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This internationally celebrated Swiss architect is founder of the Mendrisio Academy of Architecture in Ticino, where he is also a professor. Since 1970 he has worked in both teaching and research, participating in conferences, seminars and courses in Europe, America and Asia.

For the architect, the recent project is unfortunately the project of the past: from the time of planning to the actual construction it is always several years that pass. I believe, nevertheless, that for the architect it is important to speak of architecture through architectures, because they are infinitely richer in terms of concept, and become even richer through the existence of work elsewhere. Architecture is the formal expression of history and therefore inevitably speaks from beyond the architect; it speaks of a historical time, a period of which architecture is a reflection.

In 1999 there was a centenary anniversary for the birth of Francesco Borromini. Lugano, the place where he was born in 1599, had wanted to commemorate the event with an exhibition dedicated to him. I curated the exhibition. I imagined putting on the lake, as an element of cross-reference, the masterpiece of Borromini's youth, the San Carlino of Rome, the city where he arrived complete with honors after having attended the *scuola del Duomo di Milano*. Re-reading in critical terms what the writer Carlo Dossi from Como wrote on the subject of architecture, I constructed an element that was positioned at the edge of Parco Ciani, at the border of the urban periphery.

In his *Note Azzurre*, Dossi makes a surprising affirmation: the dominant characteristic of architecture is given by the context that strikes the artist's eye; the architecture of the desert is drawn by the desert, the architecture of the mountains is drawn by the mountain, just as the architecture of the great plains is given by the great plains. I thought that it would be interesting to compare the masterpiece of Borromini's youth with the orography of the landscape, and to verify the correctness of the equation given by Dossi; he captures the geographical context just as I capture it, the mountains, the lake, the great orography untouched. I proposed, therefore, to take San Carlino and cut it in two, in order to be able to read the internal space and the geometric matrixes. The idea was to take a model, a representation, to a decontextualized site relative to the original work. The work, apart from being the representation of this model, has been constructed on a scale of 1:1, becoming a new reality that is confronted by the city. From this comes great curiosity and fascination about an event that is simultaneously representation and real presence. It is not about a fabricated event, but rather a piece of work done in a very short space of time and with great effort, built with 36,000 layers, necessary to depict shapes having the slant of a bevel. Within this is the explanation of the fascination of an

**Transcription of the lecture*

element endowed with the structure and vocabulary of lumber, of wood on wood, that alters the construction in the same way that a painting by Andy Warhol is seen through Warhol's vocabulary: we always see Marilyn Monroe, but the interpretation and content are overwhelmed by the manner of execution. Even in this case, the bases, the columns, the capitals are philologically exact: we didn't give any interpretation; there is only the tolerance of the relative thickness that transforms the board into a line derived from the computer. Its great fascination springs from the fact that the system of construction is translated into a language different to that of the construction. The cupola, in the end, precisely because it was constructed in horizontal layers, overcomes the stress faults, the static structures, and is itself presented as an element that is fixed in time and with the static force of a building. We may therefore bear witness to the presence of a decontextualization that is not only physical or geographical, but a decontextualization that is generated by overcoming – through an inappropriate language – of the primary element of architecture: the force of gravity.

Between 1990 and 1995 I completed, with the collaboration of Enzo Cucchi, a project for a chapel on Monte Tamaro. In 1986 an avalanche fell in the Valle Maggia in Mogno, bringing down the old church. The new structure is placed exactly where the original structure stood, on the axis of the church: we note the idea of the *topos*, the idea of the site, the identity of the place – in this case overturned and therefore contextualized – through a completely different language. Hence the birth of this small church, built entirely of stone, the form of which is intended to sustain physical resistance in case of a possible, even if improbable, future avalanche. From this comes the idea of reconstructing the church and commemorating the event through a new construction that speaks of, apart from the church itself, the necessity of resisting time and resisting the mountain.

This church carries with it the ancient struggle between man and the mountain: man constructs in order to affirm, be it the necessities of his lifetime, or be it his primary respect for nature that must be subjected to control, geometry, and the rationality of human thought. Following the avalanche that had destroyed the entire upper part of the building, we have had to reconstruct the ossuary, an element of great interest because, paradoxically, in the avalanche that had destroyed many of the elements of the church, the only ones to have survived were the dead, because they were buried; the chapel situated above the ossuary was swept away, but the dead, trapped by their 400-500 years of history, have remained intact. Our intervention has in this way verified a transformation that is both automatic and implicit: from a disquieting form, that of the ellipse, to a fixed form, that of the circle at cornice height. Such a transfor-

mation came about without a single plan – only thanks to geometry and the geometrical cut.

Naturally there would be many things to say about the choice of materials. For example, the diachronic hue due to the two caves existing in that same mountain, or the internal space that becomes a meridian. The walls are two and a half meters deep at the base, but as they rise they become narrower, like a funnel opening with the vertical on the exterior in order to achieve a geometrical space, almost an optical instrument that modifies the internal space. On the ground floor there is a rectangular space, although by raising our gaze upwards we find a circular space, a result of the transformation of the rectangle into a circle through the transformation of the trajectory of the internal walls.

Enzo Cucchi produced the intrados of the catwalk and painted twenty-two formerets in the cove of the windows and apse of this small church that protrudes towards the valley. It is an interesting project because it concludes a natural path that descends from the mountain and comes to an end with a belvedere in the final part. The church has therefore become an instrument with which to read the mountain itself, contributing to the transformation of meaning: the church brings with it not only functional and liturgical problems, but in fact takes on the responsibility of providing a different key of interpretation – that of being an instrument for the reading of the mountain and the landscape. The call for dialogue is manifest. The great force of the structure on the edge of the mountain and the countryside below – with its characteristic stone, geometric, and counterfort elements – shows the strong relationship of the 1200 meters between plain and mountain.

Cucchi would compare this building to a nail of stone in the mountain, an edifice from which springs the desire to mark such elements at the edge of a mountain as a sign of man's taking possession of the mountain itself.

Another work relating to the theme of religion is a building on the Tel Aviv University campus in Israel, where, on a green field with a large square, museum, library and humanities faculty, a space had been found for a synagogue and a cultural center. I interpreted the necessity for equilibrium between a religious context – that of the synagogue – and that of a secular space for discussion, as the necessity to create an equilibrium within the architecture itself. Therefore I planned an edifice with two heads, like a *Janus bifrons*, where in one there is the synagogue, and in the other there is the conference hall; both are joined by a plinth that contains public amenities. The two spaces are identical in dimensions, type of materials used, and reception of light; it is not clear which represents the synagogue and which represents the cultural center. The university was concerned about the fact that the construction of a synagogue would attract many religious people to a university campus that comes from a

strong secular background. And that is why my project was chosen, precisely for the strong sense of equilibrium that it communicated.

The space planned is a quadrilateral at the base, but is transformed into a circle at the covering height. The system of light falling into the four lunettes at the covering height was rendered possible due to the changing of the geometry of the interior space. The whole has been built with an ancient structure: the transformation of the square into a circle is particular to every cupola, as with those of the Renaissance, typical to Western culture.

Many of our churches present the theme of the cusp that transforms into the cupola; such a transformation is achieved by using a geometric form that connects the two parts. In this case I didn't use this geometrical instrument; to identify the aspect of gravity, which is the ancient aspect of construction, I have in fact used primitive techniques to escape even further from the vertical boundary, to the point of finding a connecting element at cornice height. The building is constructed entirely from Verona stone, while the external part is in gilded stone.

The synagogue acquires the character of a synagogue solely through the décor, being architecturally identical to the space of the conference hall. This is perhaps because it is the light that generates the space: if it were to be obscured, the space would disappear. Nonetheless, in this case the space speaks in a different manner. If two identical spaces are given two different functions, it is no longer the function that generates the space.

The whole of contemporary culture rests upon the idea that space follows function; now we come up against a boundary, according to which it is no longer the function that determines the architecture. The function can be adapted within certain limits, because a hospital always remains a hospital and a barracks always remains a barracks, but within such limits it is the quality of the space that has the advantage.

One of my most recent works was built in Jerusalem with Niki de Saint Phalle, unfortunately recently deceased. She lived in San Diego, and we had become acquainted during the construction of the Jean Tinguely Museum. The Jerusalem Foundation and Teddy Kollek, the former-mayor of Jerusalem, had commissioned her to construct a Noah's Ark, a symbol of peace and reconciliation. From this came the idea of bringing to life a meeting place, a Noah's Ark as a space of possible cohabitation, not only for animals as in the biblical tradition, but also as a space of possible cohabitation for the world today. Niki de Saint Phalle said to me, "If you make the ark, I will make the animals." So then we went to Jerusalem and started to look for a suitable location, and arrived at the conclusion that this work could emerge from the interior of the zoo, because it would be the only space where Palestinian mothers would be able to

meet young Israelis. We chose an area considered to be archaeological terrain that had to be preserved in any case, and I drew a hypogeum ark, just as if it had been stranded on the mountain. And thus the metaphor of a petrified ark came to life, constructed entirely of Hebron stone, while Niki drew twenty-two fantastic animals for children to play on, some of them in the ark and some of them in the surrounding park. On a slope inside the zoo we found a flat plane where I introduced, as metaphor, a boat that on one end transforms into an amphitheatre. The ark, forty meters long, has a ceiling that, thanks to a wooden trellis, functions as a walkway in the park, bringing life to an area in shadow. The work therefore offers a very suggestive, restful space.

Another recent work, commissioned by the city of Lugano, may seem at first appearance to be very banal: it is a bus-shelter for buses, constructed in a new area in keeping with the new route across from the terminal in the historical city. Even a banal theme such as that of protection may leave its mark on a city: a translucent shelter seventy meters long, bringing with it light. It came from the idea of something very simple from a static point of view, supported by only four large columns that radiate light from within, varying according to the season: in winter it is violet because there are red and blue lights, which then become blue during the spring, white in summer, and red in autumn. Even though it is a very simple structure in itself, the shelter is distinguished by a few elements that render it very similar to an urban structure that strongly defines public space.

A project recently completed in Tenero, near Locarno, required the reorganizing of a sports center and games area, and the construction of three modules: a youth accommodation, a gym, and a place for climbing. There is an element of enclosure that separates a busy main road from an area that solely houses the washroom facilities, with the accommodations facing out onto the lake. The gym becomes a large factory with a vast portico. The final element to complete the space is a climbing frame transformed into an arch angled towards the lake. Its contents are emptied in order for it to become purely a space to be enjoyed for climbing, taking on a very important symbolic value as an element of transition between the constructed area and the lake.

The Museum of Rovereto, on which we have been working for the last ten years, was inaugurated on the 15th of December, 2002, after various difficulties due to bureaucracy and Italian building regulations. The interesting thing is that this museum, with its 22,000 square meters, is the largest museum in Italy. It is situated on the second floor relative to Corso Bettini, a road surrounded by 17th-century buildings that must be integrated with the new cul-

tural center. It is a museum situated in the city's interior, yet does not have to confront this fact because it is the final element among a few buildings standing on the opposite side. It is a museum without a façade, causing a semantic shock in that the visitor leaves behind a familiar building to find himself immersed not in front of a new building but inside the building itself: a large square, forty meters wide, partly covered in glass, that acts as the entrance to the museum. The building is characterized by a zenithal light diffused from the upper floor.

Another recent work can be found in Città della Pieve, near Perugia, where we were asked to build a school at the gate to the historical city. Therefore it was about the creation of a dialogue between a contemporary language and one that is already consolidated. In the city's skyline one can glimpse the school spread over five floors, in direct contrast to the countryside.

There are obviously problems when contemporary languages draw from pre-existing languages, as with the National Bank of Greece, constructed on the old road to the entrance of Athens in a very sensitive archaeological context.

The theme was that of a new building placed in the context of a turn-of-the-century structure – in other words, the idea of the new taking into account that which surrounds it. It was built in Cypress stone with a treatment of alternating rough and smooth texture. The desire to align ourselves on this front was strong, the result of a massive effort to suspend these elements and leave the archaeological remains exposed on the ground floor.

The project for the library in Dortmund, Germany, began with the idea of separating the area for public utilities sectors from the historical city through a completely new element. It seemed wrong to us to break the historical division. Therefore we developed a typology on the basis of which the library would continue the urban design. The front of the library towards the city defines a path that leads directly to the spaces reserved for reading areas. What becomes apparent is the desire to align the construction with the historical city through another language, in other words using a different architectural structure to communicate with the park opposite. The two languages were driven not so much by a functional idea as by the morphology of the city.

At his home in Neuchâtel, Friedrich Dürrenmatt dedicated himself to literature and painting, and expressed the desire to exhibit all his work after his death. I therefore created a pavilion adjoining the house that had become a foundation. Dürrenmatt lived in a valley that was very wild, almost primitive, and my concern in lengthening the terrace from the old residence was to preserve the aspect of the landscape that is part of the writer's world. The pavilion, built

SAN FRANCISCO,
MUSEUM OF MODERN
ART, SAN FRANCISCO,
1989-1995



entirely from black ardesia stone, catches the diffracted light for the exhibition space beneath a turret of shiny white stucco. In the exhibition space I wanted to deal with the works of the writer-painter differently than would be done by a museum: they are works without a frame, intended not to be hung on a white wall; they are part of a labyrinthine game specific to Dürrenmatt's poetics, and as such they are presented as objects that emerge from the wall's edge.

The Jean Tinguely Museum in Basel is situated against the motorway so that it opens onto a 20th-century park. It also closes it off, functioning as a sonic barrier relative to the motorway viaduct. The articulating element between the city that is left behind and the park opposite the museum consists of five trusses, each twelve meters in height. The part leading towards the Rhine is defined by an obligatory path, a kind of initiatory walk that leads to the galleries. The object in question is a mechanism that obliges the visitor to be confronted with the river's scale.

Even now I am working on a project intended for the Scala di Milano. Since the original design by Piermarini in 1779, the site has undergone numerous interventions; one need only consider that, at the time, candle and oil lamps were in use, while today laser beams are a norm. Furthermore, in 1814 the theater hall was extended by Luigi Canonica. A great state of disarray provoked the need for the changes: during the immediate post-war period, continuous interventions were undertaken that, on the one hand left the 19th-century sections intact, while on the other hand created a new context comprised of additions, fireproofing, and bays to serve as water towers. La Scala is therefore a kind of collage of continuous transformations – with an attitude of “what you can’t see can’t hurt you” – that has reduced Piermarini’s monument to its current state.

My two interventions are aimed at modifying the two realities: the first is that of the 19th-century structure on Via dei Filodrammatici, the second being that of the constant battle to enlarge the volume of the stage. This is to be achieved through a stage pit that descends twenty meters and a tower that rises forty meters, so that the volume created by Piermarini will continue to exist, even with the current needs and technologies.

The turrets were added previously during the period of Fascism; the stage tower will have a new volume; on top of the 19th-century structure – where the dressing rooms, ballet dancers, sets, and canteen will be, including all the activity that cannot be sustained by the volume beneath – is where I will create an elliptical volume. The two internal volumes, built in stone, will be characterized by a contemporary language; the 19th-century volume has reemerged as a result of the removal of all added elements.

It is important to update a staging system until it can satisfy contemporary requirements. Piermarini’s stage was designed for flat, two-dimensional sliding sets that gave a scenic illusion. Whereas today, as a result of the optical effects used, the depth of the scene is the main achievement. Based on requirements that are economical, technical, and programmatic in nature, the staging system needs to be updated following a careful review of Piermarini’s typology. The curious fact is that Piermarini was already working on modifying the stage at the end of the 19th century, followed by Luigi Canonica and so on. At one time a journalist asked me what Piermarini would have thought of these changes, and I replied that he would have been extremely contented, because my intervention would permit the theater hall to function for another fifty years.

The Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco directly overlooks downtown, and is a building that possesses an enormous iconic charge, even if the building itself is relatively small. This is due to the rosette which, like an old church, connotes the centrality of the institution. The museum has a very complex

structure and presents itself as an element that interrupts the surrounding area with its entirely “stone” structure, in an abstract style that is specific to the *International Style*. However, this building is characterized by a particular material, texture, color and depth. What is key is the idea of an important physical, corporeal, vital presence in the city and not the idea of the construction of an enlarged object.

Together with an artisan from Milan, I have also made models for some small design objects: a series of vases using the tree as metaphor, later produced in ceramic; two trays in steel for Alessi, both for water and wine; and the design for a mineral water bottle produced in PET plastic in a capsule that, once inflated, becomes a bottle. Truly, architecture in miniature.

The cylindrical form with an elliptical or circular base holds extraordinary fascination because it manages to model the space along a single axis, the vertical. As the history of architecture demonstrates, it is an instance of an extremely difficult and, at the same time, very fascinating form given its simplicity. When the architect finds himself in the interior space, in a circular form such as in the Pantheon, he is able to reconstruct the whole through the reading of one part: this ability to communicate beyond that which is visible is specific to cylindrical spatial forms. I believe that architecture and contemporary culture today are orphans of this capacity for communication, once typical in the past. I am able to immediately grasp the whole when I find myself in the interior of the Castello Sforzesco; when I enter the Pantheon I have no need to interpret it. Architecture carries with it the capacity to speak of the whole as well as the particular. The exact opposite of this happens in contemporary architectural culture. When I enter a supermarket I do manage to perceive the space (I am not speaking so much of the quality of the space, as the perception of it), but I must entrust myself to disciplines that don’t belong to architecture, such as those of signage and publicity: all of which represents an incredible loss in the quality of life.

We have complicated a series of messages that are not decipherable. We therefore need to read in order to understand where to go. Any great architecture carries with it the idea of a direct communication, at least in terms of the space. This is why, whenever possible, I reason through primary forms: because they are simple to perceive. Let us take for example the rosette of San Francisco: I remember that when I would arrive in San Francisco I would ask the taxi driver to take me to the museum, where I would find myself immediately in front of a building that, due to its extraordinary strength, presents itself as an icon in the Babel of contemporary styles.

I believe it is right to encourage the use of simple and primary forms, because the component of legibility corresponds directly to the quality of the space.

Heidegger would say that man carries with him the idea of living, and has the ability to orient himself in an interior space: man lives when he has the ability to orient himself within the interior of a space, otherwise he doesn't live. To live also means to carry with oneself values and memories from history, of which man has an immense need.

The labyrinths of today are unfamiliar because they don't evoke any memory of the past; when I enter an ancient space, I recognize myself because I recognize my history. This is why I am devoted to primary forms, in particular the cylinder. I am interested in adapting it to the point of transforming it into the covering for a synagogue, a rosette for a museum, a green aureole for a cathedral. It is not a limit to have a very limited vocabulary; if one continues to write using the same words, like Giacometti and Morandi, one can say many things; the important thing is to say them in a different way each time. Very often, young people and critics do not have the capacity or humility to enter into this vocabulary. They see something round and think: "it's always round," as if to say the history of architecture itself is always based on four walls and a roof; but behind these four walls there are centuries upon centuries of history, each with something different to say.

On the basis of this old conflict, I cannot say whether architecture is art or science. It is certain that architecture is a language, an expression that gives shape to history, whether good or bad. We know how to distinguish and recognize various architectures independently from the architects' personality. Let us take Gaudì, the most outstanding and least classifiable of 20th-century architects: at the distance of a few years we can see that he perfectly represents the middle-class culture of his time. The architect cannot narrate outside of his own time because architecture is strictly tied to the history, culture, economy, state of knowledge, and materials of its own time.

If we take this premise as our point of departure, architecture can aspire to an erudite language that has its own autonomous form of expression, or instead can be prosaic and narrate purely functional or technical needs. It is difficult to say that Le Corbusier has not given a personal image to post-war reconstruction, enriching it with a functional connotation, or that Louis Kahn had not recognized the moments of crisis in the 20th century; if he had been present in American criticism, the postmodern would not have emerged. He was eliminated because he was an uncomfortable figure that didn't speak of applications, but of the origin of problems, of institutions, of the control of man's space.

I have never selected what to do; I have always been asked: once a petrol station, once a cathedral, then again a church, a museum, a library. The architect is an instrument that is able to give life to an image, in the same way that

architecture is not only a technical response, but also an image, and as such can evoke or ignore certain values. Architecture has enormous responsibilities: the greater complexity of the architectural process is clear in relation to that of painting, which ends up inside a frame.

The first act of architecture is the transformation of a state of nature into a condition of culture; before putting stone upon stone, the architect has to put stone on the ground, transforming a piece of land into an act of culture, of human work. Architecture carries all this with it, but not only this. Sometimes it can be overwhelmed by economic, distributive, technical, and normative elements, the elements of legislative prejudice. Here is the reason why the architect sometimes doesn't make it. We mustn't think that the majority of our architects intend to construct the territory badly, or that they are drawn to the urban periphery. The truth is that they don't manage to live the great contradictions because they mediate the law of maximum profit with that of the maximum quality of life, or environmental equilibrium. One need only think of energy resources, a major problem for our generation: we cannot avoid taking on the responsibility of water as a common resource; one need not be a genius to understand that the problem of water will be the emergency of the future. The wars to come will not be fought for territory, for which, unfortunately, nothing can be done other than to hoard this resource, which, like all others, is limited. What can the architect do? He is like a seismograph that emits warning signals. I am fighting a rearguard battle: I speak of history, memory, and ancestral values, while at the same time attempting to create a history able to inspire and resolve future problems. It is a battle of resistance that is instead perceived as banality, a leveling. Architecture is neither different nor equal to other forms of expression: it is a particular form of expression that has to take on some responsibilities.

One cannot give an answer that is of an exclusively technical, functional nature. Earlier I had given the example of the two different forms for the synagogue and cultural center: there are no longer those post-war reconstruction laws that pursued objectives of a social, sanitary, and functional type, that inevitably led to a certain typological model. Now there are others, and it is the architect's task to transform even a banal theme, as for example a bus shelter. My design for a shelter in Lugano was completely different than the alternative that envisioned the construction of a 19th-century-style shelter. The problem was not so much one of cost as one of purpose: will this become a part of the city, or will it only be used to attend buses?

The architect's work is that of contraband: asked for a house, the architect provides the archetype of a house; asked for a museum space, he provides a museum that shouldn't be interpreted as a sum of exhibition spaces. Let us take the church:

I am working on the theme of architecture of the sacred: everyone wants the sacred but doesn't know how to express it. When discussing with a cardinal how to design the church, I am the cardinal and he is the architect: the ethical tension comes from the architect's side, while the technical comes from the cardinal.

One no longer has the strength to express hopes, needs. Even the young, who are very sensitive to these issues, express them in a manner that is very confused; the need to go to a concert is the need for spirituality, but they don't manage to identify this.

Banal themes don't exist: one theme is to once again put into question one's own Weltanschauung – the ability to perceive the reasons of the world. One is not always able to do this, because the contradictions are strong and time constraints increase. I will have to participate in a competition in China, and the maximum time available is only three months, compared to the two years of twenty years ago: only three months to construct part of a university that will remain a part of Peking's history!

There is no more time to reflect. We think of Filippo Brunelleschi, who constructed the dome knowing he would not be able to admire the completed work. This indeed is another way of constructing!

The relationship with the artist need not be an ideological relationship.

I developed a very interesting project with Walter De Maria: we had discussed the construction of a sculpture for the palazzo dell'Ubeschi in Basel, a project that did not materialize. I have worked with Cucchi, and with Paladino; I am currently working with Vangi, a realist sculptor, and at the same time I would like to work with Richard Serra. I would like to return to the time when cathedrals were white, to retrieve that naiveté by which the artist is not a decorator but a figure that provides that added element that architecture can't attain. The Ark of Jerusalem would not have a reason for being if it weren't for Niki, and, vice versa, the sculptures would become simple park sculptures if it weren't for the ark. Sculptures without semantic reference were instead enriched by a metaphoric and symbolic value that the uniting of the two languages was able to create. It is a reciprocal giving and taking. In the past, things were different, with Michelangelo capable of designing and intervening contemporaneously. What would the *Capella degli Scrovegni* be without Giotto? Would it still have the same meaning if there were only a series of paintings or panels, or is it the architecture that conveys a different meaning?

I am profoundly convinced that architecture is something different than nature.

All the theories on mimesis and adaptation are alibis, because in fact architecture is the negation of nature, in so far as it intervenes in a natural context with

MART, MUSEO DI ARTE
MODERNA E
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TRENTO E ROVERETO,
ROVERETO 1992-2002



something that is manufactured. Architecture carries violence with it. The problem presents itself at a cultural level: in primitive society this violence was a sign of civility, whereas it transforms itself into deeper violence in a post-tertiary society.

I believe this relationship needs to be considered as a dialogue, and not a mimetic one. I can quote another example by Heidegger on the theme of the bridge: there are two valleys, which upon first impression seem insignificant. The moment a bridge is introduced, it creates a place that enriches the landscape, transforming itself into the point of encounter between the two valleys. We admire and appreciate the landscape thanks to the bridge, but if we should observe it without the bridge, the natural landscape would seem uninteresting. The terracing that we see holds great fascination for us because it was modeled by the serfs; we hear that it is about a contrived nature. The relationship with the constructed is a relationship with man's mark, which is always positive inasmuch as it is steeped in civilization, culture, and toil.

Even my architecture needs to be interpreted through contrasts; we must try to understand in what measure does the manufactured enrich the landscape, and the landscape give the man-made a reason for being. Architecture needs the landscape in order to identify itself in a unique place, and the landscape needs the architecture to transform itself into a human landscape.

Today, in the very superficial culture of the everyday, there are certain taboo words: historic city center, green, ecology, restoration – all terms that have

entered part of our collective subconscious, like a conscience that is guilty about what has been done in the past. We must admit that in past decades we have overturned the value of our patrimony in the name of progress and technology. Now, as a reaction, we want to preserve and protect it. We eat, we dress, we watch television in a new way; therefore why shouldn't this system have a new form of expression? And so, newly nostalgic, there are those that emerge and, in the name of destruction of that which has been done in the past, make a kind of moratorium. It is a lost battle. It is not possible to restore. Restoration is a transformation because it carries with it the idea of renewal; if it were not so we would be lost. The only conservative restoration is the reduction to ruin, equally as expressive as conservation. To accept that a monument dies a natural death, because everything will disappear, is only a question of time. The solution would be to have resources at our disposal to safeguard our heritage in a different way. The problem is mediation: What can be done? What can't? I remember when Carlo Scarpa would say that if he had had the opportunity, he would have even constructed in Piazza San Marco, and he would have been right. Taboos don't exist: if one has the strength, why can't one construct in Piazza San Marco?

This is a moment of great weakness, because a strong society would absolutely not pose itself the problem of conservation; a strong society affirms new values that we don't have, and so we bury ourselves in the past with nostalgia and melancholy. The cultures of the past have always been driven by the force of innovation: the Baroque never posed itself the problem of intervening on the Renaissance, just as the Renaissance never posed itself the problem of intervening on the Gothic. When there is the possibility, it seems to me there is a duty to vindicate the legitimacy of the new. Karl Krauss said: "I want to remind my nostalgic friends that the old, dear, beautiful Vienna was at one time new."

It is absolutely wrong to think that the new does not exist legitimately, or that it must only be legitimate in peripheral areas, as maintained by the great historian Manfredo Tafuri, whom I confronted when I was young. There doesn't exist a prohibited space at the interior of which an architect cannot intervene. Those nostalgic for the past are forever condemned to lose. An example: the sum total of the damaging crimes committed against La Scala were made with the approval of all the superintendents that had succeeded one another from the beginning of the last century until today: it was necessary to insert new electrical distribution units, air conditioning, etc. The new was inevitable.

The world is changing: the world of consumption and that which, better than any other, unites the pastiches of the fake antique; it is not by chance that Disneyland re-presents timpanums and columns. But what need is there of re-presenting these elements precisely in Disneyland, as if everything were true,

everything were pure? In reality everything is counterfeit, like Coca-Cola, like everything that we buy at McDonald's. I believe that ancient Europe has the resources necessary to oppose the barbarism born into consumerist society, characterized by a strong liberalism in which it is legitimate to propose anything as long as it generates profit. Nevertheless, Europe has to take great care because it risks becoming an American colony, and if it doesn't develop the antibodies that history supplies her with, even she could disappear like the great civilizations of the past.

Architecture, more than other disciplines, has at its disposal the resources necessary to resist over time, because it was born before the architect and continues well beyond his life. The other disciplines, like painting, are very weak: in fifty years time the colors will have disappeared; architecture instead will continue to testify. Public authorities no longer require architectural values, but simply that a project be completed on schedule and within budget. Architecture works for or against the city; or consolidates certain collective values or destroys them. The world of art and culture needs to keep these spaces open, because the rapidity of transformation in which we live is unprecedented.

I try to save myself, my discipline; it is certain I can't save the world with architecture. In '68 someone thought that through their own discipline it would be possible to save the world: today we have a much more limited awareness, but are also much more realistic, because we know that through architecture it is possible to change architecture, but not the world. I suffer seeing the world destroyed, but this is the reality; I was born into this period and will I try to comprehend the good, the bad, and the disciplined commitment. It would suffice for each of us to do their duty well, and much would change in the manner of using, of consuming.

We are the first to criticize, but we are also the first to consume our society; the artist must work to testify to the best of his or her ability, even recognizing the great contradictions.

Many architects support with conviction the theory of the non-place. It is surely a question of sensibility, because when I am in front of a Romanic church I still feel a wave of sensation, while they feel it in front of a Coca-Cola or a McDonald's. I believe one should respect everyone's taste, but it is unreasonable to expect that everybody fully appreciate those aspects of contemporary culture such as dynamism and urban profusion, though fascinating nonetheless. To accommodate these views, the city needs two things: the center and the periphery. I feel at ease in the interior of a city when I manage to perceive both elements. Obviously that doesn't prevent me from benefiting from urban profusion, although I don't always feel particularly at ease.

Everyone must do that which they find most congenial; if Giacometti finds his

reality in a few centimeters, one can't expect that he confront the landscape and the modeling of the landscape. We have to recognize our limits and what we can do within them, even if it may seem small. Yesterday evening, for example, I was fascinated by a plastic bottle. Theories are like trends – they come and go. One should learn to judge the quality of the product; that is the only thing that remains.

Why does one work? To overcome death. It would be foolish to say that I would be unaffected if one of my works were to be demolished. Yet that destiny is inevitable. The idea of constructing is an idea to overcome death, to survive physical death that has the advantage. Aspiring to eternity is implicit in each of us. Unfortunately, we have to also accept the new demands that history brings with it. I believe all architects are conscious of the limitation of their enterprise. I am happy to have lived a happy season, in which my work has been put to the service of others that have appreciated it.