

Social Condensers

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Social condenser

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

From Soviet [constructivist](#) theory, the **social condenser** is a spatial idea practiced in [architecture](#). A "the principal objective of constructivism...is the definition of the Social Condenser of the age." The s and finished in 1932.

Central to the idea of the social condenser is the premise that architecture has the ability to influence [spaces](#), with a goal of breaking down perceived [social hierarchies](#) in an effort to create [socially equi](#)

Approaches in creating the built form of a "social condenser" include the intentional overlapping and nodes create collision zones of varied constituencies. The premise is that these areas of collision cr to interact.

From the OMA book *Content* a social condenser is described as; "Programatic layering upon vacant interference, unprecedented events."

References [[edit](#)]

- McGetrick, Brendan; Koolhaas, Rem, Ed. (2004). "Content", pp. 73. Taschen, 2004. [ISBN 3-8221](#)
- Kopp, Anatole (1970) "Town and Revolution" London. p. 112



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This [architecture](#)-related article is a *stub*. You can help Wikipedia by [expanding it](#).

e. At the opening speech for the first **OSA Group** conference in 1928 **Moisei Ginzburg** claimed that the single building most associated with the idea is the **Narkomfin Building** in Moscow, begun in 1928

ence **social behavior**. The intention of the social condenser was to influence the design of **public equitable spaces**.

and intersection of programs within a space through circulation. In this example, shared circulation can create the environment where there is potential to allow for otherwise dispersed social communities

can't terrain to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and to generate through their

8228-3070-4.



Preface

“During constructive periods in history, i.e. during periods of intensive [trans]formation of a culture, the architect is required to first invent and then to crystallize the social condensers of the era, to create new architectural organisms serving this era.”

In *Constructivism as a Method of Laboratory and Teaching Work*, Moisei Gizburg states the necessity for architect to dig deep into architectural practice with the intensions of finding new spatial devices capable of influencing human behavior. Gizburg, together with Ivan Leonidov, Nikolai S. Kuzmin and others, was the protagonist of a particular period for constructivist architecture regarding the design of something never experienced before: the Social Condenser, a revolutionary tool capable of rewriting conventional spaces leading to new interactions among people in order to forge the new individual of the soviet republic. Plunged into this subject a little bit by chance, we were intrigued by the possibility it offered us to reflect on the role and the responsibilities the architect has - or should have - in constructing built environment embodied with civic values for his society. Approaching more and more the topic of the Russian Social Condenser - handed to us on a plate - we have seen the germs for a potential interpretation deploying it beyond the historical and cultural confines of its origins. If we just consider its literal signification, in the term of ‘condenser’ assimilated to an electrical device, there is a notion of “storehouse of energy”, where the external power balanced with the internal one is accumulated in it. Once completed the activity of condensation, the object permits the heat and tension transfer from the inner system to the

external environment to finally accomplish the “magical-electrifying capacity”. Taken as a metaphor, we would like to appropriate the notion of the Condenser as a real architectural instrument capable of gathering together the collectivity in itself while spreading new waves of irradiation.

It is thus for us a concept still valuable that just wait to be re-charged. In which way today can we create new spatial be influenced by the spatial form? How can architecture create new ambiguous layouts? In what can this ‘sharing heats’ influence one’s *bien-être*? Therefore, from the Russian experience we would like to borrow, first, its inspiring intent and, secondly, to ‘steal’ its denomination as a pretext to look backwards and forwards over the centuries. If history in fact *magister vitae est*- one could say-, what has already happened can teach us what to do now. Used in its larger sense, we will look for different ‘people collectors’ that act as an architectural response to social circumstances and that call for the investigation of new spatial patterns, trying to refer to them not as a panacea, but as a collection of possible propositions to better live one with another.

Is it still possible to condense the concept in a new built idea?

Introduction

Back to Red

Social Condensers: soviet edition ©

Moscow, October 1927. It's been ten years since the Bolsheviks have overthrown the Russian *ancien régime* during the crucial events of the Red October. The revolutionary ideals that inflamed the spirits seem now waned in a *lazier* second season; here, apparently, « ingrained inertia and atavism¹» have dethroned the genuine interest in new radical social concepts.

It is within this framework that a host of architects - the OSA² - decides to embrace the very archetypal criterions of the uprising once again, sketching a new architectural concept through the pages of the Soviet review *Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* (*Contemporary Architecture*).

« Having eradicated the fetters of private property ownership, October has opened up new perspectives for Soviet architecture: of grand planning works, of the development of new types of architecture, of new architectural organisms, and of new complexes and ensembles in place of the narrowly-individualistic parameters dictated by pre-revolutionary clients. [...] The second, positive stage of Constructivism [...] manifests itself in the *specific role of the Soviet architect in the creation of the social condensers of our epoch.* »³

As an electrical device, architecture has to galvanize people in the urgency to achieve a new, social and socialist way of life - *byt* in Russian -, weaving « new links between men by making each individual a responsible member of [a possible future] society »⁴. Since the *byt* has to change, a transformation is to be applied also to the living environment. Architects begin to radically reconsider techniques and languages to better express the aspirations due to post-revolution ideals. The total revision of social life requires material and formal improvements. Together with economic and technological principles, the regard for the human dignity is one of the driving forces of the researches. By studying the effects that spatial layouts have on the emotional health of people, the OSA try to lead the country towards a « humanization of Modernism »⁵, where architecture has the ability to influence and improve the social behavior in a sort of Communist Humanism. In this

1. «Resolution on the Reports of the First Ideological Section of the OSA», CA, n.

3, 1928, quoted in MURAWSKI Michał (2017), pp. 374-375.

2. Organization of Contemporary Architects, the group was active in Russia between 1925 and 1930. It was led by Moisei Ginzburg and the Vesnin brothers. Its exponents supported Constructivist ideas and were directly linked to the magazine *Contemporary Architecture*.

3. «Editorial. On the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution» in *New translations from Contemporary Architecture* (2017).

4. KOPP Anatole (1970), p. 145.

5. Making sense of Narkomfin » in *The Architectural Review. After the Revolution* (October 2017).

way, the social condenser would help to delineate a future not-yet existing society, through a design deliberately unfitting the historical moment it longs for changing, foreseeing different habits and transformed users.

Therefore, unprecedented *urban machines*⁶ mirror the anxiety to shape a catalyst for the auto-recognition of the mass. New experimental types of communal housings, workers' clubs and palaces of labour begin to flourish as transitional architectural spaces, in the attempt to embody this new civic and egalitarian *esprit*. Opposing to « pre-revolutionary products » such as the speculative tenement houses or the gentlemen's clubs, « social condensation [speaks] about filling architecture with a sort of revolutionary electricity.⁷ » The celebration of *free time* - released from the chains of work - for everyone becomes the key to interpret the various communal spaces designed within the different buildings.

Following this new magnetic *byt* means sneaking in a not-yet known environment with no rules set *a priori*, where anything can happen. This brave new world would lead to surprising and unexpected developments, associating the image of the social condenser to the concept of the word *Ostranenie*, (defamiliarisation in English), frequently used in Russian literature to refer to common events shown in an unfamiliar way to push aside the perception of the mundane. Murawski properly borrows this mechanism⁸ to better describe the feeling of estrangement and wonderfulness⁹ that the social collision in these buildings produces.

In this sense, the workers' clubs are providing original collective forms in order to « serve as a sort of school of culture »¹⁰ for *anybody*, no more for an *élite*. Here, the social *byt* can take place: it is in gathering together that new complex collective networks can develop. However, this progress does not have a predetermined formal language and - as Anna Bukov reminds us - that is the reason why « these buildings were actively in search of a new form - breaking from the past and making a giant leap forward. »¹¹

In these « workshops for the transformation of man »¹² the members are asked (and supposed to be impatient) to be invested with an active role in public and cultural situations, converting themselves in « creators, instructors and moving spirits »¹³ of a brave new society.

Within these radical transformations, seeking a new type of architecture totally dependent from the social actions, volumes

6.BIRAGHI Marco (2008), p. 258.

7.MURAWSKI Michał, « Revolution and the social condenser: how soviet architects sought a radical new society » in *Strelka Magazine*.

<https://strelka.com/en/magazine/2017/09/26/>

8.MURAWSKI Michał (2017), pp. 379-383

9.Poetic language must appear strange and wonderful », sentence by Aristotle quoted in SHKLOVSKY Shklovsky, « Art as Device », in *Theory of Prose*, n. 20 translated by Benjamin Sher, Dalkey Archive Press, 1990, p. 19.

10.KOPP Anatole (1970), p. 116.

11.BOKOV Anna, quoted in MURAWSKI Michał (2017),p. 379.

12.El Lissitzky, quoted in KOPP Anatole (1970), p. 120.

13.KOPP Anatole (1970), p. 120

start being conceived to form spatial intervals of various sizes suitable for the mixture of the most possible occasions. In order to host these changes, the clubs are offering different facilities fitting the more disparate scheduled activities, exploitable thanks to rehearsal rooms capable of modifying the capacity of the interior space. Therefore, in 1927 Ilya Golosov astonishes Moscow habitants for the great flexibility of spaces in his Zuev Workers' Club where a multitude of users - different in classes and ages - is able to gather and confront. He succeeds in drawing a « series of intercommunicating spaces, overhanging galleries and staircases whose landings offer choice observation points ».¹⁴

A decade after the 'ten days that shock the world', finally the architect - seen as a social catalyst¹⁵- has to tackle the unanswered problems of the working class, referring to a *new social type* in his architectural thought. Developing unrestricted use of the spaces in his clubs, Ivan Leonidov suggests a solution to the necessity for cultural advancement of masses and for remodeling the urban life, interweaving « previously unheard-of social relations. »¹⁶

As El Lissitzky argues: « The important thing about a club is that the mass of the members must be directly involved. They must not approach it or be channeled into it from the outside as mere entertainment. They themselves must find in it the maximum self expression [...]. The ultimate role of the club is to liberate men from the oppression of the State and the Church. »¹⁷

In this kind of revolutionary society, on the other hand, the concept of home is fated to become just a mere place for resting. The traditional ways of life are here criticized as old habits passively accepted as recipes transmitted from mother to daughter.¹⁸ Rethinking each aspect of everyday life encompasses any field of research, from the scientific and hygienic design to the aesthetic one. The use of the most advanced technologies combined with the study of residential units' patterns help to offer high standard of living - also for women, finally free from the domestic slavery - and to unveil new way of sharing and living together.

Through a Fourierian lens, daily activities begin taking place in communal housing experiments where the development of the apartment inner cell is reduced to a bare minimum: the intimacy of the hearth is translated in shared spaces including communal kitchens, canteens, libraries, gyms and

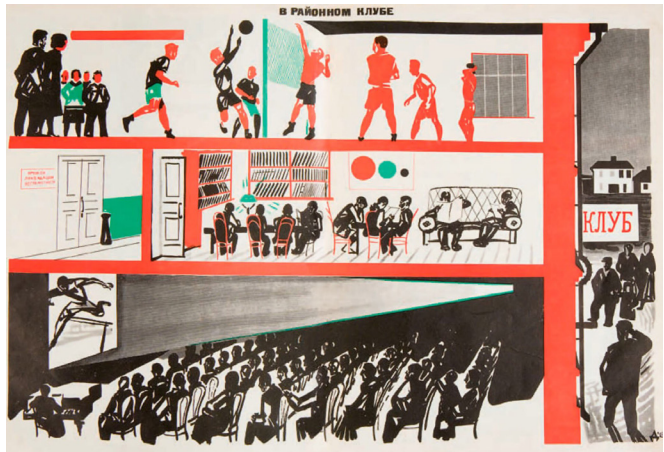
14. *Ibid.*

15. KHAN-MAGOMEDOV S.O., (1987).

16. BUCHLI Victor, *An Archeology of Socialism*, quoted in MURAWSKI Michał (2017), p. 380.

17. « Social Condenser », <http://paral-laxisaeterna.blogspot.ch/2010/09/thoughts-part-i.html>, visited on 09.12.2017.

18. « Perestroika of life » in *The Architectural Review. After the Revolution* (October 2017), p. 29.



kindergartens.

In its statement as a transitory object, the Narkomfin Building becomes a weapon to seduce citizen to embrace new daily routine, finally abandoning the private bourgeois ideals, diving themselves in a communal future where private and communal functions are mixed together to create a brand new experience. In fact, the architect of this *dom-kommuna*, Moisei Ginzburg, considers « absolutely necessary to incorporate features that would stimulate the transition to a socially superior mode of life, stimulate but not dictate ». ¹⁹

Seen as an intermediary stage towards a new socialist *byt*, this experiment introduces the concept of 'societal property' - category outside the dialectical struggle between private and public. ²⁰From the different variations of dwelling units - inviting to a more and more shared life - to the spaces of circulations - not merely places of transition anymore -, everything here speaks about the investigation of new opportunities for interacting and socializing, encouraging collective consciousness.

Unfortunately, once the construction was completed, the interests of the Party take a different direction, making all the researches for a new lifestyle pointless and leaving the Narkomfin concrete wreck as a *memento* of a lost fairytale against the conventional wisdom.

However, nowadays, « under the condition of Putinist capitalist neo-nationalism the Narkomfin *social condenser* represents a dystopian rejection of its political and economic context. it

19. GINZBURG Moisei quoted in KOPP Anatole, (1970), p. 141.

20. SEKULIC Dubravka, « Self management and social condenser » in *Reactivating the Social Condenser! Architecture against Privation* (May 18, 2015).

On the top: Soviet edition. *The Architectural Review. After the Revolution*, n. 1445, October 2017, p. 26

takes on new productive powers, hitherto unimaginable but nonetheless well in keeping with its original social mission for enabling a world that is 'otherwise'. »²¹

Architecture and revolution

« Some forty years ago in a country that was one of the most backward in Europe, they gave a new meaning to the word 'architect'. Designers of buildings that are remarkable even today or authors of projects that were never to be realized, their real aim was the total reconstruction of society. It now appears that their efforts queer not in vain, and in contemplating their achievement one is reminded of these words of one of their distinguished contemporaries who understood them well: 'It is good to remember that utopia is nothing but the reality of tomorrow and today's reality is yesterday's utopia.' »^{22, 23}

Paris, 1967. Students revolution's eve. Anatole Kopp, architect and historian, recognizes and rediscovers the deepest meanings of the social condenser in a totally different environment. Here, in fact, the principles are the ones of the 1960's West Europe, poles apart from the native land of our magnetic architectures.

Through the pages of his *Architecture et Revolution*, Kopp unveils the power of the soviet collectors as a « symbol of renewal and creative freedom »²⁴ for the intellectuals, reintroducing the term in the dictionary of the insiders, from politicians to architects to urban planners.

In his notes on *The Architectural Review* Issue about the Red Revolution Andrew Willimott poetically underlines that « in a beautiful piece of symmetry, the anniversary of October once again saw the social condenser explicated as a force for social revolution. »²⁵ Curiously, the concept makes an appearance in another critical moment where the traditional measures are questioned. Once again, it reveals all its electrical power prefiguring « future [social] life and [becoming at the same time] melting pots in which this new society and these new men will be created ».²⁶

Absorbed in this climate of revolt and fed by broad speculations about the link between politics, architecture and city, Kopp's friend Henri Lefebvre loans the constructivist notion to articulate his « dreaming collective. »²⁷ He recognizes in students' uprising in the campus of Nanterre - in the suburbs

21. BUCHLI Victor, *An Archeology of Socialism* (1999) quoted in MURAWSKI Michał (2017), p. 380.

22. Le Corbusier, *Modulor* (Paris, 1949), quoted in KOPP Anatole (1970).

23. KOPP Anatole (1970), Foreword.
24. *Ibid.*, p. IX.

25. « Perestroika of life » in *The Architectural Review. After the Revolution* (October 2017), p. 27.

26. KOPP Anatole, quoted in STANEK Łukasz (2017), p. 480.

27. BENJAMIN Walter, quoted in STANEK Łukasz (2017), p. 478.

28. STANEK Łukasz (2017), p. 480.

29. LEFEBVRE Henri, quoted in STANEK Łukasz (2010), p. 129.

30. MURAWSKI Michał (2017), p. 378.
Here we consider *accidental condensers* those buildings planned to function as something else but that finally happen to work as social condensers in that particular context. In addition to the campus of Nanterre, the paper mentions some english examples like London's partisan coffee house, Kennington's Secondary modern school and Arry's Bar in the stadium of Millwall Football Club.

31. HILLIER Bill, HANSON Julienne (1989).

32. STANEK Łukasz (2010), p. 129. The lecture given by Lefebvre about Fourier's will to think to - and to build for - a society to come is linked to his interpretation of the parisian Palais Royal as a space conceived for joy, for « stimulating pleasures, relating one to others and letting them reinforce each other ».

33. STANEK Łukasz (2017), pag. 484.

34. KOOLHAAS Rem (2004), p. 73.

of Paris - the seed of a social condensation raised against the common feeling of separation between classes or between centre and periphery. According to the French philosopher, the campus becomes fertile ground of lived contradictions capable of improving the social dynamism: the borders between work and living, duty and leisure, private and public become blurrier and blurrier.²⁸ Thus, Lefebvre shifts the concept of the social condenser to explain how spatial patterns and social developments can intersect. In fact, he will remind that « to invent a group and a human relation is to invent or produce a space. »²⁹ If in the case of Nanterre researchers talk about *accidental condensers*,³⁰ the socio-spatial dualism could be soaked of the original soviet meaning. If society has a certain spatial logic, space could have a certain social logic too.³¹ This dialectic relationship suggests the coining of the concept of the *collective luxury*, containable in communal shrines such as the utopian Phalanstère by Fourier. Through a lefebvrian lens, it can be seen as a « space leading the discourse, [...] for entertainment, socializing, commerce, work, leisure and luxury »³² that would help people associating, the fundamental principle of social happiness. This 'social palace' represents a « space of enjoyment » to which everyone can participate and where the assemblages of programs and senses should offer ambiguous and vague architectural moments. In fact, following the concept of the Russian *Ostranenie*, « the more intense, differentiated, unpredictable the use of social space, the more desirable they become. »³³

Thus, as the social condenser magically appeared a second time to help defining a specific moment of crisis with its specific needs and desires, in the same way, once again, it disappeared immediately afterwards.

We will have to wait until superKoolhaas to brush it up again. In the desecrating *Content*, according to OMA's conviction that architecture's collective memory lasts - on average - just six months, he aims to make ideas endure again, claiming for their eternity. The developed device, the Patent Office, opens with the very license for the *Social Condenser*. After almost eighty years, for his proposal for the Parc de la Villette Koolhaas brought again the concept to light, depicted as a « programmatic layering upon vacant terrain to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and to generate through their interference unprecedented events ».³⁴ In his ironically

(or not) privatized and depoliticized reading, Koolhaas articulates the strength of the condensation through the *mixité* of programs and functions and its resulting feeling of unexpected and estrangement, betraying in any case a close relation with Constructivist architects. However, since there is « no collective 'it' left »³⁵ the term becomes now detached from its original and deeper meaning of publicness.

Maybe his sort of auto-appropriation will save the *social condenser* from the mass oblivion, as many worldwide architects and students start to reproach it when designing,³⁶ but in the same way, maybe, it will also offer a misreading of its electrical shades, merely seen as a pile of pleasant functions one above the other.

And what about now? After almost one hundred years, here we go again. Chronicle seems whisper to us about the *eternal recurrence* of people collectors in precise turning points of history, revealing their peculiarities but also their versatility. Torn between the revival celebrations of the Great October anniversary and its more current capitalistic interpretation, the Social Condenser - despite its old age - still conserves its electric magnetism and fascination. If the same Koolhaas who 'privatized' it underlines that « our concern for the masses has blinded us to People's Architecture »³⁷ maybe it is time to move our *narcissistic* veil away and finally meet in architecture.

35.« Bigness » in KOOLHAAS Rem, MAU Bruce, *S, M, L, XL*, New York, Monacelli Press, 1995, p. 514.

36. MURAWSKI Michał, « Revolution and the social condenser: how soviet architects sought a radical new society » in *Strelka Magazine*.

<https://strelka.com/en/magazine/2017/09/26/architecture-revolution-social-condenser>, visited on 18.11.2017.

37. KOOLHAAS Rem (2016), p. 64

On the right:

KOOLHAAS Rem, *Content: triumph of realization*, Köln, Taschen, 2004, p. 73

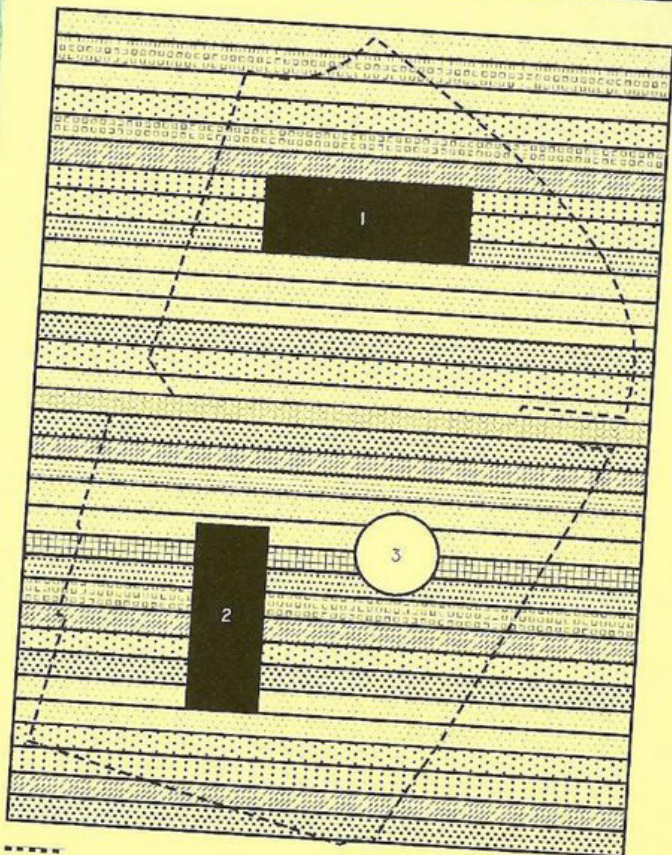
Patent Office

The half-life of architecture's collective memory is now around six months. Ideas emerge, inspire, and are conveniently forgotten. Here, OMA stakes its claim for eternity.



UNIVERSAL MODERNIZATION PATENT [14] "SOCIAL CONDENSER" (1982)

Patent Number: 3,818,150



[21] Patent for: "Social Condenser"

(29) PROGRAMMATIC LAYERING UPON VACANT TERRAIN TO ENCOURAGE DYNAMIC COEXISTENCE OF ACTIVITIES AND TO GENERATE THROUGH THEIR INTERFERENCE, UNPRECEDENTED EVENTS.

(36) Inventor(s): Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis

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[42] Initial Application of Concept: Parc de la Villette, Paris, FRANCE

[54] Filed:.....1982

(71) ABSTRACT

Take the section of the typical skyscraper and put it on its side; now declare each floor a different program; distribute recurrent obligations mathematically across the site in intervals dictated by need; design one (or more) symbolic elements (1,2,3) to acknowledge "eternal" human values. Instead of treating "park" as the opposite of the city - a programmatic non-entity, this approach demonstrates that the park can sustain program with superior ease.

People want to meet in architecture

“All human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together, but it is only action that cannot even be imagined outside the society of men. [...] This special relationship between action and being together seems fully to justify the early translation of Aristotle’s *zoon politikon* by *animal socialis*, already found in Seneca, which then became the standard translation through Thomas Aquinas: *homo est naturaliter politicus, id est, socialis* (“man is by nature political, that is, social”).”¹

How many times have we heard about this so much notorious, and sometimes abused, principle written by the greek philosopher? Leaving aside all the possible and undoubtedly interesting sociological digression one could do, we continue referring to it when we have to admit that man cannot live alone and he seeks indeed the exchange with the other. But where?

People meet in architecture, the Biennale of 2010 headed by Kazuyo Sejima, was focused on the role of architecture seen as the scene where the community can express and recognize himself, seen “as the art of building spaces in which man as individual and community may realize his ideals and establish his society”.² If, at one side, the aim of the exhibition could appear to many a little bit vague, on the other it is curious to notice that we still need an exhibition on this theme to clarify one of the most peculiar purpose of our discipline. According to her curator, one of the main cause must be traced back to advances in technology that have completely changed ours everyday reality and the way we connect with other people. Internet, as an entirely new dimension, has imposed itself on ours routines and totally affected the different facets of our daily lives. But if society evolves, architecture needs and must follow these changes too. As a “reflection of the collective consciousness, a physical encapsulation of the evolving lifestyles”³, architecture yet has still the privilege to occupy a unique and important place in this world that is becoming more and more intangible. We are particularly devoted to this exhibition because in someway it raised the question of what obsess us the most in this discipline: the magic power in gathering people together around a physical, concrete, tangible space where the celebration of *civitas* takes place. And right down on paper,

1. ARENDT Hannah, (1958), p.23.

2. AA.VV., *People meet in architecture*.
p.12.

3. *Ibid.*, p.14

once opened the first pages of the catalogue, the intentions of this Biennale are declared:

“La Biennale is interested in architectural research in the present, in architecture as art that helps build the *res publica*, the spaces in which we live and organize our civilization, the spaces in which we recognize ourselves, the spaces we possess without being owners of them, but that are part of our condition as men and society.”⁴

In the words of the president of the Biennale Paolo Baratta, we can hear an echo of a nostalgic feeling that goes back to the dawn of time: the roman architecture. Nobody like the Romans was in fact able to build such an efficient and self-celebrative machine of their empire. Through a specific program of public *oeuvres*, any given roman city was organized following more or less the same standard urban infrastructure: the forum, the baths, the insulae, the theatre, the temples, the market, the legion’s headquarters and so on. As a real patrimony of the collective, these architectures served as the driving force of the roman civilization and they therefore assumed a community value. In the same manner the greek agorà was conceived. It was the public space *par excellence*, where the community of the *polis* gathered together to discuss about political and economical problems; it was the space devoted to democracy. Hence, the romans had already understood the key role that architecture could have in affecting and building an “*us*” through artifacts each of which peculiar of a characteristic program. But if “specific needs have specific objects, desire, on the other hand, has no particular object, except for a space where it has full play”.⁵ In this never-ending relationship between the living environment and us, man has investigated over the centuries the most various solutions in creating spaces for the collectivity. Jumping through history we have recognized several ‘social collectors’ that provide to give new ways of living and new way of toghertness reoccurring at precise key moment characterized by demographic changes, advances in technology, political issues. The Russian experience of the Social Condenser was certainly an attempt to create spaces of new collectivity focused on the empowerment of the spirit of the community by shaping the behavior of each individual. However, if the main goal was to liberate one from the chains of work, this passed by an architectural program which transferred values

4. *Ibid.*, p.12.

5. LEFEBVRE, Henri, *The Production of Space*, op. cit., p. 353, quoted in STANEK Łukasz *Collective Luxury*, p. 483.

of the soviet socialism by reinforcing his commonness. The paradox, thus, was that the system that was actually supposed to liberate people, made them subordinate to it. Therefore, if we take a step back and we leave aside the political revolutionary intent of these objects, we should reflect on the mere social role of the architect, called to serve his community. In the words of Herman Hertzberger: "The architect can contribute to creating an environment which offers for more opportunities for people to make their personal markings and identifications, in such a way that it can be appropriated and annexed by all as a place that truly belongs to them."⁶ And if the architect has this privilege of creating places of 'social happening', how should do we construct an architecture that in turn constructs us? ⁷

6.HERTZEBERGER, Herman, Lessons for students in architecture, Uitgeverij 010 Publishers, 1991, p.47.

Re-charging the Social Condenser

The inspiring yet too soon forgotten experience of the Russian Social Condenser has taught us about a new way of influencing human behavior through an architecture that explores new ways of social interaction together with new functional architectural layouts. Not only the context and circumstances gave birth to these hybrid buildings -as we would call them today- but also an important shift in considering the architect as an active political subject in the organization and construction of our social life. Fascinated by these revolutionary objects, we believe they maintain their magnetic power even nowadays. The aim of this project is to constantly refer to them for their still 'magical-electrifying capacity' in providing new forms of relations, but also to go backwards and forwards its Russian origins. Looking back at history, we have recognized several people collectors (for this research, we have chosen twenty case-studies) that appear in key moments as a consequence of cultural, social, political and technological changes throughout the ages (showing always new ways of social aggregation). As the latter represents the core of our work, we will deeply discuss it in the following part (see Methodology, pag.32) We propose therefore to re-activate and re-charge a one-hundred old experiment that we consider appropriate nowadays more than ever. We suggest a new definition of its principles and parameters and widen its perimeter of radiation. We intend to showcase its potential as a device for exploring new spatial and social interactions in today's architectonic and urban practice. Hence, we believe it is time to re-appropriate this tool deploying it in different circumstances thanks to its versatile and flexible nature. Indeed, as a truly typological concept it allows a variety of architectural solutions. First of all, if the intentions of the social condenser were clear since the beginnings, his formal characteristics were not. As a sort of methodical indeterminacy, the form the object would have embodied was always an "unknown x, always discovered anew by the architect".¹ Secondly, the constructivists transferred their ideas on different morphologies, designing social condensers of various scales and typologies: residential blocks (ex. Ginzburg's Narkomfin), domestic interiors, worker's club, the Palace of Culture, factories, etc.. Last but not least, Finally the notion of the ostranenie,

1. MURAWSKI Michał,(2017) *Introduction:crystallising the social condenser*,The Journal of Architecture, p. 377

(hidden as the) quintessence of the social condenser, paves the way to the world of serendipity, to something that is still in between, estranged because of its unpredictability on one hand, but electrifying and surprising on the other.

“The concept of the social condenser was, without a doubt, a de- familiarising one. It was an idea which [...] exists at the boundary between the everyday or mundane (in other words, byt) and the extraordinary, utopian and otherworldly (the ‘new culture’, ‘new society’). Despite - or perhaps, because of - all of its scientific framing, the social condenser was [...] a mechanism for bridging the gap between the contemporary and the not-yet existing. This is what makes its ‘scientific’ character all the more, rather than less, powerful: the social condenser was an architectural method for harnessing, or ‘crystallizing’ the extraordinary or not-yet formed, for bringing it down to earth and deploying it to create a new society.”²

As product of its time, in the idea of the social condenser, as we have already said, there was a radical intention in shaping the soviet community. Going beyond his historical and geographical context, and leaving aside its revolutionary agenda, can we now think of these objects as keepers of an immanent future and as architectural vectors of our present that look for new ways of toghertness? And can we apply the same reasoning over the centuries? We believe so. The social condenser has not to be seen just as an empty box open for possible programs; it should rather be an interactive process between it and its users, where architectonical language and functions cooperate and match together to explore and to adapt to the new issues of our time.

To Social Condensers AD 2018 and beyond!

In the society we live in, we are indeed, facing several changes that call into question our habits and our traditional spaces. Let’s think for example of the increasingly popular concept and business model of the ‘sharing economy’ : things that are no longer bought but rather borrowed, like car-sharing, bike-sharing, platforms offering power drills and other household

2. *Ibid.*, p. 379.

3. NIKLAS, Maak, (2015) p.139.

appliance; or spaces, like a room or an apartment to live in with strangers, or even multipurpose offices, where freelancers can find their own desk. The advantages of this new economy are clear: it is more ecological and more economical and, especially, it makes us feel part of a community. ³Through our electronic devices we can in fact easily access all sorts of collaborative platforms that get us in touch with the shared facilities: to name a few, Airbnb, Couchsurfing, Fablabs, Blablacar, CoLive, wework, welive and many others. This technology revolution and the advent of social networks has also modified the conventional way we use objects and their place in our houses:

“Homes are getting emptier. The record collection, the address book, maps, photo albums, the camera, and the game collection have all disappeared into the smart phone; the document files have been moved into the laptop, and magazines and books are now on the e-reader. The consequences of this electronic drain for housing have not even been properly analyzed yet.” ⁴

We should therefore ask ourselves : which are the impacts of these new trends on the traditional architectural typologies? Which are the implications of the new sharing culture for public buildings? And for housing? Because the theme is extremely current curiously the Vitra Design Museum has recently set up Together! The new architecture of the collective, an exhibition on the renaissance of a communal desire in contemporary urban architecture. Based on the idea that it seems that our society is looking for alternative ways of life based on sharing goods and services, the exhibition presents a wide range of projects of co-housing from Europe, Asia and the USA that have emerged in recent years as a response to our present situation: “In today’s reality the traditional nuclear family is rapidly giving way to a multitude of other living situations like single or couple households, time-shared housing, living constellations in serviced or care-related housing such as hotels or old’s people’s homes, holiday accomodation, etc.” ⁵ Demographic changes, immigration, high-demand and cost of housing and digital revolution these are just A few of the concerns that show how the conventional ways of living need a redefinition; at the same time they open the way to the design of new spatial and programmatic layouts, by recalibrating the relationship between private and public, individual and collective, and so on. The architecture of the new collective “envisages a

4. *Ibid.*, p.139.

5. KRIES Mateo. MULLER Mathias, NIG-GLI Daniel, (2017), p.37.

city with a highly mixed program combining housing, working, and leisure environments and furthering an inclusive social stratification, whereby people from different income groups live side by side rather than being spatially segregated.”⁶ Moreover, the exhibition not only presents current projects but tries also to trace the origins of collective housing, going back to the utopian Phalanstère, - then Familistère - touching upon, ironically, the Narkomfin by Moisei Gizburg. If - as it is prosaically said - what goes around comes around, we think our reality calls for new strategies with a constant look to history. As a cross-fertilizers of all the known archetypes, we think that the social condenser, as a general concept, and the twenty social condensers ante-litteram we have chosen as case studies, may help us in finding new complex and unpredictable buildings for our complex society.

“Social condensers were to render the old forms of architecture and social existence obsolete: we need not merely new clubs -inventions, insofar as these are not clubs for playing whist and dancing the quadrille, but clubs, designed for brand new, previously-unheard of human relations, new ‘social condenser’ of our time.”⁷

What are ours?

6. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

7. Leonidov, Ivan Illich, Criticism of Constructivism, quoted in MURAWSKI Michał, (2017) *Introduction: crystallising the social condenser*, The Journal of Architecture, p. 379





Analysis

Methodology

Intrigued by the reading of the Russian pages from the Twenties about the need of a contemporary social condenser, we started wondering how a people collector of our era should be and how we could define it. Firmly believing that germs of magnetic social collision can be found in architecture since its very beginning, we decided to plunge in a in-reverse research to be able to give a new fresh definition of the concept borrowed from the great socialist machines.

With a vague idea of what a people collector was, just fed by the soviet description and its following various exhumation, we jumped into history. It is in this way that our temporal journey around social condensers begun. We started collecting a large amount of projects-always objects- that in a way suggested the still-nebulous relation that architecture interlaces with society. Together with the development of the research, the selected data were refined thanks also to the contemporary flourish of articles and essays celebrating and remembering the centenary of the Russian Revolution. Thus, from this wider spectrum of projects, twenty case-studies were finally chosen. Each of them highlights a variety of different solutions from widely different backgrounds curiously always related to revolutionary moments. In their peculiarity they represented, as a sort of prototype, new architectural responses to cultural, technological, social changes of their historical moment. They will be presented in the following pages with a sort of identikit profile where their main informations will be shown: an evocative photo, the context and the actors involved in it, and a description focusing on the principle factors of social condensation they were chosen for. The selection was based on the presence of determined characteristics that would have given rise to our five categories, central body of the research, and essential tool that helped us in defining and explaining the various natures that the SC can assume.

Comparing our twenty buildings, the classification - in turn divided into different sub-group - draws a portrait of this architectural notion, investigating it through:

_its degree of publicness (1) as a way to show itself to the public realm inviting to take a look inside;

_the protection (2) it is able to offer under condensation;
_the promiscuity (3) given by its mixité of programs and users;
_the resulting unpredictable scenes with the so-called
ostranenie (4) effect,
_its power to question and make traditional edges blurrier,
delineating borderline (5) situations.

Black pages will alert the reader each time the Social Condenser is in « danger », because used in a dystopian way. The analysis will be developed through the use of drawings, schemes and explicative texts to better compare and dissect each different case-study in order to assimilate and extend its socio-electric potentialities. This is the reason why we have decided to strongly rely on these particular twenty projects, to fully exploit their characters supporting us in the attempt of giving a clear definition of what a Social Condenser is now. Besides, the redrawing of the selected characters represented an important moment of the investigation. This complementary work can be found in the Appendix at the end of this work, together with a brief *summa* of the comparative analysis.

The development of the five categories will lead to a new definition of the social condenser, constituting the last chapter of our research.

The work can be read as the construction of a process we elaborated to analyze and compare the several essences of social condensation, searching for its roots in the past in order to build a sort of language composed by architectural forms, elements, objects, processes. The result is a sort of manual, a recipes book, a guide, a *vademecum* we will keep by our side during the next semester when we are going to try to practically reactivate the magnetic power of the Social Condenser.

This research is by no means exhaustive, nor is it an attempt to identify a clear-cut, linear narrative. Rather, we would like to consider it as a first effort to be evolved, an invitation to reflect on this concept and to continue to develop the device, to challenge again categories and definitions, thoughts and representations in an ever-ending questioning on architecture as fixed scene hosting our evolving lifestyles.



Twenty case-studies

Baths of Caracalla

41°52'45.998"N
12°29'35.002"E



When: 212-216 AD

Where: Rome, Italy

Client: emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla

Program: baths, gyms, theater, library and studying rooms, exposition spaces

*Among the Romans, we find a powerful sense of civic involvement that connected individuals to the city. The most important pleasures were experienced within a social framework; [...] private and public were not yet separated¹. Like spectacles and foodstuffs, baths were enumerated between the rights of the citizen. Conceived to take care of the personal hygiene in a communal place, they responded also to associative wills. *Mens sana, really, in corpore sano*: while water cleaned limbs, libraries, spaces for museums and the possibility of public debating fed the mind. Paintings and mosaics, stucco and marble were the frame in which discussions about art and politics took place, where deals were concluded. No one was excluded from partaking in this luxury: the emperor together with slaves, men and women, everyone could share this public pleasure. Indeed, the entrance was almost always free.*

Palazzo della Ragione

45°24'26"N
11°52'31"E



When: 1218 - enlarged in 1318

Where: Padua, Italy

Architect: Giovanni degli Eremitani

Program: palace of justice, shops.

Truly landmark in the town since it was built, the building stands between the two main commercial squares allowing the passage from one to the other one through its permeable groundfloor. This one still maintains its historical function with various commercial stands while the upper floor (now used for exhibitions) was used as palace of justice and city's council assembly. Because of this unusual union of functions, the Palazzo was a meeting point for the whole population. That was about a lawyer, a furrier or an artisan, the so called *Salone*, because of its vast and elegantly painted upper floor, was a theatre of social and relations where the justice of the city was administrated together with its economical activities within the same building.

Scuola Grande di San Marco

45°26'22.95"N
12°20'29.32"E



When: 1490 (first construction in 1260)

Where: Venice, Italy

Client: Guild of St. Mark

Architect: Pietro and Tullio Lombardo, Mauro Codussi

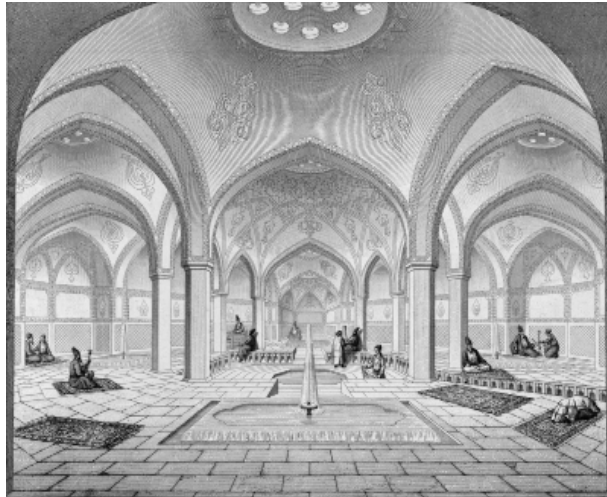
Program: the two great halls hosted assembly of the brothers, distribution of charity, storage space, *ad hoc* workshop, healthcare services.

In Venice a *Scuola* (literally “school”) could refer to various organizations dealing with social services. Similar to professional guilds, each one had a particular task linked to charity. Placed under the secular government, they showed their civic character improving the social cohesion. Everyone - men and women - who didn’t belong to the higher classes, like nobles and clergy, or to the lower ones (beggars, prostitutes) could be a member but the inscriptions were extremely limited.

The Scuola di San Marco, together with its charitable programs, was particularly devoted to healthcare. Composed by two great halls (where the lower one supported the chapter room above through two rows of columns) and a smaller unit, the *albergo*, this civic meeting house was capable “to fulfill specific functions both practical (to hold meetings and hear the mass) and symbolic as a proclamation of wealth, benevolence and piety of the group.”²¹

Kashan Bazaar

33°59'02"N
51°26'11"E



When: XII century (in XIX century last alteration)

Where: Kashan, Iran

Program: caravanserais, mosques, tombs, arcades, baths, water reservoirs.

Built in the Seljuk era and restored during the Safavid period the bazaar still exercees its power of meeting place in the city of Kashan. Nowadays the complex still maintans its original functions: commercial areas, caravanserais, tombs, mosques and baths. In the manner of traditional islamic architecture, it is embellished with colorful and precious domes through which zenithal light penetrates and illuminates the space.

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

45°27'56"N
9°11'24"E



When: 1861-1877

Where: Milan, Italy

Client: City of Milan and private investors

Architect: Giuseppe Mengoni

Program: bars, restaurants, shops, hotels

Embodying the heart of the city, people crowd the gallery, coming from everywhere, continuously, according to daily circumstances, and pour out from its four way out in the aorta and the arteries of this great organism³. Every pulsation of urban life is mirrored here, under its iron and glass envelope. Synonymous of modernity and technological progress it reflected the change in the way of life the city was experiencing. It represented, indeed, a new great passage that would have connected two of the most important urban cores - civic and sacred together -, the cathedral of the Duomo and the square of the Teatro della Scala. Here the new beat would have totally transformed the everyday rhythm making it more accelerated, more linked to engineering and industrial products. One hundred and fifty years later it is still considered a gigantic melting pot of luxury without having lost its, paradoxically intimate, role of meeting *portico* - as Futurists intended it-, the very Milan *parlour*.

Cafè Pedrocchi

45°24'28"N
11°52'38"E



When: 1831

Where: Padua, Italy

Client: Antonio Pedrocchi

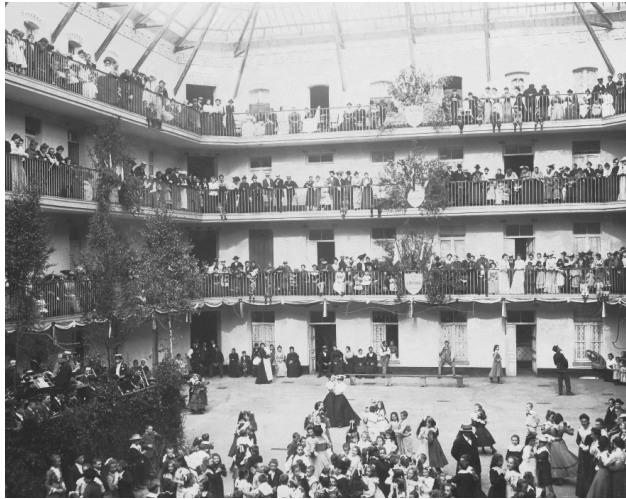
Architect: Giuseppe Japelli

Program: cafè, music hall, offelleria.

"The Cafè Pedrocchi is the collector of all social classes. Because of its central position, its various and big rooms, its facilities and its political and amusing newspapers, everything encourages to visit it. The flux of people is continuous, and every strangers wants to come. It is also a refuge for those travellers who comes at night, because the it is always open and inviting." From the literature of the time the complex is described as a great infrastructure for the city, an extremely efficient machine for the well cultured community who used to meet here. It was a privileged place not only for those intellectuals, academics, students that here discussed about politics and culture but also for the whole city that here read, played pool, or simply relax. The Pedrocchi became soon a model to copy in Europe because of its new way of living a cafè, a public buiding with a domestic nature.

Familistère

49°54'15"N
3°37'31"E



When: 1859 - 1883

Where: Guise, France

Architect - Client: André Godin

Program: housing, medical offices, laundry, school, crèche.

Inspired by the utopian phalanstère by Charles Fourier, André Godin realized his own radical new model of collective housing for workers renamed it in Familistère, or “palace for families”. It consisted of three blocks connected at the corners with inner glazed roofed courtyards for a community of over 1700 people at its height, as well as other facilities like a pharmacy, medical offices, a kindergarten, laundry and school. The complex has been one of the most successful example of social utopia ever realized because it promoted a new solution for the time of communal dwellings while encouraging cooperation among its residents as founding principle. As Godin underlined in his Solutions Sociales “[...] the reform of building for the purpose of creating a comfortable environment for the workers, which is fully attuned to their practical needs as well as to providing access to the pleasures of community living which every human being deserves to enjoy”.

Karl Marx-Hof

48.2493° N
16.3644° E



When: 1927 - 1930

Where: Vienna, Austria

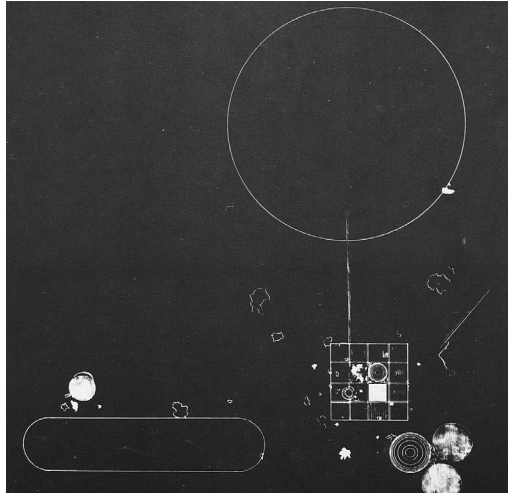
Client: City of Vienna

Architect: Karl Ehn

Program: residential units, laundry, baths, kindergartens, a library, doctor and business offices.

Unemployment, poverty and famine was paralyzing the city of Vienna until the Social Democratic Party began a politics of renaissance. Thus, administrative reforms starts shaping again the urban tissue thanks to great *travaux* of social housing, finally recovering workers dignity. Conceived as a container for the growth of the "new man", the Karl Marx-Hof stands out like a giant infrastructure. Indeed, it plays the role of interchange junction between vehicles, public and inhabitants movements. Two vehicle accessible roads cross the central square under two lateral great arches reserving the core to the pedestrian passage. The same attention to men respect can be found inside the single apartements where the best solutions for hygiene and decorum are researched. Strengthened by a celebrative language, the block shows the power of a worker fortress to the city and, at the same time, offers to its users the possibility to finally recognize themselves in its peculiar built and green environment.

Club of a new social type



When: 1928

Where: never realized

Architect: Ivan Leonidov

Program: workshop areas, cinema, sport facilities, lecture hall, gardens, library.

The Club of a new social time envisaged to liberate men from the oppression of the chains of work by promoting a series of cultural and leisure activities for the new soviet men. It was a truly condenser of mix functions which included a scientific botanical garden, several laboratories for analytical work, a library, an open area for mass activities, sport facilities and a parkland area. The latter was provided with an open-air screen on which radio and television transmissions informed and forged the new individuals with all the political and economical events of the day as a sort of live newspaper through which nourish the mass with sovietical principles. From a technological point of view it should have been provided with walls of transparent glass to avoid separation from the surroundings and as Leonidov said 'involve the individual in the widest possible way in the dynamics of the world around him'.

Narkomfin dom-kommuna

55.7572° N,
37.5811° E



When: 1928-1932

Where: Moscow, Russia

Client: STROIKOM (Building Committee of the RSFSR)

Architect: Moisei Ginzburg, Ignaty Milinis

Program: residential units, communal kitchen, canteen, library, gym and nursery

The social condenser *par excellence* embodied by the Narkomfin building enlightens all the issues Constructivist architects were dealing with. Fascinating communal living experiment, its design looked for a new form of housing more appropriate to the new social *byt* of the masses. The project would have physically influenced the behavior of tenants, shaping in a totally different way the private spaces of each residential unit: inside apartments, services were reduced to a bare minimum in order to translate all functions to the communal sphere. Indeed, individuals would have been more encouraged to take advantage of collective moments by exploiting shared facilities like kitchens, creches and laundry. This new form of living environment would have taken inhabitants toward a more socialist way of life and, by enriching their relationships, it would have made everyone a responsible member of a not-yet-come society.

Haus Vaterland

52° 30' 29" N,
13° 22' 38" E



When: 1928-1943 (demolished in 1976)

Where: Berlin, Germany

Architect: Carl Stahl-Urach who converted
a previous project by Franz Heinrich
Schwechten

Program: cafes, cinema, variety theatre,
ballroom, theme restaurants

die Welt in einem Haus. Set in Potsdamer Platz, this pleasure palace promised the visitor to find "the world in one house." It represented a unique concept in the entertainment industry: under one roof a cinema, various restaurants and the largest cafe in the world at that time were hosted. 8'000 people could enter and experience a journey around the world thanks to the several theme restaurants, shaped emulating the attractions of Coney Island in New York.

The entry fee was 1 mark and adding 3 more it was possible to access to the night dancefloor, of the Palm Tree Room, on the highest story, where spectacles lasts until 3am. The colorful and cosmopolitan program of the multipurpose Haus Vaterland was capable to fascinate one million guests every year, drawing an interesting relationship between amusement, architecture and new technologies.

Downtown Athletic Club

40° 42' 22" N,
74° 0' 56" W



When: 1926

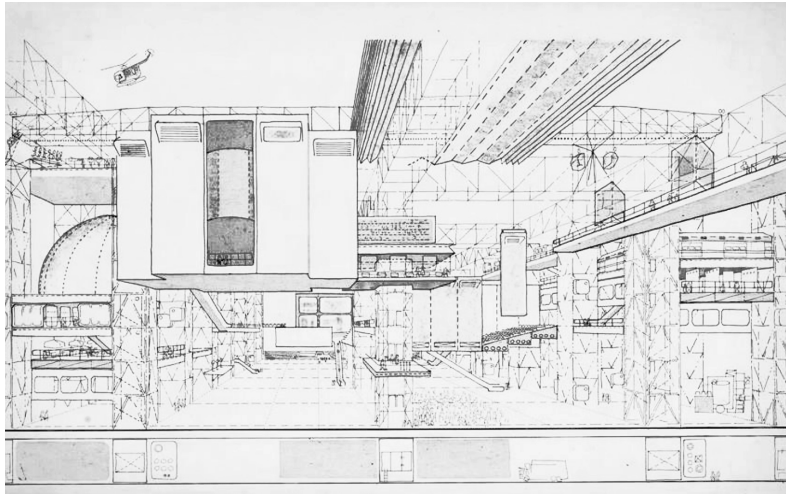
Where: New York, Usa

Architect: Starrett & van Vleck

Program: sport facilities, leisure spaces,
medical service, barber, bar and restaurant,
bedrooms, roof garden, offices.

On the rigid grid of Manhattan stands the only men admitted Athletic Club skyscraper, incubator of the metropolitan "Culture of Congestion" as described by Rem Koolhaas in his *Delirious New York*. It is in these pages that we can find the most accurate interpretation on it: "In the Downtown Athletic Club the Skyscraper is used as a Constructivist Social Condenser: a machine to generate and intensify desirable forms of human intercourse." Thirty-eight superimposed platforms connected by an exaggerated system of elevators offer, floor by floor, the most appealing activities to restore and train the body of a perfect metropolitan man. "In the fantastic juxtaposition of its activities, each of the Club's floors is a separate installment of an infinitely unpredictable intrigue".

Fun Palace



When: 1963 -1977

Where: not realized

Architect: Cedric Price

Program: leisure and entertainment spaces,
restuarants, auditoriums.

A playful visionary machine to live actively: this was the Fun Palace, a social utopia designed by Price together with theatre producer Joan Littlewood. In this 'laboratory of fun' everything is up to the user: from painting to dancing, from watching the stars to simply observing others doing something. By choosing from a wide range of activities one is led to build his own pedagogical and leisure environment moving and assembling the free system of gantry cranes and floating platforms. Every part of the structure is variable and open to a surprising agenda of unpredictable phenomena. It is not only an improvisational architecture to interact with but also a virtual theater where meet the other :“the Fun Palace wasn't about technology, it was about people”, said its architect.

SESC Pompeia

45°24'26"N
11°52'31"E



When: 1997 - 1986

Where: San Paolo, Brazil

Client: SESC (Business Social Service)

Architect: Lina Bo bardi

Program: theatres, gymnasiums, swimming pool, bars, leisure areas, restaurants, galleries, workshops, ateliers.

Described by the chonacles of the time as a "schocking bomb", from the very beginning the Pompèia factory Leisure Centre arised admits the surrounding of the brazilian capital. Two concrete towers linked by eight suspended walkaways impose an abrupt change of scales to the already existing drum factory that Lina Bo Bardi was called to renovate. "What we want is precisely to maintain and amplify what we've found here, nothing more", said the architect when she had to start designing the new proposal. The open spaces and the ateliers of the reconverted factory together with the sport facilities of the concrete 'caves' explore new ways of living the public space. An inclusive program that embraces artistic, civic and sporting activities and a spatial organization that promotes accessibility- bringing the public street and an urban beach into the Center- make the complex a truly *Cidadela* of cultural leisure for the local population.

St. Jakob Park

47.5416° N
7.6201° E



When: 1996-2002

Where: Basel, Switzerland

Client: FC Basel

Architect: Herzog & de Meuron

Program: football stadium, residence for elderly people, commercial centre

Stuck in the middle between the two Basel half cantons, the St. Jakob Park inserts itself in the urban tissue interweaving new networks with near sport facilities. Like a large vessel, it englobes in its shell both architectural and infrastructural solutions. The different facades and the attention to the use of colors play the role of unifying and presenting a strong identity to a variegated program. In fact, the largest stadium in Switzerland is hosted here without, however, letting its bigness hampering the sense of security of the spectator: the solid bleacher roof succeeds in displaying the researched impression of a protected interior. A commercial centre and a senior citizen residence are also on board, enriching the *mixité* of the object and alluding to new possible social interactions. A different proposition to achieve the hoped aim: to shape "a place with an integrative effect for the entire region⁴⁷".

Rolex Learning Center

46°31'06"N
6°34'05"E



When: 2010
Where: Lausanne, Switzerland
Client: EPFL
Architect: SANAA

Program: library, workspaces, auditorium, restaurant, cafeteria, bookshop, offices, parking

A novel architecture of 'intimate public space' shaped in the form of an undulating built dune takes place in the Rolex Learning Center. This continuous open space landscape made of concrete sloped slabs and wrapping panes of glass surely offers a new spatial experience and a contemporary alternative to traditional library buildings. In this hilly object, one can freely stroll up its valleys and plateaus where all the functions are set up one next to each other without dividing walls. Because of this spatial freedom the user is encouraged to appropriate the space the way he wants discovering maybe new forms of interaction with the building. Taking a nap, walking up and down its hills, hiding in glazed private bubbles here it seems to be totally appropriate. This artificial topography creates indeed an extraordinary fluidity while promoting a network of services spread on the open plan. Can we say it is a metaphor of our liquid society?

Market Hall

51°55'12"N
4°29'13"E



When: 2004 - 2014

Where: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Client: Provast Nederland bv, The Hague;
Netherlands

Architect: MVRDV

Program: housing, market, supermarket,
parking

Housing and market area are here combined for the first time under the same roof: an arch-shaped solution covers the new market hall of Rotterdam and hosts 228 privately developed apartments. It is a new icon in the city that stages the innovation and provides a 24h building for the collectivity. As a completely new hybrid, the Markethall is an unpredictable combination of living, leisure, food and parking fully integrated in order to give the visitor a new life experience.

A giant glazed curtain wall protects the market from wind and cold allowing at the same time for the maximum transparency. From the outside, one is attracted to look into the colorful ceiling while inhabitants from the square windows of their apartments can look down onto the living life of the market square.

Communal Villa



When: 2010
Where: not realized
Architect: Dogma

Program: residential units, common spaces

"How can the housing question (Wohnungsfrage) be appropriately reformulated in an age in which the work / life distinction is becoming increasingly blurred?" Can we still consider the house as the more private part of our daily routine? If the borders between working and living are blurrier and blurrier, how can we use this dynamic to stop up the effects of this precarious economy? With its strong ideological positions, Dogma tries to give an answer, challenging the very meaning of housing, villas and commons. In a perfect cube the inhabitants (all artists in this case) find an intimate modular shelter - almost a room in a wall - next to the facades. Thus, the rest of the space is free to hold communitarian activities fostering different organization of the interiors according to collective needs. Here, domesticity, publicness and working environment are melted together to suggest a new way of togetherness.

Taipei Performing Arts Center

25.0850° N,
121.5242° E



When: 2009 - ongoing

Where: Taipei, Taiwan

Client: Department of Cultural affairs, Taipei
City Government

Architect: OMA

Program: theater, public spaces, offices,
parking

"Why have the most exciting theatrical events of the past 100 years taken place outside the spaces formally designed for them? Can architecture transcend its own dirty secret, the inevitability of imposing limits on what is possible?"

The machine of the Taipei Performing Art Centers is trying to challenge this old stagnation offering three autonomous theaters - penetrating a central cube - that according to directors and audience needs can change configuration and merge together to shape unexpected new stages: "the advantages of specificity with the freedoms of the undefined". The inner body is lifted from the ground allowing the street to enter into the building and inviting everyone to go in. Anyone - also without buying a ticket for the spectacle - can discover the showed limbs of the building following the public path. Surprisingly, it leads the visitor through the theatre infrastructure and spaces of production proposing a new, different and unsuspected point of view on the canonical theatrical representation.

MPK20, Facebook Headquarters

37.4845° N,
122.1474° W



When: 2012 - 2016

Where: Menlo Park, California, US

Client: Facebook

Architect: Frank Gehry

Program: working space, cafeterias, library,
fitness club, leisure areas

A satellite would never reach it. Where it would be supposed to find the largest open office in the world, it would see just 3.6 hectares of park (larger than the Grand Trianon in Versailles!). The invisibility of our liquid society, always everywhere and always connected with everybody, is translated here in a green blanket covering an enormous concrete slab. The headquarters appears in fact as "sandwiched between two spaces of atonement: the Garden of Eden on the roof and the Grotto in the parking lot." In this sort of *working landscape* a whole new city is condensed, giving no reason to leave: from more intimate working spaces to a fitness club, from cafeterias to game-rooms to a library, the worker will find anything he needs. Considering the essence of the famous social network, in continuous change, this flexible space proposes a new, dynamic approach where there is not so much difference between working and living, paving the way to unexpected experiences.



SC

1 Degree of publicness

Social condensers seem to present a predisposition to stand out in the public realm. Various grades of publicness depict the way buildings work on their visibility to become more appealing to the community, to invite to take a look inside.

2 Protection

Condensation is capable of making people feeling more protected. Different are the expedients used to suggest a sensation of sheltering, giving also rise to a debate on the borders between control and freedom.

3 Promiscuity

In order to discover new interactions, experiments tend to mix data and elements in not traditional ways. Thus, association - the germ of social happiness - appears to be extremely linked to the surprising combination of functions and users.

4 Unpredictable /Ostranenie/

If we are able to describe how it is possible to condense, finally foreseeing what could happen under compression results unimaginable. Social condensers in fact show some inclinations to be stuck in the middle between mundane events and totally unexpected, defamiliarizing situations.

5 Borderline

Concentrating people seems filled up with instability about a clear definition of traditional dialectical concepts. Borders become more and more blurrier, gradually leading us toward another way of life.



degree of publicness

Ingredients

of

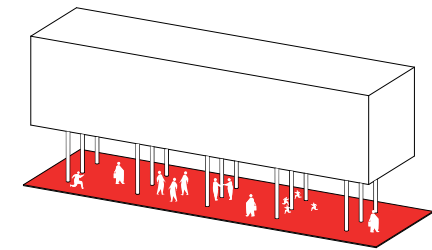
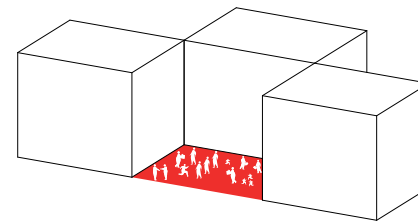
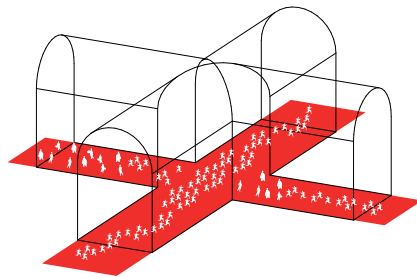
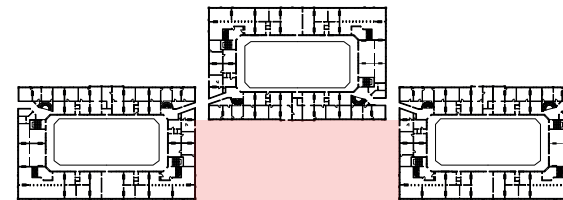
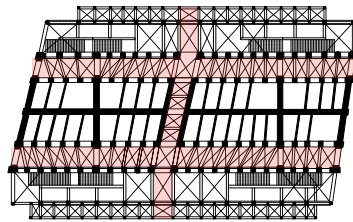
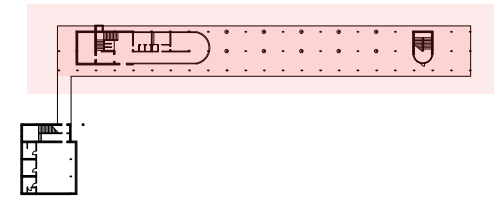
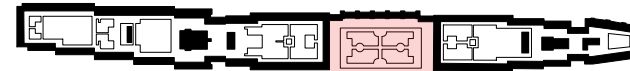
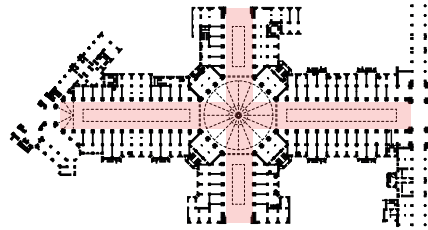
ЦГ

Building thoroughfare

Puzzle piazza

Porouse groundfloor

The degree of publicness of a building starts with the relation with its surroundings: is there a connection between it and its context? If so, how? And where is it achieved? Studying these twenty examples we have noticed how their relation with the surrounding affects their public appearance within the urban context, by creating spaces of collectivity and for so, places of sociability. Instead of a sharp division between the physical object and the environment, most of the case-studies show, indeed, a more explicit threshold between the exterior and the interior domain. This 'in-between' space can thus offer different degrees of accessibility by generating several sequences of spaces in the whole design. But which are the forms that the block perimeter assumes in order to make the building more inviting to enter? And if the enclosed world is transcendent in favour of a more gradual access, how is the latter spatially organized? Moreover, one could also question how the urban space - that is for instance the public realm of the collectivity - is actually designed to penetrate the inner core of the Social Condenser? Finally, how the users live and make own these borderlines? To answer these questions, here you can find a mosaic of possible solutions.



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele
Palazzo della Ragione

In these buildings the city is turned inside out: the exterior space runs through the built form giving the visitor a feeling of an interior even though here they are 'inside' and 'outside' at the same time. Building thoroughfare acts as shortcut in the city, offering new covered streets, new indoor corridors of generous wide and height.

Karl Marx Hof
Familistère de Guise

An open surface sticks in the middle of these housing complexes produces a space of representation and welcomes its inhabitants. It is a meeting point for the community and a space of collective activities and events.

Narkomfin dom-kommuna

As the building is lifted from the ground, a covered surface is created below. It is a public space where one can have a talk before entering the building or simply take shelter from the rain. It gives us the perception of an intimate and protected space while it still belongs to the outside world.

ban

accessibility

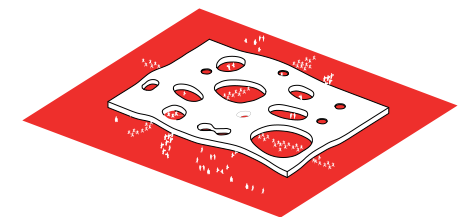
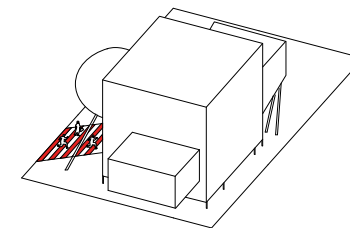
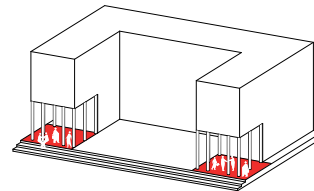
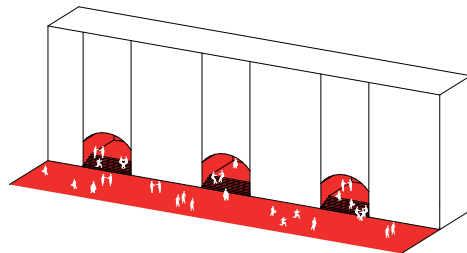
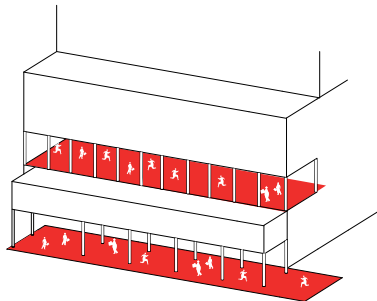
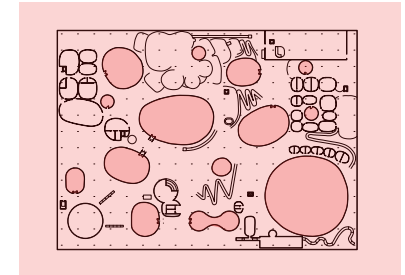
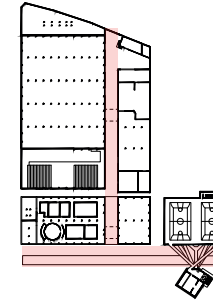
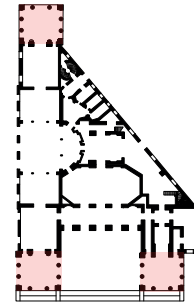
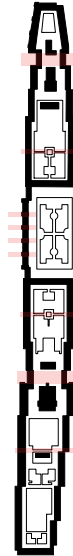
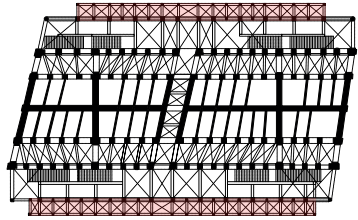
Portico/Loggia

Threshold Arcades

Vestibule

Inner road

In/Out platform



Palazzo della Ragione

The portico on the ground floor defines its perimeter and establishes a direct contact with the public world. It creates a lively territory and makes people interact with the building. One can feel protected under its arcades without actually entering the building. The loggia above provides an outer space while keeping the perception of being inside the architecture and protected by it.

Karl Marx Hof

The arcades of the Karl Marx are both the entrances for the inhabitants and living spaces for the collectivity. While walking down the street in front of it one can have a sit on the steps of these accesses and finds a refuge under its porches.

Cafè Pedrocchi

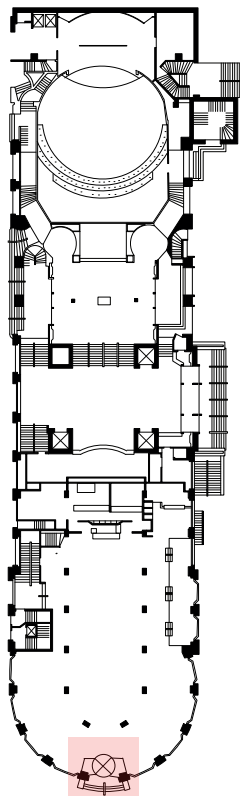
The whole design is conceived to invite public to enter: standing on a podium, three vestibules (two on one side and one symmetrical on the other) are projected out the building as to call the visitor to approach it. They create a covered buffer zone for social interactions while delimiting the perimeter of an in between open-air terrace.

Sesc Pompeia
Taipei Performing Arts Center

Bringing the public street into the building blurs its edges. In the Sesc Pompeia the urban beach shaped in the form of a long deck, continues the already existing access street of the ex-fabric, while in the Taipei Performing Arts Center, pedestrian crossing penetrates the volumes till the main entrance.

Rolex Learning Center

The sloped platform punctuated by holes is lifted in some points from the ground generating a porous surface. This becomes a neutral space of various activities. The internal patios make one feels being inside the building while he is still outside. The access to the library is possible in its middle once passing under its slopes.



Sliding door

“Every house has a door to the street and another to the garden. The doors which are made with two leaves, open easily and swing shut automatically letting anyone enter who wants to-and so there is no private. ”

Thomas More, *Utopia*

Haus Vaterland

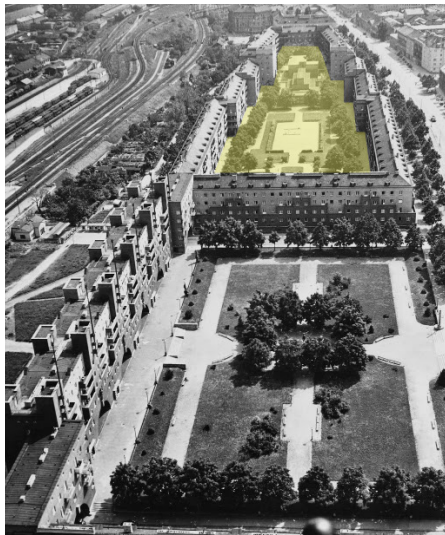
On the right: Cafè Pedrocchi functions as a building thoroughfare because access is symmetrical from one side to the other and parallel to the street.

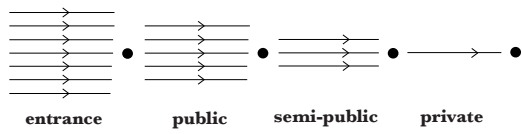


PUBLIC accessibility for dwellings



A building can offer a gradual sequence of accessibility: this is particularly evident in the case of dwelling. The Karl Marx Hof in fact presents a great system of courtyards where all the communal facilities (library, kindergarten, laundry, doctor offices, business offices) were located. In the Familistère an inner glass roofed courtyard represented the scene where the community recognized itself and the space where all public events took place. Moreover, from the walkaways, a sort of threshold before entering the apartment of each inhabitant, was possible to enjoy the common life of the complex. Sharing heats has never been so manifest in a housing block before.





“Lay out the spaces of a building so that they create a sequence which begins with the entrance and the most public parts of the building, then leads into slightly more private areas, and finally to the most private domains.”

Intimacy Gradient
From *A pattern language* by C. Alexander

Below: children playing in the central swimming pool of the Karl Marx Hof and a civic celebration in the courtyard of the Familistère.



VISIBILITY

Intrinsic in the condition of publicness there is a notion of seeing and be seen.

How a building can show itself? How much is it visible in the context? Does it affects his form or rather its aesthetical appearance? Or both? Visibility consitutes therefore an important architectural condition of publicness that can be analyzed through three lens: materiality, scale and colour.

The external *apparatus* of a building displays the way it wants to be seen from outside and the relation it establishes -or not- with the context. Materiality tells us about the nature of a building. If we think to the extensive new employment of glass made possible thanks to new materials such as iron in the 19th century, we understand how materiality can affect also one's phenomenological sphere of appearance.

A flourishing of new transparent spaces (such as Crystal Palace, covered passages, etc.) let the light enters the building and thus made people see from inside and be seen from outside. In the same manner, everything related to the skin of a building, like ornamentation, colour, and special visual effects could help in making the building more visible and thus more public.

If materiality is therefore related to the concept of visibility as we intend it, also the scale and the form of a building plays an important role in this argumentation. Since the dawn of time, the scale was an instrument to express the *grandeur* of the empire (roman and greek architecture for example), as a way to traduce the prestigiousness in a great built form. The bigger an architecture is, the more it stands out and becomes a landmark in the context. Moreover, if it is shaped in bizarre forms, its chances to show off surely increase.

Materiality

The *enveloppe* of a building is a first instrument to understand how the building wants to show itself.

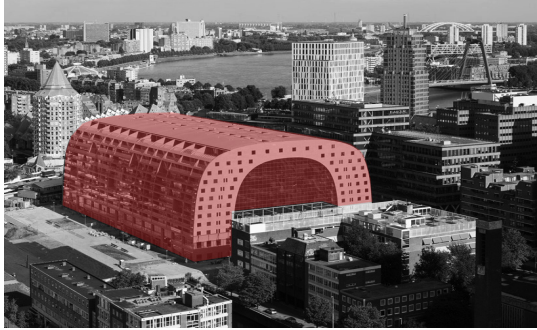
We can appreciate its implications by looking at the image here below representing the façade of the Scuola Grande di San Marco. Architecture was a truly vehicle of prestigiousness for the *confratelli* of the six Scuole Grandi in Venice. The more powerful the confraternita was, the more opulent the fabric of the institution should have been.

The main façade became thus the screen to display their authority and autonomy in the Serenissima. Each Scuola competed to have the most precious one as a way to convey their richness. The principal entrance of the Scuola di San Marco is a profusion of sumptuous ornamentation and sophisticated elements where different colored marbles are applied: yellow Carrara and pink Veronese marble, Grey bardiglio and porphyry to just name a few.

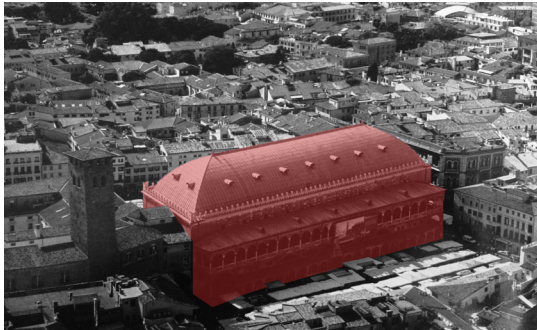


Thanks to its transparency, the façade of the Market Hall creates a connection with its context and makes one curious to approach it. A glass cable net façade closes off the building from the outside but at the same time it lishes shapes and colours of the ceiling inviting the public to enter the market.

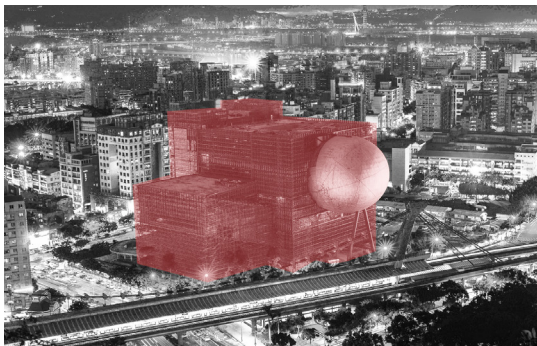




Market Hall



Palazzo della Ragione



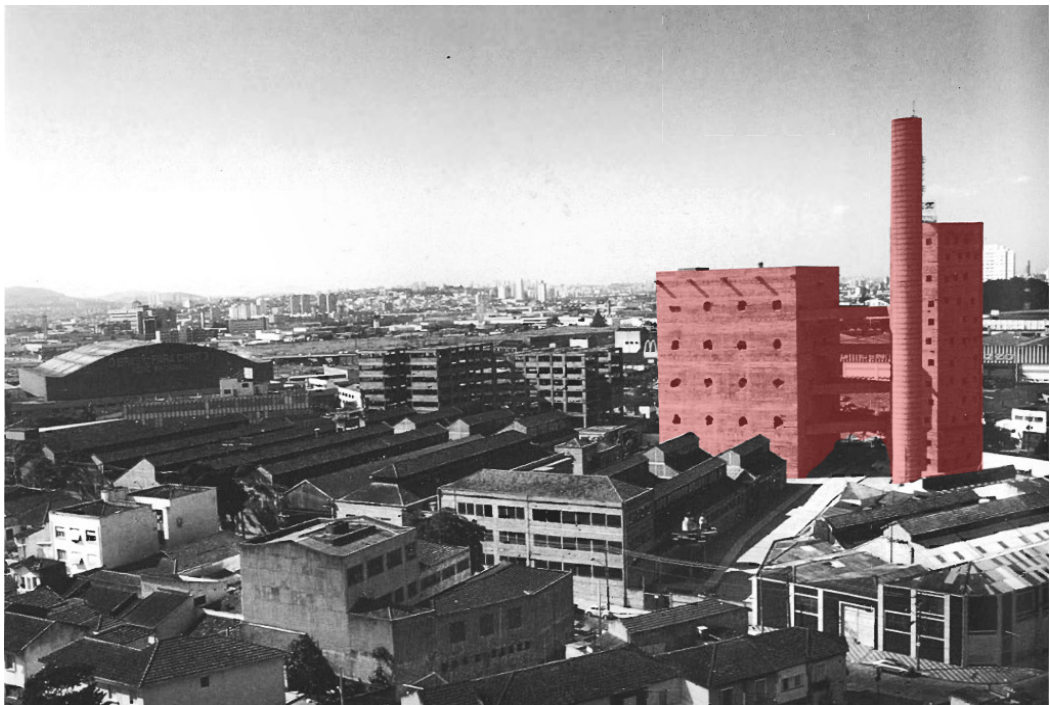
Taipei performing Arts Center

Scale

Social Condensers seem to prefer a big scale. If this is not a condition *sine qua non* of their existence, for sure it helps them to emerge from the urban context where they are. What are their intentions? Becoming new landmarks, icons of something new in town or just bizarre creatures? What is evident is that their *grandeur* responds to a necessity: the bigger the site it is, the easier condensing a large number of people becomes. Some of them are even sort of infrastructure that articulate the urban tissue: it is the case of the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua which stands in the middle of two squares and acts as a threshold between them. The ground floor is in fact totally permeable allowing the access from one square to the other one extremely easy. Besides, the Sesc Pompeia stands out in the even covered field of San Paulo. Its rough majesty was an *unicum* for the epoch, and we could say it still is; its big scale opens also to new perspectives of the city.

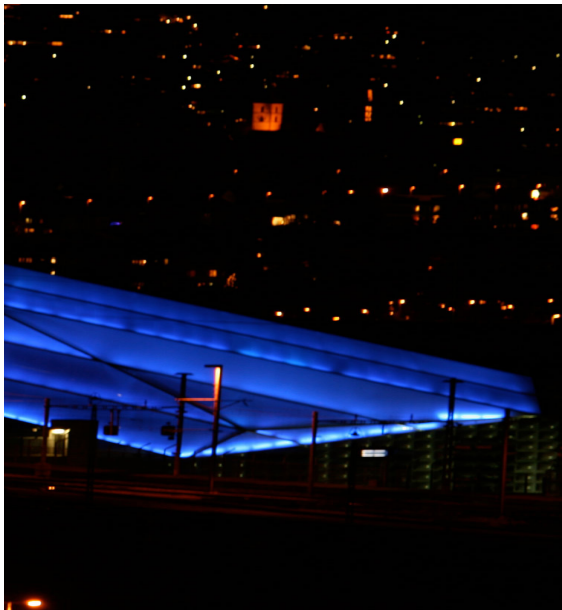
*“Beyond a certain scale , architecture
acquires the properties of Bigness.
The best reason to broach Bigness is
the one given by climbers of Mount
Everest: “because it is there”.
Bigness is the ultimate architecture.*

Extract from *S,M,L,XL* by Rem Koolhaas



The three Stunning towers of Sesc Pompeia





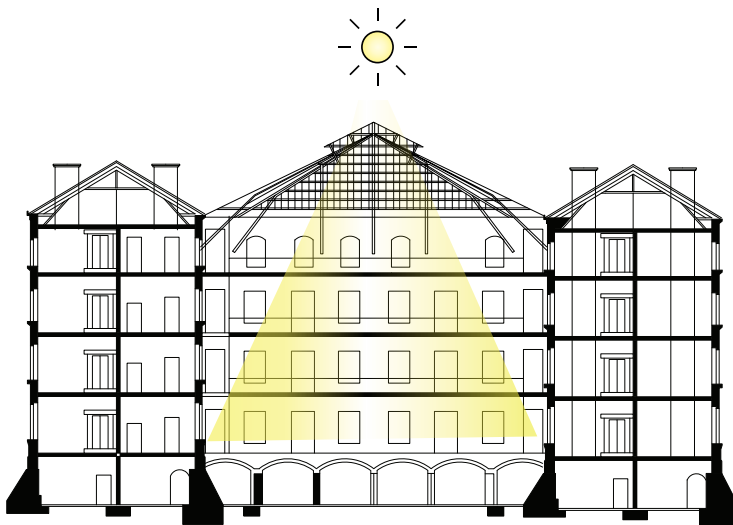
Colour

Providing an unmistakable identity to the Social Condenser passes also by the use of colour and light. The St. Jakob Park impresses for the translucent coloration of the stadium's shell: a layer of teflon cushions covers it in the form of a mosaic and creates amazing visual effects enlightening the stadium at night with the local colours of Basel.

Here comes the sun

“In a building with uniform light level, there are few “places” which function as effective settings for human events. This happens because, to a large extent, the places which make effective settings are defined by light.”

As underlined in *A pattern language* by Christopher Alexander it seems that there is a tendency of people to orient themselves towards the light; as a consequence, the places the most appreciated are the ones enlightened by natural light. This has also implications on the appearance of the body: if we can be seen by others it means we are no more owner of our intimacy sphere but rather we enter the public realm. Zenithal light as well as two-sides helps in creating a more appealing and seducing ambiance.



Familistère de Guise

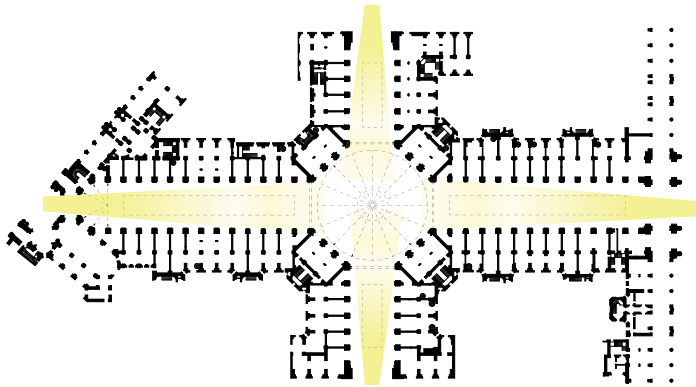
“The building needs to be a tapestry of light and dark”



“Create alternating areas of light and dark throughout the building, in such a way that people naturally walk toward the light, whenever they are going to important places: seats, entrances, stairs, passages, places of special beauty, and make other areas darker, to increase the contrast.”

Kashan Bazaar

Quotations from *A pattern language* by Christopher Alexander



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele

Two-sides light




Market Hall

OPEN

24/
7

	Baths of Caracalla	
	Palazzo della Ragione	
	Scuola Grande di San Marco	
	Kashan bazaar	
	Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II	
	Café Pedrocchi	
	Familistère	
	Karl Marx-Hof	
	Club of the new social type	
	Narkomfin dom-kommuna	
	Haus Vaterland	
	Downtown Athletic Club	
	Fun Palace	
	SESC Pompeia	
	St.Jakob-park	
	Rolex Learning Center	
	Market Hall	
	Communal Villa	
	Taipei Performing Art Center	
	Facebook Headquarters	

Only those who own the keys  have free access all day long

On the right: central station in Milan by
Gianni Berengo Gardin



A dystopian dérive?



“Even in circumstances where the ‘spectator’ out in public seeks consciously to preserve his anonymity, rather than to engage in the formation of ‘sociability’, propinquity plays a key role”

*Public Space: cultural / political theory;
street photography by George Baird*

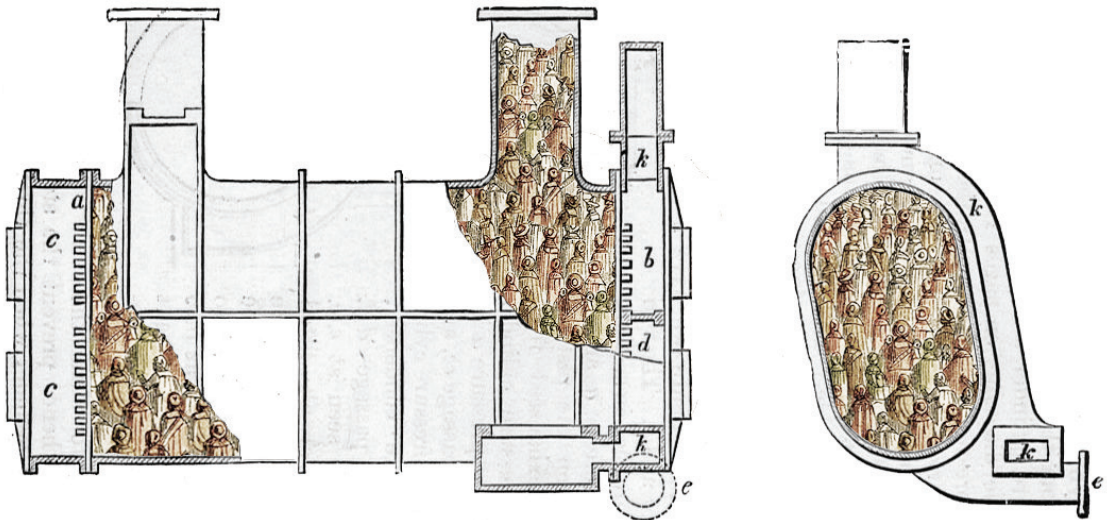
Public spaces such as stations and airports are certainly condensers of a large number of people everyday. Designed with generic qualities and most of the time with a unique vocabulary, they are defined by Marc Augé as “non-places”, ‘spaces of transience’ where the human being remains anonymous. However, if it is true that being close together in space implies a certain degree of publicness, this ‘spatial propinquity’ is an obliged one and it does not affect the social domain. Proximity of bodies rules the spatial movements of continuous flux of masses coming and going in these terminals but it does not establish any interactions among people. For these reasons we have decided to not include these objects in our classification of the social condensers, as they do not create spaces of one’s identity.



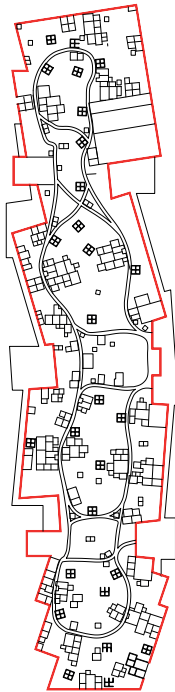
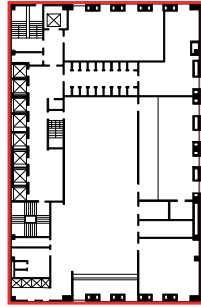
Рготестюп

Кноп чтог конденсер !

In the way architecture 'storages' people and the different functions in itself, it assumes the most various forms. Strictly linked to the act of condensing is the notion of protection: being collected within a space intensifies one's feeling of belonging to something and thus, in a way, makes him feel protected. That is about within a shelter, in a box or inside an alcove here you can choose from the condenser that makes you feel at safe the most!

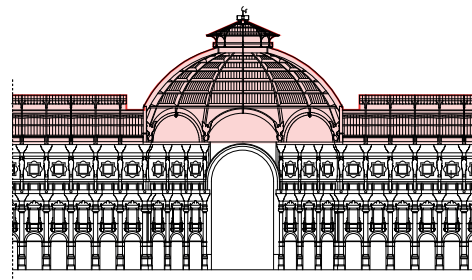
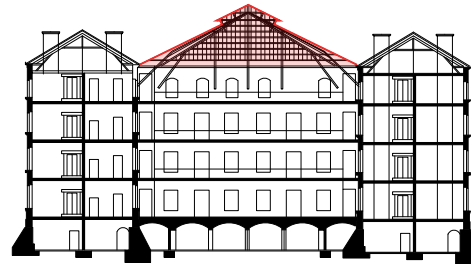
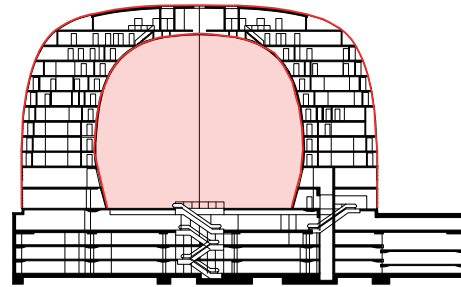


Box



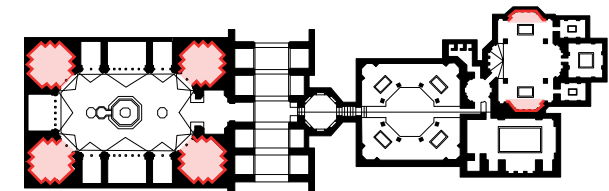
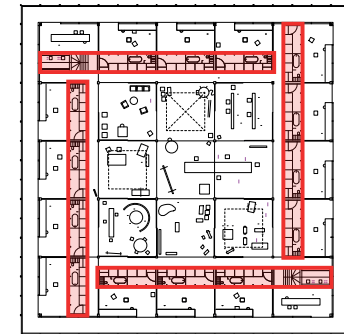
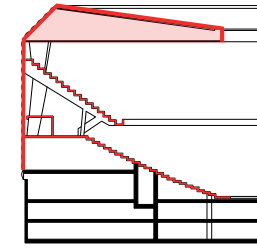
From the top:
Downtown Athletic Club
Facebook Headquarters

Shelter



From the top:
Market Hall
Famillistère
Galleria Vittorio Emanuele

Alcove



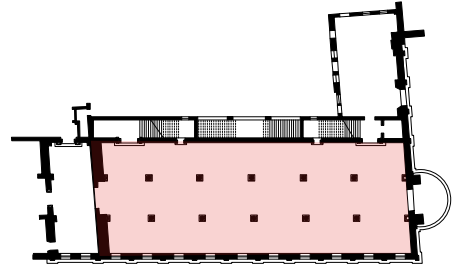
From the top:
St. Jakob Park
Communal Villa
Kashan Bazaar



Communal Villa
'Inhabitable wall': an alcove where living and working



Freedom

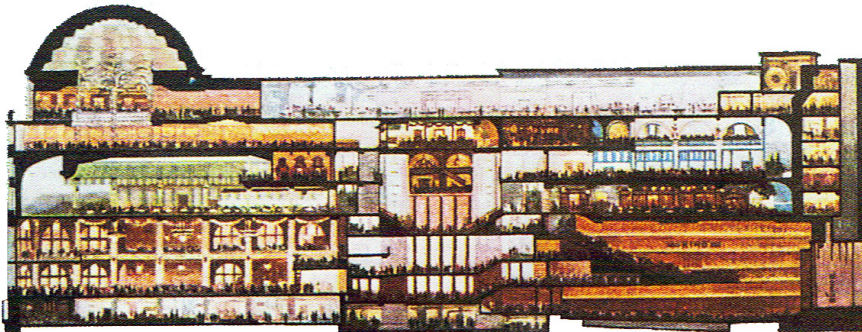


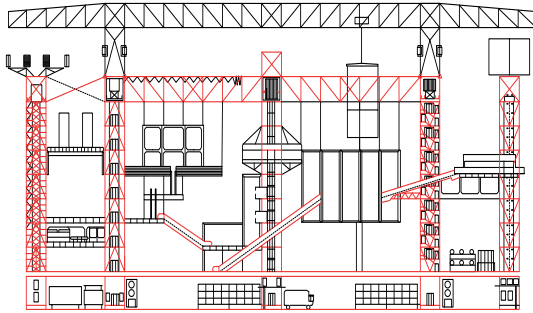
Scuola di San Marco

CONTROL

In the Downtown Athletic Club, the rigid structure of the skyscraper determines a severe superposition of functions: one above the other, the user is forced to lean on the lift to reach the chosen activity. In the same way, the Haus Vaterland in Berlin was an unflexible machine of entertainment where every space had its own specific function and purpose. Here again, circulation was forced and controlled by staircases and three lifts giving the impression of being in a shielded complicated organism. Little steps of stairs introduced in fact every rooms as a sort of Loosian 'Raumplan'. This choice helped in marking the access to an outer place and underlining a threshold every time the user had to move from one space to the other one.

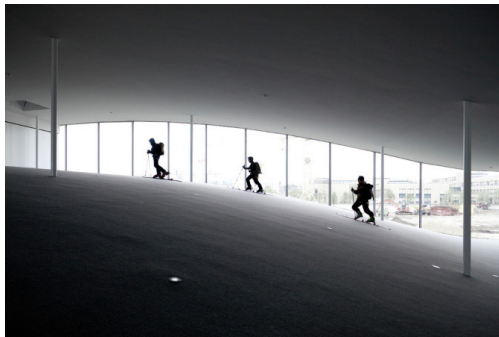
Below: section of the 'Pleasure Palace', the Haus Vaterland



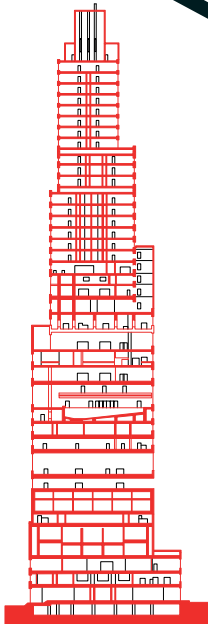


Fun Palace

Once condensed within a space, how much freedom is left for the users? That it is about a built dune landscape, an open-plan of a venetian palazzo or a machinist theatre, in the Rolex Learning Center, the Fun Palace and the Scuola Grande di San Marco it seems the architects wanted to create an environment which encourages autonomous circulation and the appropriation of the space by its users. This means one is free to explore it the way he wants, making his personal markings and identification within the building. As in the Fun Palace the user can build his own laboratory of fun by choosing to move the structure as he prefers the most, or calls his confratelli for an urgent reunion in the Scuola Grande or even walks up and down the valleys of the Rolex Learning Center, everything calls for the improvisation in these places. It follows that the more freedom one can have in using the space, the more motivated and intrigued can be.



Rolex Learning Center



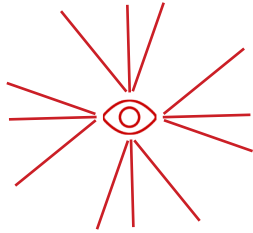
Section of the Downtown Athletic Club

“In an abstract choreography, the building’s athletes shuttle up and down between its 38 “plots” - in a sequence as random as only an elevator man can make it - each equipped with techno-psychic apparatus for the men’s own redesign.”

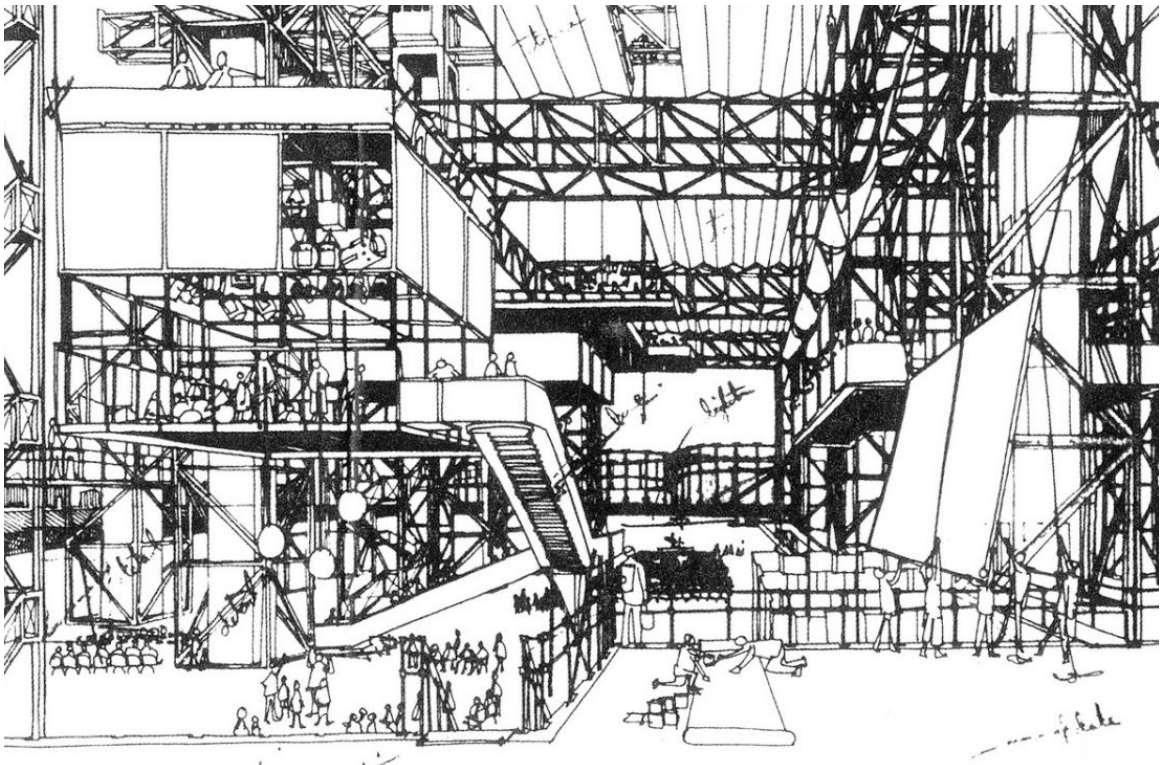
Delirious New York, Rem Koolhaas

Panopticon vision

VS



Ηeterogenos vision



* See: Perspective VS Anamorphis
in *Ostranenie*



A dystopian dérive?



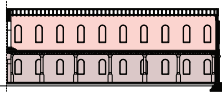
What happens when politics takes control of architecture and uses it for its own propaganda? The Italian architecture of the fascist period is one among many examples history gave us. People collectors *par excellence* were the so-called "children colonies". Differentiated by their seaside, mountain, river or lakeside locations they were formidable propagandistic machines of the regime where children were indoctrinated through an intensive holiday programme to fascist principles and values. And what if the regime conditions social condensers already existing like the Café Pedrocchi? In the image here above we can see the building completely embellished for the visit of the *duce*.





РГОМІСЦІТЧ

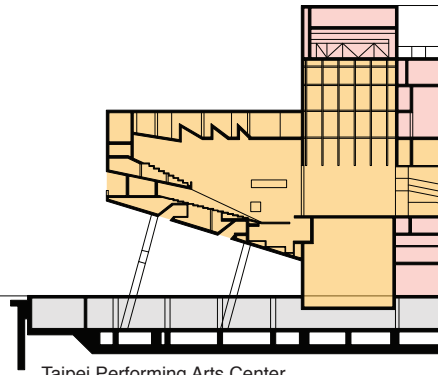
Cross-programming



Scuola Grande di San Marco



Kashan Bazaar



Taipei Performing Arts Center



housing



working
offices



shopping



market



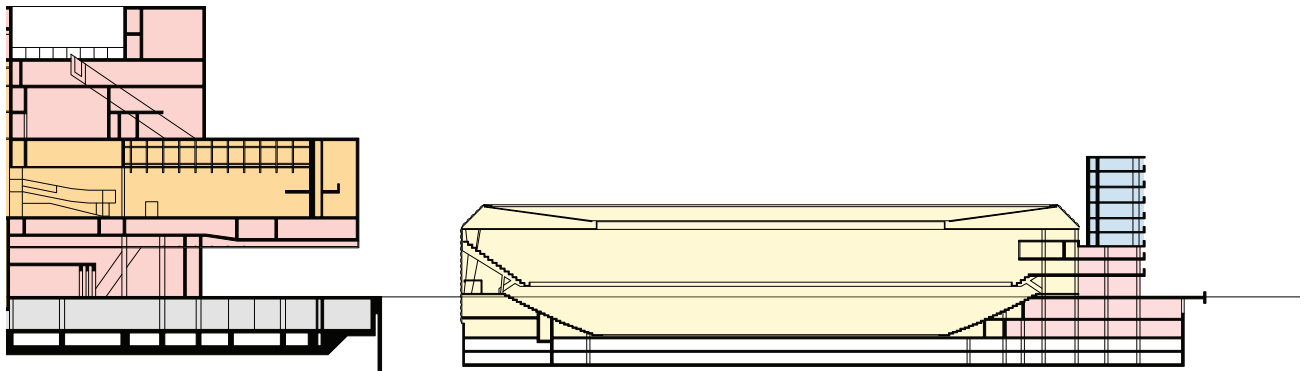
sports facilities



library



exhibitions area



St. Jakob Park

healthcare

green areas

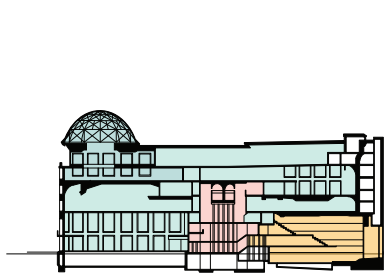
(movie) theatres

bar/restaurants

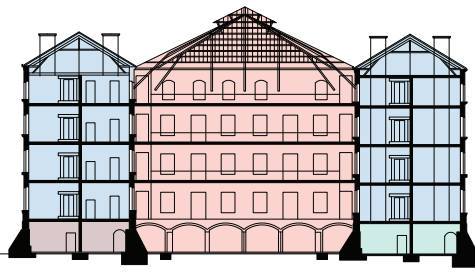
bath

parking

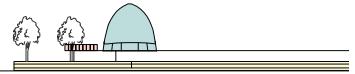
assembly spaces



Haus Vaterland



Familistère de Guise



Club for a New Social Type



housing



working
offices



shopping



market



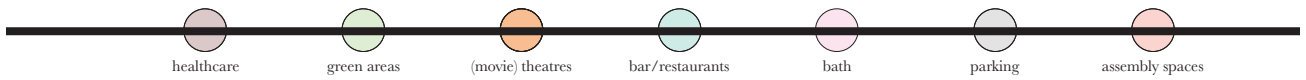
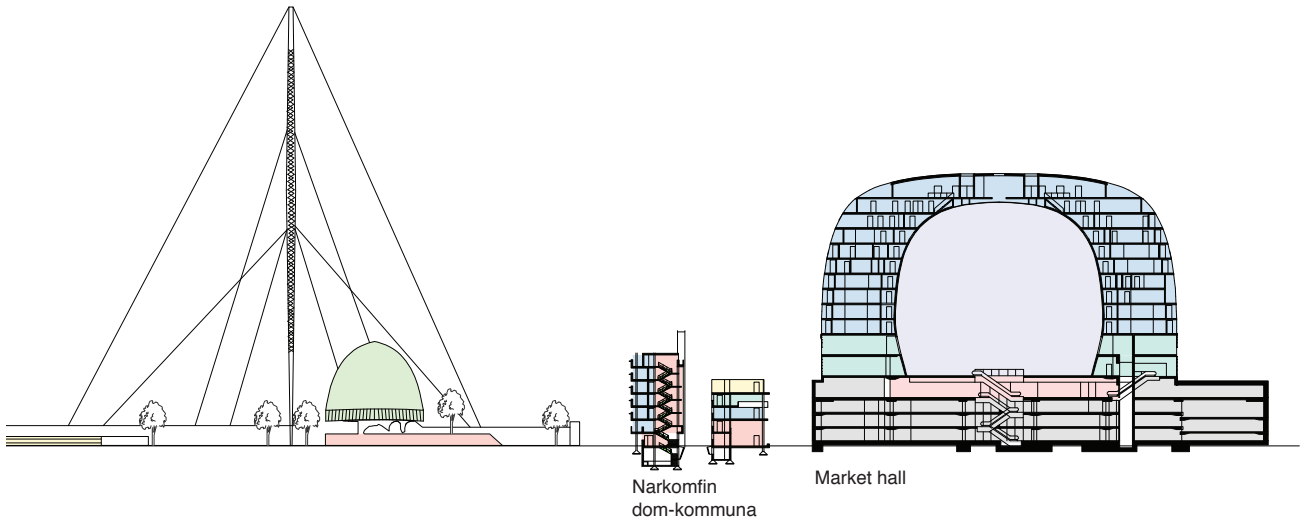
sports facilities

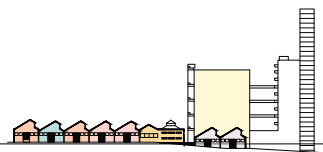


library

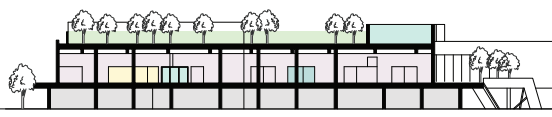


exhibitions area





SESC Pompeia



Facebook Headquarters



housing



working
offices



shopping



market



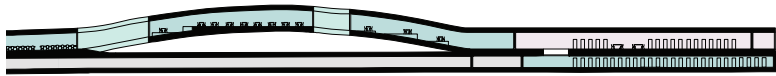
sports facilities



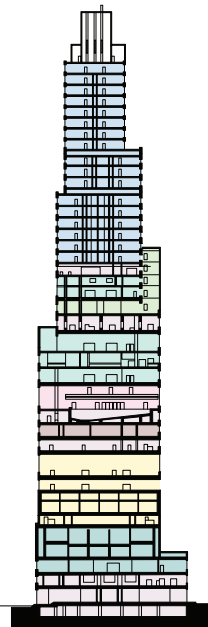
library



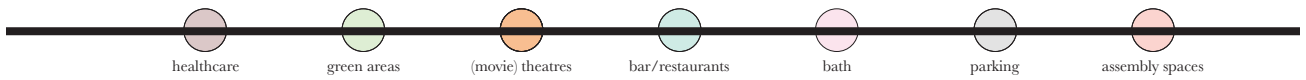
exhibitions area



Rolex Learning Center



Downtown Athletic Club



healthcare

green areas

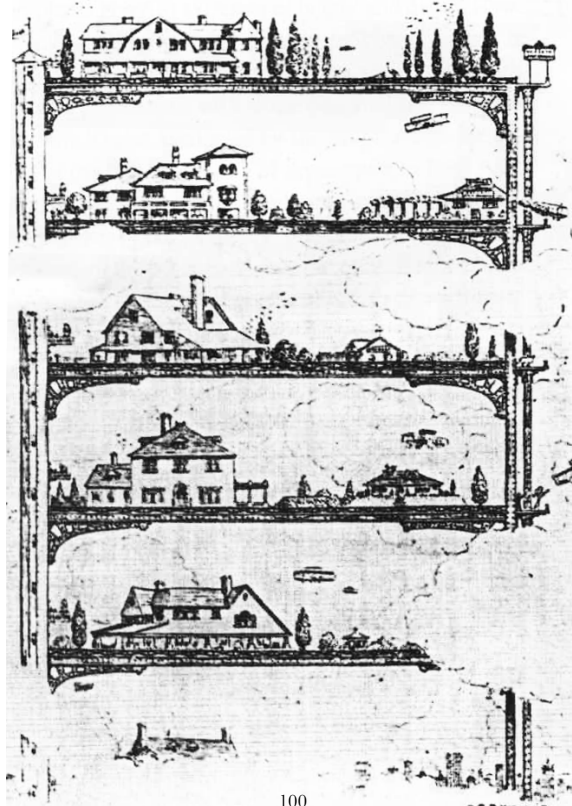
(movie) theatres

bar/restaurants

bath

parking

assembly spaces



'1909 theorem': cartoon of the skyscraper seen as an illimitate territory where urban functions can be piled up infinitely.

The ambition to enhance the offering of programs and functions means suggesting and improving new ways of exploiting an architecture, new ways of spatial and social interaction, new ways of togetherness.

Projecting future habits and users into a building also leads to a different interpretation of the activities sheltered inside. Multiple programs could enrich and disturb each other increasing the complexity of the environment by dis-cross and trans-programming. If "specific needs has specific objects" while "desire, on the other hand, has no particular object, except for a space where it has fully play", as Lefebvre reminds us in his *The Production of Space*, the social condenser could embrace all the complexities of the indefinite passions shaping fresh layouts for yet-uninvented thoughts and actions.

Behaving as a cross-fertilizers, its floors could be filled up of life and unusual relationships waiting for its users to consequently play their role. Our information era, sustained by the advancement of

new technologies and a tentacular network society, is requiring a peculiar approach to architecture. Nowadays, the grand project, portrayed by the single function - the *institution* -, could hinder a collectivity more and more used to be always available - "online" - connected by the invisible net.

Certainly, exploring and investigating new typologies able to cross-, trans-, dis-program will produce innovative events only if the general public, in turn, will be ready to actively accept the questioning of archetypical functions and to plunge itself into new challenges.

Our twenty case-studies seem to search for innovative form of interaction, mixing - sometimes in a not-so-orthodox way - activities and services, strongly improving the possibilities to collect, compress and condensate the largest number of users. In its broad definition, in fact, the notion of promiscuity is linked to the concept of interweaving casual relationships with different actors, implying a condition of licentiousness and randomness.
































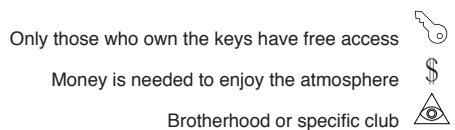
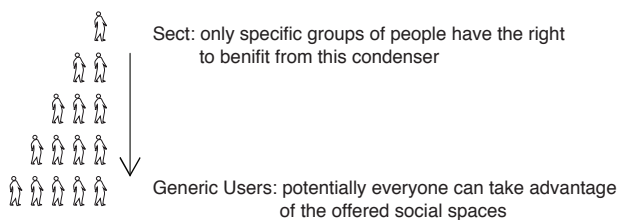
Bazaar, interior

GENERIC VS SECT



Gentlemen Athletic Club, barber floor

	Baths of Caracalla	
	Palazzo della Ragione	
	Scuola Grande di San Marco	
	Kashan bazaar	
	Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II	
	Cafe Pedrocchi	
	Familistère	
	Karl Marx-Hof	
	Club of the new social type	
	Narkomfin dom-kommuna	
	Haus Vaterland	
	Downtown Athletic Club	
	Fun Palace	
	SESC Pompeia	
	St.Jakob-park	
	Rolax Learning Center	
	Market Hall	
	Communal Villa	
	Taipei Performing Art Center	
	Facebook Headquarters	





A dystopian dérive?

“In effect, the apartment block was a small vertical city, its two thousand inhabitants boxed up into the sky.”

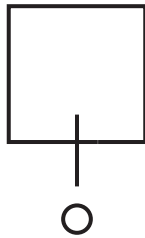
¹BALLARD J.B., *High-Rise* (1975)

HIGH RISE

“Ballard’s finest novel
... a triumph”
The Times

“The more arid and affectless life became in the high-rise, the greater the possibilities it offered. By its very efficiency, the high-rise took over the task of maintaining the social structure that supported them all. For the first time, it removed the need to suppress every kind of anti-social behavior and left them free to explore any deviant or wayward impulses. It was precisely in these areas where the most important and interesting aspects of their lives would take place. Secure within the shell of the high-rise, like passengers on board an automatically-piloted airliner, they were free to behave in any way they wished, explore the darkest corners they could find. In many ways, the high-rise was a model of all that technology had done to make possible the expression of a truly free psychopathology.”¹

Would you ever believe that, in the best of all possible worlds, living together, sharing facilities and heats, interacting with people similar to us - or totally different - could become a nightmare? If we are not able to know *a priori* what people would do under compression, Ballard’s sharp pen describes one of the worst scenarios. In his skyscraper - crowned by a totally artificial Eden Garden (“see *Artificial Nature* in *Ostranenie*) - the trans-programming is superb: residents can take advantage of a supermarket, a bank, a gym, a junior school and swimming pools just choosing a floor in the high-speed lifts. As the architect piled all the urban commodities one on the other, he causes the rise of a new disorderly society between the walls of the tower block, cutting out any contact with the exterior world and making inhabitants loose all sense of time. When the amenities of the high-rise stop working with no maintenance, violence will prevail revealing man as a real *homini lupus*, waiting for imposing his own’s supremacy within a building already falling into pieces. We are here witnesses of the sinking of a social condenser, failing in fostering interactions, destroying itself instead.



The inventory of different kind of users our buildings can host, is an index worthy of attention to measure the degree of potential social condensation a building can provide. The more a social group is restricted and specific, the more boundaries will generate tangible thresholds, marking a strong differentiation between those who are allowed to benefit from the building and those who are left outside, « the strangers ».

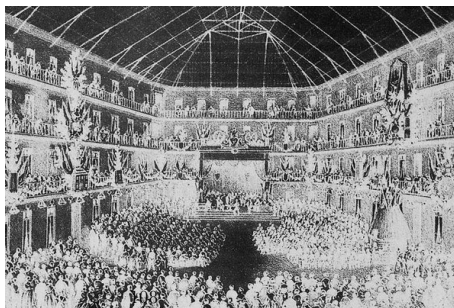
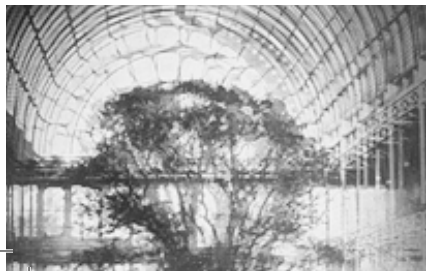
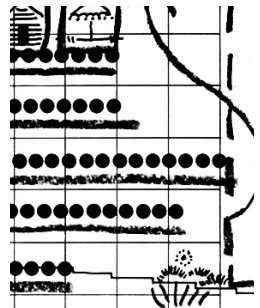
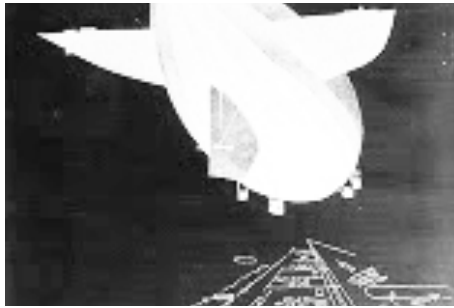
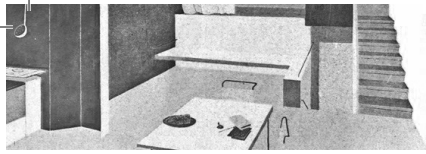
The way these edges are underlined in the architecture and used by the groups can reveal the grade of confidence or fears presented in the container itself or, at the contrary, the pleasure to embrace the change and the different. How the borders are marked and controlled helps defining the possibilities of social inclusion or exclusion a condenser

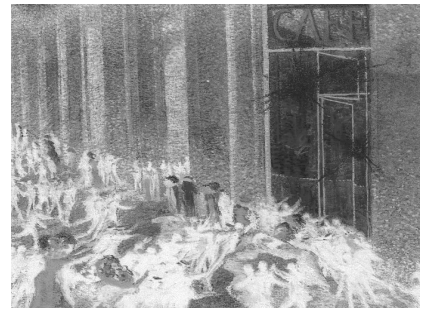
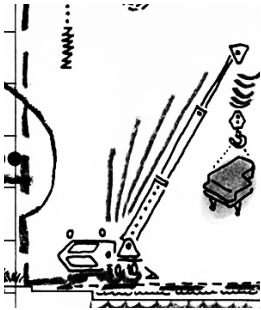
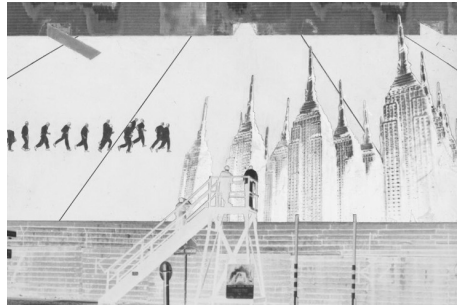
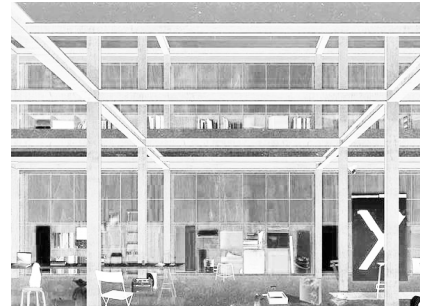
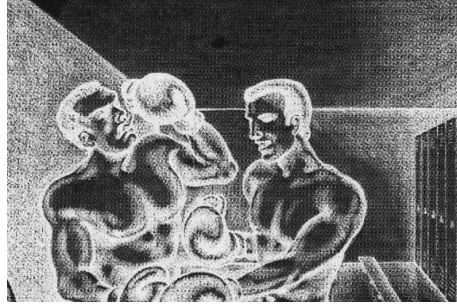
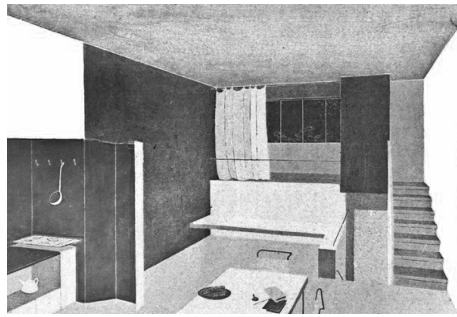
is able to offer (*see *Protection*). Spatial patterns can disclose potential interface between the so-called inhabitants and strangers. Thus, working on the borders means make the edges between these different realms - the domain of the others and the one of the approved occupants - blurrier and blurrier, composing a sort of social medley of users and forms.

Image from HILLIER and HANSON, *The social logic of space* (1989). Here the simplest structure is shown: the categorie of inhabitants is protected by precise borders drawing a rigid line between them and the world of strangers. The circular element, seen as a potential interface between the two realms, could be the kickstarter of a new way to see the others, considering him as a visitor. The passage, the new threshold would delineate a new diaphragm in including differences inside a definite container.

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Unexpected / Ostranenie/





Mix & Match

*“Eating
oysters with
boxing
gloves,
naked, on the
nth floor”*

¹RENDELL Jane (2017), p.582

quotation and image taken from
KOOLHAAS Rem, *Delirious New York*
(1978), Downtown Athletic Club, pp.
152-159

MIX AND MATCH:

“Select and combine different but complementary items, such as clothing or pieces of equipment, to form a coordinated set.”

Example sentences: *‘mix and match this season’s colours for a combination that says ‘winter.’*

‘Each of the ingredients imparted a characteristic colour to the food, so it was important to know how to mix and match.’

(English Oxford Living Dictionary © 2017 Oxford University Press)

As matrix of production of different perception of the ordinary, the *ostranenie* takes advantage of the mechanism of condensation. As Jane Rendell underlines, we have no idea of what people could do while being compressed.

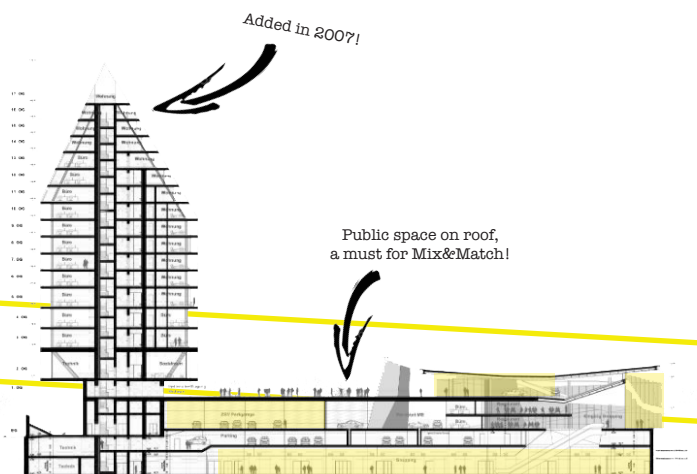
“Perhaps under compression or condensation they will do something completely unexpected?”





For the occasion Jaques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron have really dared! They chose to put together a residence for the elderly (1, available on tertianum.ch!) with the official stadium of the FC Basel (2,4, you can find more information on its site fcb.ch), without forgetting to think to shopping (3, obviously on st-jakob-park.com) and working requests! Six years later they went back on the same site, developing a residential/office tower connected to the previous project.

Here the overlapping programs is truly neverending!



If you don't want to miss a match or if you finally decided to go and say hi to your granpa, don't worry about traffic! The stadium has its own train station!

A great mix of infrastructure and pleasure facilities, bravo!



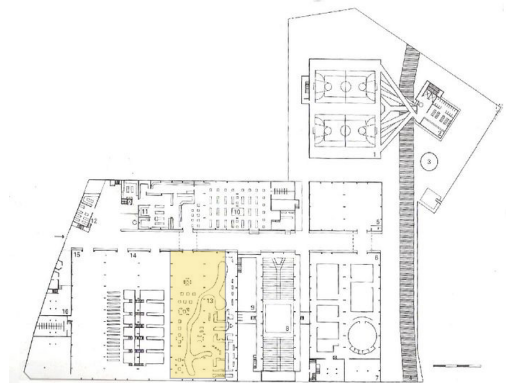
We can easily find the term « condensation » leafing through the freudian pages about dreamwork. Familiar events, people or things happen to be, often in an obscure way, compressed, shaping totally new and unpredictable situations.

In the *Mix&Match* activity, the impression of usual functions is molded again by different relations between them.

“As perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic”, turning unconsciously into something immediately recognizable, almost banal. That is why combining various programs - in maybe non-orthodox juxtaposition - within a same volume offer an interpretation of an experimental defamiliarization of space.

Having oysters sounds perfect on a beach near Bordeaux but it could result more disturbing while being (un) dressed like a boxer and surrounded by naked strangers. Therefore, if we admit the role of the fireplace as the heart of the intimate part of one own's home or, in a more public sense, as the bonfire during a summer camp, it will be more bizarre finding it in the middle of a great concrete slab in a brazilian cultural, leisure and sport center, surrounded by urban benches but supplied by a domestic hood. Curiosity and surprise would surely whet some social buttons. capable of making people play and meet in a totally different way of togetherness.

Thus, the social condenser properly deploys programmatic layering “to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and to generate through their interference unprecedented events” as Koolhaas assumes. The infinite floors of the Downtown Athletic Club or the amusing union between the biggest stadium in Switzerland with a retirement home feed on the same sensation of unexpected and estrangement. Eating oysters with just boxing gloves on, on an indefinite story of a NY skyscraper suggests a feeling of defamiliarization of something that could be considered totally normal just changing some factors.



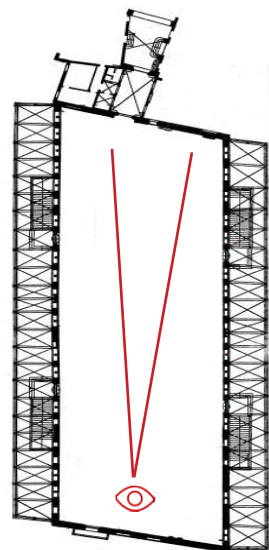


SESC Pompeia, fireplace

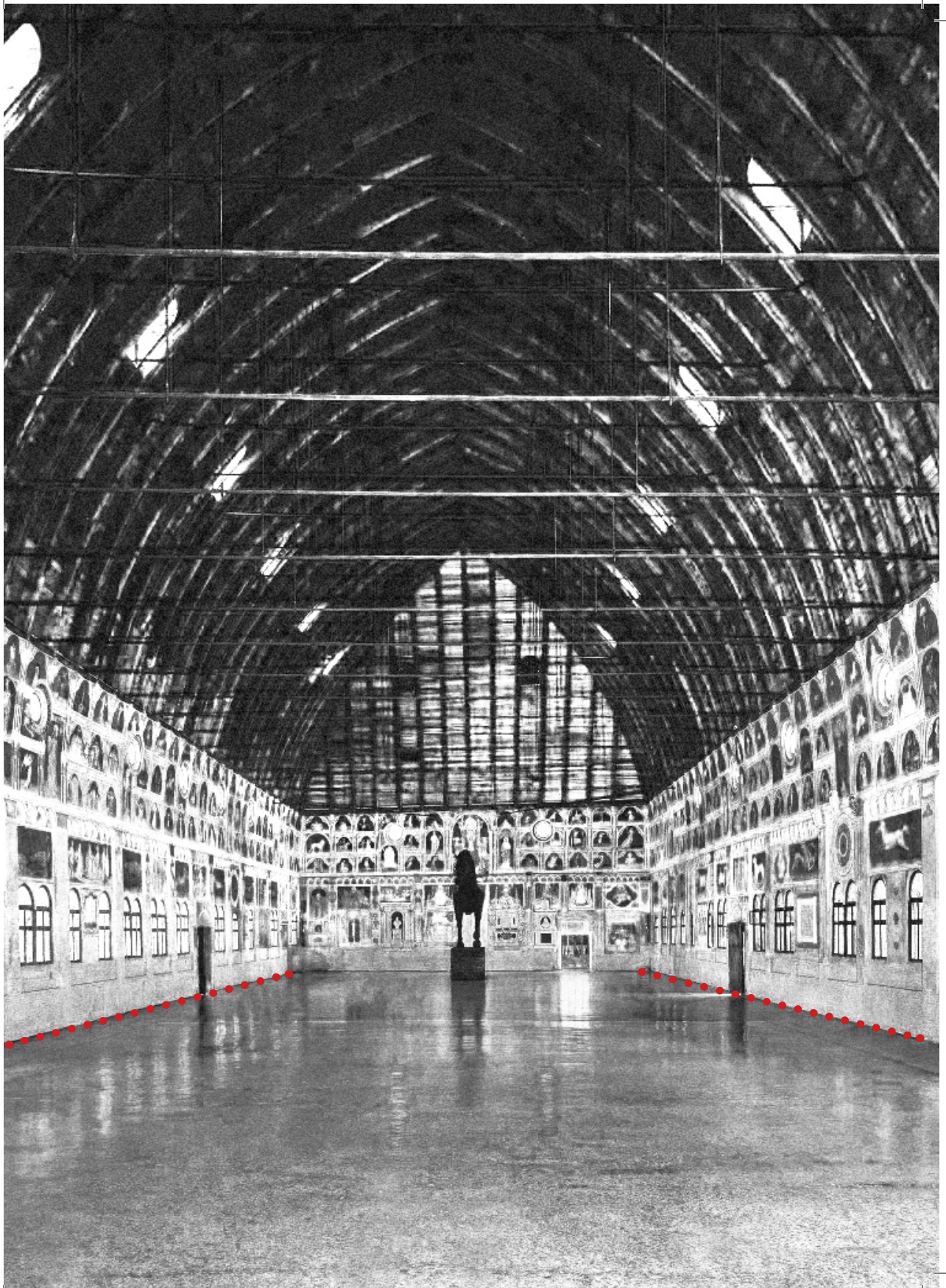
Perspective VS агонотомия

If the perspective view obliges the spectator's eye to just focus on one single point the anamorphosis invites to get lost and to try to determine, to re-shape something that is not immediately understandable. This technique was especially in vogue during the seventeenth century when arts sought to amaze more and more the users. This *perspective curieuse* allows to stun and to de-familiarize observers involved giving them the opportunity to become active members of the construction and the development of their experience in the space. Scenographic studies on angular or eccentric perspectives followed the same intentions of astonishment.

Without bringing up the Maignan's St. Francis of Paola in Trinità dei Monti in Rome or the researches by Nicéron we are going to use the term "anamorphosis" in his largest meaning of projection of a new, different shape of something in order to confuse and surprise.

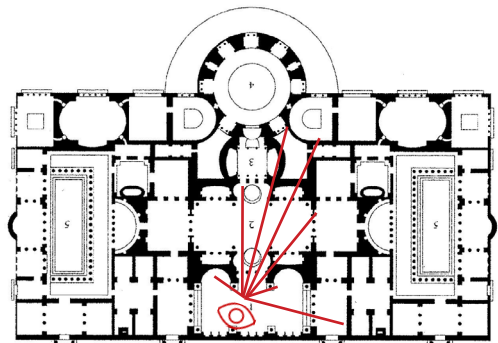


Palazzo della Ragione

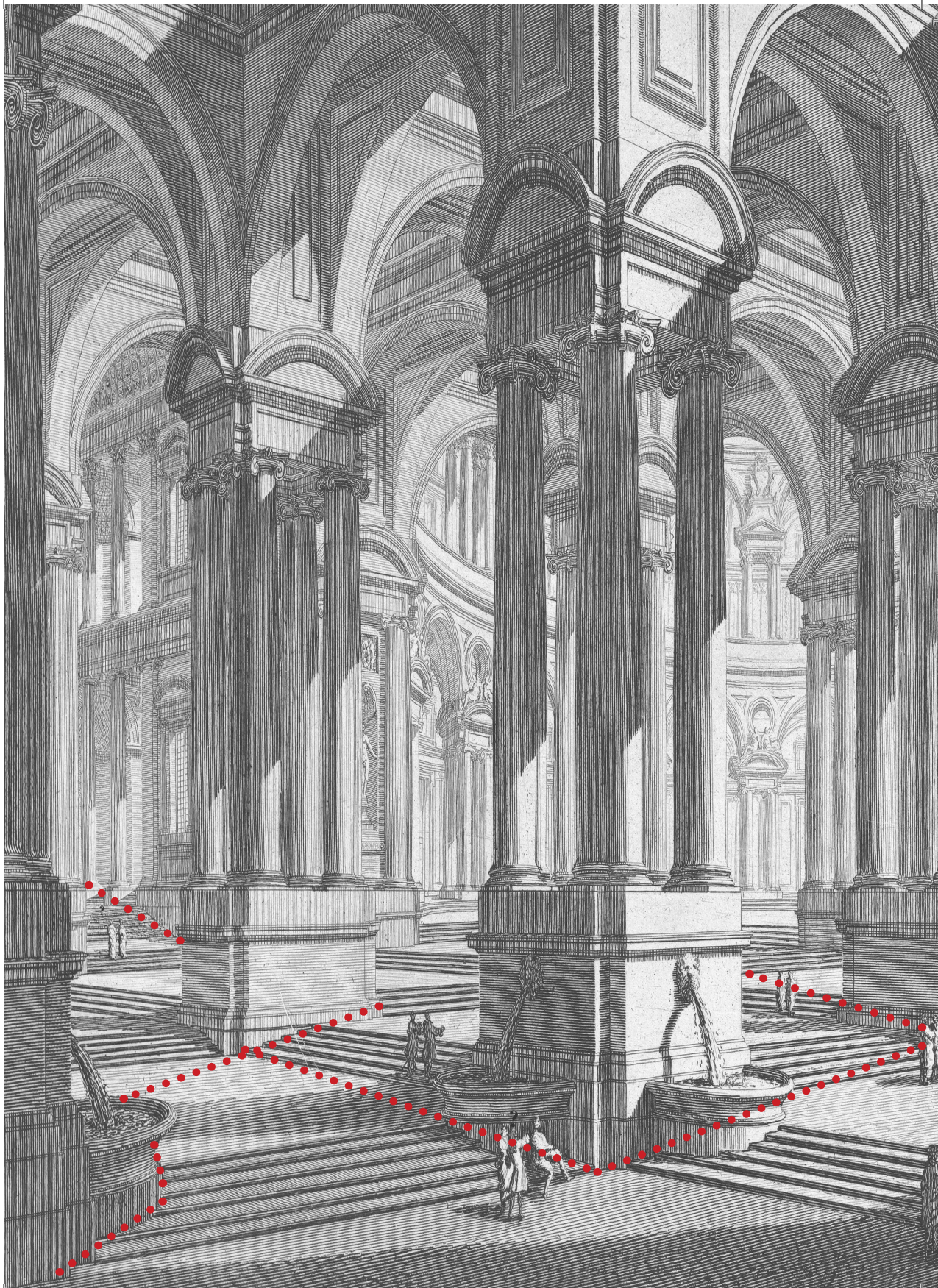


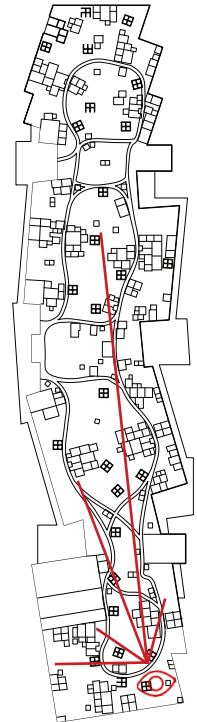
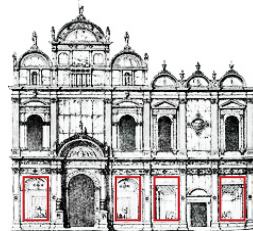
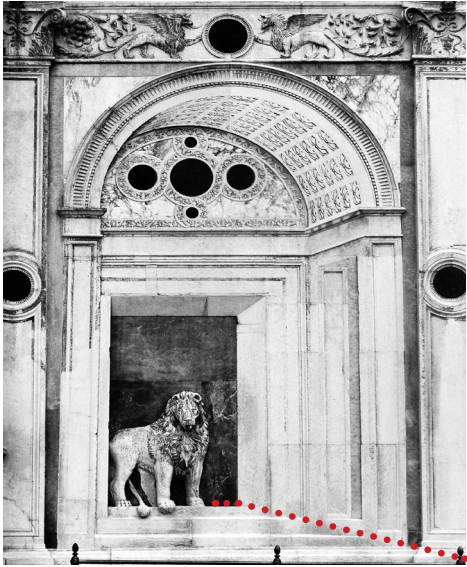
The easy sense of protection and control given by a great hall free from visual obstacle, totally shielded - the feeling of the shrine of the Salone in the Palazzo della Ragione - is totally shattered in anamorphosis surges. The magnificent gravures by Piranesi remind us, though his eighteenth-century lens, a glorious Roman past where architecture was filled with wonder, surprise and astonishment. Different points of interest took the place of a single ante-litteram vanishing point, proposing various paths to choose in exploring the artifact. Thus the visitors is offered an active role and becomes freer to discover, get wrong, interact with spaces and people according to his own needs and desires. From 212 AD until nowadays, the examples of a shifted visual approach are numerous. The brand-new Facebook headquarters boasts the greatest open space in the word but still, offers curious viewpoints far from the only perspective direction, improved by the possibility to observe and disclose the project looking down from breaches in the upper artificial Eden garden.

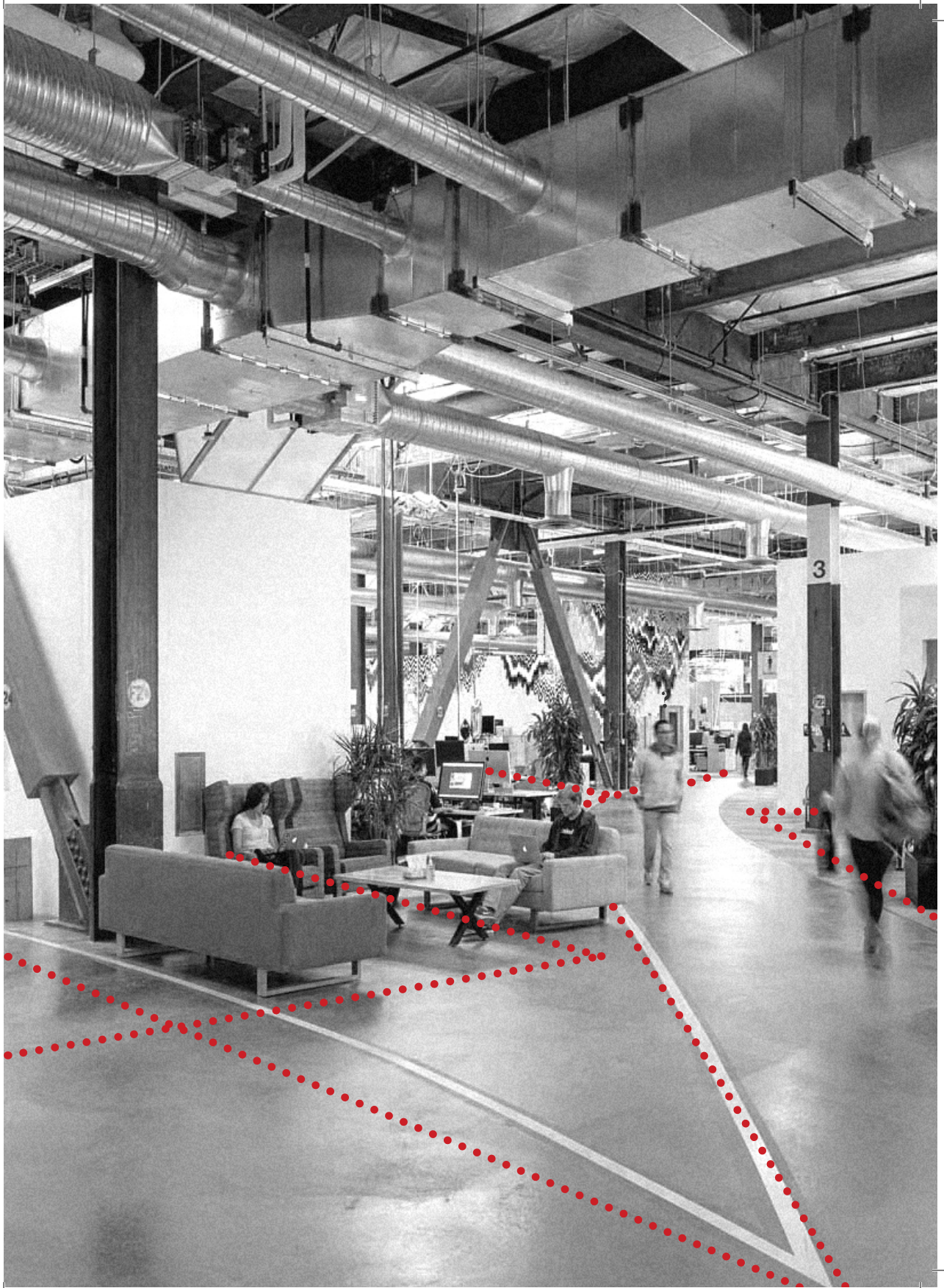
Ironically, the front of the Scuola Grande di San Marco - known for its vast single room where the impressive paneled ceiling guides the view towards its very Renaissance single point - presents an appealing visual experiments. The precious flatness of the facade is striken by four *trompe-l'oeil*, addressing the observer towards different vanishing points hidden by the sculpted columns. In sheltering the entrance doors, they cheat our eyes and break the golden perspectival rules. The resulting illusion of a three-dimensional space emphasizes the spatial relationships with the facing square, enriching of ambiguities the access to the Scuola.

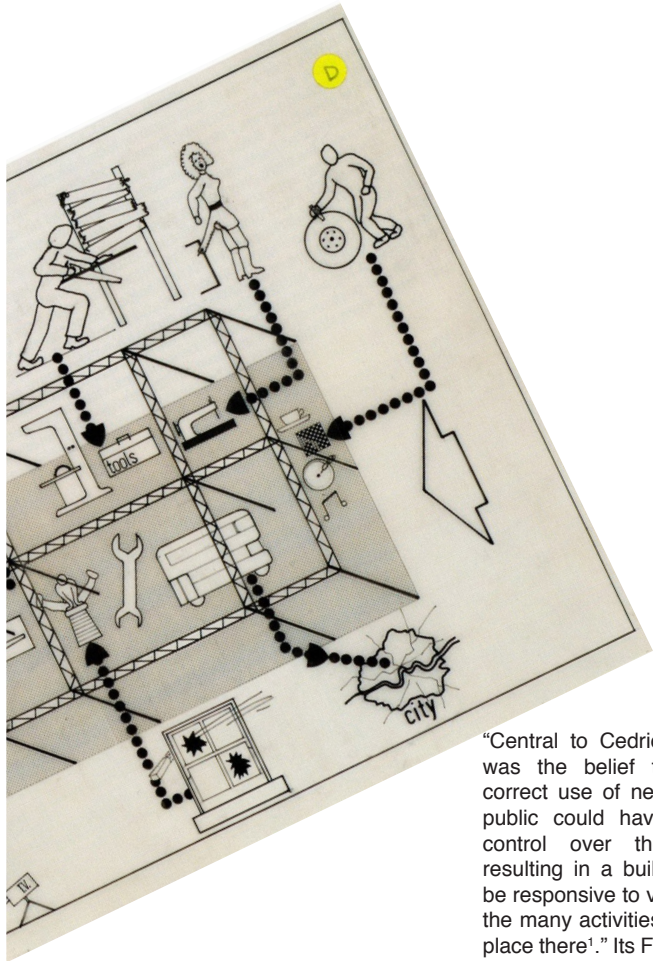


Above, baths of Caracalla. Right "Stairways adorned by magnificent architecture" by Piranesi





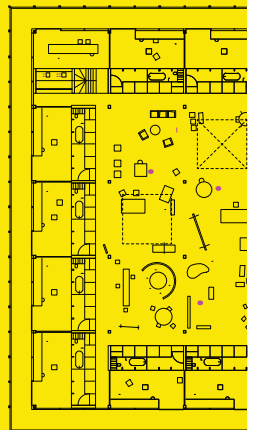
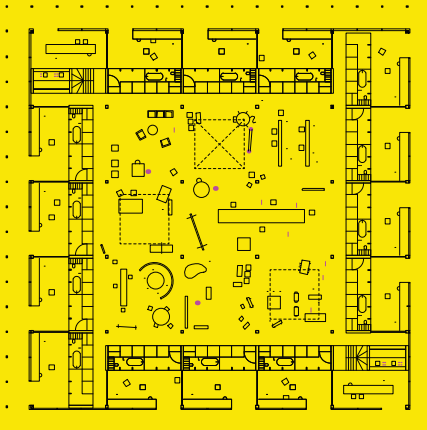
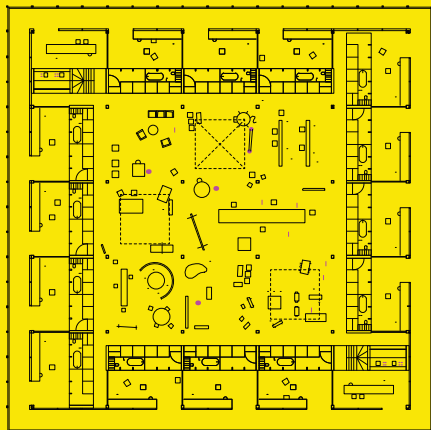
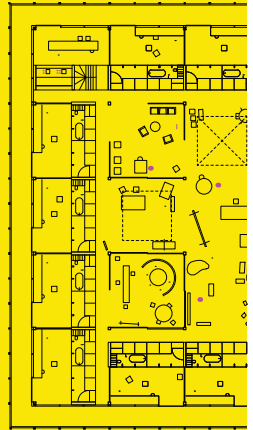
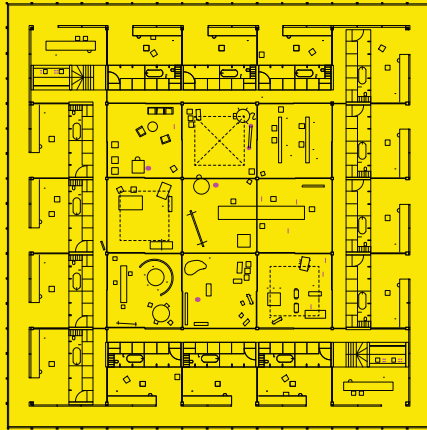
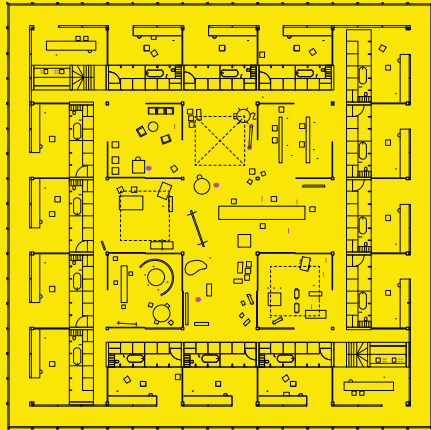




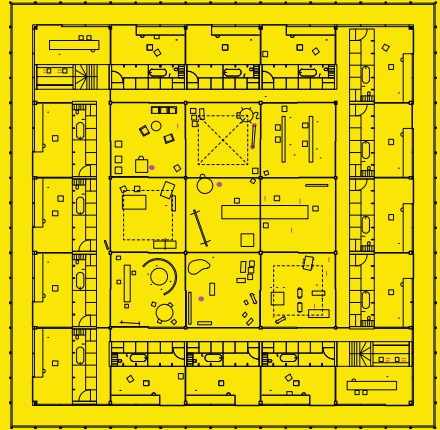
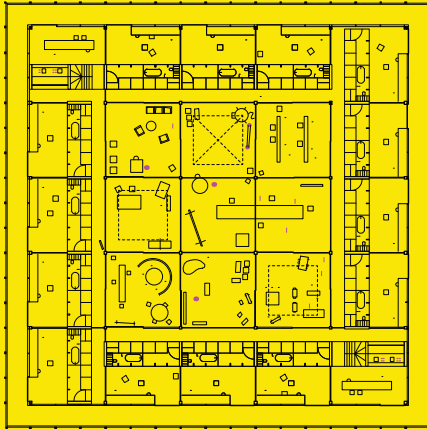
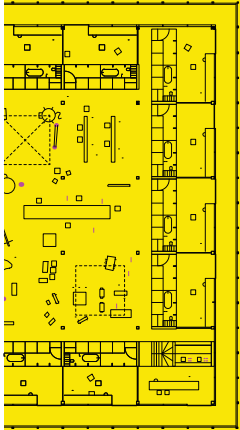
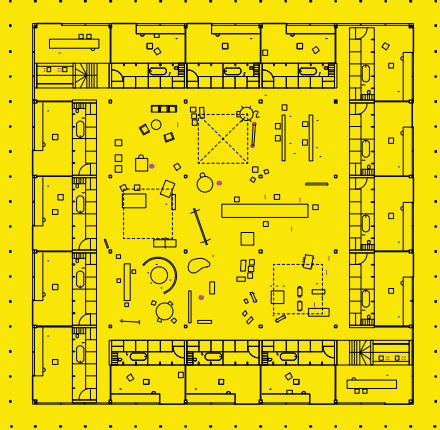
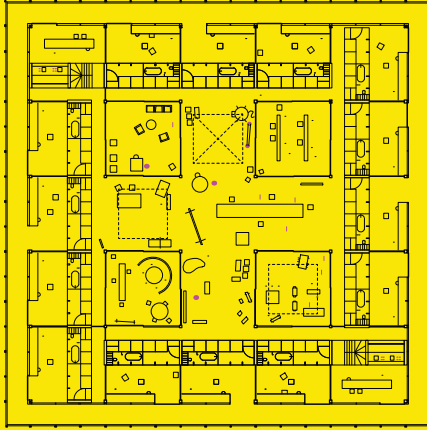
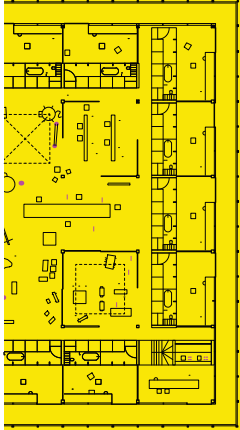
“Central to Cedric Price’s practice was the belief that through the correct use of new technology the public could have unprecedented control over their environment, resulting in a building which could be responsive to visitors’ needs and the many activities intended to take place there¹.” Its Fun Palace, with its free structure, would have offered a tool box of mobile platforms, ceiling and floors units to be infinitely exploited. Potentially every module have been continuously assemblable by users driving the cranes, moving and re-arranging the space infinitely. A same intention of charging people of decisional power in the architecture they are experiencing

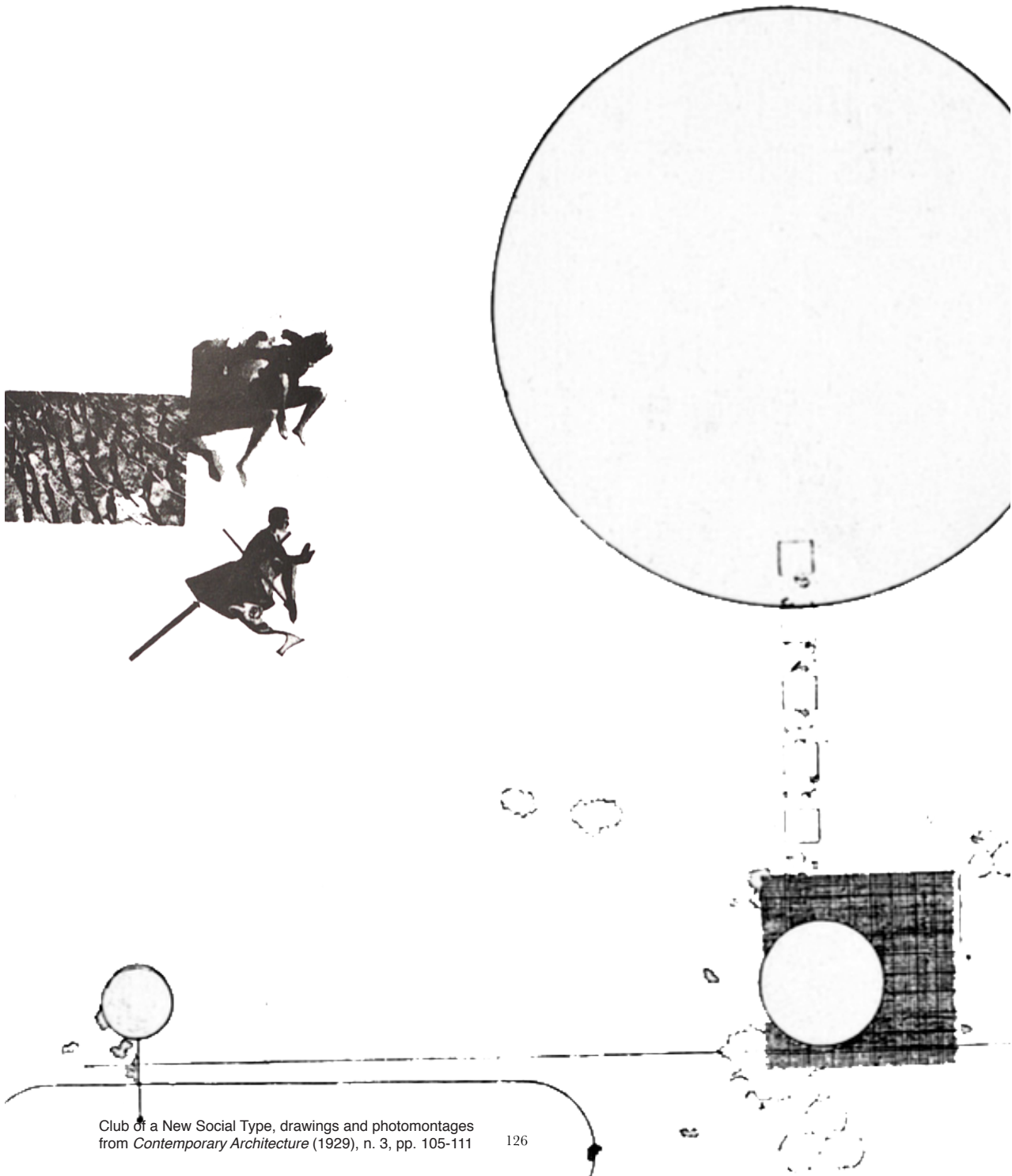
can be found in the experimental Villa for artists by Dogma. Here the partition walls dividing the private space from the more public one are potentially in the hand of the inhabitants. This continuous variations on a theme is the leitmotif of the Taipei Performing Arts Center where the three stages are totally shapeable by needs of audience and actors. Almost one hundred years ago, in Leonidov’s attempt to dignify workers’ (*citizens*) role in the society, a similar attention to the active tasks of users is shown. For his New Social Type, he proposes in fact unrestricted uses of the space in a *park-like* approach in order to let the intellectual needs of workers develop autonomously.

¹ <http://www.interactivearchitecture.org/fun-palace-cedric-price.html>



Communal Villa



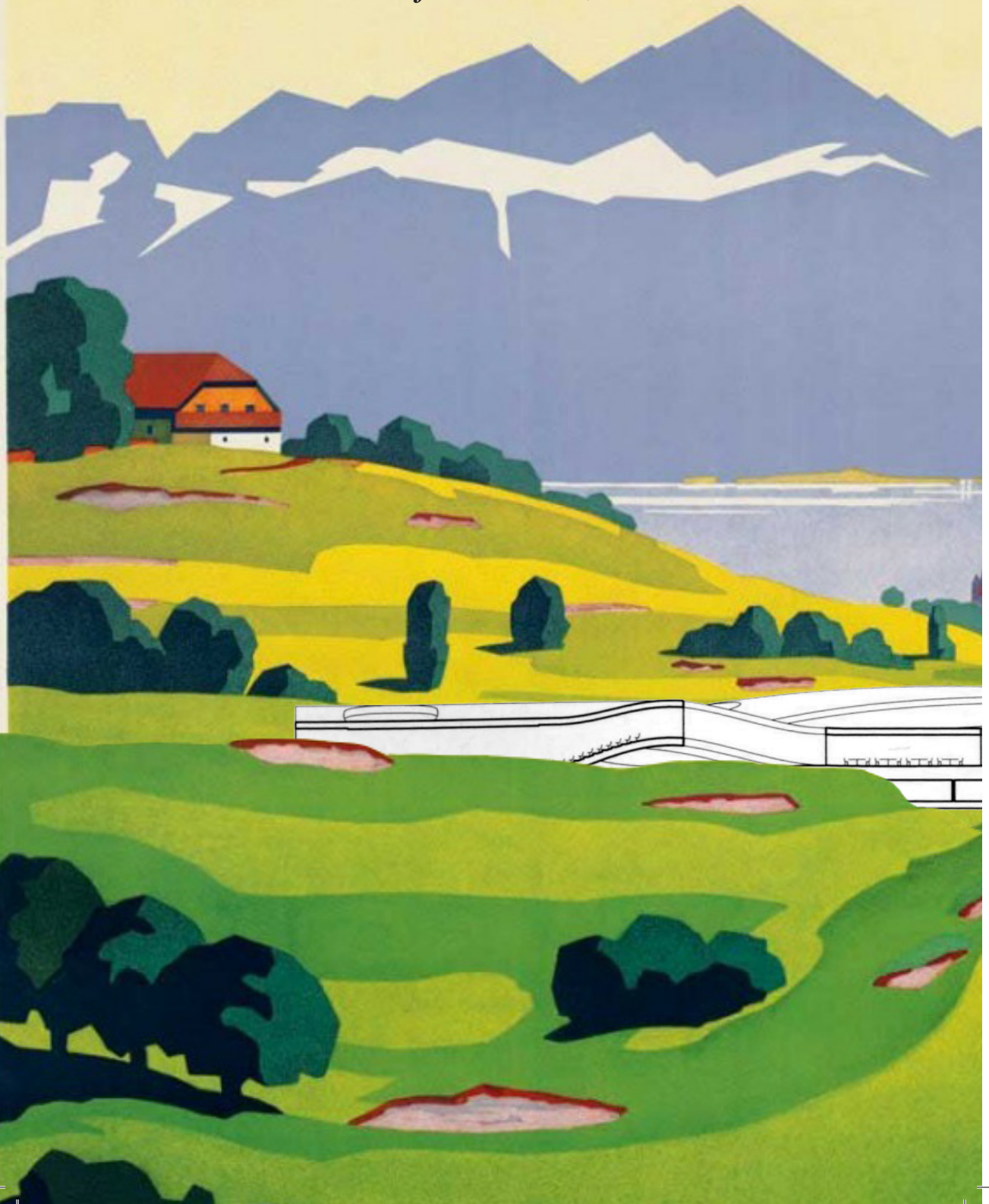


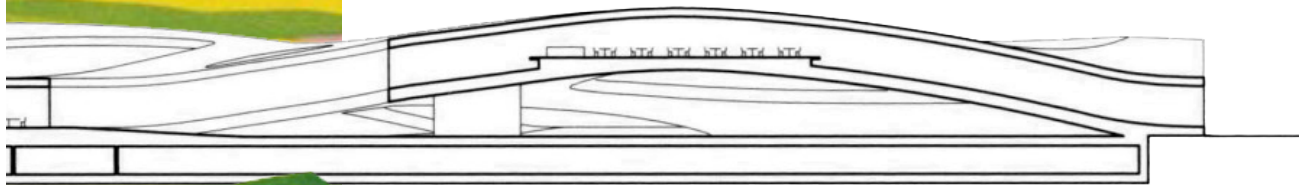
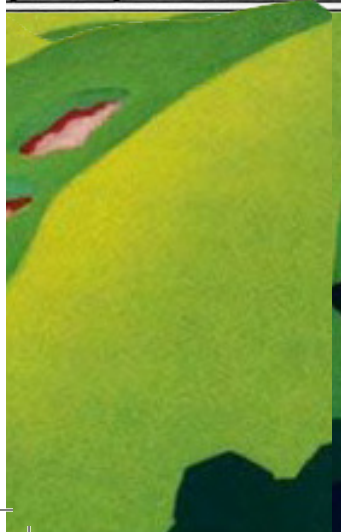
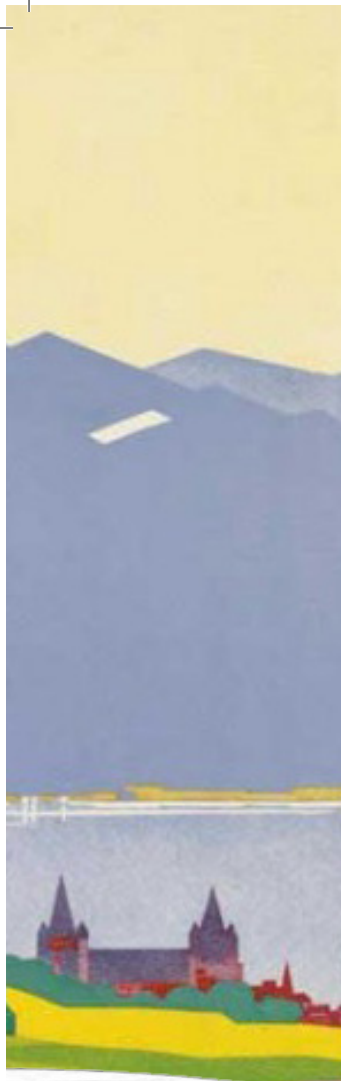
Club of a New Social Type, drawings and photomontages from *Contemporary Architecture* (1929), n. 3, pp. 105-111



■ Audience
■ Stage

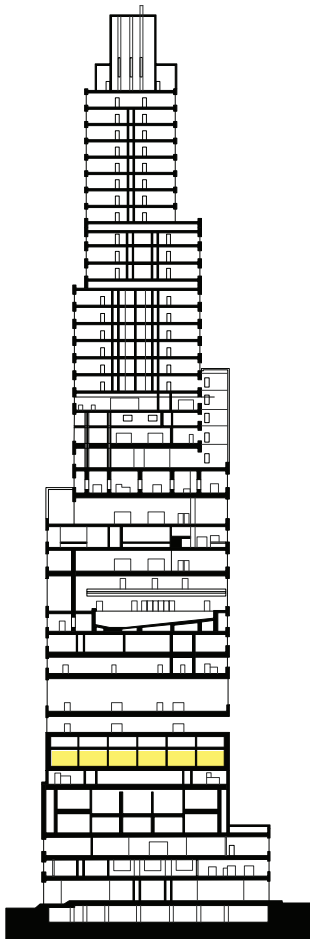
Artificial Nature





_When people find valleys, they tend to settle there and build villages.
When they find a hill, they like to build a beautiful cafe on the hill.
When they find slopes, they cover them in terraces.

We hope students can find nice places for themselves._
Ryue Nishizawa on the Rolex Learning Center



Downtown Athletic Club

Can nature be defamiliarizing?

If defamiliarization is intended to be the representation of common events in an unfamiliar way, how could nature be exploited to push aside the perception of the architectural and social mundane?

Imitating, reproducing, seizing natural environments in an artificial system address us to a different, shifted, slower perception of something completely usual (natural, of course) until that very moment.

The concrete transposition of swiss green slopes or the reconstruction of 9 acres of garden on a roof of a giant office building in California move (voluntarily or not) towards this direction. At the 7th floor of the Downtown Athletic Club it artificially becomes a “transplantation of an English landscape of hills and valleys, a narrow river that curls across a rectangle, green grass, trees, a bridge, all real but taxidermized in the literal realization of the ‘meadows aloft’. The interior golf course is at the same time obliteration and

preservation having been extirpated by the Metropolis, nature is now resurrected inside, the skyscraper as merely one of its infinite layers, a technical service that sustains and refreshes the Metropolitanites in their exhausting existence.

The Skyscraper has transformed Nature into Super-Nature¹.”

The same concept of Super-Environment was the input of the great Palmensaal in the berlinian Pleasure Palace. Under a modern dome, crowd danced surrounded by metal palm trees. Apparently, a bionic nature prothesis has conquered the highest floor of a perfectly functioning leisure machine, too. Besides, if nature cannot be physically reproduced, walls could be recovered by a Majolikahaus-like ornament, covering the interiors of a giant market of a luxuriant cornucopia of fruits and vegetables.

And after all, have you ever tried to fish in a concrete floor in São Paulo? Unexpected experience, we suppose.

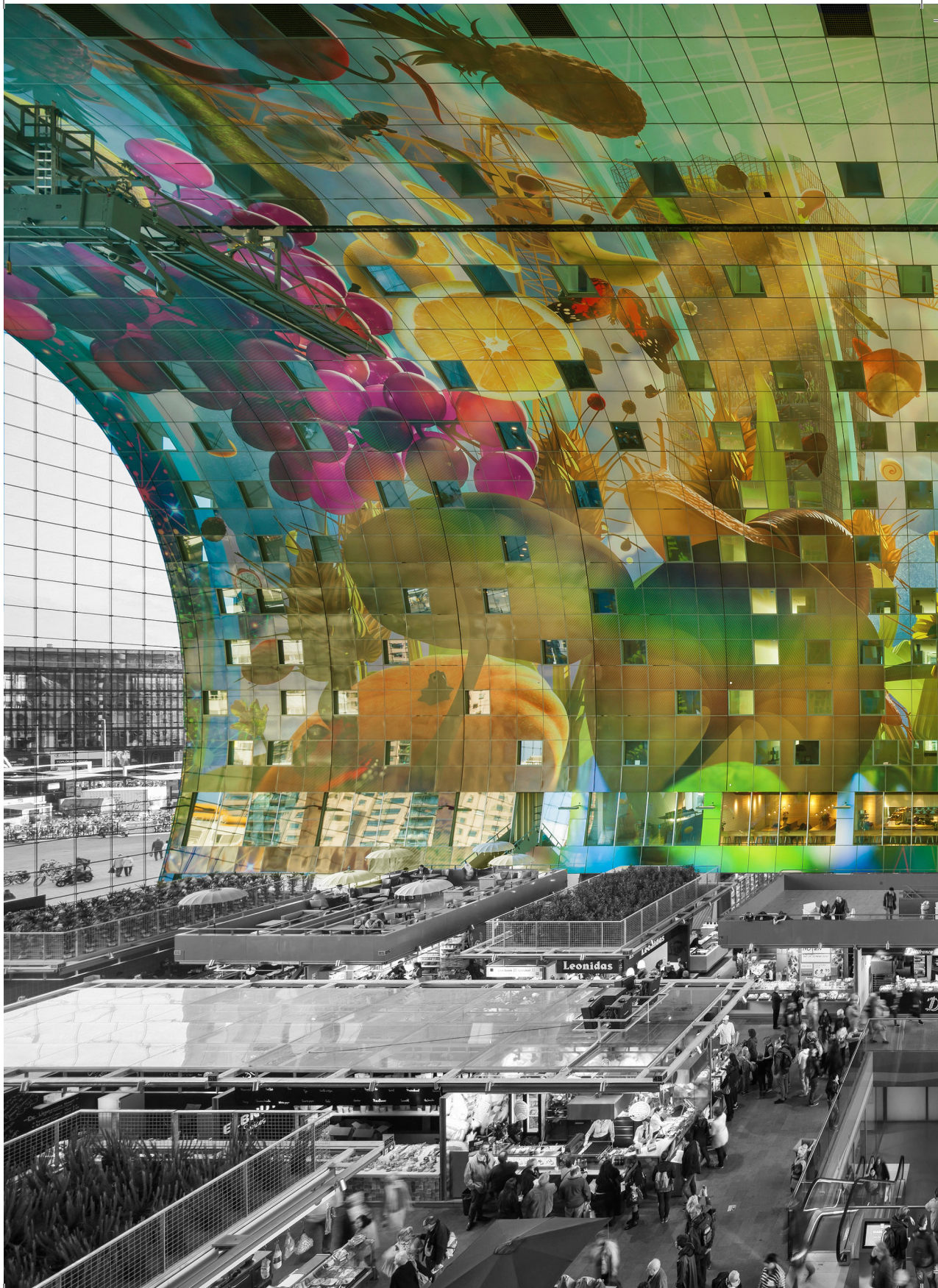
¹ KOOLHAAS Rem, *Delirious New York. A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1994, pp.155-157



Haus Vaterland, Palmensaal



*Above, SESC Pompeia, fishing in the river.
Right, Market Hall, wall cornucopie.*





Вордсипте

COMMUNAL INTIMACY

Nowadays we are extremely used to experience a really close proximity of bodies on urban means of transportation. The rush hour transfers oblige us to press up against strangers in a propinquity that could be judged questionable in other situations. In similar condition the intimacy of the person is extremely near to his public sphere. And what if in an analogous common everyday circumstance we found ourselves really close to others, completely undressed?

For Romans it was not at all a problem, baths were the place where the community could gather together and everyone, from the emperor to slaves, was naked in the same way while discussing about art and politics. A communal function here answered to collectivity needs proposing a different shade of the word intimacy.

A blurry line can also be drawn between the domesticity and the publicness of certain habits, behavior but also elements or spaces. Hanging out clothes or having coffee for breakfast in a room of fluttering curtains is a normal scenario within the private walls of one own's house but can become a particular moment of communal life if it happens in a concrete cultural center or in the meeting house par excellence of revolutionaries and intellectuals. Besides, sharing the more intimate parts of the home reveals a new attitude of living together, showing a research for new social interactions, far from an individualistic culture. In this way communal kitchens and laundries unveil the possibilities of more collective habits where, in an oxymoron, the individual divides his intimacy with the others.

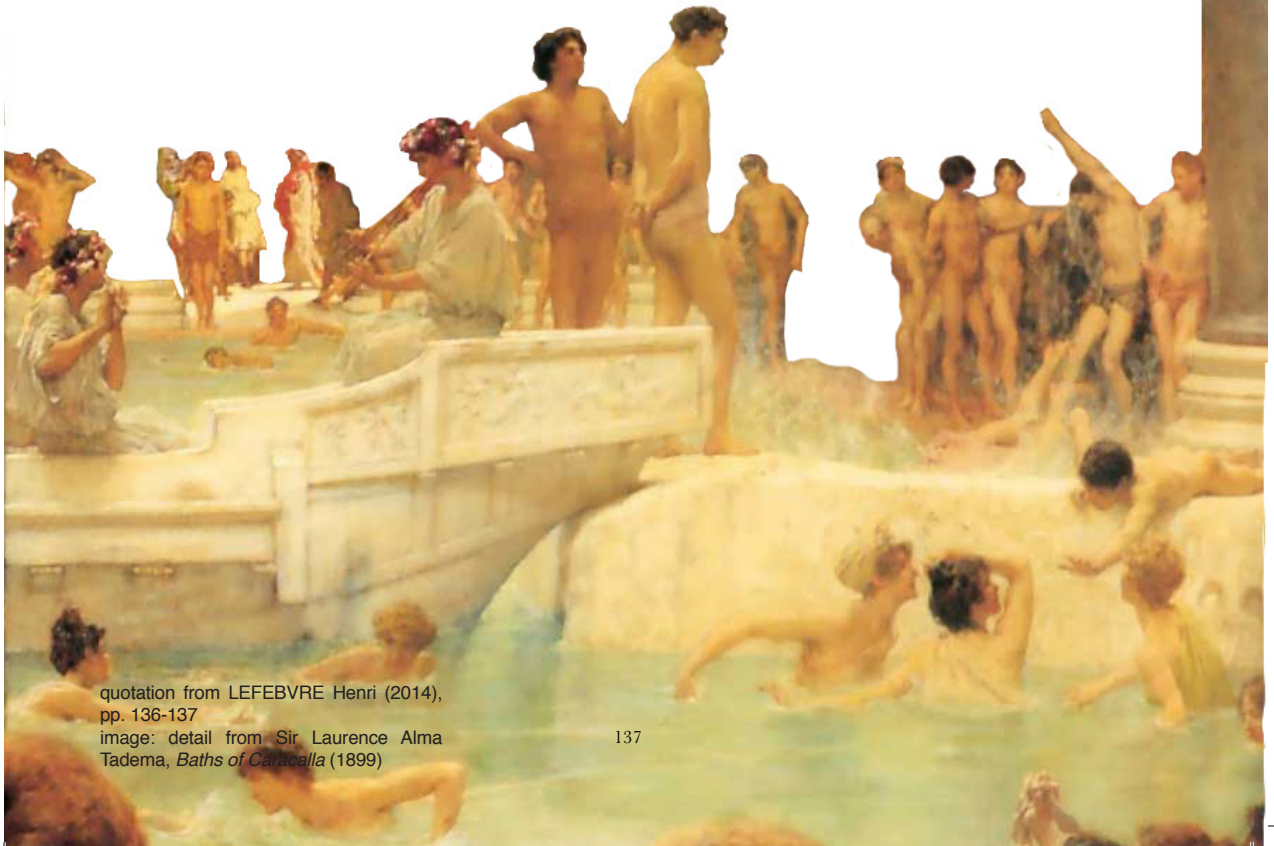
_ The most important pleasures were experienced within a social framework;
in other words, private and public were not yet separated.

The baths were a space of enjoyment, yes, perhaps the most successful of architectural spaces.

There is one reservation, however. While there is nothing sensual about them, they were, in a sense,
the place where the body as well as the mind prepared itself for sensuality.
And the preparation for sensuality in such a context may already constitute a kind of sensuality.

Obliged Proximity

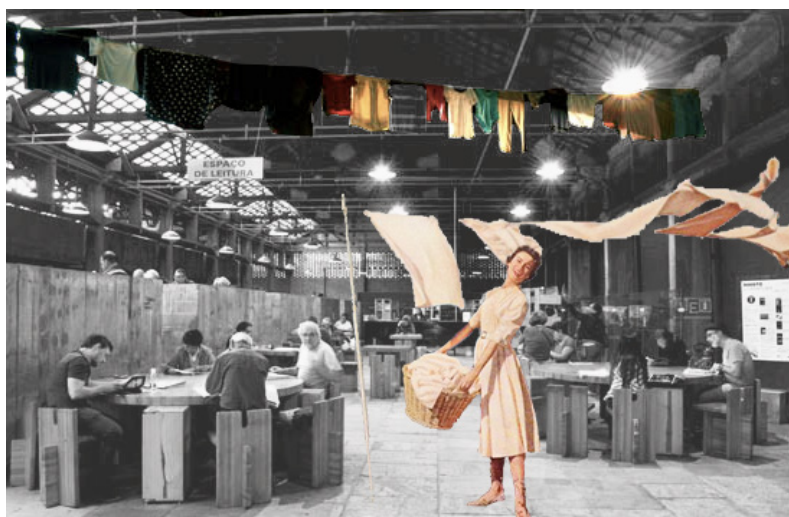
There was nothing erotic in this, of course, but the statues, the paintings, the beauty,
didn't they themselves constitute the best preparation, the best way to approach eroticism?_



quotation from LEFEBVRE Henri (2014),
pp. 136-137

image: detail from Sir Laurence Alma
Tadema, *Baths of Caracalla* (1899)

Below, SESC Pompeia, clothes hung out;
Cafe Pedrocchi, home-like coffee





Private spaces
for everyone

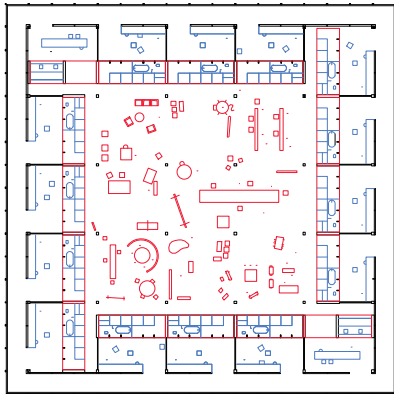


Above, Narkomfin dom-kommuna, communal kitchen;
Karl Marx Hof, communal laundry

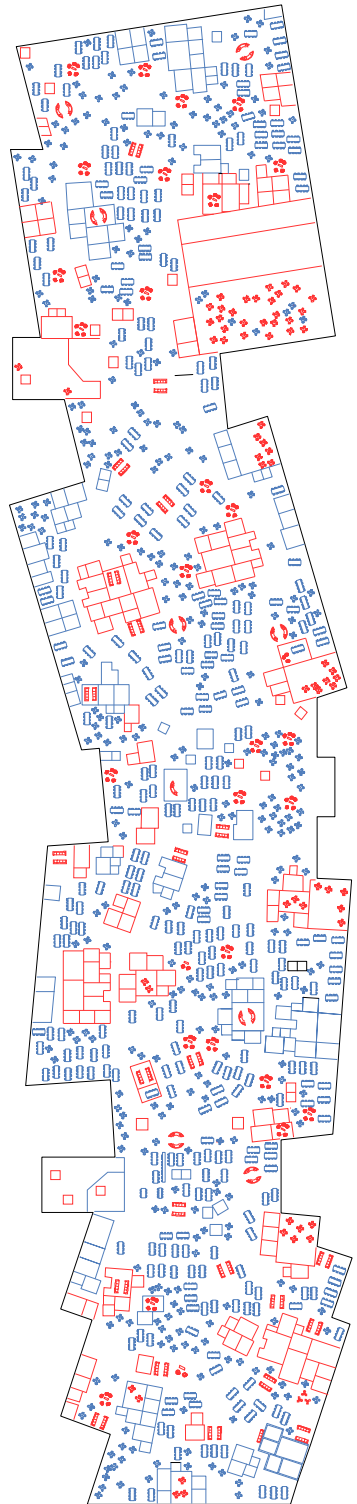
Work & Leisure

Technology has completely changed our way of working. A simple connection to internet allows us to accomplish our tasks wherever, whenever. Public spaces, from bars to libraries, are nowadays considered as potential working spaces. Not to be outdone, homes are receiving the same treatment: bedrooms can easily turn into practical private offices. In a complementary way, real working places offer a large amount of leisure facilities for the employees. From time to time, they take the shape of a fitness club, a bar or a resting space, making blurrier and blurrier the boundaries between typological forms and actions.

Work 
Leisure 



Communal Villa



Facebook Headquarters

Co - dividuality

Living together does not mean to lose every chance of being by oneself. The concept of the idiorhythmic way of life of monks perfectly embodies the role of the individual inside a sharing community, looking for a living-alone together, where a redefinition of public and private habits can shape new forms of collectivity but also help the single person to grow up by himself. The development of personal intellectual needs provided by Leonidov's clubs moved in this direction: thanks to the unrestricted uses of space, the worker searched for his own individual progress while being well integrated within a communal society. Being alone with others is what happens in the Rolex Learning Center glass bubbles. Looking for solitude here does not mean to be isolated. In fact, the transparency of walls blurs distances, conciliating the single person and the collectivity, staying in the middle, in a co-dividualit space.



Rolex Learning Center



a definition

The expression social condenser refers to a particular spatial concept where the physical association of a community within a well-defined architectural object aspires to conditioning a collective behavior of the society.

so·cial con·den·ser

Historical background. Historically the term has its roots in the period following the Russian Revolution, where architecture, strictly bound to the contemporary political vision, has the task to guide society toward a different, more egalitarian conception of public space. Through a drastic change of techniques and formal languages, it aims to break down traditional social hierarchies. Thus, in 1927, Moisei Ginzburg

claims the specific role the soviet architect has to assume in the definition of the social condenser of the age. Communal experiments like workers club, palaces of culture or social housing such as the Narkomfin building witness the great political importance of their re-forms. Fifty years later, on the students revolution's eve, the historian Anatole Kopp transfers the concept in France paving the way to lefebvrian theory about the dialectic relation between society and space. Their interdependence would have later led Henri Lefebvre toward the theorizing of a *collective luxury* everyone can take advantage of. However, the actual notoriety of the term is due to OMA's publication *Content* where the social condenser, saved from eternal oblivion thanks to a patent compiled *ad hoc*, is defined as a « Programatic layering upon vacant terrain to encourage dynamic

coexistence of activities and to generate through their interference, unprecedented events. »

It is not useless to add that, even if historically the concept is related to Red October events, an architecture intended as « collector of a collectivity », capable of hosting the *mise en scène* of the *res publica*, can be considered always present in our history pages.

An etymological interpretation. The lyrical strength of the term is linked to its appropriation of the definition of the electronic device storing energy within an electric field. A metaphorical difference of potential between the possibilities of gathering together at the exterior or the interior allows us to define it as a « storehouse of energy ». Once completed the activity of condensation, the object would permit the heat and tension to

COMDES

S O C I A L

transfer from the inner system to the external environment to finally accomplish its « magical-electrifying capacity ».

The paraphrases of the concept through a freudian interpretation appears nevertheless significant. From the german '*Verdichtung*', it corresponds to the fusion of two or more elements or ideas into a single composite or new image, as a particular manifest content. Like in the psychoanalytical dreamwork, the condenser could facilitate the mixture between daily circumstances and extraordinary events.

This particular process combines different contents and situations within a same scene, reassembling them in various ways in order to originate something completely new and without precedents.

Like all social experiments dealing with condensation, they can

cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. In fact, they can lead to phenomenons linked to neurotic symptomatology and to processes of verbal modifications in schizophrenic patients (i.e. the events recounted in *Highrise* by J.G. Ballard).

Definition. These buildings don't seem to necessarily answer to a specific form but they often present a strong physique du role within the urban tissue, making themselves appealing to the visitor and inviting him to take a look inside. The notion of protection appears to be typical of these architectural collectors; the almost obliged proximity among bodies, due to compression, manages to suggest a communitarian belonging, intimately associated to the condenser peculiarities. The interpretation given by Koolhaas

underlines another considerable characteristic of these objects: the search for a functional and social promiscuity through an intentional layering and intersection of programs - often not orthodoxly combined - is capable to generate, through their collision, unusual and unpredictable situations. In this way, the concept of the social condenser becomes tightly related to the rhetoric figure of the *Ostranenie* (from Russian, defamiliarization), showing common situations in an estranging, surprising way and spreading the germs of potential new social interactions. In this continuous research of the unexpected, traditionally accepted dualism are constantly questioned, making blurrier and blurrier the borders between concepts such as public and private, working and pleasure, individual and collective, solitude and solidarity.

Э М С Э Я

Condensatore sociale

Da Wikipedia, l'enciclopedia libera.

Con l'espressione **condensatore sociale** si indica un particolare concetto spaziale in cui l'associaz condizionare un comportamento collettivo della società.

Indice [nascondi]

- 1 [Cenni storici](#)
- 2 [Una lettura etimologica](#)
- 3 [Definizione](#)
- 4 [Note](#)
- 5 [Bibliografia](#)

Cenni storici [modifica | modifica wikitesto]

Storicamente il termine affonda le sue radici nel periodo successivo alla [Rivoluzione d'Ottobre](#) russ: aveva il compito di indirizzare, attraverso un drastico cambiamento di tecniche e linguaggi formali, v tradizionali gerarchie sociali. Così, nel 1927 Moisei Ginzburg rivendicava lo specifico ruolo dell'[arch](#) comunitari quali club operai, palazzi della cultura o alloggi collettivi come la Narkomfin dom-kommu Cinquant'anni più tardi, alla vigilia dei moti sessantottini, lo storico Anatole Kopp trasferisce il conce tra società e spazio. La loro interdipendenza avrebbe infatti condotto [Henri Lefebvre](#) verso la teoriz: termine si deve però alla pubblicazione da parte di OMA di *Content* in cui il cosiddetto *social conde* una "programmatica stratificazione su di un terreno vacante al fine di incoraggiare una dinamica co È utile aggiungere che, sebbene storicamente il concetto si rifaccia agli eventi dell'Ottobre Rosso, l' scena della *res publica* può essere considerata presente da sempre nelle pagine della nostra storia

Una lettura etimologica [modifica | modifica wikitesto]

Il termine deve la sua potenza lirica all'appropriazione della definizione del [componente elettrico](#) ca potenziale tra le possibilità di ritrovarsi insieme all'esterno e all'interno del condensatore permettere condensazione l'oggetto consentirebbe poi allo scambio di tensioni interne di trasferirsi verso l'amb Significativa è anche la parafrasi del concetto legata all'interpretazione freudiana del termine. Ques nuova immagine in un particolare contenuto manifesto. Come nel lavoro onirico quindi il condensat determinato processo combina diversi contenuti e situazioni all'interno di una stessa scena, riassen esperimento sociale legato alla compressione, però, il condensatore sociale può causare effetti indi manifestazione di fenomeni quali sintomatologia nevrotica e processi di modificazione verbale in pa in [Il condominio](#)).

socializzazione fisica di una comunità all'interno di un oggetto architettonico ben definito è indirizzata a

russo, momento nel quale l'architettura, strettamente legata alla contemporanea visione politica, si muove, verso una diversa concezione dello spazio pubblico più egualitaria, al fine di eliminare le **idee** dell'**architetto sovietico** nella definizione del condensatore sociale della loro epoca ^[1]. Esperimenti numerosi testimoniano ancora oggi la grande portata politica delle loro riforme.

concetto in Francia preparando il terreno alla teoria lefebvrina sul rapporto dialettico che soggiace alla realizzazione di un lusso collettivo, di cui tutti possono usufruire ^[2]. La contemporanea notorietà del **condensatore**, salvato dall'eterno oblio grazie a una schedatura compilata ad hoc, viene definito come "condensatore" a coesistenza di attività e di generare, attraverso la loro interferenza, eventi senza precedenti ^[3]. In questo senso, l'architettura intesa come "concentratore di una collettività", capace di ospitare la messa in scena di una storia.

condensatore è capace di immagazzinare energia in un campo elettrostatico. Una metaforica differenza di potenziale potrebbe quindi di definirlo come un magazzino di energia sociale. Completata l'attività di condensatore, l'ambiente circostante per realizzare finalmente a pieno la sua « magica capacità elettrificante^[4]».

Questo, dal tedesco **Verdichtung**, corrisponde infatti alla fusione di due o più elementi in una singola forma. Un condensatore potrebbe facilitare la mixité tra circostanze quotidiane ed eventi straordinari. Questo processo di assemblaggio potrebbe dare vita a condizioni completamente nuove, senza precedenti. Come qualsiasi processo di condensazione indesiderati, sebbene non tutte le architetture li manifestino. Può, infatti, causare la schizofrenia in pazienti affetti da schizofrenia^[5] (l'esempio più calzante si rifà all'episodio narrato da J.G. Ballard

Definizione [[modifica](#) | [modifica wikitestò](#)]

Questi manufatti non sembrano rispondere necessariamente a una forma specifica ma sono spesso all'osservatore e invitandolo ad addentrarvisi. Propria del loro carattere di accumulatori architettonici dalla compressione suggerisce inoltre un'appartenenza alla comunità, là riunita, intimamente associata. Una caratteristica rilevante di questi oggetti architettonici: la ricerca di una promiscuità funzionale e socialmente ortodossamente associati - è in grado di generare, con la loro collisione, situazioni inusuali, inattese alla figura retorica dell'*ostranenie* (dal russo, defamiliarizzazione), mostrando in maniera estraniante interazioni sociali. Nella continua ricerca dell'inaspettato, dualismi tradizionalmente accettati vengono quali pubblico e privato, lavoro e piacere, individuale e collettivo, solitudine e solidarietà.

Note [[modifica](#) | [modifica wikitestò](#)]

- ↑ "The second, positive stage of Constructivism [...] manifests itself in the specific role of the Soviet Anniversary of the October Revolution" in GINZBURG Moisei, LEONIDOV Ivan & KUZMIN Nikolai S 2017, pp. 584-628
- ↑ STANEK Łukasz, "Collective luxury", *The Journal of Architecture*, Vol. 22, Issue 3, 2017,
- ↑ KOOLHAAS Rem, *Content: triumph of realization*, Köln, Taschen, 2004, p. 73
- ↑ MURAWSKI Michał, « Introduction: crystallizing the social condenser», *The Journal of Architecture*
- ↑ https://www.filosofia.unimi.it/~giovannipiana/freud_lavoro_onirico/freud_02.htm , visitato il 18.11.

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esso dotati di una forte presenza scenica all'interno del tessuto urbano, rendendosi attraenti tonici è la nozione di protezione che questi offrono; la prossimità fisica tra gli individui che deriva associata alle peculiarità del condensatore. L'interpretazione koolhaasiana sottolinea un'altra sociale attraverso un'intenzionale sovrapposizione e intersezione di programmi - spesso non ttese, imprevedibili. È in questo modo che il concetto del condensatore sociale si lega strettamente iante, quindi sorprendente, situazioni comuni, e diffondendo così i germi di potenziali nuove ngono costantemente messi in discussione, rendendo sempre più sfumate le frontiere tra concetti

oviet architect in the creation of the social condensers of our epoch." Tratto da "Editorial. On the Tenth alai S., « New translations from Contemporary Architecture », The Journal of Architecture, Vol. 22, Issue 3,

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Conclusion

Lausanne, January 2018
Social condensers. There and back again.

Tool for unexpected social collisions, the electric feel that architectural collectors spreads remains still intriguing, still suspended to us.

The journey we set out around collectivity and architecture had never stopped wondering us. Through the lens of our 'people concentrators', we have continuously challenged ourselves in plumbing architectural archetypes, postulates and personal convictions. As collectors of events and civic moments, these buildings started obsessing us, from their more formal language to the ideals and the aim they were messengers of, making us questioning and questioning about their status over and over again. Trying to find a common *modus operandi* to their conditions became an amusing detective game we really enjoyed.

If social condensers - like some sort of superheroes - reappear periodically when people need them, it is time for us to start paving them the way. Indeed « the aspirations of Soviet architectural ideologues one hundred years ago really were more advanced, more equitable, more sensitive to the social asymmetries - especially those of class and gender - than those of the late capitalist-present, whether of the Putinist, Trumpist or Brexitist variety¹ ». That is the reason why, continuing our investigations for the second part of the *Projet de Master*, we are looking forward to answer to the journalist that, in 1929, challenged Constructivist architects about their pragmatic tasks. The interviewed was Ivan Leonidov and the question was:

1. MURAWSKI Michał, « Revolution and the social condenser: how soviet architects sought a radical new society » in *Strelka Magazine*.

<https://strelka.com/en/magazine/2017/09/26/>

2. *Contemporary Architecture* (1929), n. 3, pp. 105-111

What is this, real design project or just a piece of fiction?²



We would like to thank our Professors, Martin Fröhlich and Roberto Gargiani, together with our Maître EPFL, Tiago Borges.

A special thanks goes to our families for their immense and constant support and to Isabella di Lenardo, precious counselor, without whom nothing of this would have been possible.

To all of you, *grazie*.



Social condensers

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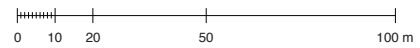
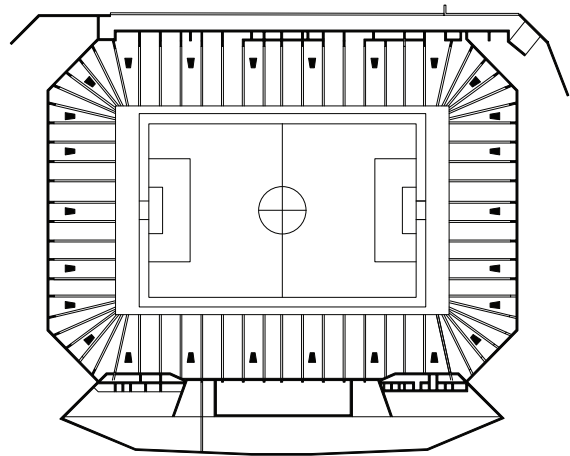
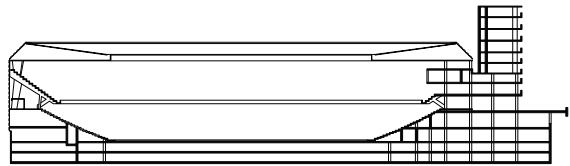
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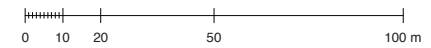
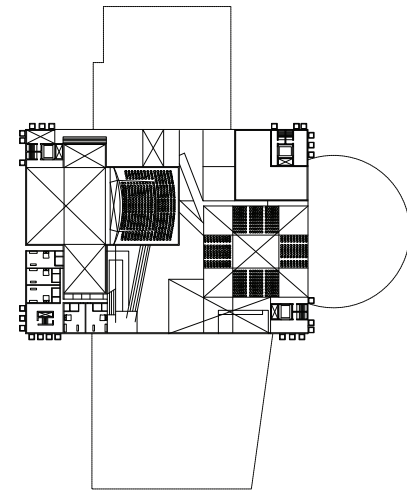
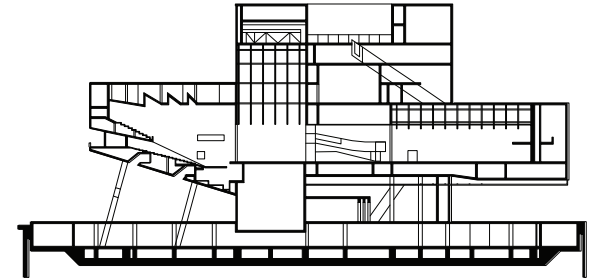




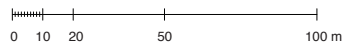
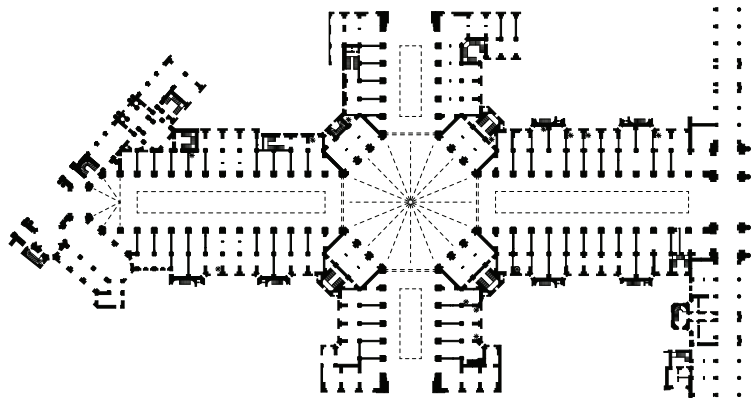
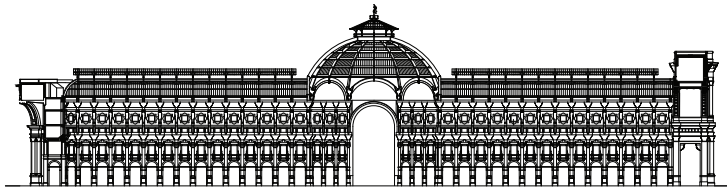
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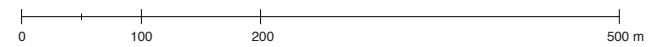
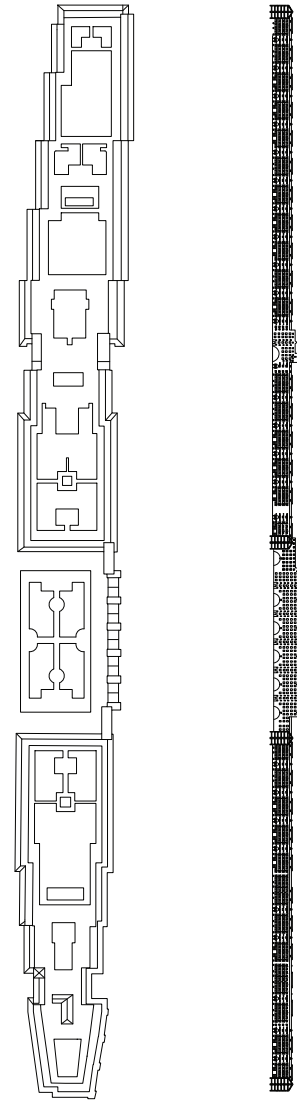
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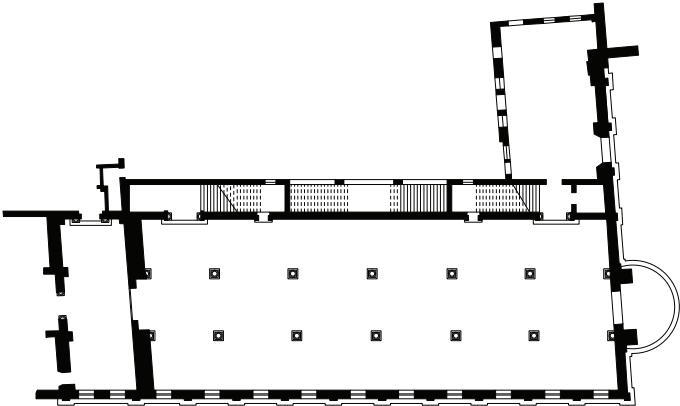
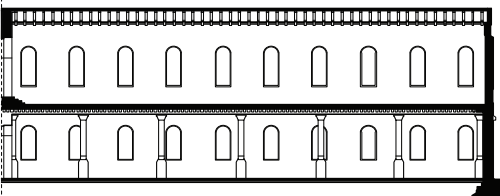
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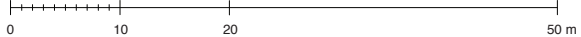
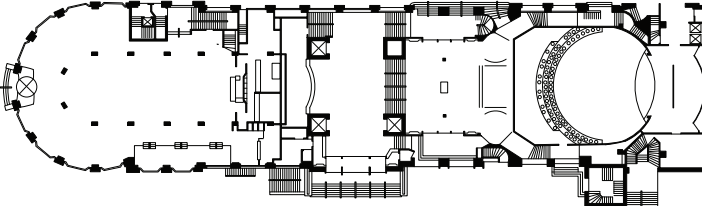
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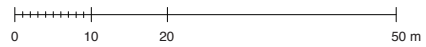
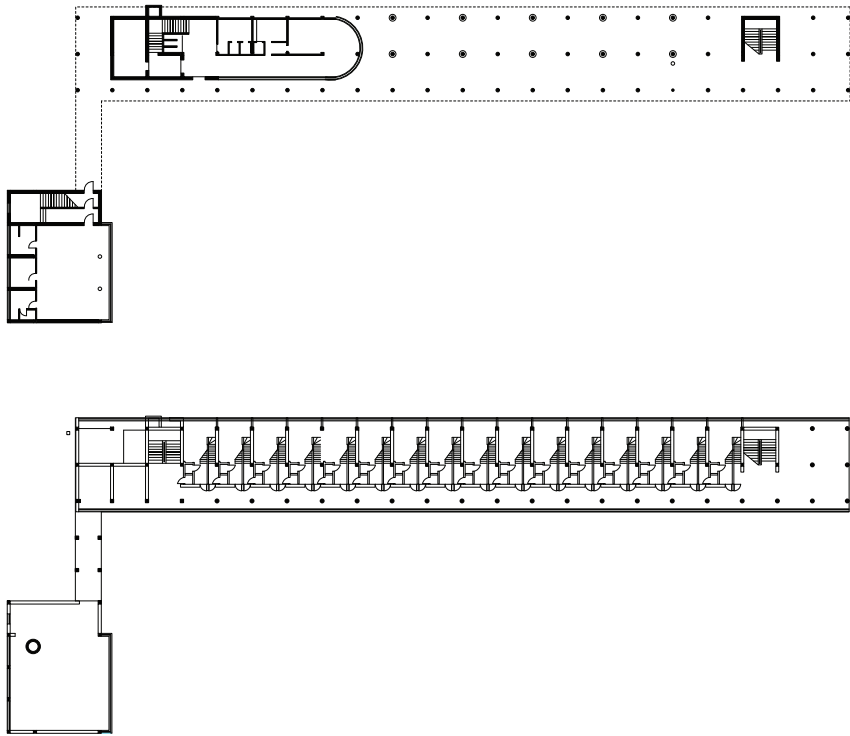
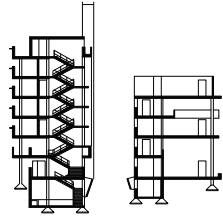
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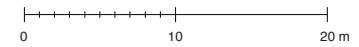
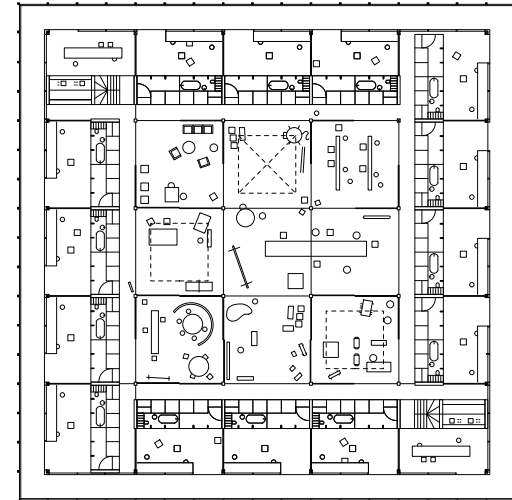
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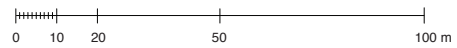
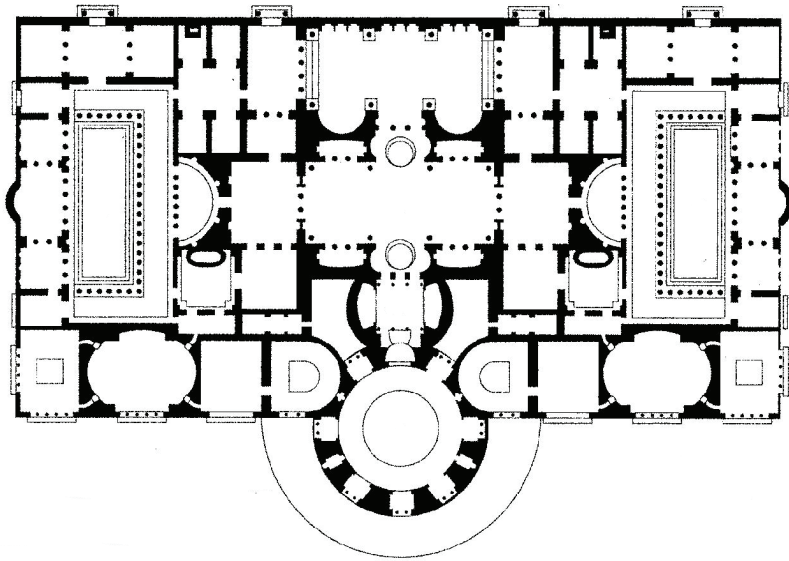
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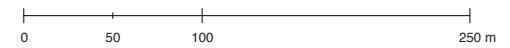
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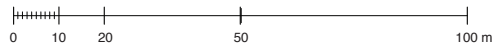
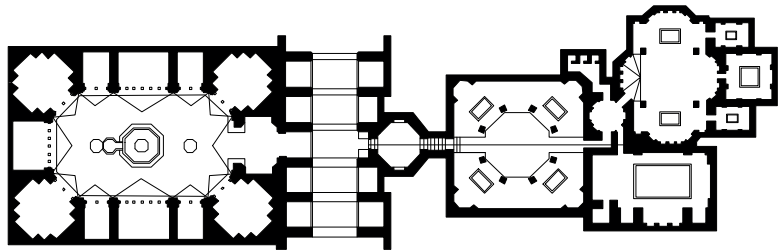
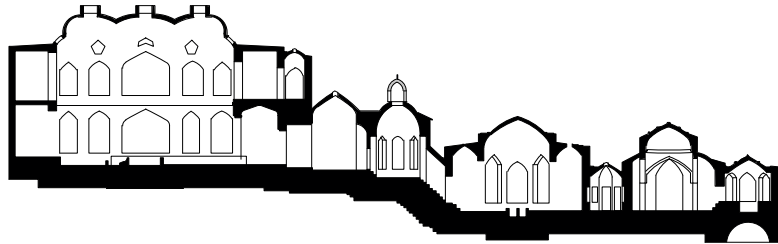
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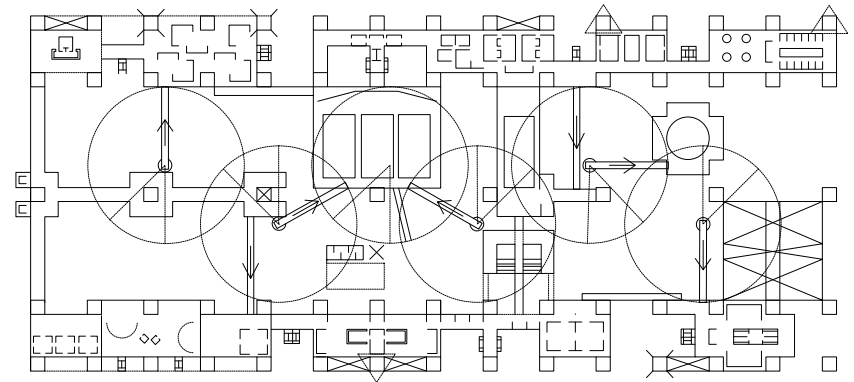
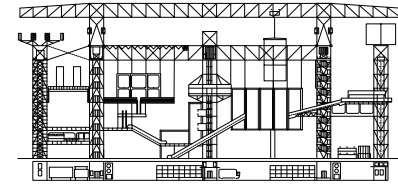
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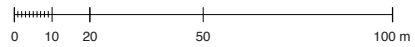
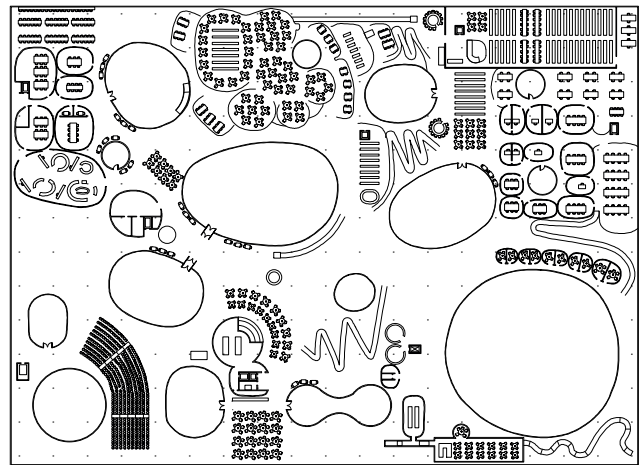
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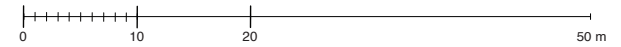
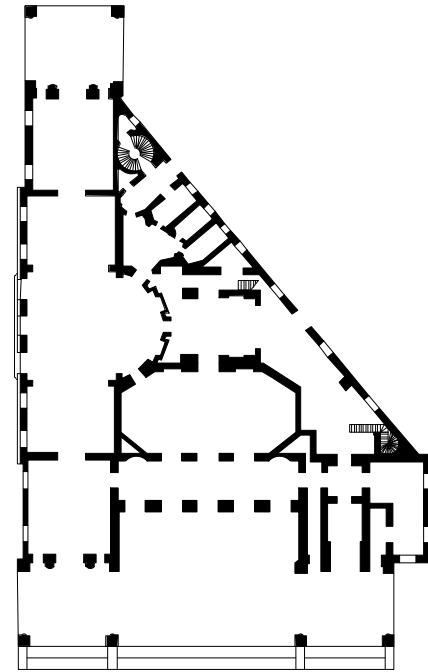
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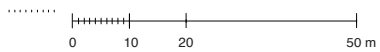
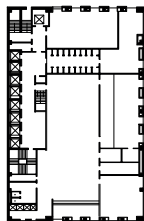
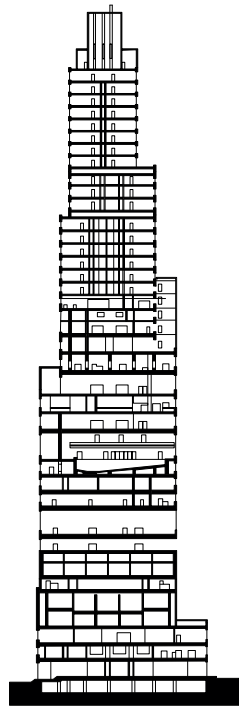
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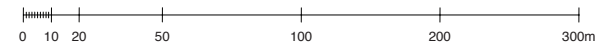
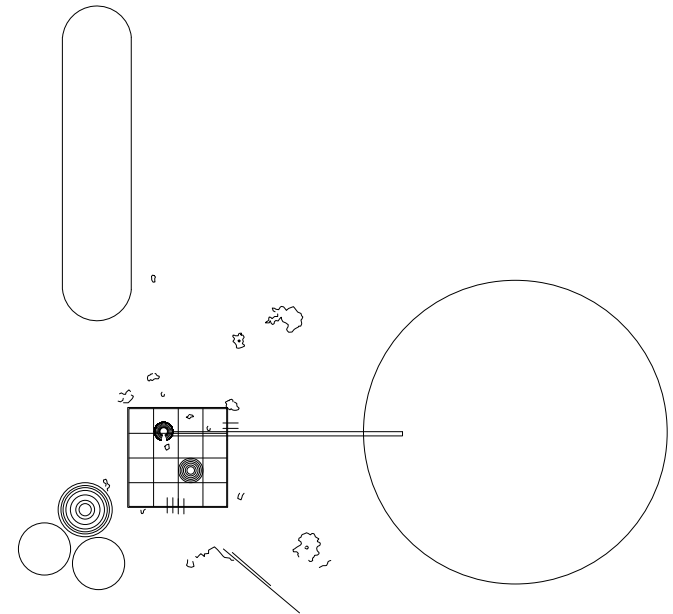
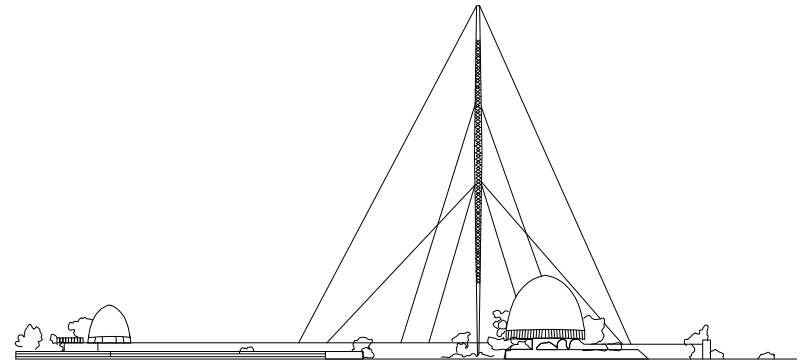
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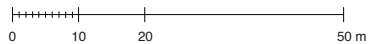
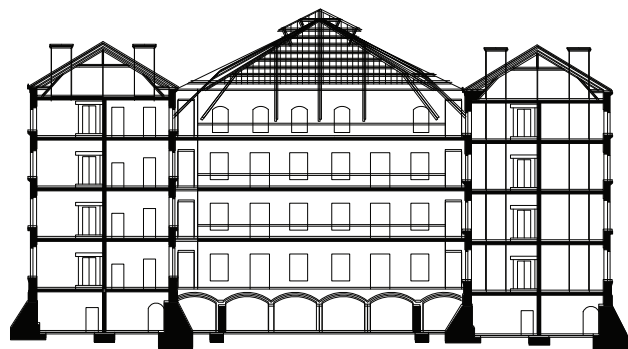
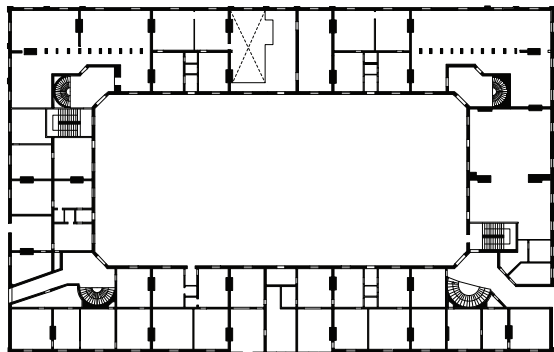
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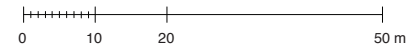
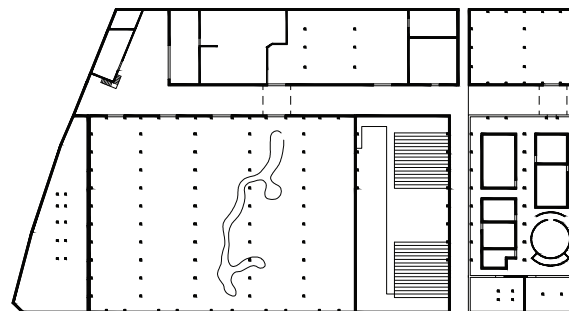
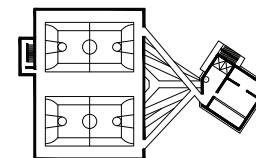
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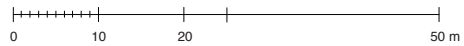
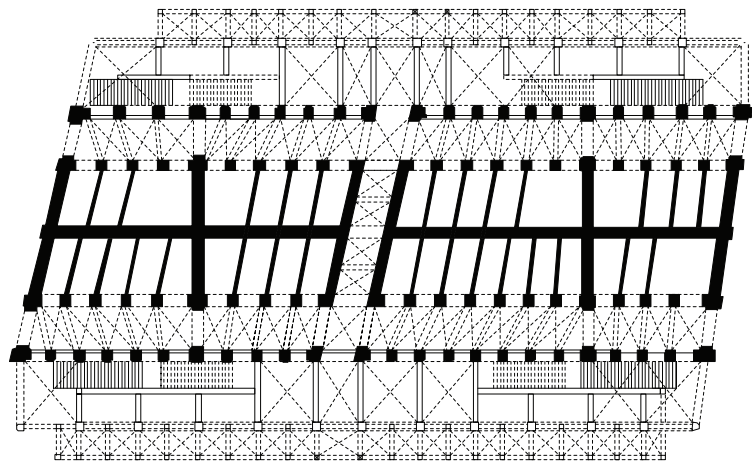
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SESC Pompeia



Palazzo della Ragione



Market Hall

