radically dissimilar realms of art. Apollo embodies the transcendent genius of the *principum individuationis*; through him alone is it possible to achieve redemption in illusion. The mystical jubilation of Dionysos, on the other hand, breaks the spell of individuation and opens a path to the maternal womb of being. Among the great thinkers there is only one who has fully realized the immense discrepancy between the plastic Apollonian art and the Dionysiac art of music. Independently of Greek religious symbols, Schopenhauer assigned to music a totally different character and origin from all the other arts, because it does not, like all the others, represent appearance, but the will directly. It is the metaphysical complement to everything that is physical in the world; the thing-in-itself where all else is appearance (*The World as Will and Idea, I*).

(...)

We might approach this fundamental question problem by posing the following question: what esthetic effect is produced when the Apollonian and Dionysiac force of art, usually separate, are made to work alongside each other? Or to put it more succinctly, in what relation does music stand to image and concept?

Tokyo with its 13.5 million people metropolis, is able to achieve both individual appropriation and collective association. The coexistence of single family housing, collective one, private and public, work and leisure seems to be completely achieved. There is a kind of layering of urbanism. There are cities inside cities. Islands kind. Perimeters of tall buildings surrounding single family houses, parks and facilities. The tension is achieved by contrast and crash between chaos and harmony. Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* puts the question. The simultaneous existence of Apollo and Dionysus. A tension of side by side relation and action. Producers of intense social acts and personal desires. Yet is not really true. The lack of form of the city already eliminates part of its Apollonian character. Neither I believe in individuation without the Dionysian ecstasy. Will and individual are both one. So it gives architecture the possibility to deal with it. The existence of both of them is only solved in the interiors of blank buildings. It is Koolhaas's *Culture of Congestion*. The coexistence of order and intoxication. The tension of individuals and collectives. The act of giving form to a city and be able to condense its madness. Enclosed urban intensities.

The juxtaposition of different volumes in Moretti's Corso Italia is consequence of the city like character and a simultaneity of programs. Bofill is able to condense a sky city like in Walden 7. Intense interactions between the different levels. Hara House is topography, public and private, is tensions in a condensed box. Corbusier's house is inner plazas and towers, is individual and collective in city form. Both OMA's Netherland Dance Theater and Sejima's Women's Dormitory are interior exterior spaces. Inner streets and monuments condensed in architectural space. Stairs, levels, diagonals, interactions, exteriors and interiors, seem to be condensed in Toyo Ito's Hanakoganei House and in Villa dalla'Ava

Atlanpole is pure condensation and simultaneousness. A condensed city in a landscape. Abalos & Herreros seems to pursue the same goal, in a much less monumental desire, yet consequence of less program. Both of them seem to apply the same answer. Urbanism in its extreme power is No-Stop city. The diagram remembers to the floorplan of Très Grande Bibliothèque by OMA. Is structured and clear and yet intoxicated and amorphous. It is the duality of Apollo and Dionysus. Is the Birth of Tragedy from Nietzsche. The same duality is achieved but in a more Apollonian way in John Soane's Bank of England. And even more in Sanaa's theater. Toyo Ito's Silver Hut and Lacaton & Vassal's Latapie house are condensers of individual and collective of exterior and interiors in the simplest way, one by surrounding one by offsetting.

Nightclub is a metropolis in itself. It is condenser of city. Private and public. Social and individual. Is able to condense the madness of it in a form. It deals with the duality of Apollo and Dionysus. Yet if it seems more Dionysian than Apollonian, it deals with both of them. There is no individuality without intoxication. Nightclub is the protagonist of a current urban intensity.

Conclusion: 1

With the sequence of: Cow, Electric Bathing, Steeplechase and Barrels of Love, all the natural elements that had once defined the attraction of the Island, were systematically replaced by a new kind of machinery that converted the original nature into an intricate simulacrum of nature, a compensatory technical service.

This technology is not the agent of objective and quantifiable improvements - such as raising the levels of illumination, controlling temperature, etc. - it is a superior substitute for the "natural" reality that is being depleted by the sheer density of human consumers.

Together, this apparatus constitutes an alternative reality that is invented and designed, instead of accidental and arbitrary. Since this "instrumentarium" of true modernity creates states and situations that have never existed before, it can never escape its aspect of fabrication - of being the result of human fantasy.

The Metropolis is irrevocably the resultant of such identifiable mental constructions, and that is the source of its fundamental "otherness" from all previous Urbanisms.

(...)

Conclusion: 2

Through the medium of the Skyscraper, each site in the Metropolis accommodates - in theory at least - an unstable and unforeseeable combination of superimposed and simultaneous activities whose configuration is fundamentally beyond the control of architect or planner.

As a vehicle of Urbanism, the indeterminacy of the Skyscraper suggests that - in the Metropolis - no single specific *function* can be matched with a single *place*.

Through this destabilisation it is possible to absorb the “change that is life “ by continuously rearranging functions on the individual platforms in an incessant process of adaptation that does not affect the framework of the building itself.

Exteriors and interiors of such structures belong to two different kinds of architectures. The first - external - is only concerned with the appearance of the building as a more or less serene sculptural object, while the interior is in a constant state of flux - of themes, programs, iconographies - with which their overstimulated nervous systems, combat the perpetual threat of ennui.

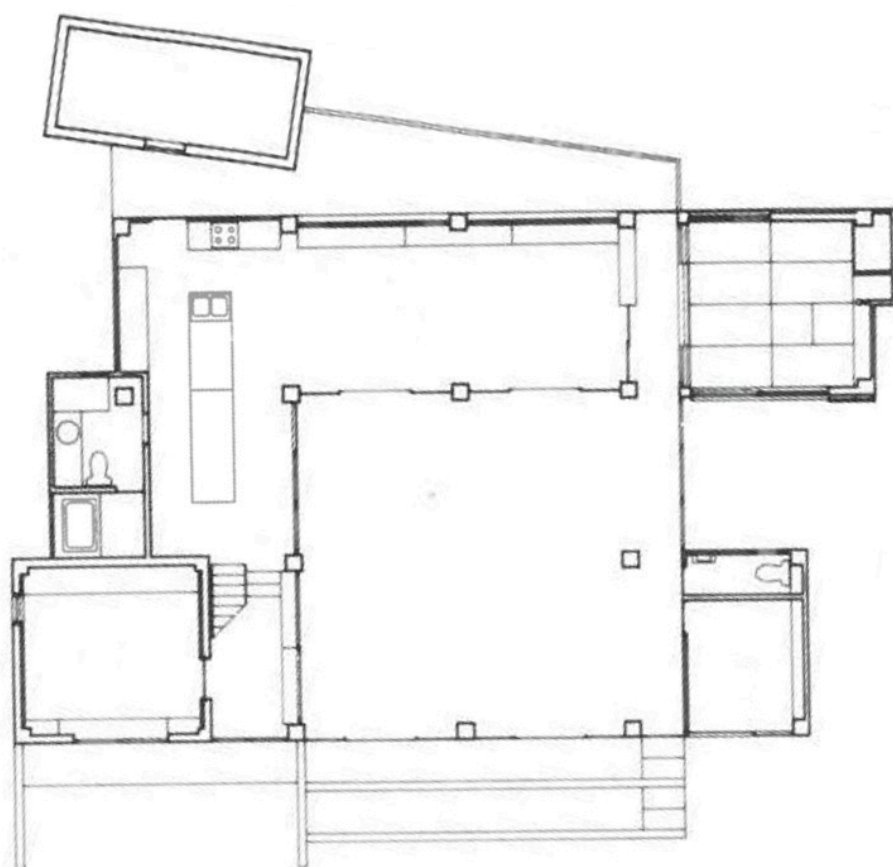
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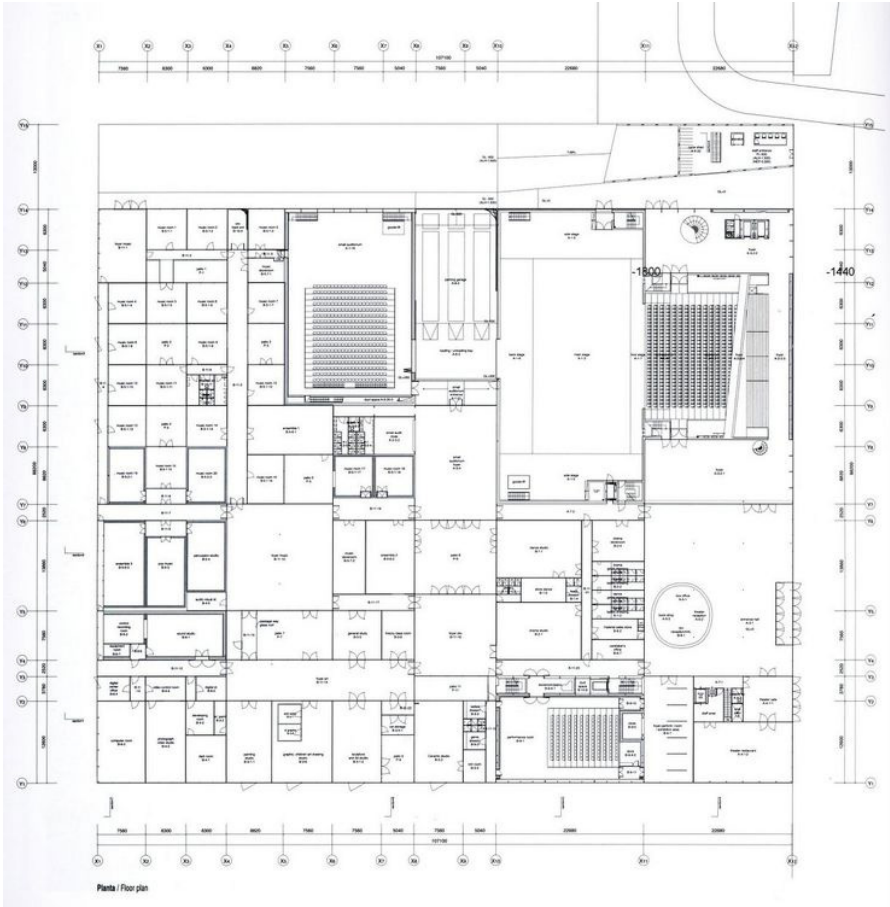
Conclusion: 3

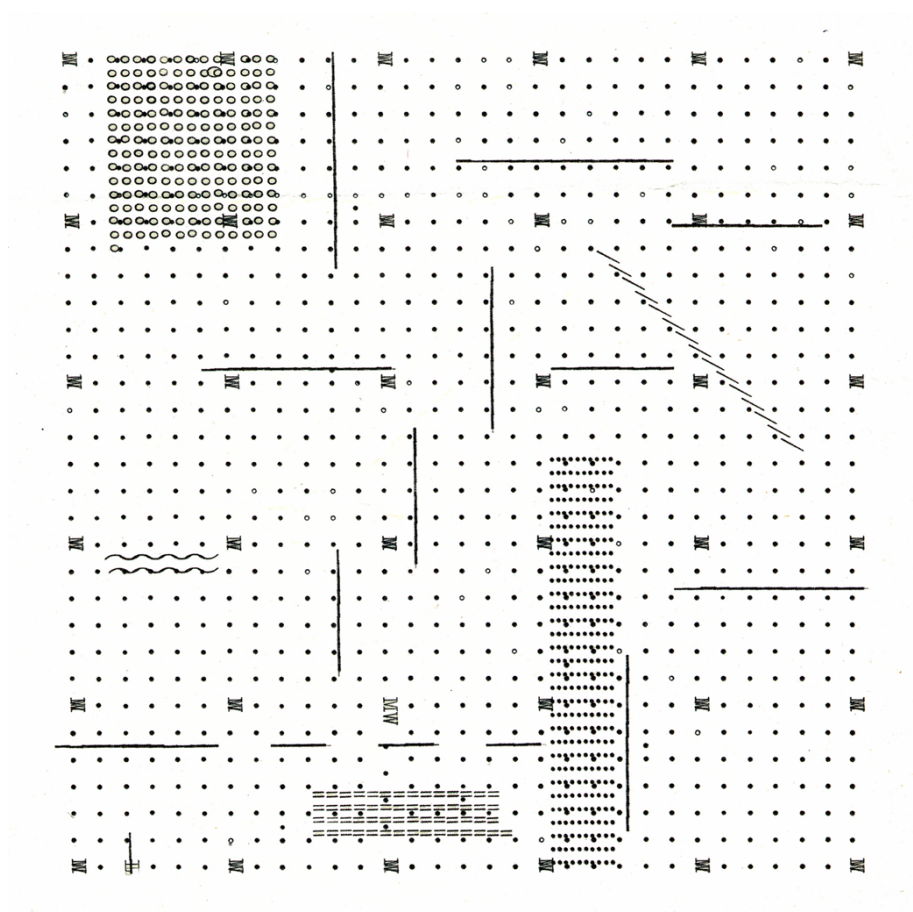
As in the example of Radio City Music Hall, planning in Manhattan consists of the imposition on the explosive substance of the Metropolis of the metaphoric models - at once primitive and efficient - that replace literal organisation - impossible in any case - with a form of conceptual control.

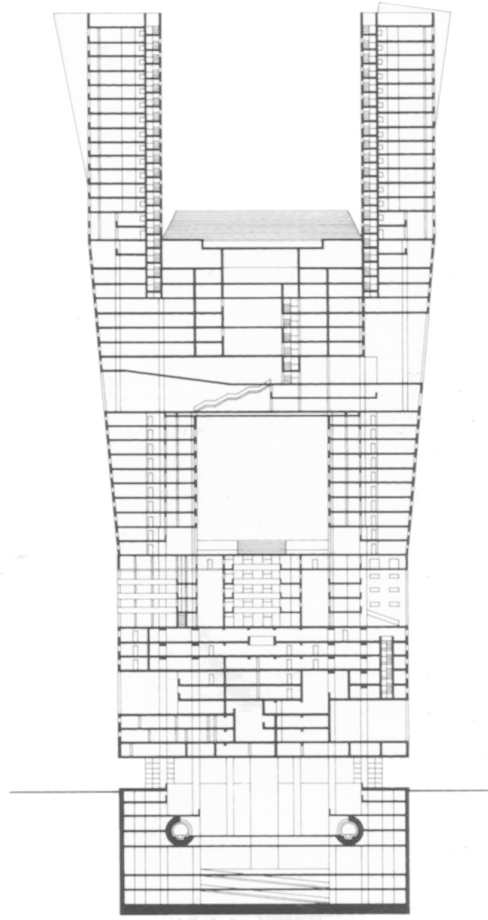
Such hermetic, selfcontained enclaves offer emotional shelter to the disinherited Metropolitan masses, ideal worlds removed in time and space, protected against the corrosion of everyday reality in their interior locations. These sub-Utopian fragments are all the more convincing for having no territorial ambitions beyond occupying their interior allotments through a private hyperdensity of symbolism and localised paroxysms of the particular. Together, such moments form a matrix of frivolity, a system of poetic formulas that replaces traditional quantifiable planning in favour of metaphoric planning.

Movement in the Metropolis becomes ideological navigation between the conflicting claims and promises of “islands” of a metaphoric archipelago.

















OMA - Villa dall'Ava. Image Hans Werlemann. <http://oma.eu/projects/villa-dall-ava>
Kazuyo Sejima - Saishunkan Seiyaku Women's Dormitory. Image Hisao Suzuki. El Croquis 77+99, 2007, p.44
Hiroshi Hara - Hara House. <http://thetriumphofpostmodernism.tumblr.com/tagged/hiroshi-hara>
Luigi Moretti - Corso Italia 15. <http://ilgiornaledellarchitettura.com/web/2016/11/08/bnl-bnp-paribas-a-roma-corazzata-di-vetro-arenata-lungo-la-ferrovia/>

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