



If we introduce in 2018 a new teaching cycle to initiate young students to architecture, in a time when depletion of reason seems about to become a normality and a fundamental disruption of the ecosystem forecasts its proximity through abnormal climatic occurrences, the first and foremost question that may come to mind is about foundation, not only of architecture, but of society and life as a whole. Are the 'fundamentals' that we have been taught by our teachers, by history and by how we have been conducting our profession as architects, are these foundations adequate? How should we learn from there, from this incredibly rich and abundant substance built up by the many cultures of this planet? How should we understand it, how should we re-read it? Which values will have to be abandoned or entirely replaced?

With our ALICE year one program we put emphasis on two notions that we do indeed esteem fundamental for architecture. The first is its processual nature. Architecture does not belong to a world conceived as a series of well-defined problems where architecture would form the objects to bring about solutions to those problems. Rather architecture is always entangled in questions directly linked to our existence and therefore of emergent nature. As such, as gestures and inventions, architecture has cultural and technical meaning. Indeed, the technical and cultural aspects of architecture cannot not be separated. They are of the same nature: The things that we invent and produce to act upon the space that we live in are extensions of our body. As such they are situated in relation to us as living

individuals and societal beings – in constant transformation – and in relation to the environment that is itself a living organism. Being alive we are in a state of *becoming*, constantly, as is our environment, our society. Architecture is then an expression and concretization of this aspect of *becoming* that we share with all humans.

The second aspect that we stress is architecture's collective nature. Architecture is never done alone, it is a means of communicating in society and with the environment. This collective nature, the languages that pertain to architecture, play a fundamental role in how we conceive of architecture itself, and its role as exteriorization of our bodies into the world – to use one of Bernard Stieglers concepts. Gestures, the making and the significations that emerge through these processes form a cultural and technical language that we craft together. We make architecture together. Indeed, making is as intrinsically linked to thinking, as is the will of the soul that lets a gesture take place.

In our program we emphasize on the collective nature of architecture in doing projects as individuals and as groups, and as one group of people as well. To emphasize the importance of the collective act we have hypothesized and succeeded to think, design and build one single project with 250 people, who are all authors and co-authors. The most important aspect in the ALICE series of HOUSE 1 to HOUSE 3 is not their final form but rather the explorative process by the contributors and the capacity of an articulated *mise-en-espace* to support a search for new forms of living together. As such HOUSES become a powerful research tool.

The terms that we have introduced in our first-year program as a journey into architecture are crafted around a simple idea: They are intended to first help to constitute a conception of the world, then to engage with it, and finally to help to situate ourselves in it – both as an individual and collectively. The first phase MEASURES can be seen as an expanded idea of correlation and infinite proportion. We then conceive and project ELEMENTS to act upon the world, to correlate ourselves in space and with the environment and with the people around us. In PLANES we are building up supports to situate us gravitationally, and to localize articulated openness and separation. With ROOMS we are creating interiors, of individual or entirely collective nature. We are considering thresholds and transitions. The term HOUSE then is about the organism, about the principles and structures that build up and hold together the above notions.

The present third cycle *becoming* is continuing the investigations we have led through the previous cycles, *inside* and *visible worlds*. The first cycle *visible worlds* focused on the relation that we build up to the world in its appearances and through collective making. How we, as we act on space, communicate spatially. Therefore projects were conceived in a collective matrix space – not as individual objects but as collective artifacts with hundreds of individual qualities. These inventions were emphasized in model space. In the second cycle, named *inside*, we have laid focus on constructing. Being inside of the processes that act upon space our existential position is by logic that of immersion. Immersion we have emphasized as a condition

of being-in: In making, literally in constructing the architectures that we have conceived and designed. As importantly we have pushed immersion as being-in space, as a phenomenological architecture so to speak. And we have accentuated *insideness* as a collective phenomenon, both in working in large groups, and in leaving the sheltered academic environment constructing full scale projects in public places, and as public places, accessible to all. Each of the HOUSES is forum, a place for exchange. To mount these exchanges of ideas, gestures and built space by many souls, to scaffold these communications, we have elaborated and investigated the concept of *protostructure* – itself concretized as a physical support and supporting concretizations of the ideas of a larger collective.

But how do we situate these architectures? Have we perhaps still been focusing too much on architecture as building?

We will now aim to learn how to relate architectures to the ground. How to situate ideas and spatial constructs, not only in society, but also in relation to life in general, to our resources on this planet, and very literally how to root architecture, how we let it live, how we let it *become*. With GARDENS, situated between PLANES and ROOMS, the new program introduces a new phase with a new term that will investigate the relations that architecture – sounding the waters, sounding the grounds – will have as extensions of ourselves in this marvelous and fragile planetary garden (Gilles Clément) that is the biosphere. We hope to write architecture and its relation to the ground simultaneously.

We will elaborate, test and investigate the potential of *protofigure* and *protofiguration* – as ways, concepts and ideas how we inscribe Habitat into the Land.

We hope and believe that such architecture can shift values. Architectures are not problem-solvers – architectures can contribute. Architectures can relocate values – from profit in a capital fixed economy to an ecology and economy of space and of contribution.

It is in the spirit of an urgency that we propose to work first on values other than efficiency, profitability, or longstanding knowledge of architectural types and languages: In initiating architecture as a thinking and making of space that is aimed at an intrinsic principle of contribution and care, based on individual and collective desire. It is the sense of experience of this very possibility that we want to share with communities of people in most diverse environments – Houses and Gardens as habitats, imagined, conceived, thought, drawn and built by and with many. These future spaces that emerge between many souls in constant deliberation will be expressions and contributions of desire, beyond the object and beyond efficiency.

It is there that such architectures may embark on other routes. They may emerge not as rigidly ordinated and easily legible objects, ready to be consumed as eloquent speech or used as functional machines in view of a purpose. Rather spaces may take on strange form and resemble organisms like whole cities, with their many imperfections and often less obviously ruled development. They may become constructs embodying collective histories of deliberation

rather than architectural canon. Yet, at times they may sound like symphonies – louder reverberations in the streets followed by slighter whispers at night.

Grounds, plants, structures, rhythms, details, materials may evolve by themselves into new forms in the interplay with many and in constant ongoing deliberation. It is the open field of potential that draws out new collective ideas, to be brought into material life through open operations, intrinsically coordinated. We have to think of new canvases and new tools. We have to unlearn and relearn architecture. Values will shift and form may be very different. And perhaps at times reoccurring from other times in our histories. Projects and resulting spaces will be material articulations of liminalities – potentials articulated by material and temporal processes – *becoming* future inscribed in values of contribution.

Such an architecture is again immersive: it is aimed at an ecology of space. As an immersive architecture it must be phenomenological: it evolves the experiential comprehension of the places and the space that we live in. It becomes where we meet other people and our environment. To survive it must be economical beyond capitalism: it must give us values to live a better life.

Architecture is a political practice. The way we evolve space reconfigures matter, places, people, biological life. To act upon space is a collective responsibility. Our foremost question must be therefore about the values that exercise control in these actions. Who or what governs life and us? What are the values that truly matter?