EXHIBITING DISCIPLINARITY
THE VENICE BIENNALE OF ARCHITECTURE 1980-2012

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the changing definition of architecture over the last three decades through the lens of a real institution: the Venice Architecture Biennale. Its conceptual framework has been motivated by two dominant and apparently unrelated debates recently arising in architecture. The first of them is the ever-present discussion on disciplinary crisis and on the position of architecture among a wider group of epistemic cultures. The second regards the emergent concern about the impact of cultural institutions, such as the biennials, on the experience, rhythms, and modes of architectural knowledge construction and communication.

The argument presented in this thesis is that there is a mutual dependence between the concepts of discipline and institution, emphasising that the study of architecture needs to consider the new institutional frameworks, in which its discourse has been produced, fixed and disseminated. In this sense, it stems from the assumption that architectural disciplinary knowledge is not exclusively contained in academic structures, neither based on classificatory categories — architecture is a historically discontinuous field and subject of change.

This study tells a story about the disciplinary dilemmas and uncertainties of architectural discourse, from the first International Architecture Exhibition, The Presence of the Past (1980), to Common Ground (2012). It looks at the thirteen International Architecture Exhibitions thus subjected to the scope of inquiry, not as a simple succession of isolated events, but as episodes of a storyline supported by a broader constellation of ideas and actors that evolves over time. Accordingly, this study offers an overarching reading over three decades in order to identify the fluctuations and development of concepts, themes, and core values structuring architectural disciplinary culture.

Finally, this account attempts to contribute to the study of the discipline of architecture as well as of the Venice Biennale, by introducing new approaches on the conceptualization and analysis of the notion of discipline itself.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Studie befasst sich mit dem Wandel der Definition von Architektur im Laufe von drei Jahrzehnten. Ihr Rahmen ist gegeben durch die „reale" Institution der Architekturbiennale von Venedig. Konzeptuell orientiert sie sich an den zwei dominanten, jedoch scheinbar voneinander unabhängigen Debatten, die im Laufe der vergangenen Jahre an Bedeutung gewonnen haben. Zum einen, die stets präsente Diskussion um die disziplinäre Krise der Architektur und deren „Position" im weiteren Feld der epistemischen Kulturen. Zum anderen, das wachsende Interesse am Einfluss kultureller Institutionen – so etwa der Biennalen – auf die Erfahrung, die Rhythmen und die Weisen der Produktion und Kommunikation architektonischen Wissens.

Hauptthese ist, dass zwischen den Konzepten der „Disziplin" und der „Institution" eine wechselseitige Abhangigkeit besteht. Das Gewicht liegt hierbei auf dem Gedanken, dass das Studium der Architektur sich mit dem institutionellen Rahmen, in dem Diskurs produziert, fixiert und verbreitet worden ist, befassen muss. In diesem Sinne leitet sich diese Studie ab von der Überzeugung, dass architektonisches Disziplinarwissen sich nicht ausschliesslich in akademischen Strukturen entfaltet, und auch nicht auf klassifikatorischen Kategorien beruht – Architktur ist stets in historischem Wandel begriffen und kennt keine Kontinuität.

Diese Studie verfolgt die Geschichte der disziplinären Dilemmata und Unsicherheiten des Architekturdiskurses, angefangen von der ersten Internationalen Architekturausstellung, The Presence of the Past (1980), bis zu Common Ground (2012). Die somit untersuchten 13 Internationalen Architekturausstellung stellen nicht einfach eine Reihe voneinander isolierter Veranstaltungen dar, sondern sie erscheinen in dieser Studie als Episoden einer „Storyline", die von einer breiteren, sich wandelnden Konstellation von Ideen und Akteuren getragen worden ist. Dementsprechend bietet diese Studie eine drei Jahrzenhte erfassende, übergreifende Interpretation der Schwankungen und Entwicklungen von Begriffen, Themen und zentralen Werten, die die architektonische Disziplinarkultur strukturiert haben.

Letztlich stellt dies den Versuch einer Studie der Architektur als Disziplin und der Biennale von Venedig dar, in der auch neue Vorschläge zur Analyse des Disziplinbegriffs an sich zum Tragen kommen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Zusammenfassung

PART 2

PART 3

For Ivo, Guilherme and Matilde

INTRODUCTION

ARGUMENT, STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE

...In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.

Jorge Luis Borges, On exactitude in science

When we read Jorge Luis Borges' *On exactitude in science* we can easily imagine that this short story could be a kind of allegorical image for enouncing the dilemma in which the discipline of architecture is participating today. This fictional map, coextensive with the territory it was supposed to represent, displays an intrinsic paradox between the singular and multiple nature of "exactitude". It is, on the one hand, strictly framed and meticulously fixed "point for point". Yet, on the other, such exactitude is "unconscionable", unlimited, borderless, and has no territorial centre. One might actually say that the real dilemma is not so much that of a territory which makes itself hostage of representation — a *simulacra* in Jean Baudrillard's interpretation[1] — but that of a polycentric cartography in which the *multiple* and the

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[1] Starting from Jorge Luis Borges' "On exactitude of science", Jean Baudrillard developed in the opening chapter the ideas of *Simulacra and Simulations*, in the following terms: Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — precession of simulacra — that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the

singular, the *expanded* and the *compressed*, the *global* and the *local* share unexpectedly the same instance, thus introducing a sense of fragmentation and crisis.

1.

In our age of global dimensions, "when pluralism and relativism have become default positions" (Frodeman *et al.* 2010: XXXII), contemporary architecture dissolves in a similar sense of crisis. Two dominant assumptions, shared very broadly across the community of architects, critics and historians of our times, define such a perception.

The first is that architecture rests not upon an axiomatic doctrine, a professional expertise, or a codified language, but upon a territory fragmented by individual sensitivities. Such an account is generally related with the collapse of disciplinary paradigms that ran through the 1970s and 1980s, under the broader influence of poststructuralism — with the writings of Michel Foucault on discourse and discipline, the postmodern[2] and deconstructivist[3] arguments, the new historicism, and the post-colonial critique —, and mainly under the suspicious of the doctrinarian values of modernism — such as subjective autonomy, scientific progress, and rational social planning. This intellectual framework has led to the notion that there are potentially as many discourses as there are architects operating in the field. It was indeed such a notion that gave rise to the iconic system of the *star-architect* — as it came to be

territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself. (Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser in Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulations*, published by the University of Michigan Press, 1994).

[2] During the 1980s several essays were very influent in architecture culture: Jean-François Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979); Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide – Modernism, Mass Culture, Posmodernism* (1986); Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters—On Modernity, Post-Modernity, and Intellectuals* (1987); Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991); and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989).

[3] In late 1980s, titles such as *What is Deconstruction?* (Norris and Benjamin 1988), *Deconstruction in Architecture* (Papadakis 1988) and *Deconstructivist Architecture* (Johnson and Wigley 1988) marked this period.

called by the end of last century — and, ironically, to the reduction of his practice to mere commodified competence.

A second assumption is the notion that architecture has lost its disciplinary boundaries to become an "expanded field"[4] of epistemic practices. In the words of the American architectural historian Anthony Vidler, architecture today is but the celebration of "flows", "networks", and "maps" (Vidler 2004). The strong presence of concepts and vocabulary borrowed from the political, ethical, linguistic, aesthetic, and phenomenological fields, or the volatile contours of architecture — overlapping artistic, social, human, and scientific cultures — opened, in fact, disciplinary interrelations "across real and imaginary boundaries" (Moravánszky 2008: 15). As a consequence, architecture today seems to fall into a certain ambiguity between the enthusiasm for expanding its limits — suggested, in some way, by the new technological and digital culture that has changed the ideas of production and representation — and the permanent effort to redefine itself as an autonomous field.

Furthermore, by bringing the *global* and the *local* in contact[5], the so-called "global turn" challenged not only the geopolitical notion of boundary,[6] but definitely the configurations of disciplinary knowledge perception. In the decades following the post-1989 European reconfiguration, the rhetoric on globalization[7] and the current

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[4] Vidler, Anthony. 2004. Architecture's Expanded Field: Finding Inspiration in Jellyfish and Geopolitics, Architects Today are Working within Radically New Frames of Reference. *Artforum International* 42 (8): 142-147.

[5] Broadly speaking "the global" refers to the spatially extensive social and cultural forces associated with globalization (e.g. consumerism, satellite communications, culture industries, migration), while "the local" refers to small-scale, geographically confined traditions and ways of life (e.g.. ethnic traditions. language. religion) (Smith 2001: 231).

[6] See Clark, John, 2013. The Endogenous-Exogenous Interface in Globalism: the case of China and Thailand. *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds.* Ed. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel. Cambridge; London: ZKM, MIT Press.

[7] Édouard Glissant defined "globalization" as the "downside of a prodigious reality." He replaced the term "globalization" by "globality" to means "the unprecedented adventure we are all given to live in a world which, for the first time, in a real and immediate, shattering

theoretical reflection on *network society*[8] created a new global cartography. Although it did not generate innovative theories on society, history, culture or knowledge (Mann 2013: 3), nor even delineate new intellectual categories, this "turn" redefined the time-space parameters of disciplinary organization.

In fact, nowadays the schools are no longer the exclusive places of architectural culture. A cyclical network of *biennials*, *triennials* and other temporary large-scale exhibitions, have also been performing that function, challenging the experience and rhythms of architectural knowledge construction. Known as *biennale culture* or *biennialization*, this phenomenon is genealogically located in the Venice Biennale (1895) — the oldest referential point and main model for all the following periodic exhibitions — and chronologically coincident with the rhetoric of globalization. *Biennials* became a trademark name associated with the implicit guarantee of worldwide relevance (Ferguson; Hoegsberg 2010: 362), with cities that had never been considered relevant centres before — Havana, Istanbul, Lisbon, Rotterdam, Oslo, just to mention a few — demand a position as global players in a new worldwide cultural cartography. Some authors identify *biennials* as an epiphenomenon of late capitalism embedded in the logic of mass culture (Basualdo [2003] 2010). Others, on the contrary, have been arguing that the role of such institutions should not be underestimated (Filipovic, Hal, Øvstebø 2010b; Belting *et al.* 2013). *Biennials* have become experimental and self-reflexive places, whereby architecture and art have acquired unprecedented visibility in a new *global civil sphere*.[9]

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way, conceives of itself as both multiple and single, and inextricable" (quoted in Griffin 2013: 11).

[8] Manuel Castells coined the notion of "network society" in the studies *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Wiley 2010) and *The Network Society: A Cross Cultural Perspective* (Edward Elgar 2004).

[9] It was Anthony Giddens in *Consequences of Modernity* (1990), with Ulrich Beck, Mary Kaldor, John Keane and David Held, who most forcefully gave centrality to the idea of civil "globality". See also: John Keane. 2003. *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Alexander, Jeffrey. 2006. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The action of the above-mentioned assumptions, accompanied by the anxiety brought with the displacement from the school to the *global civil sphere*, have determined the vulnerability of architectural disciplinary frames and have raised doubts about the foundations of its authority and disciplinary identity.[10]

Whether the presumption of disciplinary crisis is real or fictional is, in fact, an important subject for scrutiny. Is that interplay between the *multiple* and the *singular,* or such dislocation from the academy to the *biennials*, a signal of disciplinary "failure"? Or is it more prudent to consider the notion of discipline as a historically contingent form that changes over time? Such questions will be taken up in the following chapters. I intend to emphasise that the study of the discipline of architecture needs to be re-thought. It must consider the "real institutions"[11] in which its discourse is currently produced, framed and disseminated.

This is what the present study seeks to do. Its main purpose is precisely to examine the changing definition of architecture over the last three decades, through the lenses of a real institution — the Venice Biennale. I track the trajectories of the notion of architecture by intersecting the institutional, official and critical discourses that stem from each bi-annual International Architecture Exhibition, from 1980 to the onset of the 21st century. As this study attempts to show, the long shadow of disciplinary crisis lay heavy across the Venice Architecture Biennale since it's very first moment in 1979. Nowadays, in the wake of a new *global civil sphere* where architecture is cyclically

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[10] The concept of "identity" retains a number of different meanings in the humanities and social sciences. Here, "identity" comprises a set of interrelated concepts: "self-identification"; "self- understanding"; and "self-representation". In addition, since the collective and individual agents involved in the production of the discipline are included in a web of relations, "identity" also encompasses external categorization, identification and representation. See: Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, *Beyond Identity* (2000); Bryon Wynne, *Misunderstood misunderstanding: social identities and public uptake of science* (1992); Margaret Somers, "The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach" (1994).

[11] I am borrowing an expression used by Tahl Kaminer (2011: 4), however under a different perspective.

debated in almost every city, it seems somehow fitting that architecture should feel able to question itself about the impact of the new modes and places of disciplinary construction.

2.

My argument is that there is a mutual dependence between the notions of *discipline* and *institution*. More precisely, as in any other field of knowledge, the discipline of architecture is an imaginary entity, a "non-tangible institution" (Kaminer 2011: 4) that needs to be confined by a real institution. A real institution is here taken to mean a concrete institutional structure able to confine and to fix a field of knowledge, by producing and transmitting relevant contents shared by a group of experts. It functions as a bridge that links together the several segments of disciplinary discourse (historical, theoretical, practical, symbolical) and as a canon-making engine that shapes a culture of knowledge — i.e. a set of discourses, values, codes as well as practices under a specific disciplinary view. By looking at the overlapping contours and fault-lines of architecture through the Venice Biennale, I am placing emphasis on such an idea.

The Biennale[12] deals, in fact, with multiple dimensions involved in disciplinary complexity — institutional, discursive and reflexive. Firstly, the Biennale is a model of large-scale international manifestation fixed on a twofold viewpoint: performing a kind of international state of the art, and legitimizing new trends, ideas and innovations within the global culture industry. Secondly, while establishing its identity through a specific cycle of repetition, the Biennale cannot be reduced to a perennial manifestation. It forms a culture where "taste has been cultivated, and its aesthetic

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[12] Here the term "Biennale" is assumed as a noun to designate the Venice Biennale. The title "Esposizione Biennale Internazionale di Venezia" (Biennale International Exhibition of Venice) was established by the Law n. 3229 on 24 December 1928. In 1938, with the Law n. 1517 that established the "Nuovo ordinamento dell'Esposizione Biennale internazionale d'arte di Venezia", the title was changed to "La Biennale di Venezia esposizione internazionale d'arte" (The Venice Biennale international art exhibition).

codified and defined" (Jones 2010: 69). Finally, it engages an institutional structure as well, with its own history, principles, rules and conceptual viewpoints.

The route traced by this study, from the first International Architecture Exhibition, *The Presence of the Past* (1980), until *Common Ground* (2012), embodies a story line, the axis of which is given by the disciplinary dilemmas and uncertainties of architectural discourse. Cyclically, curators, architects, critics, and policy makers meet, introducing new aphorisms, promoting ideas and redefining strategic conceptions about what architecture *is* or *should be* (Figueiredo 2014: 86). Beyond their diversities, one set of key questions seems to be shared by all: Where does architecture belong? What is the nature of its borders? What is the relationship that architecture establishes with the other epistemic cultures at the Venice Biennale?

In 1980, the Venice Biennale inaugurated the new sector of Architecture with the first "Mostra Internazionale d'Architecttura di Venezia" (International Architecture Exhibition of Venice), *The Presence of the Past*, directed by the Italian architect and historian Paolo Portoghesi. The central exhibition, "Strada Nuovissima", was not the first architectural manifestation inside the institution,[13] but it was the first time that architecture was exhibited as an autonomous disciplinary sector. Recent studies have, however, voiced doubts about the officially[14] established origin of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 1980 (Levy 2014; Busetto 2006: 34). Some authors, as Philip Rylands and Enzo Di Martino, have suggested that it was rather created in September 1991, with the *5th International Architecture Exhibition*, because this was the formative moment of a kind of large-scale exhibition in which art and architectural structures were connected by encompassing the foreign representations (Levy 2014: 90).

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[13] Until 1980 architecture was displayed sporadically: "Quattro progetti per Venezia" (1972); "A proposito del Mulino Stucky" (1975); "Il razionalismo e l'architettura in Italia durante il Fascismo" (1976); "Europa-America. Centro storico-suburbio: 25 architetti contemporanei" (1976); "Utopia e crisi dell'antinatura" (1978).

[14] The official story of the Architecture sector has been defined from 1980 onwards: http://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/history/

Nevertheless, Francesco Dal Co, the director of this Biennale, rejects such hypothesis: "The idea that there were five biennales came with my biennale. They said, 'This is the first biennale of architecture', and I said, 'No, it's the biennale that comes after Vittorio, Paolo and Aldo.' But I would avoid the conclusion that Vittorio, Paolo, Aldo and myself invented this. We were just reacting to what was suggested at the time" [15] (Levy 2010: 56). Other authors have considered *Proposti per il Mulino Stucky* (Proposals for the Mulino Stucky), organized by the Italian architect Vittorio Gregotti in 1975, as the formative instance of the Architecture sector, in which the interdependence between architecture, art and the city was first sketched (Levy 2014; Busetto 2006: 34).

In truth, architecture may well have entered the Venice Biennale "surreptitiously" (Portoghesi 1996). First, through a set of architectural drawings exhibited in the 34th International Art Exhibition in 1968.[16] After that, architecture field appeared as part of the Visual Arts and Architecture sector (1974-1978), and finally in 1979 with the official creation of a sector "specifically" and "autonomously" committed to Architecture (Galasso 1980: 7) — first directed by Paolo Portoghesi (until 1982) and celebrated with the "Teatro del Mondo" engine in 1979.

This study does indeed consider the conjuncture marked by the "Teatro del Mondo"[17] and the "Strada Novissima" as the most significant point of departure. This was not only the official moment in which a new independent sector of Architecture was installed, but a trigger moment: the conjuncture marked a turning point both in

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[15] Francesco Dal Co is making reference to the exhibitions: *Proposti per il Mulino Stucky* (1975), directed by Vittorio Gregotti; *The Presence of the Past* (1980) and *Architecture in Islamic Countries* (1982), directed by Paolo Portoghesi; *Progetto Venezia* (1985) and *Hendrik Petrus Berlage. Disegni* (1986) directed by Aldo Rossi.

[16] It was in this year, during the 34th International Art Exhibition, that architecture was displayed for the first time, with four small exhibitions with the works of Franco Albini, Louis Kahn, Paul Rudolph, and Carlo Scarpa (cf. Lanzarini 2003: 215).

[17] Designed by Aldo Rossi in 1979, Teatro del Mondo was the first public representation of architecture at the Venice Biennale.

the Venice Biennale as a cultural institution and in the contemporary architectural culture. To better understand its significance, I will first turn a step back to the moment just before it, beginning in 1975.

At the lower end of the chronological framework, this dissertation closes with *Common Ground*, curated by David Chipperfield in 2012. The several exhibitions and discussions developed during the outlined period defined a plot that, starting with a rupture from the Visual Art sector in 1979, and followed by a humanist culture — mediated by the postmodern paradigm in the 1980's — ended up in a transdisciplinary fragmented scope after the turn of the millennium. More recently, the urgency to find shared conventions, common guidelines, and wider frameworks within which to situate architecture, has changed the strategic conceptions of the events.

Some of the actors and some of the stories that took place during the Venice Biennale are relatively well known. However, the reflection about the Biennale's own culture and what has been the disciplinary consciousness expressed through that "dialectic atmosphere of controversy and stimulation" (Kultermann 1981: 15) is a matter that calls for a deeper investigation. This dissertation aims to fill this gap.

3.

The problem of disciplinary crisis did not rise exclusively from architecture. It has affected a wide panorama of disciplines in contemporary Western culture from the last decades of the 20th century. Many of the important debates taking place today in cultural studies, the philosophy of science, and the history of science orbit around the question of whether we might identify a discipline when it is no longer possible to inscribe knowledge into a stable frame of references.

Despite the diversity of viewpoints, authors from distinct backgrounds like Andrew Abbott[18], drawing on the fractal model and chaos theory; David Shumway and Ellen

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[18] He considered the existing matrix of disciplines from a dynamic perspective, arguing that, in several disciplinary fields, knowledge is organized by common oppositions that function at any level of theoretical or methodological scale. Abbott, Andrew. 2000. *Chaos of Disciplines.* Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.

Messer-Davido,[19] considering discipline as a "historically specific form;" Julie Thompson Klein,[20] searching for disciplinary taxonomies; Michael Gibbons,[21] reflecting on the new dynamics of knowledge production in contemporary societies; Karin Knorr Cetina,[22] exploring the machineries for the construction of "epistemic cultures;" or Peter Weingart,[23] elaborating on the paradoxes of interdisciplinary discourse, have all been expressing the idea that disciplinary culture became a moving target.

Together, they have suggested that the subject alignments and the systems of research are demanding alternative modes and places of organization, production and representation. They have, also, been arguing that transitory networks of communication, non-academic and non-professional structures, knowledge markets and mass media, have replaced the conventional disciplinary institutions and the modes of knowledge construction (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993, p. 121; Gibbons *et al.* 1994, p. 4-6; Weingart in Frodeman *et al.* 2010: 12; Rödder *et al.* 2011). The Venice Biennale might be easily situated in these non-academic networks of communication.

While the assumption of crisis is very well known in architectural studies, those alternative modes and places of disciplinary delimitation are much less understood. Without doubt, the disciplinary position of architecture has been a subject of extensive

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[19] Shumway, David and Ellen Messer-Davidow. 1991. Disciplinarity: An introduction. *Poetics Today* 12 (2 [Disciplinarity]): pp. 201-225.

[20] Klein, Julie Thompson. 2000. A Conceptual Vocabulary of Interdisciplinary Science. *Practicing Interdisciplinarity.* Ed. Peter Weingart and Nico Stehr. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

[21] Gibbons, Michael *et al.* 1994. *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies.* London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: Sage.

[22] Cetina, Karin Knorr. 2009. *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge.* Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press.

[23] Weingart, Peter and Nico Stehr. 2000. *Practicing Interdisciplinarity.* Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

reflection.[24] But, scholars who write about the discipline tend to be fixated on categorical approaches involving conceptual binaries such as autonomy *versus* heteronomy, or disciplinarity *versus* interdisciplinarity, disregarding fluctuations over time and the notion that architecture is a historically discontinuous field. We also know unexpectedly little about the Venice Biennale culture and to what extent it actually affects the ways of looking at architecture.

In the same sense, the paradigms that once drove the discipline of Architectural History seem now to be inadequate for expressing the dense and dynamic web of geographical, social and conceptual relationships in which architecture is nowadays included. In fact, recent work on architecture has tended to keep the focus on conventional perspectives: based on linear classificatory notions such as, among others, modernity and postmodernity — around which so much discussion took place[25] —; on the dependence between authorship and the built works; or on the

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[24] Just to mention a few: Koridon, Smith. 2012. *Introducing architectural theory, debating a discipline*. London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis; Troiani, Igea, Suzanne Ewing, and Diana Periton. 2013. Architecture and culture: Architecture's Disciplinarity. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 6-19; Gough, Tim. 2013. Architecture as a Strong Discipline. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 20-41; Kulper, Amy Catania. 2013. Representing the Discipline: The Operations of Architecture's Discursive Imagery. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 42-66; Seligmann, Ari. 2013. (M) ANY Disciplinary Approaches. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 68-95; Kenley, Stefania. 2013. Of Discipline, Disciples and Disappearance. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 96-110; Moravanszky, Akos and Ole W. Fischer (eds.), 2008. *Precisions: Architecture between Sciences and the Arts*. Berlin: Jovis; Picon, Antoine; and Alexandra [eds.] Ponte. 2003. *Architecture and the Sciences. Exchanging Metaphors.* Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press; Piotrowski, Andrzej and Julia W Robinson. 2001. *The Discipline of Architecture.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Leach, Neil. 1997. *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge.

[25] In 1989 Cornelius Castoriadis gave a lecture at the Boston University: "The retreat from autonomy", which was an explicit challenge on the "widely accepted historical periodization modern/postmodern". In his perspective "periodization provoked an impasse within history's necessary movement of ruptures and revolutions." Cf. Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 2008. *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, p.4.

treatment of the ideas, beliefs and concepts under an excessively abstract perspective. Besides, there is still little research on the mechanisms by which the concepts, methods and terminology from other epistemic cultures have been translated into the architectural discourse. Furthermore, the multiple layers involved in disciplinary construction (institutional; theoretical; critical; symbolical) have not been sufficiently explored or confronted.

For this reason, my study attempts to offer an alternative approach to the study of the discipline. The argument I present here stems from the recent insights of cultural studies, philosophy of science, and history of science above mentioned. It challenges the author-building historiographical paradigm and the abstract analysis of the concepts to re-evaluate the notion of discipline as a dynamic body and to introduce the perspective that concepts are "words in their sites" (Hacking 1990: 360). It looks at architecture beyond the events, connecting their multiple dimensions (symbolic, theoretical, institutional, official) through the notion of plot. This "emplotment" — drawing on Margaret Somers' notion of narrativity —, is what gives significance and understanding to each independent instance, since "causal emplotment is an accounting […] of why a narrative has the story line it does" (Somers 1994: 616).

This means that the thirteen International Architecture Exhibitions that define the scope of my inquiry are more than a mere succession of isolated events. Together, they define a story line supported by constellations of social and conceptual relationships that vary over time. This approach opens up a chance to avoid the usual rigidity of chronological or categorical orders; it "renders understanding only by connecting (however unstably) parts to a constructed configuration of a social network of relationships (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices" (Somers 1994: 616). Therefore, this study is not centred on biographical approaches or the activities of individual actors. On the contrary, the great protagonists are the constellations of architects, critics, curators and policy-makers, as well as the networks of concepts, words and taxonomies.

If the Venice Biennale (and the *biennials* in general) has shifted the ways of producing and locating cultural values — refuting a universal idea of art, shifting the

notion of scale and the West-centred perspective — as some art historians have been claiming,[26] there is no reason to deny that the study of architecture should change as well — as Weibel puts it, "we are experiencing an epoch of rewriting programs, rewriting art history, rewriting political and economic history on a global scale." (Weibel 2013: 27)

The focus on the biennial model became, in fact, an increasing new area of study that has been at the forefront of original research and could be included in a wider tendency arising from the field of Art History.[27] Art historians like Hans Belting, Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg have confirmed[28] that this global phenomenon has affected the art museums' activity, art market, and markedly the disciplinary definition of Art. Debates on biennials have seen the argument emerge that Art History, long

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[26] Belting, Hans, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (eds.). 2013. *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of the New Art Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press,); Belting, Hans, Jacob Birken, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011); Belting, Hans and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and museums* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009); Weibel, Peter and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.) *Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective* (Hatje Cantz, 2007).

[27] Gardner, Anthony and Charles Green. 2016. *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta: The Exhibitions that Created Contemporary Art.* Hoboken: Wiley & Blackwell Publishing; Spricigo, Vinicius. 2011. *Modes of Representation of the São Paulo Biennial: The Passage from Artistic Internationalism to Cultural Globalisation.* São Paulo: Hedra; Vogel, Sabine. 2010. *Biennials: Art on a Global Scale.* Vienna: Springer; Duve, Thierry de. 2009. *The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon: Strategies in Neo-political Times.* Rotterdam: NAI/SKOR; Vanderlinden, Barbara, Filipovic, Elena. 2005. *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe.* Cambridge; Massachusetts: MIT Press; Ricci, Clarissa. 2005. *"La Biennalizzazione". Dalla documenta 10 alla 50ª Biennale di Venezia. Utopia, Identità e Relazione* (unpublished). Doctoral thesis in History of Contemporary Art, La Sapienza University of Rome; Bydler, Charlotte. 2004. *The Global Art World Inc.* Upsale: Uppsala University; Grasskamp, W. 1996. For example: Documenta. Or, How is Art History Produced?. *Thinking about Exhibitions*. R. Greenberg, B. Ferguson, S. Nairne (eds.). London; New York: Routledge.

[28] Throughout the project GAM – Global Art and the Museum, at the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Technology Karlsruhe.

accommodated to a narrative focused on personalities and artworks, should be "written through, with, and alongside" the "biennial culture", so far insufficiently examined.[29] It becomes also clear that new vocabulary, expressions, and strategies have come into existence as part of a global process of civil representation. "Biennialogy" is one such expression and strategy. By introducing the suffix *ology*, this neologism constructs a kind of defence against the undervaluation of biennials as a systematic subject of study, instead reinforcing its relevance as a privileged mechanism able to generate a new body of knowledge (Filipovic, Hal, and Øvstebø 2010b: 16).

As can be seen from such a flow of ideas and resources, it is in the field of Art History that the debate on the biennialization phenomenon first emerged. Some authors have been giving attention to the study of biennials[30] in particular, as well as

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[29] Cfr. Filipovic, Elena, Marieke Van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø. 2010. *The Biennial Reader: The Bergen Biennial Conference.* Bergen and Ostfildern: Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz, p. 24; Ricci, Clarissa and Angela Vettese. 2010. *Starting from Venice: Studies on the Biennale.* Milano: et al./ Edizioni, p. 6. See also Martini, Vittoria. 2010. The Era of the Histories of Biennials has begun. In *The Biennial Reader: The Bergen Conference,* Bergen and Ostfildern: Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz.

[30] Gardner, Anthony and Charles Rick Green. 2016. *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art.* Oxford: John Wiley & Sons; Spricigo, Vinicius. 2011. *Modes of Representation of the São Paulo Biennial: The Passage from Artistic Internationalism to Cultural Globalisation.* São Paulo: Hedra; Vogel, Sabine. 2010. *Biennials: Art on a Global Scale.* Vienna: Springer; Duve, Thierry de. 2009. *TheAart biennial as a global phenomenon: strategies in neo-political times.* Rotterdam: NAI/SKOR; Vanderlinden, Barbara and Filipovic, Elena. 2005. *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-wall Europe.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Ricci, Clarissa. 2005. *"La Biennalizzazione". Dalla Documenta 10 alla 50ª Biennale di Venezia. Utopia, Identità e Relazione* (unpublished) History of Contemporary Art thesis, La Sapienza University of Rome; Bydler, Charlotte. 2004.*The Global Art World Inc. On the Globalization of Contemporary Art.* Upsale: Uppsala University. We should also mention the articles: "In Defense of Biennials", by Massimiliano Gioni; "Curating in Heterogeneous Worlds", by Geeta Kapur; and "Biennial Culture and the Aesthetics of Experience," by Caroline Jones published in *Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present.* Ed. Alexander Dumbadze and Suzanne Hudson. Hoboken: Wiley & Blackwell Publishing.

to the study of art and architecture exhibitions in general.[31] Yet, these approaches have not been extended to include the Venice Architecture Biennale. Nor have they related the disciplinary culture with the biennale culture in the architectural field. Besides, the studies that exist provide only a partial history on the Biennale.[32] This said, I must mention the project *Venice Biennale and the Structures of the Art Sector* (2008), directed by Beat Wyss at the Swiss Institute for Art Research in Zurich (SIK ISEA). Using Comparative Art History as a method of analysis, a team of international researchers has been exploring the dichotomy between *centre* and *periphery*, opening public debates and promoting a series of academic research initiatives and articles, though restricted to the artistic sector of the Biennale and focused on the cultural politics and regionalist identities.

In the field of architecture, only very recently has this phenomenon become a focus of interest and reflection. The synthesis *Un Secolo di Architettura alla Biennale e in Europa*, directed by Giorgio Busetto and edited by the Archivo Storico delle Arti

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[31] Among others, Arrhenius, Thordis *et al.* 2014. *Place and Displacement. Exhibiting Architecture.* Zurich: Lars Müller Publisher; Altshuler, Bruce. 2008. *From Salons to Biennials.* London: Phaidon; O'Neill, Paul. 2012. *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s).* Cambridge: MIT Press; Greenberg, Reesa, Bruce W Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne. 1996. *Thinking About Exhibitions.* London; New York: Routledge. Saunders, William S. 2005. *Commodification and Spectacle in Architecture: A Harvard Design Magazine Reader.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

[32] Alloway, Lawrence. 1968. *The Venice Biennale, 1895-1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl.* New York: Graphic Society; Rizzi, Paolo and Enzo Di Martino. 1982. *Storia della Biennale, 1895-1982.* Milano: Electa; Di Martino, Enzo. 1995. *Biennale di Venezia.* Venezia: Marsilio; Ventimiglia, Dario. 1996. *La Biennale di Venezia: Le Esposizionali d'Arte, 1895-1995: Artisti, Mostre, Partecipazioni Nazionali, Premi.* Venice: La Biennale di Venezia; Vecco, Marilena. 2002. *La Biennale di Venezia, Documenta di Kassel: Esposizione, Vendita, Pubblicizzazione dell'Arte Contemporanea.* Milano: Franco Angeli; Di Martino, Enzo. 2005. *The History of the Venice Biennale: 1895- 2005: Visual Arts, Architecture, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theatre.* Venezia: Papiro Arte.

Contemporanee of the Venice Biennale,[33] started to analyse the architectural sector. It was followed by two academic theses. One is the study *Exhibiting the Postmodern: Three Narratives for a History of the 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale* (2012)[34] developed by Léa-Catherine Szacka, who has been working on the first International Architecture Exhibition in its relationship with postmodernist debate. The other is *Architecture of Compromise: On the Venice Biennale and the Cultural Politics of Display*, concluded by Aaron Levy in 2010,[35] in which the cultural politics of display and contemporary curatorial practices were explored through a particular case study — the United States official representation at the 2008 Biennale. Furthermore, mention should be made of the research thesis *La Biennale di Venezia 1968-1978: La Rivoluzione Incompiuta* (2011), by Vittoria Martini. While not focused on the Architecture sector, it is a fundamental study for understanding the Venice Biennale's institutional transformations between 1974 and 1975.[36]

It is also worth mentioning the project *Architecture on Display,* coordinated by Aaron Levy and William Menking, under the shared tutelage of the Slought Foundation and the Architectural Association, which signals the rising interest in this subject. Gathering a relevant group of architects, critics, historians, editors, scholars and students, including the past directors of the Venice Architecture Biennale, this initiative produced an audio recorded archive of open-ended conversations[37] and

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[33] Busetto, Giorgio, Elena Lingeri, and Guya Bertelli. 2006. *Un Secolo Di Architettura Alla Biennale E in Europa: Ristampa in Appendice Di Guya Bertelli, Elena Lingeri: Il Novecento, Un Secolo Di Architettura Europea.* Venice: Marsilio.

[34] This thesis was recently published with the title *Exhibiting the Postmodern. The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale* (Venice: Marsilio, 2016).

[35] Levy, Aaron. 2010. *Architecture of Compromise: On the Venice Biennale and the Cultural Politics of Display.* School of Fine Art, History of Art, and Cultural Studies – University of Leeds (Unpublished).

[36] Martini, Vittoria. 2011. *La Biennale di Venezia 1968-1978: La rivoluzione incompiuta.* Università Ca'Foscari Venezia. (Unpublished)

[37] Available from http://architectureondisplay.org and published in Levy, Aaron and William Menking. 2012. *Four Conversations on the Architecture of Discourse.* London: AA Publications.

interviews[38]. It is also interesting to observe that, during the entire period of the 12th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 2010, the cycle "Architecture Saturdays" was launched, defined by discussions and meetings dedicated to every previous director of the Biennale,[39] clearly expressing the urgency to focus on the unknown history of the Architecture sector. Finally, the triptych of round-tables titled *2016-ennials. A Geography of Temporary Territories*, took the chronological coincidence of five large-scale architectural exhibitions in 2016 — International Istanbul Biennial, Lisbon Architecture Triennial, Oslo Architecture Triennial, Rotterdam Biennale, Venice Architecture Biennale — as the timely moment to reflect upon the challenges and dilemmas raised from this pressing phenomenon in the field.[40]

In spite of the abovementioned contributions to the subject, these studies and initiatives are mostly focused on very specific cases, on the complexities of curating and displaying architecture, or on the phenomenon of biennialization. We are still missing a systematic study of the relationships between curators, critics, policy

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[38] Published in Levy, Aaron and William Menking. 2010. *Architecture on Display: On the History of the Venice Biennale of Architecture.* London: AA Publications.

[39] Vittorio Gregotti (1975, 1976, 1978), Paolo Portoghesi (1980, 1982, 1992), Francesco Dal Co (1988, 1991), Hans Hollein (1996), Massimiliano Fuksas (2000), Deyan Sudjic (2002), Kurt W. Forster (2004), Richard Burdett (2006), Aaron Betsky (2008).

[40] This project was co-organized by Rute Figueiredo and Léa-Catherine Szacka in the context of the Lisbon Architecture Triennial and the Oslo Architecture Triennial. To discuss critically the impact of Biennials and Triennials in architecture field, fifteen leading actors directly involved in the construction of such events were invited. This brought new insights on the topic under distinct points of departure. Together, these meetings defined a cartography pointed by three relay stations: first in Venice — during the opening of the 15th International Exhibition on 27th May —, trying to scrutinize the configuration of -*ennials* as regular large-scale exhibitions and the position they occupy among other kind of structures; second, in the opening of Oslo Architecture Triennial (3rd September), reflecting on the institutional nature of these events in its relationship with the host cities; finally, at the closing moment of the Lisbon Architecture Triennial (11th December), aiming to look beyond the architectural displays, placing the Curator and the topics he raises at the centre of the debate.

makers and architects. In addition, such studies do not provide answers about how architecture has been conceptualized, shaped and presented within the Venice Biennale's context. All of these studies have generated important reflections and are considered an important support for the present study. However, they give us a fragmentary scope, which cannot provide a comprehensive view of the culture of the Venice Architecture Biennale.

Thereby, my study aims to define an overarching reading over three decades to better understand the evolution, fluctuation, and dilemmas of architecture disciplinary culture, through the lenses of the Venice Architecture Biennale. It also intends to analyse the reflexive[41] relation between such evolution and the Biennale's own culture, contributing both to the clarification of the recent debate on architecture's disciplinary crisis and to the history of the Venice Architecture Biennale. Finally, this study proposes to introduce new perspectives on Architecture History by exploring multiple theoretical and methodological approaches within the Theory of Architecture, Cultural Studies and Human and Social Sciences, which mirrors the interdisciplinary nature of the subject itself.

4.

This thesis is not about the materiality of architectural production, but rather the disciplinary discourses that circumscribe it. The research material includes the texts published in the catalogues of the Venice Biennale's exhibitions, architectural history and theory texts, as well as archival documents and some articles published in specialized magazines of architecture and the generalist press. Together, such different types of sources can provide evidence of cross-readings by different kinds of authors, under very distinctive dimensions, which are related to the architectural culture and to the ideas shaped behind the production of each Biennale.

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[41] Here the term "reflexive" is used as an action performed in response to a stimulus. Oxford English Dictionary, 'Reflex' and "Reflexive", *Online Edition*, available at <http://dictionary.oed.com>, accessed 23 October 2011).

First of all, the systematic analysis of all the texts published in the printed catalogues of the thirteen International Architecture Exhibitions can be considered a privileged source for reflecting on the official discourse, intellectual perspectives and key definitions produced within the Biennale. They give us the "site" of the words (Hacking 1990) and the direction of the discourse. In general terms, this published discourse is not innocuous. It registers the axis of argumentation of the authors and has a real impact on architectural culture. I have thus treated them as objects and studied their contents under two levels of analysis: the intellectual framework of the various authors; and the evolution of the concepts over the exhibitions. The lineages and conceptions defined in each catalogue differ widely, each expressing distinct understandings that are grounded in different beliefs on architecture.

Since this research aims to 1) confront both the institutional and the public discourse produced in the Biennale's context and 2) reflect about the Venice Biennale's identity, the documents included in the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee of Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia (ASAC), were an essential source of research. The focus on archival documents — such as letters, administrative processes, meeting minutes, etc. — can provide the access to: the institutional discourse; administrative and organizational information; the intentions of the agents of architecture as well as the validation of their choices; the conflicts within the institutional field and the tensions between political, social and economic interests.

My research has, in addition, been based on an iterative process. During the first stage, I deductively defined a set of concepts from the theory of architecture and other areas of knowledge: for instance, looking for concepts related to disciplinarity in different fields. In the second stage, taking those concepts as referential points, the I started by inductively systematizing topics and invariant categories, focusing on the texts published in the catalogues of the exhibitions and on the archival documents.

After the data was collected, I applied qualitative analysis methods in order to increase flexibility in data analysis and to help the systematization and categorization of the themes during the research work. This involved the codification of categories — selected from the theoretical literature — which were fine-tuned several times

during the research process. These categories were organized within a hierarchical structure. My strategy was to permanently adjust topics, patterns and contrasts. I also performed a qualitative content analysis, taking into account each agent, word, document and topic as a record unit and the context units.

Considering the nature of the research topic, the interest in allowing an overarching reading over three decades of activity, and the strategy of understanding the several constellations of relationships — both permanent networks of institutional actors and transitory networks of fluctuant actors as curators, critics, architects, policy makers, among others — social network analysis was adopted (Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Knoke and Yang 2008). With this analytic method, it is possible to examine patterns and ties between social relations but also between conceptual ones — grounded in a tradition that encompasses several areas of knowledge such as biology, sociology, physics, computer science, among others (Lima 2011; Newman 2010).

Social network analysis was used to map and discuss patterns of ties between collective and individual actors involved in the architectural field over time. This was also the reason for which I have excluded the method of interviews — considered in a first phase of the research. My focus is not on individual actors but on the constellations of relationships among them.

The purpose was not quantifying the information. The focus was instead on the exploration of the interconnections between concepts, ideas and actors mapped by the visualization of networks, examining *who* and *why* certain groups of actors become more important than others as well as to provide insights into the multiple conditions under which some ideas entered in the architectural discourse. gap.

5.

The study that follows is structured in three parts. Each part begins with a brief introduction that helps to link the key arguments together.

The Part 1 — "From the Tree to the Network. Discipline, Crisis and 'Real' Institutions in architectural knowledge construction" — examines the position of

Architecture in the wider disciplinary and interdisciplinary debate, promoted in the architecture field but also in contemporary cultural studies, philosophy of science, and history of science. Furthermore, it examines the position of the Venice Biennale in the *global civil sphere* defined by a cyclical cartography called biennialization and the consequences of this phenomenon on the emergence of new places of knowledge construction and dissemination in architecture. The first two chapters offer the framework of the main perspectives related to the topic, and emphasize the key issues to be resolved. The two chapters that define this part are, thus, central for the structuration of the argument.

The Part 2 of the study — "Architecture at the Venice Biennale. Institution, Exhibition, and Culture" — takes the Venice Biennale as a privileged site for studying fluctuations of Architecture over time. First, it scrutinizes the multiple nature of the Venice Biennale — an institution, a large-scale perennial exhibition, and a culture — and explains why such nature is an important condition for disciplinary discursive construction today (chapter 3). Second, it turns to the Architecture sector of the Venice Biennale, analysing how it was formed, operated and changed over time.

In the Part 3 — "Displaying Architecture. Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives" — the route proposed from *The Presence of the Past* (1980) to *Common Ground* (2012) is analysed under two distinct perspectives: a diachronic one, which examines the social and conceptual constellations of relationships over time; and a synchronic perspective, which shifts the scale of scrutiny and explores three notions commonly linked with architecture in the context of the Architecture Biennale: *city*, *language*, and *form*. Each notion formed a distinct story line.

In the diachronic perspective, it was important to distinguish two analytical levels: the social network of agents involved in the structuration of the Architecture Biennales; and the conceptual framework on which these agents constructed their arguments on architecture. In order to handle the complexity of disciplinary reality, graphical representations are explored as a privileged reading tool.

1.

FROM THE TREE TO THE NETWORK*

DISCIPLINE, CRISIS AND "REAL" INSTITUTIONS IN ARCHITECTURAL
KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

AU LECTEUR

Da veniam Scriptis, quorum non gloria nobis causâ, sed utilitas, officiumque fuit.

Ovid. Trist. III. 10.

L'HISTOIRE

LA RAISON d'où emane PHILOSOPHIE ou SCIENCE

LES LETTRES PHISIQUES

L'ENTENDEMENT

LA MEMOIRE à laquelle se rapporte l'HISTOIRE

L'IMAGINATION

ESSAI D'UNE DISTRIBUTION GÉNÉALOGIQUE DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS PRINCIPAUX

What we call *discipline* is still, despite the long history of knowledge classification since Greek philosophy, a difficult concept. We have, however, no reluctance in using the term discipline in circumstances very distant from each other. The various senses included in the Oxford English Dictionary** suggest that the idea of discipline — both a verb and a noun — involve several meanings: practice of controlling or correcting future behaviour; a system or method for the maintenance of order; a body of rules for conduct or action; a way of doing things; a branch of learning and of knowledge; a field of study or expertise; a subject matter; the system or method by which order is maintained; meanings relating to order arising from training or instruction; what instructs, trains, and makes intellectually disciplined. It seems that discipline stems from an unclear oscillation between several ideas, but that lead to at least two main interlocking concepts: *order* and *knowledge*.

Addressing the current debates on discipline and inter/trans-discipline, as well as those articulated around the new cyclical network of large-scale exhibitions in which knowledge has currently been shaped, this part explores such concepts of *order* and *knowledge* connecting architecture with the other disciplinary domains, on one hand, and enquiring on the impact of the *biennial culture* in the production and mediation of architectural disciplinary contents today, on the other. This focus delimits the field that is primarily grounded on authors coming from sociology and history of science, cultural studies, philosophy and art history, whose work engages with different conceptions of discipline, within which architecture can be situated. Naturally, it also considers the important contributions of recent studies developed within the field of architecture*.

Chrétien Guillaume Roth, "Explication détaillée du systeme des Connoissances Humaines tirée du Discours Préliminaire du Tome I. de l'Encyclopédie Publiée par Mr. Diderot et Mr. d'Alembert à Paris pour Servir à l'Usage de l'Arbre Encyclopédique", in *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* (1751)

* The title of Part 1 is borrowed from the Umberto Eco's essay *From the Tree to the Labyrinth: Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation* (2014).
** Oxford English Dictionary, 'Discipline', *Online Edition*, available at http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/53739 accessed January 2015.

1. Defining *Discipline*

It becomes clear that the sum of our knowledge (present, but also, as it was for Leibniz, future) extends like a geographical map without borders, within which infinite itineraries are possible.

Umberto Eco, *The Tree and the Labyrinth*

A *discipline* has long been thought as a system of branches distributed inside an order of classification and categorization. From the Aristotelian division of knowledge between practical and theoretical enquiry[1], the medieval *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) or *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), until the Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620) — who first took into consideration the hierarchical order of disciplines —, the subject matters were classified into different systems of categorisation.

Within the Enlightenment project, discipline has always been used to refer knowledge. In the "Preliminary Discourse" to the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751), Jean le Rond d'Alembert

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[1] Complementing the "pure" thinking of rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and ethics, with the examination of nature by physics and astronomy. Cf. Klein, Julie Thompson. 1990. *Interdisciplinarity/History, Theory, and Practice*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, p. 19.

(1717~1783) enounced how the sciences and the arts were organized in a genealogical order of knowledge:

The general system of the sciences and the arts is a sort of labyrinth, a tortuous road which the intellect enters without quite knowing what direction to take …
However philosophic this disorder may be on the part of the soul, an
encyclopaedic tree which attempted to portray it would be disfigured, indeed
utterly destroyed …Finally, the system of our knowledge is composed of
different branches, several of which have a common point of union. Since it is
not possible, starting out from this point, to begin following all the routes
simultaneously, it is the nature of the different minds that determines which
route is chosen […] [2]

D'Alembert's metaphorical image, between the schematic model of the Neo-Platonist *Arbor Porphyriana* and the territorial image of the labyrinth, did however introduce a difficult question: since every category is potentially connected with other categories within a continual process, human knowledge extends like an unlimited map that constantly acquires new configurations. Those who travel on that map "must also learn to correct constantly the image they have of it", Umberto Eco advised, "whether this be a concrete (local) image of one of its sections, or the hypothetical regulatory image concerning its global structure" (Eco 2014:54). If the image of the tree was a bi-dimensional classificatory schema of organization, the conception of knowledge slowly developed towards the open-ended encyclopaedic model that has in the image of the rhizome its extreme idealisation (Eco 2014:54). The term rhizome —

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[2] Jean le Rond D'Alembert's "Preliminary Discourse" in the *Encyclopédie*, quoted by Eco, Umberto. 2014. *From the Tree to the Labyrinth: Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation.* (Trans. Anthony Oldcorn) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 48.

adapted in the 1970s from the botanical taxonomy[3] to philosophy, by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, to signify an "image of thought" — is here taken as the closest metaphor for clarifying the idea that disciplines have become multidimensional labyrinths of interconnected nodes, open in several directions, and susceptible to constant readjustment.

That is to say, by expanding scientific knowledge throughout diverse subject matters and by opening up a hypothetically unlimited sequence of abstractions, it becomes evident that disciplines provide taxonomies[4] that construct the paths by which we organize knowledge and education in a specific field. Nonetheless, in architecture the main concern has been precisely to understand the interaction between the different possible paths of "imagination" (arts), "raison" (sciences), and the "memoire" (expertise), as enounced in the Encyclopedic's *Systême Figurè des Connoissances Humaines.* In fact, architecture draws upon this apparent difficulty.

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[3] Rhizome, from Greek *rhízōma* "mass of roots", is a notion taken from botany and dendrology. A rhizome is a subterranean stem of a plant, forming accidentally diverse configurations shooting from its nodes.

[4] On the study of disciplinary taxonomies see: Klein, Julie Thompson. 2010. *A taxonomy of interdisciplinarity.* In *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*. Ed. Robert Frodeman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1.1 Real Institutions in the Field of Architecture

The position of architecture among the several paths of knowledge has been a question on which there is no agreement. Yet, some different aspects have confined architecture as a disciplinary entity. The self-perception of architecture as a discipline became possible from the 19th century onwards, throughout the expansion of new subject matters — as the new functional programs, the industrial city, the technological novelties, among others — and, essentially, the creation of new institutional frameworks: the academic and professional structures.

Without doubt, academic institutions proved to be the form of organization better suited for the accommodation of different, quite heterogeneous, disciplines in the modern sense (Stichweh 1984: 73). Also, the professional institutions came to represent the interests of the architect as a collective entity, certifying and demarcating a disciplinary territory within the professional market. These institutions function as an essential mechanism to legitimate professional statements, but also to supply contents for interaction, for communication, and for sharing knowledge on the field. Finally, architectural offices provide the disciplinary practice and transmit specialised knowledge between generations, allowing for the socialisation of architects into their profession. The following table synthetizes the function and action of each institution.[5]

Taken together these are *real* institutions — that is, they permit to identify the abstract and non-tangible idea of discipline as a *conceptual entity*, delimiting a particular field of knowledge, founded on a set of theories, concepts, methods, and using specific vocabulary and taxonomies. They are also *real* in the sense that they permit to confine architecture as a *social entity*,[6] constituted by a group of experts, with scientific authority to acquire, sustain, and transmit a shared body of knowledge

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[5] This table was produced for this thesis in order to synthetize the relationship between "institution" and "discipline".

[6] On this topic see: Weingart, Peter and Nico Stehr. 2000. *Practising Interdisciplinarity*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, p. XI.

between generations. It is this double nature — conceptual and social —, supported by specific institutional structures, that has confined the notion of field of knowledge in architectural culture.

INSTITUTIONS	FUNCTION	COMMUNICATION	CONTENTS	IMPACT ON	BOUNDARY
Academic structures	• Represent disciplinary knowledge • Produce and reproduce disciplinary contents • Perform research and educational functions	Self-referential "Closed" Disciplinary community	Theories Concepts Methods	Scholars Students	Impermeable
Professional societies	• Represent the interests of disciplinary community • Perform corporate functions • Certify professional training • Demarcate the disciplinary sector within the professional market • Control the access to the job market	Self-referential "Closed" Membership community	Rules of membership	Members	Impermeable
Design firms/ ateliers	• Applied disciplinary knowledge • Perform training functions	"Opened" For the client For the apprenticeship	Know-how Methods Practical knowledge	Client Practitioners	Permeable
Cultural institutions [exhibitions; foundations, architectural journals, publications]	• Present and disseminate disciplinary knowledge • Provide revision of disciplinary contents • Provide widespread circulation of ideas, solutions and discourses • Perform a critical function	"Opened" For the pairs and for the public	Trends Ideas Innovations	Scholars Practitioners Public	Permeable

TABLE 1 – REAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF ARCHITECTURE

In any discipline, the *field* — a geographical metaphor — has the function of ordering and confining subject matters, by the formulation of research problems under the viewpoint of a group of experts. It is a "territory" confined by boundaries and protected by what Tony Becher called academic "tribes" (Becher 2001), which indicate the relations that it may establish with other epistemic territories. But these same boundaries are not static delimitations. They may be redefined if the discipline is attempting to expand into new areas of knowledge. Boundary-work determines, precisely, which methods and theories should be maintained, which should be excluded, and which may be imported from other cultures of knowledge. Disciplinary fields differ regarding the permeability of their boundaries. "Impermeable boundaries", Becher stresses, "are in general a concomitant of tightly knit, convergent disciplinary communities and an indicator of the stability and coherence of the intellectual fields they inhabit. Permeable boundaries are associated with loosely knit, divergent academic groups and signal a more fragmented, less stable and comparatively open-ended epistemological structure". (Becher 1989: 37-38)

A field of knowledge is, therefore, a structured configuration in social life, with a specific logic that distinguishes it from others, whereby agents are struggling for power — as sustained by Pierre Bourdieu in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993). In architecture, the idea of *field* is based on social appropriation and a principle of exclusion,[7] since laypersons are not, in principle, able to participate in the production of disciplinary contents. In other words, the architect — a profession that includes artistic, technical, and sociological dimensions — increases distance from the traditional builders and the "more-established" activity of engineers, by both: defining "design as their specific competence and a theoretical foundation for their art"; and by subordinating technology to design (Larson 1993: 5).

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[7] As suggested by the American sociologist Magali Sarfatti Larson in *Behind the Postmodern Facade: Architectural Change in Late Twentieth-Century* (1993).

To sum up, architecture — and its specific professional and conceptual culture — can only be confined as a discipline through a real institution. It is only through it that architecture can transfer knowledge between generations, identify itself as a field of expertise, and institutionalise its intrinsic practices.

1.2 The Sense of Crisis in Architectural Disciplinary Culture

In the course of the 1970s and in the following decades, disciplinary paradigms faced two tough challenges. The first of these was conceptual and the other institutional. The rise of cultural studies with their tendency for multiculturalism, the growth of new identity politics focused on questions of race and gender, and the flatness of high and popular cultures, have all undermined the legitimacy of disciplinary identities and weakened the role of the academic structures as exclusive centres for knowledge construction. The poststructuralist thought of Michel Foucault, as expressed in his essay *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (1969), added to this crisis. Foucault argued that *discipline* is a mechanism of control in the construction of discourse (Foucault 1972: 224). He further postulated that discipline "fixes", "arrests" or "regulates" movements, "it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings of individuals wandering about the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions" (Foucault [1977] 1995: 219).

A definition such as this brings us close to the relation between *knowledge*[8] and *power*, one of the pivotal dichotomies of Foucault's theoretical framework. In truth, they are two sides of the same question: "who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided?" (Lyotard 1984: 8-9). Here, however, I am less interested to situate discipline in the larger set of strategies of control and regulation — associated with the concepts of *biopower* and *biopolitics* —, and more centred on the idea that *discipline* and *discourse* were considered interdepended concepts, working together as a key mechanism for fixing, delimiting and organising knowledge.

By the end of the last century, the notion of discipline was considered a discursive formation, constituted by different histories, trajectories, methodologies, and theoretical positions. Under this poststructuralist perspective, discourse became not only a linguistic system able to safeguard margins around what is considered

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[8] The idea of "knowledge" ("connaissance" in the French version) is defined by Foucault as a specific corpus of knowledge, "the relation of the subject to the object and the formal rules that govern it". In other words: a discipline.

important, and what is not; but also, a body rhetorically constituted to define the content of domain and the way whereby such content is organised inside an individual perspective or a specific culture at a given moment of time. Accordingly, discourse is related to the historically specific relations between disciplinary bodies of knowledge and disciplinary practices, looking for the continuities and discontinuities of episteme and for their sociological context.

1.2.1 The Labyrinth of Individual Interpretations

The action of this intellectual framework had a strong impact on the identities and disciplinary characteristics of architecture, as such generating a sense of fragmentation and crisis. Many aspects of the notions of *discipline* and *discourse* offered in the poststructuralist thought and in the writings of cultural studies, accompanied by the collapse of the modernist normative idealisations, challenged the established matrix of architectural disciplinary principles. Primarily, it led to the idea that there are several modes of structuring architectural discourse as diverse as all the architects operating in the field. Secondly, "after the loss of consensus",[9] architecture compensated the lack of axiomatic doctrines by translating words and expressions that came from other cultures of knowledge.

Architect-Centred Discourse

Without doubt, the individualization of architect's discourse was one of the most important aspects that had contributed to the emergence of the idea of crisis in the field of architecture, introducing a kind of "antinomy": the "unity" of architecture was dependent from its "diversity".[10] In other words, even though all individual discourses

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[9] Borrowing Carter, Marcus *et al.* 2006. Architecture After All. *Perspecta* (38).

[10] Florent Champy, drawing on the referential work of Magali Larson and moving beyond the functionalist and interactionist theories of professional activity, argued that the dilemmas of architecture, that bring so little affinity with the epistemic bodies usually called disciplines, made architecture a particularly suitable subject for reflecting on the delimitations of professional expertise. Champy, Florent. 2011. *Nouvelle Théorie Sociologique des*

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— sustained by private theories, based on personal methods, and defining extremely different formalisations — became equally possible and suitable. Therefore, the distinctiveness of architecture became no more than a set of isolated perspectives. Besides, the growing diversification of the techniques of construction, the new modes of representation allowed by the digital culture, the emergence of new functional programs, and the complexity of professional exercise among the other increasing sectors of specialisation involved in the building practice, have all generated a suspicion about the architecture's authority and identities. The French sociologist Florent Champy summarised this difficulty in the following terms:

L'incapacité à penser l'unité de l'architecture est ipso facto incapacité à penser la spécificité de cette activité. Qu'est-ce que faire de l'architecture?
Cette question simple semble ne pas pouvoir trouver de réponse claire, mais seulement une multiplicité de réponses dont la validité est toujours restreinte au mieux à un groupe, au pire à un individu. (Champy 2011: 40)

The multiplicity of answers has been, undoubtedly, a deeper difficulty when reflecting on architectural disciplinary configuration. As explained above, disciplines are conceptual and social communities defined for the production of specific knowledge, establishing authority, legitimacy, and a set of shared conventions. They also define fields of expertise that require a shared language, methods, conventions, theories and rules, functioning as mechanisms of ordering and confining subject matters. Accordingly, it becomes clear that the architect-centred paradigm undermines the notion of architecture as a disciplinary coherent field.

In this regard, our field is not a unique case. "In its own time, the Enlightenment age congratulated itself with a universally valid aesthetic whose language was

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Professions. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. See also Larson, Magali Sarfatti. 1993. *Behind the Postmodern Facade: Architectural Change in Late Twentieth-Century.* Berkeley Los Angeles London: University of California Press; and Jones, Paul. 2011. *The Sociology of Architecture.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

understood all over the world," wrote the art historian Hans Belting. Today, nonetheless, such universalism is no longer possible because art is "a practice of personal autonomy", he added, without "formal models from which we could read the autonomy of the artistic creation" (Belting 2003: 198). Although in a different scope and with implications that go beyond the latitude of this study, these considerations on art can illustrate that the individual approach is something transversal. But it also confirms that such individuality has been reinforced by the profile that the architect has been constructing about himself as a creative entity.[11]

As a consequence, the signature of the architect has acquired symbolic as well as economic value and became something "transacted as a trademark that supposedly guarantees superiority" (Curtis 2008). The emergence of the star-system — as it became known — brought an overpowering cultural meaning to architecture, at the same time it ended up by reducing the architect's activity to mere commodified competence. Also, the architect's desire of exceptionality has been dissipating architecture in "empty gestures and complex excessive forms that do not imply a true meaning". (Curtis 2008)

Translating, Transcoding and Transgressing Discourses

Another aspect was equally important in raising the architecture's rhetoric of crisis: while distinct individual perspectives co-existed, it was admissible to mention the authority of wider intellectual frameworks. In fact, writings from semiology, phenomenology, structuralism, poststructuralism, among others, suddenly seemed more important than the discourses (formal and textual) produced inside the field of architecture. This is, in some way, the central argument of Neil Leach's *Rethinking*

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[11] Champy illustrates this position with a concrete example: "Le propos suivants d'un architecte enseignant dans une école parisienne l'illustrent: 'Je ne veux pas que le gouvernement me dise par décret au Journal officiel ce que je dois transmettre à mes étudiants. Le seule chose que je peux transmettre, c´est ma personnalité. Le reste ne présent aucun intérêt" (Champy 2011: 40).

Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory (1997).[12] Leach rethought the concept of architecture by publishing texts from outsider viewpoints, grounded on broader traditions of thought, that had been adopted by the architectural field over the last decades of the 20th century. Authors such as Theodor Adorno, Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, Umberto Eco, Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, among many others, constituted the intellectual corpus on which architecture would define its strategies and arguments of action. From the heterogeneous and fragmentary corpus of tendencies, themes and discourses, architects tried to construct a discursive ground based on the wider paradigms of theoretical speculation.

This *Reader* was symptomatic of the urgency felt, by the late-1990s, in rethinking the concept of boundary and the position of architecture. It is surely no coincidence that a plethora of terms such as "transcoding",[13] "translating", and "transgressing", deeply used by the vast community of architects at that time, had entered in architectural vocabulary. Under Leach's perspective, these concepts were precisely what guaranteed architecture's own individuality. The idea of transgressing, for instance, does not deny the idea of limit. On the contrary, the instance of transgression is precisely what emphasizes the limit as limit, Leach claimed. In fact, *limit* and *transgression* are concepts that depend on each other, since "a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows"[14] (Foucault 1977:34). In line with poststructuralist thought, the disciplinary configuration of

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[12] Leach, Neil. 1997. *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge.

[13] Here, it is useful to call Fredric Jameson's notion on "transcoding", since it was very influent on architecture's thought on that time: "the invention of a set of terms, the strategic choice of a particular code or language, such that the same terminology can be used to analyse and articulate two quite distinct types of objects or `texts,' or two very different levels of structural reality". Jameson, Fredric. 1981. *The Political Unconscious.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 40.

[14] Foucault, Michel. 1977. Preface. In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice.* Ed. Donald Bouchard. Ithaca; New York: Cornell University Press, p.34 (quoted by Leach 1997).

architecture was stimulated by some sort of "contamination"[15] from the other fields, such as media and arts, in which multiplicity and heterogeneity would be accepted as a mechanism to avoid the danger of modernist homogenisation.

Other voices inside the architectural circle have, conversely, been considering this phenomenon as problematic. Anthony Vidler — who has been analysing the "state of art" in the field of architecture over the last few years[16]— argued that "an anti-institutional ideology, with strong French philosophical connections — Foucault, Barthes, Derrida — served to undermine architecture's own disciplinary focus" (Vidler 2011:102). He also asserted that the phenomenon of "transmigration" of theories was deeply responsible for a certain attitude of "resistance", particularly identified in the debate in North America at the turn of millennium.

There are many terms that have been expressing such a "resistance", as post-theory and post-criticism (just to name a few), developed by Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting in *Perspecta* 33[17], as well as by Stan Allen, Sylvia Lavin and Michael Speaks,

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[15] Jacques Derrida in discussion with Christopher Norris, 1988. *Deconstruction Omnibus*. Ed. A. Papadakis, C. Cooke, A. Benjamin. London: Academy Editions, p. 72 (quoted by Leach 1997)

[16] In a set of six essays, published in *Architectural Review* between 2011 and 2014, Vidler outlined "the state of the art" of architecture from the post-War period until 2000.

[17] In 2002, Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting published "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism" in *Perspecta* 33. This article has been considered a referential moment that fixes the shifting of architectural theory towards a supposed project of autonomy. As pointed out by the authors: "If critical dialectics established architecture's autonomy as a means of defining architecture's field or discipline, a Doppler architecture acknowledges the adaptive synthesis of architecture's many contingencies. Rather than isolating a singular autonomy, the Doppler focuses upon the effects and exchanges of architecture's inherent multiplicities: material, program, writing, atmosphere, form, technologies, economies, etc. It is important to underscore that this multiplying of contingencies differs greatly from the more dilute notion of interdisciplinarity, which seeks to legitimize architecture through an external measuring stick, thereby reducing architecture to the entirely amorphous role of absorber of heterogeneous life". (Somol and Whiting in Krista 2010: 196-197)

among others.[18] Applied retrospectively, the prefix "post" ended up delimiting and, at the same time, pointing towards the end of the intellectual culture shaped by a second post-war generation — from the 1960s until the late-1990s. This was the "generation theory", as it came to be called, which attempted to draw "maps of possibilities" (Hays 2000: xiii) in order to solve the crisis of legitimation and to rethink the frames of architectural practice.

Such delimitation was previously outlined by the publication of two anthologies on Architecture Theory — Kate Nesbitt's *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995* (1996)[19] and Michael Hays's *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (1998).[20] The almost coincident publication of these volumes, accompanied by the above-mentioned *Reader*, is extremely significant for the delimitation of the discipline. Taken together, these volumes tried to define a framework to "rethink"[21] architecture as a coherent field of knowledge. While doing it, they also identified "what" and "who" should be included or excluded. Here, what is essential to reinforce is that the scope defined by these publications affected the way architects have been constructing their understanding on the discipline. In other words, they functioned as mechanisms of discursive legitimation.

These collections of writings rested upon the notion that theory was the "catalyst" for changing academic and professional disciplinary conditions (Nesbitt 1996: 13).

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[18] For analysing the discussion on post-criticism see: Baird, George. 2005. 'Criticality' and its Discontents. *Harvard Design Magazine*. 21 (Fall 2004/Winter). Martin, Reinhold. 2005. Critical of What? Toward a Utopian Realism. *Harvard Design Magazine*, 22 (Spring/Summer): 104-109; Speaks, Michael. 2005. *Architectural Record*, June: 73-75.

[19] Nesbitt, Kate. 1996. *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995.* Princeton Architectural Press.

[20] Hays, K. Michael. 1998. *Architecture Theory Since 1968.* Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: MIT Press.

[21] "Whereas it opened with slogans such as 'Towards a New Architecture', it closes with a 'rethinking' of architecture. This is in line with a general trend that Fredric Jameson has detected within culture at large which he has described as an 'inverted millenarianism'". Leach, Neil. *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge, 1997.

However, as evidenced above, each architect had developed private theories of his own work. Above all, what holds together a set of writings dedicated to very heterogeneous topics, engaged in singular methodological conceptions, and coming from very dissimilar understandings of architecture, was the belief that plurality was precisely what had defined the disciplinary understanding in such "generation theory". Those anthological projects were an attempt to reconstruct the idea of architecture, by looking at architecture as a discursive formation constituted by different stories, trajectories, and theoretical positions.

1.2.2 *Inter*- and *Trans*- Disciplinary Debate

It is no longer possible to speak about architecture as a unified disciplinary corpus grounded on shared principles or values, given the fragmentation expressed in the field. But, the idea of discipline as a unified corpus also faced a further challenge: the intense debate focused on inter- and trans- disciplinary modes of knowledge construction. In the course of the 1990s and during the first decade of our century, there has been a deeper discussion — in diverse cultures of knowledge — about the nature, identity, and dynamics of disciplines. It has been identified that discipline has become a "shifting and fragile homeostatic system" (Heckhausen 1972: 83; Easton 1991: 13). In Julie Thompson Klein's interpretation: terms:

Plurality" and "heterogeneity" replaced "unity" and "universality." "Interrogation" and "intervention" supplanted "synthesis" and "holism." And, older forms of "interdisciplinarity" were challenged by "anti," "post," "non," and "de-disciplinary" formulations. The keywords of the new rhetoric signalled the evolution of a general form of "critical interdisciplinarity" that challenged the existing structure of knowledge and education. (Klein 2005: 5)

In other words, what Klein is emphatically claiming is that such a "new rhetoric" has generated the collapse of traditional paradigms. It has, furthermore, created metaphoric structures and analogies (Klein 2005; Maasen and Weingart: 2000), in which *interdisciplinarity* has been connected to a variety of lines of inquiry, often mentioned as if they were the same: *crossdisciplinarity*, *multidisciplinarity*, *supradisciplinarity* or *transdisciplinarity*.[22]

Among these lines of inquiry, *transdisciplinarity*[23] represents today the major tendency and has entered the architectural debate. Also known as Mode 2 of knowledge production,[24] transdisciplinarity occurs in the "interstices" between conventional disciplines, throughout the *cross-fertilisation* of disciplinary areas, and by the "diffusion of instruments and procedures which affect the practice of research in often remote areas" (Gibbons 1994: 147). Transdisciplinarity has, too, been understood as a system of axioms — such as structuralism, Marxism, policy sciences, feminism, etc. — that transcends the limited scope of disciplinary views by an overarching intellectual framework. In *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, the

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[22] On this topic see: Klein, Julie Thompson. 1996. *Crossing Boundaries/Knowledge, Disciplinarities, and Interdisciplinarities*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

[23] The term "Transdisciplinarity" was introduced by Erich Jantsch in early 1970s, during the debate organized by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1972. On the study of "transdisciplinarity" see: Thompson Klein, J., Grossenbacher-Mansuy, W., and Häberli, R. (Eds.). 2001. *Transdisciplinarity: Joint problem solving among science, technology, and society: An effective way for managing complexity*. Basel: Birkhäuser. See also Doucet, Isabelle and Nel Janssens. 2011. *Transdisciplinary Knowledge Production in Architecture and Urbanism: Towards Hybrid Modes of Inquiry*. London: Springer.

[24] Erich Jantsch first coined the term 'transdisciplinarity' which was taken up two decades later by Gibbons *et al.* (1994) to diagnose the emergence of a new mode of knowledge production termed 'Mode 2'. The thesis that the traditional disciplinary 'Mode 1' of knowledge production has given way to a new transdisciplinary mode of knowledge production has since then initiated animated discussions among analysts and the mobilisation of conflicting evidence. Gibbons, Michael *et alt*. 1994. *The New Production of Knowledge. The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: SAGE.

concept of *interdisciplinarity*[25] expressed in the title intends to means both: knowledge production that "bridge disciplinary boundaries ('interdisciplinarity'), and the growing effort to make knowledge products more pertinent to non-academic actors ('transdisciplinarity')" (Frodeman *et alt.* 2010: 12).

Broadly speaking, the emergence of *inter-* and *trans-* disciplinary structures is directly related to the growing number of specialities, therefore increasing the probability of creating new disciplinary configurations. The interdisciplinary approach attempted to preserve the notion of authority by understanding the discipline as a set of interconnected fields managed by principles, norms, and rules in continuous transformation. A remarkable example is Art History's periodisation. Periodisation was taken, for a long time, as the one of the most dominant basis of interdisciplinary relation between painting, sculpture and architecture. Shared themes, motifs, and genres "suggested synchronic relations within chronological eras and stylistic categories" (Klein 2005: 109).

The tendency towards interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches has strongly questioned the notion of intellectual and scientific disciplinary autonomy — a self-contained and self-regulated field, under its own laws — in a variety of areas of knowledge. Architecture is, evidently, no exception. Recent work[26] has tended to

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[25] For the discussion on interdisciplinarity: Frodeman, Robert. 2010. *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity.* Oxford University Press; Klein, Julie Thompson. 2009. *Creating Interdisciplinary Campus Cultures: A Model for Strength and Sustainability.* John Wiley & Sons; Klein, Julie Thompson. 2005. *Humanities, Culture, and Interdisciplinarity: The Changing American Academy.* SUNY Press; Klein, Julie Thompson. 1989. *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice.* Detroit; Weingart, Peter and Nico Stehr. 2000. *Practising Interdisciplinarity.* Toronto/ Buffalo: University of Toronto Press; McKeon, Michael. 1994. "The Origins of Interdisciplinary Studies," *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 28 (Autumn), pp. 17-28.

[26] To mention a few: Koridon, Smith. 2012. *Introducing architectural theory, debating a discipline.* London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis; Troiani, Igea, Suzanne Ewing, and Diana Periton. 2013. Architecture and culture: Architecture's disciplinarity. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 6-19; Gough, Tim. 2013. Architecture as a strong discipline. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 20-41; Kulper, Amy Catania. 2013. Representing the discipline: The

claim that the affinity between architecture and other disciplines is inevitable. Those theorists also claim that other disciplines have a strong impact in the practices of building and designing — such as Engineering, Sociology, Urbanism, Landscape, Design, Computer Science —, thus entering in clear confrontation with the understanding of architecture as an individual practice.

Some authors have argued that architecture can be identified as a multidisciplinary subject. But, while comprising several disciplines, it also requires interdisciplinary relations that question the modes of operation of all disciplines involved. In Jane Rendell's perception, for example, "architecture is a multidisciplinary subject, which can operate in an interdisciplinary way" (Rendell 2007: 2). Other authors, however, have been situating architecture within a transdisciplinary conception. The proliferation of recent publications such as *Transdisciplinary Knowledge Production in Architecture and Urbanism* (Doucet and Janssens 2011), or the reflection on "Trans-Disciplinary: The Singularities and Multiplicities of Architecture", which inaugurated the academic journal *FOOTPRINT* in 2007 (Stanek and Kaminer 2007) express this increasing tendency: "In other words, in spite of the antithetical rhetoric and different points of departure, several significant trajectories and oeuvres of the tradition of the present were oriented towards a possibility of constructing architecture as a unique object, and a specific practice, which links the heterogeneous forces of the contemporary urban society. It is this intertwining of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary definitions of architecture which we call trans-disciplinarity" (Stanek and Kaminer 2007:3)

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operations of architecture's discursive imagery. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 42-66; Seligmann, Ari. 2013. (M) ANY disciplinary approaches. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 68-95; Kenley, Stefania. 2013. Of discipline, disciples and disappearance. *Architecture and Culture* 1 (1): 96-110; Moravanszky, Akos and Ole W. Fischer (eds.), 2008. *Precisions: Architecture between Sciences and the Arts*. Berlin: Jovis; Picon, Antoine; and Alexandra [eds.] Ponte. 2003. *Architecture and the Sciences. Exchanging Metaphors.* Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press; Piotrowski, Andrzej and Julia W Robinson. 2001. *The Discipline of Architecture.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Leach, Neil. 1997. *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge.

1.2.3 First Institutional Challenges

If discourse became a "space-forming practice" (Crysler 2011) able to delimit architect's individual approaches, it was also plausible to define architecture beyond the professional contingencies of building practice. This means that buildings, drawings, images, texts, and exhibitions became discursive practices equally valid when regarding architecture's delimitation. It also means that the legitimacy and authority of the traditional institutions of knowledge construction and mediation were, consequently, questioned.

Although the debate on architecture had been for a long time developed in the academic and professional institutions — thereby keeping its rules of membership and the transmission of specialised contents through apprenticeship —, these structures had lost their role as exclusive centres for disciplinary delimitation.[27] By the end of the 20th century, other institutions also performed such role and connected the multiple paths — artistic, technical, social — of architectural knowledge, namely the cultural institutions.

At the forefront of these cultural institutions was the architectural periodical press[28] such as professional journals, academic reviews, and architectural magazines. This

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[27] For the survey on the topic see: Larson, Magali Sarfatti. 1993. *Behind the Postmodern Facade: Architectural Change in Late Twentieth-Century.* Berkeley; London: University of California Press, pp. 10-12; Piotrowski, Andrzej and Julia W Robinson. 2001. *The Discipline of Architecture.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. X; Weingart, Peter. 2010. A short history of knowledge formations. In *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity.* Ed. Frodeman, Robert. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 16.

[28] Since the 1980's the relationship between architecture and mass media became subject of scrutiny, with the pioneering studies of Hélène Lipstadt, *Pour Une Histoire Sociale de la Presse Architecturale: La Revue Générale de l'Architecture et César Daly (1840-1888)*, of Marc Saboya, *Press et Architecture*, or of Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media.* For the deeper discussion on the topic see also: Sornin, Alex; Hélène Jannière and France Vanlaethem (eds.). 2008. *Architectural Periodicals in the 1960s and 1970s: towards a factual, intellectual and material history / Revues d'Architecture dans les Années 1960 et 1970: fragments d'une histoire événementielle, intellectuelle et*

involved not only the production of textual and graphical contents, but also allowed other aspects equally important in the legitimation of architectural discourse — they were important players in the public sphere, in which architecture and the architects were presented and legitimised. The ways by which architecture is produced, framed, discussed and disseminated became part of the "institution architecture" (Colomina 2001: 215). In the age of mass consumption, the architectural press was indeed an important structure in playing the functions originally performed by architectural schools and supporting the architect-centred paradigms.

Yet, it has been argued that the architectural press today, "dominated as it is by image, the star system, pluralism and the relativism of doctrinal positions", became an "obstacle to the debate, if not for the 'critical thinking'" (Jannière; Vanlaethem 2008: 42). Although architecture magazines had been, until the end of last century, crucial forums for critical discussion, fixing strong and precise positions on architecture, raising new structures of thought, and generating critical debate — fundamental aspects for disciplinary continuity and sociability —, currently they have been losing such functions. The exercise of criticism has become less common and tends to be replaced by a mere record of the current activity "usually in a plural and neutral way"— Gregotti stated (1996: 30).

Architectural magazines and other *media* have been dealing with architecture as a product displayed in the market of mass-consumption. Furthermore, the digital world has been interfering with the modes of creating, organising and understanding contents, thus challenging the methods and structures of architecture validation. Lastly, architecture's mediation has currently extended towards non-conventional spaces in a wider global scale — transitory networks of communication, online publications, and digital platforms became the new forms of dissemination of

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matérielle. Montreal: ABC Art Books Canada Distribution; Colomina, Beatriz and Craig Buckley (Eds). 2010. *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X - 197X*, Barcelona; Parnell, Steve. 2011. *Architectural Design, 1954-1972. The architectural magazine's contribution to the writing of architectural history,* University of Sheffield School of Architecture (unpublished).

architectural contents. It seems then, that conventional ways to construct critical and conceptual discourse in architecture are "historical artefacts and a new paradigm is necessary" (Moravanszky 2009: 9).

1.3 New Modes and Places of Architectural Knowledge
     Construction and Mediation

The sense of crisis evidenced in the disciplinary debate is not unprecedented in the history of architecture. At the end of the 19th century, the question of style, the historicism, the language-games of the eclectic system of composition, were as problematic as the individual discourse of our times. Also, the presence of vocabulary taken up from other fields, or the perspective of architecture as an interdisciplinary body, were not unfamiliar, much to the contrary. Neither is there anything new about the shifting of the debate and delimitation of the discipline from the architectural school to the public sphere. It is undeniable the importance of the public sphere in enabling the rise of new orders of thought on the practice and representation of architecture during the 20th century.

Disciplinary understandings are being challenged and transformed. The global phenomenon of time-space compression — drawing on Anthony Giddens' proposition[29] —, the increasing process of social representation in a "supranational civil society"[30], and the speed of images, information and contents available with new technologies of communication in a global *network society*[31] have all generated new understandings of the concept of discipline itself. "This is because the intellectual categories that we use to understand what happens around us have been coined in different circumstances", Castells argues (2010: XVII). Despite all this, the new complex interrelations of disciplinary debate today can hardly fit inside such categories.

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[29] In *Consequences of Modernity*, Anthony Giddens introduced the idea that "globalisation" characterises the contemporary late modernity, underscoring that it marks an on-going compression of time and space.

[30] See also Alexander, Jeffrey. 2006. *The Civil Sphere.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[31] Manuel Castells coined the notion of "network society" in the studies *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (2010) and *The Network Society: A Cross Cultural Perspective* (2004).

1.3.1 The "Complex Texture" of Disciplinary Relationships

Broadly speaking, the recent debate promoted in cultural studies, in the philosophy of science, and history of science has focused not on disciplinary differentiation[32], foundationalist theories, or on the articulation between disciplines, but upon a much more anxious[33] concern with the perception of knowledge as a "complex texture" of epistemic and social practices (Cetina 2009). The terms we have used in the past for disciplinary differentiation are no longer able to bring out this texture, because we need to enlarge "the space of knowledge-in-action, rather than simply observe disciplines or specialties as organizing structures" (Cetina 2009: 3).

A closer look at the rhetoric that has been accompanying such debate confirms that the vocabulary once used to transmit the idea of discipline has shifted from the geographical metaphors of demarcation such as *territory*, *field*, *frontier* and *borderline*, towards organic metaphors based on relational linkages such as, among others, *interdependence*, *network*, and *constellation* (Klein 2000). Also, the crucial terms *discipline*, *expertise*, or *specialty* have been replaced by expressions such as "epistemic culture," "knowledge-in-action," and "knowledge-related cultures" (Cetina 2009). These expressions are, in fact, particularly meaningful to better understand the "amalgams of arrangements and mechanisms — bonded through affinity, necessity, and historical coincidence — which, in a given field, make up how we know what we know" (Cetina 2009: 8). 8).

Knowledge Culture

Here, the notion of "knowledge" is connected with that of "culture", as such inscribing the discipline with a changing outlook and emphasizing the idea that knowledge is a cultural network of "structures, processes, and environments that make up specific

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[32] See Becher, Tony. 1994. The Significance of Disciplinary Differences. *Studies in Higher Education* (19): 2.

[33] See Huggan, Graham. 2002. Mixing Disciplines: The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity, *Postcolonial Studies* (5): 256.

epistemic settings" (Cetina 2009: 8). This apparently simple replacement of terms leads, however, to significant consequences. First, it correlates *discipline* with the notion of *experimentation* as a basic unit for knowledge construction. Second, it considers *laboratory* as an "improved" background to accommodate subject matters. In the laboratory, the natural cycles of occurrence of events can be suspended and "make events happen frequently enough for continuous study" (Cetina 2009: 27). Laboratory practice requires the detachment of objects from their natural environment in a new phenomenal field supported by a constellation of actors. In the architecture field, these laboratories can acquire today diverse configurations, among which biennials are included, as we shall see latter.

The debate on the architectural boundaries is not isolated from this wider trend. On the contrary, if before architects, historians and critics had tried to draw "maps of possibilities" to delimit architecture as a coherent disciplinary body, as analysed above, presently "blobs, swarms, crystals, and webs proliferate as paradigms" of both: the built form; and the conceptual understanding (Vidler 2004). Evoking Gottfried Lessing *Laocöon* (1766) — in which architecture is considered "neither painting nor sculpture", or "neither poetry nor prose" —, the American architectural historian Anthony Vidler tried to delimit the discipline by enouncing what architecture is not. In line with Rosalind Krauss[34], he defined architecture by a "combination of exclusions", in which architecture is "not-landscape", "not-sculpture", but is a geometry defined by four binary vectors: architecture-landscape, architecture-biology, architecture-program, architecture-architecture. In other words, architecture became in Vidler's interpretation, an "expanded field" of knowledge. [35]

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[34] Krauss, Rosalind. 1979. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", *October* 8 (Spring), pp. 30-44. Rosalind Krauss suggested that "sculpture had entered the full condition of its inverse logic and had become pure negativity: the combination of exclusions" (Krauss 1997: 41).

[35] Borrowing the landmark text published by Rosalind Krauss, Anthony Vidler asserts that after decades of "self-imposed autonomy", architecture had entered in an expanded field. Vidler developed this idea in the context of the Conference "Architecture Between Spectacle and Use" focused on the current condition of architecture between "usage" and "display".

Several other voices[36] have been analysing in very different ways and often conflicting perspectives architecture's disciplinary position, nature and delimitation. Yet, even with different approaches, they all agree that the static logic of academic classification have been converted in new dynamic possibilities that challenge the methods and conceptions of architecture.

The proceedings of the conference were later published: Vidler, Anthony (ed.). 2008. *Architecture: Between Spectacle and Use*. Yale. Yale University Press and Clark Art Institute. It includes a collection of essays from Anthony Vidler, Beatriz Colomina, Felicity D. Scott, Hal Foster, Kurt W. Forster, Mario Carpo, Mark Dorrian, Mark Jarzombek, Mark Wigley, Sarah Williams Goldhagen, and Terry Smith. The first version of this article was originally published in: Vidler, Anthony. 2004. Architecture's Expanded Field: Finding Inspiration in Jellyfish and Geopolitics, Architects Today are Working within Radically New Frames of Reference. *Artforum International* 42 (8): 142-147. Also included in the anthological volume: Sykes, Krista, A. 2010. *Constructing a New Agenda: Architectural Theory 1993-2009*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

[36] Among others, Antoine Picon has published extensively on the relationship between architecture, new technologies of production and representation, and the digital culture namely in: *Smart Cities. A Spatialised Intelligence* (Wiley 2015); *Ornament: The Politics of Architecture and Subjectivity* (Wiley 2013); *Digital Culture in Architecture: An Introduction for the Design Profession*, (Birkhäuser 2010). On the topic see also: Graafland, Arie and Heidi Sohn "Introduction: Technology, Science and Virtuality". *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*. 2012. Ed. C Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns, and Hilde Heynen. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications; Moravanszky, Akos and Ole Fischer. 2008. *Precisions: Architecture Between Sciences and the Arts*. Berlin: Jovis; Blau, Eve. 2003. A Question of Discipline. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. 62 (1): 125-129; Andrzej Piotrowski and Julia W. Robinson (Eds). 2001. *The Discipline of Architecture*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press; Cross, Nigel. 1982. Designerly Ways of Knowing: Design Discipline Versus Design Science. *Design Studies*. 3(4): 221-227.

1.3.2 New Institutional Relationships:
The Action of Non-academic and Non-conventional Structures

Alongside this intense debate, it is noteworthy how conventional institutions of architecture's knowledge construction and representation, centred around architectural schools, research centres, professional entities, and architectural magazines, were also affected by this new dynamic. Recently, such institutions have been making several important dislocations towards non-academic and non-conventional structures. Transitory extensive networks,[37] organised around research agendas at an international scale — such as the European Architectural History Network — have been challenging the experiences and rhythms of disciplinary knowledge (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993, p. 121; Gibbons *et al.* 1994, p. 4-6; Weingart in Frodeman *et al.* 2010: 12). But also, the new knowledge markets and *mass media* are affecting the methods and modes of disciplinary construction (Rödder *et al.* 2011; Gibbons *et al.* 1994).

These non-academic and non-conventional structures are currently generating an important debate in the scientific field. Some scholars have been particularly aware of the tension between mass technologies and new communication systems — which has been spreading scientific contents addressed to unspecific audience and to knowledge markets[38] — and the conventional institutions, whereby scientific contents have always been produced and communicated "within the peers' circles" (Weingart 2011:18). Inside the conventional institutions, the production of knowledge is guided

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[37] On this topic see for example: Rheingold, Howard. 2000. *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier.* Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: MIT Press; Castells, Manuel. 2010. *The Rise of the Network Society* (2nd edition). Oxford: Wiley & Blackwell; Castells, Manuel. 2004. *The Network Society.* Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing.

[38] Franzen, Martina; Peter Weingart and Simone Rödder. 2011. Exploring the Impact of Science Communication on Scientific Knowledge Production: An Introduction. *The Sciences' Media Connection--Public Communication and Its Repercussions.* Ed. Rödder, Simone, Martina Franzen, and Peter Weingart. Springer Science & Business Media, p. 4.

by research agendas, ideally determined by a community of experts. In mass communication, there are no equivalent procedures:

Mass media communicate 'new events' and — like science and all other social systems shared research agendas — 'create' their own 'reality' by selecting and shaping them according to so-called 'news values' — interpreted and applied by editors and journalists — which steer the attention of the media. (Even if they repeat known facts they have to give them the appearance of newness) (Weingart 2011:18). 40)

Accordingly, relevance and novelty seem to be the essential common targets between conventional and non-conventional structures. In a "post-academic" era, as it came to be called, many authors look at knowledge as an everyday subject matter; others, on the contrary, have been evaluated these non-conventional institutions as extremely problematic: "Do the interactions between science and the media really change epistemic practices and criteria of validation of knowledge? Or are they limited to staging?"

Following this question, a series of other interrogations should be assembled: how can the value of the discipline be preserved if specialised contents have been addressed to the general public? Also, the political implications of specialised and non-specialised knowledge in democratic societies have been the focus of inquiry. How can expert and lay competencies be accommodated and interconnected? Are there viable forms of the public's participation in the production of scientific knowledge? (Jasanoff 2004).

A further aspect that should be considered in this debate is the changing roles of the conventional institutions: they have acquired, by turn, additional functions of mediation between the centres of production and the new global public sphere. In fact, the "resonance" of the scientific system in public opinion and the "medialisation" of scientific discourse become part of the activity of the experts and of the

expectations of scientific structures. Conventional institutions are, thus, losing in this process "their original role as guardians of intellectual pursuit" (Weingart and Stehr 2000: XIV).

There is, indeed, a widespread consensus that knowledge today needs to be legitimised in the *global civil sphere*. [39] This idea is strongly aligned with key concepts already available, as the Kantian utopian image of a cosmopolitan frameless civil society[40], or the concept of *public sphere*[41], theorized by Jürgen Habermas as one of the crucial conditions for democracy's discursive interaction in contemporary society.

Nowadays, such sphere is grounded on global networked organisations connected with other webs of information (Castels 2010: xxviii), and the logic of representation is extended towards a broader worldwide dimension. "Despite different languages and separated ownership and organization, national news stories construct extra-national events in a manner that often reveals a high level of intertextuality, creating the common understandings and interpretations that allow there to be putatively global events" (Alexander 2005: 379). To summarise, the intense network of conceptual and social relationships became the frame of reference for cultural activity and intellectual work today.

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[39] It was Giddens' *Consequences of Modernity*, in 1990, along with Ulrich Beck (another intellectual central to this discourse), Mary Kaldor, Jhn Keane and David Held, who most forcefully gave centrality to the idea of civil globality. See Kaldor, Mary. 2003. "The Ideas of 1989: The origins of concept of global civil society"; John Keane. 2003. *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[40] Kant, Immanuel. 1970 (1784). Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose. *Political Writings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 41-53.

[41] Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* was first published in 1962 and translated to English in 1989. At the end of 19th century "opinion" was a novelty in the structure of the bourgeois society. Identified as a distinctively modern development, based on public discursive interaction, "opinion" was considered the "fifth power" or the "invisible court" of society, becoming an essential tool through which citizens engaged in "rational public discourse to comment on society as a public affair" (McQuire 2010: 602).

The impact of these "increasingly mobile" networks enables new forms of mobility, production and communication that have transcended the spatial and temporal dimensions (McQuire 2010: 599). The extraordinary spread of periodical large-scale exhibitions, in proliferation since the end of the 20th century, might be easily situated in this new phenomenon.
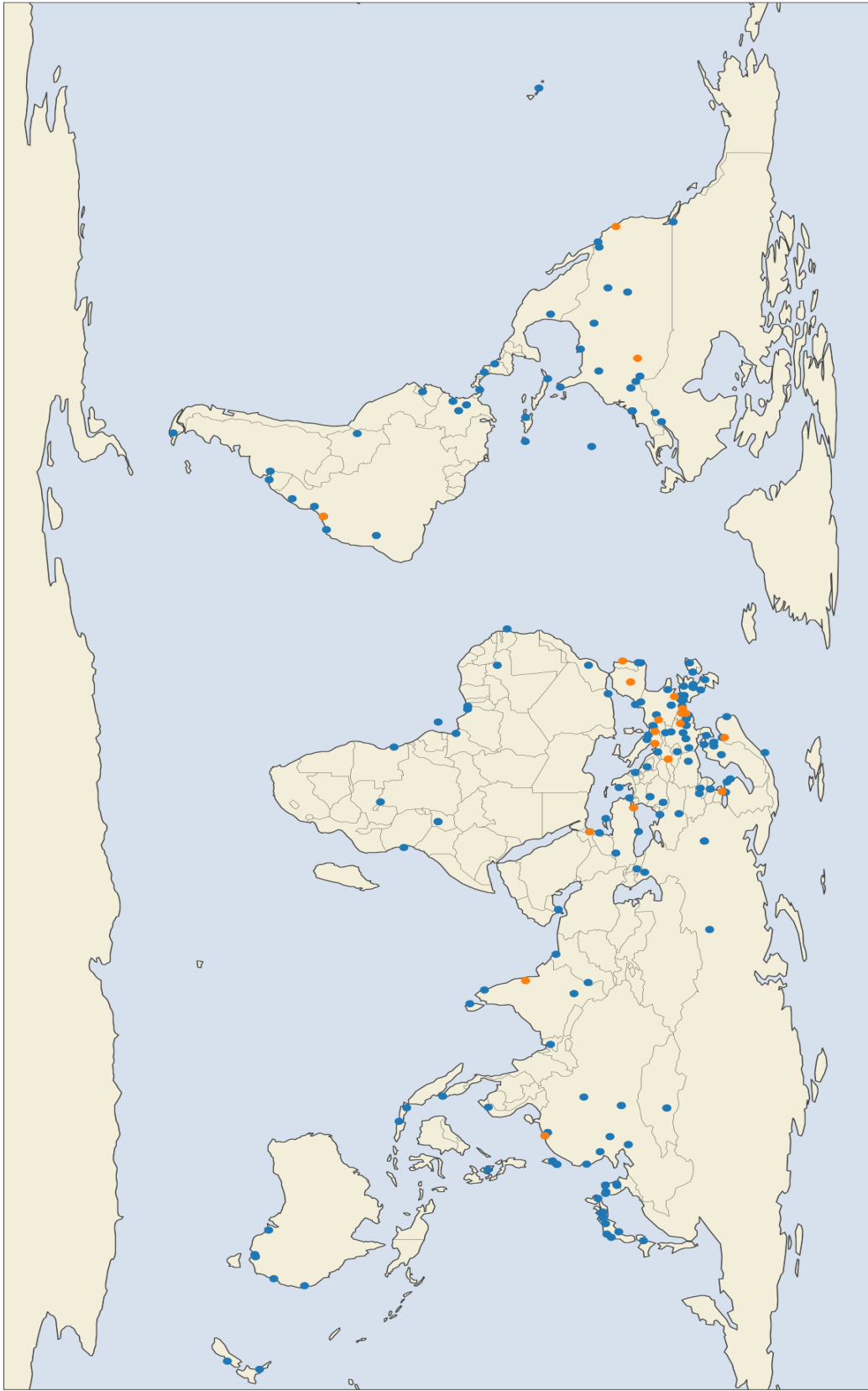
Map1_CURRENT LOCALIZATION OF BIENNIALS

2. The Biennial Culture and the New Global Civil Sphere

The polycentric cartography[1] (Map1) we are looking at represents the current constellation of *biennials*, *triennials* and other large-scale international periodical exhibitions of art and architecture, here taken as "relay stations" (Buddensieg 2014) of a fictional "megacity" (Blom 2010: 25). In the course of the last three decades, the extraordinary spread of what was becoming known as *biennial culture* or *biennialization*, has produced an imaginary (and hypothetically unlimited) circuit of temporary territories. It defines a new global civil sphere in which architecture and art have acquired exceptional visibility.

The term *biennial culture* has been commonly used in a broader sense to mean a system of temporary, international, large-scale exhibitions that has in the Venice Biennale its model.[2] Commonly, they discuss topical tendencies, raise new questions, and function as "seismographs of their time" (Moore 2015: 7). Art historians have

[1] The several Maps and Graph presented in this chapter were produced specifically for the present thesis, using data collected from different sources, namely the Biennial Foundation's site which lists the *biennials*, as well as the websites of several other platforms associated with the institution.

[2] John Clark and Charlotte Bydler tried to distinguish the specificities of biennales around the world suggesting that biennales can be differentiated according to different criteria: historical position and curatorial intention; organisational structure; functions within political and economic structures. John Clark's "Biennials as Structures for the Writing of Art History: The Asian Perspective" and Charlotte Bydler's "The Global Art World, Inc.: On the Globalization of Contemporary Art" were both published in Filipovic, Elena, Marieke Van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø. *The Biennial Reader: The Bergen Biennial Conference.* Bergen and Ostfildern: Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz.

considered their flexibility and temporality as starting points for relevant discussions and for creating counter narratives that challenge the stable structures of museums and academic institutions.

Yet, within such fictional megacity, the location of the Venice Biennale becomes unclear. The literature currently available on the *biennial culture* is not consensual on the centrality of Venice as the main referential model of exhibition. If some art historians, critics and curators have asserted that the biennial format of exhibition was set up on the Venice model,[3] others, on the contrary, have argued that this is a phenomenon grounded on the emergence of non-Western *biennials*.[4] These exhibitions took the counter-model of Venice together with Havana's Biennial (1984) — the first non-Western structure of this kind — as their emblematic reference. Some authors argue that this complex cartography suggests the existence of the *biennale*'s "second wave" (Jones 2010; Gardner, Green 2016).

This chapter suggests, however, that more than one *biennale culture* is under way. Enquiring on this idea, the discussion that follows will scrutinize, first, on the position of Venice Biennale in the new cyclical and unprecedented cartography also called as *biennialization*. Second, it will ask how and to what extent can this phenomenon produce and mediate disciplinary contents in architectural contemporary culture.

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[3] For example, Caroline Jones' "Biennial Culture: A Longer History" (2010); Sabine Vogel *Biennials - Art on a Global Scale* (2010); Carlos Basualdo "The unstable institution" (2003).

[4] See, among others, Rafal Niemojewski "Venice or Havana: A Polemic on the Genesis of the Contemporary Biennial" (2010).

2.1 The Venice Biennale

While characterising the phenomenon of *biennials*, it has been stated that these contemporary meetings are grounded on the international exhibitions of the 19th century. There are, certainly, numerous reasons for that argument and there are also diverse analogies which lead us to invoke the World Fairs and Parisian Salons: the tendency to "universality"; the clear relationship with cultural touristic activity; the significant effects on the host cities; geopolitical ambitions and competition in strict articulation with local investments (Jones 2010: 69).

The foundational moment of the International Art Exhibition of the City of Venice[5] was grounded on that wider context of the International Exhibitions and World Fairs, and on the emergence of other perennial international manifestations in Italy — such as the Milan Triennale (1891) or the Torino Triennale (1896). The Venice Biennale was officially created on 19 April 1893 by the poet and mayor Riccardo Selvatico[6], as an "institution of public utility and benefit" [7] defined to "recall perpetually the twenty-fifth anniversary of the wedding of the sovereigns" Umberto I and Margherita di Savoia.

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[5] For analysing the origins of Venice Biennale see: Di Martino, Enzo. 2005. *The History of the Venice Biennale.* Venice: Papiro Arte; Stella, A. 1913. *Cronistoria della Esposizione Internazionale d'arte della città di Venezia 1895-1912*, Venice; Vecco, Marilena. 2002. *La Biennale Di Venezia, Documenta Di Kassel: Esposizione, Vendita, Pubblicizzazione Dell'arte Contemporanea.* Franco Angeli; Ventimiglia, Dario (ed.). 1995. *La Biennale di Venezia. Le Esposizioni Internazionati d' Arte 1895-1995*, Venezia: Electa. Donaggio Adriano. 1995. La Biennale di Venezia. Un secolo di storia. *Art Dossier*, no. 26.

[6] Ricardo Selvatico together with the politician Antonio Fradeletto and the philosopher Giovanni Bordiga were the founders of the "Exposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia". Cf. Jones 2010: 73.

[7] Essentially embodied within the Municipality, the Biennale's financial structure comprised one member of the financial department of the Municipality, and its employees were part of the municipal staff. Cf. Barbato, Maria B.; Chiara Mio. 2007. Accounting and the Development of Management Control in the Cultural Sphere: The Case of the Venice Biennale. *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 17(1): 187–208.

The First International Art Exhibition of the City of Venice[8] opened on 30 April 1895 (Vecco 2002: 22), not only as a moment of celebration but, mainly, as a sign of "civic pride", in a time in which the city of Venice had lost its statute as capital to become a peripheral province.[9] The establishment of the Biennale was, therefore, strictly connected with local political ambitions and the desire to place Venice in the international competition map of European capitals.

The Biennale also defined the *public sphere* when it came to the emergence of art criticism, which functioned as a new mechanism producing aesthetical opinion, acknowledge the value of art works, and make such works exist in a worldwide artistic community. That moment coincides with the crisis of the conventional stylistic schools, a period of eclectic fragmentation, and of ongoing tensions inside disciplinary institutions. Having *taste* as the main driving force inside that process. This was autonomous from the normative codes of academic tradition, which meant that architecture and art became complex bodies of interpretation, as plural as the diversity of its authors.

Thus, we would say that the Biennale and Criticism emerged from the same condition of crisis, as coherent parts of an intellectual moment centred on plurality and contradiction, therefore working not only as a vital mechanism of communication but also acquiring a canon-making value in artistic and architectonic disciplinary cultures.

From then on, the Biennale has been playing the functions of *reporting*, *retrospecting*, *canonising* and *predicting* artistic and architectural discourses. The spread of the Venice Biennale's model promoted crucial aesthetical changes in the past, which have deeper consequences in the present artistic discourse.

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[8] The exhibition was successful, with 224.000 visitors.

[9] Cf. Donaggio, Adriano. 1996. Biennale di Venezia. Un secolo di storia. *Art Dossier* (26).
See also: Paladini, Oiannantonio. 1995. Venezia 1895: società, política, cultura. *Biennale News*, Venezia.

2.2 Biennale Culture and Biennialization

To better understand the position of the Venice Biennale within the recent phenomenon of *biennials* and how it has affected the field of architecture over the last decades, we may start by crossing the analysis of their evolution over time (Graph1) with their territorial expansion over the globe (Maps 2-6). According to the following graphical representations,[10] it becomes clear that the spread of large-scale international exhibitions did not have two distinct "waves" of existence, but was instead a slow, cumulative process, strictly connected with the wider structure of geopolitical conditions and social transformations.

In the first phase, started at the end of 19th century until the 1950s (Map 2), the Venice Biennale occurs as an almost isolated event, though encompassed in the wider phenomenon of international World Fairs, as mentioned above. From 1895 until 1950 there were only six new *biennials*.

A second moment emerged between the post-War II period and the late 1980s (Map 3), stimulated by the prosperity of the time, but also related to the reestablishment of the importance of cities in a wider political and social context. Their symbolical returning "to the brotherhood of civilized nations" (Altshuler 2010: 25), is epitomised by Kassel's Documenta (1955).[11] There were sixteen new events of the same type during the 1970s, mostly concentrated in Europe but also engaging non-European locations, such as São Paulo Biennale (1972) and Sidney Biennale (1973) (Map 3). Coincidentally, in 1979 the autonomous Architecture sector was also created

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[10] The set of maps, graphs and diagrams here presented were produced in the context of my thesis and constitute an important part of my research work.

[11] For a deeper reflection on *Documenta* case, see: Grasskamp, W. 1996. For example: Documenta. Or, how is art history produced?*Thinking about exhibitions*. Ed. R. Greenberg, B. Ferguson and S. Nairne. London; New York: Routledge; *50 Jahre Documenta, 1955-2005 = 50 years Documenta, 1955-2005: Kunsthalle Fridericianum Kassel, 1. September-20. November 2005.* 2005. Göttingen: Steidl; Gardner, Anthony and Charles Rick Green. 2016. *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art.* John Wiley & Sons.

at the Venice Biennale. Thus, it took almost a century for architecture to gain entry in this wider cartography. During the 1980s fourteen *biennials* were organised, three of them dedicated to architecture.

After the post-1989 process of European geopolitical reconfiguration, *biennials* became one of the most expressive cultural phenomena that expanded to a global dimension (Map 4). Over the 1990s, there was a clear sign of increasing decentralisation. This expansion was expressed through a series of events, from Africa to Asia, namely the itinerant Manifesta[12] (1996), the Dak'Art Biennial (1992) and Johannesburg Biennial (1995), the Asia Pacific Triennial (1993), Gwangjiu Biennial (1995), and Shangai Biennial (1996), among others.[13]

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[12] Vanderlinden, Barbara and Elena Filipovic. 2005. *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-wall Europe.* Cambridge; MA: MIT Press.

[13] The trend towards decentralisation is really remarkable in Map 5, during the 1990s, with the appearance of 35 biennials, including African locations for the first time.
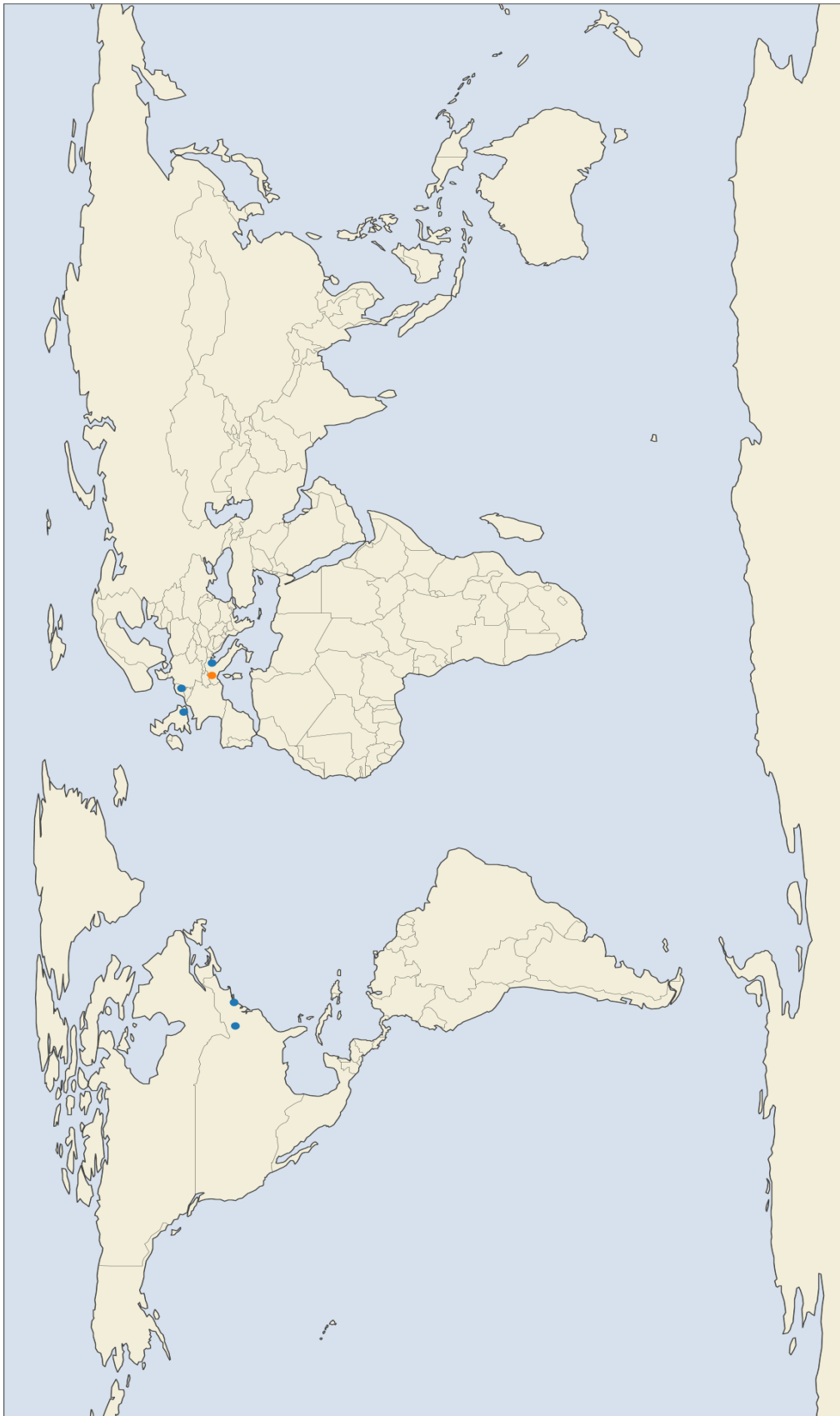
Map 2_LOCALIZATION OF *BIENNIALS* BETWEEN 1895-1950
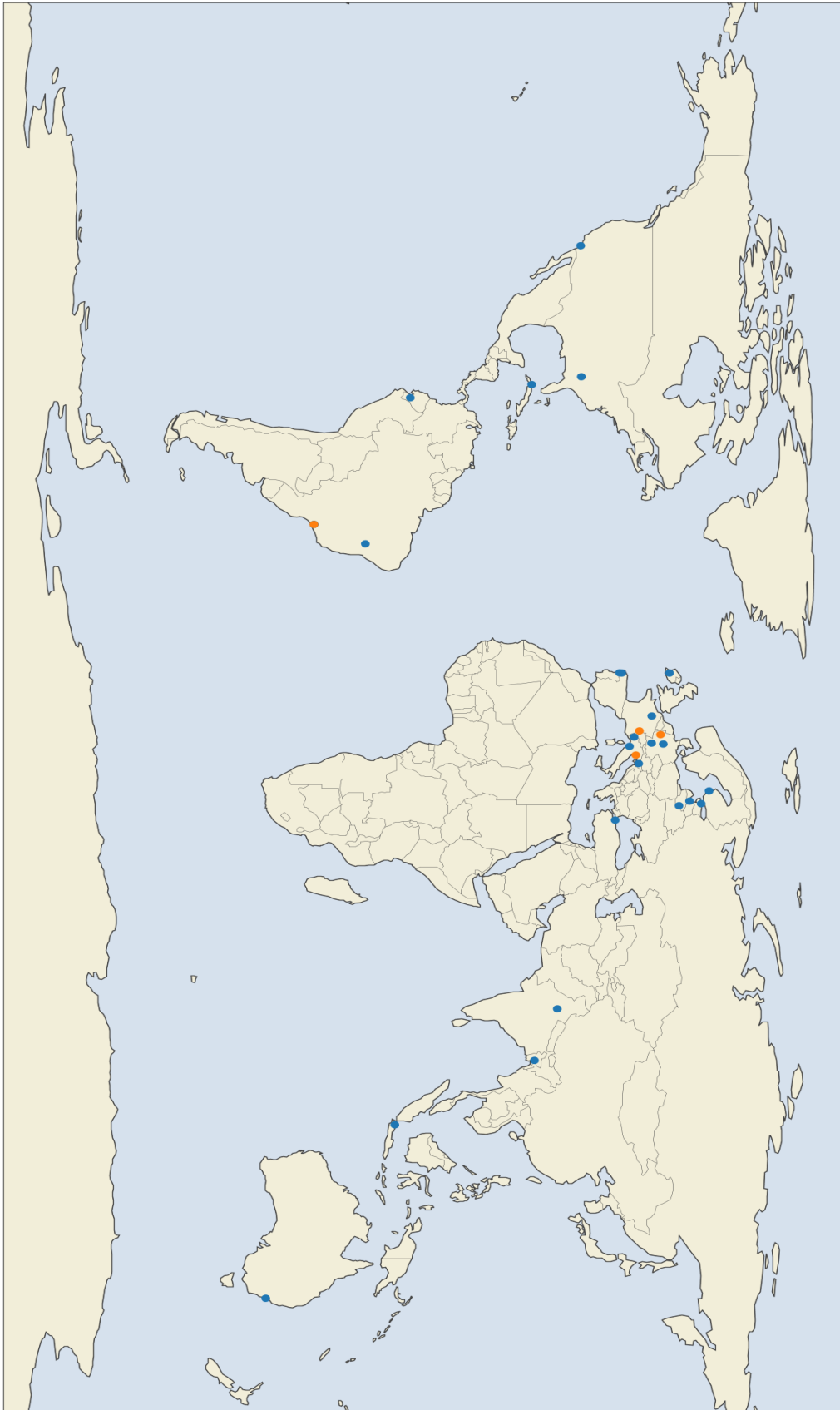
Map 3_EXPANSION OF *BIENNIALS* BETWEEN 1951-1989
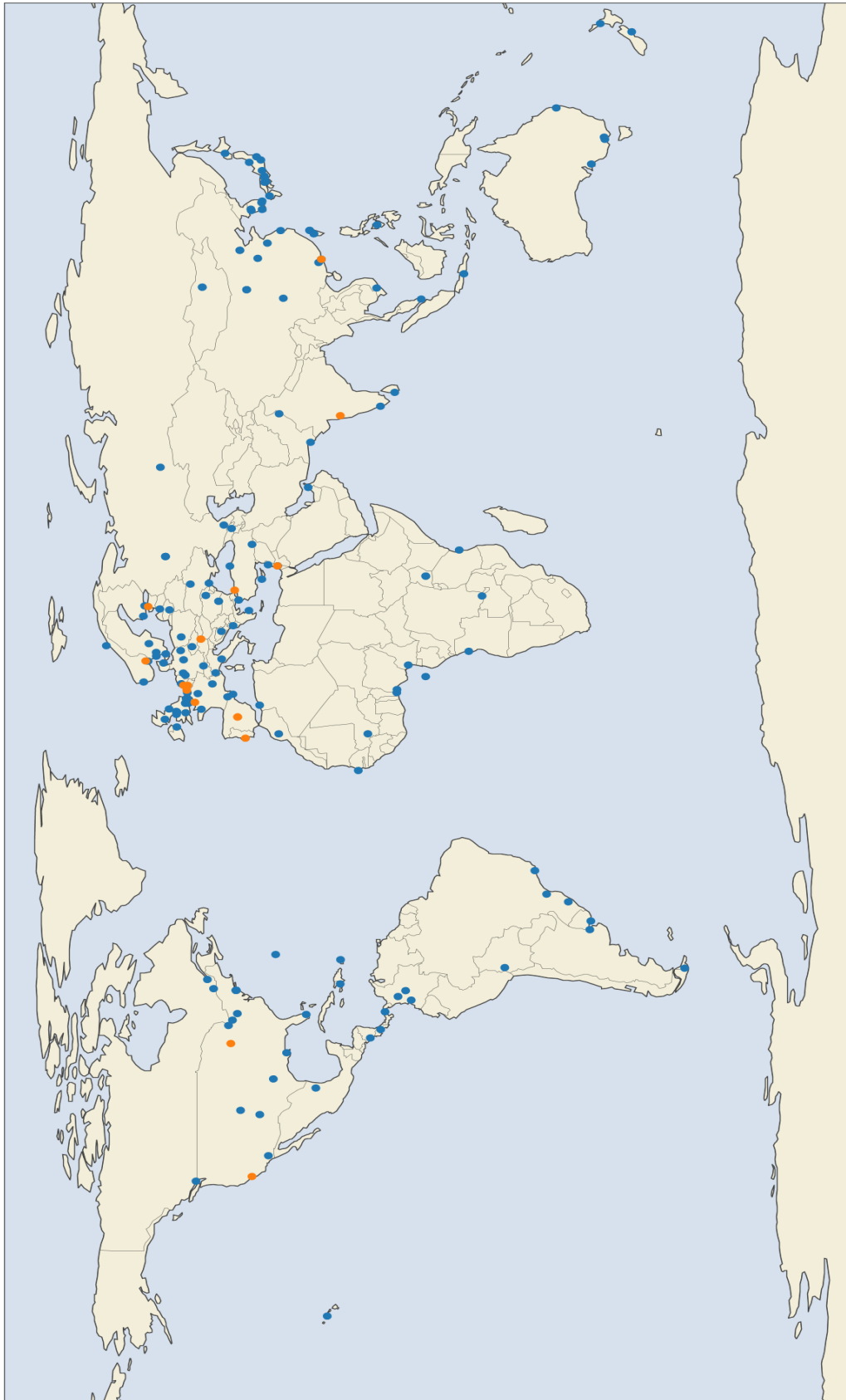
Map 4_EXPANSION OF *BIENNIALS* BETWEEN 1990-2018

The peak of *biennials'* expansion happened at the turn of the millennium (Map 4), precisely coincident with the period of systemic worldwide economic crisis that became dramatically significant around 2008. After this moment, (according to the Map 4 and the Graph-I below) there was clearly an increasing tendency for *biennials* to focus on architecture and for a re-centring in the European continent with an intensive development of new events in Europe.[14] Such factors contribute to make *biennials* effective and relevant frameworks for the historical study of artistic and architectonic discourses today.
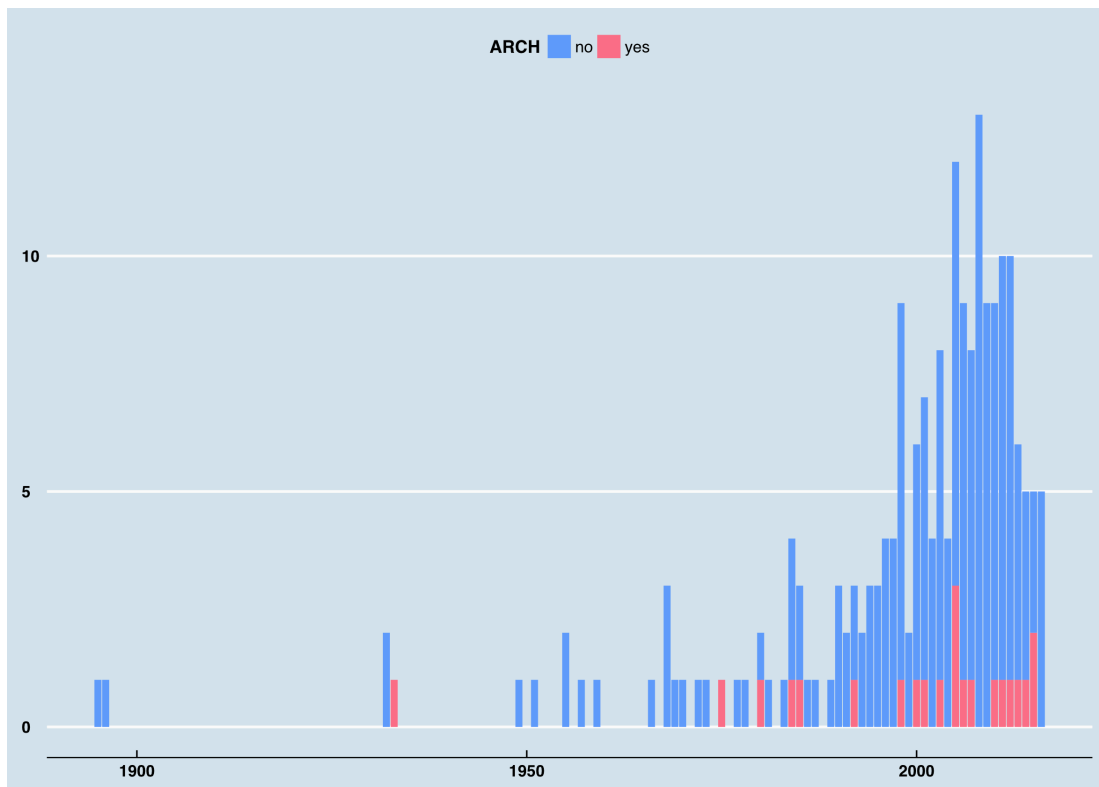
Graph-I_EVOLUTION OF *BIENNIALS* OVER TIME

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[14] There are currently several new *biennials* scheduled for 2018.

The geography of the *biennials* is grounded on cross-border dynamics among *global cities* — i.e. "the terrain where a multiplicity of globalization processes assumes concrete localized forms".[15] It marks another aspect of the global time/space compression phenomenon of our ages. The significant trend towards the geographical spreading of economic activities at the "metropolitan, national, and global level" (Sassen 2005: 32), has contributed to a demand for new cultural forms embedded in the cultural industry and tourism of local territories, therefore introducing new variables in the conceptions about art and architecture. In other words, the duality local/global — one of the outcomes of Sassen's global city's analysis — become part of the "lifestyle portfolios" and tourist agendas of cities, taken as a means to include peripheral locations as global players on the cultural map (Bauer 2015: 19).

The *biennial* "pandemic" must be seen in that context, in which art and architecture are taken as "tool(s) for dealing with issues such as education, cultural diversity and integration, cultural tourism, urban and social regeneration, and identity politics" (Ferguson; Hoegsberg 2010: 362). In fact, *biennials* have become mechanisms for the display of civic ambitions far beyond artistic agendas, mainly grounded on geopolitical, ideological and economic values:

Nation-states, municipalities, regions, cities, civic organizations, and private corporations alike embraced this emerging cultural and economic tendency, mythologizing contemporary art's potential in order to market cities or regions and place them indelibly on the global map through promises of economic prosperity and social prestige. (Ferguson; Hoegsberg 2010: 362)

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[15] The concept of "global city" was shaped by Saskia Sassen in 2005 in the article The Global City: Introducing a Concept. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, XI (2 winter/spring): 32.

In this sense, *biennials* have become a new and powerful social representation. They have a performative force and their increasing visibility "suddenly turns them into desirable and even, occasionally, income generating instruments for the political and corporate sectors. At the same time, it makes them anathema for the very intellectual spheres whose analytical capacity should (supposedly) help to elucidate their current meaning and potential." (Basualdo [2003] 2010: 126). *Biennials* have been connected to notions such as marketing and consumption, and therefore included into the logic of spectacle and show, in which the system of values is replaced by the value of exchange. But, on the other hand, this international circulation has generated an on-going debate on the possibilities opened by these structures as new sites for disciplinary discursive rhetoric.

As already analysed, the displacement from conventional structures of knowledge production and discussion towards extensive networks organized around research agendas and interests at an international scale, are changing the experience of knowledge culture. In that sense, the methodology that informs the large-scale periodical exhibitions do not follow a linear process of knowledge formation. Exhibitions have become identified as "privileged platforms for exhibiting discursivity" (Ferguson 2009: 361), "platforms for global dialogue" (Martin 2011: 45), "platform of exchange", "platform for artists and curators" (Gratz in Weibel 2014: 5), "discursive platforms".

The term platform has been intensely and extensively used to express the meeting point between art, the host city, and the emergence of the global cultural public sphere. We do not mean to question the use of the term, but it is important to understand the reason why the term platform has often been attractive to critics, curators, and other participants recently. On the one hand, this term replaces the established model of selecting and classifying works, providing a multiculturalist approach and worldwide dialogue. On the other hand, it is motivated by curatorial strategies, in which artworks operate in articulation with the whole city, hence distinguishing the *biennales* from generic forms of event culture.

This phenomenon is accompanied by a notable body of conferences, symposiums, and forums, which try to inquiry into the relationship between cultural production and *biennialization*.[16] The insights of landmark debates such as the *Bergen Biennial Conference*[17] (2009), and the almost parallel *Starting from Venice*[18] study day, alongside the organization of the World Biennial Forums[19] promoted by the Biennial Foundation[20] in 2012 and 2014, or the series *Biennials in Dialogue*[21] developed since 2000, embody this new tendency. In 2014, the Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe (ZKM) and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (IFA) structured the conference *The*

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[16] Among others: *The Marco Polo syndrome: problems of intercultural communication in art theory and curatorial practice* (April 11-12, 1995 at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlim); *Das Lied von der Erde/The songs of the earth: Biennials in dialogue* (August 3-6, 2000, Kassel); *To Biennial or not to biennial?* Bergen Biennial Conference (17-20 September 2009, Bergen).

[17] The three-day *Bergen Biennial Conference* was held in September 2009 at the Bergen Kunsthall, promoted by the City Council. The conference was organized by Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Ovstebo.

[18] The debate *Starting from Venice*, held in October 2009 at the Faculty of Arts and Design of Universitá IUAV was co-promoted by the research unit "Fare mostre per fare storia" (IUAV) and by the research program "Towards a comparative and transnational art history of modernity" (SIK-ISEA). Its reflections were gathered in the volume Ricci, Clarissa. 2010. *Starting from Venice. Studies on the Biennale*. Milan: et alt./Edizioni.

[19] The World Biennial Forum is promoted by the Biennial Foundation. The first WBF entitled "Shifiting Gravity", was directed by Ute Meta Bauer and Hou Hanru, and co-organized by Gwangju Biennale and Ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen. It occurred during the 9th Gwangju Biennale in 2012. The second WBF, entitled "Making Biennials in Contemporary Times" took place in São Paulo during the Biennale.

[20] The Biennial Foundation is an independent not-for-profit arts organization, established in 2009 to provide support and regulate the international arts community, on the one hand, and to serve as a platform for communication, inquiry and information, on the other. It is supported by the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa). The World Biennial Forum is one of its most important activities.

[21] Previous conferences took place in Kassel, Frankfurt am Main, Singapore, and Shanghai. Acessible in: http://zkm.de/en/publication/biennials-prospect-and-perspectives.

Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives,[22] inviting forty curators in order to scrutinise the phenomenon of "what is probably the most successful exhibition format: biennials".[23] Recording and reflecting on the dilemmas and challenges generated by globalisation, it intended not to draw a new cultural map, but rather to discover new ways to frame "the multitude and multiplicity of art" that has been produced worldwide. In the same year, the Biennial Foundation programmed the international conference "Why Biennial? Why Associate?",[24] where a new *biennial* network — the International Biennial Association (IBA)[25]—, was first launched.

What this hectic convergence of events and the connectivity between entities and *biennial* cities reflects is the urgency to discover frames of reference able to provide new readings on the impact of this boundless phenomenon in contemporary cultural

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[22] The International Conference was held at ZKM, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe between 27th February and 1st March 2014. The conference was structured on five topics: "Biennials and Public Space"; "Biennials as Motor for Social Change"; "The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of Its Actors"; "Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies"; and "Alternatives and Open Spaces". Cf. Buddensieg, Andrea. 2015. "Research on the Topic of Biennials at ZKM". In Buddensieg, Andrea, Elke aus dem Moore and Peter Weibel (eds.). *Biennials: Prospect and Perspectives*. International Conference at ZKM / Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe (27Feb. to 01 Mar. 2014), zkm e-paper, p. 11.

[23] The conference was focused on five main topics: "Biennials and Public Space", which discussed art as public sphere and new public conceptions; "Biennials as Motor for Social Change", analysing the role of biennials on political and social transformation; "The Dynamics of Biennials and the Role of Its Actors (Curators, Artists, Organizers and Public)"; "Chances and Limitations of Biennials in the Context of Marketing and Policies"; "Alternatives/Open Spaces".

[24] This conference was held in Berlin, between 10th-13th July 2014, at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt.

[25] The non-profit International Biennial Association (IBA) is a community of biennials and other institutions organized with the aim of creating international cooperation and exchange activities of curatorial, artistic creation and knowledge production throughout cultural industry. Accessible in: http://www.biennialfoundation.org/2014/06/why-biennial-why-associate-join-the-first-general-assembly-of-the-international-biennial-association-iba-this-summer-in-berlin/

production and, no less important, how to study this production today. It also suggests that *biennialization* should not be understood as exclusively related to the proliferation of cyclical large-scale exhibitions, but equally as a network of institutional structures shaped within a wider biennial community (Buddensieg 2014).

2.

ARCHITECTURE AT THE VENICE BIENNALE

INSTITUTION, EXHIBITION, AND CULTURE

BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
SETTORE ARCHITETTURA
REGOLAMENTO

Regolamento per della la Nostra Sezrua-
zionale di Architettura : "La presenza del
passato" 1980

Finalità

1) *La 1a N. S. di tr. "La presura del passato" si terrà su*
Venezia nei locali delle Corderie dell'Arsenale della Città dal
1° p.o e 1980.

1 Il "Settore Architettura" promuove e indice nell'arco dell'intero pe
   riodo biennale una serie di manifestazioni e mostre di cui una di ca
   rattere internazionale di particolare importanza e prestigio.

2 Alla preparazione e attuazione della ~~varie attività sono preposte il~~ *Nostra è* ~~Direttore~~
   ~~Presidente del settore affiancato dalla~~ la Commissione ~~Permanente~~, pre-
   vista dalle norme legislative vigenti. *Diano p. de, due liquo il capo-*

   ~~Essi hanno il compito di studiare, proporre e relazionare il piano pro~~
   ~~grammatico culturale.~~

   ~~Essi possono agire in forma coordinata anche con gli altri settori in~~
   ~~cui si struttura l'Ente.~~

3 Il Settore Architettura si propone di riunire insieme in forma organi-
   ca le espressioni più significative della cultura architettonica attua
   le sia attraverso mostre, sia attraverso quelle manifestazioni che nel
   la forma più diretta ed immediata siano capaci di evidenziare le scel-
   te di fondo individuate.

   Allo stesso tempo il Settore Architettura è impegnato alla chiarifica-
   zione di momenti della storia dell'architettura, sia generali che spe-
   cifici, di particolare importanza nell'attuale momento storico.

   Per lo studio e la realizzazione di tali mostre e manifestazioni il Pre
   sidente e la Commissione Permanente possono avvalersi della collaborazio
   ne individuale o collegiale di esperti.

   Per le mostre e le manifestazioni programmate il Settore Architettura si
   potrà avvalere di differenti sedi concordate di volta in volta con le
   strutture generali dell'Ente e della Città di Venezia.

o di studiare propone e redigere il piano programmatico
culturale - la Commissione pro avvalersi della collett di esperti
italici e stranieri e può agire in forma coordinata anche
con gli altri settori in cui si struttura l'Ente.

3) *vedi foglio*

The Part 2 of this study covers the period from 1975 to the present. It will distinguish the three overlapped layers that define the structure of the Venice Architecture Biennale. In the following pages, I shall not discuss the debates raised by the architectural exhibitions — which importance and story lines will be stressed in the Part 3 —, but I will try to reconstruct the Biennale's configuration as a real institution in the production of discourse and dissemination of knowledge in the architectural field. More specifically, the chapters that follow will, first, scrutinize the Biennale in its multiple nature — an institution, a large- scale perennial exhibition, and a culture — as a crucial ground for disciplinary discursive structuration today. Second, I will try to understand where Architecture stands among the other artistic fields, in order to map how this sector was formed, operates and has changed over time both in its institutional nature and in its disciplinary framework. Through official documentation, the sub-chapters that follow aim to show how the Venice Biennale frames and gives shape to the disciplinary approach in the architecture field.

3. The institutional Nature of the Venice Architecture Biennale

By the end of the 1960s, the art critic Lawrence Alloway outlined the idea that the Venice Biennale was, above all, an "organization", a "structure", a "party", and a "target" — in other words, an institution that "in its history touches on unsettled problems of art in society" (Alloway 1968: 89). Furthermore, as it became evident many years later, he suggested that the Venice Biennale should be scrutinized as one of the most significant mediums for cultural distribution and so the art critics should reconsider their own *modus operandi.*

Considering the complex multiplicity of the artistic production and the conviction that art could no longer be justified by "hierarchical and evolutionary schemes of order", he argued that the study of the work of art should be grounded on the new "communication system" in which it is included, produced and disseminated. The network of information and opinion provided by the Biennale, he claimed, had replaced the "uniform validated standards", that were the previous bases for the earlier critics' activity (Alloway 1968: 126).

Nevertheless, in the same moment Alloway sketched the above comment, the Venice Biennale faced one of its most violent challenges. The elitist and seasonal configuration that once drove the institution were undermined by young artists, activists and students in a series of strong confrontations at the 34th International Art Exhibition, which resulted in the well-known blockade of the Biennale in June 1968.[1]

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[1] For the description of the events occurred during this conjuncture see: Alloway, Lawrence. 1968. *The Venice Biennale, 1895-1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl*. New York: Graphic

The wake of student protests was symptomatic of the political tensions that crossed the different spheres of Italian society in this period. In this context, many architectural students and young architects joined the workers' movements and questioned the legitimacy and authority of all institutional structures — educational entities being no exception. Students from Instituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV) were particularly active in workers' struggles at Porto Marghera. The growth of the New Left at the Venice School was, among other actions, accompanied by a remarkable critical debate and production of writings in the field of architecture, addressing reflections on urban planning and housing problems, under the influence of Manfredo Tafuri's critical work on the avant-garde and on the historical project, as well as Massimo Cacciari's "negative thought" on the Metropolis.[2]

Italian architects, historians and intellectuals took up this moment to raise a vibrant debate inside the architectural schools, with several movements and ideologies competing and sparking debate. The discussion on architectural autonomy associated with the Italian Neo-Rationalist thought was contemporary to the dynamic activity of architecture magazines such as *Controspazio*, *Casabella-Continuità* or *Domus*, in which a generation of architects and historians could enounce and intertwine their plural positions on architecture. One example among others is the emergence of the Italian *Tendenza*, shaped under the influence of Aldo Rossi, in the 15th Triennale di Milano (1973). Additionally, the development of groups such as Architettura Radicale, Superstudio and Archizoom undeniably challenged the normative idea of architecture as well as the conventional ways of representation. The plurality of the debate resulted in the questioning of the socio-political values,

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Society, pp. 24-29; Martini, Vittoria. 2011. *La biennale di venezia 1968-1978: La rivoluzione incompiuta. Università Ca'Foscari Venezia*; Szacka, Léa-Catherine. 2016. *Exhibiting the Postmodernism. The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale*. Venice: Marsilio, pp. 47-52.

[2] For a deeper analysis on the topic see Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 2008. *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press; Day, Gail. 2010. *Dialectical Passions: Negation in Postwar Art Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

functional conventions, and normative codes of the Modern Movement. Which in turn ended up by weakening the established professional and academic identities.

It seems then, that there is a kind of common denominator that weaves both the post-1968 Venice Biennale and the architectural debate in the same period: the rhetoric of crisis.[3] Since its very first moment in 1979 until today, the notion of crisis undoubtedly has transversed the culture of the Venice Architecture Biennale.

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[3] "A retorica della crisi è tanto poco apprezzabile quanto ogni altra retorica. Ma nel nostro caso la realità della cris, di una crisi profunda e generale è ben piú di un dato retorico o esistenziale. Dalle ideologie alle strutture è tutto un fronte assai ampio di conflitti e di mutamenti a premere [...] sulle condizioni e sull'esperienza dei singoli e della società." Galasso, Giuseppe in La Biennale di Venezia. 1980. *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazioni (1979-1982), Documenti 6*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p.4.

3.1 "New Biennale" — Values, Rules and Disciplinary definitions

Following the cycle of protests and confronts, La Biennale di Venezia[4] was further restructured in 1975 with the *Nuovo Ordinamento dell'Ente Autonomo "La Biennale di Venezia"*.[5] This document regulated the new institutional structure; at the same moment it outlined the central values and rules on which it will be grounded.[6] It provided the main bases for extended reflections, trajectories and changes, drawing the Biennale's strategic lines that would organise the several disciplinary sectors over the following decades. terms:

> *The Body has a legal personality and Venice is its seat. It is a democratically organized cultural institute and its object is the production of permanent activities and the organization of international events relating to documentation, information, criticism, research and experimentation in the field of the arts, whereby full freedom of ideas and forms of expression is guaranteed. The Body promotes the participation of every social class in artistic and cultural life.*[7]

3.1.1 Main values: City, Policy and Culture

City, *policy*, and *culture* were, thereby, the central values that framed the renewed institution. The "new Biennale" — as it was starting to be called — was, after all, remarkably raised from the political and cultural clime of Italy's post-1968. During the very early moments of the reformed institution, these values were the point of origin

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[4] The Venice Biennale was considered "Ente autonomo La Biennale di Venezia" by the Royal Decree of 13 January 1930 (fixed by the Law n. 504 of 17 April 1930), signed by Vittorio Emanuele II and Mussolini.

[5] Fixed by the Law n. 438, 26 July 1973.

[6] Meana, Carlo Ripa di, "Introduzione". *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazioni.* [Approved in 12 July 1974], s.l., s.n., p. 4.

[7] New regulations of the "Ente Autonomo 'La Biennale di Venezia'". Law n. 438, 26 July 1973. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia / Documenti 4, p. 3.

that generated the programme of the sectors' activities defined for the following years in the first and second Quadrennial Plans. These Plans operated as identity-making mechanisms. The first, between 1974-1978, was approved on 12 July 1974[8] under the presidency of the communist politician Carlo Ripa di Meana (1929), and the following plan for the period of 1979-1982 was defined under Giuseppe Galasso's presidency. Taken together, these two documents and the Law of 1975 had a foundational role in the institutional structure of the Biennale, whereby the principles, driving lines, and operative strategies were fixed for those quadrennial periods of activity with wider consequences over time.

While introducing the Quadrennial Plan[9], Ripa di Meana immediately strengthened the intention of making the Biennale a "structure of service", claiming the rejection of any elitist conception of culture enounce; avoiding the touristic and seasonal dimensions of the exhibitions; denying a sectorial vision of the arts, and refusing the previous restrictive model of circulation of art works.[10] It becomes clear that the new Biennale signified the very opposite of the fixed and rigid model of the previous entity, indicating processes of constant intervention and revision under a democratic orientation.[11]

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[8] Three proposals were presented for the definition of the first Quadrennial Plan, being approved Proposal n. 2 and later published in the brochure *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni (1974-1977)*. 1974. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia.

[9] The structuration of the first Quadrennial Plan was taken by the Directive Council as an open public debate. The Directive Council included important figures of the intellectual and artistic contexts, among others: Adriano Seroni; Carlo Ripa di Meana; Domenico Purificato, Ennio Calabria; Ermanno Olmi; Francesco Maselli; Giuseppe Mazzariol; Giuseppe Rossini; Guido Perocco; Mario Baratto; Mario Monicelli; Neri Pozza; Pietro Zampetti.

[10] La Biennale di Venezia. 1974. *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni (1974-1977)*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p. 4.

[11] The art historian Vittoria Martini remarked that the ideological approach was reflected also in the plural composition of the Directive Council including figures coming from diverse political orientations and distinct disciplinary contexts (Martini 2011: 121-122). As expressed in the minute of the first meeting of the Directive Council (20th March 1974): The articulated composition of this Council "dovrà far si che l'attività di informazione, documentazione,

The new entity was conceived as an open democratic organism, an active agent in the promotion of the public cultural debate in the society, as such replacing the "passive spectator-viewer" (spettatore-fruitore) by the "active spectator-viewer".[12] It also intended to be strongly linked with both: on one hand, the new critical and aesthetical tendencies and groups; and, on the other, with the national and international organisms, cultural centres, syndicalist institutions, universities and associations.[13]

In line with the emergent democratic principles, the definition of those propositions was often discussed in the public sphere, involving the participation of intellectuals, critics, architects, artists, and policy makers. The meeting *Arte, Architettura, Città - Un Dibattito sulla Biennale di Venezia* (Milan, October 1974), the *Convegnio Internazionale sulla Nuova Biennale* (Venice, 30-31 May 1975), and *La Biennale di Venezia: un'instituizione al servizo del dibattito culturale internazionale* (Venice, 28-27 July 1975), among others, were key moments for the consolidation of the main guidelines outlined in the Quadrennial Plan and for corroborating the identity of the institution as a public service inside the new democratic society. That is the reason why the first activities were precisely focused on the interplay between culture and politics: *La Biennale per una Cultura Democratica e Antifascista* [The Biennale for a Democratic and Anti-fascist Culture] was the title of the 1974's edition of the Art International Exhibition, which opened with the International Conference *Testimonianze Contro il Fascismo* (Testimony Against Fascism), already enouncing the international and interdisciplinary ambitions.[14]

produzione e di esposizione della Biennale attui il confronto e la partecipazione democratica […] configurandosi come un vero servizio della collettività […] prescindendo dai canoni tradizionali e dai canali mercantili ed al riparo da inaccettabili discriminazioni."

[12] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Reg. 10, Documenti Proposti per il Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazione, [1974] p.2.

[13] La Biennale di Venezia. 1974. Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni (1974-1977). Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, pp. 10-11.

[14] Among the participants in this conference we can find politicians, artists, writers, composers, architects, intellectuals such as: Carlo Ripa di Meana, president of the Venice

Under this perspective, the Biennale could not be a cultural enterprise, if it was not able to be a political enterprise as well.[15] In many ways, the Biennale needs to be understood together with the intense atmosphere of intellectual inquiry and activism surrounding the activities of the Italian communist party; the launch of the theoretical journal *Contropiano* in 1968; the work of younger Italian thinkers such as Alberto Asor Rosa and Franco Fortini, Giulio Carlo Argan, Massimo Cacciari. And above all the "mythic presence" (Day 2010: 74) of the Instituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV), within which Manfredo Tafuri formed the Instituto di Storia dell'Architettura gathering an important group of young intellectual scholars,[16] later identified as the Venice School.

By the year 1973, Venice was the "real allegory" (Lombardo 2003:115), the central focus and expression of this conjuncture. It was the stage for the national Festival dell'Unità,[17] but also for the crucial reflections on the "city", such as Massimo Cacciari's essay "The Dialectics of the Negative and the Metropolis" and Manfredo Tafuri's *Architettura e Utopia* and was also an unequivocal frame of reference for the

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Bienale; Giorgio Longo, Mayor of Venice; Alberto Moravia, Alexandros Panagulis, Carla Bo, Carlo Aymonino, Carlos Altamirano, Julio Cortazar, Lelio Basso, Manoel Soares, Marco Pannella, Roberto Rossellini, Umberto Terracini; Alexander Calder, Dom Helder Camara, Henry Cartier Bresson, Giovan Battista Cavallaro, William Deakin, Jean Marie Domenach, Simone de Beavoir, Danilo Dolci, Gillo Dorfles, Giuseppe Dossetti, Celso Furtado, Dom Antonio Fragoso, Graham Greene, Jurgen Habermas, Joris Ivens, Ugo La Malfa, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Robert Sebastian Matta, Henry Moore, Giorgio Napolitano, Ferruccio Parri, Roger Planchon, Sandro Pertini, Franco Russoli, Jean Paul Sartre, Giorgio Strehler, Mario Soares, Bruno Storti, Angelo Tomelleri, Leo Valiani, Peter Weiss. Cf. Martini 2011: 139-140.

[15] Argan, Giulio Carlo. 1974, Arte, Architectura, Città. (L'esperienzia della Biennale di Venezia. Atti dal convegnio promosso dall'IN/ARCH di Lombardia. Milan, October 1974). *Città e Società* (Sep.-Oct.), p. 60.

[16] Such as Massimo Cacciari, Francesco Dal Co, Marco de Michaelis, Mario Manieri-Elia, Giorgio Ciucci.

[17] "Venice, June 1973: the city was overrun by the national Festival dell'Unità, the early festivals of the PCI, Italian Communist Party. Venice itself was transformed: in every campo (square) there were red flags, bookstalls, public speeches, food, wine, music, songs, company from everywhere" (Lombardo 2003: XIII).

strong interplay between the political and cultural values that supported the Biennale's reform.

The notion of city is closely linked with the new Biennale, not only because it is hosted in Venice, but also because such notion was intellectually connected with the definition of art. "Art is the city", claimed the critic and art historian Argan in 1974, while participant in the meeting *Arte, Architettura, Città - Un dibattito sulla Biennale di Venezia*[18] (Art, Architecture, City – A Debate on the Venice Biennale). If the city, like art, is a visual system of communication, then the Biennale should also be shaped as a wider system of information and communication. Two different aspects drew the nature of such system of communication: the first was its international scope; the second its interdisciplinary logic.[19]

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[18] In October 1974, the IN/ARCH [Instituto Nazionale di Architettura] promoted the meeting *Arte, Architectura, Città – Un dibattito sulla Biennale di Venezia*, held in Milan, problematizing upon the role of the art, and more precisely the place of architecture, in the communitarian life system, taking the Venetian experience of the Biennale as a starting point. It included the participation of Luigi Venegoni, Roberto Guiducci, Giulio Carlo Argan, Renato Barilli, Vittorio Gregotti, Alik Cavaliere, Andrea Villani. The communications were published in "Arte. Architectura. Città. L'esperienzia della Biennale di Venezia" (atti dal convegnio promosso dall'IN/ARCH di Lombardia. Milan, October 1974). *Città e Società*. (Sep.-Oct.1974).

[19] It was Francesca Castellani who first called attention for the importance of scrutinizing interdisciplinarity and internationality as the "keywords" of Venice Biennale, "which became crucial in the absolute necessity to bridge Italy's cultural gap in the post-Fascist era." Francesca Castellani put forth her article in La Biennale di Venezia. Rivista trimestrale di arte cinema teatro musica moda (1950-1970), republished after 1975 with the title Annuario dell'ASAC. See: Castellani, Francesca. 2010. "Keywords on la biennale: The strategies of a journal in the Rodolfo Pallucchini years". *Starting from Venice: Studies on the Biennale*. Ed. Ricci, Clarissa and Angela Vettese, Milano: et al./ Edizioni, p. 180.

3.1.2 The International Scale of the Biennale

The new Biennale rested on a double territorial nature, operating from a national level to an international scope. This double dimension is one of the key principles that remained in the history of the institution from its inception until today. In May 1975, the Biennale promoted an International Congress held at Ca'Giustinian, in which twenty-three countries were represented. One of the central topics was, precisely, the international vocation of the Biennale and the disciplinary enlargement of the institution towards architecture and mass communication, now included in the scope of activities. Two architectural historians, members of the Commission for Architecture and the Build Environment, organized this meeting: the Italian Francesco Dal Co and the British Joseph Rykwert.[20] At this meeting it was suggested the creation of an international working group for promoting dialogue on the several perspectives on contemporary art.

Ten years later the then president Paolo Portoghesi would reinforce the double territorial vocation of the Biennale: on one hand, it emerged from "the very unusual quality of its territorial emplacement", and on the other, it rose from the "historical role it has developed […], operating on a worldwide scene through an organization just about unique in its kind, that involves in the cultural management a great number of notions from the whole world". "Internationality" and "Venetianity" were, in accordance, defined as the basis for the institutional work (Portoghesi 1985: 10).

The focus on the international link would be kept as a guideline over the next decades. In 1994, just before the celebration of the institutional centenary, the

[20] In this international meeting, the Biennale was represented by Carlo Ripa di Meana, president, and Floris Ammannati, general secretary; Matteo Ajassa, Mario Baratto, Osvaldo De Nunzio, Francesco Maselli, Giuseppe Mazzariol, Guido Perocco, Giuseppe Rossini members of the Directive Council; as well as Eduardo Arroyo, Raffaele De Grada and Pontus Hulten, mambers of the Visual Arts. Commission. Vittorio Gregotti as director of the sector, and Wladimiro Dorigo responsable for the ASAC. ASAC (ed.), 1976. Manifestazioni di arti visive e architettura In Annuario 1976, eventi del 1975. Venice: la Biennale di Venezia, p. 153.

Directive Council promoted "Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia" [Six Study Days in Venice] under the title *Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma* [What Biennale after 100 years? Identity, Prospective, Reform].[21] The intention was to strengthen the needed link between Venice and foreign experiences, while trying to address a necessary redefinition of its cultural role and historical function. The idea that only a "strong" institutional setting could enable the achievement of the desired cultural aims became central. To achieve this, it would be necessary to have an extremely detailed juridical apparatus, able to regulate working process of the "Biennale's engine".[22]

As a result, this prospective document suggests here major premises for an appropriate institutional work, revealing its intentional research and cross-disciplinary ambition. First, the synergy between the several disciplinary sectors should not give rise to a "generic interdisciplinarity", but rather acknowledge the systematic cross-contamination in "languages", thereby reconstructing one of the most relevant expressions of contemporary art: "the multiplicity of codes". Second, as a "periodic review" of contemporary art, Venice Biennale should maintain its distinction among other large-scale exhibitions, similarly to Kassel and São Paulo in the arts sector; Cannes, Berlin and Montreal in cinema; or theatre manifestations in Avignon and Spoleto. While it was difficult to understand the reasons why the Venice Biennale should keep representing the architecture sector — given its meagre funding when compared with the Triennale of Milan —, it became clear that only the Biennale was institutionally engaged not only with multiple sectors, but also with other institutions and the entire domain of contemporary arts.[23] This capacity is precisely what distinguishes the Biennale as a singular institution in the international landscape. Lastly, there was the premise of a "deeper and more analytical discourse", on which

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[21] La Biennale di Venezia. [1994]. *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p.11.

[22] La Biennale di venezia. [1994]. *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p.15.

[23] Idem.

the cultural project of the Biennale's reform should be grounded. Within this premise, the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee (ASAC) [24] had a key role as the fundamental mechanism for supporting the permanent research activity.[25]

In the sequence of these enunciations, the institution was reformed in 1998, renovating its image as a referential interdisciplinary institution inside the international community. Through the Law decree n. 19 of 29th January 1998, the Venice Biennale changed its statute as an entity with "juridical personality of public Law" to a "private legal entity", which became entitled Società di Cultura La Biennale di Venezia (Cultural Society La Biennale di Venezia). This reform changed several administrative and financial aspects, while conceptual and disciplinary issues did not experience significant revisions.[26]

3.1.3 Interdisciplinary Structure of the Institution

The new Biennale extended the disciplinary sectors beyond the conventional academic orders of classification. The old sector of "Figurative Art" shifted its title and definition to "Visual Arts and Architecture" (1974-1978), and the disciplinary scope was deeply enlarged, including fields such as architecture, design, photography, and graphic design. It also comprised mass communication as an independent new area, strictly connected with the cinema's sector.[27]

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[24] Created in 1928, the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee [Historical Archive of Contemporary Art] holds documentation produced within the Biennale's activity since the 19th century. It also includes a collection of monographs and catalogues (130,000), periodical titles (3000), AV items (16,000), images, movies, posters, press cuttings and other kind of material. This material is organized by disciplinary sections: art, architecture, film, music, dance, and theatre.

[25] La Biennale di venezia. [1994]. *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p.17.

[26] The sector of Dance was created in the context of this institutional reform.

[27] On the topic see Martini, Vittoria. 2011. *La biennale di venezia 1968-1978: La rivoluzione incompiuta*. Università Ca'Foscari Venezia (unpublished).

The early debate on the interdisciplinary nature of the institution was particularly important. Some, such as Argan, took an active part in this debate. "Obviously, the Biennale may no longer […] be an exhibition of sculpture and painting", he stated, "simply because we know perfectly that this kind of distinctions by technical category do not have any meaning today".[28] Thus, the interdisciplinary strategy was not based on abstract configurations of artistic genres or technical categories, but rather it was based upon a process of experimentation, which determined the interrelations and facts between the several sectors. In such interdisciplinary approach, the Venice Biennale intended to "capture the characters of the current phase of the Modern Movement and be the instrumental platform for the entire projectual work".[29]

The *project* — a concept we will be returning later — was the crucial notion introduced by the Italian architect Vittorio Gregotti, as director of the Visual Arts and Architecture sector between 1974 and 1978. It was the pivotal mechanism outlined for connecting the three main areas of intervention — Visual Arts and Architecture; Cinema and Mass media; Theatre and Music. The Directive Council also took such notion of project as a methodological strategy able to link and to keep the five operative moments predefined in the 1973's legal document — *documentation*, *knowledge*, *criticism*, *research* and *experimentation*.

The first moment, *documentation*, consisted in the classification and production of information within the context of the ASAC's activity — "the most relevant cultural structure of the Body".[30] The second moment, *knowledge*, should record, notice and document the Biennale's activity in the public sphere, namely in both the specialised and generalist press. *Criticism*, the third moment, was structured in close articulation

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[28] Argan, Giulio Carlo. 1974. "Arte. Architectura. Città. L'esperienzia della Biennale di Venezia" (atti dal convegnio promosso dall'IN/ARCH di Lombardia. Milan, October 1974). *Città e Società*. Sep.-Oct.1974, p. 60. (Translation my own).

[29] La Biennale di Venezia, 1974. *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni (1974-1977)*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, pp. 11-12.

[30] Meana, Carlo Ripa di. 1974. "Introduzioni". *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni (1974-1977)*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p. 5.

with the universities and scientific institutes (in which IUAV was included). It revaluated the outputs produced in the previous moments, under both a disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives (including, among others, the areas of semiotic and linguistic, history, sociology, psychology, pedagogy), and explicitly grounded on political interpretations. *Research*, the fourth moment, was defined as a "laboratorial interdisciplinary work" shared by all the sectors. The last moment, *experimentation*, should include social participation of general and specialised audiences working as an important "productive synthesis".[31]

From this interdisciplinary logic emerged a complex programmatic board and a methodological strategy based on a principle of "laboratorial research and experimentation".[32] "La Biennale – Un laboratorio internazionale" became the label of the new institution, covering all the sectors and main activities scheduled for 1975. The expression "laboratory" — extensively used in the institutional documentation and communication over the 1970s — is a significant metaphor. If a laboratory is a site where scientific experiments take place, the Venice Biennale was intentionally structured as a place for artistic experimentation. In accordance with such approach, interdisciplinary working groups, also called commissions, were defined at the Biennale. These were constituted by a set of experts and dedicated to specific themes of research. The working groups functioned under the direction of a coordinator closely linked with the Directive Council and the President.

On the one hand, occurred the creation of permanent structures of research work[33] was well articulated with the seasonal rhythm of international exhibitions, and the work

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[31] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Verbali del Consiglio di Administrazione, busta 10, Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni. Document n. 2, n.d., pp. 5-7.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[33] A program of research fellowships for artists was proposed in 1974, as well as the structuration of a set of tools, namely, among others: an atelier for serigraphy and lithography; a studio for the production of electronic music; a space for scenically experimentation and theatre; equipment for photographic reproduction. Cf. La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Reg. 10, Documenti Proposti per il Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazione, [1974], p. 6.

of classification and report of the Biennale's production. On the other hand, the research groups expressed not only the experimental approach of the institution, but also its ambition to contribute to a culture of knowledge in contemporary art. As stated:

The *moments of research and experimentation will be essentially reported in an interdisciplinary Laboratory, based in Venice, in offices suitably equipped with appropriate tools and upgradeable equipment in the various techniques, for the realization of hypotheses and models, and for testing methods of operation, through a system of International study grants.*[34]

Therefore, the notion of laboratory is strongly associated with scientific work, defining a background on which *knowledge-in-action* is accommodated, bringing discourses, subjects and representations from their *natural* cycles of occurrence to a *fictional* condition defined by a system of social and conceptual interrelations.

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[34] "I momenti della ricerca e della sperimentazione faranno capo essenzialmente a un Laboratorio interdisciplinare, con sedi in Venezia opportunamente attrezzate e strumentazioni adeguate e aggiornabili nelle varie tecniche, per la realizzazione di ipotesi e modelli e la sperimentazione di metodi operativi, mediante un sistema di borse di studio internazionali." La Biennale di Venezia, 1974. Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Acttività e delle Manifestazioni (1974-1977). Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p. 15.

3.2 The Visual Arts and Architecture Sector

The sector of Visual Arts and Architecture (1974-1978) was structured in the context of the debate on the Biennale's interdisciplinary conception. Recent studies have been arguing that, among the several sectors, this sector was the only able to understand such conception, because the Italian architect Vittorio Gregotti was its director (Martini 2011: 153).

In fact, we can find some support for the idea that Vittorio Gregotti played a central role in the definition of an interdisciplinary direction, as well as in the introduction of Architecture in the Venice Biennale. At that time, Gregotti had joined the editorial staff of young professionals of the magazine *Casabella-Continuità,* directed by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, and he was the only architect included in the neo-vanguard Gruppo 63. This group, mostly constituted by philosophers, poets, artists, and musicians,[35] "decided to occupy the triennale [Milan] and made an exhibition on the theme of leisure, the free time after work", as Gregotti well remarked (Levy 2010: 31). It was in this context that Gregotti was appointed curator of the XIII Milan Triennale in 1964, working together with Umberto Eco[36] for the organization of the introductory section entitled *Sezione introduttiva a carattere internazionale*. He also invited as collaborators the composer Luciano Berio, as well as writers and artists, namely Gianni Balestrini, Furio Colombo, Lucio Fontana, Tinto Brass, Enrico Baj, Roberto

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[35] As the title suggests, Gruppo 63 was founded in Palermo in 1963 and was defined as a neovanguardia group composed by figures from diverse fields: Nanni Balestrini, Corrado Costa, Alfredo Giuliani, Francesco Leonetti, Giulia Niccolai, Elio Pagliarani, Lamberto Pignotti, Walter Pedullà, Antonio Porta, Amelia Rosselli, Edoardo Sanguineti, Giuliano Scabia, Adriano Spatola, Patrizia Vicinelli; Luciano Anceschi, Renato Barilli, Fausto Curi, Gillo Dorfles, Umberto Eco, Angelo Guglielmi; Alberto Arbasino, Gianni Celati, Giorgio Celli, Furio Colombo, Enrico Filippini, Franco Lucentini, Luigi Malerba, Giorgio Manganelli, Nico Orengo, Giuseppe Pontiggia, Sebastiano Vassalli; Inge Feltrinelli; Vittorio Gregotti; Luigi Gozzi; Roberto Di Marco, Michele Perriera, Gaetano Testa; Luigi Nono.

[36] Eco, Umberto. 1964. Teoria e pratica del Tempo libero: indicazioni per la sceneggiatura di un allestimento. In Tempo libero, note, studi, disegni sulla preparazione della XII Triennale. A. Fabbri (ed.), Milano: Giordano Editore.

Crippa, and Fabio Mauri (Martini 2011a: 153). With the curatorial experience of this exhibition, which demanded an articulation between disciplinary cultures, Gregotti constructed a notion of interdisciplinary work that would drive his activity at the Venice Biennale.

Gregotti — as well as the directors of the two other sectors[37] — was suggested by Ripa di Meana,[38] who identified "in the great currents of culture and thought of our society, people of unquestionable operational curriculum" able to assure and to define "common values and needs with absolute independence of thought and action", and, notably, beyond political affinities.[39] Ripa di Meana observed that with Gregotti's mandate "an institution like the biennale ha[d], however, a task of its own, to bring culture to bear on administrative decisions, using the modes and idiom of culture".[40]

3.2.1 *Project* as methodological strategy

It was a "strange story", Gregotti commented more recently, to be asked to direct the Art Biennale, a role conventionally endorsed to art critics or specialists (Levy; Menking 2010: 22). However, Gregotti imposed two conditions before accepting such a position: to introduce Architecture into the Biennale structure; and to be responsible

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[37] Giacomo Gambetti, director of the Cinema and Media sector, and Luca Ronconi, director of the Theatre and Music sector.

[38] Ripa di Meana's wife, the Italian architect Gae Aulenti, had worked with Gregotti in Casabella-Continuità from 1955 until 1965 as an art director, doing graphic design work, and later served on the board of directors for the renamed Lotus International magazine (based in Milan from 1974 onwards). During that time, she became part of a group of young professionals influenced by Ernesto Nathan Rogers. Cf. Martini 2011, p. 155.

[39] "Queste nomine, come ognuno può vedere, sfuggono all'invalso costume delle trattative politiche, per identificare nelle grandi correnti di cultura e di pensiero della nostra società, persone dall'indiscutibile curriculum operativo, le quali danno garanzia di esprimere valori ed esigenze comuni con assoluta autonomia di pensiero e azione." Dichiarazione del presidente della Biennale sulla nomina dei tre direttori. 1975. *Annuario*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p. 422.

[40] Carlo Ripa di Meana quoted in Levy 2014: 90.

for the definition of the commission of experts for the sector. As a result, Gregotti defined a commission centred on the artistic field, constituted by Eduardo Arroyo, Maurizio Calvesi, Pontus Hultén,[41] Raffaele De Grada, and Silvano Giannelli. But, additionally, Gregotti also put into place an architecture's commission, in which he considered the contribution of some leading figures such as Aldo Van Eyck, Francesco Dal Co, Joseph Rykwert, Leonardo Benevolo, and Licisco Magnato.

By splitting the board of specialists in two sets of expertise, Gregotti expressed that the interaction among the disciplines depended in part on the strong sense of their own specificities and that Architecture — never included in the Biennale's structure before — couldn't be considered as belonging to the artistic field.

Without doubt, the choice of the members of the commission of Architecture provides a source for extended reflections. All of them are figures that fundamentally considered architecture in strict connection with the notion of *city*. For example, Rykwert's study *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy, and The Ancient World*, was first published in 1963 at the architectural magazine *Forum* by Aldo Van Eyck, another member of the commission. Especially Benevolo, with his important studies on the history of the city, but also Francesco Dal Co, an architectural historian and scholar at the IUAV, who had a special interest on the topic through his collaboration with Tafuri and Cacciari on *De la vanguardia a la metropolis*, published two years before.

To discover an interdisciplinary point of view, Gregotti noted, it would be necessary to rethink the old anthological model. The introduction of the notion of *project* — deeply connected with architecture's exercise — was then considered the nodal mechanism able to deal with the specificities of the several disciplinary areas within an interdisciplinary logic. It indicates an effort to create consensus and to construct a system sufficiently articulated to cover the heterogeneity and the contrasting

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[41] Pontus Hultén (1924-2006) was one of the most distinguished museum directors of the 20th century and the former head of the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm. He was also the first director and promoter of the Centre George Pompidou, in Paris, in 1974-1981.

questions raised from the disciplinary fields, inside a unitary theme. Gregotti clarified his position:

> *This method of work, I thought it especially should get out of my experience as an architect, not so much regarding to the specific cultural area of information, the technical category from which I come out, but rather to the fact that an architect is used to work throughout the project, to work according to a method that creates a fairly large distance of perspectives and method by which [he] performs such concrete work.*[42]

The strong presence of project in the definition of a transversal methodological approach was, therefore, a conscious act to construct a space for the entry of architecture into the Venice Biennale. This approach was first tested in *Cinema. Città. Avanguardia: 1919-1939,* an exhibition curated by Francesco Dal Co.[43] No less important was the international conference that closed the event[44], focused on the relationship between the European avant-garde experience and the problems of

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[42] "Questi metodi di lavoro, ho pensato che dovesse uscire soprattutto di mia esperienza di architetto, non tanto per quanto riguardava l'informazione dell'area culturale specifica, della categoria tecnica dalla quale esco, qua piuttosto per il fatto che un architetto è abituato a lavorare per progetto a lavorare secondo un metodo che crea una distanzia abbastanza larga le prospettive e i metodi coi quali se esegue in concreto questo lavoro" (Translation my owm). Gregotti, Vittorio. 1974, "Arte, Architectura, Città. (L'esperienzia della Biennale di Venezia. Atti dal convegnio promosso dall'IN/ARCH di Lombardia. Milan, October 1974). *Città e Società* (Sep.-Oct.), p. 67.

[43] The exhibition opened on 16 October 1974. Dal Co, Francesco and E. Donda, Cinema, Città, Avanguardia: 1919-1939, Magazzini del sale alle Zattere (saloni), 16 ottobre-15 novembre. Venezia: La Biennale di Venezia, 1974. Il cinema sovietico: arte, industria e Stato; Dziga Vertov; L'avanguardia francese: cinema, critica e capitale; Il documentario sociale; Sperimentalismo astratto e avanguardia sperimentale; Avanguardia tedesca e società; La propaganda, la città e il fascismo.

[44] The conference occurred on 28 and 29 October.

modern architecture and the city, which obviously included the contribution of Manfredo Tafuri alongside other Italian architects, critics, and social scientists.[45]

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[45] Along with Gregotti, Alberto Abruzzese, Adriano Aprià, Maurizio Fagiolo Dell'Arco, Tomas Maldonado, Lino Micciché, Gianni Rondolino, Joseph Ryckwert, Bernard Schneider. Cf. Martini 2011: 160.

La Biennale di Venezia
Ente autonomo

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The Architectural Department

The Architectural Department of the Biennale regards the
cultural events organized by the past management as a valid
heritage: they have introduced the problems concerning the
transformation of the territory and the industrial design
into the field in which figurative arts are traditionally
confined, thus contributing to privilege a general tendency
to the study of planning. However, now that an autonomous
department has finally ratified the interest of the Biennale
in architectural thematics, what has already been done must
be developed in a wider and more articulated way, by fully
exploiting those potentials for a direct relationship with
society that architecture by its very nature implies. In
such a way, this new Department can constitute one of the
main supports in a general policy aiming at a consolidation
of the links with the living forces of culture and labour.
According to the most correct interpretation of the insti-
tutional aims of the Biennale, this Department will be able
on the one hand to document critically the most relevant
phenomena of the present debate on architecture as a specific
discipline - and, on the other hand, to explore the con-
nections between this discipline and the other fields of
intellectual work, both in the area of planning & design
and in that of the analysis of the architectural project
& product in their relationship with social needs and the
history of culture. Furthemore, the Architecture Depart-
ment can contribute to a fair formulation of problems con
cerning internationality and - not in contradiction with
that - the link with the Veneto territorial reality.

"The Architectural Department", [1979], [La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC FS, *busta* 664].

3.3 The Architecture Sector

In the second *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazione* (1979-1982), the Biennale's disciplinary structure was reformulated under the new presidency of Giuseppe Galasso.[46] It was in the context of this restructuration that the new Architecture sector was institutionalized in 1979, being directed by Paolo Portoghesi until 1982. This foundational moment closed the previous period of exploration and took the concepts of *city* and *project* as an important heritage introduced by the previous direction into a new field, which was traditionally confined by the arts.[47] For sure, the definition of architecture as an autonomous sector was a fundamental moment of disciplinary delimitation.

The atmosphere of exploration and trial developed during the first post-reform period (1975-1978) of the Biennale was rethought and a new perspective defined. In December 1978, the new Directive Council[48] met for the first time in order to propose a programmatic platform for the second quadrennial period of activity (1979-1982).[49] Among the directions then defined, it was confirmed the principle of "continuity" with the previous approach, namely the emphasis on the "political and civic values" and the role of the Biennale as an agent in the defence of democracy in contemporary society. Once more, the old seasonal and elitist dimensions of the Biennale were

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[46] The Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazioni (1979-1982), was presented and discussed in a public meeting, on 7 April 1979, and approved by the Directive Council in the session on 22-23 June 1979 (Translation my own).

[47] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 664, "The Architectural Department", [1979], p. 1.

[48] The new Directive Council was constituted by Giuseppe Galasso, president; Mario Rigo, vice-president; Matteo Ajassa; Fernando Bandini; Giovanni Cesari; Piero Craveri; Wladimiro Dorigo; Alessandro Meccoli; Massimo Rendina; Carlo Ripa di Meana; Giuseppe Rossini; Luigi Ruggiu; Ettore Scola; Vittorio Spinozzola; Ernesto Talentino; Roberto Tonini; Maurizio Trevisan.

[49] La Biennale di Venezia. 1980. Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazioni (1979-1982), Documenti 6. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia.

avoided and its definition as a "cultural institution" reinforced[50]. However, this meeting also redefined the autonomy of the Biennale by going against the idea of using cultural structures as mere ideological tools. This was not done to deny the role of the intellectuals and of the Biennale as political forces in a democratic society, but rather to avoid the instrumental use of cultural entities.[51]

The crucial issue was finding the right balance between cultural continuity and the innovation imposed by an aimed institutional "openness". "Openness" meant a "pluralistic conception of the cultural life". It defined the intention to confront the several "tendencies of the 'neo-vanguard'", but also the construction of new criteria structured from the "historical evaluation" of such tendencies. "Openness" implied, furthermore, the development of a new interpretative matrix that allowed to define deeper ties between historical avant-garde and neo-vanguard, and the way by which such continuity was conditioned by contemporary society.[52] "Openness" was, lastly, understood as the capacity to promote debate about emergent themes such as: experimental culture and popular culture; artistic creativity and technic-scientific creativity; artistic production and communication systems.[53]

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[50] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 4093, Comunicazioni alla stampa nº 91 bis/G: Documento conclusivo della riunione del Consiglio Directtivo della Biennale (2-3 dicembre 1978).

[51] La Biennale di Venezia. ASAC, Fondo Storico, Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazioni. p.2.

[52] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 4093, Comunicazioni alla stampa nº 91 bis/G: Documento conclusivo della riunione del Consiglio Directtivo della Biennale (2-3 dicembre 1978), p.3.

[53] "Apertura è anche promouvere in tutta la sua vastità il dibattito tra certe destinazioni ormai classiche: cultura sperimentale e cultura popolare; creatività artistica e creatività technico-scientifica; produzione artistica e produzione comunicativa". La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 4093, Comunicazioni alla stampa nº 91 bis/G: Documento conclusivo della riunione del Consiglio Directtivo della Biennale (2-3 dicembre 1978), p.3.

3.3.1 Disciplinary Realignment: debate and key directions

The discussion on the disciplinary realignment occurred within this climate of "openness", taking into consideration the experience and necessities enounced in the previous period. Tellingly, Galasso was aware of how complex was the inclusion of Architecture in the Visual Arts sector:

Living together had, in other words, become difficult: not certainly because of mere incompatibility of a corporate or – even less – a personal nature. It was necessary to take note of a technical, expressive and functional specificness which, no matter how ancient it was [...] had qualified Architecture in an ever more complex fashion compared with the Fine Arts: they had been joined to it by ancient aesthetic and rhetorical tradition. (Galasso 1980: 7)

In the light of the above, it became clear that the principle of interdisciplinarity — which the Biennale embraced — had generated important difficulties in the interaction between disciplinary fields. According to Galasso, the work of art — increasingly "transformed into an event" — had lost its qualities as a "manufactured article." Architecture production, in contrast, "energetically, removed from all monumentalist concepts", demonstrated to be part of a "much more complex subject". First, because architecture "flowed into the whole" including new areas such as town planning and landscape architecture. Second, because architecture also "ran into the problems of 'material culture', the social and individual use of time and resources, etc." (Galasso 1980: 7).

In addition, the traditional ways of Visual Arts' representation and the nature of its exhibitions contrasted with a "remarkable sensitivity for new articulation and constant vitality" of architecture, which had also contributed "for the uneasy alliance between Architecture and ... the rest" (Galasso 1980: 7). In other words, these comments, written in 1980 in the "Introduction" of *The Presence of the Past* catalogue, reflect the

experience accumulated in the previous period of activity, but also the open debate promoted in the context of the institutional working meetings.[54]

Giuseppe Galasso echoed the critical analysis stated on the several proposals presented for the restructuration of the Biennale between December 1978 and March 1979. Among those proposals, the Argentine artist and thinker Tomas Maldonado, member of the board of experts, criticised the unclear criteria and the "strongly institutionalized" categorization of the previous disciplinary sectors — Visual Arts and Architecture; Cinema and Mass Media; Theatre and Music. As he put it, the segmentation in three sectors reflected the convention historiographical approach. The arbitrary sense of artistic classification clashed with both the "interdisciplinary spirit" fixed in the quadrennial plan and with the contemporary tendencies of artistic discourse.[55]

In Maldonado's viewpoint, the future of the Biennale depended on its targets. The institution should consider – in line with the legal document of 1973 – the moments of "documentation, knowledge, critic, research and experimentation" as the main drives for its work. In this sense, he suggested the reorganization the categories of activity not by disciplinary fields — that undermined the interdisciplinary institutional logic —, but within transversal domains of activity, such as: "events", "research", and "didactic". The sector of events would be in affinity with the aim of "documentation, of knowledge and criticism"; the sector of research connected with the institutional principle of experimentation; and the sector of didactic would be in affinity with the demands of knowledge production and critique of cultural phenomena, encouraging an open debate with the public and in articulation with the schools' activity.

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[54] Through the archival documentation we can access this discussion that occurred between December 1978 and March 1979.

[55] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 16, (folder 19/1/1979), Proposta di ristrutturazione dei settori della Biennale.

It is indeed obvious that they [disciplinary fields] *will still have a dominant role in the cultural activities of the Biennale. It is not here to take the path of an "after life art" rhetoric, or "the death of art", of which wishful thinking more than once we have seen the negative effects. It is, in short, to reopen the old debate about an alleged overcoming of traditional art forms, but rather to find an organizational setup more adherent to the tasks that the Biennale has set itself, and able to show in all its wealth of shades the overall arc of the artistic experiences of our time.*[56]

The relationship with schools and universities was taken as a fundamental aspect in the restructuration of the disciplinary sectors: "a confrontation in which the Biennale could be a rich and stimulating interlocutor for the study and knowledge of the contemporary art".

It was, however, the schematic opinion defined by Ripa di Meana[57] that would be adopted in the Quadrennial Plan. Such opinion, evidently in line with the previous strategy, suggested the constitution of five sectors of activity: visual arts, architecture, cinema, theatre, and music; and proposed the organization of the activities (exhibitions, reviews, festivals) in a bi-annual base for the sectors of art, architecture, theatre, and music, and in an annual rhythm for the cinema's sector. He also recommended the preparation of two interdisciplinary "special projects" to be presented in 1980 and 1982; the continuity of the "permanent activity" of research and experimentation, promoted in strict connection with the activity of the ASAC; and, lastly, the implementation of some projects of displays with non-Italian cultural

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[56] *Ibid.*.

[57] Carlo Ripa di Meana wasn't present in the meeting for discussing the several proposals, considering the "febrile political activity" in which he was involved on that date, but he wrote a letter addressed to the new President of the Biennale, Giuseppe Galasso; Fernando Bandini (Consigliere della Biennale); and Maurizio Trevisan (Consigliere della Biennale), 18 January 1979. La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 16, (folder 19/1/1979), Proposta di ristrutturazione dei settori della Biennale.

institutes. Regardless of theoretical argumentation and debate, it was this pragmatic proposal that prevailed and was legitimised through the second Quadrennial Plan.

3.3.2 The Autonomy of the Architectural Field

By introducing the new sector of Architecture among other independent sections, the Biennale avoided the rigidity of the previous structure and linked such institutional changes with the disciplinary specificities, underlining the externality of architecture or, more precisely, its increasing distance from art. The "Venice Biennale's decision to set up, alongside the other activities, a sector exclusively and autonomously dedicated to Architecture, was the result of an experience and a necessity" (Galasso 1980: 7).

The Italian architect and historian Paolo Portoghesi was, until 1982, the first director of the Architecture sector and contributed decisively to its significance. Under his perspective, by claiming "a technic of architecture, which is not technology" and distinguishing its specificity "from all other cultural activities", the Biennale acknowledged architecture's disciplinary differentiation.[58] As explained in the official documentation, the term *architecture* should not be understood in a "restrictive meaning as an artistic genre" and configures a particular domain among the other disciplines. It must be considered as "human work", directed to plan the physical environment which includes the build environment, the environmental objects and also the problem of the technologies of aesthetical production and, more generally, of

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[58] "Ritiene che l'interpretazione piú corretta di questa volontà consiste nel seguire due linee: da una parte rivendicar una tecnica dell'architettura, che non è la tecnologia e che distingue questa attività da tutte le altre attività culturali; dall'altra, invece, indagare in modo sempre piú approfondito quelle discipline che possono correggere e verificare soprattuto l'operazione progettuale dell'architetto". La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 16, VII Riunioni del Consiglio Direttivo 5,6,7,8 aprile 1979. p. 29.

the productions of communication.[59] Architecture was, thus, understood as being central for the Biennale's strategy:

In such a way, this new Department can constitute one of the main supports in a general policy aiming at a consolidation of the links with the living forces of culture and labour. According to the most correct interpretation of the institutional aims of the Biennale, this Department will be able on the one hand to document critically the most relevant phenomena of the present debate on architecture as a specific discipline; and, on the other hand, to explore the connections between this discipline and the other fields of intellectual work, both in the area of planning & design and in that of the analysis of the architectural project & product in their relationship with social needs and the history of culture. Furthermore, the Architecture Department can contribute to a fair formulation of problems concerning internationality and — not in contradiction with that — the link with the Veneto territorial reality.[60]

Even if not theoretically structured, the argument for the autonomy of Architecture was strongly supported by the four main lines of the Biennale's orientation: documentation of contemporary cultural production; consolidation of the relationship with society; interdisciplinary approach; international and national articulation.

Architecture as a field of expertise

The definition of the second quadrennial plan of activities was a central moment for the disciplinary framework of the Biennale, in general, and for architecture's self-perception as an autonomous discipline, in particular. This document gave shape, articulated the interaction, and conferred legitimacy to each disciplinary sector as a

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[59] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, serie Architettura, busta 664, The Architectural Department, [1979], p. 2.

[60] *Ibid.*.

field of expertise. In this sense, architecture found a place for disciplinary authority in the Biennale, not conditioned by a doctrine or grounded on individual approaches, but on methods, practices and conventions accepted by a group of experts.

In the Biennale the attribution of value, selection of participants, and definition of criteria are given by an advisory board constituted by a body of experts, often renovated according to the director of the architecture sector. The attribution of value by a panel of specialists emphasizes the *symbolic capital* conferred by the Biennale, albeit the inevitable instability of the board, which often reflected curatorial strategies. Its primary nature was, precisely, to distinguish *knowledge* from mere *opinion* under an architecture disciplinary viewpoint.

In fact, *expertise* — along with related concepts as *specialization* and *knowledge* — is a key notion of disciplinary differentiation able to set order in the diffusion of knowledge inside and outside the disciplinary field. Along with these lines, it can be argued that architecture is understood in the Biennale as a field of expertise, being able to produce a body of knowledge and reproduce disciplinary culture throughout codified practices, explicit and implicit norms. And, as put by Larson, throughout the field of expertise disciplines "claim the right to create their discourse autonomously" (Larson 1993: 12). The architecture sector acquired, as such, the function of ordering and confining subject matters under a disciplinary perspective. From its very first moment, International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale became a referential point for disciplinary classification and consecration of identities and conventions.

The sectorial disciplinary approach

The definition of autonomous sectors was, however, understood as a complex and almost contradictory approach within the interdisciplinary orientation. For this reason, they were transformed and justified in the following terms: "the distinction between sectors doesn't mean separation neither isolation. The artistic sphere is today characterized by the confluence of experiences, exchanges and analogy of

106

expressive models and of the constant proposal of methodologies in the domain of artistic experience".[61] Under these circumstances, another sector was added to solve the complex relationships of the sectorial approach — a move also suggested by Ripa di Meana — called "Special projects". It added an "element of novelty" — as expressed in the official documentation —, in order to articulate the specificities of the sectors within an "organic projectual discourse" and under an overall vision of the "cultural discourse."

Two general requirements were, then, established as common lines for the several sectors. First, the moments of *research* and *experimentation* should be organized inside each singular sector and in deeper connection with a structure defined by permanent activities of the institution.[62] These activities aimed to "produce culture" and new practices of communication between disciplines, which would be expressed in seminars, meetings, conferences, and publications. Furthermore, in line with the suggestions sketched by Maldonado, the "didactic experience" was viewed as a fundamental component of the Biennale's activity, linking the artistic movements with the general public. Second, the moments of cultural information and mediation should be defined throughout the "traditional displays and exhibitions" by which the Biennale made public to the "great cultural circuit" the achievements of the internal research and critical systematization on contemporary art.[63]

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[61] La Biennale di Venezia. 1980. *Piano Quadriennale di Massima Delle Attività e delle manifestazioni (1979-1982)*, Documenti 6. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p.11.

[62] "Il tempo dell'uomo nella società della tecnica", under Gianfranco Bettetini organization; "Cultura di massa e cultura di intratenimento", structured by Marino Livolsi; and "Venezia 800/900, imagine di um mito".

[63] La Biennale di Venezia. 1980. *Piano Quadriennale di Massima delle Attività e delle Manifestazioni (1979-1982)*, Documenti 6. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p.14.

Permanent and periodical activity of the sector

When Paolo Portoghesi was appointed director of the sector,[64] he immediately defined a set of hypotheses. Firstly, to develop research agendas to transform the territory in the Third World, which meant organizing events and meetings in order "to place the experiences of architectural culture in their economic, social and production context, enlarging the field of its analysis to a kind of architecture which is most affected by its consumers, the 'architettura dialettale' (local native architecture)".[65] A second line of work was the analysis of new architecture tendencies, emphasising the needed critical reinterpretation of modern movement experiences.[66] In other words, two main lines would structure the first intentions for the Architecture sector: the report of new tendencies, among which postmodern architecture was considered a fundamental thematic already reflected in the "Anglo-Saxon world;[67] and the analysis of "architettura dialettale".

The notions of laboratory and experimentation were still crucial under Portoghesi's tenure. The clear intention, already enounced in the previous period of activity, to create a huge "interdisciplinary laboratory" that could congregate the experiences produced within the sectorial laboratories was reinforced as the key notion. Portoghesi looked at the Venice Biennale as "a public institution of historic dimensions", able to provide "permanent laboratories" of research and to inspire public manifestations that fortified the "link between the institution, the city and its territory". He saw the Biennale as a privileged place for the construction of a "centre

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[64] The contracts with the directors of the several sectors were formalized in April. Cf. La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Comunicati Stampe, busta 4093, Comunicazioni alla stampa 8/G-79: Consiglio Direttivo della Biennale. Seduta del 27/28 aprile 1978.

[65] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, serie Architettura, busta 664, The Architectural Department, [1979], p. 3

[66] Idem.

[67] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 16, VII Riunioni del Consiglio Direttivo 5,6,7,8 aprile 1979, p.2.

for the elaboration and promotion of architectural debate and research" (Portoghesi 1980: 9).

In this manner, the sector was structured not only by an international engagement but also by a permanent research activity. Subsequently, two laboratories of research at the Architecture sector were created: the first was the "Laboratorio di analisi urbana e territoriale" (Laboratory of urban and territorial analysis) in collaboration with IUAV; and another centred on the theme "Lavorare in architettura" (Working in architecture). By creating a sector centred on the areas of "environment daily life, homes, working conditions and use of free time", the Biennale will offer an "apparatus of critical suggestions and lines of action", Portoghesi claimed. It also would provide a "possibility to verify hypothesis and a chance to confront scientific disciplines". [68] Following the latter intention, the new autonomous Architecture sector would be inaugurated in articulation with the other sectors.

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[68] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, serie Architettura, busta 664, The Architectural Department, [1979], p. 2

**VENEZIA
TEATRO DEL MONDO**

"si é nel labirinto, si è qui per tentare da che parte si entra
e si esce o si vola fuori per creare una prospettiva. Ciò av-
viene appunto nella tensione al linguaggio, nella poesia,
nell.espressione (in senso etimologico e ultra).
E' il sublime destino (pendolarmente e riversibilmente)
di Münchhausen, che si toglie dalla palude tirandosi per
i capelli, Noi siamo Münchhausen, Io è la realtà".

Andrea Zanzotto

I settori Architettura e Teatro della Biennale di Venezia inaugurano la loro atti-
vità con un progetto comune: una mostra concepita come omaggio a Venezia,
che si svolge nelle sale di uno dei suoi palazzi, ma che proietta anche in alcuni spa-
zi urbani particolarmente significativi la sua proposta interpretativa e progettuale.
Architettura e teatro, costruzione della città e rappresentazione della vita, trova-
no a Venezia una delle coniugazioni più profonde avvincenti. Già nel contrasto
tra un ambiente fisico monotono e inerte, in cui l'orizzontalità diventa dominan-
te e la città del colore e del ritmo, in cui si realizza una delle lingue architettoni-
che più ricche di contrasti e di complessità strutturali, Venezia esprime la sua vo-
cazione scenica, la volontà di sfruttare tutte le risorse della qualità -- qualità istitu-
zionale e qualità urbana indissolubilmente legate — per costruire la sua storia di
ribellione nei confronti dell'appiattimento e della morte incombente, di libera-
zione dalle condizioni ambientali che perpetuamente ne minacciano l'azzera-
mento.
La tendenza ad autorappresentarsi, ad amplificare, attraverso la ricchezza e la
magia della scena, la propria presenza e il proprio luogo politico, artistico, civile,
è la forza di Venezia ed è parte integrante della sua identità. Il ruolo stesso affi-
dato all'architettura dal potere veneziano non è spiegabile se non come disegno
coerente di esprime una "diversità" e una "maggiore densità", di mediare, attraver-
so i simboli della propria storia, il rapporto con l'estreno, il rapporto con il
mondo.
Per questo Venezia fu e rimane uno dei "teatri del mondo" e un significato pre-
ciso vuole avere la rievocare la tradizione cinquecentesca dei teatri natanti (che
si chiamavano appunto teatri o macchine del mondo) affidando la riprogetta-
zione a un architetto moderno che si batte per restituire all'architettura il suo
valore di costruzione e riorganizzazione della città.
Il settore Architettura e il settore Teatro si sono così incontrati sul terreno della
rivalutazione dei luoghi come matrici della cultura: sull'esigenza, da una parte, di
sviluppare la propria azione nell'analisi della parola teatrale e degli spazi scenici,
attraverso i quali la lingua è ciclicamente nata, morta e risorta, sull'importanza e
attualità, dall'altra parte, di reinventare e riprogettare la città esistente attraverso
la reintegrazione dell'immaginario e del nuovo uso dell'effimero.
Proponendo la rilettura dei suoi spazi più celebrati, insieme ad altri meno noti o
dimenticati, come scenari della vita, la mostra rivela la sua progettualità in quanto
suggerisce una riappropiazione di questi luoghi in funzione di un'idea di Venezia
come città della sperimentazione, dell'incontro e dello scambio tra le culture in
confronto e in conflitto. Teatro del mondo in un mondo che non riconosce più
centralità e gerarchia e accetta la difficile condizione — che è sempre stata di Ve-
nezia — di cercare la sopravvivenza nella tolleranza e nella pluralità.
l'omaggio a Venezia e ai veneziani da parte di una istituzione come la Biennale,
che ha campo di azione e compiti internazionali, non vuole essere d'altronde che
il riconoscimento dell'importanza di prendere le mosse nel proprio lavoro dalla
concretezza delle radici per procedere intorno a esse con un movimento a spirale,
capace di coinvolgere quanto di più vitale e significativo vi è nella cultura d'oggi
senza riconoscere barriere e confini di separazione.

Paolo Portoghesi e Maurizio Scaparro

Paolo Portoghesi and Maurizio Scaparro, "Venezia. Teatro del Mondo", *Venezia e lo Spazio Scenico*, 1979

[La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC FS, *busta* 4093]

4. Venice Architecture Biennale:
Representation, Experimentation and Criticism

"Representation" is a much-used term in the human sciences, and has been for a long time. No doubt this is because of its ambiguity. On one hand the "representation" stands in for the reality that is represented, and so evokes absence; on the other, it makes that reality visible, and thus suggests presence. Moreover, this opposition can easily be reversed: the representation is present in the former case, even if only as a surrogate; in the latter case it ends up recalling, in contrast to itself reality that it is intended to represent.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *Wooden eyes. Nine reflections on Distance*

Arguably the first public representation of architecture at the Venice Biennale emerged from the dialogue between two key events: "Teatro del Mondo", the floating engine designed by Aldo Rossi for the exhibition *Venezia e lo Spazio Scenico* (1979); and "Strada Novissima" the scenic mechanism structured by Paolo Portoghesi in 1980 to give identity to the 1st International Architecture Exhibition, entitled *The Presence of the Past*. Together, they celebrated the institutionalization of architecture as an autonomous sector, and in the same instance legitimised another kind of autonomy: the autonomy of architecture as discipline.

This disciplinary representation was a "Trojan Horse" — according to Paolo Portoghesi — entering in the Biennale structure and "forcing the impossible scenario" of Venice (Portoghesi 1980: 13). The impact of this moment was so unprecedented that even architecture historic continuity had to be "reinvented", for example by

situating it in a genealogy of foundational moments that had in the 1927 Werkbund exhibition at the Weissenhofsielung its point of reference.[1] "Teatro del Mondo" and "Strada Novissima" were recorded in the history of architecture as "undeniable powerful signs" — Franco Purini assured — able to provide a "fully practical way and at the same time highly symbolic entire disciplinary status caught in the moment of its irreversible transformation".[2]

The instance formed by "Teatro del Mondo" and "Strada Novissima" is here taken as the nodal point, in which the several ways we have been identifying as important guidelines for the construction of architecture's knowledge culture had converged and a new paradigm emerged. Firstly, it corroborated the Biennale's strategies, such as: interdisciplinary experimentation, and national-international interplay. Secondly, this moment defined a new model of architectural representation, able to "reflect" — sometimes in divergent directions — the architecture state of the art, as well as to "resonate" new trends and positions in architectural culture. Finally, together these events inaugurated a *Biennale culture* in the architecture field, which produced conventions and a regime of specific practices that changed its history and influenced architecture contemporary discourse in the following decades.

It is also clear that the Venice Architecture Biennale came into existence as part of a worldwide cultural cartography, by the visibility and statute conferred through this double moment of experimentation and representation. From this moment on, the Venice Architecture Biennale became "an integral part of contemporary architectural

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[1] Jencks, Charles. 1982. Presents of the Past. *Architectural Design*. ["Free Style Classicism", Ed. Charles Jencks] 52 (1/2): 2.

[2] "A me sembra che sia la Via Novíssima sia il Teatro dei Mondo si siano iscritti nella storia dell'architettura di questi ultimi anni con la forza incontestabile di segni capaci di dare un senso pienamente concreto e nello stesso tempo fortemente simbólico a un'intera condizione disciplinare colta nel momento di una sua irreversibile trasformazione." Purini, Franco. 1995. "Giornata di studio sull'Architettura". *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p. 110.

culture" (Steele 2010: 7).[3] In 2004 — another moment of institutional change — David Croff, president of the Foundation *La Biennale di Venezia*, confirmed that the International Architecture Exhibition had gradually turned out to be "an obligatory appointment for world creativity" and the main "driving force" of the Biennale. To understand the significance of this inaugural moment I will first turn back to 1975. This was the experimental moment provided by Gregotti, who rethought the notion of architecture exhibition at the Venice Biennale.

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[3] Steele, Brett. 2010. Preface. *Architecture on display: on the history of the Venice Biennale of Architecture.* Eds. Aaron Levy and William Menking, London: AA Publications, p.7.

4.1 Architectural Exhibitions: first essays

The three exhibitions dedicated to architecture, organized under Gregotti's direction between 1975 and 1978, might be observed together, as if they were one singular episode.[4] The group of exhibitions was comprised in an initial moment by *Proposition for Mulino Stucky* (Proposals for Mulino Stucky) in 1975. The 1976's triptych of events *Werkbund 1907. Alleorigini del design* (Werkbund 1907. The origins of design)[5], *Il razionalismo e l'architettura in Italia durante il fascism* (Rationalism and architecture in Italy under fascism)[6], and *Europa-America. Centro storico - suburbio* (Europe-America. Historical center - suburbia). Finally, in 1978, *Utopia e crisi dell'antinatura. Intenzioni architettoniche in Italia* (Utopia and crisis of anti-nature. Architectural intentions in Italy). Together these exhibitions constitute a juncture that prepared the relation of architecture with the city, the entry of architecture in the Venice Biennale, and its official autonomy in the next quadrennial period. At the same time, they show Gregotti's interest to make relevant the dialogue between disciplines.

This set of exhibitions have in common a renewed attention to the territory and the city in line with the work already produced by Gregotti in the study *Il Territorio dell'Architettura* (1966), but also grounded on the important Italian debate on the city by the 1960s. This discussion was highly indebted to several key thinkers, namely to Giancarlo Di Carlo and his notion of historic city, as well as the vision of the city as an architectonic *artefact* developed by Aldo Rossi in *Architettura della Città* (1966). Other influences included the work produced by Carlo Aymonino on morphology, and Giorgio Grassi's contribution in the constitution of an urban science.

Territorial approach

After the long interruption imposed by the political protests of 1968, the sector reopened its official activity in 1975 with the *Convegnio internazionale sulla nuova*

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[4] It was Aaron Levy who first suggested that the three events form a unity (2014:94).

[5] Organized by Julius Posener and staged in Cà Pesaro.

[6] Curated by Silvia Danesi e Luciano Patetta, at the San Lorenzo Church.

Biennale, synchronic with the presentation of two exhibitions: *Proposte per il Mulino Stucky; and Le Macchine Celibi.*

Proposte per il Mulino Stucky was inaugurated at the Magazzini del Sale (Zattere), on the 15th September of 1975. The event launched an international competition among artists and architects for the restructuration of the old industrial structure Mulino Stucky, situated at the Giudecca's island. [7] Thirty important artists from several countries had enthusiastically accepted the invitation to "transform the problem", mentioned Rykwert. It was an "act of faith in the ability of the artist to mediate between the builder, the planner, and the dweller, the user and also between the city fabric and the city movement, its life".[8] The main idea for organizing a competition of projects for Mulino Stucky, Gregotty explained, started from both the evident crisis of the Biennale and from the reading of the first Quadrennial Plan, which turned the spotlight on "all those systems that somehow deal with problems within the confines of the subject areas or between different disciplines". Mulino Stucky was a "pretext" — in Gregotti's words —, since the discourse produced and the process of experimentation carried out could be not only transversal among the disciplinary sectors, but also used in other places of the city and in other problematic urban conditions. [9]

The question was not placed on mere aspects of "re-functionalization and reutilization of an artefact". Rather, it wanted to start a moment of collective creativity, in which it could be possible to emphasize both: a consideration on the image and function of the city, its history, and its present situation, under diverse viewpoints; and the promotion of public debate between the Biennale and the community.[10] Aaron

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[7] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 300. Manifestazione aperta sul tema: 'Venezia e il Mulino Stucky.

[8] Rykwert, Joseph.1975. *Proposte per il Mulino Stucky*. Ed. Vittorio Gregotti. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, p. 19 (quoted in Levy 2014: 93).

[9] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, reg.9, "La Biennale di Venezia. Riunioni del Consiglio Direttivo" (dal 10 gennario a 3 maggio 1975)", XVII Riunione del Consiglio Direttivo, 28 Febbraio 1975, p.54

[10] Cf. La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Fascicolo lettera critici (31/8/1975 - 26/10/1975), busta 21, In Risposta alla lettera aperta di critici e artisti del 31/8/1975.

Levy argues that this exhibition "represents a formative moment in the development of the Architecture Biennale. It represents an incipient model of social engagement that acknowledges the complex interdependence of art and architecture in an urban context"[11].

However, this strategy was totally misunderstood. On 31 August 1975, before the inauguration of the exhibition, an open letter against the program that Gregotti had defined for the 1975 and 1976 artistic sector was published, signed by a group of forty-five artists, critics, and art historians[12]. They argued that the Biennale's democratic values, its intentions of critical requalification and its refusal towards mercantile tendencies had been neglected. "Disorientation" was the term used by the signatories of the open letter to define the set of activities proposed by the sector: "The Biennale shouldn't become the official stage of convene dominated by avant-garde terrorism. [...] Rather, it should include the collaboration of the artists and critics, i.e. the experts — now practically excluded — since art, as well as literature, science and other human activities, encompasses [...] specialization".[13]

These critical comments were mainly focused on the other exhibition, *Le Macchine Celibi*, by Swiss curator Harald Szeemann, an itinerant exhibition first presented on the 1st of July at the Kunsthalle Bern. The open letter mentioned the "second hand" character of the exhibition, as well as the foreigner participation in the Biennale.[14] In

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[11] Levy, Aaron. 2014. Mulino Stucky and after. *Archithese* 5 (Oct.).

[12] In the sequence of this letter, Ripa di Meana invited the forty-five signatories of the letter for a meeting: "Il Consiglio Direttivo della Biennale ha preso atto, con molta considerazione della lettera aperta, e si é riservato di discutere criticamente le affermazioni al di là del loro aspetto polemico, e soprattutto di valutarne le proposte nell'ambito della impostazione dei programmi per il 1976". La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Fascicolo lettera critici (31/8/1975 - 26/10/1975), busta 21, "Ripa di Meana invita ad un incontro i firmatari della lettera aperta sulle arte visive" (Comunicazioni alla stampa 4 Oct. 1975).

[13] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Fascicolo lettera critici (31/8/1975 - 26/10/1975), busta 21, Lettera aperta sulla Biennale di Venezia (31/8/1975).

[14] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Fascicolo lettera critici (30/8/1975 - 26/10/1975), busta 21, In Risposta alla lettera aperta di critici e artisti del 31/8/1975.

any case, Gregotti defended his stance and argued for the unequivocal cultural quality of the exhibition, stating that the unity was given by its projectual intentions: the exhibition was an expressive methodological example of what should be understood as *project* in the field of the Visual Arts and Architecture sector. He insisted on its "pluridisciplinarity" and on the non-fetishist use of art works, which allowed for a plurality of interpretations. Moreover, the investment was not demagogical but deeply political and that international cooperation was taken into account. Gregotti added that the Biennale should not be merely a "meeting point", but it should strive to become a "critical polycentric laboratory" and a clear "producer of culture".[15] Ultimately, it was mainly the methodological approach defined by Gregotti, an architect, that had generated perplexity and generated a violent reaction.

Thematic interpretation

In the sequence of this opposition, Gregotti tried a different approach for exhibiting art and architecture in the following years, assembling a different set of curators, and defining separated events for both areas, although under a common theme. These were *Ambiente, partecipazione, strutture culturali* (Environment, participation, cultural structures), proposed in 1976[16] and *Dalla natura all'arte – dall'arte alla natura* in 1978.

Still striving for internationalization, Gregotti decided to propose two modes of representation for the 1976's event, aiming to confront the Mediterranean and Latin American cultures with the Anglo-Saxon culture. In the Visual Arts "sector"[17], the commission decided to present a *mostra-progetto* focused on the reaproppriation of the environment (urban and natural), which was taken as a creative socio-political phenomenon.

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[15] Cf. La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, Fascicolo lettera critici (31/8/1975 - 26/10/1975), busta 21, In Risposta alla lettera aperta di critici e artisti del 31/8/1975.

[16] The proposal defined by Gregotti was accepted by the Directive Council in the meeting held on 30-31 May 1975.

[17] Even associated in the same sector, Visual Arts field and Architecture field were already identified in the meetings and written proposal as "sectors".

Diversely, in the Architecture "sector", the triptych of exhibitions — *Werkbund 1907. Alleorigini del design*; *Il razionalismo e l'architettura in Italia durante il fascism*; *Europa-America. Centro storico - suburbio* — covered two distinctive avenues of aproach. First, the "connection between history and criticism", closely related with the ideological, methodological and iconological sources of architectural modernism — then defined as a moment of cultural disruption and progress concerning the *beauxartian* tradition. A second line of enquiry was focused on contemporary architecture, opening an important moment of international discussion, under a comparative perspective between European and American distinctive approaches.[18]

In this second line, the exhibition *Europa-America. Centro storico – suburbia* was a very relevant moment of discussion. Curated by Franco Raggi and inaugurated on 31 July 1976, at the Magazzini del Sale in Zattere. Gregotti, this moment joined together some of the most influents architects of the period. The European architects Carlo Aymonino, Aldo Rossi, Giancarlo de Carlo, James Stirling, Oswald M. Ungers, Alison and Peter Smithson, Aldo Van Eyck, AUA (Atelier d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture), Herman Hertzberg, Hans Hollein, Lucien Kroll, MBM (Martorell/Bohigas/Mackay), Álvaro Siza Vieira, Taller de Arquitectura. From the North American side, Peter Eisenman was responsible for gathering the set of participants, among these: Raimund Abraham, Emilio Ambasz, John Hedjuk, Craig Eduard Hodgetts, Richard Meier, Charles Moore, Cesar Pelli, Robert Stern, Stanley Tigerman, Robert Venturi, John Rauch and Denise Scott Brown. The exhibition was accompanied by a vibrant and violent debate under the title "Quale movimento moderno" (What modern movement), which can be understood as a key moment that anticipated and prepared the postmodernist conceptions exhibited four years later at *The Presence of the Past.*[19]

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[18] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, settore Arti Visive e Architettura, busta 21, *Relazione sulle proposte di programa 1976.*

[19] For a deeper reflection on this exhibition see Szacka, Léa-Catherine. *Debates on Display at the 1976 Venice Biennale* (on-line access:
https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/278689/Szacka_Place_and_displacem

4.2 First Representation of Architecture at the Venice Biennale

Paolo Portoghesi and Maurizio Scaparro inaugurated on 11 November 1979 the activity of the new sectors of Architecture and Theatre with a common project, "Teatro del Mondo". Designed by Aldo Rossi for the exhibition *Venezia e lo spazio scenico,* [20] it was a "homage" to the city. This ephemeral work emphasized the "scenic vocation" of Venice and its tendency for self-representation and amplification "through the richness and magic of the stage, its own presence and its own political, artistic and civic role".[21] The "venetian theatre" — as termed by Rossi[22] — was a floating construction structured in iron and covered with wood, attached to the Punta della Dogana and defined to be a moving body in the waters between the Giudecca and the Grand Canal.

A few months later, under the title *La Presenza del Passato* (The Presence of the Past), the first "Mostra Internazionale d'Architecttura di Venezia", [23] was held between 27 July and 19 October 1980, coinciding with the "highly symbolical" celebrations of Palladio in Venice City. The central axis of the exhibition was "Strada Novissima", a scenic mechanism installed in the monumental Corderie dell'Arsenale and constituted by twenty real-scale façades. The "Strada Novissima" attempted to redefine the relation between architecture and history, as well as to allow the communication with

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ent.pdf?sequence=3). See also Rispoli, Ernesto. 2012. *Ponti sull'Atlantico. L'Intitute for Architecture and Urban Studies a le relazioni Italia-America* (1967-1985). Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 11-38.

[20] The exhibition was curated by Giancarlo Leoncilli and held in Palazzo Grassi from 6 October to 4 November 1979. It was structured in three distinct nucleos: "La città palcoscenico e la scena fissa"; "La mostra del ptere o il regista politico"; "Personaggio folla la scena del desiderio."

[21] Portoghesi, Paolo; Scaparro, Maurizio. [1979]. "Venezia Teatro del Mondo". ASAC busta 4093. See also Portoghesi, Paolo and Maurizio Scaparro. 1980. *Venezia e lo spazio scenico exhibition catalogue*. Venice Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia.

[22] Rossi, Aldo. Le 'Théâtre du Monde', Venice. *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'Hui* 207 (Fevrier 1980): 72.

[23] For the analysis of the exhibition *The Presence of the Past* see Lea-Catherine Szacka. 2016. *Exhibiting the Postmodern. The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale*. Venice: Marsilio.

the public in general. Connected by notions such as "plurality", "history", "communication", this scenic mechanism was built by the Cinecittà technicians under the orientation of Claudio D'Amato and Francesco Cellini. An advisory board[24] was created for the preparation of the exhibition, whose work was accompanied by a committee of critics constituted by Charles Jencks, Christian Norberg-Schulz and Vincent Scully. Kenneth Frampton had declined the invitation for this committee in April 1980.[25] "Strada Novissima" involved the participation of twenty architects[26] coming from several and very disparate discourses, such as the "realists" Robert Venturi, Robert Stern and Charles Moore or the "rationalists" Leon Krier and Aldo Rossi (Szacka 2016).

This double event was an important moment of relation with the city of Venice and with the notion of *memory*, as well. The "Teatro del Mondo" started from Portoghesi's general idea of linking the activity of the sector with the history of Venice. The theatre evoked *memory*, recovering the Venetian Renaissance tradition, but mainly, a *memory* opened beyond the limits of "any modernist orthodoxy".[27] The theatre suggested the "revaluation" of the place as a cultural environment, the "reinvention" of the city, the "reintegration" of the ephemeral within the Venetian imaginary in a "world that no longer recognizes centrality and hierarchy [...] and that accepts the

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[24] Constituted by Costantino Dardi, Giuseppe Mazzariol, Robert Stern, Rosario Giuffré, and Udo Kultermann.

[25] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, serie Architettura, busta 632, Letter signed by Kenneth Frampton, 25 April 1980.

[26] Costantino Dardi; Rem Koolhaas e Elia Zenghelis; Michael Graves; Paolo Portoghesi, Francesco Cellini e Claudio D'Amato; Ricardo Bofill; Frank O. Gehry; Charles Moore; Oswald Mathias Ungers; Robert A. M. Stern; Robert Venturi, John Rauch e Denise Scott-Brown; Leon Krier; Franco Purini e Laura Thermes; Stanley Tigerman; Joseph-Paul Kleihues; Studio GRAU; Hans Hollein; Thomas Gordon Smith; Massimo Scolari; Arata Isozaki; Allan Greenberg.

[27] Portoghesi, Paolo. 1979. Il Teatro del Mondo. *Controspazio* 5/6, p. 120

difficult condition of surviving in tolerance and plurality".[28] Rossi himself explained, however, the notion of memory in different terms:

> *Anthony Vidler has given me a copy of Frances Yates's Theatre of the World with a beautiful dedication: "For A., from the theater of memory to the theater of science." Certainly, the Little Scientific Theater was the theater of memory, but memory in the sense of repetition: this was its magic. The Venetian theater is of course closer to the theater at Padua and to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre (and the "Globe" was in fact literally the "Theater of the World" as, going back to the Venetian tradition, this project of mine has been called the teatro del mondo).* [29]

What Rossi seems to be suggesting is that *memory* here is not a mere quotation of images. The contamination of elements and references in the project — from the lighthouses of New England to the Anatomical Theatre in Padua (1594) — are "analogies to the place in which a project is inscribed", which are of decisive importance and when "just well deciphered, they constitute already the project".[30] In this way, the "theatre of memory" — as Tafuri entitled it[31]—, was projected in the opposite direction of the use of historical elements in "Strada Novissima", as we shall see later.

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[28] "[…] in un mondo che non riconosce più contralità e gerarchia e accetta la difficile condizione […] di cercare la soppravivenza nella tolleranza e nella pluralità." Portoghesi, Paolo and Maurizio Scaparro. [1979]. Venezia Teatro del Mondo. La Biennale di Venezia. ASAC. Architettura. Busta 4093, Settore Architettura, Settore Teatro.

[29] Rossi, Aldo. 1981. *A Scientific Autobiographie* (Postscript by Vincent Scully, translation by Lawrence Venuti). London: MIT Press, p. 68.

[30] "Ces analogies au lieu dans lequel doit s'inscrire un projet ont pour moi une importance decisive et lorsqu'elles sont bien déchiffrées, elles constituent déjà le projet." Rossi, Aldo. Le 'Théâtre du Monde', Venice. *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'Hui* 207 (Fevrier 1980): 72.

[31] Tafuri, Manfredo, The Theater of Memory. *Skyline* (October 1979): 7.

"Teatro del Mondo", image published by Aldo Rossi in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (February 1980)

4.2.1 Between Experimentation and Self-reflection

"Teatro del Mondo" and "Strada Novissima" were both ephemeral structures that presented architecture through real-scale original works. By extending the mechanisms of representation beyond the traditional limits, these unrepeatable displays shifted the relation of the exhibition's scale and formed a powerful hallmark of the Venice Architecture Biennale, instantly remembered over time.

"I think it is impossible to make an architecture exhibition without constructing a great image" Rossi stated. Indeed, based on his experience at the Milan Triennale[32] and the Biennale, he had some doubts about the possibility of architecture to be exhibited: "all architecture exhibitions are obsolete and useless. Unless we have a particular type of architects, as Ridolfi, that engage in painting, scenography, and then it is perhaps possible to do such a construction".[33] In Rossi's conception an exhibition of architecture should be considered a privileged moment for experimentation, "because this enables us to do a kind of research without which it would be impossible to experiment".[34] In the meeting *Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*, in 1994, Rossi argued that experimentation was a privileged moment to interdisciplinary collaboration:

When I was invited here it came to my mind as how, in the Biennale, the Teatro del Mondo was not a personal achievement of architecture, but rather a very successful collaboration. I must say that the staff of the various sectors of the Biennale had collaborated in a truly incredible way for this building and that the theatre is mine, is of Portoghesi, is of Scaparro, and of who was able to organise some great performance. Then I saw in the future [of the Biennale] *the possibility of making not*

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[32] Aldo Rossi was the curator of the exhibition Architettura-Città in the15th International Exhibition of Milan Triennale, held from 20 September to 20 November 1973.

[33] Rossi, Aldo. 1995. "Giornata di studio sull'Architettura". *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: la Biennale di Venezia, p. 105.

[34] Rossi, Aldo. 1977. Introduzioni. *Architettura Razionale*. Ed. Ezio Bonfanti et al. Milan: Franco Angeli, p.20.

to say a "total work of art", but I think that a certain cooperation between arts such as music, architecture and scenography with blurred boundaries, and the theatre, for example, can create something that can actually be only Venetian".[35]

To sum up, this fluctuant ephemeral construction had motivated several other projects that would remain in the collective imaginary as the "strongest memory" and the very expressive interpretation of Biennale's aspiration.[36] Indeed, the identification with the city, the experimental interdisciplinary approach, the communication with the public, the disciplinary research, and the international scope were all present in the structure that Rossi designed.

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[35] "Quando mi hanno invitato qui mi è venuto in mente come la Biennaie del Teatro del Mondo non sia stata un successo personale di quell'architettura o di quell'idea ma anche un grande successo di collaborazione. Devo dire che il personale dei vari uffici della Biennaie ha collaborate in modo veramente incredibile a questa costruzione e il teatro è sia mio, sia di Portoghesi, sia di Scaparro, che ha saputo organizzare delle ottime rappresentazioni. Allora io vedo nel futuro questa possibilita non dico dell'"opera d'arte totale", ma ritengo che una certa collaborazione fra determinate arti come la musica, l'architettura e la scenografia con i labili confini che possiedono, e il teatro, ad esempio, possa dar vita a qualcosa che può essere effettivamente solo veneziano. Nella storia, nella struttura stessa delia città questa combinazione teatrale, che poi comporta e coinvolge la musica e il teatro, è secondo me molto importante. Anche perché, in fondo, la Biennaie è stata famosa ed è famosa per il cinema: uno viene alia Biennaie per il cinema, per le stelle che vengono al cinema, per tutto questo spettacolo che solo in questa città può raggiungere il suo culmine. Allora 1'unione delle altre arti, partecipando a una forma spettacolare della città stessa, io credo possa dare qualcosa di nuovo. Questi sono i pensieri che nascono dalla mia esperienza delia Biennaie, che non é poi molto diversa dalle esperienze di altre mostre. Alia Triennale milanese, stessa noia, incapacita di soluzione, se non quando si è cercato di creare un'opera che effettivamente rappresentava la città". (translation my own) Rossi, Aldo. 1995. "Giornata di studio sull'Architettura". *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: la Biennale di Venezia, p. 105.

[36] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, "Verbale originale. Consiglio Direttivo. Riunioni del 17/18 November 1979", busta 16, XIII Riunione del Consiglio Direttivo. 17-18 November 1979, pp. 21-28.

But these principles were put under scrutiny, or, in Rossi's words, "under hot controversy".[37] In the 13th meeting of Directive Council,[38] the advisor Maurizio Trevisan reminded that the "Teatro del Mondo" was under the Council's careful examination since the beginning. The building was a very expensive investment advocated by Portoghesi and Scaparro as a part of the material heritage of the Biennale that could be reused in future events. The construction, budgeted at 50 million *lire* was at the end extraordinarily more expensive (135 million *lire*), raising polemic for the institution. Portoghesi justified this gap with the lack of a specialised technical staff, as well as the progressive rise of market costs. The main cost was related to the experimental nature of the proposal, which had never been tried before in the architecture field.

The discussion oscillated between two different notions of value: the financial issues related with the costs of maintenance or dismantling of the structure after the exhibition; and the cultural and disciplinary value of the floating theatre. Beyond the financial matters, which were seriously discussed, several advisors reinforced the idea that this was undoubtedly an initiative with great impact that had given visibility to the Biennale at an international scale. Some members of the advisory board called attention to the symbolic capital acquired by the Biennale with "Teatro del Mondo", which coincided with a period when Aldo Rossi was being distinguished in New York.[39] This project had generated a great debate in strong articulation with the Biennial's program, and was extensively covered by Italian and international

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[37] Rossi, Aldo. 1995. "Giornata di studio sull'Architettura". *Sei Giornate di Studio a Venezia. Quale Biennale dopo 100 anni? Identità, Prospecttive, Riforma*. Venice: la Biennale di Venezia, p. 105

[38] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, "Verbale originale. Consiglio Direttivo. Riunioni del 17/18 November 1979", busta 16, XIII Riunione del Consiglio Direttivo. 17-18 November 1979

[39] Probably referring the exhibition *Aldo Rossi. An exhibition of drawings*, held at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, inaugurated on 25 March 1976.

architectural critic.[40] The work of Aldo Rossi in general, but this project in particular, was in fact a focus of great attention in the architectural press,[41] having great influence in the European and North-American debate.

"Teatro del Mondo" was a moment of disciplinary self-reflection in architecture that synthetized several of Aldo Rossi's theoretical conceptions. Among them, we should include the conviction of architectural autonomy; the identification between architecture and city; and the idea of *urban artefact* — developed in *the L'Architettura della Città* (1966). But we should not forget the indefinable *analogous city*, which constructed a representation that "can only be visual and architectural" (Stoppani 2012: 90). This project embodies the singularity of the urban artefact that resides precisely, as Rossi explained, in "the succession of events that unfolds around it, and the minds of its signs; but also in the place that determines it — both in a physical sense and above all in the sense of the choice of this place and the indivisible unity that is established between it and the work".[42]

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[40] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, "Verbale originale. Consiglio Direttivo. Riunioni del 17/18 November 1979", busta 16, XIII Riunione del Consiglio Direttivo. 17-18 November 1979, pp. 21-28.

[41] Among others: Dal Co, Francesco. 1979. Ora questo è perduto. Il Teatro del Mondo di Aldo Rossi alla Biennale di Venezia. *Lotus* 25: 66-74; Tafuri, Manfredo. 1979. The Theatre of Memory. *Skyline* (October): 7; Tafuri, Manfredo, 1980. L'éphémère est eternal. Aldo Rossi a Venezia. *Domus* 602 (January): 7-11; Agrest, Diana. 1979. The Architecture of the City: an interview with Aldo Rossi. *Skyline* (September): 4-5; Libeskind, Daniel. 1980. Deus ex Machina / Machina ex Deo. Aldo Rossi's Theater of the World. *Oppositions* 21 (summer): 3-23. *Oppositions* Manfredo Tafuri and Rafael Moneo had already published articles in which Rossi's work was analysed. Tafuri, Manfredo. 1974. L'architecture dans le boudoir. *Oppositions* 3 (May); Moneo, Rafael. 1976. Aldo Rossi: the idea of architecture and the Modena Cemetery. *Oppositions* 5 (summer): 2-30.

[42] Rossi, Aldo. [1966] 1988. *The Architecture of the City* (trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman). Cambridge: MIT Press, p.113.

"Strada Novissima", brochure materials, *The Presence of the Past*, 1980

[La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, FS, *busta* 632]

4.2.2 Exhibition as Mechanism of Critical Mediation

There were some convergences and divergences between Rossi and Portoghesi's conception on architectural exhibitions. They complement each other as they provide competing perspectives. Like many other architects who participated in *The Presence of the Past,* Portoghesi was focused on the notion of exhibition as a "space for debate".[43] Besides, the proposition of exhibiting façades in "Strada Novissima" had the intention to easily communicate with the common public, performing a "kind of 'Exclamation'". Furthermore, ephemeral architecture allowed the gradual introduction of new architectural approaches "into old cities, with viable cultural significance". [44]

This had important repercussions for the idea of architectural representation at the Biennale. Without doubt*, The Presence of the Past* — whose title "intentionally avoided the term 'Post-Modern"[45] — was subject of a "lively and impassioned debate"[46] around the postmodernist conceptions, which had a real impact on architecture critical discourse and culture. The exhibition was broadly discussed in the public sphere and the reactions were immediately felt in both the periodical specialised press and in the newspapers.[47] In Italy, the architecture magazine

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[43] Venice Biennale: Discussion. Charles Jencks, Paolo Portoghesi, Michael Graves. Eugene Kupper, Fernando Montes *et al.* 1982. *Architectural Design*, Charles Jencks (Ed.), "Free-Style Classicism" 52 (1/2):9.

[44] Idem*.*

[45] Portoghesi, Paolo, 1982. AD Interview by Antonio de Bonis: Aldo Rossi and Paolo Portoghesi. *Architectural Design*. "Free-Style Classicism" 52 (1/2): 13.

[46] Portoghesi, Paolo. 1980. Il riemergere degli archetipi. *Controspazio* (12):1.

[47] For example: Chessa, Pasquale. 1980. Coloquio com Paolo Portoghesi, A Venezia in via del post-modernismo. *L'Europeo* (22 July); Gregotti, Vittorio. 1980. I vecchietti delle colonne. *La Republica* (30 July); Portoghesi, Paolo. 1980. Dietro la facciata. *La Repubblica* (1 August); Bonuomo, Michele. 1980. Scusi architetto, mi disegna una polemica? *Il Mattino* (3 August); Cirio, Rita. 1980. Facciatisti e fasciatoti, Dibattito fra Paolo Portoghesi e Bruno Zevi. *L'Espresso* (17 August); Fusco, Renato de. 1980. Un termine da precisare. *Il Messagero* (1 September); Appela, Giuseppe. 1980. La Biennale di Venezia. Una strada (e una facciata) per la storia. *L'Osservatore Romano* (4 September); Fusco, Renato de. 1980. Fu un grande Eclettico, non un Maestro. *Il Messaggero* (2 October); D'Amato, Claudio. 1980. Discussione/

Controspazio, edited by Portoghesi, organised a special issue devoted to *The Presence of the Past*,[48] while at the same moment *Casabella* — followed by many other magazines — published an answer to the provocative postmodern formulations with a dossier entitled "Il dibattito sul Movimento Moderno".[49] The issue included texts by Tomas Maldonado, Alan Colquhoun, Jean-Louis Cohen, Jacques Gubler and Manfredo Tafuri, among others. The overall aim was to scrutiny the "projetto moderno", echoing Jüngen Habermas' "Modernity — An Incomplete Project".[50] Maldonado opened the dossier in the following terms:

Let's face it: the real goal is the "modern" project, i.e. the modern condition as a project. And if that is the plan, and I am persuaded that it is, the issue goes deep behind the current debate on the stylistic features of the buildings. In fact, if we want to start a rigorous discourse, we must necessarily address the issue of modernity in all its implications, especially in those that concern the modernity as a project of development of the productive forces, as a very innovative project social and cultural structure. [51]

Chi ha paura del post-moderno in architetture? Ripensando la strada e la storia. *Il Messaggero* (27 October).

[48] La Presenza del Passato – Numero speciale dedicato alla I Mostra Internazionale di Architettura della Biennale di Venezia. 1980. *Controspazio* (12):1-6.

[49] Maldonado, Tomas (Ed.). 1980. Il dibattito sul Movimento Moderno. *Casabella* 54 (463/464). See also Gregotti, Vittorio. 1982. An open letter to Leon Krier regarding the Venice Biennale. *Architectural Design.* Charles Jencks (Ed.), "Free- Style Classicism", 52 (1/2): 24.

[50] This very well-known discourse was pronounced when Habermas was awarded with the prize Theodor W. Adorno, in Frankfurt, in September 1980.

[51] "Diciamolo pure: il vero traguardo è il "progetto moderno", cioè la condizione moderna come progetto. E se questo è il disegno, e io sono persuaso che lo sia, il tema va al dirà del presente dibattito sulle fattezze stilistiche dei palazzi. Infatti, se vogliamo aviare un discorso rigoroso, dobbiamo necessariamente affrontare il tema della modernità in tutte le sue implicazioni, anche in quelle, e soprattutto in quelle, che riguardano la modernità come progetto di sviluppo delle forze produttive, come progetto decisamente innovativo del Passetto sociale e culturale". Maldonado, Tomas. 1980. Il Movimento Moderno e la

In this debate, the magazine *Architectural Design* was instrumental for disseminating the contents and ideological assumptions that stem from the *Presence of the Past*. In the editorial article "Presents of the past: revisiting the 1980 Venice Biennale" Charles Jencks — directly involved in the exhibition as we shall see later — redefined the position of this display within a genealogy of exhibitions that strongly influenced the history of architecture*. The Presence of the Past* was here evaluated as a landmark, which had, "historically speaking, exerted considerable influence on architectural development", because it promoted a "distinct ideology".[52] The magazine also welcomed more antagonistic points of view by inviting also figures that had been very critical with the "Strada Novissima" proposal, such as Manfredo Tafuri, Vittorio Gregotti, Bruno Zevi and Kenneth Frampton.

As Udo Kultermann reiterated in an article published in 1981 in *Architecture + Urbanism,* the Venice Biennale was "the beginning of a long-range and complex program dedicated to the improvement of architectural concepts and architectural realities as we define and realize them today. In order to make this program successful there will have to be critical debates as well as a dialectic atmosphere of controversy and stimulation, all fundamental for the continuation of tradition" (Kultermann 1981: 15).

4.2.3 Venice Architecture Biennale as a canon-making engine

From this moment onwards, as predicted by Kultermann, the Venice Architecture Biennale has defined a "tradition" on architectural representation. Twelve other International Architectural Exhibitions have been keeping the rhythm of debate and stimulating the field of experimentation, namely: *Architecture in Islamic countries* in 1982, curated by Paolo Portoghesi; *Progetto Venezia* in 1985 and *Hendrik Petrus*

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questione 'post'. *Casabella*, "Il dibattito sul Movimento Moderno", Maldonado, Tomas (Ed.) 54 (463/464): 10.

[52] Presents of the past: revisiting the 1980 Venice Biennale. 1982. *Architectural Design*, Charles Jencks (Ed.), "Free-Style Classicism" 52 (1/2):9.

Berlage. Disegni in 1986 curated by Aldo Rossi; *5th International Architecture Exhibition* organized by Francesco Dal Co in 1991; *Sensing the future. Architect as Seismograph* by Hans Hollein in 1996; *Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* by Massimiliano Fuksas in 2000; Deyan Sudjic curated *Next* in 2002; *Metamorph* organized in 2004 by Kurt W. Forster; *Cities. Architecture and Society* by Richard Burdett in 2006; *Out There: Architecture Beyond Building* by Aaron Betsky in 2008; *People Meet in Architecture* by Kazuyo Sejima in 2010; and *Common Ground* curated by David Chipperfield in 2012.

Starting with the rupture with the artistic sector in 1979 and gathering dynamism throughout the 1990s and beyond, architecture has taken cyclically different facets and expressions at the Venice Biennale. Until 1996, architecture was exhibited through conventional technical drawings, sketches, and photographical documentation, while after the turn of the millennium the resources allowed by the new digital culture, media culture, and computer science changed the paradigms of architectural representation, thereby confirming the vocation of the Biennale as a laboratory of experimentation.

But, it is not only this sense of formal and visual experimentation what makes the relevance of the Biennale in the course of the several large-scale international exhibitions. The Biennale has been working as a kind of canon-making engine. In the place of the academic debate, the Biennale has been playing a central role in architectural contemporary debate. Taken together, the continuous process of correcting directions, consecrating identities and the never-endless replacing of proposals has been a fundamental mechanism of inquiry and criticism on a global scale. The Biennale allowed the displacement of conventional structures of architectural representation and discussion, such as the academy and the architectural press, towards an extensive global network of ideas and architects. In that sense, the methodology that informs the exhibitions does not follow a linear process of knowledge formation. They have been changing the experience and rhythms of architectural knowledge culture.

5. The Venice Biennale Culture

This thesis argues that the entry of architecture in the Venice Biennale is coincident with the crisis of the conventional places for disciplinary institutionalization. "The schools are no longer the only centres of architectural culture" — Gregotti commented in 1982 — "it now takes place in different places and this probably will stimulate the schools themselves to compete at the level of production of ideas".[1]

The *Biennale culture* replaced, in some ways, the conventional sites for knowledge construction, interaction, and communication, becoming a crucial instrument for discursive mediation and for the production of disciplinary and interdisciplinary conventions — in other words, for the construction of a knowledge culture.

The discursive biennial signals a migration of the prerogative of knowledge production through art from the museum and the academy to the biennial. […] It is a process that involves theory, practice, and the inevitable gap between them. Therefore, it seems possible that this is an historical moment that, like the interrogation of the museum two decades ago, is not a result of exhaustion or of a fashionable claim for "turns" over other forms of curatorial or artistic engagement. Instead, it represents a real need to start to differentiate and designate how knowledge is now produced and reproduced in this expanding form in ways that are significantly distinct from the traditional modes. […] *If Venice Biennale is able to shape "alternative experience," it is thus a powerful vehicle for the introduction of new knowledge* (Ferguson; Hoesberg 2010: 366).

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[1] Gregotti, Vittorio. 1982. A Task. *Casabella* (485): 13.

5.1 The formation of a Culture of Knowledge at the Venice Biennale

As I noted earlier, it is important to look at the Venice Biennale as a cultural formation, asking how it relates with other aspects of disciplinary culture. *Culture*, adopting Ann Swidler's sociological approach, is similar to a "tool kit" that provides resources for constructing organized strategies of action, which can be integrated in quite different perspectives. Thus, an essential task for our inquiry on the Biennale culture is — borrowing Swidler — to understand: how the cultural resources available by the Biennale, created in a specific historical and spatial context, are able to be re-appropriated over time when discursive and conceptual circumstances change? (Swidler 1986).

Considering the proposition that culture impacts action, not by delivering fixed values in order to determinate or control this action, but by defining a repertoire from which people construct their strategies, the Biennale can be observed as comprising a culture — i.e a set of practices, stories, rituals and perspectives — that architects can apply in different moments and under diverse discursive tendencies to solve practical, conceptual and professional problems. Moreover, there is not a model of a unified, systematic, and coherent cultural system. In this perspective, real institutions such as the Biennale contain multiple practices and conceptions, "which actors draw upon in different ways in order to craft their own, context-specific guides to action" (Swidler 1986: 277).

5.1.1 Defining *Culture*

In accordance, the short hand expression "Biennale culture" is taken here not just to express the contemporary impulse to consider art, as well as architecture, as experience (Jones 2010: 69), strongly associated with the phenomenon of *biennialization*. Neither it is to emphasize the Biennale's relevance as the genesis of the large-scale international exhibition format — which implies less its periodicity than its complex specificity. *Culture* here is mainly understood as one of the key principles that define the institution since 1973 and a process of meaning-making involving

discourses, values, codes and practices (Smith, 2000) in the particular context of the Venice Biennale. In this sense, in connecting the Biennale with the notion of culture, I am suggesting that the Venice Biennale is a real institution in architecture knowledge construction, able to produce conventions, practices and values that influence, promote, and distribute disciplinary knowledge in a wider scope — geographical and conceptual.

The Biennale culture allows the development of shared knowledge, while supporting the work of architects, critics and curators also develop and renew continually that knowledge. Furthermore, the coexistence of permanent and transitory protagonists, and its double temporary character are extremely important circumstances for the construction of a knowledge culture, which comprises not only the "facts of the matter" but also the assumption that those "facts" obtained the "status of truth and passed the test of epistemological accountability and credibility" (Somers 1999: 124). Such knowledge culture operates mainly to provide material for disciplinary interaction and professional conversation.

Each unrepeated event generated transitory networks of curators, architects, experts and authors, which cyclically reformulate the debate within a web of connections, but in articulation (or sometimes challenge) with another web of permanent social, institutional and territorial interactions. As we shall see through the graphical representations presented in Chapter 6, pertaining to the period 1980-2012, we can clearly note the huge density of actors' relationships included within the Venice Architecture Biennale corpus. But they also show a permanent institutional network[2], clearly distinct from the transitory networks of curators and organisers.[3]

The two networks of permanent (Diagram-5) and transitory agents (Diagram-1), further analysed, should be read together. Even though their constellations are not coincident, they form the two fundamental layers that, when juxtaposed, are able to construct a knowledge culture in architecture today. As we can confirm, the transitory networks of the curatorial teams are connected within groups centred on the chief

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[2] See Diagram-5_Institutional Actors (1980-2012) p. 164.

[3] See Diagram-1_Curators and Curatorial Team (1980-2012), p.150.

curator, sometimes totally isolated from the other curatorial groups or only connected by one or two actors. This means that there is a strong ability for generate "novelty" and to "resonate" new discursive tendencies, which are legitimised through the "cultural capital" given by the symbolical status of the Venice Biennale.[4]

The notion of *cultural capital* — i.e. the competences, skills and objective knowledge that provide cultural authority to a group for defining what is acceptable or valued and what is not — is a key operative concept used in the present case. The "cultural capital" conferred through the Venice Biennale came, thus, from its own institutional "tradition" which rested on two apparent contradictions. On the one hand, a discontinuity provoked by the transitory approaches and plurality of discursive strategies; on the other, a continuity of principles, rules and conventions made possible by the stable constellation of institutional actors, all interconnected in a singular body.

5.1.2 Value and Memory

There could not be a better comment than the following statement made by Alloway in 1968's, regarding the issue of the value that distinguished the biennial format from other kind of institutions in which art and architecture are also displayed, legitimised, and celebrated.

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[4] Also, Rafal Niemojewski mentioned that: "the biennial thus function as a generator of symbolic capital" (Niemojewski 2010: 90). In the light of the above it is, important to consider Bourdieu's theory on cultural production — developed in works like *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) and *The Rules of Art* (1996) —, exploring the concepts *habitus* and *cultural capital* to complement our theoretical approach to the research. In fact, in Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, in which the relationship between objective structures and the subjective experience are theorized, the idea of *habitus* provides valuable insights about the motivations of different groups within the web of transitory and/or stable relations. However, we should take into consideration that this approach is commonly criticized for given too much weight to the structure of reproduction in detriment of the contingence of agency.

> *They [biennials] are dependent, of course, on the mobility of works of art, as they are taken from original sites and permanent repositories with a freedom equal to that with which a critic selects photographs for reproduction. In this respect, a recurring exhibition like the Biennale is more like the drive-in movie theatre than the museum from which some of its exhibits may be borrowed. It is originals that are being spun around the world, and so to speak, inserted, into a core of permanent services at the exhibition ground. The particular relation of scale and facture, experienced only in the presence of the original works of art, is preserved, but in contexts that can change as fast as conversation. These contextual shifts have meant that works of art acquire additional comparative meanings as their company changes. The theoretical absoluteness of art has been modified by the mobility of art in successive man-made environments.* (Alloway 1968: 39)

While museums, until very recently, acted to reinforce culture (Ferguson 2009: 366), being commonly considered places for "authoritative pronouncements, classification, canonization and preservation" (Filipovic; Van Hal; Øvstebø 2010: 13), the *biennales* are considered "artificial environments" (Alloway 1968: 39) frequently associated with experimentation, risk and enquiry.

In fact, the museum has been an established and symbolically dense institution, based on the collection principle and, therefore, grounded on the condition of selection, as such defining what should and should not be included in the values' framework. "Always in flux" (Hlavajova 2010: 296), the *biennial* system, on the contrary, is essentially an "unstable institution" when compared with museums' fixed structure: "the configuration of interests at the core of institutions like biennials clearly differs from that which gave rise to the institutional circuit traditionally linked to modernity (museums, art criticism, and galleries)" (Basualdo 2010:131).

If *biennials* became one of the major "cultural forms of a new mediatic urban structure", they must be considered a new mechanism of "social memory" and should be revaluated as places for cultural mediation and restructuration (Blom 2010: 26). Without a doubt, *memory* is a concept "that makes the biennale a place in which time

and different types of narratives meet." Hence, it can be argued that biennales are "places of memory" that comprise both concrete spaces (monuments, archives, museums, people) and abstract or intellectual places (institutions, symbols, events) (Martini 2011: 103). The Biennale "looks beyond the present and into the future", as the curator Rosa Martínez[5] suggested by dissociating the notion of *biennial* with that one of museum: "Museums are temples for the preservation of memory. [...] Biennials are a context for the exploration and questioning [...] of the present". [6]

5.1.3 Difference and Repetition

Here we may recall Jones's interpretation about *biennial*'s "repetition and difference" ambiguity (Jones 2010: 71). Echoing the last comment quoted and evoking in an elaborate way the Deleuzean "philosophy of difference", she asserts that biennials are "future-oriented" projects (Jones 2010: 73). Indeed, "to repeat is to behave in a certain manner", argued Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), "but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration, which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. This is the apparent paradox of festivals: they repeat an 'unrepeatable'. They do not add a second and a third time to the first but carry the first time to the 'nth' power. With respect to this power, repetition interiorizes and thereby reverses itself [...]".[7]

The Venice Biennale plays on such significant paradox. The difference of each singular unrepeatable bi-annual event undermined the idea of continuity and ended up by defining its history as a successive addition of isolated curatorial projects.[8] While the

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[5] Rosa Martínez was director of the Art sector of Venice Biennale in 2005.

[6] In Thea, Carole. 2001. *Foci: Interviews with 10 International Curators*. New York: Apex Art curatorial program, Apex Art. (Quoted by Jones 2010: 72).

[7] Deleuze, Gilles. 1994 [1968]. Difference and Repetition. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 1.

[8] Maria Hlavajova suggests that "the identity of the biennial must necessarily be unstable, always in flux, and difficult to articulate in terms of continuity or as something more than just

repetition installed by the Biennale suggests the "illusion of everlastingness" (Basualto 2010: 127), thus assuring its futurity. We can argue that the bi-annual events are subject to a practice of forgetting. Each new exhibition omits the apparatus and representation of the discipline taken in the previous event. As we will see latter, the filtering process made by each new chief curator and curatorial team is grounded on relevance and novelty as crucial values. But, conversely, this ritualization of novelty does not omit the remembrance of past events nor the cyclical "state of the art" of architecture, allowed by the *habitus* that stems from an addition of "past experiences and becomes, reciprocally, a producer of significant future practices" (Fleury 2014a: 41).

The repetition, in these terms, is not a mere routinized process but a significant ritual, in the durkheimian meaning — i.e. a central process that connects the individual to community, fortifying shared fundamental values. Considering the disciplinary discursive fragmentation evidenced in architecture today, the process of repetition became a fundamental mechanism through which architects and architecture could maintain their disciplinary configuration and codes of communication. It became evident that any cultural practice that needs to be carried out repeatedly will tend to develop a set of conventions, which allow the maintenance of "schemas of thinking and feeling about the world and acting in it" (Saito 2010:634).

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the sum of its editions over time" (Hlavajova 2010: 296).

3.

DISPLAYING ARCHITECTURE

DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC PERSPECTIVES

Il luogo della mostra

■ Mostra internazionale di Architettura Corderie dell'Arsenale

Linea 2 (Fermata Arsenale)
linea 1 (Fermata Arsenale)

La mostra «L'oggetto banale» è una mostra di design e di architettura. Si basa su alcune considerazioni: il grande numero e la serie implicano il concetto di banale. La moltiplicazione del capolavoro è una utopia intellettuale. Può esistere una teoria dell'autenticamente falso. Si può ipotizzare una metodologia di progettazione che assuma la realtà del gusto medio nell'ambiente contemporaneo ed agisca su di essa per piccole trasformazioni di superficie.

Tra le innocue devianze del Kitsch e la progettazione colta esiste una fascia intermedia, quantitativamente rilevante, che non esprime nè l'utopica estetica proletaria nè quella borghese. È la fascia nella quale si riconosce l'uomo medio, nella quale trionfa l'esaltazione paradossale delle convenzioni, dell'autentico mancato, dove il concetto di buon gusto appare ribaltato in una atmosfera non impegnativa, non drammatica, rilassante. Banale significa la presa di coscienza del quotidiano; piace all'uomo di massa perché è fatto da lui stesso, è un fenomeno di quantità per definizione. Lo stile raggiunto nel progettare la casa banale, la casa come souvenir di se stessa, è cinicamente caotico, esuberante, iconico, impotente e pessimista; ma è anche lo stile non violento della «coscienza infelice». A questo modo la **progettazione banale** e la amoralità stilistica possono essere intese come fenomeni non negativi.

La mostra presenta 30 oggetti quotidiani «trattati», un quadro, un plastico di Architettura Banale, una stanza.

La mostra è stata ideata da Alessandro Mendini, Paola Navone, Daniela Puppa, Franco Raggi, e realizzata dallo Studio Alchymia con la collaborazione delle industrie Abet Laminati, Fontana Arte e Osram.

Il quadro a olio «La città banale» è stato dipinto da Arduino Cantafora.

The exhibition on «The banal object» is an exhibition of design and architecture, based on some considerations: large numbers or series imply the concept of what is banal. The multiplication of the masterpiece is an intellectual utopia. A theory of what autentically false can exist. One can dream up a method of planning that assumes the reality of the average taste in the current environment and acts on it through minor surface changes. An intermediate layer exists between the harmless deviations of Kitsch and cultured design which is remarkable in its quantity and expresses neither the utopic aestheticism of the proletariat nor that of the bourgeois. This is the layer where the average man can be singled out, where we have the triumph of the paradoxical exaltation of what is conventional, of what is unsuccessfully authentic, where the concept of good taste appears overthrown in an atmosphere which is neither taxing nor dramatic, but relaxing. Banal means conscious awareness of everyday things; the man of the masses likes it because he made it: by definition it is a phenomenon of quantity. The style achieved in planning the banal house, the house as a souvenir of itself, is cynically chaotic, exuberant, iconic, impotent and pessimistic; however it is also the non-violent style of the «unhappy conscience». In this way **banal planning** and stylistic amorality can be seen to be non-negative phenomena.

The exhibition presents 30 «treated» everyday objects, a painting, a model of Banal Architecture, a room.

The exhibition was conceived by Alessandro Mendini, Paola Navone, Daniela Puppa, Franco Raggi, and put up by the Alchymia Studio with the cooperation of Abet Laminati, Fontana Arte and Osram. The oil painting of «The banal city»
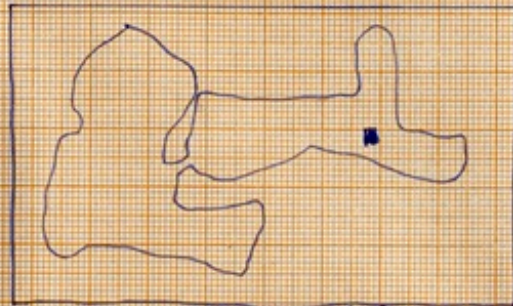
**Direttore del
Settore Architettura**
Paolo Portoghesi

Settore Architettura
Eugenia Fiorin
Paolo Cimarosti

**Commissione consultiva
del Settore Architettura**
Costantino Dardi
Rosario Giuffré
Udo Kultermann
Giuseppe Mazzariol
Robert Stern

La mostra è stata curata dal Direttore del Settore, dalla Commissione e da Charles Jencks Christian Norberg-Schulz Vincent Scully

L'organizzazione della mostra è stata curata dal Direttore del Settore con Francesco Cellini, Claudio D'Amato, Antonio De Bonis, Paolo Farina

Le ricerche preparatorie sono state curate da Francesco Cellini e Claudio D'Amato con Paolo Farina

Per i rapporti con gli architetti espositori degli USA e della Germania Federale hanno dato la loro collaborazione Emilio Battisti, Alessandra Latour, Burckhardt Grashorn

Il catalogo è stato curato da Francesco Cellini, Claudio D'Amato, Antonio De Bonis, Paolo Farina

La «personale di Ignazio Gardella è stata curata da Paolo Farina

La «personale» di Philip Johnson è stata allestita da Massimo Vignelli

La «personale» di Mario Ridolfi è stata curata da Francesco Cellini e Claudio D'Amato

La mostra sulla Corderia dell'Arsenale è stata curata da Manlio Brusatin

Il progetto generale dell'allestimento e la direzione dei lavori sono di Francesco Cellini e Claudio D'Amato

La realizzazione della «Strada Novissima» è opera della Cinecittà S.p.A.

The present work started with the argument that the International Architecture Exhibitions at the Venice Biennale are more than a mere succession of isolated events. These events are here analysed as episodes of a wider story line supported by constellations of conceptual and social relationships fixed in time and space. Appropriating Margaret Somers's notion of narrativity, the Part 3 of this study enquires on the connection between the changes in disciplinary perception over the last three decades and the way these changes were expressed inside the Architecture sector. Thus, the route here proposed — from the *Presence of the Past*, 1st International Architecture Exhibition, curated by Paolo Portoghesi in 1980, to the *Common Ground*, the 13th International Architecture Exhibition curated by David Chipperfield in 2012 —, intends to connect the several dimensions (symbolic, theoretical, institutional, official) of disciplinary discourse through a plot.

In order to handle the complexity of disciplinary reality two perspectives were considered. First, a diachronic perspective will analyse the social and conceptual frameworks that structured the arguments of architecture at the Venice Biennale over the period in analysis. This focus delimits the field of architecture from the inquiry of those who structured the main ideas and whose writings participated in the construction of architecture's conventions — curators, experts and authors. Second, a synchronic perspective will follow the persistence and evolution of themes that acquired centrality over the Biennales. Here, three notions — *city*, *language*, and *form* — delimit a set of story lines on architecture.

The paths that we shall follow begin with reflections published in the exhibition's catalogues that provide the main sources for our considerations. By using graphical representations of social and conceptual networks of relationships, it will be argued that the complex entity La Biennale di Venezia allows architecture to counterbalance the fragmentation of the discipline.

On the left: Brochure materials, draft, "L'Oggetto Banale", *The Presence of the Past*, 1980
[La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, FS, *busta* 632]

6. Diachronic Perspective
Social and Conceptual Constellations of Relationships

Each International Architecture Exhibition functions as a time-space compressing instance in architecture contemporary culture. We have been identifying it as a kind of global public sphere that cyclically concentrates a dense constellation of actors — curators, architects, critics, journalists, policy makers, and visitors. Before the opening weekend of each exhibition, Venice is transformed, commented the British architect Deyan Sudjic, "and for that moment the world of architecture is focused on that one place" (Levy; Menking 2010: 101). Furthermore, we have been looking at this instance not as a mere meeting point, but more precisely as an instance of reflection, able to connect at once the functions of *reporting*, *retrospection*, *canonizing* and *predicting* architecture.

To be sure, while architecture exhibitions are tangible displays — constituted by drawings, models, images, and installations —, the ideas, discourses, criticism and conventions they generate are, however, intangible constructions. For capturing this intangibility, it is fundamental to consider the action of the agents, on one hand, and the flow of concepts, on the other. Studies on agency in architecture have made major contributions to reframe the theoretical and practical discourse. A recurring problem, however, is that the direction they described is commonly unrelated with the study of architecture as a discipline. In this chapter, I will argue that a dense and dynamic web of social and conceptual relationships has shaped the identity of architecture at the Venice Biennale over the last three decades.

6.1 Constellations of social relationships over time

The first step to manage the complexity of interconnections between the huge quantities of actors was to visualize it by using graphical representation methods of social network analysis. The graphical representation of a network is a simplification that reduces the complex system of interconnections to an abstract structure of nodes and edges, capturing only the essential patterns of association. The nodes are actors, or sometimes groups of actors, and the edges represent some form of social interaction between them. In this case, the following networks are constituted by constellations of curators, architects, critics, authors, and institutional actors participants in the production of thirteen International Architecture Exhibitions from 1980 to 2012.

On the grounds of this sequence of events, this reflection takes as a starting point the graphical representation of that huge constellation constituted by 815 actors. It considers the reading of different layers of relationships: between chief curators and curatorial teams (Diagram-1); between experts of the several exhibitions (Diagram-2); between authors that produced contents in the catalogues (Diagram-3; Diagram-4); between institutional actors (Diagram-5); and between participants, i.e. architects and artists involved in the definition of the official exhibitions inside the Central Pavilion and the Arsenale (Diagram-7 to Diagram-9). Social networks affect perceptions and beliefs in architecture through a variety of mechanisms socially constructed by relations among entities. Direct contacts and intensive interactions lead entities to better information, greater awareness and higher susceptibility to influencing or being influenced by others. Indirect relations through intermediaries also bring exposure to new ideas. Networks help to create interests and shared identities and to promote shared conventions, values, and images. Thus, it helps us to identify agents, as well as other actors with whom they discussed or participated in common projects, shared theoretical positions or choices on disciplinary issues.

It is worth stressing that the particular pattern of interactions can have a strong effect on the overall structure. The connections in social networks affect how people understand discussion on architecture, form opinions, and gather news.

6.1.1 The role of the curators

My task here is to bound the field of architecture by examining those that launch the themes for reflection, make the choices, and legitimise conceptual positions – the curators. The emphasis on the "curator-centred discourse" (O'Neil 2009 [2007]: 247) is one of the central issues recently debated in the fields of curatorial studies and art history. It stems from the assumption that the curators "have access to an illusionary world view, and that spectators may follow in their wake" (Ferguson 1996:3); in other words, that the curator is also an expert on the field, able to distinguish values and construct new conventions. Today, the figure of curator became a professional activity, institutionalised in the academic structures and delimited as a new disciplinary area called curatorial studies.

Yet, none of the thirteen chief curators that planned the set of Biennials included in this study is a professional or institutional curatorial figure. All of them are architects. They are professionals that exercise the practice of architecture, design projects, and define buildings. Only one curator, Francesco Dal Co, was an architectural historian. In spite of that, they are in fact powerful architectural critics that shape the discourse and steer our ways of looking at and thinking of architecture.

In the Biennale, the role of the chief curator is coincident with the temporary function of director of the sector of Architecture. The choice of the curators/directors — who are always appointed by Italian local and national politicians, and by the Biennale's president and Directive Council —, is strongly connected with their prestige in the field.

Tito Talamini
Renzo Toffolutti
Manuela Zevi
Gian Arnaldo Caleffi
Aldo Rossi
Marino Zancanella
Paolo Farina
Francesco Delogu
Aaron Betsky
Umberto Barbieri
Antonio De Bonis
Casey Jones
Reed Kroloff
Dick van Woerkom
Gian Ugo Polesello
Marino Narpozzi
Manlio Brusatin
Saskia van Stein
Mariet Willinge
Gottardo Bonacini
Luca Meda
Claudio D Amato
Emiliano Gandolfi
Evert Rodrigo
Mauro Lena
Massimo Vignelli
David Rockwell
Paolo Maretto
Eugenia Fiorin
Paolo Portoghesi
Francesco Cellini
Ludovico Micara
Francesco Dal Co
Enrico Valeriani
Paolo Cuneo
Margherita Petranzan
Augusto Burelli
Kate Cregan
Mario Trimarchi
Nicoletta Cosentino
Shumi Bose
Livio Sacchi
Attilio Petruccioli
Jaffer Kolb
Sarah Ichioka
Julie Richardson
Tiago Frazao
Marco Miglio
Julia Maquieira
Nicola Marzo
Mathias Clottu
Richard Burdett
Paolo Cimarosti
Evelyn Stern
Hannah Cox
Rik Nys
Pamela Visconti
Luisa Vozza
Nanni Baltzer
Fred Birdsall
Elena Riva
Mirko Zardini
Kieran Long
Rita Bertoni
Rinio Bruttomesso
Hani Rashid
David Chipperfield
Adrien Vasquez
Franco Purini
John Morgan
Pio Baldi
Guido Martinotti
Marina Bertaggia
Claudio D Amato Guerrieri
Matteo Caine
Fragile
Asymptote
Lise Anne Couture
Patrick Ueberbacher
Chiara Poletti
Renato Quaglia
Massimiliano Fuksas
Chiara Banchini
Francesco Garofalo
Francesca Montorio
Massimo Michieli
Alessandro Boscarino
Kurt Forster
Luigi Ricciari
Cibic and Partners
Chiara Costa
Doriana O. Mandrelli
Michele Azzopardi
Bruno Moser
Andrea Plenter
Concetta Schepis
Roberto Rosolen
Paolo Scibelli
Chiara Bernardi
Pino Brugellis
Indira Fassioni
Maurizio Celoni
Silvi Serreqi
Angela Cicolini
Jack Hogan
Martina Pizzul
Alessandra Versace
Sam Chermayeff
Alessandra Rizzotti
Jon Hill
Luigi Sabatino
Marino Folin
Ryue Nishizawa
Dario Ventimiglia
Nicole Bellamy
Herbert Lachmayer
Satoshi Ikeda
Deyan Sudjic
Kazuyo Sejima
Alessandra Durand de la Penne
Ben Acornley
Anna Maria Porazzini
Klaus Hellweger
Yuko Hasegawa
Sam Blok
Claudia De Zordo
Paolo Piva
Gianni Pettena
Stephane Orsolini
John Pawson
Mario Spinelli
Maria Spann
Maria Cristina Cinti
Hans Hollein
Matt Brown
Hannah Tyson
Dustin Tusnovics
Esterson Lackarsteen
Madeleine Jenewein
Shingo Ozawa
Manna Bertaggia
Simon Esterson
Vishwa Kaushal

Diagram-1_CURATORS AND CURATORIAL TEAM [1980-2012]

For instance, some of them were awarded with the Pritzker Prize, such as Hans Hollein (1985), Kazuyo Sejima (2010).[1] Others were connected with important centres of architectural research, such as Kurt Forster, who was before the founding director of the Getty Centre for the History of Art and the Humanities, a director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and was a Full Professor at the ETH in Zurich. Some were visible in the *media*, namely Deyan Sudjic, then chief editor of *Domus* magazine; or Aaron Betsky, who headed the Cincinnati Art Museum when he was selected to curate the event. Finally, some were referential personalities for a whole generation of architects, as in the case of Aldo Rossi.

According to Paolo Baratta, president of the Foundation La Biennale di Venezia since 2008, the choice of a new curator always raises great expectations. Thus, he never considered selecting more than one curator "because then all the tension is lost", he remarked, "I am for one man, one show, and one responsibility. If you give them this chance and freedom, curators feel as if they are artists with their own work of art to be imagined".[2]

As we can see in the Diagram-1 (in the next page), each Biennale comprises a distinct cluster centered on the curator but interconnected within a wider constellation. What is immediately evident is that there is a great discontinuity between orientations inside the Biennale. Each event brings to the forefront a new map of individual patterns and ties. This means that the final outcome of the exhibition, both on a conceptual and visible level, does not have necessarily to engage in dialogue with other events.

The link between curatorial teams is defined by some few actors — Paolo Cimarosti, Roberto Rosolen, Paolo Scibelli, Luigi Ricciardi — which belong to the Biennale's staff. These actors are members of a permanent constellation that support

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[1] More recently, Rem Koolhaas director of the 14th International Architecture Exhibition was Prizker Prize in (2000) and Alejandro Aravena director of the 15th International Architecture Exhibition, was distinguished in 2016 with the same prize.

[2] Paolo Baratta interview by Levy and Menking (2010: 201).

the exhibitions and make them happen. In short, they have an operative function inside the curatorial process. The architect and city planner Richard Burdett, when director of the exhibition *Cities: Architecture and Society*, noted that what is "amazing" in the structure of the Biennale is the central support and essential skills provided by a small group of civil servants — "one moment they are dealing with my exhibition about the streets of Caracas and crime, and the next they are dealing with Sejima's wonderful white spaces" (Levy; Menking 2010: 128).

In the Diagram-1 we see, however, that the exhibitions produced by Betsky, Sejima, and Chipperfield are totally disconnected with the other curatorial groups. For example, members of Chipperfield's office constitute the curatorial team. The same occurred with Sejima's exhibition. The architect defined the smallest curatorial team inside this constellation and explained her position in the following words:

I have asked Yuko Hasegawa to be a curatorial advisor. I worked with her for the Twenty-first-Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, and now she has moved to MoT in Tokyo as their chief curator. I also asked my partner Ryue Nishizawa to be a curatorial advisor. Our team, including Sam Chermayeff, Jack Hogan and Satoshi Ikeda, meets often. Mostly, we just discuss things. We discuss inviting different people, including architects, engineers and also a few artists. I wanted to invite a few engineers and artists to show some work through the form of collaborations.[3]

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[3] Kazuyo Sejima interview by Levy and Menking (2010: 169).

6.1.2 The Committee of Experts

In the 12th edition, Sejima choose a team composed by two advisors and three collaborators. Together they contributed to the definition of the program and for the process of selection. By calling for the participation of the experts in the curatorial decisions Sejima retrieved the Biennale's tradition. In fact, until 2000 each chief curator, who is also temporary director of Architecture sector as mentioned, defined a committee of experts that worked together in the main decisions. The Diagram-2 presented on the next page clarifies this approach until 2000.

As we can recognise, each curator/director defined a specific board of advisors, constituted by experts that share a particular vision of architecture. Here we can distinguish three groups. The first group is constituted by the first Biennales directed by Paolo Portoghesi in the early 1980s — *The Presence of the Past* [BV1980] and *Architecture in the Islamic Countries* [BV1982] — which had a common committee of experts that share a conceptual framework: architecture is defined in strong affinity with history and culture. The board includes the renowned art historian Udo Kultermann, the American architect and historian Robert A. M. Stern, Giuseppe Mazzariol also art historian, the architect and scholar at IUAV Costantino Dardi — responsible for the installation of "Strada Novissima"—, and the architect and scholar Rosario Giuffré. This board legitimised and corroborated the Portoghesi's ideological perspective on the return to history and the recycling of syntactic elements in architecture (Portoghesi 1980).

A second individualised group connects the exhibition *Progetto Venezia* [BV1985] and *Hendrik Petrus Berlage. Disegni* [BV1986], both curated by Aldo Rossi. The Italian architect Claudio D'Amato, the architectural historian Werner Oechslin, and the French architect and planer Bernard Huet were common advisors of both exhibitions.[4]

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[4] The 1985's exhibition also includes: Aldo Rossi; Diane Ghirardo; Gianfranco Caniggia; Gino Valle; Guglielmo De Angelis D'Ossat; Rafael Moneo; Rob Krier; Sandro Benedetti. For the 1986's exhibition: Bruno Reichlin; Ed Taverne; Martin Steinmann; Paolo Portoghesi; Pieter Singelenberg; Stanislaus von Moos; Tjeerd Dijkstra.

Manfredo Tafuri
Richard Meier
Bruno Cassetti
Franco Purini
Giandomenico Romanelli
Margherita Asso
James Stirling
Gianluigi Rondi
Leonardo Benevollo
Kurt Forster
BV1991
Hans Hollein
Paolo Portoghesi
Pieter Singelenberg
Nereo Laroni
Patrice Goulet
Stefano Boato
Martin Steinmann
Tjeerd Dijkstra
Hans Ulrich Obrist
Ignazio Gardella
Marino Folin
Ed Taverne
BV1986
Richard Levene
Jon Jost
Stanislas van Moos
Alessandro Petti
Arata Isozaki
Francesco Dal Co
BV2000
Bruno Reichlin
Francois Burkhardt
Otto Steidle
Francois Barre
Werner Oechslin
Frederic Migayrou
BV1996
Claudio D'Amato
Toshio Nakamura
Bernard Huet
Kyong Park
Jorge Glusberg
Norman Foster
Cynthia Davidson
Gianfranco Caniggia
Peter Cook
Kate Linker
Dietmar Steiner
Rob Krier
Rafael Moneo
BV1985
Terence Riley
Sandro Benedetti
Diane Ghirardo
Robert Stern
Constantino Dardi
Guglielmo De Angelis Ossat
BV1982
Aldo Rossi
Rosario Giuftre
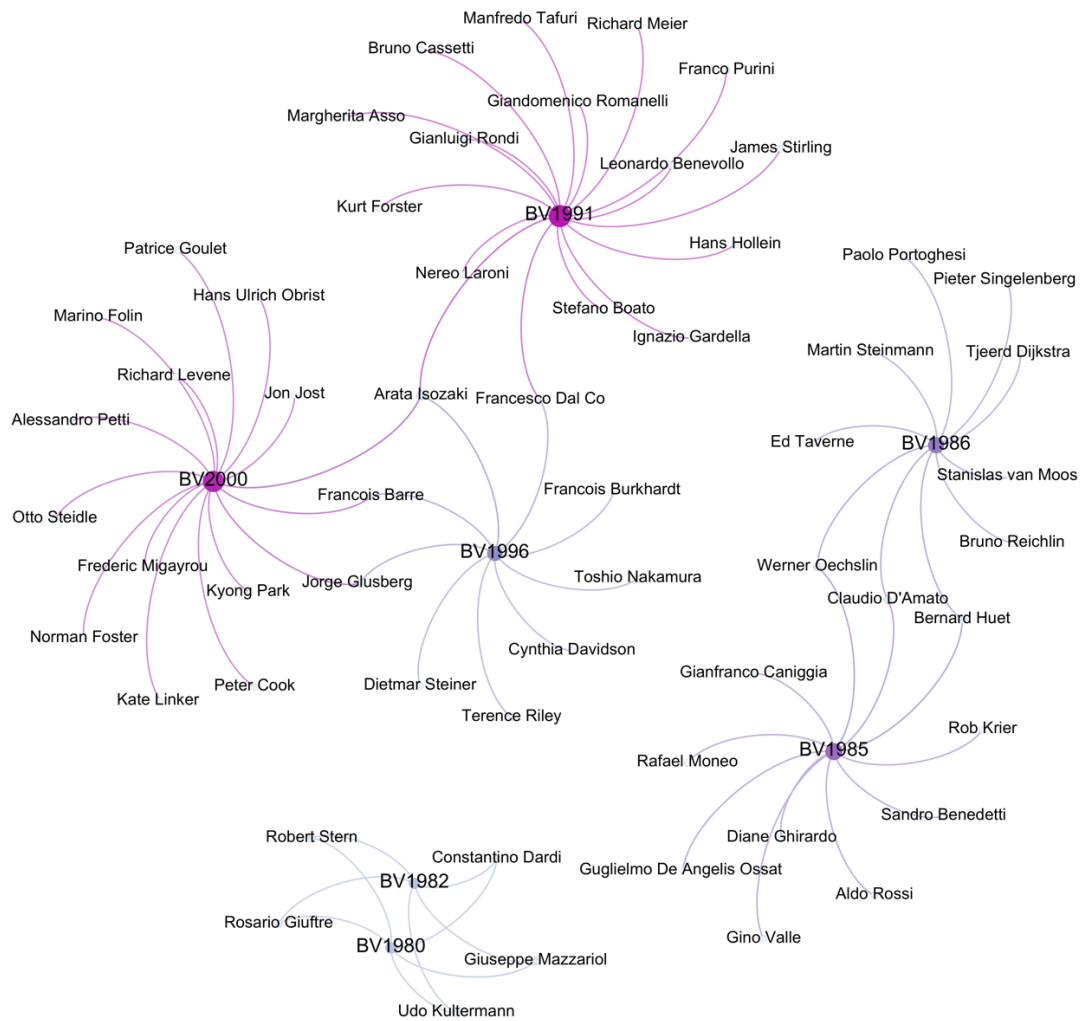Gino Valle
BV1980
Giuseppe Mazzariol
Udo Kultermann

Diagram-2_ COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS [1980-2000]

154

In the third group, comprised by the *5th International Architecture Exhibition* [BV1991], *Sensing the Future. Architect as Seismograph* [BV1996] and *Città: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* [BV2000], Francesco Dal Co, François Barré, Jorge Glusberg created the links between exhibitions, and the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki assumed great centrality, pointing out the influence of Japanese architecture in the Biennale's culture from then on.

As noted, in the exhibition curated in 1996 by Hans Hollein — the first non-Italian director of the sector —, the commission of experts is based on an international logic,[5] including personalities coming from distinct viewpoints and geographical locations. But, above all, it must be underlined that this is principally composed by personalities related with media and criticism.[6] This happened in the precise moment in which "critics, historians or journalists who want to follow the evolution of the trends in architecture would find themselves [...] more than ever at grips with the conscience of the individual aspects of a theory, and even with an idea of the personalities, if they want to repurpose the related contents" (Burkhardt 1996), commented François Burkhardt, chief-editor of *Domus* magazine (1996-2000).

Along with the role as curator, Hans Hollein had taken part of the committee of experts in 1991. Unequivocally, he was a permanent presence in the Venice Biennale both in the Architecture sector, in which he participated in the 1st, 6th, 7th and 8th International Architecture Exhibition, and in the arts sector:

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[5] The committee of experts was constituted by the Swiss François Burkardt, the Argentine Jorge Glusberg, the Japanese Arata Isozaki, the Italian Paolo Portoghesi, and the North-American Terence Riley.

[6] Cynthia Davison, Dietmar Steiner, Francesco Dal Co, Francois Barré, Toshio Nakamura.

[…] *my participation as an artist went back to 1972, with my installation in the Austrian pavilion. Then I was commissioner of the Austrian pavilion of the architecture biennale in 1988, as well as in 1991 with '13 Austrian Positions', in 1996 with 'Coop Himmelb(l)au' and 'Visionary Architecture', in 2000 with 'Austria Area of Action for International Architects', and in 2001 with 'Area of Tolerance'. I was also the commissioner of the Austrian pavilion for every art biennale from 1978 to 1990. For example, I organised exhibitions on Arnulf Rainer in 1978, Valie Export in 1980 and Franz West in 1990.* (Hollein in Levy 2010: 65-66)

Also clear in the Diagram-2 is that the Venice School provided part of the intellectual framework of the 1991 exhibition — when Dal Co was director of the sector, himself belonging to the IUAV —, constituted by influent personalities of the Italian architectural debate such as: Manfredo Tafuri, Leonardo Benevolo, Ignazio Gardella, Franco Purini, Giandomenico Romanelli, and Stefano Boato.

6.2 Constellation of authors and intellectual framework

Here I will analyse the constellation of authors (architects, curators, critics, historians, policy makers) who defined the contents published in the several exhibition catalogues. The catalogues are considered fundamental sources for our inquiry, since they provide accurate — visual and textual — documentation of the exhibition contents, adding interpretations and reflections able to promote new conventions and redefine disciplinary boundaries. More precisely, I will scrutinise the constellation of actors whose writings have been constructing the textual identity of the Venice Architecture Biennale, in order to capture the promotion of new ideas and conceptual lines on the architectural field.

As suggested by the schematic synthesis in the Diagram-3, such constellation cannot be understood as a homogeneous and unitary identity. The reading of it allows, thus, the configuration of two different genealogies. This representation is a simplification of the Diagram-4, showing the aggregation of relations between events.

From this evidence, a question immediately emerges: does it mean that there are two different ways of looking at and defining architecture inside the Venice Biennale? If we consider that the definition of such constellations of writings is not only constituted by chronological identities but also framed by an intellectual culture and disciplinary understanding, we might easily confirm that are traces of disciplinary differentiation between them.

In accordance, the constellation of authors shall be crossed with another kind of reading: their intellectual framework. The Graph-1 was created from the bibliographical references and quotations they mentioned over the texts and essays, drawing an intellectual cartography intending to emphasise the major disciplinary tendencies in the construction of the architectural discourse over the several editions of the Biennale.
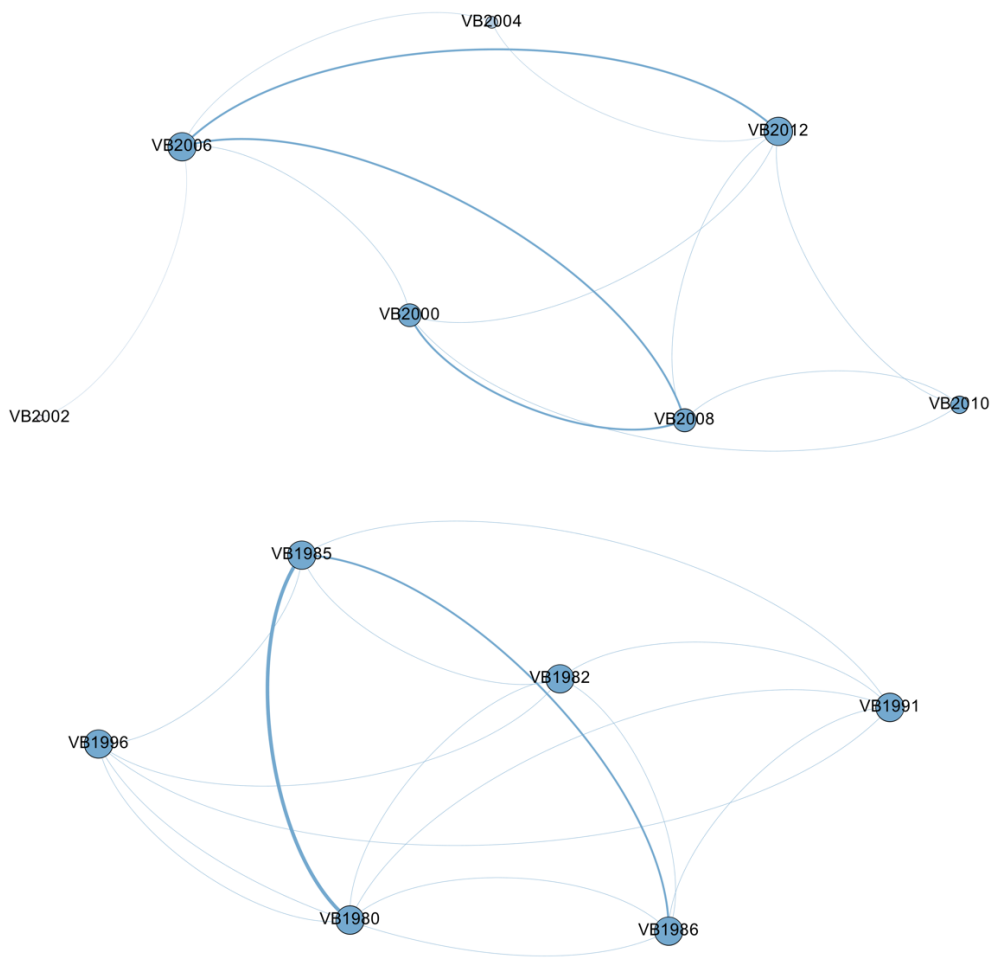
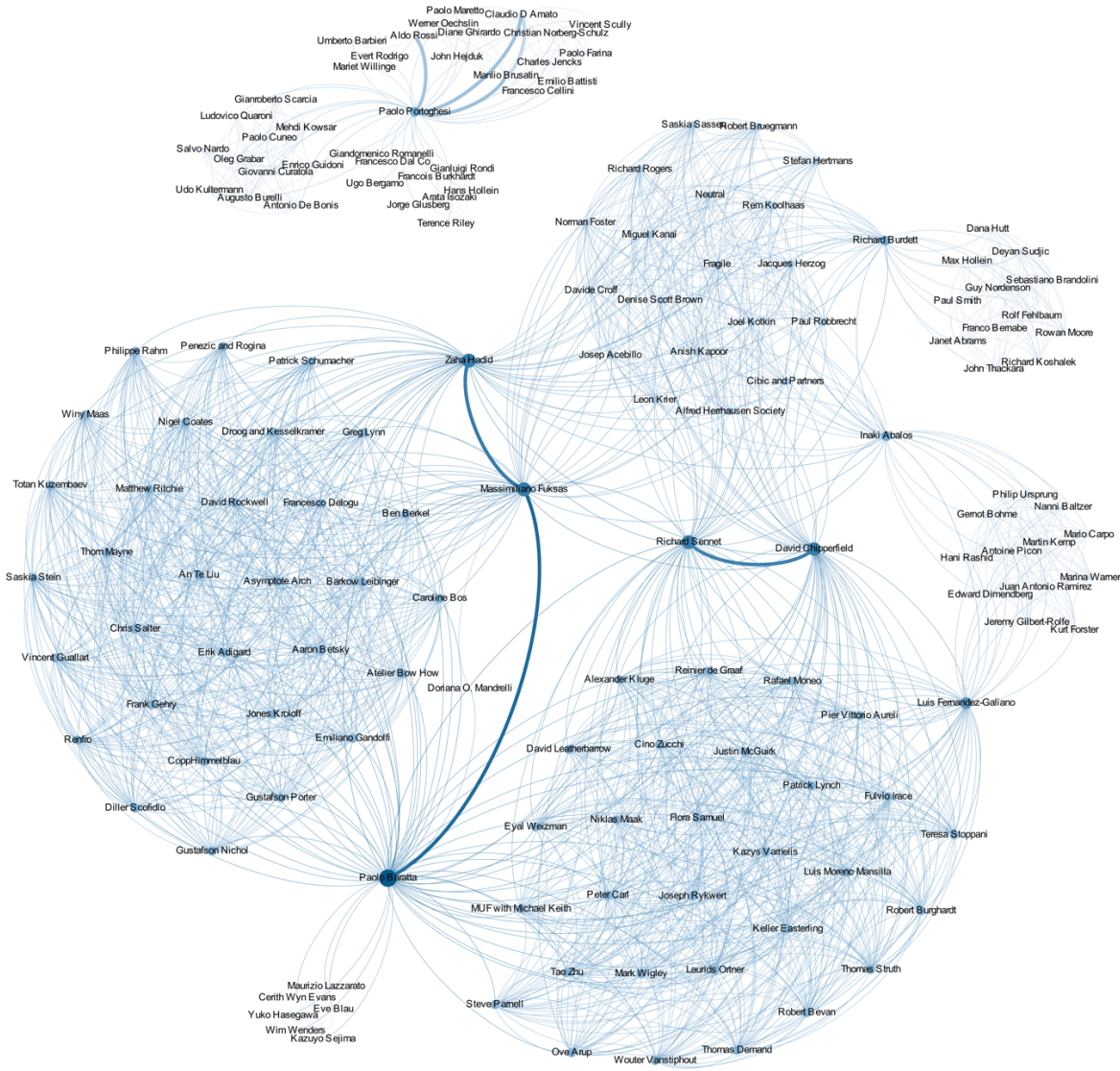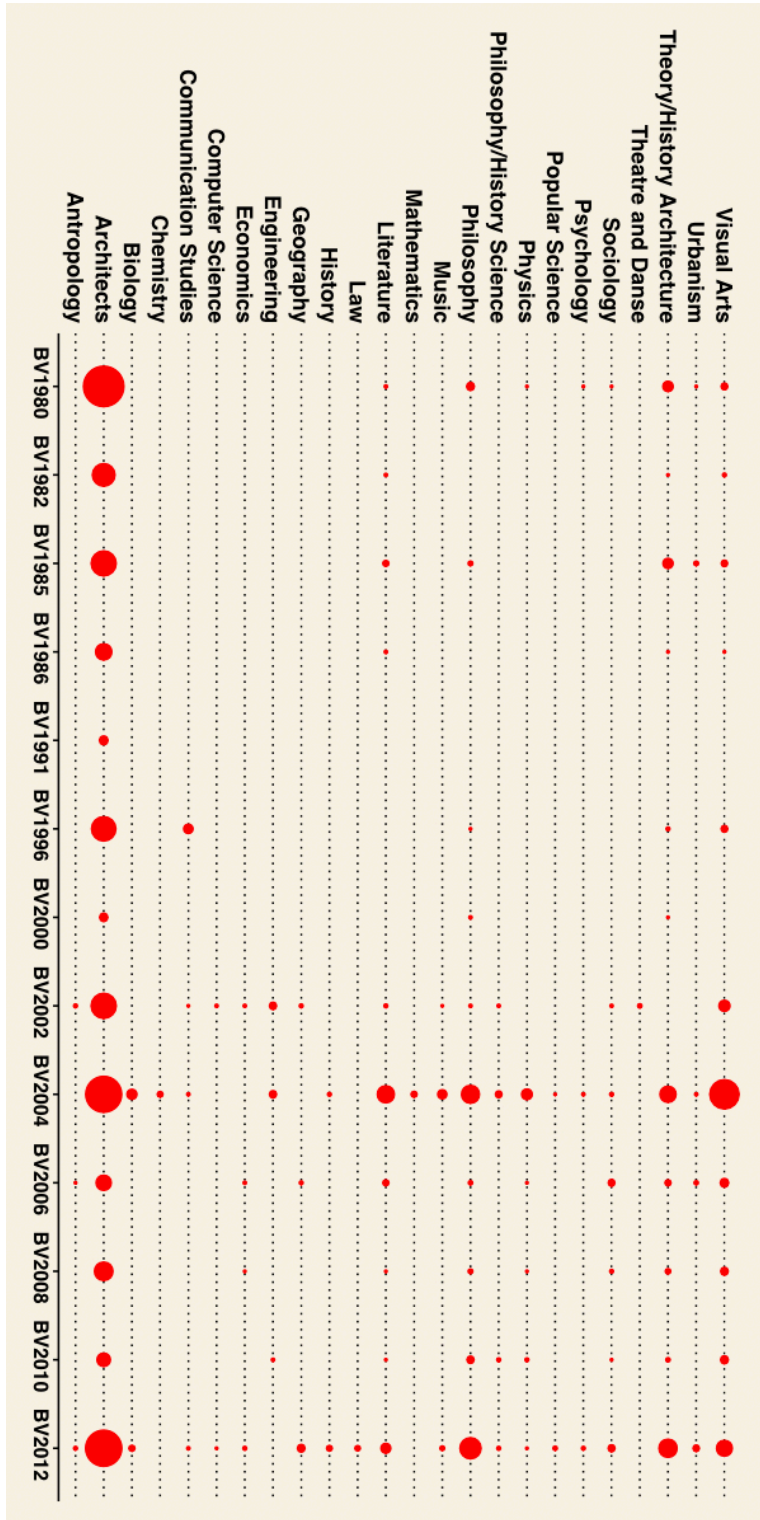Diagram-3_CONSTELLATION OF AUTHORS/ SYNTHESIS (1980-2012)

Diagram-4_CONSTELLATIO OF AUTHORS (1980-2012)

Graph-1_DISCIPLINARY FIELDS (1980-2012)

This graphical representation is, again, a simplification that records the relevance of twenty-four disciplinary areas.[7] Overall, it seems there were some invariant epistemic areas and two general groups of tendencies. First, it becomes clear that History and Theory of Architecture, Visual Arts, and what we called Architects — to define the references and quotation of professional entities —, were fields that accompanied, even with subtle fluctuations, the production of the discourse from *The Presence of the Past* (1980) to *Common Ground* (2012). Still, areas such as Philosophy, Literature, Science, and Urbanism have also constituted important grounds to support the disciplinary argumentation in the Architecture sector.

Second, as we can observe, from the exhibition *Next* (2002) on it is evident the increasing of disciplinary exchange with the introduction of new fields of knowledge — as different as Sociology, Economics, Music, Physics, Engineering, Biology, among others. This densification is more relevant in *Metamorph* (2004) and in *Common Ground* (2012), which covered a wider scope of cultures of knowledge. The influence of Communication — i.e. press and other media — acquired particular importance in *Sensing the Future. Architect as Seismograph* (1996).

In this context, the *5th International Architecture Exhibition* (1991) — structured as an architecture international competition — and *Città: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* (2000) are totally focused on the work of the architects, here taken as the main support for architectural argumentation. On the contrary, *Metamorph* (2004) and *Common Ground* (2012) express a higher tendency to inter and transdisciplinary approaches.

In short, by crossing Diagrams 3-4 with Graph-1, it was possible to identify two general constellations of authors concurrent with different disciplinary tendencies. In

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[7] Namely: Visual Arts; Urbanism; Theory and History of Architecture; Theatre and Dance; Sociology; Psychology; Popular Science; Physics; History and Philosophy of Science; Philosophy; Music; Mathematics; Literature; Law; History; Geography; Engineering; Economics; Computer Science; Communication Studies; Chemistry; Biology; Anthropology; and what we called Architect to identify the discourse grounded on professional exercise.

this case, I distinguished: first a constellation bounded between 1980 and 1996; and a second constellation formed from 2000 until 2012, in which the group of authors is broader and more diversified, as we shall see.

6.2.1 First Constellation: Under the shadow of modernism

The first constellation involved the contribution of some well-known figures of late-20th century architectural thinking, notably: Aldo Rossi, Francesco Dal Co, Paolo Portoghesi and Hans Hollein. It also included historians and critics as Udo Kultermann, Charles Jencks, Vicente Scully, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Werner Oechslin, and Diane Ghirardo. This set of authors is coincident with the called "generation theory" framed between 1968 and late-1990s.[8] We saw in the first chapter that this generation had tried to draw new hypothesis grounded on wider theoretical frameworks of contemporary thought such as structuralism, phenomenology, semiology and post- structuralism, in order to counterbalance the sense of loss and the increasing fragmentation of the field. It is a generation strongly influenced by the fields of literature and social sciences, in which the Theory and History of Architecture acquired great centrality.

Curiously, while Manfredo Tafuri can be positioned as a key point for architecture theoretical trajectory over the period,[9] in the Biennale's writing representation he was an unexpected absence that must provide the basis for other kind of considerations. Tafuri's contribution to the Biennale was limited to the advisory board of the *5th International Architecture Exhibition* (1991) and was referenced only twice in thirty years. We must remember that, although strongly linked with Dal Co and Cacciari – who had a visible action in the interior of the institutional network (Diagram-5), Tafuri was extremely critical in regard to the "hypermodern 'dances'"[10] promoted by Paolo

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[8] See in this regard the three anthologies on architectural theory published at the end of last century by Kate Nesbitt, Michael Hays and Neil Leach.

[9] See the above-mentioned anthologies.

[10] Quoted by Gail Day (2011: 104).

Portoghesi at the Biennale. After the disciplinary and ideological tensions that rose from *The Presence of the Past*, Tafuri abandoned his role as critic of contemporary architecture to dedicate himself exclusively to the study of the architecture of the Renaissance.

The architectural historian and critic Bruno Zevi is also absent from the range of intellectual influences over the Biennales, only mentioned by Fuksas as a personal reference, but without any kind of correlation with Zevi's intellectual legacy. In truth, Zevi, who was at the origin of the Movement for Organic Architecture and an intellectual reference in Italian debate since late 1950s, argued for a critical reinvention of the modernist theoretical values (Aureli 2011: 54). As editor of *L'Architettura. Cronache e Storia*, he published strong critics, as well as several articles written by Gregotti, Dal Co, Peter Murray, Frampton and Habermas, against the post-modernist approach institutionalized by *The Presence of the Past* exhibition.

The reverse of these absences is obviously expressed in the following Diagram-5. Here, Paolo Portoghesi played the central role. He is the nodal point who, under his pluralist vision of architecture, was able to bridge very distinctive conceptual orientations written in the several catalogues. Such orientations include the postmodern American perspective of Charles Jencks, Vincent Scully, Diane Ghirardo; the phenomenological approach of Norberg-Schulz; the multiculturalist angle of Udo Kultermann, Oleg Grabar, Augusto Burelli; the Venice School tradition represented by Dal Co; and the Rossian neo-rationalist and theoretical conception on city. Centrality here quantifies at which point the personal relations were important in this networked system of authors and ideological perspectives. Furthermore, the centrality of Portoghesi in the institutional network (Diagram-5) also shows that he played a role in the functioning of the system — given his position at the Biennale, initially as director of the Architecture sector between 1979 and 1982, and then as president of the Biennale from 1983 to 1992.

Diagram-5_INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORS (1980-1996)

When Portoghesi was appointed director of the first International Architecture Exhibition, his architectural thought was clearly framed within the human sciences and cultural studies. Some authors have been suggesting that *The Presence of the Past* can be considered the apotheosis of Portoghesi's historical inquiry on baroque architecture.[11] In it, the theme of the "frontage", the linguistic-formal design aspects, the idea of architecture's "popular persuasion", as well as the image of "Strada Novissima" — a clear homage to Borromini, borrowing elements of the Oratorio dei Filippini — belong to the rhetoric of the Baroque (Leach; Macarthur; Delbeke 2016: 207). Indeed, his conception on contemporary architecture was grounded on such scope, but it was also constructed — though enounced in *Le Inibizioni dell'Architettura Moderna* (1974) — together with the definition of the Biennale's contents. His concept of contemporary architecture became, after 1980, specifically associated with the post-modernist discourse developed by his peers and by Portoghesi himself.[12] In the following conceptual network[13] (Diagram-6) it is visible this interconnection between "architecture" "Biennale", "postmodern", and "history" suggesting a moment of

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[11] Until 1980 Portoghesi had already wrote extensively on the biographies of some referential architects and on baroque architecture, among others: *Guarino Guarini* (1956); *Borromini nella Cultura Europea* (1964); with Bruno Zevi *Michelangelo architetto* (1964); *Bernardo Vittone* (1966); *Roma Barocca* (1966); *Borromini, Architettura come Linguagio* (1967).

[12] In the year of the exhibition Portoghesi published *Dopo l'Architettura Moderna*, in which he placed himself in the trajectory of the historical research he has done until that moment, as historian and as designer. Two years later he published the book *Postmodern: L'Architettura Nella Società Post-Industriale*, fixing his position among the founders of postmodernism in architecture.

[13] For producing Diagram-6, I adopted a three-step process for extracting the concepts from the first Venice Biennale catalogue: first, it was adopted an exploratory approach to identify the concepts; at the same time identifying a potential set of concepts also used in coding the texts. Second, it was defined a particular type of relationship that can exist between those concepts, namely associative or dissociative. Finally, it was used the software package Gephi to graphically represent the relationship between concepts.

conceptual foundation in the structure of Portoghesi's thought on architecture at the Biennale.

Diagram-6_PAOLO PORTOGHESI'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK I*THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST* (1980)

Taking the sentence as the unit of analysis in the text written by Portoghesi "The End of Prohibitionism", we can visualize the relationship between concepts — associative (red) or dissociative (blue) —, from Portoghesi's texts point of view. The word "modern" and the adjacent concepts — "capitalism", "loss of place", "hermetic", "arbitrarily", "technological mythologies," among others —, are clearly dissociated from the other nodes denouncing the rejection and opposition regarding the paradigms of modernism. "Architecture", on the contrary, is at the centre of the network strongly linked with ideas of a distinct nature, such as: "polycentric"; "network of experiences"; "post-modern"; "traditional composition systems"; "complex phenomenon"; and "history. The term "Biennale" — along with such related words as "cultural", "city", "public", "debate", "research", "architectural change"— is the second term more relevant. Thus, "architecture" and "Biennale" polarize the structure of conceptual relations, taken "history" and "postmodernism" as mediator concepts.

This structure of thought clearly guided Portoghesi's choices and, consequently, framed the critical approaches within this conjuncture of authors. Portoghesi emphasised:

The return of architecture to the womb of history and its recycling in new syntactic contexts of the traditional forms is one of the symptoms that has produced a profound "difference" in a series of works and projects in the past few years understood by some critics in the ambiguous but efficacious category of Post- Modern. The word modern, originally designating continual change, has undergone a process of sclerosis in identifying itself with a style, contaminated by the stasis of an unproductive situation. Paradoxically, it has become the symbol of an abstract power to be fought and overturned. (Portoghesi 1980: 9)

The architects' objection to modernism was an overarching obsession in the course of the first exhibitions. In the several texts produced within what we have called first constellation, two general frameworks of contemporary thought were evidenced in the construction of the argument. On one hand, the semiological vision of architecture

clearly explored the postmodern linguistic approach of Charles Jencks in "Towards radical eclecticism" (1980) and the discourse on plurality by Claudio D'Amato in "A liberated research: cultural pluralism of the Venice project" (1983). Together, they understood architecture as a system of signs defined from a pluralistic conception of language.

On the other hand, the writings of Gaston Bachelard, Martin Heidegger, Marx Weber, and Edmund Husserl provided the reference points for the phenomenological vision of architecture in Christian Norberg-Schulz essay "Towards an authentic architecture" (1980), strongly linked with the anthropological and cultural experience of the place.

This double framework — semiology and phenomenology — is also evident in the multiculturalist and post-colonial approach defined in the series of articles written for the 1982 exhibition by Paolo Portoghesi, Udo Kultermann, Oleg Grabar, Ludovico Quaroni, Mehdi Kowsar, Gianroberto Scarcia, Giovanni Curatola. In these texts, Western culture lost its centrality in the field of architecture, and instead there was an investment in a polycentric dimension of place and language. The baroque architects Francesco Borromini, Guarino Guarini, and Bernardo Vittone, the Rococo rhetoric, the exotic painting of Eugène Delacroix, the Primitivism movement in art, Picasso's sculpture, the Art Nouveau movement, the architectural work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Hector Guimard, Antoni Gaudí, and Joseph Olbrich were taken as exemplar moments of cultural difference integration and meeting points between languages.

In spite of all those references, the relevant theoretical presence in the Biennale's first constellation was, definitely, Aldo Rossi. He dominated the debate. Firstly, he did it as subject of reflection in a comparative perspective with the pluralistic "complexity" of Robert Venturi; and secondly, as the main reference for the theoretical framework in several texts produced in the catalogues. Rossi's conception of autonomous architecture constituted a powerful theoretical influence. This was grounded on the research on typology — itself based on the rationalist tradition of Enlightenment

architects[14] and distant from the notion of quotation and style—, but above all the perception of the city as architecture. Therefore, the choice of Rossi for the inauguration of the reformed and, until 1979, inexpressive sector of Architecture was definitely not an innocent event. Charles Jencks commented later: "You performed a magic trick, Paolo, by drawing Rossi out of the hat of the Rationalists".[15] The "alliance" with Rossi's neo-rationalist definition was, admittedly, related to issues of theoretical legitimation of the post-modernist formulations, whilst bearing in mind his reputation and visibility in the international scene. The choice was almost inevitable, as Aldo Rossi was the "reference point for a whole generation, a master, and his cultural standing absolutely demanded a commensurate right to expression, to effect creative reality", Portoghesi remarked.[16]

The shifting point between what we called constellations would be the 6th International Architecture Exhibition, whose title was extremely accurate — *Sensing the Future. The Architect as Seismograph*. Even considering that Hollein kept the link with Portoghesi — in what it means in terms of discursive approach and disciplinary understanding —, this moment would change the focus of display. Unmistakably Hollein explained that this exhibition would be about "the Architect", not about architecture.

The critical texts are limited to the members of the experts' committee, which participated in the selection process of seventy architects, participants in the exhibition and presented in the catalogue. Here, Rossi — who would die one year later — was not included in the "seismographs", neither his theoretical work was considered an intellectual reference.[17]

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[14] Rossi grounded the theory of types principally on the work of the architects Durand, Quatremère de Quincy, and Viollet-le-Duc.

[15] Charles Jencks, *et al.* 1982. Venice Biennale: Discussion. *Architectural Design*, Charles Jencks (Ed.), "Free-Style Classicism", 52 (1/2): p.9.

[16] Portoghesi, Paolo. 1982. AD Interview by Antonio de Bonis: Aldo Rossi and Paolo Portoghesi. *Architectural Design*, Charles Jencks (Ed.), "Free-Style Classicism", 52 (1/2): 13.

[17] Rossi's legacy was recovered only in 2012 with *Common Ground*.

At once, the authors harked back the first Biennale's edition "oriented towards the future through the recognition of the value of individual research" (Burkhardt 1996) and predicted the emerging voices of architecture in the next millennium. Burkhardt clarified:

> *The choice of the authors and works for the selection put forward by Hans Hollein and his collaborators leaves no doubt on the fact that we have arrived at the end of a total search dear to the "grand masters" of modern architecture and which attempts to impose itself as a radical transformation. Following from these "grand masters" is an increasing number of authors who want to define an intelligent and research-based architecture, the options of which no longer intend to disrupt the trends of society, the pathos of architectural meta-projects, according to the rules set by the Enlightenment, seems to be gradually lessening, without however losing sight of certain humanistic codes, with the aim of reaching more limited but also more concrete goals, like taking part in the construction of an environment it's quality in difference, leaving the mark of their curiosity. The earth effect consists in underlining the consequences of the tremors of that which takes form in the innovational designs.* (Burkhardt 1996)

A map of difficult configuration was sketched in the catalogue. For this purpose, it was necessary to call personalities able to guess or predict, on very distinct perspectives, new ways inside the complex system of individual statements that became known as the *star system*. The choices made by Hollein would be, after the turn of the millennium, the great protagonists of the following International Architecture Exhibitions in Venice.

The iconic system of the star-architects opened by this exhibition carried an overpowering cultural meaning: the symbolic value celebrated in the signature of the star architect and the economic value in which his activity is inserted. While the members of the star system give exceptionality and added value to architecture — now "transacted as a trademark that supposedly guarantees superiority"—; this same

value is, in turn, dissipated through "empty gestures and complex excessive forms that do not imply a true meaning", reducing the architect's activity to mere commodified competence, according to critics of the star system.[18] The worldwide convergence of consumer tastes led to the idealisation of the uniform condition, a feature that has been severely criticised by a number of different authors, and challenges the notion of disciplinary unity.

6.2.2 Second Constellation:
The complex texture of individual interpretations

The second constellation identified from the Diagram-4 is defined from the exhibition *Città: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* (2000) up until *Common Ground* (2012). The authors invited to write contents were and are positioned in different intellectual frameworks, strongly related to the new modes of knowledge production and dissemination. As identified in the first chapter, after the global turn, disciplinary delimitation suffered significant dislocations towards inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches, challenging the notion of boundary, currently converted in space of commutation.

Moreover, architectural discourse within the Venice Biennale has tended to be defined as a complex texture of interrelations with other cultures of knowledge (see Graph-1). By perusing through the catalogues, the dissolution of conventional boundaries is immediately visible through the way architecture is represented. While until 1996 architecture was communicated through conventional technical drawings, sketches, and photographical documentation of buildings and models, in this second constellation new graphical approaches based on digital culture, media culture, and

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[18] Curtis, William. 2008. La crisis del "star system'. *El País* (12 Apr.) Available from http://elpais.com/diario/2008/04/12/babelia/1207957150_850215.html (accessed 2014).

computer science suggest a paradigm change in the conceptual framework of the field.

Still, inside this inter- and trans-disciplinary framework we can see a constellation internally heterogeneous (Diagram-4), in which confined webs of authors — defined within an event base and visually recognizable as confined clouds — indicate different critical frames, disciplinary interpretations, and an inevitably sense of fragmentation of the field. As we saw in the second chapter, the Biennale culture is precisely founded on relevance, novelty, and difference as imperative values in the cyclical process of representation. Likewise, the curatorial angles in each exhibition tend to omit the previous approaches and to propose new exhibiting conceptions and new readings on architecture.

The architect Kurt Forster, chief curator of the exhibition *Metamorph* in 2004, when inquired about the role of the curators in the Biennale, commented that today in a "situation like ours [...] everybody is used to forcefully structured propositions, to a kind of honed discourse that has a thrust, an orientation, a purpose and a character" (Levy; Menking 2010: 123). To sum up, the increase of connections between architecture and other epistemic fields emerged in parallel with this tendency to structure individual propositions. This can immediately be seen when confronting the disciplinary tendencies that emerged in this latest period (see Graph-1) with the list of codes present in the catalogue texts and shown in Graph-2 (next page).

The vision of the exhibition as a "laboratory of ideas" and the notion of "crossed and violated" (Fuksas 2000:13) architecture borderlines in the exhibition *Città: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* (2000) emphasises this fragmentation of the field. Such manifestations need to be understood and accompanied by the notion of "project" as a space of virtual experimentation for the new "astonishing" materialities of architecture as expressed in *Next* (2002); or the conception of architecture as a "process" of transdisciplinary commutation in systematic readjustment made explicit in *Metamorph* (2004).

Graph-2_CODES (1980-2012)

More provocative ideas such as claiming architecture "is not building", "has no function", "does not endure" (Betsky 2008: 14) and the intentional emptiness of established logics in *Out There: Architecture Beyond Building* (2008) reveal, together, the resonance of post-structuralist thought and the deconstructivist legacy in architectural culture.

It seems then, that a new conceptual logic emerged at the turn of the millennium. Looking at the text contents produced in the context of the above-mentioned exhibitions, it is visible that notions directly connected with post-structuralist thought informed the writing and physical production of contents in these set exhibitions. The list includes notions such as "transgression", "disorder", "fragmentation", "commutation", "erosion", the disruption of disciplinary systems, the challenge of language as a system of signs, and the empathy with experimental "transgressive" practices. It becomes clear that this was the moment when the "theorists [were] forced out of the sanctuary of theory" (Wigley 1988: 19) and the realm of the building became the meeting point between the "complex abstractions" of theory and the materiality of the objects.

Starting from the *Città: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* (2000), curated by the Italian architect Massimiliano Fuksas, a singularity is immediately evident: the catalogue is defined from the personal convictions of its curator. He authors the single text written in the catalogue, which is only complemented by ninety very short annotations related to each installation included in the exhibition and without mentioning any kind of bibliographical or conceptual references. Only Bruno Zevi is mentioned, but under a mere social perspective and not as an intellectual background. Fuksas himself explains:

The Instructions for Use advise you not to look for etymological or philological explanations for LA, ME [Less Aesthetics, More Ethics]; not to think that we are somewhere between the origin of the world and its future and not to spend months debating whether it is aesthetics that includes ethics or vice versa.
(Fuksas 2000)

In addition, it was avoided "to 'fix' the terminology", since "[w]e must counter the certainties with the 'uncertainties'", indirectly evoking the collapse of the modernist values: "As soon as we are sure we have grasped a general principle of order, it vanishes like a mirage. 'CHAOS' is not disorder, it is a 'sublime' order, which, in the evolution of physics, finds greater laws than those of simple geometry" (Fuksas 2000).

Fuksas was invited to collaborate in two other catalogues: in 2006 when sharing a personal viewpoint on the global cities; and in 2008, following an invitation by Aaron Besky to collaborate on the volume "Manifests". Both the 2000 and 2008 editions of Biennale put the emphasis on the curator-centered discourse and on the experimental dimension of architecture through media languages and virtual images, calling into question the conventional delimitation of architecture.

Two years later in 2002, Deyan Sudjic positioned *Next*, a direct reference to the 9/11 shocking moment, under a very distinct understanding of architecture — something in which the "materiality" already exists in the project "as an idea" (Sudjic 2002: 15). As a critic, journalist and chief editor of *Domus* magazine at the time of the exhibition, Sudjic commissioned a series of essays for the 2002 Biennale's catalogue. Each essay introduced ten different architecture typology organized as a kind of thematic dossiers, namely: "housing", introduced by the architect and critic Rowan Moore; "museums" overseen by Max Hollein, then director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt; "communication", opened by the journalist and architecture writer Janet Abrams; "education", by architecture writers and historians Richard Koshalek and Dana Hutt; "work", which consisted of a conversation between Rolf Fehlbaum and Deyan Sudjic. The theme "shopping" saw fashion designer Paul Smith in conversation with Deyan Sudjic; "performance" was curated by writer and producer John Thackara;

"church and state" was presented by Sudjic himself, while structural engineer Guy Nordenson was in charge of the "towers" theme. Finally, the "master plans" theme was organized by architect and city planner Richard Burdett, who would be director of the 2006 Biennale.

As mentioned, the authors selected by Sudjic were predominantly professional writers, as even Burdett and Nordenson are habitual collaborators in architectural magazines and journals. Architecture, he argued, "is too important to be reduced to a 'private religion', where architects just talk to architects".[19]

Kurt Forster, however, introduced additional perspectives in the Biennale's edition held in 2004 under the suggestive title *Metamorph*, focused on the advent of an unpredictable exploration of form in contemporary architecture. The catalogue reflects directly the notion of disciplinary commutation and the sense of enduring readjustment. Forster considered the contribution of authors that came from very distinct theoretical and disciplinary backgrounds — literature, science, computer science, art history, art, and philosophy.

Authors addressed themes as different as mythology, as seen in the essay structured by the mythologist and writer Marina Warner. Scientist and art historian Martin Kemp chose to ponder on the "structural intuitions" of natural sciences in art and architecture. Meanwhile, the strong presence of digital culture in the exploration of the form was discussed by Antoine Picon, Hani Rashid and Edward Dimendberg. Art and architectural historian Nanni Baltzer analysed the atmospheric photography and the shadows of architecture surfaces. Others explored different links to other disciplines. Such was the case of Gernot Böhme, a specialist in philosophy of science who explored the metaphorical and acoustic connections between architecture and music. The comparative reflection between Hans Scharoun and Frank Gehry concert halls was explored in different perspectives by Kurt Forster himself and by the Abstractionist painter and art critic Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. The notion of landscape

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[19] Next: in Venice the future of world architecture. In *Domus* (17 May 2002).

design in the modernist discourse was also debated by Iñaki Ábalos while concurrently Philip Ursprung discussed the vision of Earth Art as "terrain vague" for architecture in order to counterbalance the emptiness of meaning. Another contribution by Spanish architect and editor Fernandez-Galliano addressed the issue of language metaphors.

The main domains of intellectual influences are easily identifiable while navigating through the references that supported the argument of the fifteen essays collected in the catalogue's volume, suggestively entitled "Focus".[20] Looking at Graph 2 – Codes, one realises that the artistic field played a very important role in the structuration of the argument. Marcel Duchamp, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Serra, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Robert Smithson are among the central references of artists and artists' writings that shaped the discourse on architecture. Simultaneously, digital culture, the notions of complexity and science are taken on board as new participant areas in the definition of architecture.

The most fracturing moment in the Architecture Biennale can be found in 2008' *Out There. Architecture Beyond Building*, in which Aaron Betsky launched the disturbing idea that architecture "might be" something that everyone could do, understand, or be part of. In fact, in order to understand this moment of de-construction we might frame Betsky's approach through his own written work. The emphasis in fragmentation and the challenge of the established codes of architecture was enquired early in *Violated Perfection: Architecture and the Fragmentation of the Modern* (1990). This essay should be analysed in the context of MoMA's referential exhibition *Deconstructivist Architecture*, curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley in 1988.[21]

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[20] The catalogue is divided in three volumes: Focus; Trajectories; and Vectors. Here we are centered on the volume Focus, since it is composed with essays written by several authors. The other volumes are related with the work displayed in the exhibition or with the official representations of the several countries.

[21] See Baptista, Luís Santiago. 2012. Desconstruindo a desconstrução arquitectónica. In *Revista de História da Arte*, 10 (issue: "Praticas da Teoria"): 61-77.

In the essay "Experimental architecture: a short introduction" (2008), Betsky defined a genealogy that stems from the work of Team10, Aldo van Eyck, Alison and Peter Smithson, Jaap Bakema, and Giancarlo de Carlo, as well as from the experimental approach of Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Peter Cook, Rem Koolhaas, Nigel Coates and Zaha Hadid. In other words, from the group of architects distinguished by Mark Wigley and Philip Johnson as deconstructivists. As point of departure for his essay, Betsky enunciated some personal convictions from which he based his argumentation: "I believe that architecture can stand witness to its own fact and to its potential disappearance" (Betsky 2008:15).

The catalogue, structured in five volumes,[22] considered the collaboration of the architect and independent curator Emiliano Gandolfi — who defined the exhibition of the Italian Pavilion —, and gathered twenty-seven very short "Manifestos" in volume V, written by architects and groups of architects,[23] which have neither common axis, nor conceptual interrelations between them.

Nodes of articulation

Looking again at the constellation of authors (Diagram-4), the interconnection between those heterogeneous approaches is provided throughout the three types of nodes, notably an institutional node, with author Paolo Baratta, President of the Venice Biennale Foundation. The second node was comprised of the

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[22] The catalogue is structured in the following volumes: "Installations"; "Hall of Fragments"; " Experimental Architecture"; "Participating Countries. Special and Collateral Events"; " Manifestos".

[23] Aaron Betsky; An Te Liu; Asymptote Arch; Atelier Bow How; Barkow Leibinger; Ben Berkel; Caroline Bos; Chris Salter; CoppHimmelblau; David Rockwell; Diller + Scofidio; Droog and Kesselkramer; Emiliano Gandolfi; Erik Adigard; Francesco Delogu; Frank Gehry; Greg Lynn; Gustafson Nichol; Gustafson Porter; Jones Kroloff; Massimiliano Fuksas; Matthew Ritchie; Nigel Coates; Paolo Baratta; Patrick Schumacher; Penezic and Rogina; Philippe Rahm; Renfro; Saskia Stein; Thom Mayne; Totan Kuzembaev; Vincent Guallart; Winy Maas; Zaha Hadid.

curators/directors, who were also invited to collaborate in other events' catalogues, such as Fuksas, Burdett and Chipperfield — directors of the 2000, 2006 and 2012 Biennale editions respectively —. Thirdly, there were authors specifically invited for writing texts in the catalogues, as the architect Zaha Hadid, English sociologist Richard Sennett, architect and editor Luís Fernandez-Galiano, and the Spanish architect Iñaki Abalos. Together, these authors worked as points of articulation between the Architecture Biennales, thus, allowing for the circulation of ideas and simultaneously increasing the opportunities to spread new conventions.

Although Baratta constituted a mere institutional node, his centrality cannot be disregarded inside the constellation of authors over the thirteen Architecture Biennales. Baratta is an effective politician, as Sudjic defined him, who has been determining the strategy of curators' choices since 2008, and punctually between 2000 and 2002. The sequence of such choices is very significant and clarifies one vision that, although informed by experts, is structured from outside the disciplinary field. However, in the 2008's catalogue he asked a disciplinary-oriented question: "What should an architecture exhibition, an architecture Biennale, be? The question is necessary", he pointed out, "in the other disciplines (art, cinema, dance, music, theatre) an exhibition or festival gathers and shows the works of the artists, but in this case?" (Baratta 2008: 13).

In other words, Baratta seems less concerned with the always-present challenge of exhibiting architecture and more interested in understanding whether the Architecture Biennale is an "instrument of knowledge", a mechanism of documentation, or an "emotional experience". He concluded that the event should be above all a place for the production of knowledge and a structure of communication " with its own rules, its own instruments, and its own logic".[24] In any case, grounded on such principles, the Biennale's president has taken "difference" as an intentional strategy for displaying architecture. For example, Sejima's "serene faith in

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[24] Baratta interview in Levy and Menking (2010: 194).

architecture" in the 2010 Biennale, strongly contrasted with the "joyful pessimism" of Betsky's 2008 exhibition:

With Betsky's biennale, he took the critic's criticism of architecture to the extreme by arguing that today architecture is almost everything. The world is not one of building but of space and of things to be seen and heard and enjoyed. By contrast, in selecting Sejima, I chose an architect who is in fact one of the most architectural. She starts from the problem of architecture, and the question of how to define limits from inside and outside, or from two different outsides, or from two different insides.[25]

Looking once more at Diagram-5 it is important to observe that the 12th Biennale, directed by Sejima, plays here an isolated position in the constellation of authors, contrasting not only with Betsky's approach but also with all the other groups, which are interconnected among them. Here, the 2006 edition curated by Richard Burdett aligned a high level of articulations, acquiring centrality in the constellation of relationships.

Burdett, a leading city planner and scholar at the London School of Economics, was invited by Davide Croff — then president of the Biennale —, specifically to produce an exhibition focused on the city in the age of global transformation. Behind this institutional determination, it should be considered the Biennale's political interests in producing referential contents on contemporary critical issues in order to reinforce its cultural visibility after the moment of institutional reform in 2004. But it is also evident the presence of Massimo Cacciari, author of the renowned essay "The Dialectics of the Negative and the Metropolis" (1973), vice-president of the Biennale and Mayor of Venice City[26] at that time, who probably had some influence in the theme proposed and in the selection of the director.

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[25] Baratta interview in Levy and Menking (2010: 182).

[26] Massimo Cacciari was Mayor of Venice City from 1993 to 2000, and from 2005 to 2010.

However, Cacciari did not constitute the intellectual support of Burdett. The catalogue is the result of a deeper and rigorous scientific research work that involved the contribution of large teams, based in each of the sixteen cities[27] analysed, who collected data and produced materials specifically for the exhibition. But the catalogue is also informed by the knowledge acquired from diverse urban research projects undertaken by academic and professional institutions such as IUAV, ETH Studio Basel, The Berlage Institute, The University of Texas at Austin, among others.[28]

Therefore, the published discourse provides accurate documentation of this collective research work, as well as strong images of global cities, accompanied by graphical representations of collected data and analytical essays. The work was framed by an interdisciplinary view that linked architecture to economy, sociology, politics and geography. It included an extended and central essay written by the sociologist Saskia Sassen — leading figure in the analysis of "global cities"[29] and Burdett's colleague at LSE —, and an essay jointly written by Burdett and the urban geographer Miguel Kanai. A group predominantly constituted by architects completed the conceptual approach with personal viewpoints shared by: Inaki Abalos; Josep Acebillo; Robert Bruegmann; David Chipperfield; Norman Foster; Massimiliano Fuksas; Zaha Hadid; Stefan Hertmans; Jacques Herzog; Anish Kapoor; Rem

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[27] São Paulo; Caracas; Bogota; Mexico City; Los Angeles; New York City; Cairo; Johannesburg; Istanbul; Milan and Turin; Berlin; London; Barcelona; Tokyo; Mumbai; and Shanghai.

[28] C Photo Magazine; Domus; M.I.T. SENSEable City Laboratory; OMA-AMO; Royal College of Art; Shrinking Cities; Universidad Iberoamericana, School of Architecture; The University of Texas at Austin; UDRI; Architecture Foundation and MoMA; Macrourbanistica DPA, Politecnico di Milano. The research centers constituted a set of workshops, entitled: " Shaping the city of the future: boundaries and connections"; "Sustainable mobility in meta-cities"; Conference. "Engineers and architects planning the future of the city." This network of institutions, as well as the research teams based on the cities, was not represented in Net5 because it would undermine the clarity of the reading.

[29] As already mentioned in the second chapter, "global city" is a term coined in 2005 by Sassen in the well-known article "Global City: Introducing a Concept", published in *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, XI (2 winter/spring).

Koolhaas; Joel Kotkin; Leon Krier; Paul Robbrecht; Richard Rogers; Denise Scott Brown; and the sociologist Richard Sennet.

Burdett admitted that, while it was not "conscious", this was an "intellectual statement" that encompassed a critical discourse against the understanding of architecture as a field separated from the problems of contemporary global cities:

I know there were people who saw the show and didn't like it, thinking that it was social geography and had nothing to do with architecture (...). *When you've got these major themes to work with, you try to relate them to current concerns in architecture. But architecture today doesn't really engage with these issues yet.*[30]

Turning point

Compared to Burdett's scientific and interdisciplinary perspective — as well as with the axes defined by the other directors — one comes to realise that the 12th Biennale (2010) is, in fact, in the opposite disciplinary position — whether in terms of scale, disciplinary perspective, and discursive approach.

Sejima puts back elementary questions of architecture, now refocused on the experience of space: "I am an architect", she said, "so I would like people to feel the possibility of architecture".[31] This guideline steered the selection of a very limited group of authors, who produced "short and contained texts" that supported the phenomenological notion of architecture as sensorial experience. Among these were Italian sociologist and philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato, whose text is grounded on notions such as the "production of subjectivity", referencing Félix Guattari's "aesthetical paradigm" and Michel Foucault's "aesthetical of existence".

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[30] Richard Burdett interview by Levy and Menking (2010: 132-133).

[31] Kazuyo Sejima interview by Levy and Menking (2010: 178).

Another author invited was Japanese Yuko Hasegawa, then Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, who recalled Henri Lefebvre's experience of everyday space in a "post- theoretical" era; and Eve Blau, a scholar in History of Urban Form who also discussed the Lefebvrean notion of production of space. The filmmaker Wim Wenders and the conceptual artist Cerith Wyn Evans completed the scope of the catalogue.

Common Ground, directed by David Chipperfield in 2012, is here considered the closing moment of the constellation of relationships. Chipperfield, following Sejima's perspective, located architecture at the centre of reflection, because "it is within the discipline of architecture and its distinct physical limits that we must operate". This exhibition intended to put into question "the priorities that seem to dominate our time, priorities that focus on the individual, on privilege, on the spectacular and the special. These priorities seem to overlook the normal, the social, the common" (Chipperfield 2012: 13).

Chipperfield published a catalogue and commissioned a book of essays — *Common Ground. A Critical Reader —*, whose nature, configuration and intellectual framework is totally distinguishable from all the previous approaches. The book is, in fact, a critical reader that constructs a theoretical support around the theme proposed. The idea of "common" was mapped by thirty-one essays, organized in five main issues: "common grounds"; "intellectual commons"; "modern commons"; "conflicted ground"; "architecture in public".

If we look closer inside Chipperfield's network of authors,[32] we realize that he drew on a group strongly connected with history and theory of architecture, whose writings

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[32] Keller Easterling; Laurids Ortner; Luis Fernandez-Galiano; Luis Moreno Mansilla; Mark Wigley; MUF with Michael Keith; Niklas Maak; Ove Arup; Paolo Baratta; Patrick Lynch; Peter Carl; Pier Vittorio Aureli; Rafael Moneo; Reinier de Graaf; Richard Sennet; Robert Bevan; Robert Burghardt; Steve Parnell; Tao Zhu; Teresa Stoppani; Thomas Demand; Thomas Struth; Wouter Vanstiphout; Joseph Rykwert; David Leatherbarrow; Cino Zucchi; Ove Arup; Flora Samuel; Denise Scott Brown; Fluvio Irace; Eyal Weizman; Justin McGuirk; Kazys Varnelis, Alexander Kluge.

are supported on classical philosophy, mainly on the work of authors such as Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, Edmund Husserl, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Immanuel Kant, Walter Benjamin. But, incidentally, Chipperfield's authors also seem interested in recovering the architects of the Enlightenment and, most notably, on the theoretical thought of Aldo Rossi.

6.3 Constellation of participants

In this subchapter, I will enquire on the patterns of ties between all participants in the visual discourse, i.e. architects and artists involved in the production of the exhibition ' contents at the Central Pavilion and the Arsenale. We can clearly distinguish three groups of actors that made the thematic choices and selected the participants, and two conjunctures of intellectual frameworks, but a division is not so clear in the constellation below.

The reading of the Diagram-7 suggests that these participants established a very intricate web of interconnections over the period in analysis. In fact, in our globalized era, the phenomenon of biennialization has permitted to increase exponentially the relations between actors, as we saw in the second chapter. In spite of this extremely dense web of relationships, it is possible to conclude that some participants became more relevant or enduring then others, as perceptible in the filtered diagram Net9. This could mean that these agents had more direct contacts and more intensive interactions — hence more opportunities to have better information, greater awareness and a higher susceptibility to influence or to be influenced by others.

We can clearly distinguish in the Diagram-8 (next page) — that filtered the totality of actors, revealing the information by levels of visibility —, the names of Zaha Hadid, Renzo Piano, Arata Isozaki, Herzog and De Meuron, Frank Gehry, Diller and Scofidio, Jean Novel, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Morphosis, Álvaro Siza Vieira, MVRDV, David Chipperfield and Richard Rogers inside the constellation of recurrent participants. It is noteworthy to observe that in 1996 Hans Hollein had already predicted the iconic dimension of these architects. The individualities selected by Hollein and by the board of experts as "seismographs" and "emerging voices" would acquire, from that moment on, great visibility and continuous presence in the Venice Biennale structure (Diagram-8). Several of them became the most influential personalities in architecture since the end of the 20th century, and some were distinguished with the Pritzker Prize.
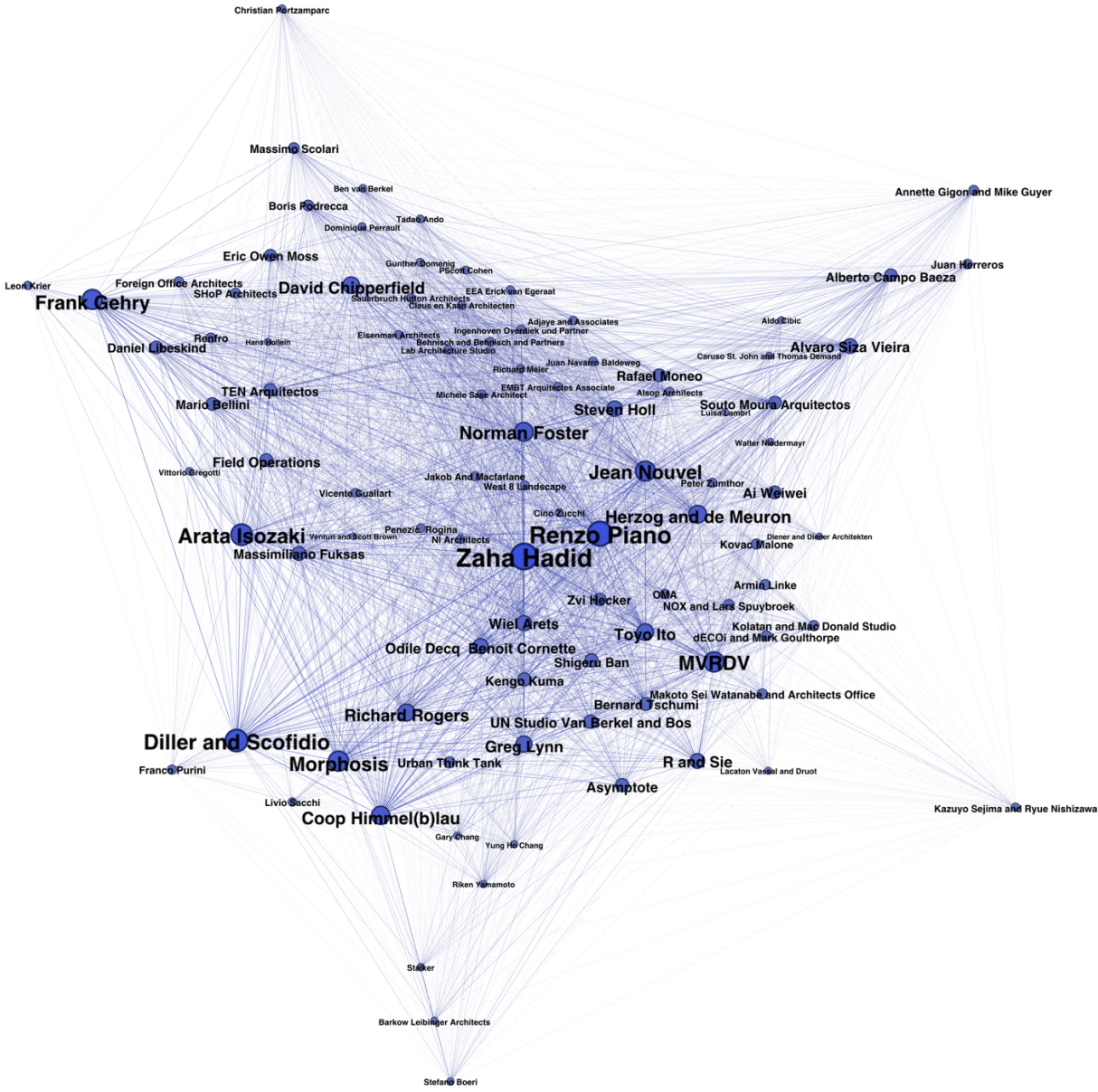
Diagram-7_CONSTELLATION OF PARTICIPANTS (1980-2012)

Christian Portzamparc

Massimo Scolari

Ben van Berkel

Boris Podrecca

Dominique Perrault

Tadao Ando

Annette Gigon and Mike Guyer

Eric Owen Moss

Gunther Domenig

PScott Cohen

Juan Herreros

Alberto Campo Baeza

Leon Krier

Foreign Office Architects

SHoP Architects

David Chipperfield

EEA Erick van Egeraat

Sauerbruch Hutton Architects

Claus en Kaan Architecten

Aldo Cibic

Frank Gehry

Renfro

Hans Hollein

Adjaye and Associates

Ingenhoven Overdiek und Partner

Behnisch and Behnisch and Partners

Alvaro Siza Vieira

Daniel Libeskind

Eisenman Architects

Lab Architecture Studio

Caruso St. John and Thomas Demand

Richard Meier

Juan Navarro Baldeweg

Rafael Moneo

TEN Arquitectos

EMBT Arquitectes Associate

Alsop Architects

Souto Moura Arquitectos

Mario Bellini

Michele Saee Architect

Steven Holl

Luisa Lambri

Norman Foster

Walter Niedermayr

Field Operations

Jean Nouvel

Vittorio Gregotti

Jakob And Macfarlane

West 8 Landscape

Peter Zumthor

Ai Weiwei

Vicente Guallart

Cino Zucchi

Herzog and de Meuron

Arata Isozaki

Venturi and Scott Brown

Penezic Rogina

NI Architects

Renzo Piano

Diener and Diener Architekten

Massimiliano Fuksas

Zaha Hadid

Kovac Malone

Armin Linke

Zvi Hecker

OMA

NOX and Lars Spuybroek

Wiel Arets

Toyo Ito

Kolatan and Mac Donald Studio

dECOi and Mark Goulthorpe

Odile Decq

Benoit Cornette

Shigeru Ban

MVRDV

Kengo Kuma

Makoto Sei Watanabe and Architects Office

Bernard Tschumi

Richard Rogers

UN Studio Van Berkel and Bos

Diller and Scofidio

Greg Lynn

Franco Purini

Morphosis

Urban Think Tank

R and Sie

Lacaton Vassal and Druot

Livio Sacchi

Asymptote

Coop Himmel(b)lau

Gary Chang

Yung Ho Chang

Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa

Riken Yamamoto

Stalker

Barkow Leibinger Architects

Stefano Boeri

Diagram-8_CONSTELLATION OF PARTICIPANTS FILTERED [1980-2012]

Together, these award holders[33] belong to the so-called star system and their projects and build works are essentially associated with such notions as spectacular, difference, experimentation. Some of them notoriously challenge conventional limits of physical and structural dimensions, forcing the possibilities of spatial perception, exploring the limit of materiality, or transgressing the ways of representation. In the continuous presence of these heterogeneous actors, as well as others such as Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, Rafael Moneo, Daniel Libeskind, we can see an obvious strategy of marketing and consumption of the present time, when architects using their capacity to generate public attention inside the global sphere of the Venice Architecture Biennale.

In this sense, the Biennale is a double edge engine: on the one hand, it performs a space for consecration of identities, increasing the symbolic value of the architect; and, on the other, it cumulates cultural capital from the guarantee provided by the star architect visibility.[34] As Paolo Baratta clearly explained:

> [...] *Only half of this public belongs to the world of architecture, and an exhibition has to speak to those who are not in the discipline. I state this issue very strongly when I speak to curators. To Aaron Betsky, who sent me a paper of concepts, I said 'No, no, no.' This is not a book or an essay, it is theatre.*[35]

However, inside this "theatre", the choice of the protagonists for public representation cannot be ignored in the context of the internal discourses of the disciplinary domain. Beyond their apparent formal and conceptual heterogeneity, these architects share a "commitment to building" (Wigley 1988: 19) and believe in the exploration of the built

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[33] The award holders list includes Zaha Hadid (2004) the strongest presence within the web of participants until 2012; Kazuyo Sejima (2010); Jean Novel (2008); Norman Foster (1999); Renzo Piano (1998); Álvaro Siza Vieira (1992); Frank Gehry (1989); and Hans Hollein (1985).

[34] This topic was analysed in the present thesis, 1.1 "Defining discipline", pp. 35, 36.

[35] Paolo Baratta interview in Levy and Menking (2010: 184).

object as a place for theoretical inquiry and formal experimentation. These theoretical tenets still stand in the face of discourses dominated by "fragmentation", " transgression", and "disintegration" — words often used from 2000 onwards, as seen previously. "Let's be clear", Forster wrote, "in no way are we suggesting that there is only one way to experience or debate the myriad works on exhibition. Experiencing a work means letting go of preconceived ideas and examining not only the work before us but also ourselves" (Forster 2004b: 5).

Though the Biennale had never tried to impose readings or aesthetical directions, however, we can read these enduring presences as a resonance of the post-structuralist debate. Even considering that these architects can hardly be limited to the group distinguished in 1988 as deconstructivists, their work expresses the paradigm change denoted by Wigley on that date:

They have left their complex abstractions and confronted the materiality of build objects. This shift gives their work a critical edge. Critical work today can be done only in the realm of building: to engage with the discourse, architects have to engage with building; the object becomes the site of all theoretical inquiry (Wigley 1988: 19).

The scheme defined in Diagram-9, in the following page, synthetizes the flows of the participants among the exhibitions. This scheme indicates that between 1996 and 2004 (a high moment of concentration) the above mentioned group of architects kept a very strong presence within the Biennale, which was extended to the 2006, 2008 and 2012 events, although, with less relevance. Here, it is also visible that the criteria used by Sejima for selecting the participants was distinct: "When I selected the participants, I asked each of them to think about this title [People Meet in Architecture]. [...] I want to say that architecture should always be open to the public", she stated, "and I hope the people I have invited to participate in this biennale are interesting and interested in that".[36]

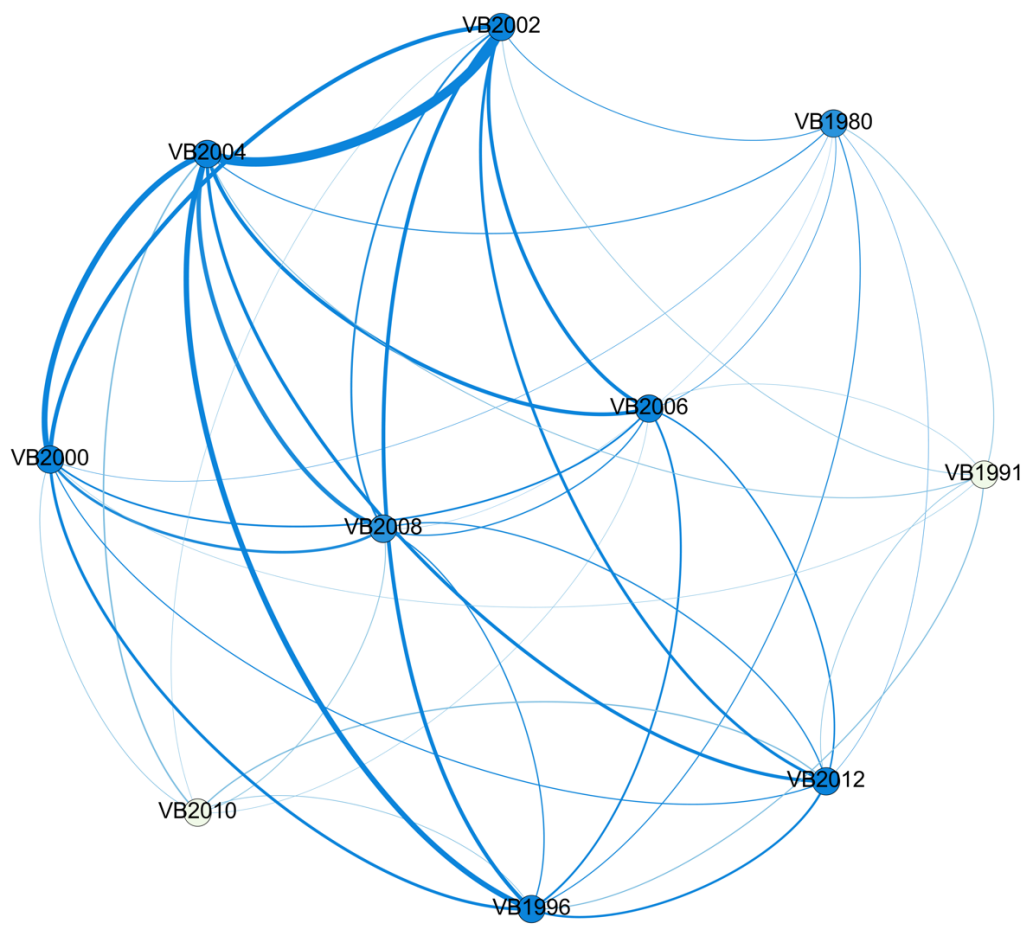[36] Kazuyo Sejima interview by Levy and Menking (2010: 168).

Diagram-9_CONSTELLATION OF PARTICIPANTS SYNTHESIS [1980-2012

Curiously, since 1996 — the moment she was identified as an "emergent voice" — Sejima has been a permanent presence in the Biennale.[37] But she did not select architects from the recurrent group of actors in which she is also included. On the contrary, she tried to invite a younger generation of lesser-known architects, a task made easier by the extensive network of social relations and possibilities allowed by technological communication systems (Levy; Menking 2010: 168-169). Among the star-architects, only Rem Koolhaas was distinguished in *People meet in architecture* event with a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement. This means that the notion of experience was redirected towards a sensorial experience of space, already distant from the post-structuralist fragmentary orientation and dissociated from the notion of star system. Sejima seems to be more focused on the idea of "meeting" and in its direct connection with the phenomenological experience of space.

David Chipperfield, in 2012, would follow the shifting moment started by Sejima. In Common Ground the star-architects[38] were required to think not about their differences or exceptionalities, but about their affinities, therefore challenging the cult of the individual. This perspective was extended through the essays published in the Critical Reader. In doing so, Chipperfield emulated Hollein's first moment of rupture, but in a reverse perspective: this exhibition is "about architecture and not about architects." (Chipperfield 2012: 13)

[37] Kazuyo Sejima was invited to participate in the 6th, 7th, 8th and 13th editions.

[38] Among others: Álvaro Siza Vieira, Bernard Tschumi, Jean Novel, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, Kenneth Frampton, MVRDV, Norman Foster, OMA, Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Peter Zumthor, Rafael Moneo, Renzo Piano, Souto Moura Arquitectos, Steven Holl, Zaha Hadid

7. Synchronic Perspective
Crossed Stories

City, *language*, and *form* provide the focus of this chapter in order to track down three brief story lines that run parallel but separate, notwithstanding perceptible exchanges. From the detailed readings of the texts published in all the catalogues of the Venice Architecture Biennale until 2012 and attending to the specificities of words and categories included in these themes, each story line intends to understand the evolution of the discourse and to provide a reading of the discipline of architecture in the Biennale as a *corpus* in permanent adjustment and transformation.

These story lines involve the same question on architecture's disciplinary delimitation, but each seems to refer to different aspects: architecture as project in strong connection with the notion of city; the individual discourse of the architect; the materiality of architecture and its formal dissolution, exploring the relation with the concept of function and utility. Together these story lines tell us less about the works of architecture exhibited in the several Biennales than they do about the ideas, conventions and dilemmas under which they were constructed, suggesting that architecture is a multi-layered disciplinary domain.
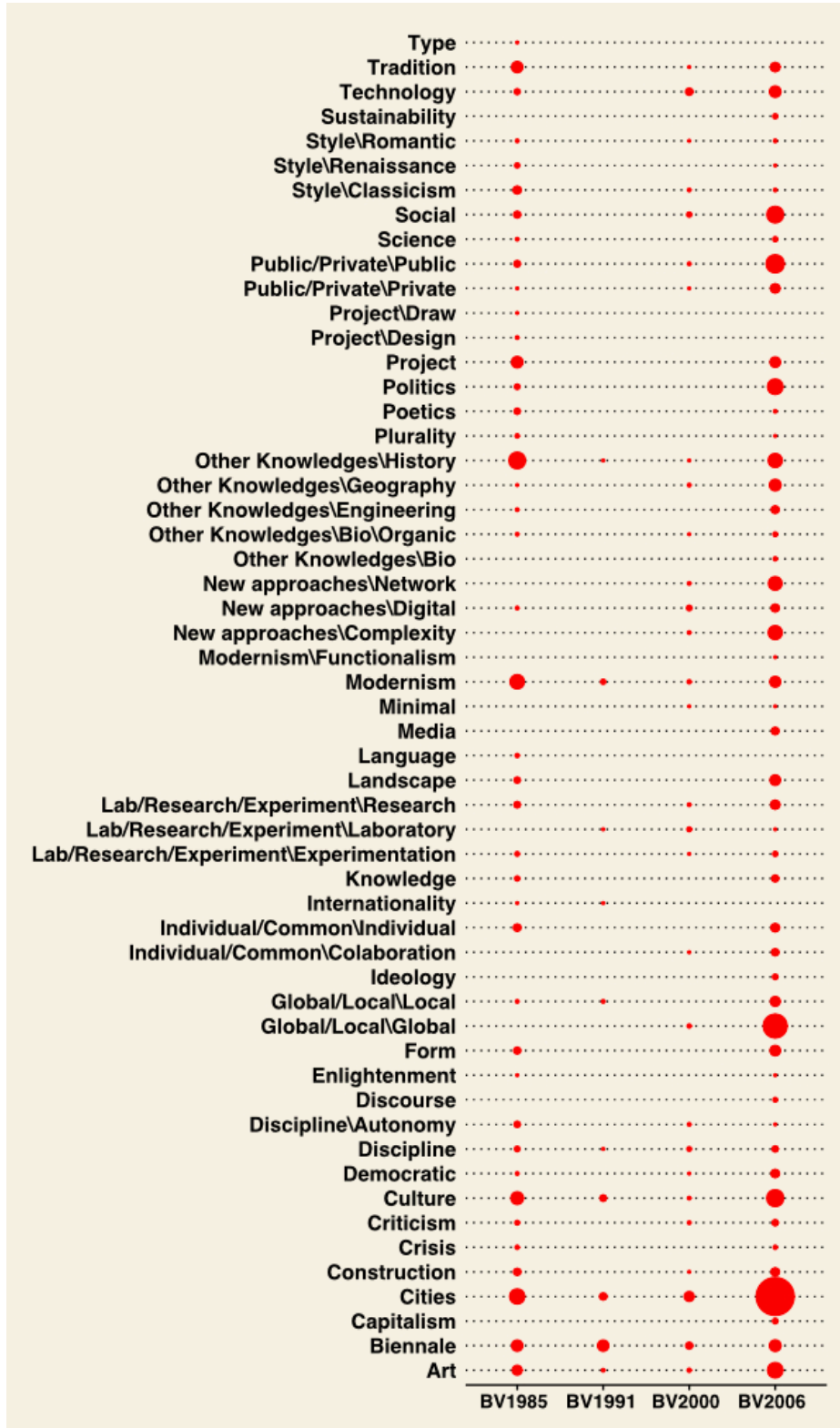
Graph-3_TERMS CONNECTED WITH THE IDEA OF *CITY*

7.1 First Storyline: City

Since the celebration in 1979 of its very first moment with the "Teatro del Mondo" engine, the Venice Architecture Biennale has been identifying the *city* as among the most significant notions in the definition of the discipline (see Graph 2-Codes). As showed over the course of several exhibitions from that moment on, these two notions — architecture and city — have been seen as strongly connected, providing a point of departure for a wider reading. Here, four exhibitions are considered more relevant on such connection: *Projetto Venezia* (1985); *5th Mostra Internazionale di Architettura* (1991); *Cities: More ethic less aesthetic* (2000); and *Cities: Architecture and Society* (2006).

The city was a notion ostensibly treated by Aldo Rossi not only in the *L'Architettura della Città* (1966), which soon acquired a landmark status, but also by his "graphic metaphor"[1] of the *analogous city* — "the unlimited *contaminatio* of things, of correspondences" (Rossi 1981: 35) — produced for the Milan Triennale in 1973 and presented in the exhibition *Europa-America* (1976) at the Venice Biennale.[2] In *L'Architettura della Città* Rossi had developed the notion of *urban artefact* to characterize the idea of city, a place where monuments — "signs of collective will" (Rossi [1966] 1984: 162) — functioned as referential points in time and space. In Rossi's theoretical thought, architecture and city were perceived as coincident and equal phenomena:

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[1] Tafuri wrote: "Even for Rossi's 'analogous city,' there is no real 'site'. Beneath the composition, there could very well appear the inscription, scrawled in childish handwriting, *ceci n'est pas une ville,* which would produce the same discursive slippage that occurs in Magritte's *Pipe.*" Tafuri, Manfredo. 1987. *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s.* Trans. Robert Connolly Pellegrino d'Acierno Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, p. 277.

[2] Aldo Rossi explained his notion of *città analoga* in an article published in *Lotus* 13 (December 1976).

I use the term architecture in a positive and pragmatic sense, as a creation inseparable from civilized life and the society in which it is manifested. By nature, it is collective. As the first men built houses to provide more favourable surroundings for their life, fashioning an artificial climate for themselves, so they built with aesthetic intention. Architecture came into being along with the first traces of the city; it is deeply rooted in the formation of civilization and is a permanent, universal, and necessary artefact. (Rossi 1984 [1966]: 21)

Following this conviction, Rossi elaborated the program for the 3rd International Architecture Exhibition, held in 1985, while he was director of the Architecture sector (1983-1986).

"Leone di Pietra", Sketch by Aldo Rossi', *Progetto Venezia*, published in the catalogue
Terza Mostra Internazionale di Architettura (Electa 1985)

The exhibition was based on a very successful international competition that invited ideal proposals for the requalification of real areas strongly related to the history of Venice city and its mainland.[3] The work of architects "universally recognized" together with less famous and young architects from European, American and Japanese schools, was an important achievement in the Architecture Biennale sector:

In this participation, the established and fortunate theme has certainly been that of Venice and the Venetian mainland; Venice, like all other big cities or like capitals, could not have been understood or seen with municipalistic cares.
It could not but state general problems for the architects; and so it has become material to be composed for a different architecture by people who live in the farthest places. (Rossi 1985: 13)

Progetto Venezia was the title of the exhibition, literally undertaken by Portoghesi as a "projectual offer", in which around 3000 architects from all over the world had contributed with 1500 proposals for the city of Venice. In the international competition launched by Rossi, Venice was effectively the great "protagonist" of the exhibition and the "capital of projectual hope" — as Portoghesi defined it. Portoghesi took Venice as a symbol of "resistance" against the modernist urban determinism. He also took "plurality" in the same sense:

The main significance of this exhibition, is that of having called together planning forces from every part of the world and having driven them, with the thematic unity of the ten competitions, to dialogue about the destinies of the city and the territory, through comparable examples, through valuable images and

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[3] Namely: Piazza di Badoere; Piazza di Este; Villa Farsetti in Santa Maria di Sala; Piazze di Palmanova; Castelli di Giulietta e Romeo; Rocca di Noale; Prato della Valle in Padova; and three specific areas in the historical center of Venice, Ponte dell'Academia, Mercato dei Rialto; Ca'Venier dei Leoni.

differentiated cultural addresses, converging in sincereness and seriousness in the engagement. (Portoghesi 1985: 10)

But, *Progetto Venezia* means, likewise, to situate architecture in a wider disciplinary understanding, where the notion of *city* is linked with the idea of *project* and *place* (Venice in this case). The term *city* can, thus, be understood in two different ways. On the one hand, it implies the conviction that architecture is city, evoking the theoretical thought of Rossi on the notion of urban artefact, as well as a focus on the idea of *place*. It also considers the role of history in the sedimentation of old and new memories.

On the other hand, Rossi draws attention to the notion of *project*, here considered the principal act of architecture's decisions. He argued that it was precisely in the "supposed impossibility" of the projects submitted in the competition that the "sense of architecture c[ould] be found; which could be in its unavoidable growth through a "deconsacration" of what comes before it" (Rossi 1985). In this sense, Rossi distinguished Daniel Libeskind's project proposed for the Piazza Palmanova with the "Leone di Pietra" and his exhibition "Three lessons in architecture" — "Writing machine", "Reading machine" and "Memory machine" — with the "Leone d'Oro."

In Libeskind's proposal — "one of the most committed architects in this exhibition", in Rossi's words —, architecture was "destroyed, upset, deprived of its image" to be "recomposed in these machines of memory where the city of Palmanova is buried" (Rossi 1985:14). The aerial image of the city was embedded in an engine from which only few fragments of the original structure of the city were perceptible. D'Amato reinforced the notion that the "designed architecture" is able to raise a "new cultural geography […] that well represents the deep transformations with which the architectural culture prepares to face the end of this millennium" (D'Amato 1985: 37).

Over the several Biennales, the idea of city expanded from this perspective to ever-changing visions. After the global turn the city lost its identification with the notions of *history* and *place*, changing the scale of interpretation as well as the focus of attention,

which shifted to the complexity of the new systems of communication, shaped by "new technologies, changing means of transport and advanced methods of construction." (Hollein 1996: n.p.)

In 2000, Fuksas dedicated the exhibition *Città: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* to another conception and scale of the city, the "megalopolis", calling for an "order of intervention, that, after the utopias and the beginnings of the modern movement, has become foreign to us" (Fuksas 2000: n.p.). The exhibition used the entire space of the Arsenale to transmit the information over a giant surface of a 300-meter screen, on which were projected eleven videos identifying the contradictions and dilemmas of the eleven biggest cities in the world, from Cairo to Mexico City. The ideas of "desperation", "non-integration", "marginalization", "clandestine" were displayed, provoking great impact:

Nocturnal visions in the long hours of city flight stream out across clear night skies like 'filaments', gleaming springs, 'spiders' that shatter in a thousand different directions. Satellite visions, clouded images where the immense is not so different from the infinitely tiny. (Fuksas 2000: n.p.)

In parallel with the exhibition, an open competition was launched between students and architects, with proposals submitted "strictly on-line" that illustrated the "idea of a city in the third millennium" virtually. Doriana Mandrelli, who organized the competition, expressed the "freshness of ideas" — about one hundred submissions —, remarkable for using new digital tools in the experimentation and reinterpretation of cities' "metabolism". The images in movement or the fixed sequences "never seek out a technical performance or a dramatic stratagem". Also, the fast circulation of information, "accessible in real time, anywhere and always in the same way, through the web" (Mandrelli 2000: n.p.), have transformed both the relationship with the city and its image. The introduction of the digital in the concept of the city increased the spectrum of possibilities and changed the vision of what "city centre", "historical

place", "locus", could be, therefore advancing a notion of project defined as a field of virtual exploration.

Likewise, the notion of *network* introduced in the Biennale's vocabulary since 2000 and emphasized in 2006 (see Graph2-Codes), became preeminent in the definition of the contemporary city. Particularly Saskia Sassen, in the essay "Why cities matter" (2006), clarifies this point:

> *It is the new challenge of coordinating, managing and servicing these increasingly complex, specialized and vast economic circuits that has made cities strategic. It is perhaps one of the great ironies of our global digital age that it has produced not only massive dispersal, but also extreme concentrations of top-level resources in a limited number of places. Indeed, the organizational side of today's global economy is located and continuously reinvented, in what has become a network of about 40 major and not-so-major global cities* […].
> (Sassen 2006)

The city was not only converted in a network structure, but it also became part of a networked system with other cities, forming new "inter-city geographies". The categories *network*, *global*, *systems* started to provide a new reference point for architecture's relation with city.
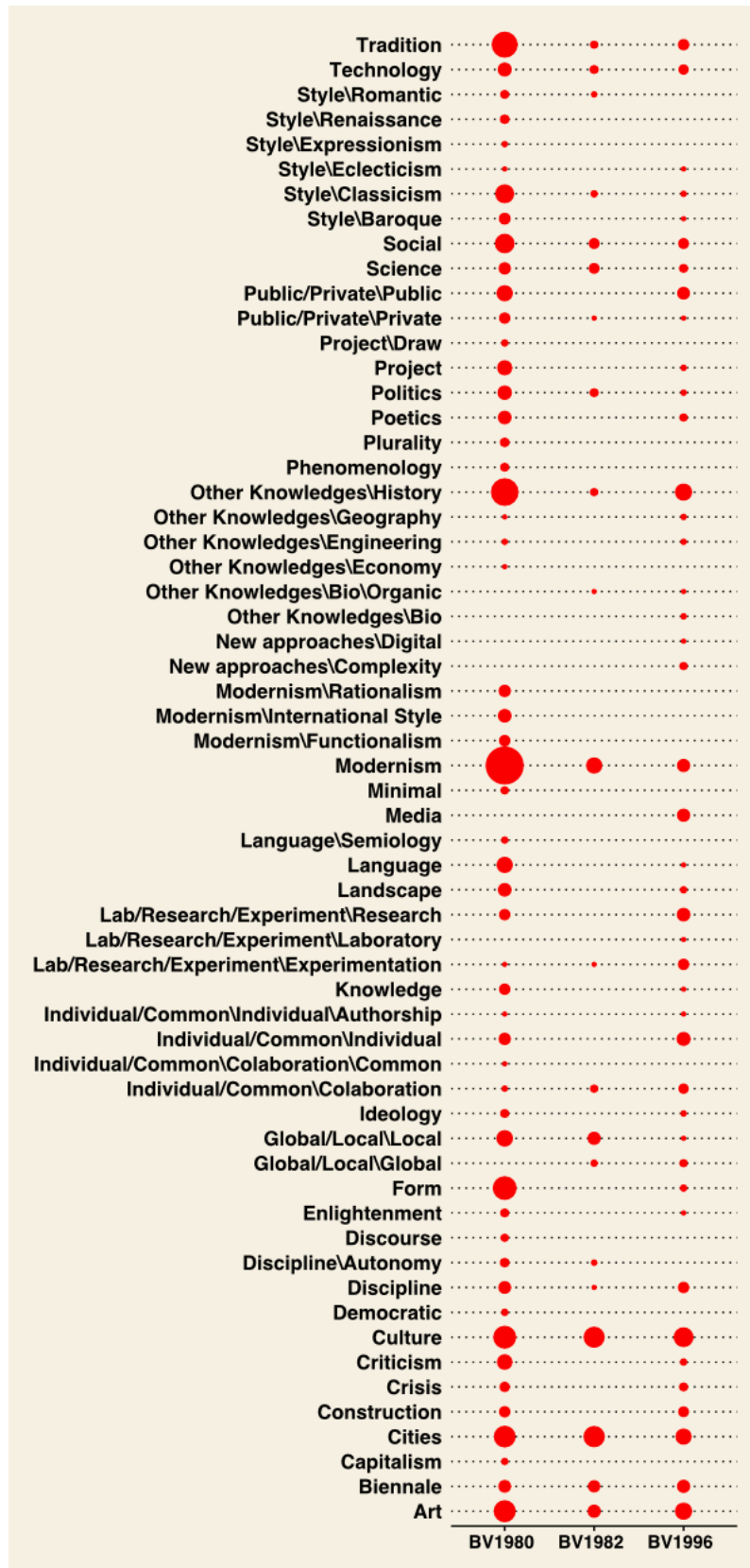
Graph-4_TERMS CONNECTED WITH THE IDEA OF *LANGUAGE*

7.2 Second Storyline: Language

In 1985, five years after the first International Architecture Exhibition in Venice, Portoghesi recalled the foundational moment in which the Corderie of the Arsenale became a "symbolic battlefield" and proclaim the determination of the architects "to regain confidence with the historical heritage and with the living body of the city" (Portoghesi 1985: 10). In this battlefield, the post-modern idea of plurality, shaped from a multifocalization of architects' perspectives and the polycentric notion of culture, worked as a kind of mechanism of defence against the social, functional and linguistic determinism of modernist paradigm. If we look at the Graph2-Codes we realize that modernism was, in fact, an important presence that crossed the Biennale's architectural discourse over the thirty decades. It should be noted that, during the first period, there was a real determination to fight against modernism.

In the wake of the "battle" of the Arsenal in 1982 and just when architecture was analysed under a multicultural perspective in *Architecture in the Islamic countries*, the Biennale, jointly with the Museum of Finnish Architecture, organized the International Symposium "La tradizione moderna" (The modern tradition).[4] The purpose was "to reinforce the awareness of the participants about the central problems of architecture in our confused and disoriented era".[5] The discussion on the topic lasted three days

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[4] In this occasion the Venice Biennale had restored the exhibition pavilion designed by Alvar Aalto for the Finnish section completed in 1955-56. In order to maintain the Italian-Nordic interaction in the field of architecture, it was decided to organize an invited symposium between a limited number of architects, critics and historians from Italy and the Scandinavian countries. For the analysis on Alvar Aalto retalationship with Italy see: Micheli, Silva. 2014 Alvar Aalto and Italy: A relationship of exchange. In *Alvar Aalto Second Nature.* Kries, Mateo and Jochen Eisenbrand (Ed.), Barcelona: Vitra Design Museum.

[5] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 4086. *Simposio internazionale "La tradizione moderna"* (Draft/JP/17 May 1982).

and started with two introductory lectures from both Italian and Scandinavian participants which functioned as the core of discussions.[6]

In the program's draft — probably written by Portoghesi — it is clear the urgency to find a framework on which to situate contemporary architecture: "Attacks on the leading artistic movement of our decade have often taken an aggressive tone and the ideals of Modernism have been replaced by neo-classicism, post-modern pluralism, neo-rationalism, neo-surrealism and a number of other approaches. […] The ideals of Modern Movement have not possessed the capacity of turning into the positive vernacular, like the previous styles have done".[7] By assessing the validity of the ideals of modernism and by placing it in the scope of a "tradition", this debate discarded some of the essential characteristics of modernism. The Italian architect Giuseppe Samonà argued, in the introductory lecture, that it would be necessary to shape a new architectural avant-garde focused on the theory of project and not on the linguistic orientation of style:

I believe we can find so, some coherent answers about problems of doing and judging the architectural forms in the difficult situation we have today, divided between the idea of Modern tradition, interpreted as continuity with Modern Movement, and the alternative idea of a Post Modern Movement, interpreted as a return to the tradition of spatial system forms of the past, prevalently involving it in a new and popular neo-classicism, that renews the need of a monumental architecture as the neo-classicism one, recreated, with the destruction of myths and of abstract ideologies, through new revivals.[8]

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[6] The symposium occurred from 23 to 25 September 1982. As participants the symposium included: Yoshinobu Ashihara (japan); Hans Asplund (Sweden); Sverre Fehn (Norway); Ignazio Gardellla (Italy); Knud Peter Harboe (Denmark); Timo Penttilä (Finland); Renzo Piano (Italy); Reima Pietilä (Finland); Aldo Rossi (Italy); Giuseppe Samona (Italy); Tuomo Siitonen (Finland); Colin St John Wilson (Great Britain).

[7] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 4086. *Simposio internazionale "La tradizione moderna"* (Draft/JP/17 May 1982).

[8] *Ibid.*

For authors such as Vincent Scully, in the essay "How things got to be the way they are now" (1980), or Charles Jencks' "Towards radical eclecticism" (1980) — whose writings had contributed to the proposal of post-modern conceptualization[9] — architecture tended to be identified through stylistic paradigms and distinguished as a linguistic system of signs. Jencks compared the written work produced by contemporary architects[10] to those of Vitruvius, Alberti, Serlio, Viollet-le-Duc, "all marginal builders", to illustrate that architecture writing and building practice were equal gestures in the "re-naissance" of architecture. Jencks was convinced that this was the moment of theoretical "rebirth", which was waiting for an equal rebirth in architectural practice. He used the expression "re-naissance" not in classical terms, but to describe "architectural history in its variety; not of one tradition, but many heterogeneous ones, displaced from their previous contexts" (Jencks 1980: 33). The demand for meaning, in Jencks semiological conception, should be done through a set of historical codes and stylistic elements, under a plural understanding of the tradition. Portoghesi also believed that this would be the "reopening of boundaries that delimited the language of uncontaminated geometry" (Portoghesi 1980: 11).

However, this plurality was precisely one of the key points that forced Kenneth Frampton to decline the invitation to take part in *The Presence of the Past*.[11] In the letter he addressed to Portoghesi on 25 April 1980 — just three months before the exhibition's opening —, he justified his refusal to participate with two main arguments. Firstly, the exhibition "confused the category of the 'star' architect with the role of being a critic". Secondly, the critic would be "absorbed by the acritical nature of the work

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[9] *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977); *Meaning in Architecture*, 1970, co-edited with George Baird.

[10] *L'Architettura delia Città* (Aldo Rossi), *Delirious New York* (Rem Koolhaas), *Collage City* (Colin Rowe) - or with rediscovering a European tradition, *Architettura razionale* (Rossi again).*Rational Architecture* (Leon Krier), *La Tendenza* thus giving the eclecticism a more contextual basis than it has in America (Jencks 1980: 33).

[11] Frampton had participated, as member of the committee of critics, in three meetings held in Venice, in September 1979, November 1979 and February 1980. Cf. Léa-Catherine Szacha 2016: 233.

surrounding him or her on every side".[12] Frampton acknowledged that it was "an illusion" to keep critical distance from the "overall ideology of the show by simply writing a critical article", because he was explicitly opposed to the "post-modernist cultural policy of pluralism".[13] The letter finished with a powerful critic tone, expressed in the following terms:

It is one thing to mount an international exhibition whose theme is to demonstrate the present reaction against the reduced categories of modern architecture. It is another thing to manifest the triumph of an understructured pluralism through a curiously partisan approach to the apparent procedure of selection and display. Where the one leads towards a creative criticality, the other would seem in this instance to have no other outcome but the further demoralization of an already beleaguered profession.[14]

In fact, plurality could not be neutral since the sense of plurality was not only associated with stylistic issues. It was likewise situated in the notion of authorship, a concept easily identified in the individual façades organized for the "Strada Novissima". This scenic mechanism was understood as a "gallery of architectural self-portraits made for play, for rediscovering the very serious game of architecture, a game on which even the quality of our life depends somewhat" (Portoghesi 1980: 12). A sequence of "self-portraits" means, consequently, the recognition of architectural research as an individual act, and thus linking the notion of *language* with the entity *architect*.

In the trajectory defined in this story line, the question of linguistic identities would follow towards the increasing sense of fragmentation, marked by the predominance of personal references that — as Frampton had already suspected — made the role

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[12] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 658. (Letter from Kenneth Frampton addressed to Paolo Portoghesi).

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.*

of the critic an impossible task. In 1995, Hans Hollein in the program drafted for *Sensing the future. Architect as Seismograph* — that would close the Venice Biennale's centenary celebrations in 1996 — explained that the exhibition would be about "the Architect" and not about architecture, because:

We no longer have common schools, common dogmas, common tendencies — big formations that fight each other in defence of their truths — but that you have a complex system of individual statements of singular individuals of the same quality and excellence. Architects today are cultural seismographs.[15]

Since every architect became its own referential point, divergent methods and antagonistic conceptions become co-existent in a complex system of personal beliefs. In this sense, there would be no other way than to register an evolving situation and to predict the "yet unknown situations" (Hollein 1996) of architecture. Curiously, while in the catalogue of the 6th exhibition each of the seventy architects is represented by an image of his hands drawing (i.e registering) the terms *history*, *tradition*, and *modernism*, those same notions acquired lesser importance in the structuration of the discourse about architecture as can be seen in Graph 4. Other notions as *individual*, *author*, and *complexity* — a concept that appeared in the Venice Biennale for the first time in 1996 (Graph 2) — getting great significance in this Biennale edition (see Graph1), as well as the introduction of media in the precise moment in which mediation became a widely discussed issue.

After the disappearance of the *canon*, the critic, journalist and historian had to confront itself with the individual interpretation of the architect. The architect then assumed the role of author-theoretician and presented his works "as illustrations of a thesis or theory, as is demonstrated, for example, by the works by Peter Eisenman,

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[15] La Biennale di Venezia, ASAC, Fondo Storico, busta 826. *VI International Architecture Biennale 1996. Program: Sensing the Future. The Architect as seismograph.*

Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, Steven Holl, Rem Koolhaas, or by Hans Hollein himself"
(Burkhardt 1996: n.p.).

These architects had no common spheres, because they were looking for
"differentiation rather than the research of unity" as denoted by François Burkhardt,
chief-editor of *Domus* magazine and member of the committee of experts. In the
context of the 1996 Biennale, Burkhardt organized the meeting *Architecture and
Media. The future of architecture reviews*,[16] in order to question the progressive "self-
centering" of architects.[17] There was, however, a kind of "mediatic game" mutually
played between architects and the *media*:

> *There are the "stars" and their stories, there is the "marketing" of production
> (ideas, positions and objects), and this means that the producers or artists of
> architecture - the architects, that is - must consider how and where they should
> position the optimal "use" of their intentions. Specialised periodicals will continue
> to be the traditional forums for discussing and reflecting on this discipline.*
> (Burkhardt 1996: 490)

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[16] This meeting was included in the program as "Special Event". It was held at Ca'Corner
della Regina on 16 September 1996.

[17] This meeting was attended by a renewed group of editors and critics, namely: Dominique
Boudet (Amc); Cynthia Davison (Any Magazine); Ole Bouleman (Archis); Maggie Toy
(Architectural Design); Axel Hecht (Art); Michael Hays (Assemblage); Erwin J.S. Viray and
Tetsuo Usada (a+u); Peter Rumpft (Bauwelt); Rowan Moore (Blueprint); François Burkhardt
and Oletmar Steiner (Domus); Richard C. Levene and Fernando Marquez (El Croquis);
Yokio Futagawa (Global Architecture); Jean-Paul Robert (L'architectura d'aujourd'hui);
Pierluigi Nicolin (Lotus International); Bruno Zevi (L'Architettura); Andreas Papadakis (New
Architecture); Manuel Gausa (Quaderns); Yorgos Simeoforidis (Tefchos); Haig Beck and
Jackie Cooper (Ume); Toshio Nakamura; Jorge Giusberg.

The acknowledgment of individual perceptions of architectural theory had generated new kinds of challenges and difficulties in *media* communication. The functions later performed by the critics and historians were now reduced to a mere exercise of the "narrator". In that sense, Burkhardt predicted the disappearance of the "great critic", and his possible replacement by a broader group of other kind of specialists, "among whom we also find the journalist" (Burkhardt 1996).
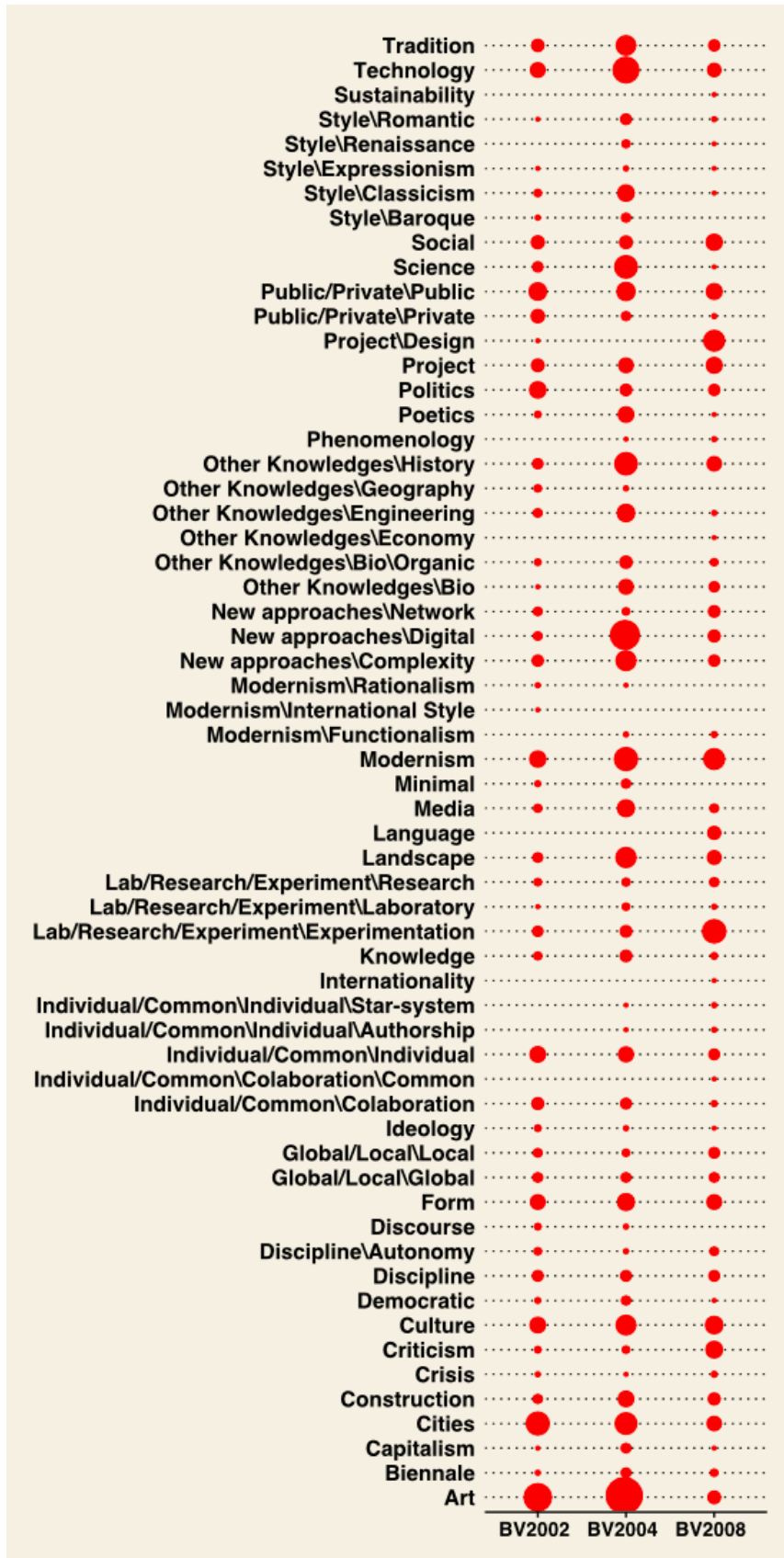
Graph-5_TERMS CONNECTED WITH THE IDEA OF *FORM*

7.3 Third Storyline: Form

Form constitutes the focus of the third storyline. From *Next*, the exhibition directed by Sudjic in 2002, in which "materiality" was the topic of reflection, toward the formal and conceptual transformation of architecture in *Metamorph* (Kurt Forster, 2004), until the disciplinary de-construction provoked by *Out There: Architecture Beyond Building* in 2008 it is perceptible that, among others, the idea of "form" is associated with relevant terms such as "technology", "digital", "experimentation", "art", "culture", and "city" (as can be seen in Graph-5).

In *Next* the discourse on "form" was constructed around the "materiality" of architecture. But this materiality already exists in the idea of the project. This project is not only the space for conceptual exploration but also the space for the predictable tangibility of the building:

> *If there is to be another project with the popular impact of the Bilbao Guggenheim opening within the next five years, you can be almost certain that it already exists as a set of drawings, or a fly-through visualization and a model or two. Of course, it isn't finished yet. It may not even have started on site. Its architects may still be exploring the possibilities of whether to build in steel rather than concrete. Nevertheless, the project exists as an idea.* (Sudjic 2002: 15)

In short, Sudjic and the set of "writers" that contributed with essays for the catalogue entitled *Next* had in common a concern for architectural "materiality". This "materiality" was the result of a new way of generating projects, now based on digital images and computer-generated renderings, strongly centred on virtuality and raised from the "astonishing" possibilities of the materials and techniques produced by the contemporary building industry. And, if it was no longer time for making "definitive pronouncements about modernism or post-modernism", it would be possible however to "discern certain trends" (Sudjic 2002: 15).

Such materiality — produced and experimented in the digital dimension of the project and deducted from the technological novelties — shaped the notion that architecture is engaged with a formal domain in ever-changing movement. "In order to stay alive", architecture, seen as cultural artefact, has "no alternative but to change, to transform substance and to assume other guises over the course of time" (Forster 2004: 9). Forster seems to look at architecture as a moving target, not confined within the limits of the conventional notion of "project" or "building" but identified as a dynamic "process" of formal exploration in open commutation with other fields of knowledge. The visual arts, landscape, biology, computer science, digital technology, among many other areas, became very important fields in this "process".

"Why not transpose the principles of genetic coding, cellular growth, mutation and natural selection to architecture?", asked Antoine Picon (2004: 63). An engineer, architect and historian, Picon recalled the pioneer work done by personalities such as the British architect John Frazer. He acted as a consultant in Cedric Price's proposal for the generator project Gilman Corporation, which stood between computer science and architecture. Another example would be the "genetic architecture" developed by Karl Chu, which suggested that a "new poetics" was emerging in the architecture field. In the essay "Digital architecture and the poetics of computation", he explored the dimensions of computer-generated architecture, enquiring: at which point such "poetics of computing" might inspire the discipline to "reinvent itself"? The open possibilities regarding disciplinary representation were explained in the following terms:

Curiously enough, virtual reality today seems to have renewed its ties with the complex structure of Renaissance and baroque illusion. Though it seems on the face of things contrary to any disillusioning effect, its very perfection leads the viewer lo question the degree of reality of what he is actually watching.
(Picon 2004: 64)

212

But, the use of virtual resources cannot reduce architecture to mere aspects of illusionist representation. In the new digital era, the architect should explore the virtual possibilities for the shaping of real forms. This perspective — which has affinity with Sudjic conception of "materiality" — is visible in projects that explored the borderlines between these dimensions, such as Sendai Ito's multimedia library and Asymptote's Virtual New York Stock Exchange, as sustained by Picon. The "pervasive" presence of digital culture in the discipline of architecture became an "inexorable part of research and practice" in architecture work (Rashid 2004: 77).

However, as already mentioned, the strongest presence in *Metamorph* was undoubtedly the artistic field (Graph1-Disciplinary fields). The mutual influence (but also conflict) between architecture and art is not new. However, fields not commonly used to inspire architecture's disciplinary change were now introduced in this relationship — such as Photography, Music, and Earth Art. These fields were considered able to "compensate" the "vacuum of meaning that afflicted architecture in the 1970s and which historians — failing a theoretical model — tried to equate with the end of Modernism, Post-modernism or post-industrialization" (Ursprung 2004: 162). The architect could explore new directions suggested from the "alliances" with other fields of knowledge.

The extreme diversity of authors and the broader scope of cultures of knowledge (as Graph1 shows) involved in the architecture exhibition do not indicate an intention to empty the field, but rather to emphasise its disciplinary tendency to become "new specie", as suggested by the title *Metamorph.* In the catalogue, expressions such as "hybrid", "mutation", "osmosis", "science", "biology", "contamination", underscored throughout the texts, reinforced the notion that architecture had acquired new potential "natures". It became a field no longer delimited by a closed surface, but by an "osmotic membrane", able to allow transdisciplinary commutations between cultures of knowledge.

The incessant erosion of architecture's idealized fixity has gathered such force over time, because it assimilates contemporary experience to its own opposite. Our life in architecture brings us ever closer to the manifestations of change and transformation, while alienating our sense of direction. […] *The magnitude of change may no longer register on a conventional scale but reach a critical point: No doubt that much will be lost when architecture as excogitated by Vitruvius, and infinitely reaffirmed by his readers and imitators, yields to an altogether different one. It is difficult to say what this new architecture and its premises will be, if it will indeed have stable premises, but our difficulties emerge from the phenomena themselves and thus assume a diagnostic value.* (Forster 2004:7)

Nevertheless, the rise of individual difference, the unlimited exploration of form, and the growing tendency for transdisciplinary approaches have ended up by displacing architecture from the centre of the field towards other epistemic fields. Betsky took the Biennale as a "manifest" for de-constructing conventions and established beliefs. He departed from the notion of experimental architecture, working on the "performative" and "spectacular" dimensions of contemporary architecture, in which the building became an intangible structure:

Buildings are obviously the most complete ways that architecture appears. But by the same token they are also the tombs of architecture. It is difficult to find architecture in buildings because buildings are defined as much by codes as by the theories of architects. […] *So we must look beyond, within, before and after buildings to find architecture.* (Betsky 2008b: 20)

Betsky's essays are mostly dedicated to elaborating a "thesis" around the idea that buildings "can be avoided" in the experience of architecture. As we have seen, while Sudjic and Forster argue that, even "alienating our sense of direction", the complicity between architecture and the other fields — from the digital to the science or arts — is a precondition for the materialization of "form", Betsky, by contrast, dissolves architecture into the experience of form:

214

It [architecture] *cannot so much tell us something as it can intimate and allow us to experience. It can be a catalyst and fragment that makes us aware of large systems. It can be a scrim or screen that by its very presence makes us wonder. It can be a useless abstraction that yet installs itself in the real world. To do so, it must be, as it always is, about buildings, but it might be able to rise above or beyond building, move through building, or perhaps even come before building* (Betsky 2008:15)

No longer sustained by a common body of knowledge, nor based on axiomatic doctrines, architecture "has been tormenting itself, questioning its languages and its roles and in fact anticipating recent changes with its anxiety and uncertainty" (Stoppani 2012: 84), as reminded by Teresa Stoppani in 2012 in the book *Common Ground. A Critical Reader*. In the same book, Kazys Vernelis's essay "Architecture after the individual" also denounces the "culture of immediacy", the disappearance of "informal canons", and the denial "of history as a disciplinary commonality". These aspects have been contributing to the loss of disciplinary autonomy and the identity of architecture as a culture of knowledge.

For many today, the Cartesian 'I think therefore I am' is dissolving in favour of an affirmation of existence through the network itself, a phantom individuality that escapes into the network — much as meaning escapes into the Derrida network of 'differance', words definedby other words, significance endlessly deferred in a ceaseless play of language as being itself comes to be found in the net. If this is the model for subjectivity in this century, then star-architecture seems destined to fall ever more out of favour as the architect-hero becomes harder and harder to identify with. (Vernelis 2012: 286)

After the disciplinary de-construction motivated by *Out There: Architecture Beyond Building* in 2008, the exhibition *Common Ground* — following Sejima's first attempt — tried to bring back some of the essential issues of architecture, notably the idea that architecture is a collective act based on shared conventions, memories and practices.

215

Considering architecture as a "collaborative art", Mark Wigley — who in the past had given theoretical support to the ideas of individuality and difference — claimed that, today, every architect and architectural office are interconnected nodes in a wider global web "of countless design offices, schools, associations, galleries, publications and archives". This web allows sharing "thoughts in a way that binds all the seemingly distinct and dispersed spaces into a single thoughtful organism." (Wigley 2010: 298)

Common Ground celebrated what is "common" in architecture and proposed to rethink the existence of architectural identities, as maintained not just by "singular talents", but mainly by a "diverse complexity of ideas and research, united in a common and continuous history, common ambitions, common predicaments and shared ideals." (Chipperfield 2012: 13)

CONCLUSION

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS
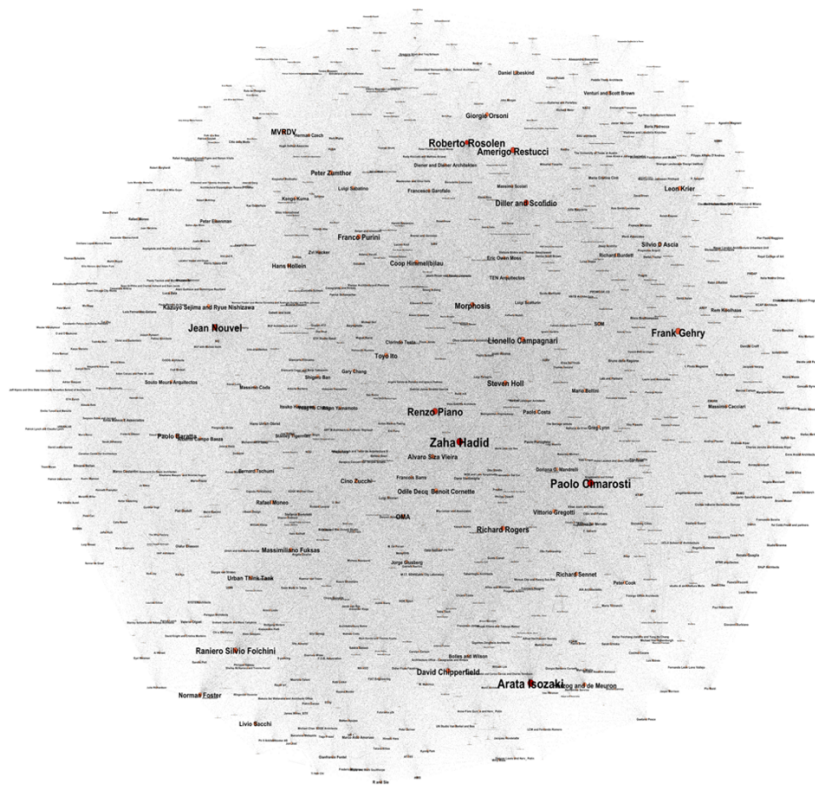
The image above defines a network. Each node is an architect, critic, curator, policy maker, author or institutional actor participant in the activity of the Venice Architecture Biennale, over the last three decades. Each one evokes a position somewhat isolated from the others, supposedly providing an illustrative image of the numerous possible interpretations on architecture, nowadays. At first sight, it seems that this network expresses the same impulse towards fragmentation as defined in the coextensive fictional map imagined by Jorge Luis Borges: it blurs the lines between the multiple and the singular. Still, even encompassing such an impulse, this network is not exactly an unlimited and unpredictable cartography of isolated nodes. Instead, when we examine it with more attention, it is perceptibly a constellation of social relationships, paths, invariants and core values that confines the disciplinary field and that is only visible when looking at architecture through a real institution: the Venice Biennale.

221

The argument I have presented in this study claims firstly that, over the last few decades, architecture has found support beyond the conventional structures of knowledge production and dissemination, originally situated in the architectural schools and the architectural periodical press. Other kinds of institutions have thus been performing the functions of producing, framing, discussing and communicating architectural contents. Secondly, this dissertation has demonstrated that shared knowledge is a key requirement for architecture's disciplinary survival. The discipline's authority is sustained and legitimised by a broader network of conventions, core values and individuals that has evolved over time. Finally, my account confirms that, alongside with such changes, the main concerns that once drove architectural debate in the early 1980s seem to have been kept relatively stable over time.

The assumptions of architectural disciplinary crisis with which this study began have thus been rethought. To understand these assumptions, I have had to pose a number of questions. The first, and most evident, was: At which point is the interplay between the multiple and the singular, and the dislocation from academia to the global public sphere, a sign of disciplinary failure in the field of architecture? This was quickly followed by the interrogation: Have the paradigms that once drove the notion of discipline and the study of architecture become inadequate for understanding its epistemic complexities today? These two questions were the starting point. But they can also serve as the conclusion of the argument, as well.

1.

From the moment that the Venice Biennale inaugurated the Architecture sector in 1979, the International Architecture Exhibitions became an obligatory meeting point for the community of architects. These events are, today, the unavoidable place of debate on architecture and, mainly, the privileged institution for inquiring on the ever-present discussion on the crisis of the discipline.

From its very first moment until today, there has been a kind of common denominator running through the Venice Architecture Biennale: the shadow of disciplinary crisis. As expressed above, this shadow came from the fragmentation of

the field and from the collapse of the conventional structures of disciplinary institutionalization — like architectural schools, professional organizations, and architectural reviews and journals, among others.

In truth, architecture entered in the Biennale at quite precisely the moment when the crisis was officially announced in the public debate. While addressing the sense of crisis felt in the discipline, the Biennale offered compensation, at the same time, for the absence of place and direction in architecture. On one hand, it emphasized the autonomy of architecture among the other sectors that defined the interdisciplinary structure of the institution; on the other, it ensured the continuity of the debate, as well as the sense of membership between architects — two basic conditions for disciplinary survival, as we have seen.

The juncture formed by "Teatro del Mondo" and "Strada Nuovissima" has been taken in this study as the inaugural moment, in which the several guidelines identified as important conditions for the construction of architectural knowledge converged and, then, a new paradigm emerged. Firstly, that moment corroborated the Biennale's strategies, namely interdisciplinary representation-experimentation and national-international interplay. Secondly, this moment defined a new model of architectural representation, able to reflect — sometimes in divergent directions — the state of the art in the discipline, as well as to resonate new trends and positions in architectural culture. Finally, together these events inaugurated a Biennale culture, whereby new conventions and a regime of specific practices emerged and changed the understanding of the discipline.

The implications of this nodal point were also significant in the architectural discourse, calling into question the socio-political values, functionalist principles, and normative codes of the modernist idealisations, thereby introducing the polemic of postmodernist plurality. The "difficult condition of surviving in tolerance and plurality", as expressed by Portoghesi, was a concernment already in course — but this was the moment in which it came to be powerfully discussed in the public sphere. Some voices of Architecture History and Criticism, like Manfredo Tafuri, Bruno Zevi, Vittorio

Gregotti, or Kenneth Frampton, accompanied intensively this polemic in architectural magazines like *Casabella*, *Architectural Design*, *Controspazio*, among others. Two correlated, however different, aspects were discussed: the polemic on modernism vs postmodernism; and the displacement or relocation of the debate towards a new kind of public sphere. In this regard, the stylistic polemic was the least important aspect — postmodernism was only an excuse. The most relevant aspect was the tension inaugurated between two different kinds of institutions in the promotion of architectural debate: the periodical press and the Biennale itself.

It was at this point, in the early 1980s, that the periodical press became important for extending debates and supporting the Biennale's acceptability in the public opinion. Yet, over the past three decades, the Biennale has increased its visibility and authority in the same proportion that the press has been losing centrality and legitimacy among the peers and the public opinion in general. From 1980 on, the press has tended to lose impact, and the press-Biennale relation has become increasingly asymmetric. Today the astonishing proliferation of architectural magazines and journals, as well as the impressive volume of press releases and news on the Biennale is a clear symptom of this condition: the volume of materials does not correspond to an equivalent qualitative increase of criticism. On the contrary, the press has been focused mostly on mere reporting, closest to the practice of journalism. Regarding the Biennale, with punctual exceptions, the exercise of criticism has been commonly neglected.

By the turn of millennium, two decades after that initial juncture, the Biennale itself was undertaking the functions previously performed by the press, having incorporated its protagonists. For example, in 2002, Sudjic called a set of critics, writers and journalists to integrate the commission of experts for the exhibition *Next*, thus transferring debate from the press to the Biennale. In fact, we saw that Frampton in 1979, and Burkhardt in 1996, had already suspected that the fragmentation of discourse would demolish the function of the critic and, then, predicted that the Biennale would replace the function of the press.

Evidently, architectural schools and architectural reviews will remain. But these conventional structures for raising debate and framing boundaries were replaced by a new dominant logic, of which the Biennale is the point of origin. Therefore, the Biennale has become one of the most significant institutions to centralize debate and promote codes, ideas and values in architecture. In other words, it became a canon-making engine, able to legitimize discourse and to consecrate identities — functions that had exclusively belonged to academy and press before. The symbolic capital offered by the long stability and history of the institution — with established rules and cultural policies clearly defined —, has been providing continuity to the disciplinary narrative, attributing value to works and authors, and assuring the futurity of the debate in the field of architecture. As I have explained over the last chapters, it is precisely the articulation between the stability of the institution and the cyclical effect of the large-scale exhibitions that gives meaning and centrality to the Biennale.

This flexibility is, indeed, one of the crucial achievements provided by the Biennale, which directly or indirectly has identified architecture as a coherent body inside the interdisciplinary logic of the institution, as well as distinguishing itself from academic, professional and other kind of cultural institutions — such as museums and the periodical press — in several aspects. Primarily, it permits the fluctuant participation of different groups of architects, curators and critics, grounded in different traditions of thought and coming from very distinct geographical origins. Additionally, it allows for the repeated process of correcting directions and a continual replacing of proposals. Each event maps the contemporary discourse — thereby reducing the complexity of fragmented perspectives — at the same moment as it shapes new tastes, words and ideas that are reabsorbed by the community of architects, critics and curators as referential points. Moreover, the Biennale is accessible to the wider community of architects, but also open to non-architects. These conditions would not be easy to reproduce in the school context — with educational principles grounded in an academic tradition of thought and established disciplinary categories —, nor in the press, the recent dispersion of which does not permit to centralize the debate.

Above all, the Biennale is an alternative experience of knowledge production that inaugurated a tradition, as Kultermann had wished in 1981. I have called it a "culture of knowledge", in the sense that it has been constructing meanings and values beyond the ritualization of the events. It is a culture that takes the relationship between experimentation and representation as the principal mechanism of knowledge construction, thus allowing for the extension of architecture beyond the limits of building or writing practices.

The global dominance of the Biennale is another important condition in this culture. As evidenced, more than one process of *biennialization* is under way and, therefore, it is important to distinguish between the Venice Biennale and the broader network of biennials that has emerged. We saw, in the second chapter, that the *biennialization* phenomenon defines an increasing polycentric cartography, dispersing events and perspectives on a worldwide scale. Each International Architecture Exhibition can be identified as aspiring to its moment of fame in the global public sphere that cyclically concentrates in a "time-space compressed" instance a dense constellation of ideas and actors — curators, architects, critics, journalists, policy makers, and visitors. In this sense, each event is not a mere meeting point, neither an isolated node. It is, rather, a moment of reflection capable of connecting the functions of reporting, retrospection, canonizing and predicting architecture.

2.

When I started researching on the Architecture sector of the Biennale, I was surprised by the swift rise and fall of ideas on architecture and by the fast movement of actors switching between such ideas. My first concern was, thus, to understand why in a field where discourses seem to multiply enormously, one nonetheless observes a high degree of professional identity among architects and a relative stability of the status of architecture inside the Biennale. I arrived to the conclusion that the network of ideas and actors is more significant than the isolated interpretations presented in each event and, consequently, that shared knowledge is a key condition for disciplinary authority and continuity.

In the course of three decades, the network was shaped by two distinct constellations of actors and ideas. The first of these was defined between The *Presence of the Past* (1980) and *Sensing the future: Architect as Seismograph* (1996), by architects and architectural historians who belong to the second post-War "generation of theory", including, among many others, Aldo Rossi, Charles Jencks, Francesco Dal Co, Hans Hollein, Paolo Portoghesi, and Udo Kultermann. These individuals did not share a common interpretation of architecture: for example, Rossi and Hollein held very distinct discursive positions, while Dal Co and Kultermann looked at the history of architecture from very different cultural grounds, as we saw. Nor did these actors share a clear definition of architecture, as their generation was characterized precisely by a sense of plurality and by the ability of translating and transcoding words, concepts and notions borrowed from outside fields and structures of thought.

But, under a disciplinary perspective, they shared a common intellectual framework based on Theory (as its axial value) and Architecture History (as its main disciplinary source). It is important here to note that Theory did not mean axiomatic structures of thought as defined in scientific fields — such as Biology, Mathematics, or Physics —, or as expressed in the social thought produced by theorists like Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, for instance. Theory was linked with the idea of "interrogating" the methods and purposes of the discipline (Judt 2010: 398). It is a non-dogmatic conception that, at the Biennale, was informed by semiology and phenomenology, but also deducted from multiculturalism and visual arts debates.

Another equally important aspect of this network is that it is not coincident (or only punctually coincident) with the group of authors (mainly architects) selected in the anthologies on Architecture Theory analysed in the first chapter, which have influenced our ways of looking at the discipline. Among those, Manfredo Tafuri, an important reference in Nesbitt's approach and starting point in Hays' perspective, was practically absent from Biennale activity as such. In fact, I have explained above that the figures of the scholar and the critic faced two sudden challenges in that period: the potential disappearance of their practice; and the replacing of their traditional

institutions of mediation (essentially the architectural school and periodical press). This means that Tafuri — as one of the major references of the mythic Venice School — could not, evidently, co-exist with such new challenges. It also means that the epistemic paradigm delimited within the above-mentioned anthologies — a close system of academic exchange —, is clearly distinct from the experimental approach provided by the Biennale towards a wider audience that includes both architects and non-architects.

Besides, since different languages were equally considered, it was plausible to cite the authority of History to legitimize and explain why architecture became a heterogeneous and fragmentary corpus of tendencies, themes and discourses. In keeping the emphasis on History, this constellation believed that disciplinary continuity would be assured over time. The intellectual affinities with History also make sense in the light of the anti-modernist obsessions that were promoted by Portoghesi's institutional centrality at the Biennale. He was, in fact, the one who made the important choices regarding the curators, architects and critics that would shape the Architecture sector and ground its future activity. Among these choices, Aldo Rossi was the "referential point", as Portoghesi himself confirmed. Rossi was, indeed, the main conceptual reference that dominated the debate. In a certain sense, he embodied for the first time the profile of author-theoretician of its own work, which would be expressed, discussed and celebrated in *Sensing the Future. Architect as Seismograph* (1996), although without his presence and following a very distinct way.

I suggested in the third chapter that the 1996 exhibition can be seen as a turning point in the direction of the Biennale's discourse. Whilst following Portoghesi's route towards plurality, Hollein and his team of experts replaced the notion of the *plural* by that of the *individual*. They also replaced the search for *unity* by an emphasis on *difference*. Although this was not the first time the term *individual* was used to qualify architecture, it seems to have been the moment at which it gained expression and the architect-centred paradigm became the main focus of architectural representation. The architects left the complex theoretical abstractions that characterized the last

generation behind, to propose a personal theory produced in the realm of the building — the only site of "all theoretical inquiry" in Wigley's evaluation.

If the architects, as cultural "seismographs", had no common schools, common dogmas, or common tendencies — as Hollein claimed — and their works became illustrations of private theories, then the continuity of architectural criticism and the identity of the discipline would be undoubtedly in danger. After this moment, each "seismograph" would acquire great visibility and enduring presence at the Biennale over the following years and become an active player inside the iconic game of the global star-system.

In the first decade of our century, a second constellation of actors and ideas emerged at the Biennale, between the exhibitions *Cittá. Less Aesthetics, More Ethics* (2000) and *Common Ground* (2012). It included many of the players of the star-system and resulted in a dense, but heterogeneous, composition of self-contained clusters organized around the action of individual chief-curators — namely Massimiliano Fuksas, Deyan Sudjic, Kurt Forster, Richard Burdett, Aaron Betsky, Kazuyo Sejima, and David Chipperfield. Curators, architects and other participants have collectively generated inter- and trans-disciplinary understandings of architecture, in line with the same tendency followed in other disciplinary fields as discussed in the first chapter. But from all the disciplinary interrelations proposed, the representation as well as the narrative constructed about architecture became particularly unpredictable.

A plethora of terms, concepts and theoretical approaches in architectural discourse emerge, coming from the fields of Visual Arts, Economics, Sociology and Digital Culture allied to other, sometimes less evident, disciplines as diverse as Music, Physics, Engineering, Biology, Literature. Terms such as "transgressing", "commutation", "osmosis", "hybrid", "mutation", "contamination", also invaded the architecture's narrative, and post-structuralism offered an extremely attractive framework to support the argument on the discipline.

Kurt Forster had noted, when labelling the exhibition *Metamorph* (2004), that architecture became a field limited by an "osmotic membrane". To survive, it had no alternative but to accept the commutation with other fields of knowledge in order to be transformed into a new "species". The new "materialities" of architecture, as Deyan Sudjic had suggested two years earlier, were a clear result of the omnipresence of the digital culture in the process of conception and representation — a new "poetics", in Antoine Picon's accurate perception — as well as from the possibilities opened up by the technological novelties explored in building practice.

While Forster's and Sudjic's different assumptions shared the notion that the complicity with other fields seems to have become a precondition for architecture's formality and materiality, in Aaron Betsky's iconoclastic determination such complicity would witness the potential "disappearance" of architecture — as he claimed in *Out There: Architecture Beyond Building* (2008).

Betsky's deconstructivist hypothesis that anything and everything could be explained as architecture, had nonetheless very important consequences and caused several reactions. In that same year, Vittorio Gregotti published the essay *Contro la fine dell'Architettura* as a clear answer towards Betsky's approach, confronting contemporary disciplinary emptiness.

Such reaction was also felt inside the Biennale. The choice of Kazuyo Sejima for curating the edition that followed and, mainly, the "serene faith architecture" she established as an axial direction in *People Meet in Architecture* (2010), was indeed the first essay to start a new approach in the Biennale's discursive direction. "I am an architect" — Sejima claimed. In reminding us of this unequivocal truth, she recalled the focus on the experience of space as the elementary definition of architecture. *Common Ground* (2012) would follow in the same direction, bringing back some of the essential issues raised from *The Presence of the Past*, but under a reverse perspective. Built around the ideas of "continuity", "context", "communication" and "memory", David Chipperfield rethought the notion of architectural culture. He did not disregard the presence of the star-architects, but in *Common Ground* these actors

were forced to think about the ways of representing affinities instead of singularities. This functioned as a question mark, challenging for the first time at the Biennale the architect-centred perspective and the idea of disciplinary crisis:

I chose this theme in order to question the priorities that seem to dominate our time, priorities that focus on the individual, on privilege, on the spectacular and the special. These priorities seem to overlook the normal, the social, the common. I was concerned to encourage a more critical examination of what we share, with the awareness of what separates us and how we are all unique. To consider our common influences, concerns and visions may help us better understand the discipline of architecture and its relation to society. (Chipperfield 2012: 13)

It seems, then, that after this question mark a new dominant logic arose in the Biennale with the exhibitions *Fundamentals* (2014), curated by Rem Koolhaas, and *Reporting from the Front* (2016), curated by Alejandro Aravena. To understand such a new logic, a number of new questions may need to be asked, but they are still unpredictable, given that they are following a direction still in flux.

3.

Over and above the explicit shifts regarding the meaning and nature of architecture and the different conceptions proposed in each exhibition, it is possible to identify a common ground that has shaped the construction of an architectural disciplinary culture at the Biennale over the last three decades. The prevalence of relatively stable key notions such as *city*, *language* and *form* (which defined the three storylines in the last chapter) is clear evidence that the fundamental concerns of architecture have remained over time. In fact, the Biennial's storylines and network of ideas and actors reminds us that shared knowledge is the vital condition for disciplinary endurance, and help us to think about the current transformations that are underway. The existence of internal constellations means that, beyond the value of authorship,

architects have experienced direct access to a much wider structure, in which they have been able to share information, tastes, thoughts and other kinds of contents. This is indeed an important aspect, as it has supported the discipline and the identification of acclaimed individuals as participants in a wider disciplinary field.

My account has aimed to contribute to the study of architecture by introducing new approaches to the conceptualisation and analysis of the discipline. It has been grounded in the idea that architecture must be considered as a conceptual and social network. This, consequently, inevitably involves the support and boundary-making work offered by a real institution — in contrast with an imaginary or abstract one. I have re-examined the classifications as well as the methods commonly employed in Architecture History, which often tends to acclaim epistemic autonomy and discursive uniformity as fundamental values for disciplinary identity. This does not mean that the studies and narratives available on the topic could be disregarded. On the contrary, the notion of architecture as a complex network of agents and ideas rests on the shoulders of some referential voices in architectural debate and history, including Vidler's suggestion of architecture as "expanded field", or Mark Wigley's definition of architecture as a "collaborative art", in which every architect in an interconnected node participates in a wider global web. It does suggest, nonetheless, that such a complex texture of epistemic and social relationships required the use of new concepts, such as "culture of knowledge", borrowed from cultural studies, philosophy of science, and history of science, as well as the use of new tools and methods, such as social network analysis and qualitative methods of analysis. These tools and methods have allowed for the identification of architectural networks inside the Biennale. But they also permit to analyse the discipline in a way that can incorporate the relations between actors and ideas across a wider chronological spectrum. Considering the fragmentations evidenced so many times in the field and the fact that architecture is a historical corpus, a long-term perspective can contribute to achieve a wider understanding of the discipline. My thesis has attempted to follow precisely such a route.

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