

THE JOURNAL

The Journal is curated by Silvia Mei

The Journal does not want to be an informative tool for the scheduled events nor has the presumption of "explaining them". The interventions collected here follow the different traces of festival flows and act as aesthetic breviary. As in a map, they represent an erratic path made coherent by graphic signs.

We leave to you, wandering readers and spectators, the task and the pleasure to abandon yourselves in this tangle or to unfasten it.



altofest.net

on the back:
Orbit - by Federica Terracina

In Orbit, a shift in perspective is drawn and territories, plants and guests who live there become subjects. Orbit is an invitation to explore space through open and abstract signs. The composition of the work is the result of an intense journey throughout the landscapes of Basilicata whose borders are redrawn following the places of Altifest Matera Basilicata 2019. An imaginary map for a region that makes itself home while orbiting.

Sezione 1/4

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INTANGIBLE IMPRINTS. FOR AN EXALTED HOME

by Raffaele Marone

A house can be considered a form of architecture when it is the manifestation of a poetics. When the aim of creating an artefact is the realisation of a space that generates emotions that are as intense as those who live in it, then we can talk of "exalted living". This has always been happening in architecture: the "atmospheres" of Vals or the chapel of Bruder Klaus created by Peter Zumthor, the "Prisons of Invention" by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, the Library, "vast amphitheatre of books" by Etienne Louis Boullée, the Pantheon in Rome ... Talking about the architecture of Boullée, the architect Aldo Rossi had spoken of "exalted rationalism". Exalted space: a space produced by an aroused fantasy or by a settlement which, compared to current practices, may appear "ventured" (the definition is based on the 'exalted' entry of the Treccani dictionary).

If a performative act is like a "foldaway" installation and can alter the sensory and perceptual qualities of a space with particular intensity in a relatively short and concluded time, then that performative act is also a form of "exalted living". The poetic action, performed in a space, even a domestic one, can remove the dimension of habits from the space, transforming it into a form of visionary and exalted architecture. Thus, the performance manages to reveal some of the emotional qualities of the space, which were already perceived before the poetic action, but without a real awareness of them.

Who knows if the places we live in have a soul, although they are quite likely to have an invisible shadow. Some shadows appear more certain, those that every day animate walls, floors, furniture and things as the light changes. Beyond these, any space is likely to produce shadows that are not visible to us yet, but already present in the space. They are perceivable with a variable degree of consciousness that depends on the individual, whether he lives there daily or only temporarily. It would be like if space, similarly to human beings, had his own unconsciousness: an unseen yet completely essential part of an individual's personality, his character and feelings.

We say that a place is "full of history" when many memorable events have taken place in that space. These places can be well known for various historical events: for the presence or visits of famous people, for the speeches that have been delivered there. Sometimes they represent the place where crucial documents were signed or important events occurred, or maybe they are relevant for the presence of objects or works of art, even if only symbolic, while other places might be known for the crimes that were committed there ... Facts and things, therefore, contribute to building environments, intangible quality of places.

The questions that arise here are: can the fulfilment of a poetic act leave an "imprint" in that space? Will that "imprint" mark the space enduringly? If the performance takes place inside a house, perhaps an artist residency, what happens to the character of the space? Certainly, life will be enriched from the contingency of public performance. During this time even the most intimate space is transformed by the poetic action that fulfils it with new, unfamiliar, emotional intensity. Also for the host, the performance represents the climax of the alteration of daily life that evolved over the previous days, by living with the artist who develops and rehearses the act in the house.

The poetic act "recast" the physical space of the house and "something" from that extraordinary experience will be embedded in the place. After the event, the life of that space will probably be transformed on at least two different levels: not only the performance will be imprinted in the memory, but also the perceptual habits of those who live in that space every day will change. Space will be inscribed with the density of sensations and emotions that have left an "imprint", invisible yet present, in the inhabited space. Even those who have not been among the audience, and maybe do not even know that a poetic action took place in those spaces, will perceive the immaterial transformations of those spaces.

These thoughts are inspired by certain considerations I made on photography a few years ago. Photography takes and receives from the world, affecting the emulsion and recording urban scenes, interiors, landscapes, people, on a digital memory card. However, on the other hand, the act of photographing is quite likely to affect the veracity of the scene that is photographed. When places get photographed a lot, if they are a famous tourist attraction, for example, I believe they get thoroughly altered by being continually the object/subject of framing and shooting. Every frame, every photography, somehow leaves an intangible imprint on the photographed space, which nurture and changes its shadow, invisible yet perceptible, and the atmosphere that surrounds its inhabitants.

"The grey palace rises in the sea. It is not in ruins, but was never completed; it does not fall, it will not fall ... The tall, wide windows without glass resemble thoughtless eyes; At night the palace turns black, deeply black; the sky is clear on its head, the high and beautiful stars glow, the sea of Posillipo is like phosphorus, melancholy songs of love, repetitive notes of a mandolin come out of the abandoned villas lost in the woods: the palace remains dark and, under its vaults, sea wave crashes continuously ... Now and then, it almost seems like a sheen passes slowly in the halls; and so amazing shadows are drawn in the window frame: they are not scary. Maybe they are vulgar thieves ... maybe they are beggars looking for a roof ... And maybe they are ghosts and we smile at them and we want them to be; we love them ghosts, we live with them, we dream for them and we will die for them" (from Matilde Serao, "Il palazzo donn'Anna", in Neapolitan legends, 1895).

Therefore, living moments of "exalted living" can extend the cognitive boundaries of an architectural poetics exposing new questions to the architect. By experiencing an "exalted living" is it possible to change the idea of architecture? Certainly, our Abitare Futuro (Future Living*) will change, but how? The idea of architecture unfolds with time, constantly changing along with the flow of knowledge that is manifested in the life of the architect. The more the architect is aware and ready to let changes flow, the more his work can respond appropriately to the continuous transformations of reality.

Beyond architecture, the endless transmutations of cities and landscapes can be seen as the materializations of collective flows of knowledge produced by the people who inhabit them. Then, Abitare Futuro¹ (Future Living*) however unpredictable this might be, shall be guided by different ways of exalted living, towards increasingly intense vital experiences. The contemporary architect, while imagining future ways of Abitare Futuro (Future Living*), can only choose/indicate a direction/intention. Then it will be the imponderable interferences, the interactions, the interconnections that will occur along the way that will deliver the concrete forms that were still unpredictable before the project. Here, if we have to choose/indicate a direction/intention to live in the future within the spaces of architecture, city and landscape, this would be to go towards an exalted inhabiting.

¹ The Italian verb abitare means "to dwell", "to live" or "to inhabit" a certain house. While the English verb "to live", recalls the biological root of living and its connection with "life", the Italian word abitare has a certain resonance with the nouns abitudine (habit) and "abito" (dress, suite, clothes). Its semantic spectrum therefore recalls the bond which connects people with the inhabited place, as if the identity of one depends on and is co-defined by the other.

DARE LUOGO

ALTO FEST MATERA BASILICATA 2019

I N T E R N A
T I O N A L
C O N T E M
P O R A R Y
L I V E A R T S

ABITARE¹ FUTURO

During Altifest, daily life and artistic process coexist in the same dimension of space and time, a domestic one. Therefore the rhythms that are embedded in the host family are overthrown, producing a shift in their habits. A new set of rituals arise which is shared with the hosted artists. Then the house opens up to the community of the fest and to all visitors who are greeted for the performances. For the donors, an extra-ordinary temporality begins which carries with it a new way of living and "practising" domestic spaces. The artist rearranges what is visible in the house and works with its spaces and objects both by overlooking their function and inscribing them in the fabric of a foreign vision - yet to come and still without a name. The poetic act, performed and received, redirects the direction of our glances shifting them from what is there, in the daily and the present, towards what is yet to be realised, what it might be, the future. Thus, Altifest predisposes a sort of laboratory in which it is possible to cultivate the idea that in a domestic space many lives can arise; other ways of living that go beyond a personal, family, nuclear dimension. A new set of encounter, confrontation, community and social bonds which can also find a space in the intimacy of one's own home; if one is willing to leave the door open. The works in the program explore the most remote dimensions of living, in a path marked by the tensions between four recurring semantic polarities: tamed / wild; legacy / slag; construction / destruction; origin / fulfillment; thus offering us a lens through which is possible to think about different forms and times of a potential living.

L E M M
A R I O

TAMED/
WILD

by Silvia Mei

Horses and hair. In some languages, like French, the two words differ only for a single phoneme which changes its pronunciation (*chevaux*, horses; *cheveux*, hair). This little difference arouses amusing, and often involuntary, linguistic games. Despite the different roots, they both relate to the sphere of wilderness which reconnects us to our original condition: that of nature without culture. Hair is the most extensive trace of primate fur and it is a shapeless, free, chaotic mass. It is only in a state of culture that hair is disciplined, outfitted, sanitized. Like architecture, hair can also design planes, vaults, niches (the *Ancien régime* wigs), topped with decorative elements such as hats or stuffed animals (the *fin de siècle* fashion), or, as a malleable material, they can be carved and become almost work of art by themselves. The human being also applies equine dressage on himself through clothing, supports and hairstyles that articulate the body into a text, disciplining it, holding it up, keeping it upright with prosthesis and masks. They train it; they tame it.

Human evolution could be read as an uninterrupted dream of domestication awoken by intentional straying, by the choice of the street. The tramp is uncultivated, like the places of Gilles Clément that are also called "third landscapes": he too is third, because he is different; the first ones against the last ones; the normal against the alternatives. The homeless lives on the edge, in abandoned urban interstices, sleeping on the threshold. He is by definition home-less - that is literally a man without a home - but he is also a *clochard*, which in French etymologically means "limping": he is an outcast, a subordinate who protests the structures of an untamed society (*homo homini lupus*: a man is a wolf to another man). With his beard, his smells and his rocky inclination, he strives towards that *becoming-animal* of Kafka-Deleuze-Guattari. He takes on a quadruped posture, as an infant; he breaks the crutches of civilization, sagging the vertical erection, to find a new pace. The street of the tramp is a place for transiting rather than a transit; it represents a way, a route, a pathway towards a future that is a *becoming*; a road that assists the transient dwelling of the *Wanderer*, the rambler, who at the same time lives and is inhabited by the time and the landscape from which he is made of.

The terms of evolution are therefore to be found in the pathway that *Homo Sapiens* beaten 150.000 years ago while migrating, even if he still walks, in a different way, towards the same monstrosity. As Massimo Filippi observes in his *The Invention of the Species*, the idea of a *proprium* of the human or animal being does not exist in nature. Instead, there is a sensual being, to put it with Daniel Heller-Roazen words, whose existential consciousness can only be earned and not given. Man and animal have therefore always kept each other company, but which of the two is more domesticated?

F L A S H E S
O F I N S P
I R A T I O N

Forme di un ideale
abitare, selezionate
da Pietro Gaglianò,
curatore, critico e
studioso dei
linguaggi dell'arte
visiva
contemporanea

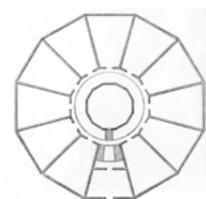


Central Italy Painter (formerly attributed to Luciano Laurana), *Ideal City*, 1480-1490?, oil on panel, 67,7 x 239,4 cm, National Gallery of the Marches, Urbino.

Ideal cities and architectures have been imagined and painted in central Italy since the XV century (as the background of human and divine events or like protagonists themselves). They shape the celestial city, always circular, in a renewed anthropocentric sense. Since the Middle Ages, circularity has represented the spiritual wholeness of Christianity and the non-perfectibility of God (Jacopone Da Todi wrote in the XIII century: "Love, Love, you are the rounded circle"); in the Renaissance, the divine design was replaced by that of the prince. In this image, civil power reaffirms its centre because "the more a settlement has no centre, the more difficult it is to define its boundaries"¹. Moreover, the circularity of the structure allows a visual connection that starting from the primary centre of power radiates to all the peripheral areas; this is also combined with other requirements for practicability, healthiness, regularity. It is no coincidence that the model for prisons developed in the Enlightenment by Jeremy Bentham, called Panopticon, is perfectly circular, aiming to obtain maximum efficiency for control and surveillance with the minimum use of guardians².



Antonio di Pietro Averlino known as il Filarete (Florence around 1400 - after 1465), *Plan of the city of Sforzinda, in the Treatise on Architecture*, 1461-1464, Central National Library, Florence.



Samuel Bentham and Willey Reveley, *Drawing for the Panopticon by Jeremy Bentham*, 1791.

¹ Franco La Cecla, *Perdersi. L'uomo senza ambiente*, Editori Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1988.

² Cfr. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, Gallimard, Paris, 1975.

Text by Pietro Gaglianò, *Quello che le rovine permettono (non nel tempo ma nello spazio)*, in Eva Sauer, edited by, *A meditation on violence*, Gli Ori editori contemporanei, Pistoia, 2017.